



TAKING CHARGE

Making Self-Determination Work for Us

**Statewide Conference on the
Self-Determination Program**

November 15-16, 2019

DoubleTree by Hilton
Los Angeles Westside

This conference has been organized by the two organizations who wrote, fought for the passage of, and continue to actively work toward the effective implementation of California's Self-Determination Law:



A statewide organization directed by and for individuals with developmental disabilities of all ages and their families. We advocate for choice and control over our lives, meaningful outcomes that matter to us, and systems that are equitable and accountable to us.

disabilityvoicesunited.org | 530-JOIN-DVU

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To improve the lives of all affected by autism in Los Angeles County by empowering individuals with autism, their families, and professionals through advocacy, education, support, and community collaboration.

AutismLA.org | 424-299-1531

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Resources on the Self-Determination Program and person-centered planning from DVU and ASLA

The Self-Determination Interchange Website

This website offers comprehensive information in English and Spanish about the Self-Determination Program. The Self-Determination Forum provides the opportunity to ask questions, provide comments, and exchange ideas with others around the state.

theinterchange.org

Profiles in Self-Determination: Inspiration for a Full Life

A guide for participants, families, and professionals that profiles ten children and adults who imagine their lives under the Self-Determination Program. It also tells the stories of participants in the pilot project and how self-determination has enhanced their lives.

Purchase at the Disability Voices United table in the foyer.

Thinking Outside of the Box: Information and Resources on California's New Self-Determination Program.

An essential manual featuring critical information on how to move forward, including the text of the Self-Determination Law, information from DDS, plain language explanations of the planning process, and lessons learned from the pilot.

Purchase at the Conference Merchandise Table.



Welcome!

On behalf of Disability Voices United and the Autism Society of Los Angeles, we want to welcome you to the Taking Charge: Making Self-Determination Work for Us conference. We anticipate an exciting, informative, and challenging two days, and we are thrilled that all of you could join us.

It has been six years since the passage of the self-determination law. We have had two previous self-determination conferences and we couldn't have imagined it would take this long to implement. But the day is finally here where individuals are entering the Self-Determination Program and benefiting from having choice and control over their lives.

During the conference we will learn together. But the learning will be a great mix of information, immersion, and fun! This conference features over 100 presenters – more than one-quarter are self-advocates and over half are family members! We will host a live musical about self-determination performed by an inclusive theater group followed by a fantastic silent disco party to celebrate the start of the Self-Determination Program! We hope that all of the self-determination participants and their families walk out ready to take charge of their services and lives in the Self-Determination Program.

We want to thank the many speakers, volunteers, board members, and staff who have helped to make this conference such a success. We also want to thank our sponsors, listed on the back cover, who allowed us to provide scholarships to self-advocates and family members who otherwise would have been unable to attend. And we are very grateful to those regional centers that funded their clients and family members for this conference.

Thank you for coming to the Taking Charge conference and embracing a future for individuals with developmental disabilities filled with freedom, choice, and opportunity. Enjoy the conference!

Judy Mark

President
Disability Voices United

Kim Sinclair

Executive Director
Autism Society of Los Angeles

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Friday, November 15, 2019



8:00 am **Registration & Continental Breakfast** **Foyer & Manhattan Beach Room**

All Day **Networking Expo** **Foyer**

Meet individuals and organizations that can assist you with the Self-Determination Program, such as Financial Management Services, Independent Facilitators, service providers, advocates, and others.

All Day **Scavenger Hunt** **Foyer**

Join in and meet others at the conference who can help you with the Self-Determination Program and win a prize!

9:00 am **Opening Session** **Pacifica Ballroom**

Welcome

Judy Mark, President, Disability Voices United
Kim Sinclair, Executive Director, Autism Society of Los Angeles

Award Presentation

Senator Bill Emmerson, Lead Author of Self-Determination Law
Presented by Connie and Harvey Lapin, Parents and Advocates

Opening Remarks

Nancy Bargmann, Director, California Department of Developmental Services

Panel: Just the Facts: How the Self-Determination Program Really Works

Knowledgeable self-advocates, family members, and leaders from DDS, regional centers, and national self-determination organizations will provide accurate information and answer all of your questions about the Self-Determination Program

- Catherine Blakemore, Executive Director, Disability Rights California
- Liz Harrell, Training and Special Programs, Department of Developmental Services
- Tim Jin, Self-Advocate, Board Member, Disability Voices United
- Mollie Murphy, Family Member, Principal, Applied Self-Direction
- Amy Westling, Executive Director, Association of Regional Center Agencies
- Rick Wood, Parent of Pilot Participant, Disability Voices United Board
- Moderated by Judy Mark, Parent, President, Disability Voices United

11:15 am

Break

11:30 am

**Breakout Sessions:
Experience the Principles of Self-Determination**

Freedom

The freedom to exercise the same rights as all citizens: to establish, with freely chosen supporters, family and friends, where they want to live, with whom they want to live, how their time will be occupied, and who supports them.

- 1. Witness a Live Person-Centered Plan (English)** for Justice Killebrew, age 13, with his family and circle of support, conducted by Dr. Sally Burton-Hoyle, Eastern Michigan University
- 2. Witness a Live Person-Centered Plan (Spanish)** for Dayra Funes, age 12, with her family and circle of support, conducted by Sofia Cervantes, Advocate, State Council on Developmental Disabilities, and Kelly Kulzer-Reyes, Parent, Disability Voices United Board
- 3. Presentation of Completed Person-Centered Plans** by Howard McBroom (adult) and Hunter (teenager), both facilitated by Sonni Charness, Founder, Guidelight Group & Independent Facilitator
- 4. Presentation of Completed Person-Centered Plan** by Tina Ewing (adult), Self-Determination Pilot Participant/Advocate facilitated by Doug Pascover, Executive Director, Imagine SLS
- 5. Interactive Person-Centered Plan Simulation**, This hands-on active learning session will walk you through the PCP process while participants work collectively and expand their circles of support. Featuring Atticus Baldwin, Mackenzie Bath, Ryan Berman, Allen Erenbaum, Zoey Giesberg, Stephen Hinkle, Megan Mendes, Gabriella Ohmstede, and David Wyles.

**Catalina
Room
(1st floor)**

**Playa Vista
Room**

**Marina
Room**

**Redondo
Room**

**Pacifica
Ballroom**

12:45 pm

Buffet Lunch

**Served in Manhattan Beach & Playa Vista and Hermosa Hallways
Seating in the Pacifica Ballroom and on Outdoor Terrace**

Lunch networking options:

- Self-Advocates
- Families of Younger Children
- Families of Transition Youth
- Families of Older Adults

1:45 pm

Breakout Sessions: Experience the Principles of Self-Determination

Authority

The ability to control a certain sum of dollars in order to purchase services and supports of their choosing.

1. Adding It All Up: Creating a Spending Plan

Hear from Financial Management Services and Independent Facilitators who will walk you through the process

- Sonni Charness, Founder, Guidelight Group & Independent Facilitator
- Tim Jin, Self-Advocate, Board Member, Disability Voices United
- Rob Lewis, National Director of Business Development, GT Independence
- Christine Sheppard, Financial Management Services Director, Community Interface Services
- Rick Wood, Parent of Pilot Participant, Disability Voices United Board
- Moderated by Linda Chan Rapp, Harbor RC Local Advisory Committee

**Playa Vista
Room**

2. Unmet Need and Change in Circumstances: Changing Your Individual Budget Amount

Learn how you can advocate for a change in your individual budget

- Sofia Cervantes, Advocate, State Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Fernando Gomez, Parent Advocate, Disability Voices United Board, Integrated Community Collaborative
- Ibrahim "Bebo" Saab, OCRA Outreach Supervising Attorney, Disability Rights California
- Melinda Sullivan, Executive Director, Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center
- Moderated by Carolyn Tellalian, LCSW, Parent, Board Member, Disability Voices United

**Catalina
Room
(1st floor)**

3. The Budget Tool: What Is It and How Do We Use It?

Regional centers will use a budget calculator to help figure out your individual budget amount. Speakers will be experts on the tool and will walk you through it so that everyone can understand it

- Liz Harrell, Training and Special Programs, DDS
- Gabriella Ohmstede, Family member, Regional Manager & Self-Determination Project Manager, San Diego Regional Center
- Moderated by Connie Lapin, Parent, Disability Voices United Board

**Marina
Room**

4. Creating a Spending Plan and Changing Your Budget en Español

Redondo Room

This Spanish-language session will cover how to create a spending plan, how to change your individual budget, and how to use the budget tool.

- Patricia Adams, Financial Management Services Supervisor, Community Interface Services
- Cesar F. Garcia, Director of Client Services, Westside Regional Center
- Elizabeth Gomez, Parent, Director, Integrated Community Collaborative
- Kelly Kulzer-Reyes, Parent, Board Member, Disability Voices United
- Alma Morales, Director of Client Relations, Premier Healthcare Services
- Moderated by Dora Contreras, Family Member, Retired School Administrator, Integrated Community Collaborative

5. You Can Do It! A Plain Language Explanation of the Individual Budget and Spending Plan

Pacifica C/D

Does all this seem really hard to understand? This session will help you and answer all of your questions

- Richard Dier, Parent, Care Manager, Disability Management Resources, Inc
- Victor Lira, Senior Vice President, Premier Healthcare (Aveanna)
- Maria Marquez, Self-Advocate, Interim Chair, State Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Doug Pascover, Imagine Supported Living Services, Pilot Independent Facilitator
- Willie West, Self-Advocate, Pilot Participant, Redwood Coast Regional Center
- Moderated by Deaka McClain, BA, MPA, Self-Advocate, DDS CAC Chair, Disability Rights California Board

3:15 pm

Break and Networking Expo

Cookies served in Manhattan Beach Room & Playa Vista and Hermosa Hallways

3:30 pm

Breakout Sessions: Experience the Principles of Self-Determination

Support

Ability to arrange resources and personnel, both formal and informal, that will assist a person with a disability to live a life in his or her community that is rich in community participation and contributions.

1. Game Show: Can You Do That in Self-Determination?

Learn together about whether the SDP can fund different services in a fun way. If the SDP can't fund it, brainstorm on where else it can be funded.

Game Show Host: Andrew Hain, Self-Advocate

Panel of Experts:

- Liz Harrell, Training and Special Programs, DDS
- Megan Mendes, HCBS Transition and Employment Manager, Westside Regional Center
- Christine Sheppard, Financial Management Services Director, Community Interface Services

**Culver Club
(1st floor)**

2. Everyone Can Make Choices: Making the SDP Work for Participants Who Are Non- or Minimally Speaking

Hear from non-speaking individuals, family members, and experts about how to ensure everyone gets to authentically participate in the Self-Determination Program.

- Tami Barmache, Parent, Community Advocate
- Dr. Sally Burton-Hoyle, Family Member, Eastern Michigan University
- Darlene Hanson, Director of Communication Services, REACH Services
- Sheila Keys, Community Resource Manager, Redwood Coast Regional Center
- Gabriela Valner, Self-Advocate
- Moderated by Diana Pastora Carson, Sibling, Author and Educator, Disability Voices United Board

**Catalina
Room
(1st floor)**

3. I'm the Boss: Hiring and Managing Your Workers and Service Providers

Get tips for managing your staff from expert self-advocates and others, and learn how to get help to do it. This session will include role plays to practice managing workers and advice on how to set boundaries.

- Tim Jin, Self-Advocate, Board Member, Disability Voices United
- Scott Shepard, Avenues Supported Living Services
- Carolyn Tellalian, LCSW, Parent, Board Member, Disability Voices United
- Willie West, Self-Determination Pilot Participant, Redwood Coast Regional Center
- Moderated by Kim Ransom, Director, Special Education, Centinela Valley Union HSD, Autism Society of Los Angeles Board

**Playa Vista
Room**

4. Building Trust: Cultural Issues with Hiring Workers en Español

Not everyone is comfortable hiring non-family members to take care of them or their loved ones. This discussion will talk honestly about how the SDP can help support all participants

- Sandra I. Aldana, PhD, MPH, Self-Advocate, Educational and Social Services Consultant
- Roxie Fernandez, Parent of SDP participant
- Fernando Gomez, Parent Advocate, Disability Voices United Board, Integrated Community Collaborative
- Alma Morales, Director of Client Relations, Premier Healthcare Services
- Moderated by Rubi Saldana, Parent, Integrated Community Collaborative

**Redondo
Room**

5. Which Model Is Right for Me? The FMS that Will Support Me Best

Find out about the different models of FMS and which one fits your life

- Harvey Lapin, Parent, Co-Founder, Disability Voices United
- Rob Lewis, National Director of Business Development, GT Independence
- Victor Lira, Senior Vice President, Premier Healthcare (Aveanna)
- Mollie Murphy, Family Member, Principal, Applied Self-Direction
- Nicole Patterson, Self-Advocate, Coordinator of Advocacy Services, Department of Developmental Services
- Moderated by Nina Spiegelman, Program Director, Disability Voices United

Marina Room

5:00 pm

Reception and Celebration

Cash Bar

Outdoor Terrace

5:45 pm

Sponsor Presentations

GT Independence, Newman Aaronson and Vanaman Law, and Premier Healthcare (Aveanna)

Pacifica Ballroom

6:00 pm

Performance of *Identity: The Musical*

A musical about self-determination featuring music and rap written by the participants of The Miracle Project, an inclusive theater program for individuals of all abilities

Pacifica Ballroom

7:30 pm

Silent Disco!

Have a blast and be self-determined at this dance party where everyone will use headsets and listen to different channels of music selected by self-advocate "DJs," Kalea Dorow, Justice Killebrew, and Danny Wolf.

Pacifica Ballroom

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Saturday, November 16, 2019



8:00 am **Registration & Continental Breakfast** **Foyer & Manhattan Beach Room**

All Day **Self-Advocate Micro-Enterprise Fair** **Pacifica Ballroom C/D**

Self-advocates will promote their small businesses and conference attendees will have the opportunity to purchase products, such as books, baked goods, jewelry, art, and other goods and services

All Day **Networking Expo** **Foyer**

Meet individuals and organizations that can assist you with the Self-Determination Program, such as Financial Management Services, Independent Facilitators, service providers, advocates, and others.

All Day **Scavenger Hunt** **Foyer**

Join in and meet others at the conference who can help you with the Self-Determination Program and win a prize!

9:00 am **Breakout Sessions:**
Experience the Principles of Self-Determination

Responsibility

This includes the ability of participants to take responsibility for decisions in their own lives and to be accountable for the use of public dollars, and to accept a valued role in their community through, for example, competitive employment, organizational affiliations, spiritual development, and general caring of others in their community. participation and contributions.

1. Moving Forward: Self-Determination Assisting with Transitions

Explore how the SDP can assist with transitions out of school and into adulthood, out of developmental centers and congregate settings, and into life as an older adult

- Killian Hynes, Self-Advocate, College-Bound Student
- Sheila Keys, Community Resource Manager, Redwood Coast Regional Center
- Connie Lapin, Parent, Disability Voices United Board
- Will Sanford, Consultant, SC&CS
- Moderated by Katie Hornberger, Director, Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy, Disability Rights California

Playa Vista Room

2. Getting to Work: How Self-Determination Can Lead to Employment and Micro-Enterprises

**Culver Club
(1st floor)**

Learn about how the SDP can help find unique employment opportunities or help you start a business

- Sandra I. Aldana, PhD, MPH, Self-Advocate, Educational and Social Services Consultant
- Tony Anderson, Executive Director, Valley Mountain Regional Center
- Stephen Hinkle, Self-Advocate, PhD Student, Chapman University
- Amy Ostrowski, M.Ed, Sibling, Diversity and Inclusion Consultant, Strategic Employment Solutions: Mobilizing an ABLE Workforce
- Moderated by Carolyn Tellalian, LCSW, Parent, Board Member, Disability Voices United

3. Making the World a Better Place: Volunteerism, Worship, Voting, and Community Participation

**Marina
Room**

This session will feature self-determination participants and family members who understand the importance of using the SDP to become full community members and enjoy a full life

- Diana Pastora Carson, Sibling, Author and Educator, Disability Voices United Board
- Howard McBroom, Self-Advocate, Easter Seals Advocate
- Kishan Sreedhar, Family Member, PRAGNYA
- Mulugeta Tadele, Parent, Ethiopian Parents of Special Needs Children Support Group
- Moderated by Michelle Wolf, Parent, JLA Special Needs Trust

4. All Together Now! The Rules Requiring Integration in the Self-Determination Program

**Pacifica
Ballroom B**

The SDP requires that all services allow full access to the community. Find out what this means and how the SDP can facilitate inclusion from experts and self-advocates

- Jim Knight, Deputy Director, Department of Developmental Services
- Kelly Kulzer-Reyes, Parent, Disability Voices United Board
- Gabriella Ohmstede, Family member, Regional Manager & Self-Determination Project Manager, San Diego Regional Center
- Lori Shepard, Director of Operations, Avenues Supported Living Services
- Diana Ugalde, Self-Advocate, Local Advisory Committee, South Central LA Regional Center
- Moderated by Kendra Oliver, LCSW, Director of Supported Living Services, Institute for Applied Behavior Analysis

5. Supported Decision-Making, For parents of teenagers or young adults who are not conserved

**Redondo
Room**

This session is limited to 15 parents who will participate in a focus group on supported decision-making. Parents will receive a gift card for their participation. Advance registration required

10:30 am

**Preparing for the Self-Determination Program:
Self-Determination Stations**

**Pacifica
Ballroom A**

Get a "passport" stamped at each station as you learn techniques to be active and healthy citizens, manage workers, and make sure staff understand how you want to be supported. The stations include:

- **One-Page Profiles**
Joshua Erenmark, Self-Advocate
& Lori Shepard, Director of Operations, Avenue SLS
- **Supported Decision-Making**
Suzanne Bennett Francisco, Parent, President/CEO, Exceptional Rights Advocacy
- **Communication Dictionary**
Danny Heldoorn, Self-Advocate, Avenues SLS
& Scott Shepard, Avenues SLS
- **My Expectations for My Support Staff**
Melanie Miles, Self-Advocate, Melanie's Arts and Crafts
& Maria Garcia, Instructional Coach, Avenues Supported Living Services
- **Circles of Support**
David Oster, Self-Advocate, Former Board Member, DRC
& Ronda Kopito, Resource Specialist, Autism Society of LA
- **Voter Registration and Civic Participation**
Zoey Giesberg, MSW, Self-Advocate, Community Outreach Associate, Family Adult and Child Therapies & Deaka McClain, BA, MPA, Self-Advocate, DDS CAC Chair, Disability Rights California Board
- **Creating Healthy Menus**
Madeline Wolf, Parent, Nutritionist, Wolf Nutrition
- **Keep Moving and Staying Healthy**
Brian Tucker, Personal Trainer, Cali-Florida Fitness
- **Video Modeling**
Dr. Sally Burton-Hoyle, Eastern Michigan University
- **Supportive Technology**
Ann Bui, Sibling, California Foundation for Independent Living
& Tim Jin, Self-Advocate, Disability Voices United Board

10:30 am

**Supported Decision-Making Session En Español, for parents
of teenagers or young adults who are not conserved**

**Redondo
Room**

This session is limited to 15 parents (native Spanish speakers only) who will participate in a focus group on supported decision-making. Parents will receive a gift card for their participation. Advance registration required.

10:30 am

Networking Sessions

1. Regional Center Self-Determination Local Advisory Committees
2. Independent Facilitators and Service Coordinators
3. Self-Advocates

**Playa Vista
Marina Room
Pacifica
Ballroom A**

**12:00
noon**

Buffet Lunch

**Served in Manhattan Beach Room & Playa Vista and Hermosa Hallways
Seating in the Pacifica Ballroom and on Outdoor Terrace**

1:00 pm

Breakout Sessions: Experience the Principles of Self-Determination

Confirmation

This includes the critical role of participants and their families in making decisions in their own lives and designing and operating the system on which they rely.

1. It's About Us: Models of Self-Advocate Leadership

Amazing self-advocate leaders will present how they are leading others and contributing to making their own lives and others' better

- Dillan Barmache, Self-Advocate, College Student, Typing4Change
- Stephen Hinkle, Self-Advocate, PhD Student, Chapman University
- Nicole Patterson, Self-Advocate, Coordinator of Advocacy Services, Department of Developmental Services
- Eden Rapp, Self-Advocate, UpVoice leader, Disability Voices United Board
- Nikita Wang, Self-Advocate, College Student, President, Self Advocate Board LA County
- Moderated by Mari-Anne Kehler, Parent, Vice President, Autism Society of Los Angeles

**Culver Club
(1st Floor)**

2. Reducing the Risk of Abuse and Ensuring Safety in the SDP

Experts on reducing the risk abuse of people with developmental disabilities will present the measures that can be put in place to protect participants in the SDP

- Dr. Nora J. Baladerian, Licensed Psychologist, Exec. Dir., Disability and Abuse Project of Spectrum Institute & Counseling Center of West LA
- Louise T. MacKenzie, PhD, Parent of Pilot Participant, Educator, Advocate, Co-Chair, Tri-Counties RC Advisory Committee
- Alison D. Morantz, Parent, Director, Stanford I/DD Law and Policy Project
- Julie Neward, Sibling, President/Co-Founder, The California Sibling Leadership Network
- Moderated by Elizabeth Espinosa, Sibling, Director of Communications, LA Sheriff's Dept

**Playa Vista
Room**

3. Can the SDP Help to Reduce Racial, Ethnic, and Geographic Disparities? (With Spanish interpretation)

Since individual budgets are based on previous expenses and people of color experience significant disparities in the amount of services received, how can we ensure that these disparities are not perpetuated in the SDP?

- Brian Capra, Senior Staff Attorney, Public Counsel
- Elizabeth Gomez, Parent, Director, Integrated Community Collaborative
- Betty Grimble, Parent, Westside Regional Center Board, John's Journey
- Cathay Liu, Parent, Independent Facilitator, Chinese Parents Association for Disabled
- Maia Pawooskar, Parent, LEND Fellow, CHLA
- Minerva Valdez, District Manager for Transition Age Youth, San Andreas Regional Center
- Moderated by Rosie Lasca, Parent, Director, Parent Empowerment Project, Autism Society of Los Angeles

**Pacifica
Ballroom B**

4. Your Local Resource: The Self-Determination Local Advisory Committees

The ultimate part of the Confirmation principle is that self-advocates, with support from families, design and operate the system on which they rely, and that means the local advisory committees at every regional center. Hear from the members of some of these committees about their oversight role.

- Tim Jin, Self-Advocate, Board Member, Disability Voices United
- Mariela Ramirez, Parent, Chair, Valley Mountain Regional Center Local Advisory Committee
- Michelle Smith, Parent; Independent Facilitator; Chair, Central Valley Regional Center Local Advisory Committee
- Kavita Sreedhar, San Andreas Regional Center Local Advisory Committee
- Rick Wood, Parent of Pilot Participant, Disability Voices United Board
- Moderated by Liz Harrell, Training and Special Programs, DDS

Redondo Room

5. Rethinking Conservatorship in the Context of Self-Determination: Supported Decision-Making in the SDP

Conservatorship and self-determination can sometimes contradict one another, as the person's choices should be paramount. Learn about an alternative to conservatorship called Supported Decision-Making and how you can make it work.

- Suzanne Bennett Francisco, Parent, President/CEO, Exceptional Rights Advocacy
- Ann Bui, Sibling; Program Director, California Foundation for Independent Living Centers
- Ryan Easterly, Self-Advocate, Executive Director, WITH Foundation
- Joshua Erenmark, Self-Advocate who uses supported decision-making
- Dohn Hoyle, Director of Public Policy, Arc of Michigan
- Clarissa Kripke, MD FAAFP, Parent, Clinical Professor Family and Community Medicine, Office of Developmental Primary Care, UCSF
- Moderated by Allen Erenbaum, Parent, Disability Voices United

Marina Room

2:30 pm

Break and Networking Expo

Cookies served in Manhattan Beach Room & Playa Vista and Hermosa Hallways

2:40 pm

Making Sure Self-Determination Is Working: Oversight and Evaluation

The final panel includes individuals who are leaders in legislative and statewide organizations responsible for oversight and evaluation of the Self-Determination Program

- Aaron Carruthers, Executive Director, State Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Jim Knight, Deputy Director, Department of Developmental Services
- Alison D. Morantz, Parent, Director, Stanford I/DD Law and Policy Project
- Joseph F. Parra, Policy Consultant, Senate Republican Policy Office
- Sonja Petek, Senior Fiscal and Policy Analyst, Legislative Analyst's Office
- Amy Westling, Executive Director, Association of Regional Center Agencies
- Moderated by Judy Mark, Parent, President, Disability Voices United

Pacifica Ballroom A/B

4:00 pm

Conference Ends

Speakers



Listed in Alphabetical Order

Patricia Adams

Financial Management Services Supervisor,
Community Interface Services

Patty has been a vital part of the Financial Management Services team at Community Interface Services since 2014. Her previous work experience was in accounting and finance in the for-profit sector. As the Financial Management Services Supervisor, Patty works closely with the accounting and payroll departments, and oversees all of the financial management programs including Self-Determination. She is fluent in English and Spanish and adept at working through all aspects of Financial Management Services with participants and families.

Sandra I. Aldana, PhD, MPH

Self-Advocate & Family Member
Educational and Social Services Consultant

Sandra Aldana has been a self-employed educational consultant since 2013. She worked for 20 years in nonprofits addressing developmental and acquired disabilities. She has also worked on temporary projects with the World Health Organization and the Ventura County Department of Public Health. She has taught in K-12 General and Special Ed as well as at Cal State Northridge, the University of Kansas, and UCSB. She is a member of the AERA, IASSIDD, CABA, and APHA. She earned a Doctor of Philosophy in Education from UCSB and a Master of Public Health from Cal State Northridge.

Tony Anderson

Executive Director, Valley Mountain Regional Center

Tony Anderson is the Executive Director of Valley Mountain Regional Center. His career began in 1987 as a direct support professional in education, IHSS, and regional center funded services. He was a case manager and resource developer at North Bay Regional Center, a service provider Executive Director, appointed deputy director in state government at SCDD, and association Executive Director for The Arc California. For 13 years of his career he was a registered lobbyist involved in every public policy impacting people with developmental disabilities in California and he served on numerous state and national boards and commissions concerning people with disabilities.

Dr. Nora J. Baladerian

Licensed Psychologist, Executive Director,
Disability and Abuse Project of Spectrum
Institute + Counseling Center of West L.A.

Dr. Baladerian, a bilingual licensed psychologist, treats trauma victims with I/DD. She also trains law enforcement & other responders, as well as people with I/DD & their families. She has authored a guidebook for sexual assault survivors with I/DD & developed a successful method to reduce the risk & impact of abuse.

Nancy Bargmann

Director, California Department of
Developmental Services (DDS)

Nancy Bargmann was appointed Director of the California Department of Developmental Services (DDS) on March 4, 2016, by Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. DDS, in conjunction with the 21 private nonprofit regional centers located throughout the state, provides services to more than 340,000 Californians with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Director Bargmann has extensive experience in the developmental services field, including for the state and private, non-profit and corporate sectors. From 2012 to 2015, she served as deputy director of the Community Services Division at DDS where she developed policy and oversaw regional center operations and services.

Dillan Barmache

Self-Advocate, College Student, Typing4Change

Dillan studies psychology at California Lutheran University and is in his second year. He communicates his thoughts and ideas by pointing to letters on a letterboard, which allows him to access the full potential of his academic, social, and personal life. Dillan is an avid runner, and runs with the CLU cross country team. He is a contributing author to two recently-published books, and shares his experiences on his blog, Typing4Change, hoping to shift perspectives of how non-speaking autistic individuals are seen and educated.

Tami Barmache

Parent, Community Advocate

Tami's son, Dillan, is a young man who communicates his thoughts and ideas by pointing to letters on a letterboard. She has facilitated a mothers' support group for the past nine years. She is passionate about connecting with families and professionals to find ways to shift the current foundational belief systems in place with regards to non-speaking and unreliably speaking autistic individuals. Tami works to support the message that every autistic person has the right to lead an autonomous and self-determined life, and should be presumed to have the capacity to learn and communicate effectively given the opportunity and proper supports.

Catherine Blakemore

Executive Director, Disability Rights California

Catherine Blakemore has been a disability rights attorney for 40 years. She currently works as the Executive Director of Disability Rights California. One of her most significant accomplishments was working with consumers and families to pass the self-determination law. In addition to her disability advocacy, Catherine serves as the Vice-Chair of the California Commission on Access to Justice. She is a graduate of Loyola Law School.

Ann Bui

Sibling, Program Director, California Foundation for Independent Living Centers; Disability Voices United Board

Ann holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from University of Illinois Chicago and a Master of Science in Health Care Administration and Change Management from California State University East Bay. Over the past 20 years, Ann's diverse professional experiences included serving as a long-term Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) fellow at the UC Davis MIND Institute and Santa Clara County Public Health Policy Aide for County Board Supervisor Ken Yeager. Currently, Ann is the Program Director at the California Foundation for Independent Living Centers (CFILC). Ann enjoys discovering new local cafes, hiking trails, spending time with her partner and rescue kittens, and supporting as well as advocating for Martin, her brother with autism and Traumatic Brain Injury.

Dr. Sally Burton-Hoyle

Sibling, Professor, Eastern Michigan University

Dr. Sally Burton-Hoyle, sister to a person on the autism spectrum, serves as a panelist on the National Quality Forum for Person Centered Planning and formerly served on the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee (IACC) at the federal level. Sally has focused her life and career on improving the education and lives of people with autism and other challenging behaviors through person-centered planning. Dr. Burton-Hoyle has developed curriculum and trainings in PCP for mental health professionals in developmental disabilities, mental illness, and those with dual diagnosis extensively in Michigan and throughout the nation.

Aaron Carruthers

Executive Director, California State Council on Developmental Disabilities

Aaron Carruthers is the Executive Director of the California State Council on Developmental Disabilities. Aaron has worked in civil rights policy and programs for over twenty years, including in the State Senate, California's Attorney General, and as an appointee of two Governors. During his tenure, SCDD advanced self-determination, employment, active shooter standards, and a strategic housing framework. Last year, SCDD's work impacted more than 2.6 million Californians and SCDD was named Employer of the Year for people with disabilities. He is a graduate of the National Leadership Consortium on Developmental Disabilities and was a Coro Fellow in Public Affairs, which trains "ethical leaders for uncommon times."

Diana Pastora Carson, M.Ed.

Sibling, Author and Educator, Board Member, Disability Voices United

Diana Pastora Carson is an elementary and college educator, consultant and trainer on diversity as it relates to disability, and is the author of several articles and books related to disability, diversity, and inclusion. She served two terms on the board of directors of Disability Rights California and currently serves as a board member of Disability Voices United. Diana credits her passion for this work to her brother, Joaquin, who endured years of segregated schooling and subsequent institutionalization. After many years of fighting for his release, Joaquin now lives a life of inclusion and quality, in the community, as her next-door neighbor.

Sofia Cervantes

Advocate, State Council on Developmental Disabilities

Sofia Cervantes is an advocate with the State Council on Developmental Disabilities, Los Angeles Office. She provides advocacy support, largely through trainings in English and Spanish on disability awareness and aspects related to service delivery systems. She has a background in social work and mental health and has served individuals with developmental disabilities and their families in different capacities for over 14 years.

Sonni Charness

Founder, Guidelight Group & Independent Facilitator

Sonni Charness is the founder of Guidelight Group, an organization that specializes in person-centered planning and independent facilitation for teens and adults in California's Self-Determination Program. Sonni has over ten years of professional experience supporting teens and adults with developmental disabilities and is an expert in community integration and employment. Her work has been published in the Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation and in Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities. Sonni holds a Master's in Special Education with a specialization in severe disabilities. Please visit guidelightgroup.org to learn more!

Dora Contreras

Family Member, Retired School Administrator, Integrated Community Collaborative

Dora Contreras is a retired elementary school teacher and administrator. She has a 27-year old grandson with an intellectual disability whom she raised from the time he was 3-years old. Sergio is a client of the Valley Mountain Regional Center. He is currently living in a care facility and self-determination is an opportunity to bring him home with all of the supports he needs to have a better quality of life. Dora became a part of the Integrated Community Collaborative because of its advocacy for families with someone with disabilities. Through the ICC trainings, she has learned to navigate the regional center system to the extent that she is now helping others.

Richard Dier

Parent, Care Manager, Disability Management Resources, Inc.

Richard Dier is a former Board Member and current Local Advisory Committee member of Northern Los Angeles County Regional Center (NCLARC). He is also the parent of Self-Determination Program participant, Paul, who has a complex budget. Richard is now the owner of Disability Management Resources, Inc. For forty years, he has supported adults heavily impacted by their disabilities and served as an expert in the value of the service provided to disabled persons by family in superior court and workers compensation systems.

Ryan Easterly

Self-Advocate; Executive Director, WITH Foundation

Ryan Easterly has worked in philanthropy for more than 10 years. He currently serves as executive director of the WITH Foundation, a private foundation that promotes comprehensive healthcare for adults with developmental disabilities in the U.S. Ryan is a lifelong disability advocate. In 2016, President Barack Obama appointed Ryan to the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities. Ryan is also on the board of Community Resources for Independent Living and is a member of the Presidents' Council on Disability Inclusion in Philanthropy, which is co-chaired by the Ford Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Bill Emmerson

Former State Senator, Member of Little Hoover Commission

Bill Emmerson is a former state senator and assemblymember who was the lead author of Senate Bill 468, the self-determination bill. He fought hard for the bill and built a bipartisan coalition, which ultimately led to its passage in 2013. Senator Emmerson continues to monitor the implementation of the Self-Determination Program. Senator Emmerson currently sits on the Little Hoover Commission, which is an independent state oversight agency. From 2014 to 2018, he was senior vice president of state relations and advocacy at the California Hospital Association. He earned a doctor of dentistry degree and a master of science degree in orthodontics from Loma Linda University.

Allen Erenbaum

Parent, Disability Voices United

Allen Erenbaum is the proud parent of Joshua Erenmark, a 22-year old self advocate with autism. In Allen's spare time, he is an attorney focusing on helping companies navigate government processes in DC and states across the country.

Joshua Erenmark

Self-Advocate

Joshua Erenmark is a 22-year old self-determined individual who sets his own schedule and enjoys being with people he loves. Joshua volunteers at the LA County public library and helps lead Jewish services at Vista del Mar. His passion is Disneyland, and he goes there often. He loves to travel and has been to 15 countries and will be going to another five new countries in 2020. He can't wait to go into the Self-Determination Program soon!

Elizabeth Espinosa

Sibling, Executive Director of Communications, LA County Sheriff's Department

Elizabeth Espinosa is a strong advocate for her brother who has multiple developmental disabilities. She serves on the board of directors of Westside Regional Center. Elizabeth recently became the Executive Director of Communications for LA County Sheriff's Department. She previously spent two decades in the broadcast industry including as a TV reporter for KTLA-5 and a host on KFI-AM 640 and PBS, as well as on Spanish stations on Telemundo and Univision.

Tina Ewing

Self-Advocate, Self-Determination Program Participant/Advocate

Tina Ewing has been a part of the Self-Determination pilot program for over 18 years. She is living proof that the program works!

Suzanne Bennett Francisco

Parent, President and CEO, Exceptional Rights Advocacy (ERA)

Suzanne Bennett Francisco provides advocacy services and is a nationally published Supported Decision-Making (SDM) writer and speaker. She is a self-determination advisory committee member at San Andreas regional center, certified SDP Trainer, Person Centered Planner and Independent Facilitator. With an undergraduate business degree, Suzanne is a student at Golden Gate University School of Law. ERA's mission is to advance the lives of people with different abilities so that those most vulnerable are self-expressed and direct their own lives to the maximum of their unique abilities. Suzanne is mother to three teenagers with CMD and ASD and the sister of a strong self-advocate with a significant disability.

Cesar F. Garcia

Director of Client Services, Westside Regional Center

Currently the Director of Client Services for Children and Early Start at Westside Regional Center, Cesar has 27 years of experience working in the field of developmental disability services. He is a strong program and project management professional who has worked in the field as an advocate, service provider, service coordinator and now in administration. He is considered one of the in-house experts and consultants for DDS (Department of Developmental Services). Most recently, he was involved with the Equity and Disparity Project, as well as with the Self-Determination Advisory Committee and is taking the lead with the Self-Determination Program at Westside Regional Center.

Maria Garcia

Instructional Coach, Avenue Supported Living Services

Maria has been a Direct Support Professional, Instructional Coach and IHSS worker for over 10 years. She prides herself on her ability to remain professional while building a strong relationship with the people she supports. Maria has worked for a number of agencies in the Los Angeles area that provide a variety of services including supported living, day program, group homes, Independent Living Services and IHSS. Her dedication to quality supports and helping people to make informed choices is key to her success in supporting people.

Zoey Giesberg, MSW

Self-Advocate, Community Outreach Assistant, Family Adult and Child Therapies

Zoey Giesberg, MSW is a social worker and community outreach associate at Family Adult and Child Therapies. Zoey serves on the Westside Regional Center Board of Directors as its Political Action Committee chair and ARCA representative. Zoey was diagnosed with autism at two and a half years old and is a proud self-advocate for all disabled people.

Elizabeth Barrios Gomez

Parent, Director, Integrated Community Collaborative

Elizabeth is a parent and a strong advocate for the Latino and other underserved communities. She is the co-founder and Director of the Integrated Community Collaborative (ICC Community Integradoras), a collaboration of community groups of parents and self-advocates. She is a graduate of the USC University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities CA-LEND Program, as well as a graduate of the Westside Regional Center Partners in Policymaking Team of Advocates. Elizabeth is also a member of the Local Advisory Committee on Self-Determination for Westside Regional Center. Elizabeth received her B.S. from Woodbury University.

Fernando Gomez

Parent Advocate, Disability Voices United Board, Integrated Community Collaborative

Mr. Gomez is passionate about equality for all and an avid advocate for individuals with developmental disabilities and has been very active in advocating for eliminating disparities for underserved communities. He was appointed by Governor Brown to the Interagency Coordinating Council on Early Intervention and formerly served on the Board of Directors for Westside Regional Center, the Association of Regional Center Agencies and Special Olympics of Southern California. He is also a member of the Statewide Self-Determination DDS Workgroup and is co-founder of the Integrated Community Collaborative and Disability Voices United.

Betty Grimble

Parent, Westside Regional Center Board, John's Journey

Betty Grimble is a parent of a 28-year-old son who deals with autism and attends Mychal's Learning Center. She has her Master's in Sociology from Cal State Dominguez Hills. She is very active at Westside Regional Center, serving as Vice President of Board of Directors, on the Executive Committee, chair of the Equity Committee, and on the Self-Determination Committee. She is also in the process of starting John's Journey for people with disabilities.

Darlene Hanson

Director of Communication Services, REACH Services

Darlene Hanson is the Director of Communication Services at REACH Services in Santa Fe Springs. Darlene has been a Speech and Language Pathologist for over 20 years, working with individuals with severe communication impairments. She currently provides training on autism, full inclusion, creating a communicative environment and Facilitated Communication. Darlene is a recognized Facilitated Communication Trainer and has published top research in this area. Her expertise is in working with individuals who are non-speaking and use alternate modes of communication, as well as in the area of speech development for persons with severe motor apraxia as it relates to autism.

Liz Harrell

Family Member, Training and Special Programs,
Department of Developmental Services (DDS)

Liz Harrell is currently working for the Department of Developmental Services. Based out of Carlsbad through a partnership with the San Diego Regional Center, Liz directs the training and technical assistance management for the state related to Self Determination, Home and Community Based Waiver, and other special projects. Liz has 22 years experience with the Eastern LA Regional Center where she managed a department responsible for a variety of projects including the statewide Self Determination Pilot Project. A Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Liz is also the youngest of four siblings, one of whom has autism.

Danny Heldoorn

Self-Advocate, Avenues SLS

Daniel Heldoorn has shared his story at self-advocacy conferences, legislative visits, and has used powerpoint slides successfully at job interviews. He lives in his own home in Valencia with his roommate Eric.

Stephen Hinkle

Self-Advocate, PhD Student, Chapman University

Stephen Hinkle is a disability rights advocate and international speaker. Stephen has presented in 24 states and in Australia, covering a 19-year presenting career. Stephen is also a person on the autism spectrum who has a Master's in Special Education Policy from Northern Arizona University. He is currently working on his PhD in disability policy at Chapman University.

Katie Hornberger

Director, Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy,
Disability Rights California

Katie Hornberger is the Director of the Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy. She has been with OCRA for more than fifteen years. She worked as a supervisor and as the Clients' Rights Advocate for clients of both Harbor Regional Center and North Los Angeles County Regional Center. She represented clients in a variety of matters including public benefits, education, regional center, and discrimination cases. Katie has trained the community and served on many committees. Prior to practicing law, she was a special education and early intervention teacher. She also was an in-home behavior therapist for children with autism. Katie received her undergraduate degree from the University of California, Irvine and earned her J.D. from Pepperdine University School of Law.

Dohn Hoyle

Director of Public Policy, The Arc Michigan

Dohn Hoyle is the former Director of The Arc of Michigan and long-time advocate for the rights of people with disabilities. A respected leader and innovator in the disability movement, Dohn has provided leadership on issues regarding the overuse of guardianship, closing the state institutions for people with developmental disabilities, person-centered planning, self-determination, inclusive education, services/supports for people with developmental disabilities, eliminating the use of seclusion and restraint in school and adult systems, criminal justice issues, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, SSI/SSDI hearings and appeals, and estate planning.

Killian Hynes

Self-Advocate, College-Bound Student

As an individual who types to communicate, Killian has worked very hard to maintain solid grades in Gen Ed classrooms throughout his career in the Manhattan Beach School District. In June, 2020, Killian will graduate from Mira Costa High School and head off to college where he will pursue a degree in science. Proudly, Killian is part of the Autism Society of LA Speaker's Bureau, the National Honor Society and actively advocates for the inclusion of non-speakers. In his free time, Killian loves to swim, attend workouts with friends, and hang out with his twin brother Justin.

Tim Jin

Self-Advocate, Board Member, Disability Voices United

Tim Jin is a self-advocate with cerebral palsy. He graduated from Cal State Long Beach in speech communication. Tim is currently working for Teacher Created Resources. He has been an active member on several advisory boards, such as IHSS, USC UCEDD, the Self-Determination Program Local Advisory Committee for RCOC, TASK, Disability Voices United, and Ability Central Philanthropy.

Mari-Anne Kehler

Parent, Vice President,
Autism Society of Los Angeles; Partner & Chief
Strategy Officer, Green Hasson Janks

Mari-Anne is currently Chief Marketing & Strategy Officer at Green Hasson Janks, an LA based business advisory firm. She is a parent to Liam and has been active in the community for almost 20 years. Mari-Anne is Chairman of the Community Advisory Council of the Southwest Special Education Local Planning Area (SW SELPA). She is a board member of ASLA and has served on numerous boards such as The Miracle Project, The Center for Learning Unlimited, and past President of the Los Angeles Board of Autism Speaks. Mari-Anne is also an Advisory Board member of Golden Heart Ranch.

Sheila Keys

Community Resource Manager,
Redwood Coast Regional Center

Sheila Keys is passionate about promoting self-determination, civil rights and the disability pride movement. She was part of the initial Self-Determination Pilot Program at Redwood Coast Regional Center over 20 years ago. She enjoys supporting service provider agencies in her current role as a Community Resource Manager at Redwood Coast Regional Center. She is also an experienced trainer and mentor trainer for The Learning Community for Person-Centered Practices.

Justice Killebrew

Self-Advocate

J Reign Killebrew is a 13-year old brilliant young man who happens to have autism and is non-speaking. He lived much of his childhood unable to communicate what he was thinking and feeling. When J finally sat down with an expert who believed in his abilities, within minutes he spelled his first sentence, which said, "you finally cracked my case." Since then, J has created a T-shirt line called What's J Say. J is a co-author in the book "Leaders Around Me" by Dr. Edlyn Pena. He presented at the National Arc convention in San Diego on racial service disparities. J enjoys being a DJ and has served as one at various autism events. Check out his documentary on YouTube called "I Have Autism Autism Doesn't Have Me" and his website: whatsjsaynow.com.

Jim Knight

Deputy Director, Department
of Developmental Services

Jim Knight has been with the Department of Developmental Services for 19 years and has been involved with a number of programs and initiatives that receive federal funding, including the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waiver, the HCBS settings rule, and the Self-Determination Program. He began his career working in the service delivery system for people with developmental disabilities 38 years ago and has spent time assisting and learning from individuals in a variety of settings including school, residential and employment.

Andy Kopito

Parent, President, Autism Society of Los Angeles

Andy Kopito currently serves as the President of the Autism Society of Los Angeles. A father of a 26-year-old son with autism, Andy is active in supporting programs to improve the lives of all those with developmental disabilities. Andy recently retired as a Program Director at Boeing's Satellite Development Center in El Segundo, California.

Ronda Kopito

Parent, Resource Specialist,
Autism Society of Los Angeles

Andy Kopito currently serves as the President of the Autism Society of Los Angeles. A father of a 26-year-old son with autism, Andy is active in supporting programs to improve the lives of all those with developmental disabilities. Andy recently retired as a Program Director at Boeing's Satellite Development Center in El Segundo, California.

Clarissa Kripke, MD, FAAFP

Parent, Clinical Professor of Family and Community
Medicine, Office of Developmental Primary Care, UCSF

Dr. Kripke is Director of the Office of Developmental Primary Care (<http://odpc.ucsf.edu>) in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the University of California San Francisco. The mission of ODPC is to build the capacity of the health care system to serve transition age youth and adults with developmental disabilities. She is the primary care physician for many of the Bay Area's most medically fragile and behaviorally complex regional center clients. Dr. Kripke teaches health professionals how to apply social and neurodiversity models of disability to the practice of medicine.

Kelly Kulzer-Reyes

Parent, Board Member, Disability Voices United

Kelly Kulzer-Reyes is mom to three children: Noah, 9, Amelia, 7, and Simon, 2. Shortly after Amelia's birth, Kelly became involved in legislative advocacy for people with Down syndrome and other disabilities. Kelly and her husband, Moses, live in Pine Mountain Club, California in the Kern County mountains. They are grateful for the community they have found at Club 21 in Pasadena, California, which has supported Kelly in her advocacy work. Kelly serves on the board of Disability Voices United and is a parent leader at Kern Down Syndrome Network. Kelly works as an English professor at Taft College in Taft, California.

Connie Lapin

Parent, Board Member, Disability Voices United

Connie Lapin, a Speech Pathologist, has been a family advocate for people with developmental disabilities for over 49 years. Connie has testified before government bodies, lectured at universities and conferences, and appeared in the media. Connie's accolades include "Woman of the Year" in Assemblyman Bob Blumenfeld's district, and a Lifetime Achievement and Meritorious Service for Autism from President pro Tempore, California State Senator Darryl Steinberg. As Co-Chair of the Government Relations Committee for the Autism Society of LA and board member of Disability Voices United, she helped lead the successful effort in California to enact self-determination legislation. She remains involved in the implementation as a member of statewide workgroups and DDS task forces. Connie and her family are looking forward to participating in the self-determination program.

Dr. Harvey Lapin

Parent, Advocate,
Co-Founder, Disability Voices United

Dr. Harvey Lapin is the father of a 50-year-old son with the challenge of autism and has been a leader and strong advocate for individuals with disabilities for over 49 years. He has served as President of the Autism Society of America, California's State Council for Developmental Disabilities Los Angeles and Co-Chair of the first Client's Rights Advocacy program for Disability Rights California. Dr. Lapin was a founder and organizer of the first US Autism Telethon from 1977-1984. He was a founder and president of Jay Nolan Community Services. He was honored by the White House twice and by the California State Senate for lifetime achievement. For the past ten years he has prioritized self-determination as the most important issue for people with developmental disabilities and was instrumental in the passage of the self-determination law. Dr. Lapin is a member of the state's self-determination workgroup. He and his family are looking forward to being included in the Self-Determination Program and sharing the importance of people with developmental disabilities being "in charge" of their own lives. Dr. Lapin is a retired dentist.

Rosie Lasca

Parent, Parent Empowerment Project (PEP)
Director, Autism Society of Los Angeles

Ms. Lasca has a degree in Communications and a minor in Disability Studies from UCLA. She has helped conduct research projects studying the communication of children with autism that focused on echolalia. Ms. Lasca oversees the PEP, a project dedicated to decreasing disparities in services for African-American and Latino families. As the parent of a 10-year-old boy with autism, Ms. Lasca has advocated for services from various systems of care and now uses her knowledge to support the PEP team and other families advocate for regional center, public and community services.

Rob Lewis

National Director of Business
Development, GT Independence

Rob Lewis is the National Director of Business Development at GT Independence with the responsibility of developing and maintaining stakeholder relationships. Rob holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Central Michigan University. He has been working at GT Independence since 2009. During this time, Rob has effectively and smoothly led multiple transitions and overseen 25%+ growth year-over-year. He successfully oversees business development with teams in eleven states across the country. As a champion for self-determination, Rob leads by example and empowers others to lead a life of their choosing regardless of age or ability.

Victor Lira

Senior Vice President, Premier Healthcare (Aveanna)
Board Member, Autism Society of Los Angeles

Victor Lira is the Senior Vice President of Support Services for Premier Healthcare Services, an Aveanna company, overseeing all operations for Financial Management Services (FMS), respite, day care and personal attendant services for over 15,000 I/DD individuals. Victor has over 16 years of experience serving the I/DD community, with many of those years spent advocating with state and national organizations to make the Self-Determination Program a reality for all California participants. He continues to serve on committees, advocacy groups, and work groups at Regional Centers and the state level dedicated to improving the lives of those he serves.

Cathay Liu

Parent, Independent Facilitator,
Chinese Parents Association for the Disabled

Cathay Liu has a B.S. from the University of California Los Angeles and a Master's degree in cross cultural mental health counseling from the University of Western Washington. She worked in the Department of Mental Health, Sacramento County. A mother of two young adults with developmental disabilities, Ms. Liu has worked at the Family Resource Center in the East Los Angeles area. Ms. Liu is a member of the Chinese Parents Association for the Disabled (CPAD). Ms. Liu focuses her work on community awareness and family-centered care. Cathay served as a service broker (independent facilitator) for the SD pilot project at East LA Regional Center. It is her lifelong goal to see that the systems and policies grow and reflect the needs of the diverse communities we live in.

Louise T. MacKenzie, Ph.D.

Parent, Educator, Advocate, Co-Chair,
Tri Counties Regional Center
Self-Determination Local Advisory Committee

Louise is the parent of four adult children, one of whom has developmental disabilities and has been in the self-determination pilot project. Louise is an educator who has taught K-12 special needs individuals, trained teachers and parents in inclusive practices, served in school administration, and teaches adults learners in a community college setting. As an advocate, Louise promotes self-determined approaches to life for all individuals through service on her local advisory committee, presentations on self-determination, informal support for individuals with I/DD and their family members, friendships with individuals with special needs, and giving voice to those who may not be able to speak for themselves.

Judy Mark

Parent, President, Disability Voices United

Judy Mark founded Disability Voices United in 2017 and leads their advocacy and programmatic efforts. Judy was instrumental in the passage of the Self-Determination Law and has been active in its implementation, serving on the DDS workgroup, as Chair of Westside Regional Center's Local Advisory Committee, and on the Statewide Advisory Committee. Judy has written and edited two books on self-determination and has spoken extensively throughout California and trained thousands of individuals and families. Also a faculty member at UCLA in Disability Studies, Judy recently led the Autism Media Lab which produced seven short documentaries on the inclusion of individuals with non-speaking autism. Judy has a Masters in Public Policy from the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University with coursework at the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University.

Maria Marquez

Self-Advocate, Interim Chair,
State Council on Developmental Disabilities

Maria Marquez is the Interim Chair of the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. She has worked in different positions as an advocate and been involved in a lot of boards and committees. At present, she is also a UCEDD facility self-advocate.

Howard McBroom

Self-Advocate, Advocate, Easterseals

Howard McBroom is an advocate for Easter Seals where he speaks both locally and nationally. He is also an ambassador for Disability Voices United. Howard serves as vice-chair of the self-determination local advisory committee at Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center and has attended several statewide advisory committee meetings. Howard is a passionate anti-violence and anti-bullying advocate and has a website dedicated to emotional intelligence at emotionalintelligenceandviolenceprevention.com. He lives on his own with some support in Burbank.

Deaka McClain, B.A., MPA

Self-Advocate, Community Advocate, DDS CAC
Chair, Disability Rights California Board

Deaka McClain is a lifelong community advocate, using her platform to continuously make positive changes, whether through public speaking, volunteering, storytelling and poetry, or simply connecting with people on an individual basis. Having been born with cerebral palsy, Ms. McClain knows firsthand the power of positive change and the value of using one's voice.

Megan Mendes

HCBS Transition and Employment
Manager, Westside Regional Center

Megan Mendes has been supporting individuals with disabilities for ten years, beginning as a direct support professional and transitioning through service provision to become a Program Director of residential services assisting individuals transitioning out of State Developmental Centers. Megan is currently working at Westside Regional Center, supporting providers, individuals, and families with the transition to the Home and Community Based Services Final Rule; conducting employment resource development; and assisting with SDP implementation. Megan is also a trainer candidate in Person Centered Thinking, encouraging the ongoing development of Westside Regional Center's commitment to Person-Centered Practices.

Melanie Miles

Self-Advocate, Vendor, Melanie's Arts and Crafts

During high school, Melanie (who was labeled with ASD) took driver training and had her driving permit and a job. Unfortunately, shortly after high school, Melanie experienced the onset of schizophrenia on top of her autism. She moved into her own apartment with a roommate and learned how to take control of her life by keeping busy and keeping variety in her jobs and activities. She has presented her story at over a dozen state and national conferences.

Alma Morales

Director of Client Relations,
Premier Healthcare Services

Alma Morales is the Director of Client Relations of Southern California for Premier Healthcare Services, an Aveanna company. Alma has over eight years of experience with the I/DD population since she entered the field as a program coordinator after graduating from the University of California, Berkeley with a B.A in Psychology.

Alison D. Morantz

Parent, Director,
Stanford I/DD Law and Policy Project

As a parent-advocate, Alison Morantz helped pioneer a new service delivery model for her thirteen-year-old son, who has autism and severe mental illness. She is also a founding board member of Disability Voices United. In her professional capacity, she is the James and Nancy Kelso Professor of Law at Stanford University and the Director of the Stanford Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Law and Policy Project (SIDDLAPP).

Mollie Murphy

Family Member, Principal, Applied Self-Direction

Mollie is a Principal at Applied Self-Direction and is a nationally recognized expert on Financial Management Services in self-direction. With over fifteen years' experience in self-direction, Mollie has assisted state and federal agencies to design and implement self-direction programs. Mollie led FMS work at the National Resource Center for Participant-Directed Services at Boston College from 2008 to 2016 and has designed and carried out the only national FMS Conference and Self-Direction Conference since 2009. She has worked with states to develop FMS from their inception and to improve services and processes in existing self-direction programs.

Gabriella Ohmstede

Family Member, Regional Manager & Self-Determination Project Manager, San Diego Regional Center

Gabriella (Gabby) has worked for the San Diego Regional Center for 16 years and is currently overseeing the implementation of the Self-Determination Program in San Diego and Imperial Counties. She participates in the statewide SDP workgroup and is the liaison for San Diego Regional Center to the Local Advisory Committee. She has a B.S. in Psychology from UCSD, and an MSW from SDSU. She has been an LCSW since 2010.

Kendra Oliver, LCSW

Director of Supported Living Services,
Institute for Applied Behavior Analysis
Board Member, Autism Society of LA

Kendra Oliver is the Director of Supported Living Services at the Institute for Applied Behavior Analysis. She oversees support services to adults with complex needs who live in their own home. She received both a B.A. in Sociology and a Master's of Social Welfare from UCLA. Ms. Oliver has been active in the field of social work for over twenty years and has taught dozens of Master's level students as a Field Instructor. Ms. Oliver's personal philosophy is that we must use positive practices to equip individuals with the necessary skills to gain self-advocacy and independence.

David Oster

Self-Advocate, Former Board Member,
Disability Rights California

David Oster is an advocate for people with disabilities. He is a program coordinator for his local chapter of People First of California, South Bay and Harbor Area. He is the director of the non-profit People First Foundation. David, who has autism, was a plaintiff in a class action lawsuit involving cuts to IHSS and helped pass California's self-determination law. He believes all people should be able to choose the services they receive, rather than a service coordinator choosing for them. David lives in Torrance and is very active in his community, local government, and synagogue.

Amy Ostrowski, M.Ed

Sibling, Diversity and Inclusion Consultant, Strategic Employment Solutions: Mobilizing an ABLE Workforce

Having a sister with a disability and as a special education teacher, Amy has extensive experience in the disability community. She has worked in job development and placement and witnessed the struggle of both prospective employees and employers, seeing the need for company wide training and support. She has seen businesses miss out on the benefits of hiring people with disabilities because they didn't have the support to overcome the perceived challenges. So she created a customized experience that helps businesses reach their diversity and inclusion goals while overcoming the fears of hiring from the disability community.

Joseph F. Parra

Policy Consultant, Senate Republican Policy Office

Joe Parra has been a Policy Consultant with the California State Senate Republican Policy Office since December 2005. In this capacity, he advises members of the Senate Republican Caucus on health and human services issues. Parra was on the legislative team that drafted and passed SB 468, the Self-Determination Law. Parra previously directed government relations for Molina Healthcare, Inc., a multi-state managed care company specializing in government programs such as Medicaid. Before Molina, Parra was a gubernatorial appointee to the California Department of Corporations, at that time the state agency responsible for HMO oversight. He began his health policy career as the Director of Legislative Affairs for the Hospital Association of Southern California.

Doug Pascover

Family Member, Executive Director,
Imagine Supported Living Services

Doug Pascover is the Executive Director of Imagine Supported Living Services in Santa Cruz County. He additionally serves as an Independent Facilitator for a self-determination pilot participant in San Bernardino County. Doug serves on the DDS Self-Determination Workgroup. He is also an uncle of a person served by a regional center.

Nicole Patterson

Self-Advocate
Coordinator of Advocacy, Department
of Developmental Services

Nicole Patterson provides a voice to the Director and the Department on issues that people with disabilities may be facing in California and helps come up with solutions. She also assists with the coordination for the Department's Consumer Advisory Committee in their work on self-advocacy projects and participates on consumer-driven projects across the state.

Julie Payne-Neward

Sibling, President/Cofounder, The California Sibling Leadership Network

Julie Payne-Neward, IMBA is President and Co-Founder of the California Chapter of the Sibling Leadership Network, a 501(c)3 organization, www.californiasibs.org, whose mission is to build a network of information, support, and advocacy resources to empower siblings to thrive throughout all stages in life. Her organization cultivates the space for siblings to participate, share their voices, and validate their experiences. She is the older sister of a woman who has I/DD, Natalie Rose, who was sexually abused, and she blogs about her advocacy efforts at www.NataliesVoice.net. She currently lives in North County San Diego with her husband and two young daughters.

Maia Pawooskar

Parent, Chair, SD Local Advisory Committee, Inland Regional Center and LEND Fellow at Children's Hospital LA

Maia Pawooskar is the mom of an adult son with autism and a daughter in high school. Maia has been very active as an advocate for her son and others and currently chairs the Self-Determination Local Advisory Committee at Inland Regional Center. She was a LEND Fellow at Children's Hospital Los Angeles and is an Ambassador for Disability Voices United. In her previous life, she was a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Specialist. She has a Bachelor's degree specializing in Economics and a Post Graduate Diploma in Computer Applications.

Sonja Petek

Senior Fiscal and Policy Analyst, Legislative Analyst's Office

Sonja Petek is a Senior Fiscal and Policy Analyst in the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) of the California State Legislature. In this role, Sonja oversees the programs and budgets of the state's Department of Developmental Services, Department of Rehabilitation, State Council on Developmental Disabilities, and Department of Public Health and provides nonpartisan advice to both houses of the Legislature. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Stanford University and a Master of Public Policy from UC Berkeley.

Mariela Ramos

Parent, Chair, Valley Mountain Regional Center's Self Determination Committee

Mariela Ramos has two sons. Her older son is 21 and has autism and language impairment. She is a stay-at-home mom and homeschools her oldest son out of necessity. At age 20, Mariela attended school for adults to learn English as a second language, and graduated from the program. Currently, she is an ICC volunteer. Mariela also serves as chair of the Self-Determination Local Advisory Committee at Valley Mountain Regional Center

Kim Ransom

Director, Special Education, Centinela Valley Union High School District Board Member, Autism Society of Los Angeles

Kim Ransom is a graduate of Wayne State and Loyola Marymount Universities. Mrs. Ransom has been a public school educator in special education for more than 30 years. She has taught at the elementary, middle, high school, and college levels. She is an Autism Society of Los Angeles board member and is a director of special education in the South Bay. She has been nominated for teacher of the year multiple times and has represented her current district as administrator of the year.

Linda Chan Rapp

Parent, Advocate, The 21st Blessing, UpVoice, Harbor SDAC

Linda Chan Rapp, whose daughter Eden introduced her family to the world of differ-abilities, has taught in community college and university settings, but parenting has been her most rewarding educational adventure. She has been an active special needs advocate, editing *Light At the End of the Tunnel*, and presenting on various enrichment and educational topics on local, regional and national levels. She has served as a mentor parent and board member for various family support organizations. Currently, she serves on the Self-Determination Advisory Committee for Harbor Regional Center, assists in UpVoice, and moderates the 21st Blessing.

Eden Rapp

Self-Advocate, UpVoice Leader, Board Member, Disability Voices United

Eden Rapp works at MOD Pizza in Rolling Hills Estates, and music is her passion. Her goals are to become a better self advocate, and to improve her writing and speaking abilities so she can make a difference. As a self advocate she has lobbied both locally and in Washington, and serves on the Disability Voices United Board. She leads UpVoice, a book club + community hangout for Club 21 self-advocates. She also volunteers for several organizations, such as Musical Connection through Inclusion, and has led workshops for National Down Syndrome Congress conventions. She just completed her Competent Communicator Award for Toastmasters.

Ibrahim "Bebo" Saab

Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy (OCRA) Outreach Supervising Attorney, Disability Rights California

Mr. Saab received his B.A. in English, with high honors, from the University of California, Berkeley in 1999. He remained at Berkeley another three years to earn his Juris Doctorate from Boalt Hall. While in law school, Mr. Saab served as President of the Boalt Disability Law Society. He also was a law clerk at Disability Rights Legal Center. Mr. Saab joined OCRA in 2005 as the North LA County Regional Center CRA. He was recently promoted to OCRA Outreach Supervising Attorney.

Will Sanford

Consultant, SC&CS

Will Sanford is currently running a consulting practice supporting innovation in supports and services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. For over 35 years, Will has been an advocate in promoting and educating the community to accept individuals with disabilities as valuable and contributing members of society. Will also works to ensure that individuals with developmental disabilities have the supports and services they need to lead successful and fulfilling lives integrated in their community.

Scott Shepard

Avenues Supported Living Services

Scott teaches courses on Functional Assessment & PBS at CSU Northridge. He also serves on the SCV Mayor's Committee for Employment of Individuals with Disabilities and consults in areas related to transition, PBS, and person-centered planning. He also works full time providing/coordinating direct support services through Avenues Supported Living Services.

Lori Shepard

Director of Operations, Avenues Supported Living Services (SLS)

Lori has spent 35 years providing support to people in community-based settings. In addition to Avenues SLS, she is also a Consultant in Assistive Technology, helping students, adults and seniors to communicate, access their education, control their environment and participate in all life has to offer with a focus on aging and end-of-life planning for people with developmental disabilities.

Christine Sheppard

Financial Management Services Director, Community Interface Services

Christine is the Financial Management Services Director at Community Interface Services. For over twenty years, she has worked closely with participants and families navigating traditional, financial management, and self-determination services. In addition to enthusiasm for self-determination, Christine has experience in human services, expertise in developing resources and executing spending plans as well as a degree in Communicative Disorders and Sciences from the State University of New York at Geneseo, and a graduate degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from San Diego State University's Interwork Institute. Christine is dedicated to providing person-centered Financial Management Services centered on the principles of self-determination.

Kim Sinclair

Parent, Executive Director, Autism Society of Los Angeles

Kim Sinclair brings 25 years of experience in both corporate and non-profit environments to ASLA. Her career spans experience in Fortune 100 business, information technology, and most recently, contributions to a number of local non-profit organizations in the Los Angeles area. With a 16-year-old with cerebral palsy, Kim is no stranger to the special needs community. This involvement opened the door to non-profit organizations with a focus on processes, fundraising, and program administration and development. Kim has a Bachelor of Science in Computing and Bachelor of Business Accounting from the Monash University, Australia, and earned her MBA from Baylor University.

Michelle Smith

Parent, Physical Therapist, Independent Facilitator

Michelle Smith is part of a very diverse family. Several of her children are adopted and each child has unique strengths and abilities that challenge her to think differently and not take "no" for an answer. She was a pediatric physical therapist, but currently works with adults in mental health. She was a co-founder of Wayfinders at Fresno State University and has assisted in establishing a Project SEARCH program at Community Regional Medical Center. She is chairperson of both the Central Valley Regional Center Self-Determination Local Advisory Committee and the Fresno Unified School District Community Advisory Committee. Lifelong learning is an important goal of Michelle's, and she completed her Master's in Curriculum and Teaching in 2018.

Nina Spiegelman

Parent, Program Director, Disability Voices United

Nina Spiegelman is Program Director for Disability Voices United, a statewide advocacy organization directed by and for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. She currently serves on the Board of the Alameda County Developmental Disabilities Council and is a leading member of the East Bay Parents Housing Network and the East Bay Stakeholder Team of The Kelsey Inclusive Housing Initiative. Nina has recently retired from a long career in environmental law. Nina is also the parent of a young adult son with autism.

Kavita Sreedhar

Parent, Cofounder and CEO, PRAGNYA

Kavita Sreedhar is the Co-founder and CEO of PRAGNYA (Preparing Resources & Alliances Galvanizing Neurotypical Youth in Autism Acculturation). PRAGNYA specializes in the creation of "real world" experiences for the neurodiverse community to acclimate and experience a sense of acceptance. At the same time, the organization trains the neurotypical world to acculturate and support their neurodiverse peers in this process. She is also a San Andreas Regional Center-appointed member of the Self Determination Regional Advisory Committee and works with the Department of Developmental Services as a South East Asian Representative on DDS's Disparities Task Force. Kavita has extensive experience in public relations, content creation, and fundraising, among other areas.

Kishan Sreedhar

Family member, Co-Founder, PRAGNYA

Kishan Sreedhar is the cofounder of PRAGNYA. He also serves on the San Andreas Regional Center Self-Determination Local Advisory Committee and works with the Department of Developmental Services as a South East Asian Representative on its Disparities Task Force. Outside Kishan's experience in the developmental disability world, he has wide-ranging experience in advertising and public relations.

Melinda Sullivan

Executive Director,
Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center

Melinda Sullivan came to the Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center (FDLRC) 32 years ago and has served as the Executive Director for the last five years. Prior to coming to FDLRC, she worked with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities as a state employee at Lanterman Developmental Center and as an employee for a service provider organization in the Los Angeles area. She has a family member served by California's developmental disabilities system as well. Her educational background includes a Bachelor's Degree in Recreation Therapy and a Master's in Organizational Leadership.

Mulugeta Tadele

Parent, Ethiopian Parents of Special
Needs Children Support Group

Mr. Mulugeta Tadele is a parent and an activist working with the Ethiopian community around education, mental health, inclusion, capacity building, and networking among communities.

Carolyn Tellalian, LCSW

Parent, Board Member, Disability Voices United

Carolyn Tellalian is a mom to three children: Ryan, 36; Marisa, 31; and Vana, 29. Shortly after Marisa's birth, Carolyn became involved in organizing community resources surrounding the Down syndrome and disability community in Tulare and Fresno County. Carolyn collaborated with another mom, Michelle Smith, to design, fund and launch the post-secondary education program Wayfinders at Fresno State. She is a licensed clinical social worker at Valley Children's Hospital in Madera and lives in Fresno. Recently, Carolyn became involved in legislative advocacy. Carolyn serves on the board of Disability Voices United and is on the Local Advisory Committee for Self-Determination at Central Valley Regional Center.

Brian Tucker

Personal Trainer, Cali-Florida Fitness

With over eight years of personal training experience, Brian has mastered the proper technique that works with each individual to achieve their fitness desires. Certified through AFAA (Aerobics and Fitness Association of America), he was also a three-year letterman at Lehigh University, where he played collegiate D-1 football. Brian also teaches exercise classes for clients at Westside Regional Center.

Diana Ugalde

Self-Advocate, South Central Los Angeles
Regional Center SD Advisory Committee

Throughout Diana Ugalde's life, overcoming obstacles has been a natural means to go on. Her cerebral palsy keeps her from walking and talking. Doctors predicted that she wouldn't survive her first year. After her 15th birthday, she came from Mexico, learned English, and caught up with her academics. Due to her physical condition, they placed Diana in a classroom for students with intellectual disabilities. Nowadays, attaining her biggest goal, which is living independently, has made her more self-confident. Life is difficult, but it's harder when one has a physical challenge. Teaching others how to overlook her disability has made Diana an expert in demonstrating that she's a person, not an object.

Minerva Valdez, MS

District Manager for Transition Age Youth,
San Andreas Regional Center

Minerva Valdez is from Southern California with 27 years of experience in the non-profit sector. She serves as the District Manager for San Andreas Regional Center in Salinas, Monterey County working with a diverse population and a team of 11 Service Coordinators. Minerva has previously held various positions in the Regional Center. Prior to joining the Regional Center system, she was a counselor in the City of Los Angeles working collaboratively with the Department of Children and Family Services and the Department of Probation. Minerva earned degrees in Psychology and Sociology from California State University, Fullerton (1993). She also earned a Master's in Education from Azusa Pacific University (2003).

Gabriela Valner

Self-Advocate

Gabriela Valner is a self-advocate on a mission to break communication and inclusion barriers. She enjoys traveling, being with her family and friends, and living a full life of new experiences.

Nikita Wang

Self-Advocate, College Student, President,
Self-Advocate Board Los Angeles County

Nikita Wang is a student at East LA College majoring in Psychology. She is also the President of the Self-Advocate Board of Los Angeles County. Her goal is to become a mental health counselor for teens and adolescents.

Willie West

Self-Advocate, Participant, Self-Determination
Pilot Project, Redwood Coast Regional Center

Willie West has been enrolled in the self-determination program in one of the five pilot project regional centers since the program's creation in 1999. The self-determination program allowed him the services and supports he needed to move out of his parents' house and live on his own. Since then, he has been a self-advocate who has worked on many local, regional, and state boards and workgroups in many different capacities. Willie sits on the statewide self-determination workgroup. He currently works with the Northern California Adaptive Living Centers in overseeing health care providers and the care of many clients with disabilities.

Amy Westling

Executive Director, Association
of Regional Center Agencies

Amy Westling is the Executive Director of the Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA). She joined ARCA in 2012 and has represented regional centers in a variety of areas such as: systemic changes, including the Home and Community-Based Services Final Rule and the Self-Determination Program, flexibly meeting individual needs while honoring culture, coalition-building, and funding. Prior to joining ARCA, Ms. Westling worked for both Central Valley and Alta California Regional Centers and Protection and Advocacy, Inc. (now Disability Rights California). She earned her Bachelor's degree in Social Work and Master's of Public Administration from California State University, Fresno.

Mady Wolf, MS, CN

Parent, Nutritionist, Wolf Nutrition

Mady Wolf, MS, CN, is a nutrition expert who helps people feel their best, lose weight and prevent and manage disease through individualized, holistic and attainable lifestyle programs. She applies a functional approach to nutrition and her mission is for all of her clients to be operating at their fullest potential. Mady has an MS in Human Nutrition from the University of Bridgeport, an MBA from Columbia University and a BA from UC Berkeley. She is also a graduate of the Integrative Nutritional Medicine program at the American University of Complementary Medicine.

Michelle Wolf

Parent, Executive Director, JLA Special Needs Trust

Michelle K. Wolf is a parent disability advocate, non-profit innovator and social services entrepreneur. She is the Founding Executive Director of the Jewish LA Special Needs Trust, the first pooled nonprofit trust in LA County. She was the Director of Serving the Vulnerable for The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles. In 2005, she co-founded HaMercaz, an innovative multi-agency collaborative one-stop model that helps families raising children with special needs. As a parent of a young adult with CP, she brings her personal experiences to her professional work. She is also part of the Self-Determination Advisory Committee for Lanterman Regional Center.

Rick Wood

Parent of Pilot Participant,
Board Member, Disability Voices United

Rick Wood is the parent of Davis Wood, who has been a participant in the Kern Regional Center Self-Determination Pilot for 20 years. Rick is a California attorney who has actively participated as a parent-advocate and speaker at numerous California and national special needs and self-determination conferences. He currently serves on a DDS self determination stakeholders committee. He is a founding member of Disability Voices United. He serves as the chair of the Kern Regional Center Self-Determination Local Advisory Committee, and is a member of the SCDD Statewide Self-Determination Committee. Rick lives in Mammoth Lakes, California with his wife, Cheryl, and son, Davis, age 24.

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24 Hour Home Care has been impacting lives by providing high quality in-home care and Financial Management Services for over 10 years.

24hrcares.com



Accredited Nursing provides Financial Management Services (FMS) for the Self-Determination Program.

accreditednursing.com



Acumen is the original Fiscal/Employer Agent, serving participants/employers, their families, and employees since 1995 across the country.

acumenfiscalagent.com



Developing the individual potential of people with special needs

Aurelia Foundation supports the The Creative Steps Program. Creative Steps is an adult community integration day program that supports self-advocates working on job skills, self-help and advocacy skills, communication and social skills in community settings.

aureliafoundation.org



Autism Society of Los Angeles represents the millions of people in the L.A. area effected by autism by empowering individuals with autism, their families, and professionals through advocacy, education, support, and community collaboration. AutismLA.org



CalABLE is a saving and investment program of the California State Treasurer's Office for people with disabilities

CALABLE.ca.gov



Community Interface Services is a nonprofit organization based in Carlsbad, California. Our agency provides FMS services for self-determination participants throughout the state. We also provide other services for children and adults with developmental disabilities primarily in San Diego County.

communityinterfaceservices.org



Disability Rights California provides free legal information, advice and representation to regional center (RC) clients. We provide the clients' rights advocate for each RC.

disabilityrightsca.org



Disability Voices United, founded by the people who sponsored the self-determination law, is a statewide organization directed by and for individuals with developmental disabilities of all ages and their families. We advocate for choice and control over our lives, meaningful outcomes that matter to us, and systems that are equitable and accountable to us.

disabilityvoicesunited.org



Easterseals of Southern California provides exceptional services to ensure that all people with disabilities or special needs and their families have an equal opportunity to live, learn, work and play in their communities. We provide employment services, life skills and community involvement opportunities, alternatives to institutionalized living and support services that assist individuals to live independent lives.

easterseals.com/southernca



Exceptional Minds is a professional training academy and studio for visual effects artists and animators with autism. Based in Los Angeles, we are a non-profit organization that transforms expectations through our mission of employability, self-sufficiency and inclusion.

exceptional-minds.org



Greenhouse Therapy's mission is to increase awareness of and access to developmental approaches to supporting children and adults with autism.



GT Independence is a FMS and Self-Directed Services provider whose mission is to help people live a life of their choosing regardless of age or ability. We believe everyone should have the right to make their own life and care choices.

gtindependence.com



GUIDELIGHT GROUP

Guidelight Group is a collective of seasoned professionals specializing in person-centered planning and independent facilitation for teens and adults.

guidelightgroup.org



The Integrated Community Collaborative is a community outreach organization and home to the ICC Integradoras. We provide training and assistance for underserved families in both Spanish and English.

integratedcommunitycollaborative.org



Jewish LA Special Needs Trust and Services' mission is to ensure that children and adults with disabilities are able to obtain a high quality of life.

jlatrust.org



Leaps n Boundz's programs enable individuals of all abilities, through individualized goals and objectives, to improve his/her quality of life.

leapsnboundz.com

Linda Andron-Ostrow, LCSW, is a licensed social worker.



Mains'l offers innovative supports to people, responding to their hopes and dreams.

mainsl.com



Mychal's Learning Place offers job training to individuals with I/DD. Mykie's is a bakery, coffee, and catering company and is a branch of Mychal's Learning Place.

mychals.org



Newman Aaronson Vanaman has provided assistance to children with disabilities and families with members who are disabled. They remain committed to providing services for families and children needing specialized legal services.
navlaw.net

Nora Baladerian, through the Counseling Center of West Los Angeles, provides a wide range of consultant services regarding mental health, from education and training services to abuse reduction.
norabaladerian.com



OurTism's mission is to listen to, empower, and validate Autism/Asperger profile individuals and their families in a safe community.
ourtism.com



Premier Healthcare Services, an Aveanna Company, provides FMS services statewide. Since 2007, Premier Healthcare Services (Aveanna) has provided participant-directed administrative support to Regional Center clients. All of Premier's flexible and streamlined services are designed to alleviate stress on the participant in order to allow families to focus on what matters most.
premier-homehealth.com

Project AutTrain's mission is to provide training on the issues of mental and physical health, sexuality, health care delivery, and communication related to adults with autism.



Stand Out is a full-service resource for special needs families to find and receive the services they need and are entitled to!
standoutadvocates.com



The State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) is a federally funded state agency that advocates for the rights of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.
scdd.ca.gov



The Miracle Project aims to create a neurodiverse community where the voices, passions & stories of individuals of all abilities are celebrated, elevated, supported & belong
themiracleproject.org



Tierra Del Sol provides innovative workforce development strategies, including internships, professional volunteerism, college-to-career services, and careers in the arts.
tierradelsol.org

Self-Advocate Microenterprise Fair Vendors



Alexandra Adwalan

Amazing Artists

Children's books. To view more of Alexandra's work, visit amazingartists.online.

Sahand Akbar

Dark chocolate. To purchase more of Sahand's chocolate, visit betterworldfoods.org.

Jeremy Bernstein

Handcrafted jewelry.

Sean Best

Challenged Conquistadors

Dani Bowman

DaniMation

T-shirts, books, animation classes, and animation services. To learn more about Dani's work, visit danimationentertainment.com.

Abby Carleson

Bookmarkers and bracelets.

Vincent Frise

V. Slava

Handcrafted jewelry.

Henry Iradj

Sewing crafts, bandannas, and headbands. To learn more, visit upholsteryplanet.blogspot.com.

Kaitlin Lundy

Art & illustration services.

Sean McElwee

T-shirts. To purchase more T-shirts designed by Sean, visit seanese.com.

Eden Rapp

T-shirts.

Sue Rubin

Innovative Consulting Solutions

Consulting services. For more information about Sue's work, visit sue-rubin.com.

Jeremy Sicile-Kira

Jeremy's Vision

Art and greeting cards. To purchase more of Jeremy's work, visit jeremysvision.com.

Leslie Versfelt

Tides of Kindness

T-shirts. To purchase more of Leslie's shirts, visit tidesofkindness.com.

Other Conference Information



Quiet Room

Quiet Room is available during the entire conference in the Hermosa Room.

Parking:

At any time during the conference, you can pay in cash at the valet station or the payment table in the lobby. If you want to pay with a credit card, you need to go to the front desk with your ticket.

If you valet parked, you can order your car to be brought to the front of the hotel by dialing 7777 from any house phone.



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