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## Animated Speech raises angel round to help teach autistic students

San Francisco Business Times - January 19, 2007 by [Mark Calvey](#)

San Francisco-based Animated Speech Corp. said Friday that it raised an angel round of \$250,000 from members of the Keiretsu Forum, Sierra Angels and Vegas Valley Angels.

The company, among the first angel-backed businesses addressing problems related to autism, creates software-based language-learning tools for children with speech and language impairments.

The company will use the money to expand production to meet the needs of this niche market that seeks to improve the pace of learning among special education students and adults learning a foreign language.

Former Massachusetts Gov. Jane Swift recently joined the company's board after being introduced to the company's founders when they were meeting with Boston financiers.

"The need for tools for the special needs population is significant," Swift said. "I am very impressed with the passion of the company's founders."

The foundation of the business is a proprietary software that creates a state-of-the-art facial animation engine and an animated tutor that mirrors what a real teacher does by providing guidance, encouragement and feedback.

Dan Feshbach is chairman and co-founder of Animated Speech. His interest in Animated Speech stems from his experience with his autistic son. Feshbach also is one of four founders of the Oak Hill School in Marin City for children with severe learning disabilities.

Almost 20 years ago, Feshbach founded San Francisco-based LoanPerformance Inc., a financial technology and predictive modeling business with a client base of more than 100 of the largest financial institutions in the mortgage business. Feshbach continues to serve as president and CEO of LoanPerformance, which was acquired by First American Corp. (NYSE: FAF) in April 2005.

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