

## Local Service Initiatives

**Name:** Autism, Oh The Possibilities

**Station:** KVCR-TV/FM

**Contact Person:** Lillian Vasquez

**Contact Information:** [lillian\\_vasquez@kvcr.pbs.org](mailto:lillian_vasquez@kvcr.pbs.org) (909) 384-4331

### **Briefly describe the initiative and be as specific as you can be about the products or services that the initiative includes.**

The KVCR Project is designed to improve focus and awareness of autism (Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)) and early detection. This project includes education regarding early signs and signals that may indicate a need to have a child screened for Autism. The materials designed for distribution included description of the Autistic spectrum; "Learn the Signs" chart printed in English and Spanish; "Social Emotional Growth Chart" (small and large posters); all to help educate and inform Family Practice physicians, Pediatricians, parents and caregivers. The items listed above were distributed to over 700 physicians, 150 Head Start Offices, and 24 California's Regional Center offices. A DVD with information and data to facilitate greater awareness and provide accurate information on early signs and signal was included in the materials produced and distributed. Both KVCR television and radio produced programs and an ongoing Autism Update Report Series for a period of 18 months. Autism has become a flagship project for our stations to aggressively educate and inform the community.

### **How does this initiative fit into your "portfolio" of other Local Service Initiatives? Is it one of many initiatives and projects, or does it take the bulk of your "Local" resources?**

This is one of several new initiatives KVCR has started in the past two years. Autism has become the KVCR flagship project. Autism is being diagnosed as often as one in 166 children, when just ten years ago it was one in 2,500, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It has become a disorder that is appearing in epidemic proportions. California's diagnoses increased by 13% in the past year with the Inland Empire having the highest increase in the state. KVCR has taken the responsibility to use its technology and access to the public to help provide parents, families and caregivers the information and resources to achieve early diagnosis and intervention. Autism now exceeds cancer, diabetes, Spinal Bifida and Down Syndrome as having the highest incidence of childhood disease or condition. This project is seen as a first step in working collaboratively with a television station that might not otherwise be explored.

### **What station assets, competencies and/or relationships does the initiative build upon?**

Based on this project KVCR has taken the initiative to form a "Partnership for Autism" that includes; (1) Information, education, awareness, communication on the issue, to the broad public, leading to action – the role of KVCR in the partnership, (2) Early diagnosis that can fast track access to services – the role of a local Pediatric Neurology Physician group, and (3) Provision of services – the role of a local children's center which works with families and children with developmental disabilities, including Autism. They are now prepared to focus resources on this new community model.

We have developed a three-partner model, which will operate parallel to the existing systems in place. The model will expand the information, education, outreach activity in the communities we serve, leading to earlier and more comprehensive treatment options for these families. The three partners are committed, stimulated by the project and the commitment of KVCR to focus on this, as a program theme, for the next five years.

<b>How would you describe the community benefit of this work? What needs are being addressed?</b>
This project has provided a voice in the community where it was weak and strengthen the educational opportunity for so many more to experience.
<b>Who is the “customer?”</b>
Physicians, parents, educators and caregivers living or working with those diagnosed with autism or appearing on the spectrum.
<b>How do you know or measure if the customer’s needs are being met?</b>
Having received over 250 calls from viewers and listeners desperate for information to help their child, family member or students living with autism, we were able to call each and everyone back to provide them with a packet of information and available services. This clearly displayed the on-going need for more initiatives in this field.
<b>Who benefits from the initiative?</b>
Physicians, parents, educators and caregivers living or working with those diagnosed with autism or appearing on the spectrum.
<b>How do you measure the benefits?</b>
Anecdotal – With positive comments from parents, teachers, grandparents on the dedication of the station and its commitment to provide such “valuable” information.
<b>Describe the financial model for the initiative, being as specific as possible. How much does it cost? What are the sources and amount of revenue? How does it fit into your station’s overall economic model?</b>
KVCR received a grant as seed money to start the project. KVCR was also able to leverage additional funds towards the project. In our on-going efforts KVCR is in the process of designing a 5 year plan
<b>Could other stations use this idea or model? Would it work for any size station or licensee type?</b>
Yes, in fact as part of this project KVCR has produced a directory of PBS stations and a directory of Autism Organizations to try and connect both organizations to work together in their community to correspond the KVCR television program Autism Oh The Possibility documentary that is being offered to all stations.