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MAXIMIZING SUCCESS FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING AND ATTENTION CHALLENGES
In more than three decades of service to students with learning and attention challenges, the SALT Center has seen its number of students grow from three in 1980, to more than 500 per semester today. It has seen its work expand from the basement of a university building to a contemporary three-story structure, equipped with tutoring labs and technology, and it has seen thousands of young men and women.

In 2012, the SALT Center’s milestones continue to grow. Bruce and Patricia Bartlett, parents of former SALT Center student Ben Bartlett, have generously committed $2 million in support of student scholarships, health and wellness services, and program improvements, prompting the SALT Center to honor their generosity by renaming its facility the Patricia A. Bartlett Building.

The SALT Center’s bond with Bruce and Patricia, both former teachers, began as they undertook the college search process for the youngest of their three children, Ben. An immediate connection to the SALT Center and the University of Arizona surfaced during their search.

that I felt could meet my son’s needs — where he could go to a large university and succeed,” said Patricia. “We were really excited about the SALT program.”

As a college freshman, Ben faced challenges that many

“I wanted to take in the whole college experience, but I was not exactly ready for ‘prime time’ college life. I was too busy with other adventures to fully take advantage of the SALT program, and I made all the classic mistakes freshmen and sophomores do to sabotage their success,” said Ben.

“Fortunately my mother, my strategic learning specialist, worthwhile goals. As I started to achieve some academic victories, I found a deepened appreciation for the SALT

Ben graduated from the UA in 2010 with a degree in Regional Development. He is currently working as an IT Manager for Excel in Carlsbad, California.
"The SALT Center is very important to us for personally helping helping so many other students reach their goals," said Patricia.

little extra support, someone to talk to, or some reinforcement meetings between the student and the strategic learning specialist in order to help students with learning strategies workshops, and a computer resource lab updated with the newest

"A lot of students who have various learning disabilities have grown up feeling like no one understood their problems and for usually much harder," said Bruce. "To see a program that not was really amazing for any parent to witness."

The Patricia A. Bartlett Building now stands as a testament to the passion and commitment the Bartlett Family has for the SALT Center program.

"Bruce and Patricia’s generosity will enable the SALT Center to remain innovative in how it facilitates academic success and learning for individuals with challenges," said Dr. Orgera, Assistant Center as the premier program for university level students with learning and attention challenges.

students, like Ben, for years to come.

"If you’re lucky, sometimes in your life something will come along that becomes a passion for you—something that you need to be cannot let it go and it becomes part of your life," said Patricia.

"And SALT has become a part of our life, it really has."

— Ben Bartlett

< Scan this to hear more about the Bartletts’ generous contribution to the SALT Center.>
Within every family, the unique needs of individual children are
recognized. As the parents of two children with varying degrees of learning challenges, Bobbi and Robert McRae Sr. have taken an active role in their children’s education since their kids were young. As daughter Lola, 24, and son Robert, 21, involvement would continue.

In 2006, with oldest daughter Lola on the verge of high school
school, “It was the guidance counselor at Lola’s high school who
said Bobbi.

and observing the multilayered approach to its services and resources, the McRaes were convinced that the University of Arizona was the right fit.

“SALT was an amazing experience, and I’m really grateful to have had that experience,” said Lola.

Having grown up working with tutors, Lola understood the need for support was still there. When the time came, Robert applied to several universities throughout the country, and even

understand her unique learning challenges.

Lola. “They worked with me by doing what I needed.”

A trip to the 2009 SALT Center Family Weekend Awards Night in support of Lola gave younger brother, Robert, a glimpse into the life of a college student. Active in her sorority and leading a busy and full life at college, Lola made an impression on her brother with her blooming social life and academic success.

both inside and outside of academics,” Robert said.

As a visual learner, Lola appreciated the focus that her tutors placed in presenting concepts in ways that she understood best.
McRae observed between other schools and the University of Arizona

“The option to do SALT was a no-brainer,” Bobbi explained.

With Robert beginning his freshman year, and Lola starting her
same school. Brother and sister both believe that their bond became
closer as a result of their shared college experience. Despite their full
schedules, the SALT Center kept them connected.

Robert points out that it was his interaction with his strategic learning
tasks at hand.

“The learning specialist showed me how to be organized,” he said.

Currently a senior studying Public Management and Policy, he believes
that these organizational tools and tips will prove instrumental in the
these tools will help him beyond campus life.

Lola shares a similar sentiment concerning how the SALT Center
has helped.

“I wouldn’t be able to get to where I am today without SALT,” said
Lola, who graduated from the University in 2010 with a degree
in Journalism.

Lola continues to pursue higher education and is currently
studying merchandise marketing at the Fashion Institute
of Design and Merchandising, while working full-time in a
prestigious sales position in Beverly Hills, CA.

have achieved, she is grateful for the SALT Center and how it has
met the varied needs of her son and daughter.

“Education is necessary. SALT made it possible for my kids.”

“I WOULDN’T BE ABLE
TO GET TO WHERE I AM
TODAY WITHOUT SALT.”
The college experience represents the epitome of the physical and emotional separation of parent and child. Son or daughter has reached the eve of adulthood and now faces the towering demands of pursuing a college education. In the case of many SALT Center-bound students, they are leaving a home in which parents advocated for them, in order to ease the stresses of tackling an education with learning challenges.

The SALT Center geared its 2012 orientation season towards allaying the concerns of parents and students who may feel unsure or apprehensive about cutting close ties with one another. What better way for parents and students to symbolically open a new door than with a ribbon cutting?

To mark the change, parents and students gripped silky white ribbons and cut them down the middle. Parents kept one half the point in orientation when parents and students split up for separate programming, and also symbolized the impending split that the two parties would experience come fall, a more emotional observation.

“The ribbon cutting activity was a symbolic and creative way of cutting loose from childhood and looking onward to the future as a young adult,” said Laura Meier, mother of incoming SALT student Sara Meier.

During the informative orientation sessions, both parents and students received valuable information about what the SALT and, most notably, the expectations that parents had for their students and vice versa.
Parents and students also participated in a ribbon-related exercise designed to look forward. During separate sessions, parents and students each chose a word that described how halves and our parents had the others,” said Sara. “When another SALT student and I saw what our parents wrote, they ‘serendipitously’ had the same word.”

Many of the students’ ribbons came back with words such as accomplished, comfortable and prepared, with some parents serendipitously choosing the same word as their students.

“Families are so in-tune with each other,” said Interim Director, Rudy Molina. “Even if they didn’t have the same word it gave the student and parent the opportunity to share their hopes and expectations, hopefully prodding them with the opportunity to get on the same page, perhaps an opportunity they may not have had otherwise.”

were prompted to tie the cut ribbons back together for a symbolic recognition that their relationship would continue to evolve during the transition from high school to college.

“It gave me goose bumps and I thought, ‘this is so cheesy, but mom can you keep your half and I will keep my half when I go to college?’” said Sara. “I have been with her my whole life and now I’m leaving her, I am going across the country. It was nice to have that memento of what we both want to get out of the college experience.”
Each new semester brings constant evolution of discovery of completing a complex math problem with a tip from a tutor,

With the various discoveries that SALT Center students make every single day, it simply whets the appetite for continued learning and growth.

and try to discover," said Daniel Carney, SALT Center alum and 2006 UA grad. Daniel studied ecology and evolutionary biology as a student, graduating with a 4.0 GPA.

based studies, he is now exercising the right side of his brain to

Daniel says that he has been creating marbles and necklaces for "a few years now" alongside his mother, Veta Carney.

"Flame working plays on my familiarity with science and technology and has allowed me to overcome my trepidations growing, allowing me to create larger, more complicated and colorful works of art that could not have been produced 20 years

Daniel’s ability to exceed or keep up with the trend has garnered him features in glass art publications and at marble shows around the country. In January 2012, Daniel and Veta’s art was displayed at the DeGrazia Gallery of the Sun’s Little Gallery in Tucson, chosen from a towering stack of applications.
selected from a wide-ranging pool of candidates,” said Veta, alluding to applications sent in from all over the world.

locals to spectators from other continents.

“There were people from Australia that came in,” said Veta, earrings and necklaces. “We had people from Germany and the Netherlands.”

It is clear why viewers are attracted to the Carneys’ colorfully breathtaking work, as it seems to come alive right before your eyes.

Daniel and Veta have what it takes to create pieces that are casual on-lookers.

to make necklace pieces because people like them.”

“People who want marbles, they want them to be perfect. They are kind of crazy,” Daniel said with a smile. “I remember the

does sell.”

Long before Daniel’s art accolades and his 4.0 semester GPAs, he attended Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, FL. While there, Daniel worked extremely hard to succeed. He attended class, paid attention and studied long hours. Yet, it wasn’t showing up on paper.

“I was getting bad grades and it was like a disconnect, it didn’t make sense to me that I’d try hard and no matter how hard I

his academic approach — the SALT Center. The Carney family discovered the SALT Center as a place where Daniel could practice alternative learning techniques. What Daniel soon and utilizing SALT services, was that he could excel by simply discussing the material with another person.

“We heard the SALT program was one of the top programs for helping students with learning disabilities,” said Daniel. “I would learn all of the material on my own, and I would go through it would be so much more comfortable on the tests because I was able to express it to another person. That was better than having able to talk to about it.”

With a college degree in his back-pocket and a blow torch in his hand, Daniel continues to discover new ideas every day, and they don’t go unnoticed.

something in common,” said Veta. “You know, most parents, it’s like, raise your kids, get them out of the house and they come home at Christmas. We talk every day.”

really has a talent.”
over the last several years to further enhance its services and increase students’ academic success. Over the past year, the research has focused on investigating and ultimately improving how SALT Center students approach reading. The current research team includes both graduate assistants and qualitative studies.

Reading requirements in college can be intimidating for anyone. For students with learning challenges, reading can be even more daunting due to the quantity and intensity of required reading compared to high school. Experts put some college courses at 600 to 750 pages of reading each semester (Taraban, Rynearson, & Kerr, 2000).

Sophisticated and require a higher level of reading comprehension skills. High school textbooks are constructed to facilitate a reader’s attempts to learn while those in college comprehend the dense information (Alexander & Jetton, 2000).

Successful reading comprehension does not occur automatically; it requires purposeful, intentional, or willfully invoked strategies (Taraban, Kerr, & Rynearson, 2004). The SALT Center’s strategic learning specialists work with students on annotating text, taking notes and drawing diagrams as reading strategies.

Research is important to conduct within the walls of the SALT Center because there is very little information about college students with learning and attention challenges at the university level. It is critical that a deeper understanding of students with learning and attention challenges is gained in order to continually improve the interventions and strategies for the SALT Center population.

The SALT Center set out to identify learning outcomes of college students with learning disabilities, and in that process a survey was designed, with one question regarding reading strategies, among other learning strategy questions. All incoming SALT Center students have had the opportunity to complete the survey since 2009. Between 2009-2011, 591 students have completed the survey.

The preliminary analysis, for 2011 responses, has focused on the response to the following prompt: You are reading your science textbook. When you get to the bottom of the page, you realize you don’t understand what you’ve read. Please identify and describe the strategy(ies) you would use to enhance your reading comprehension.

The research team reviewed all 180 responses to the 2011 reading strategy question, coding for themes. It is critical that the responses are not interpreted, but rather merely separated into categories (Corbin and Strauss, 2007). The data yielded two core themes thus far – “rereading” and “asking for help.” Under these two core themes are branches of “sub-themes” such as read aloud and highlighting, in relation to “rereading,” and asking professors, tutors and friends, in relation to “asking for help.”

The majority (63%) of students said they would reread that they would use when they did not understand the reading; among others, even if they did not directly label it as a strategy. Responses also included going to outside resources for support (7%) and asking for help (29%).

With outside research pointing to reading as one of the most important academic skills, the SALT Center research team has hypothesized based on its preliminary analysis that reading strategy instruction is critical for SALT Center students’ success. As the research on this topic continues, this study will help academic success and retention of SALT Center students.

REFERENCES
of the SALT Center; “...is help students understand the university system. Research suggests that before students can even

a recent article in About Campus by Galilee-Belfer (2012). By facilitating this learning process and by having open discussions with students, the SALT Center provides students with the opportunity to discuss their interests, passions, challenges and

For instance, based on a recent review of graduates who were enrolled at the SALT Center, Interdisciplinary Studies was listed opportunity for any UA student to create a personalized plan of

reason why many students at the UA and SALT Center choose

who participate in the SALT Center also graduate with degrees in biology, creative writing, engineering, business, and architecture, to name a few.

REFERENCES:
The SALT Center has a strategic goal of creating more access for all students with learning. We understand that economic challenges directly impact parents and families of our applicants and enrolled students. In addition, the rising costs of a college education through tuition increases and program fees associated with the SALT Center make it a necessity for us to provide scholarships for.

We are fortunate to have a large network of parents, alumni, and friends that make consistent and opens the door of opportunity for deserving students. This current academic year the SALT Center awarded over 50 student scholarships thanks to the generosity of our supporters.

Separate from the $2 million commitment from Bruce and Patricia Bartlett, the SALT Center’s student scholarship awards. The SALT Center and graduation events, end of year appeal, and membership in our Director’s Circle, which is a leadership group dedicated to enhancing the mission of the department.

If you would like to learn more about the many creative ways to include the SALT Center within your philanthropy, please contact:

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