

NFAR Announces the Teachers Grants Recipients for the 2008/2009 School Year

This week, NFAR was proud to announce the grant award winners of the San Diego Autism Teachers Fund for the 2008/2009 school year.



Thirty-three grants were awarded to educators in 12 different school districts across the San Diego region. Grant funding will be used for language and communication development, play and social skills programs, friendship opportunity programs, career planning, independent living

skills, as well as tools to further academic skills in math, reading comprehension and language arts. Three high school, three middle school, twenty-six elementary school, and four pre-K classrooms were awarded as well as a transition program for 18 to 22 year old students.

NFAR introduced the San Diego Autism Teachers Fund in 2005 and every year since then, this program has provided educational grants to San Diego County teachers in an effort to assist both teacher/ student by providing for the specialized needs of their students with autism.

The Fund is supported by the money raised by parents, friends, professionals and sponsors of the San Diego Race for Autism held in Balboa Park each March. Grants are available up to \$500 per classroom or up to \$1000 may be awarded for a single specialized program or piece of equipment. To date, NFAR has awarded more than 130 educators with grant funding for their students with autism.

"NFAR's goal is to provide funding for specialized programs, materials and equipment that help improve the learning environment for students with autism and their entire classrooms" said Sharon Leon, Executive Director for NFAR. "Most teachers are motivated to help their students with autism but lack the additional funding they need to implement simple, but often essential programs in critical areas of learning - such as communication, play, and social skills training."

This year's award winners are from the following school districts: Carlsbad Unified, Chula Vista Elementary, Coronado Unified, Encinitas Union, Lakeside Union, La Mesa-Spring Valley, Murrieta Unified, Poway Unified, San Diego Unified, San Ysidro, South Bay Union and Vista Unified School Districts.

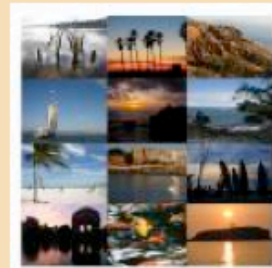
[Click here to view the entire list of San Diego Autism Teachers Grant recipients.](#)

Order Your 2009 Calendar Today!



Start planning ahead with the new 2009 NFAR Calendar, which features beautiful, panoramic photos taken by local photographer Philippe Lesage. The calendar is available for only \$12.50 and all proceeds benefit NFAR.

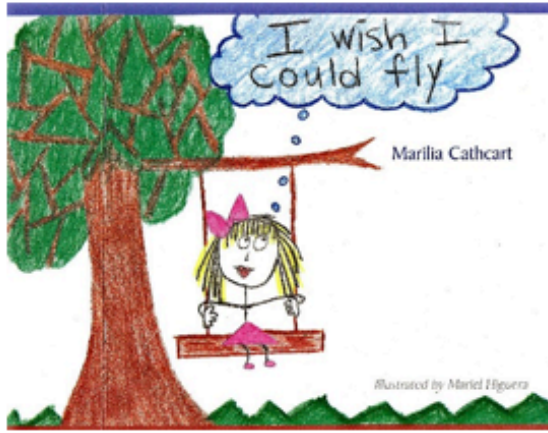
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Next Month - It's in the Mail!



***I Wish I Could Fly* – Local Children’s Author Donates Proceeds of Her Latest Book to NFAR**



One in every 150 children is diagnosed with Autism each year – but it’s not only children who are affected by the disorder. Just ask La Jolla resident Marilia Cathcart, who recently finished writing a children’s book after feeling inspired by her 9

year-old granddaughter Chelsea, who suffers from Asperger’s syndrome. Marilia – who at one time was a teacher – has always read with Chelsea, but would find it difficult to keep her attention. Marilia says this is where her idea to write a children’s book evolved. Her book, titled, “*I Wish I Could Fly*,” is a story told from the point of view of a little girl.

Unfortunately, the journey Marilia endured to get her story onto paper was quite painful and unexpected. In September 2005, Marilia took a fall down a staircase, which resulted in her neck being broken in two places. Complications from being put into a halo lead to injuries, painful surgeries and a long and difficult recovery. Although Marilia has endured a lot, and still cannot properly use the right side of her body, she has found a way to make a difference during her time of misfortune. After careful consideration, Marilia selected NFAR as the autism organization to receive proceeds from the book sales.

Today, Marilia is able to drive and work again as a realtor at Prudential Realty. Her story makes it clear that life will always throw us unexpected curves – it’s how we deal with them that make us who we are. We thank Marilia for her support and are inspired by her strength and courage.

[Order your copy of "I Wish I Could Fly" here!](#)

Be sure to check your mailbox. The annual NFAR newsletter will be coming to mailboxes in November.

Stay in the loop and invite your friends. Provide your mailing address at www.nfar.org



It was a packed house at the recent San Diego Film Festival screening of *Clay Marzo: Just Add Water*.

Visually and emotionally stimulating, the documentary on pro-surfer Clay Marzo showcases his incredible talent, while highlighting the gifts and challenges

associated with living with Asperger’s following his 2007 diagnosis.

Warmly received by the film festival audience, the screening was also attended by Marzo’s grandmother and the director’s parents.

Look for more on *Clay Marzo: Just Add Water* in the upcoming November newsletter.