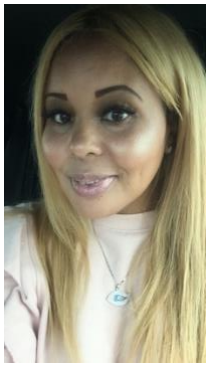
“BEYOND 4 WALLS AND A BED: HOUSING OPTIONS FOR ADULTS”

SPEAKERS

Christofer Arroyo

Los Angeles Regional Manager,
State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD)

Christofer Arroyo has worked with individuals with developmental disabilities and their families for over 30 years. He is presently the Los Angeles Regional Manager for the State Council on Developmental Disabilities, where he has worked for almost 20 years. Chris’ experience includes working as an intern at a state developmental center, a service provider running programs for children and adults with developmental disabilities, a clients’ rights advocate at a state developmental center, chair of Santa Monica’s Disabilities Commission, and an advocate specializing in regional center, special education, legislation, and systemic change. Chris has become known in both the English and Spanish-speaking communities for the trainings he has provided to thousands of attendees.



Cynthia Austin

Transition Specialist, Centinela Valley Union High School District
Cynthia Austin first experienced the power of work experience and employment on young adults with disabilities, while serving in the classroom as a Resource Specialist at Lloyde Continuation High School in the Centinela Valley Union High School District in Lawndale, California. Years later, Cynthia continues to guide the post-secondary transition needs of students and families in her role as Transition Specialist, with a strong emphasis on work experience education. Through her work cultivating beneficial school district collaborations with the California Department of Rehabilitation, Social Security Administration, The Department of Developmental Services, The California Department of Education, and the local business community, Cynthia brings life to her personal educational vision of "seamless post-secondary transition for students of all ability levels for their participation and fulfillment in all life domains."



Sherry Beamer

Director of Employment WorkFirst, Easterseals of Southern California
Since 2017 Sherry Beamer has served as Director of Easterseals WorkFirst Employment Service in Los Angeles County where she oversees the expansion of customized employment services that assist people with disabilities find and keep meaningful work. A recognized leader in the area of disability employment services, she is a board officer for the California Association of People Supporting

Employment First (APSE). A former business owner, Sherry holds her Master's degree in Social Work Administration from the University of Illinois, Chicago.



Micaela Connery

Founder and CEO of The Kelsey

Inspired by her cousin Kelsey, Micaela has been working on inclusion in communities her entire life. She has seen firsthand the housing crisis facing adults with developmental disabilities and their families. As a research fellow at the Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies, she spent a year studying the issue in detail. The Kelsey exists to turn the challenge of disability housing into the opportunity of inclusive community. Micaela completed her MPP at Harvard Kennedy School focusing on housing, disability inclusion, and community development. She was a Cheng Fellow at the Harvard Social Innovation and Change Initiative where she worked on designing The Kelsey. In 2017, she received her MBA as a Mitchell Scholar in the Smurfit School at University College Dublin. She's a proud University of Virginia Wahoo. Prior to The Kelsey, Micaela was founder and CEO of Unified Theater.



Terry DeBell

Board Member, Board of Directors, Autism Society of Los Angeles

Terry DeBell has been a family advocate for many years; her brother, Patrick DeBell, had a developmental disability. Terry, a registered nurse, is President of CASHPCR, an organization of current and former families from Fairview and Porterville Developmental Centers. She also serves on the Board of Fairview Families and Friends and the Lanterman Parents Coordinating Council. Terry was presented the 1999 Service Award by the Region II American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. In 2013, she was asked to serve on the *Future of the Developmental Centers Task Force*, convened by the California Health and Human Services Agency, which made recommendations for the future of DC residents and DC land, focusing on expanding current community services and developing specialized services to allow DC residents to transition into community living options. These recommendations have been followed in the Developmental Center Plans for Closure, and instituted at the remaining DCs, currently in the process of closure. This group now operates as the statewide *Developmental Services Task Force*, which examines the current community services system and recommends options to strengthen and improve. Terry is also a member of the *Quality Assessment Advisory Group, the HCBS Advisory Group, and the Self-Determination Workgroup* at the Department of Developmental Services.

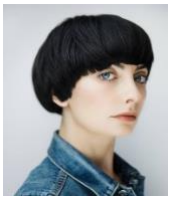


Ryan Berman

Board Member, Board of Directors, Autism Society of Los Angeles

Ryan Berman graduated in 2010 with a Masters' Degree including a Certificate of Honor for Outstanding Academic Achievement in Social Work. Ryan has worked with The Miracle Project for over a decade as the Chief Operations and Program Director. Ryan has worked with individuals with various disabilities for over 12 years, providing a variety of services, skills, and resources to families and children impacted by autism and other disabilities. Ryan applies his training as a consultant for families seeking independence and transition services for children, teens, and

young adults with. Ryan accepted a role as a panelist twice at the United Nations for Autism Awareness Day in 2013 and 2019 on panels for communication as a human right and on transitioning to adulthood. Ryan has also been a co-leader in multiple training experiences in the autism field, both internationally and nationally. Ryan has developed a unique curriculum for young adults seeking employment, including a specific workbook to allow young adults to identify passions, interests, and career opportunities in a self-directed and enjoyable way. Ryan is eager to continue deepening his roots in the in the community and to provide opportunities for all abilities.



Natalia Geldin

Sexuality Educator, Creator, Director of SPARK

Natalia Geldin is a sexuality educator, community organizer and social practice artist serving the Los Angeles autistic community. She is the creator and director of SPARK, a social club for teens with autism. Natalia is the mother of a teenage daughter with autism. Together, they enjoy exploring SoCal's beaches, mountains and deserts.



Carrie Fisher Stone

Deputy Executive Director, CalABLE

Carrie Fisher Stone has served as Deputy Executive Director for the California ABLE Act Board since July 2016. In this capacity, she oversees administration and outreach strategy for California's ABLE program, CalABLE. Carrie has more than ten years' experience in management and program administration across the investment, nonprofit and social services sectors. When her young son with autism failed to receive appropriate supports in his public school, she helped establish a private nonprofit elementary school, serving as administrative director for four years. Her position with CalABLE has allowed her to combine her experience with her passionate advocacy for the independence and inclusion of people with disabilities.



Tim Jin

Board of Directors, 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. Tim has been an active member on several advisory boards, such as IHSS, USC UCED, Self-Determination Program Local Advisory Committee for RCOC, TASK, Disability Voices United, and Disability Communications Fund. Tim has been using an AAC device ever since he was in elementary school. One of his passions is for everyone to communicate through technology, whatever that happens to be. It doesn't matter what your disability is, everyone needs to communicate.



Neal Katz

Board of Directors, Autism Society of Los Angeles

Neal Katz, 25-years-old, loves to walk, listen to music, go to the beach, hang out with friends, go to the store and eat chocolate. He works at UCLA as a community teacher, Shemesh Organic Farms in Malibu, and at the The Farms grocery store in Santa Monica. Neal sees himself as an 'emissary' for disability. He inspired the award winning expressive/performing arts social skills program, *The Miracle Project*; his journey was the subject of the book, *Now I See the Moon,* selected as a presenter for World Autism Awareness Day by the United Nations in 2011 and 2019; and he is a star of the HBO Emmy winning film, *Autism: The Musical*. Neal is a multi-modality communicator using sign language, supportive typing, ProLoquo2Go (an app on his iPhone) and some spoken words to communicate.

He has been a semi-professional model, featured in Kate Winslet's book The Golden Hat. Neal has presented his writings at synagogues across Los Angeles; and was selected as a panelist at the United Nations for World Autism Awareness Day in 2013 and 2019; at the FRED Conference in Los Angeles in 2014; and on on stage with Crosby, Stills and Nash at the "Light Up the Blues" event at the Ace Theater. Neal inspired the YouTube claymation sensation, "*My Name is Neal*," which was shown at the Pantages Theater April 2015. Last summer Neal received the Daniel Jordan Fiddle Foundation Leadership in Autism Award presented to him at the National Autism Society in Washington, D.C.

Recently, Neal moved into his own apartment with support and loves his independence. He also just played a background actor on the TV show Atypical. Neal is honored to be on the board of the Autism Society of Los Angeles.



Desiree Kameka

Project Leader, Autism Housing Network

Desiree is a recognized disability housing expert. Having visited over 100 residential opportunities and social enterprises across the USA, she shares victories and learning curves to help others understand housing, community engagement and service delivery options. Her passion is empowering the neurodiverse community to create a future that is exciting and life affirming.

Ms. Kameka's work is focused on researching housing models, advocating on issues of autism in adulthood, and consulting with existing and emerging residential projects. Ms. Kameka is cited in media outlets such as *The Atlantic*, *Rolling Stone Magazine*, NPR, Psychology Today and ABC News. She has spoken nationally and internationally at prestigious events such as the UBS Global Autism Innovation Roundtable, Great Minds Coming Together on Autism International Conference, United Nations World Autism Awareness Day, and at the National Institute of Health (NIH) to the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee.



Mari-Anne Kehler

VP, Board of Directors, Autism Society of Los Angeles
"Beyond 4 Walls" Director

Mari-Anne has held roles at top organizations for over 30 years and is currently Partner, 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 in the areas of disability advocacy and program development, and in mentoring families and professionals for over 20 years. Mari-Anne is Director of Strategy and Development for Creative Steps, an adult community-based vocational program that fosters entrepreneurial and life skills self-advocacy. She has been Chairman of the Community Advisory Council of the Southwest Special Education Local Planning Area (SW SELPA), and 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. As an Advisory Board member of the Golden Heart Ranch, she launched the FRED Conference as Director; FRED sought to advance opportunities in accelerating jobs, housing and self-determination for disabled adults across North America. Her book "Putting the Profit in Nonprofit" was a #1 bestseller on Amazon.



Hillary Kessler

Director, Adult & Residential Services, *Westside Regional Center*

Hillary received her calling to serve individuals with special needs when her amazing daughter was born 27 years ago. She transitioned from "mom" to "professional" in 1997 when she joined the Westside Regional Center Family Resource & Empowerment Center, providing parent-to-parent support. She then became a Service Coordinator, Program Manager and most recently, Director of Adult & Residential Services. Hillary is committed to keeping the journey real.



Andy Kopito

President, Board of Directors, Autism Society of Los Angeles

Andy Kopito currently serves as the President of the Autism Society of Los Angeles. A father of a 24-year old son with autism, Andy is active in supporting programs to improve the lives of all those with developmental disabilities. Professionally, Andy is a Program Director at Boeing's Satellite Development Center in El Segundo, California.



Victor Lira

Vice President, Premier Healthcare Services;
Board Member, Board of Directors, Autism Society of Los Angeles

Victor Lira is the Senior Vice President of Premier Healthcare Services, overseeing all operations of Financial Management Services (FMS), Respite, Day Care and Personal Attendant services for over 12,000 I/DD individuals. He also oversees the FMS services for the state's only veteran-directed HCBS program. He has over 16 years of experience serving the developmentally disabled population since he entered the field after graduating from California State University, Long Beach with a B.A. in Psychology. He serves with multiple committees, advocacy groups, Regional Centers and work groups throughout the state dedicated to improving the lives of those he serves.



Simon Lopez

Vice President of Workforce and Career Development, Goodwill of Southern California

Simon Lopez is a passionate advocate on behalf under-served and marginalized communities, spending his entire career campaigning for creative, systems-wide solutions that increase economic opportunities for all workers. His vision is one in which all segments of the workforce and society benefit from and contributes to strong local communities and dynamic regional economies. He has designed nationally recognized career pathway programs and helped shape policies that support upward economic mobility for under-represented communities.

Simon is currently the Vice President of Workforce and Career Development at Goodwill of Southern California. In that role, he oversees community initiatives and strategic partnerships throughout Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and Riverside Counties. Goodwill focuses on establishing innovative career mobility programs for jobseekers with the most barriers to employment including individuals with disabilities, the re-entry community, disconnected youth, veterans, the homeless, and the working poor. In order to truly move the needle on a regional level, Simon works with leaders across all sectors to develop new program and policy solutions that create shared wins for all stakeholders.



Judy Mark

President, Disability Voices United;

Government Relations Chair, Autism Society of Los Angeles

Judy Mark is President of Disability Voices United, an organization directed by and for people with developmental disabilities and family members. As Government Relations Co-Chair of the Autism Society of Los Angeles and a board member of Disability Rights California, she helped lead the successful effort to enact California's self-determination law. She has spoken nationally and trained thousands of individuals on self-determination, person-centered planning, racial and geographic disparities, and supported decision making. Judy is also a faculty member at UCLA and teaches undergraduate courses in the Disability Studies Department about the inclusion of people with autism. Her past professional experience includes over 30 years with national policy organizations, most extensively focusing on immigrant and refugee rights. Judy lives in LA and has two children, including a 22-year old son with autism.



Ronit Molko, Ph.D., BCBA-D

Founder and Principal, Empowering Synergy Inc;

Board Member, Board of Directors, Autism Society of Los Angeles

As CEO of Empowering Synergy Inc., Ronit Molko advises investors and service providers in the behavioral healthcare field, with a special focus on services to individuals with autism and developmental disabilities. Ronit co-founded Autism Spectrum Therapies, which grew into one of the largest multi-state providers of premier, evidence-based interventions for individuals on the autism spectrum. She sold her company in 2014. In her book, *Autism Matters*, Ronit takes a critical look at the autism services industry. She examines what investors and providers can do to advance services and offer sustained long-term outcomes that provide the skills and opportunities individuals need to build fulfilled, self-determined

lives. Ronit serves as a board member for the GALT Foundation, which places disabled individuals in the workforce, and ASLA. Ronit is a licensed clinical psychologist in CA and WA states, a board-certified behavior analyst, and a graduate of Harvard Business School's Owners/President Management program.



Kendra Oliver, LCSW

Co-Director of Supported Living Services (SCIP),
Institute for Applied Behavior Analysis (IABA)

Kendra Oliver, LCSW is the Co-Director of Supported Living Services at the Institute for Applied Behavior Analysis. She received both a B.A. in Sociology with a Specialization in Urban Studies and Master of Social Welfare from the University of California, Los Angeles. Ms. Oliver has been active in the field of Social Work for over nineteen years. She has taught and mentored over 20 Master's level students as a Field Instructor.

Ms. Oliver is passionate about empowering others to achieve their full potential. Over the past thirteen years, Ms. Oliver has worked in the Social Community Integration and Participation (SCIP) program overseeing support services to adults with complex needs who live in their own home. Through SCIP, she collaborates with Regional Centers to build and provide support services. 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

Board of Directors, Disability Rights California, People First

David Oster is currently involved as a board member on Disability Rights California since 2013 and also serves on the Mental Health Oversight Authority Commission in the Culture and Competence Committee since March 2019. He also is a Program Coordinator for People First in the South Bay/Harbor area. David's passionate about his love of airplanes, weather channel, travel, computer simulators and learning about the homeless, mental health and disability related issues. David has enjoyed living in his own apartment for many years.



Kim Ransom

Director of Special Education, Centinela Valley Union High School District

Kim Ransom is a graduate of Wayne State University (Detroit, Michigan) and Loyola Marymount University (Los Angeles, California). She has been a public-school educator for 38 years. She has worked in multiple states and supported various charities associated with disabilities. She has worked as an elementary, middle and high school teacher. She was adjunct professor at Purdue University and earned community awards for her work in special education. She has been nominated as teacher of the year in two districts and was the administrator of the year in 2018-19 district administrator of the year for her current district. She has been honored by several organizations including the city of Los Angeles for her support of special education. She is currently the director of special education at Centinela Valley Union High School District.



Richard L. Rosenberg, Ph.D.

Regional Manager for CaPROMISE and CCI

Richard Louis Rosenberg, Ph. D. Ph.D. in Behavioral Disabilities and Educational Administration received from University of Wisconsin, Madison in 1980. Over 35 years of teaching and administrative experience. Presently faculty member at California State University, Los Angeles (CSULA) and San Diego State University, Interwork Institute (SDSU) as Region Manager with two federal grants - California Career Innovations (CII) and Promoting the Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income. Provide supports and technical assistance to Chapman University's Thompson Policy Institute (TPI). Completed 35 years as Career Vocational Coordinator for Whittier Union High School District (WUHSD) in administrative position responsible for coordination of vocational and career support for all students with disabilities for seven district high schools and providing technical assistance for other community based organizations.



Kim Sinclair

Executive Director, Autism Society of Los Angeles

Kim Sinclair brings more than 20 years of experience in both corporate and non-profit environments to ASLA. Her career includes Fortune 100 experience in business and information technology, and most recently, contributions to a number of local non-profit organizations in the Los Angeles area. Her non-profit experience includes leadership roles at FRED Conference, and Southwest SELPA. With a 16-year-old son with special needs, 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, Melbourne, Australia, and earned her MBA from Baylor University, Waco, Texas. Kim loves to spend her spare time with her husband and her son, cycling, walking and enjoying the outdoors.



Guadalupe (Lupe) Trevizo-Reinosa

Vice President, Living Options, Easterseals Southern California

Vice President of Living Options, Guadalupe (Lupe) Trevizo-Reinoso has been with Easterseals Southern California (ESSC) for 26 years, joining as a program director in 1993, and is responsible for the development, implementation and management of residential, supported and independent living services and coordinated life services. Trevizo-Reinoso supervises a variety of ESSC service lines, including licensed residential homes; supported living and independent living services; and coordinated life services, supporting individuals moving from the State Developmental Center or at-risk of moving into a more-restrictive living environment by providing intensive case management.

Bilingual in English and Spanish, Trevizo-Reinoso holds Master's and Bachelor's degrees in Rehabilitation Counseling from California State University, Los Angeles.



Michelle K. Wolf

Founding Executive Director, Jewish Los Angeles Special Needs Trust (JLA Trust)

Michelle K. Wolf is parent disability advocate, non-profit innovator and social services entrepreneur. She is the Founding Executive Director of the Jewish Los Angeles Special Trust (JLA Trust), the first pooled nonprofit trust in LA County. She was formerly the Director of Serving the Vulnerable for The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles and co-founded HaMercaz an innovative multi-agency collaborative one-stop initiative that helps Jewish families raising children with special needs

As a parent of a young adult with cerebral palsy, she blogs on topics related to special needs for the LA Jewish Journal and also writes for the print edition. She holds Master degrees in Jewish Communal Service (Hebrew Union College) and Public Administration (USC) and has taught professional development classes through the Center for Non-Profit Management. She is currently an Adjunct Instructor in Program Development and Grant Writing for the USC School of Social Work.