

Meet The Neighbor 89148

The Peck's

By Callie Thomas

While the desire for change has resonated throughout our country and community for some time, most of us feel that it is a somewhat daunting, if not impossible idea that one person can illicit change amongst a sea of millions. This is not the case with 89148 resident Jerry *and Shelly* Peck.

They have done what most think unimaginable. *Jerry and Shelly*, along with the support of *their family*, started a 100% non-profit organization called F.A.S.T. (Finding Autistic Solutions for Tomorrow.) They have organized several events that, in just a few short months, have our city's businesses providing their time and products to raise funds so that autistic *children* have a *choice when it comes to* continuing their education. "My parents brought me up to go out and work hard to get what I wanted," says *Jerry*. "Forming F.A.S.T. is a labor of love and every kid deserves a chance at a good education."

They have lived in Las Vegas nearly twenty years *and with the help of Jerry's family being in the construction market, Jerry and Shelly* have formed a rental and sales company called Nevada Scaffold *that has been in business for nearly 10 years*. *They* continue to work hard at maintaining the business, but *have* also taken on the responsibilities of F.A.S.T. which began as a personal quest to find the right educational facility for their 11 year old son Jason. Diagnosed with a form of autism at the age of *Four*, the family found little to no resources that cater to the educational needs of autistic children in or approaching their teens. "At the time when Jason was diagnosed, autism was like a bad word, but we were able to get him into early educational programs that have really helped. When we were faced with trying to figure out which Nevada school to put him in as he approached middle school, we found there were very little viable choices." *Jerry and Shelly* learned that the New Horizons Academy, *a school that offers Autism Programs* and the second oldest educational facility in the city, began integrating education programs *that are geared toward special needs and* autistic children. The Peck's enrolled their son Jason into the private school, but realized that there were so many others that were not able to afford the tuition. "There are *several* kids on a waiting list to get into the school right now and there just aren't the programs in the public schools to help families once their children reach this age. We thought we were going to have to start a school ourselves which could take years to accomplish or form an organization that would provide scholarship funds to help kids get into the school."

Jerry was told by many that it would be impossible to create and maintain a non-profit with absolutely no overhead, no money and virtually no experience in this area, but he's already proved the naysayers wrong. "Every service or product has been donated to our efforts. When we need postage or other supplies, I've been able to get help from friends, family and local businesses and the response has been overwhelming," says Peck.

Jerry and Shelly *feel* fortunate that he is able to operate not only a successful business but also help people in the community. "It is really rewarding to know that what you are doing is benefiting others. I firmly believe that you can accomplish anything if you work hard enough." For additional information on F.A.S.T., visit www.Fast4Kids.org.