

2010

# Year Book

**A collection of stories honoring  
those who help families of children  
with special needs**



**CELEBRATING  
20 YEARS OF ADA**



**Strengthening Families** *with*  
Education • Empowerment • Encouragement

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# Governing Board

Sam Lieberman  
*Chairperson*

Terri Peltier  
*Vice Chair*

Jason Sadow  
*Treasurer*

Dee Raymond  
*Secretary*

Trish Leavitt  
Nilza Shellhamer  
Doug Whitener  
Bryce Loveland  
Thea Westin  
*Board Members*

Nancy Radford  
Bob Zauhar  
Alexia Conger  
Juanita Matz  
*Alumni Board*

Craig Wetzel  
Lois Tarkanian  
*Advisory Board*

We are very grateful to Alexia Conger and Nancy Radford for their many years of dedication to Nevada PEP's Governing Board. Alexia is one of our original founding Board Members and Nancy has been a supportive Board Member for many years. We would like to welcome Alexia and Nancy to Nevada PEP's Alumni Board. Thank you for your dedication to Nevada's families.



Alexia Conger



Nancy Radford

“You are the one who has given us the strength to keep going after everything that happened in our family. We know we can always count on you and you are always there for us. Thank you for your guidance and support.”

-Parent

## Our Mission

To increase the opportunities for home, community and school success for children with disabilities, including those who are at risk or who have serious emotional disturbances, their families and their service providers, through education, encouragement and empowerment activities.

# What Is Nevada PEP?

PEP is Nevada's statewide Parent Training and Information Center for families who have children with disabilities and the professionals who support them. Nevada PEP is also the Statewide Family Network for families who have children with emotional and behavioral health needs. Nevada PEP believes that the family is the fundamental unit in society. Our philosophy is that children with disabilities, without regard for the nature and severity of the disability, have an inherent value, that all life has a purpose, that communities benefit from providing appropriate interventions and that individuals with disabilities make valuable contributions to society.

## What Services Does PEP Offer?

Information and Referral

Statewide Lending Library

Quarterly Newsletters

Conflict Resolution Support

Individual Assistance

Parent Mentors and Advocates

Training Workshops

Volunteer Opportunities

Family Support Services



## Who Should Call?

- Parents of children with special needs, illness, and disabilities.
- Parents of children with mental health needs.
- Parents needing encouragement and support from other parents.
- Family members, friends and persons with disabilities.
- Professionals in the medical, educational, and human service fields.
- Community Leaders who make decisions about programs of support for children with disabilities and their families.

NEVADA

PEP 

Strengthening Families *with*  
Education • Empowerment • Encouragement

# ANNUAL REPORT

09-10

“When the whole world stops making sense, I call for a “PEP” talk and get refueled to go the distance for my family.”

-Parent



## Letter From the Chairperson of Nevada PEP's Governing Board

As the Chairperson of the Nevada PEP Governing Board, I am proud to share with you our many accomplishments. Throughout the state, Nevada PEP takes great pride in the respect and reputation that we have built over the years. Nevada PEP continues to grow while helping families improve their lives with the information and support we provide.

A milestone achievement of 2010 was moving to a new office space in Las Vegas. Celebrating this positive move, we held an Open House where Judge Michelle Leavitt had the honor of cutting the ribbon. We were very honored to have a special recognition award from Senator Reid celebrating our Open House. It was an exciting event with a personal visit from Congresswoman Dina Titus, Senator Barbara Cegavske, Assemblywoman Peggy Pierce, and many other special guests.

Another important milestone in 2010 was being recognized and honored by the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce as a finalist in the Annual Small Business Excellence Awards. Nevada PEP was named one of the top three non-profits of the year. It was such a privilege to receive this special recognition from the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce.

Looking into the New Year, Nevada's families are facing many difficult challenges in an unstable economy. We are dedicated to increasing the opportunities for home, community, and school success for children with disabilities, including those who are at risk or who have serious emotional disturbances. Nevada PEP remains committed to supporting and strengthening families. Through education, empowerment and encouragement activities parents will be better informed and have the information they need to support their children to reach their full potentials.

Thank you to all of our dedicated partners, volunteers and generous donors who continue to believe in our mission. Together we are building stronger families for a better community.



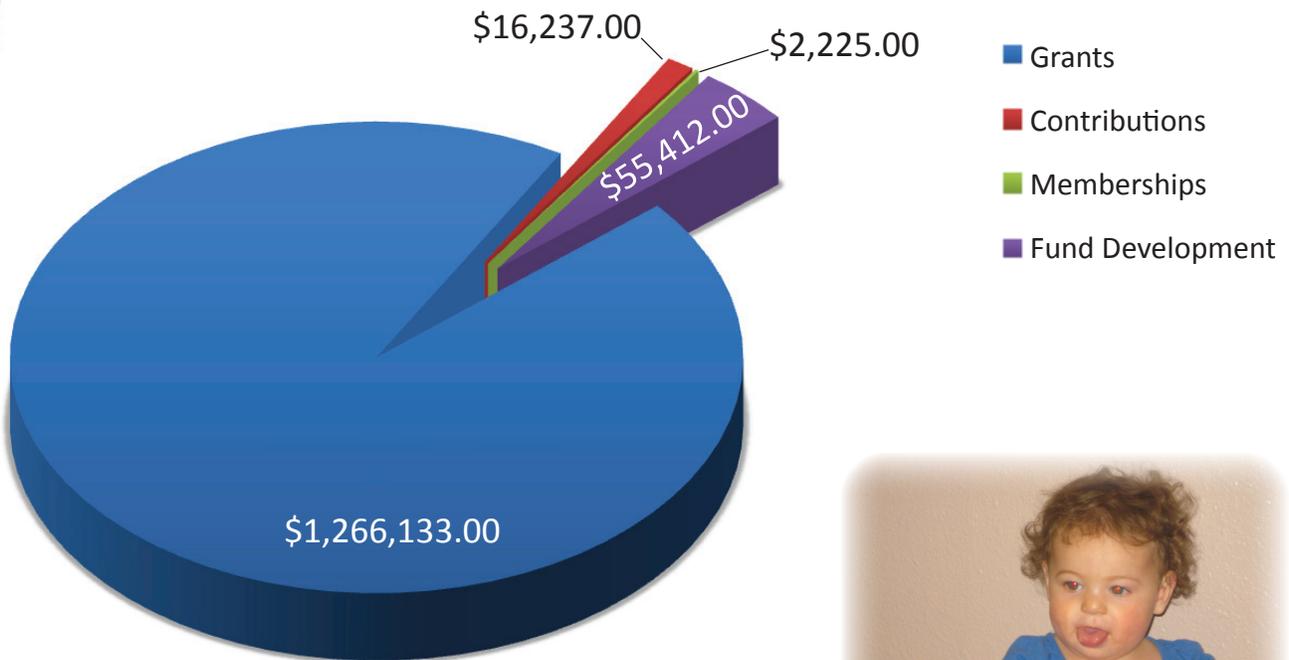
Sam Lieberman, Nevada PEP  
Governing Board Chairperson



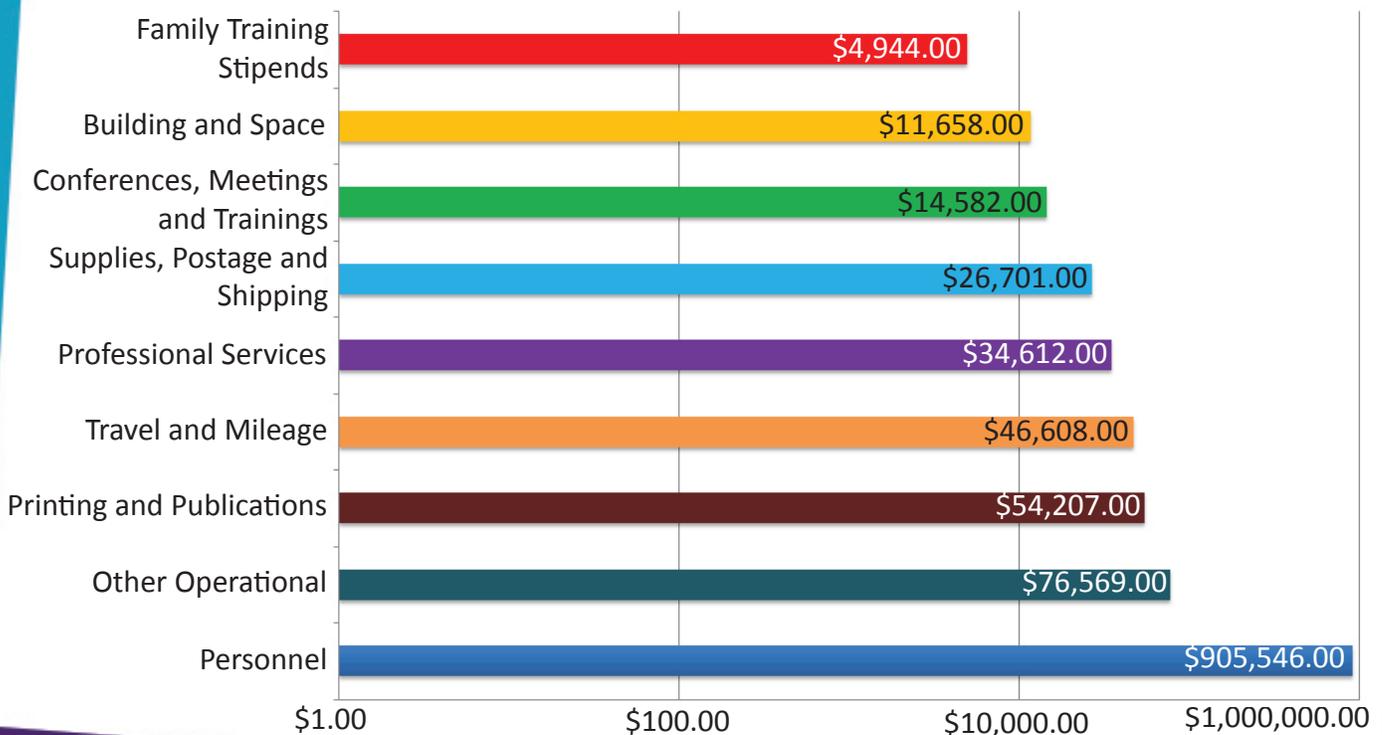
Sam Lieberman  
"Through education, empowerment and encouragement activities parents will be better informed and have the information they need to support their child to reach their full potential."

# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

**Income Total: \$1,340,007.00**



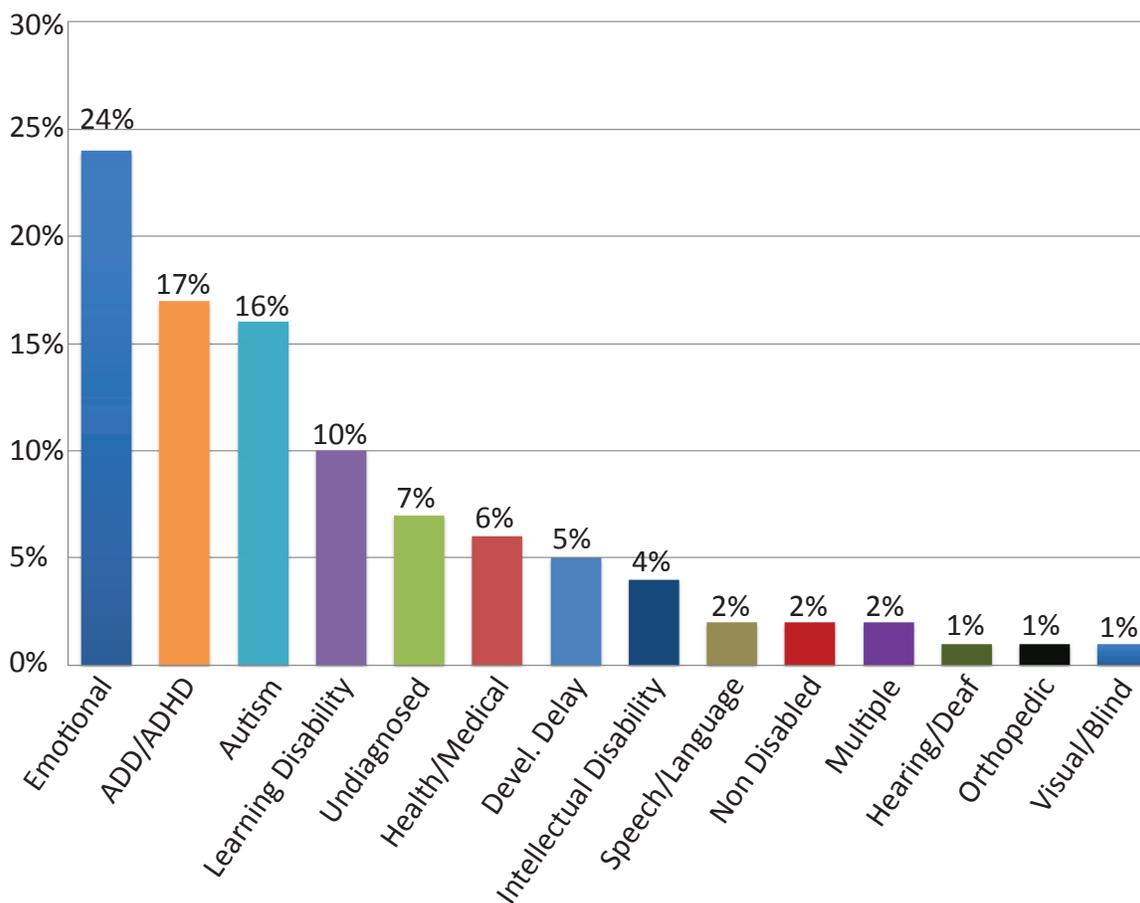
**Expenditures Total: \$1,282,427.00**



# COMMUNITY TRAININGS

Nevada PEP offers training opportunities for parents, students and professionals throughout Nevada. Core training topics include: Understanding ADHD, IEP Clinics, Positive Behavioral Interventions, Bullying Prevention and Literacy workshops. In collaboration with our community partners we provide trainings to educate the community and reach more families who have children with disabilities. The information offered in the training help families learn about best practices and to advocate for services for their children. Trainings are presented in both English and Spanish.

## DISABILITIES OF ALL CHILDREN SERVED



3,726  
Individuals  
participated  
in the training  
workshops



270  
Training  
Workshops  
conducted

# TRAINING OUTCOMES

Was the information presented at the workshop useful to you?	.....Yes, 96%
Because of the information you received at the workshop, do you feel you are more knowledgeable about how to work with schools?	.....Yes, 96%
Has your child received more appropriate services because of the information you have received from the Parent Center?	.....Yes, 84%
Because of the information you received at the workshop, were you able to work with the school to address a critical need related to your child's education?	.....Yes, 80%
Has the workshop provided you with the information you needed to make decisions about your child's education?	.....Yes, 100%

“The positive behavior training changed my life forever. I can hardly wait to attend The Journey into Adulthood Training. I am just sure this is information every parent must have!”

-Parent

## VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS

Nevada PEP encourages volunteers, board members and family members to be involved in their communities. Students, parents, professionals and the general public have donated over 6,000 hours of valuable service to Nevada PEP. Volunteers provide office assistance by helping with general office tasks: answering telephones, copying, faxing, assisting with bulk mail, filing office forms and assembling training packets. Volunteers assist with community fairs, special events, outreach, public awareness, trainings and support groups. Nevada PEP encourages family and student involvement on task forces, focus groups and at committee meetings. Thank you to all of the valuable volunteers who contributed to Nevada PEP.

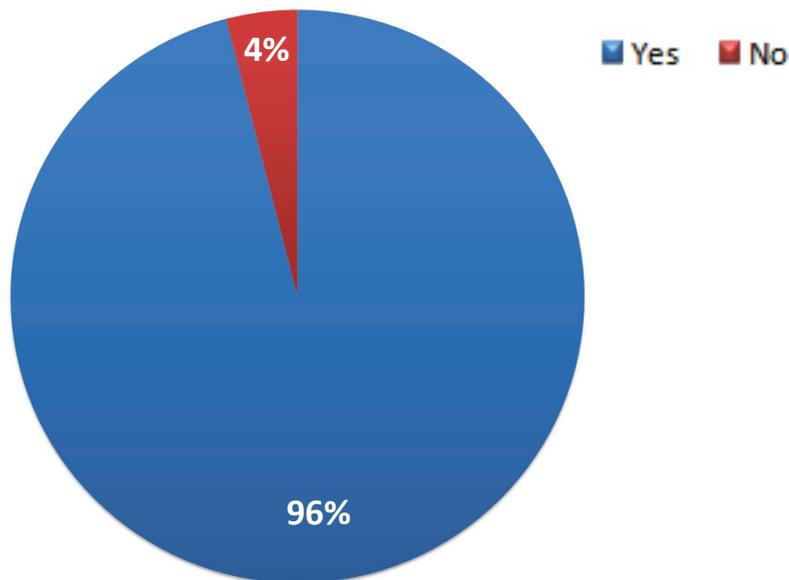


# SUPPORT SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS

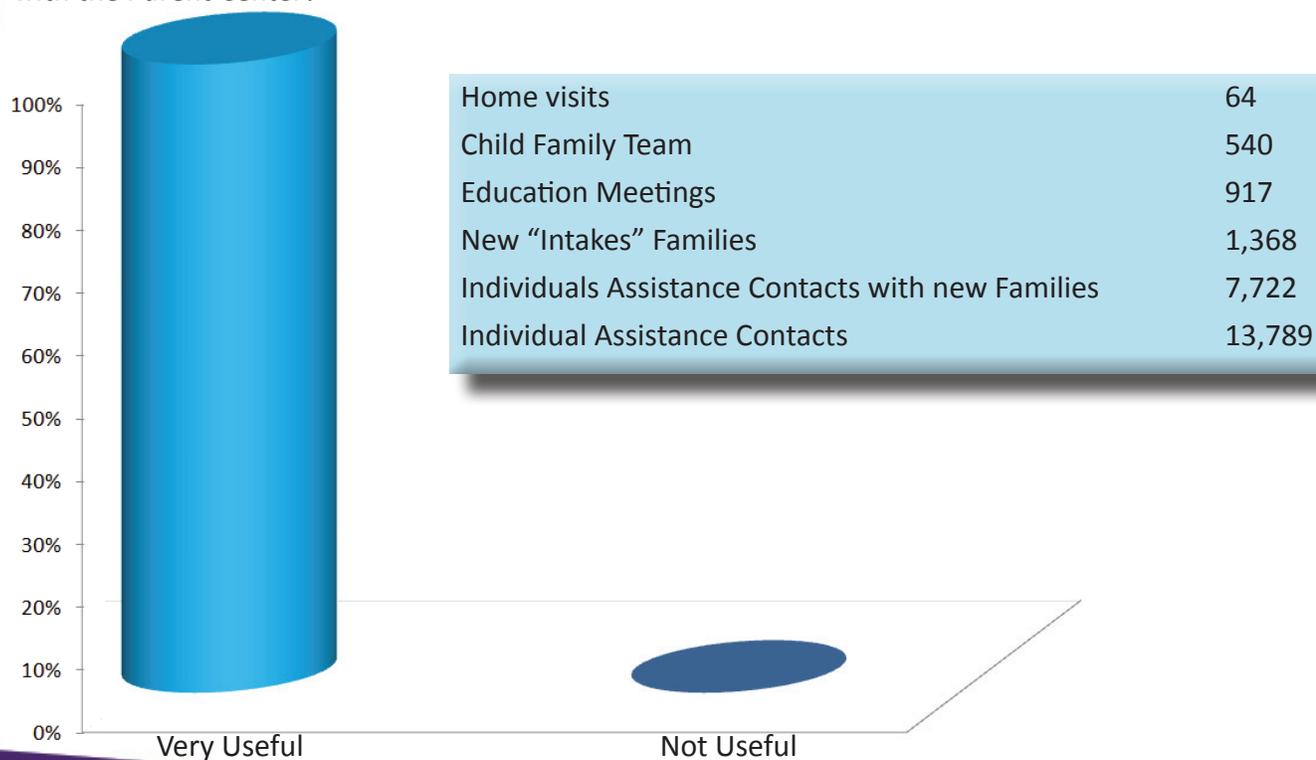
Nevada PEP provides support services by first providing Information & Referral Services and helping parents find their way through the maze of services.

Another important support service is individual assistance which targets the specific needs of the individual or family. If a family requires additional support, Nevada PEP attends Education, Wraparound, or Child & Family Team meetings.

*The Parent Center provided me with the information I needed to make decisions about my child's education.*



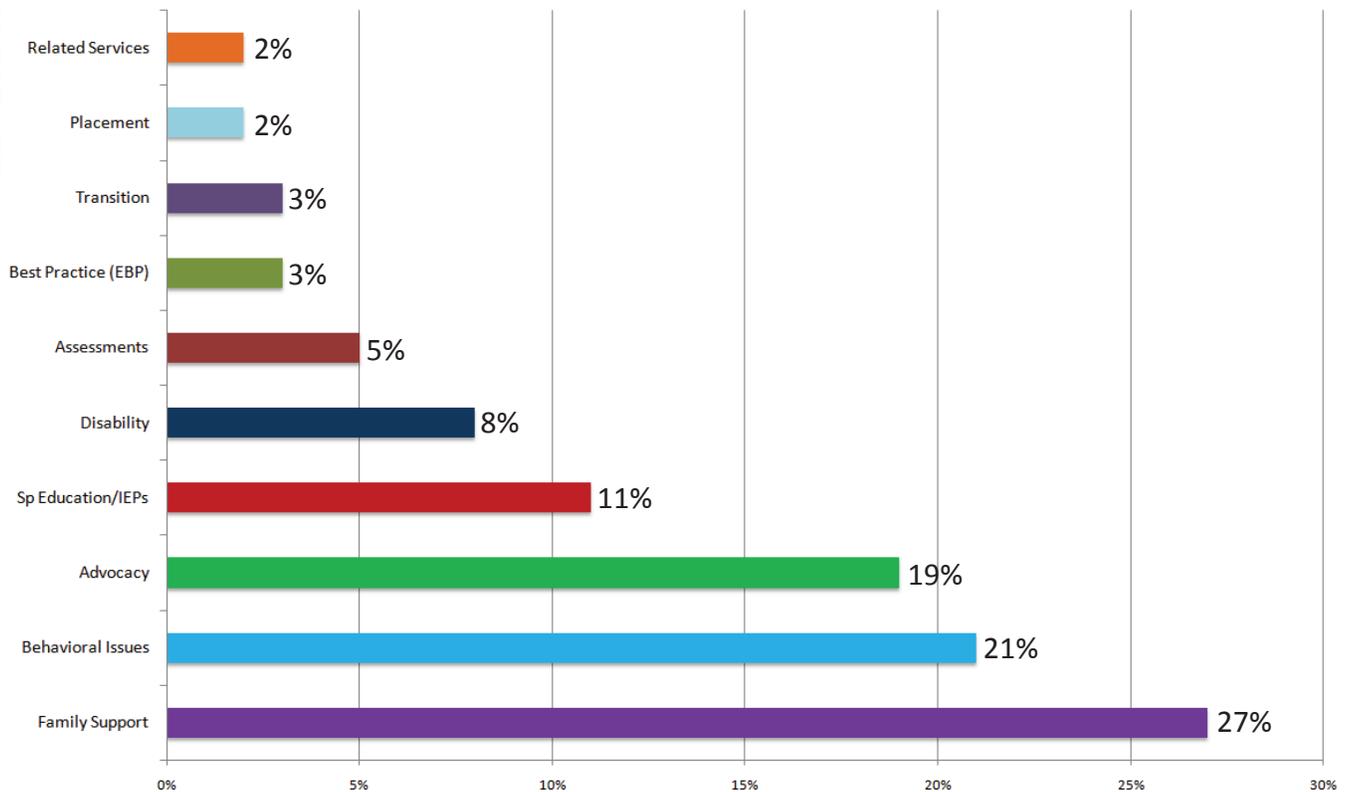
*How useful was the information you received from your contact with the Parent Center?*



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH & PUBLIC AWARENESS

Nevada PEP provides outreach presentations for advocacy organizations, service providers, professional organizations and parent groups throughout Nevada. By educating community members, Nevada PEP continually enhances understanding of the needs of children with disabilities and their families.

## TOP 10 REASONS PEOPLE CONTACT NEVADA PEP



254

Number of public forums, back-to-school fairs, and health fairs in which Nevada PEP has participated

95

Number of committees to which Nevada PEP representatives provided advocacy and the parent perspective

384

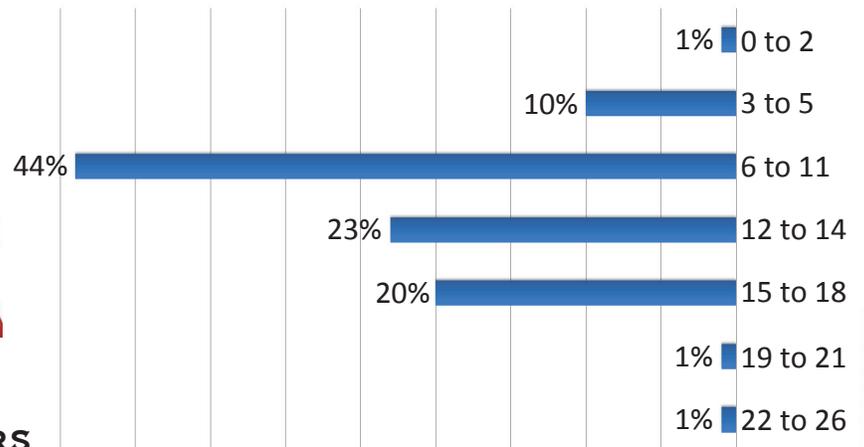
Number of meetings attended to enhance the support systems for children with special needs and their families

“I can't believe that we finally found you and Nevada PEP. Thank you so very much for all your support and encouragement. It means the world to us.”

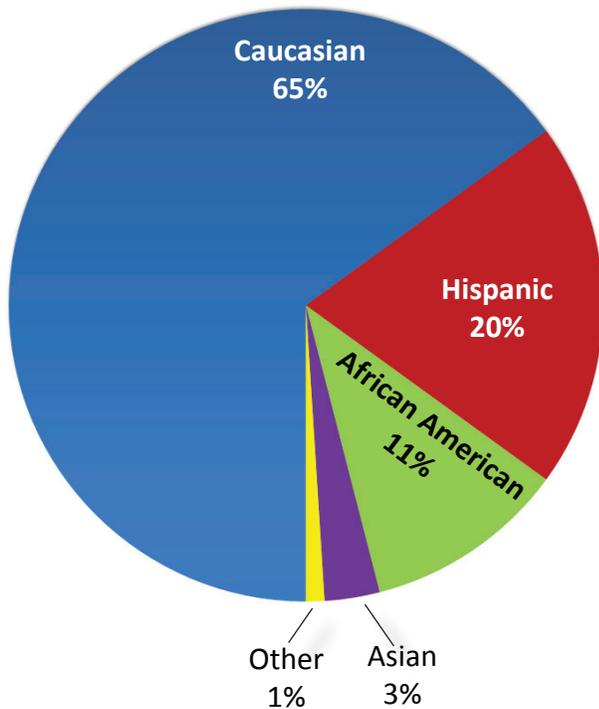
-Parent

# CONSUMER DEMOGRAPHICS

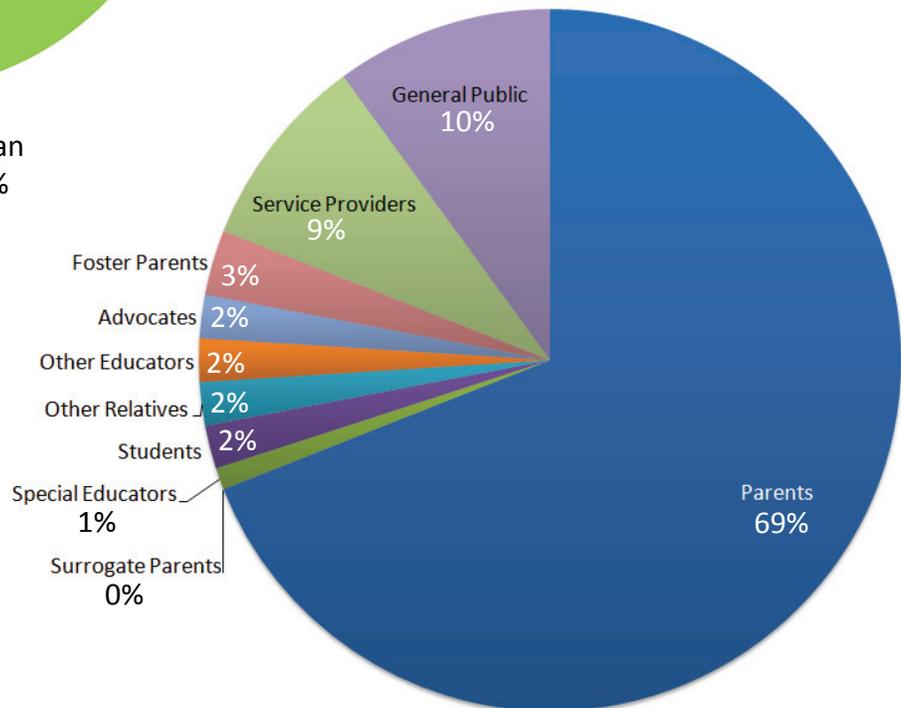
## AGES OF CHILDREN HELPED



## ETHNICITIES OF CONSUMERS



## CONSUMER RELATIONSHIPS



**21,450**  
Number of web hits at  
nvpep.org

# Funding Sources

Nevada PEP has formed strong relationships throughout the community with corporations, professional organizations, and informed individuals. Creating partnerships with the private and nonprofit sectors to extend Nevada PEP's mission has had powerful and positive results on families across Nevada. Our donors, participants, and volunteers truly impact families of children with disabilities at both the state and national level. By becoming a Nevada PEP Sponsor, you become a part of each family's success.

Over the past year, Nevada PEP has raised over \$73,874.00 to help support its mission. It is only through the continued support and commitment of our special community partners that we continue to grow. Our greatest need is for corporate sponsors. In giving to Nevada PEP, you will be rewarded with a lifetime of achievement and partnership.

## To Donate...

Visit our website at [www.nvpep.org](http://www.nvpep.org)  
to donate securely over the Internet!



# Funding Sources

## MAJOR FUNDERS

Administration on Developmental Disabilities  
MGM Resorts Foundation  
Nevada Department of Education  
Nevada Division of Child and Family Services  
Nevada Law Foundation  
Nevada Office of Suicide Prevention  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration  
US Department of Education  
US Department of Health and Human Services

## INDIVIDUAL FUNDERS

Carlos Amazquita  
Michael & Brenda Anthony  
Cindy Beldy  
Jennifer & John Bergdoll  
Teresa Ozmun-Berger  
Yvonne Betron  
Monica Reitsma-Bolin  
Steve Bramson  
Steve Cuff  
Marie Dean  
Jim Dumond  
Cynthia Escamilla  
Will Filipic  
Robert Fowler  
Angela Francis  
Daniel Giordano  
Meaghan Goecke  
James D. Hall  
Stacy Harris  
Sarah Heiner  
Andrea Herrera  
Mikel & Kim Holt  
William Horne  
Shannon Johnson  
Timothy Josselyn  
Trish and Andy Leavitt and Family

Luningning De Luna  
Ritche & Florabel Maquiso  
Jessica Misch  
Thomas & Carmela Monahan  
Diane Morales  
Andy & Lora Morin  
Barbara Parry, Ph. D.  
Frank Perez  
Cheri Resh  
Gregory Rundell  
Jason & Whitney Sadow  
Joseph Sciscento  
Joseph Sears  
Helen Senter  
Elizabeth & Barrett Shaw  
Shayne & Andrea Skipworth  
Danielle Smades  
Angela & John Springgate  
Linda Tache  
Kathy Treants  
Rita Varney  
Maritza Velez  
Pamela Watkins  
Craig Wetzell  
Sally Young

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

1909 S. Jones Properties, LLC.  
American Shredding  
Ash Signs  
Clearwater Building Maintenance

CMIT Solutions  
Spectrum Color Printing & Mailing  
U-Haul

# “Our New Home”

Nevada PEP moved into a new Southern Nevada office space over the summer. We could not have done it without great support from our volunteers and community partners. We put out the word that we needed help moving. On the day of the move, volunteers showed up bright and early to help. From donating moving trucks to lots of sweat and muscle, the job got done very quickly. We are so excited! Our new building has more office space, a bigger training room and family activity rooms to serve more families. Nevada PEP would like to thank each and everyone who helped us get unpacked and organized. And a special thanks to the following volunteers and community partners that helped to make this a successful and positive experience.



## VOLUNTEERS

Ali Ancheta  
Kyle Anthony  
Bob Blackman  
Dale Cisson  
Dorithia Coleman  
Santiago De La Torre  
Cynthia Escamilla  
Natalie Filipic  
Leslie Hernandez  
Craig Kincaid  
Robin Kincaid  
Trish Leavitt  
Austin Leavitt  
Anthony Lombardo

Diane Lombardo  
Kevin Moran  
Brandi Morgan  
Jessica Nunez  
Juan Nunez  
Louie Preciado  
Robin Renshaw  
Abigail Sadow  
Whitney Sadow  
Sarah Sadow  
Jason Sadow  
Leslie Scasino  
Michael Stansberry  
Kenny Taycher

Tom Taycher  
Karen Taycher  
Kathy Treants  
Robert Treants  
Stephanie Vrsnik  
Natalie Wahl  
Ben Wahl  
Damon Wahl  
Philip Webb  
Natasha Young  
Maria Fernanda Zamora  
Monica Zamora



## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Abbott Custom Printing  
Cactus Joe's  
Interstate Contracted Movers  
District Council #15 International Union Painters & Allied Trade  
Freeman's Carpet  
FSI Flooring Solutions Inc.  
Maximum Audio Video, Inc.  
Republic Services  
TKT Openings  
Vortex Doors

# Letter from the Executive Director



Karen Taycher

"After reading the yearbook stories, I am touch by the selflessness of the many nominees, who in spite of their own situation cared enough to make a difference for others."

I would like to applaud the 2010 Hand in Hand Together We Can honorees. This appreciation program commemorates the selfless giving of remarkable Nevadans who go above and beyond to make a positive difference in the lives of children and their families. Nevada PEP has provided this program as a way to express appreciation and highlight the outstanding individuals who make a difference. When I read the sincere nominations that thankful families submit, I am reminded and amazed of how kindness to others makes a tremendous difference.

This year has been especially difficult for Nevadans. The economic downturn has had an impact on all of us. After reading the yearbook stories, I am touch by the selflessness of the many nominees, who in spite of their own situations cared enough to make a difference for others. The stories showcase neighbors, friends, educators and service providers who have positively impacted the lives of a child with special needs. Thank you to the families who take the time to applaud the nominees. It is also very important to recognize the kindness of others.

This appreciation program is made possible because of the generous sponsors who donate the funds to support the Hand in Hand Together We Can activities throughout the year. Nevada PEP celebrates the gracious and giving sponsors as they make it possible to publically recognize the extraordinary deeds of the nominated individuals.

On behalf of the staff and volunteers of Nevada PEP, we praise the exceptional individuals who are included in this yearbook. We strengthen our community as we support and strengthen families. This group of people is a shining example to all of us; we can make a difference for children, families and our community.

With Appreciation,

*Karen Taycher*

# Department Directors



Retta Dermody, Director of Programs and Services for the Satellite Office, has over 26 years of experience in special education. Retta has advocated as a mom, step-mom, and grandmother of children with special needs. Her experience includes working as a teacher's aide in resource rooms for WCSD and as a Child and Family Advocate and Director of Family Services for the Committee to Aid Abused Women. In her current position, Retta combines her responsibilities involving the "Collaborating for Children" grant and directing the Satellite Office staff, providing rural outreach, training and other individual assistance to parents and professionals. She serves as vice-chairperson on the Washoe County Children's Mental Health Consortium and is a member of the Rural Children's Mental Health Consortium as well as serving on numerous boards and committees.

Natalie Filipic is the mother of two and grandmother of four. As the Director of Operations, Natalie is generally responsible for the business and information management of Nevada PEP ensuring the smooth operation of the organization's infrastructure. Natalie enjoys the day to day routine of office management at PEP knowing what she does makes a difference in the lives of others.



Robin Kincaid is the Director of Training Services at Nevada PEP. Robin has over 15 years experience educating parents and professionals on special education law, advocacy, best practice, parent/professional collaboration and positive behavior supports. Other responsibilities include outreach activities for Nevada PEP and individual assistance to families. Robin has served on the Interagency Coordinating Council for the past six years to represent the parent perspective in early intervention services. As co-chair for the Families First Statewide Conference in 2007, Robin provided leadership and coordination for the conference program.

# Department Directors

TJ Rosenberg is the Statewide Family Network Director for Nevada PEP. She has served in this position for the past eleven years. Her department focuses on Systems change, helping families who are involved with more than one child serving system, specific to children with serious emotional disturbance and behavior disorders. TJ is a parent who has had personal experience and has a young adult son with a disability. TJ serves on many subcommittees for the Clark County Children's Mental Health Consortium as well as other boards and committees to be a parent voice in the community. She is also a Wraparound trainer and does System of Care training and Parent training both locally and nationally.



Stephanie Vrsnik is the Community Development Director for Nevada PEP. Stephanie is the mother of two, and a very proud grandmother. Having a son with a disability brought her to Nevada PEP. Her passion and expertise is focused on bringing public awareness and community support to Nevada PEP. "It is vital, that the community supports and helps our children to be successful contributing members of society." Stephanie is a member of the American Fundraising Professionals and the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce. She has overseen the "Baldy Bash", a collaborative effort with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, to raise funds and public awareness for Nevada PEP. Building a stronger community for all Nevada families is Stephanie's primary goal.

Monica Zamora is a bilingual Information Services Director. She enjoys working with families and empowers them to advocate for their children. Monica is a graduate from UCI with a bachelor's degree in Psychology and Social Behavior. She has experience as an ABA therapist and as a tutor for children, adolescents and adults with disabilities. Monica enjoys presenting trainings in Spanish and sharing information and experiences with the local community.



# Professional Staff



Dorena Ash is a Family Specialist at Nevada PEP. Her experience with her daughter's disability has inspired her to work at PEP. She enjoys working with the families of children with disabilities; it helps to know that families don't have to go through this alone. Dorena is honored to be a part of the PEP family.

Eskinder Belete is a family specialist at Nevada PEP. He is passionate and committed to helping families who have children with special needs. He has a BA degree in Economics from AAU and Masters of Business Administration from USN/UNLV. His work experiences include project manager, director and business consultant in private and nonprofit organizations. He is very excited to work for PEP to empower, encourage and educate parents to be the best advocates for their children.



Dorithia Coleman is the Information and Referral Specialist at Nevada PEP. She is a wife and mother of an incredible teenage son with special needs. Dorithia serves as a member of the State of Nevada Medicaid Infrastructure Grant Program Advisory Group. She believes that the parent is the first and best teacher of their child, and her goal is to empower families with useful strategies and provide resources that address their child's needs through Nevada PEP.

Jennifer Cunningham is the Rural Family Specialist in the Satellite Office. She is proud to have the opportunity to help families every day. This has been a very rewarding experience for her. Learning from her own experience, Jennifer is able to continue to support and help families by listening, providing information, and just letting them know that they are not alone and that Nevada PEP is here to help.



# Professional Staff



Cheri Day is the Information and Training Specialist working in the Satellite Office. After her own personal experience, she discovered that there is wonderful help if you know where to find it. She joined Nevada PEP after a year of working with the staff on her own IEPs to work with Autism, ADHD, RAD, PTSD as well as Sensory Integration. It is her goal to help empower others as she has been empowered through Nevada PEP.

Hi, my name is Santiago De La Torre, Training Specialist, and I have two great kids one of whom has autism. I enjoy sharing moments with them because they always involve an opportunity to teach, learn and just have fun. I originally came from Southern California and went to Clark High School when moving to Las Vegas. I spent four years in the US Marine Corps after high school and was stationed in Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. I am pursuing an MA for Special Education at UNLV.



Cynthia Escamilla is one of the bilingual Family Specialists at Nevada PEP hoping to reach out to the community and to be of service to the families with children of special needs. "It is an honor to be part of Nevada PEP. I will be able to accomplish a life time goal of helping others. This is the gratification of a lifetime!!!"

Kiara Estill is the Intake Specialist at Nevada PEP. She has personal experience as a single parent and advocate of a child with special needs. She has a BA in Communications and Interpersonal Relationships. Kiara offers a combination of insight, passion, and education to support families at Nevada PEP. She holds the belief that no one knows your children better than you do. She enjoys supporting families and their children.



# Professional Staff



Tamara Grubaugh is the Program Management Specialist at Nevada PEP. As the older sister of a young adult with special needs, Tamara takes pride in supporting her sibling. Tamara began as a volunteer. She is passionately learning about advocacy for families and the resources available to them. Tamara finds being a part of the Nevada PEP family a very rewarding experience.

Sheryl Hastings is a Family Specialist in the Satellite office. She comes to us after several years working with children of all ages, especially with preschool children, as a teacher. She loves working with families and training individuals in Positive Behavioral Interventions, Is My Child a Target of Bullying, Understanding ADHD and Discipline. She also serves on the Helping Youth Succeed in School subcommittee of the Washoe County Mental Health Consortium. It is an honor for her to give back to an organization that has been instrumental in helping her son with special needs to obtain the best education possible.



Ron Kopicko is the Outreach Specialist for the Satellite Office. Ron knows that families can have a difficult time looking for support. He finds it rewarding to assist the families to navigate the process. Ron has been actively involved for PEP in the Washoe County Juvenile Justice system. He is a member of the Washoe County Juvenile Services "Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative." Ron also provides training through the Reno Police Dept Regional Crisis Intervention Program for Northern Nevada law enforcement agencies focusing on children and adolescents who have severe emotional disorders. Ron is glad to be a part of Nevada PEP.

Samantha King is the Transition Specialist in the Satellite Office. She has two children with learning disabilities. She works with middle and high school students getting ready to transition into postsecondary education, employment and independent living. She believes that life after graduation can be overwhelming and wants to do the best she can to provide families and young adults with the self-advocacy skills they need.



# Professional Staff



Teri Kirby is the Family Navigator Coordinator in Nevada PEP's 360 Center. Teri was introduced to PEP over eight years ago while seeking help for her own family. She values the opportunities to give unparalleled support back to families who face challenges in the community and schools. Helping to educate, empower and encourage families is not only an honor but a drive for her.

Flo LaRoy is a founding member of PEP and currently is the Special Projects Facilitator. She is inspired by her experiences as a parent of a child with a disability and the challenges of navigating the service delivery systems. Her passion for teaching and sharing information with parents and professionals is evident in her training workshops on positive behavioral interventions.



Diane Lombardo is fulfilling her lifelong dream of helping families through Nevada PEP. She moved to Las Vegas in 1986 for a better opportunity for herself and family. After seeking help for her own two boys at Nevada PEP, she began volunteering to give something back. She has been helping families through PEP for five years. She has a dream of one day staging a huge fundraiser and ultimately helping children with disabilities through her musical talent and Nevada PEP.

Judy Martin is a Family Specialist at the satellite office in Reno. She is a "Native" Nevadan, born in Owyhee and raised in Reno. Judy moved to Santa Cruz, CA where she raised her two children and attended school for chemical dependency counseling. She has worked in different professional settings as an advocate for people with mental health disabilities for the past 27 years. She has worked as an advocate for her son for almost as long. "My biggest accomplishment in life is my two children and now I have been blessed with three beautiful grandchildren!" Her philosophy on life – "We, all of us, have purpose! There is no greater or lesser. We are here to teach and to learn."



# Professional Staff



Dr. Christa Peterson is a licensed psychologist with 25 years of experience developing, administering and delivering services to youths who have developmental disabilities and behavioral health disorders. In the last ten years, Christa has served as principal investigator for several grant initiatives including the Neighborhood Care Center Project. Christa has co-authored many research and other publications in professional psychology, including studies of the wraparound process. She is also the parent of a child with behavior health problems. Christa has recently joined the Nevada PEP staff as director of the Family Support 360 Project.

Angelica Ramirez is the Bilingual I&R Intake Specialist at Nevada PEP. She provides Information and Referral to families. Angelica enjoys providing assistance to families and empowering parents so that they can be the best advocates for their children. She is currently majoring in Special Education and hopes to become a special education teacher.



Sally Reeves is a Training Specialist at Nevada PEP. She has a bachelor's degree in Allied Health & Rehabilitation Services from the University of Florida. Her inspiration to help families comes from watching and assisting her mother advocate for services for Sally's younger brother who has Down's Syndrome. Sally is excited to be able to provide information and support to families through Nevada PEP.

Robin Renshaw has been with PEP for eleven years now as a Transition Specialist. He advocates for and educates youth with disabilities transitioning from middle school to high school, from high school to college, or from college to the work force. He enjoys his work at PEP because as a person with a disability, he recognizes the need for an advocacy organization in Nevada to be that voice for kids with disabilities and their families.



# Professional Staff



Katherine Stansberry is the mother of two daughters. They each have their own special needs. I think the most valuable experience I can bring to my position at Nevada PEP is that I am a parent and advocate for my children. It is gratifying to work at Nevada PEP, helping to make a difference in families' lives.

Kathy Treants came to Nevada PEP in 2006. She is the "best mom" to Brianne who has given her nearly 30 years of experience in the area of advocacy and respect for the abilities of those further challenged in life. Kathy brings first-hand experience to the Transition Department as the department's Coordinator.



Pat Warnke is the Graphic/Web designer for Nevada PEP. Pat maintains the organization's website as well as the online social networks and is in charge of designing the mail out material that is sent to families. I enjoy working for Nevada PEP and designing new material in order for families to receive our information.

Lynne Windle is originally from England and has been in the USA since 1987. Most of my working life has been in financial institutions so this is very different for me. I am the mother of two wonderful children one who is SED. Having received services from PEP in the past, I am thrilled and excited to be here and aspire to be the best advocate I can be.





CONGRESSWOMAN SHELLEY BERKLEY

January 7, 2011



Nevada PEP  
2101 S. Jones Blvd. Suite 120  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89146

Dear Friends,

It is with great pleasure that I write to congratulate the honorees of the 2010 “Hand in Hand Together We Can” appreciation program. These special people have gone above and beyond the call of duty to help children with a disability. They have given so much of their time and energy to help make a positive difference in the lives of children with special needs.

I would also like to commend Nevada PEP for its dedication to providing family and community-based support services to families of children with special needs. Nevada PEP has been fulfilling its mission of empowering families and the community since 1993.

Thank you for your dedication to educating and encouraging families with special needs children. Best wishes for another successful year.

Sincerely,

SHELLEY BERKLEY  
Member of Congress

DEAN HELLER  
2ND DISTRICT, NEVADA

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-2802**



January 13, 2011

Nevada Parents Encouraging Parents  
2101 South Jones Blvd, Suite 120  
Las Vegas, NV 89146

Dear Friends:

It is my pleasure to support the Nevada Parents Encouraging Parents “Hand-in-Hand Together We Can Appreciation Program.”

The success and strength of our state and our nation depend on the investments we make in the lives and futures of our children. The support this program offers to children with disabilities is a perfect example of such an investment. I am proud to support the important efforts of Nevada PEP, and the many committed workers and volunteers who strive to make this program possible.

On behalf of Nevada’s Second Congressional District, thank you for your enthusiasm and your dedication to Nevada’s children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dean Heller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dean" and last name "Heller" clearly distinguishable.

DEAN HELLER  
Member of Congress

# Volunteer Connection

The background of the page is a vibrant yellow-orange gradient. It is decorated with several glossy balloons in shades of gold, white, and dark blue. Swirling streamers in gold and silver are scattered throughout the scene, creating a festive and celebratory atmosphere.

Actions are priceless when they are the reflection of a kind and loving heart that cares about its community. Volunteering not only helps families, but it gives a sense of accomplishment and personal fulfillment. Nevada PEP provides opportunities for families, youth, school groups and other community members to experience the rewards of contributing time and effort to an organization that cares about others. We are very proud of our volunteers statewide and appreciate their commitment to Nevada PEP and the communities in which they live. Volunteering is without a doubt a “noble” profession.

## CRS Volunteers Make A Difference!

Our Community Resource Specialist Volunteers are parents and professionals who represent Nevada PEP by providing information about PEP services and resources at community events, assisting in parent training and providing public awareness in their own communities throughout the State of Nevada.

## VIP Program

### Very Important Partners!

Nevada PEP has provided our Very Important Partners with volunteer experiences in our Central and Satellite PEP offices. Parents, students and community partners, including our school groups, have volunteered their time in business related activities, community based activities and back to school fairs. Not only does Nevada PEP benefit from their assistance, the VIP volunteer learns new skills and experiences that will contribute to their success in future opportunities.

**VOLUNTEER HOURS:**

**6,013**

# October is Nevada PEP's National Bullying Prevention Month

Join the movement and unite against bullying!



Bullying is a serious issue that faces many children in Nevada. Nevada PEP has joined a nationwide movement to raise awareness of bullying prevention. In Clark County, Roundy Elementary, Wynn Elementary, Parson Elementary and in Washoe County Melton Elementary and DePaoli Middle School participated in the movement. Nevada PEP provided Bullying Prevention Bulletin Boards, pledge bookmarks and suggestions on school-wide bullying announcements to help students recognize how they can stand up to bullying! Working together with local schools is an opportunity to address bullying and help create a culture that no longer accepts bullying. In the month of October Nevada PEP also attended a Cyberbullying forum moderated by KSNV's Sue Manteris and a Community Bullying Forum sponsored by the League of Woman Voters and

KRNV Channel Four with the guest speaker news Anchorwoman Shelby Sheehan. Both forums were meant to deepen community understanding, provide intervention and prevention strategies and offer resources available to the community.

Nevada PEP is Nevada's statewide Parent Center that provides services to families with a special emphasis on children with disabilities. Nevada PEP provides Is Your Child a Target of Bullying? workshop for parents so they can learn strategies to address bullying issues with their child.



# Nevada PEP Open House

“A Brighter Future for our Children”

Nevada PEP celebrated its Open House on Tuesday, October 19th. Nevada PEP's Board Chair Sam Lieberman welcomed everyone and introduced PEP's Board members; Karen Taycher, Executive Director of Nevada PEP, and PEP staff. The event began with a ribbon cutting ceremony supported by the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce. Representatives from the offices of Senator Harry Reid and Congresswoman Dina Titus presented Nevada PEP's Executive Director with certificates of recognition for the Open House. Board member Trish Leavitt introduced Judge Michelle Leavitt, who conducted the traditional honor of cutting the ribbon. The Open House was a success with a personal visit from Congresswoman Dina Titus, Senator Barbara Cegavske and Assemblywoman Peggy Pierce, along with many other special guests.



Guests were welcomed into PEP's new office building where they received a tour of the facilities and learned more about PEP's new and exciting programs. Guests mingled and enjoyed hors d'oeuvres while beautiful harp and viola music played in the background. A highlight of the evening was the silent auction, with a room full of exquisite lamps, original artwork, and superb wine baskets. Also, Guilt Free Glam hosted a beautiful jewelry show that was an exciting and successful addition to the festivities.



Our special thanks goes to Kaila Leavitt and Dave Chavez for entertaining our guests with their musical talents. The evening was magical. Additionally, we would like to recognize the following for providing donations to our Open House.

## Thank you to all of Our Sponsors



COURTYARD DELI

KATHY TREANTS

RELAXING SOLUTIONS BY JANAI

SIN CITY PLUMBING

TRISH LEAVITT

LIGHT'S - UP

CYNTHIA ESCAMILLA

IMPERIAL WINE WHOLESALERS



# ADA

20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

CELEBRATION



On July 26, 2010 the country celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. When President Bush signed into law the Americans with Disabilities Act--the world's first comprehensive civil rights law for people with disabilities--in front of 3,000 people on the White House lawn on July 26, 1990, the event represented an historical benchmark and a milestone in America's commitment to full and equal opportunity for all of its citizens.

The ADA was the world's first comprehensive declaration of equality for people with disabilities. It was a collaborative effort of Democrats, Republicans, the legislative and the executive branches, federal and state agencies, and people with and without disabilities.

The ADA Anniversary is a time that we can reflect positively on a law that has made a great impact on the lives of people with disabilities and our country. The message within the Preamble and history is powerful because it clearly states the Congressional intent that the law is intended "to assure equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities."

President Obama said, "Since I launched the 'Year of Community Living,' my Administration has taken a number of important steps to address the needs and concerns of those living with disabilities. And as we mark the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, we must renew our commitment to uphold the civil rights of those living with disabilities and to fully include all our people in the life of our nation." For more information visit the [Disability.gov](http://Disability.gov) website.



# “Include Me”

## A Tribute to Andrea Jagodzinski



Nevada PEP would like to express their deepest gratitude to Walter and Jackie Jagodzinski for their generosity. Walter and Jackie were kind enough to support our “Include Me” Disability Awareness Puppet program by donating funding to purchase six puppets in memory of their daughter Andrea. Andrea passed away in May of 2007. Recently, Jackie came to our Open House and wanted to find a way to give back to Nevada PEP for all the help and support that she received when her daughter was attending school. Jackie felt that this was the perfect way to honor her daughter’s memory and to keep her memory alive.

Andrea loved people, music therapy, and playing Challenger baseball. She also enjoyed participating in Special Olympics, gymnastics, bowling and soccer. Andrea always had a big beautiful smile on her face; she used a speech talker, sign language and gestures to communicate. Jackie and Walter will have the honor of naming a puppet after their daughter Andrea. Naming a puppet after their daughter will allow Andrea’s memory to continue throughout the Las Vegas community.

We are so very grateful to be able to bring the “Include Me” program to the community and to bring the true spirit of disability awareness to bridge the disconnect of information between children with disabilities and their peers. By educating our community on disabilities we are building a more accepting community for all our children.

The disabilities the puppets represent are:

- Blind
- Deaf or hard of hearing
- Down syndrome
- Physical disability (either cerebral palsy or spina bifida).
- Epilepsy
- Learning disabilities

The puppets bring a message that is entertaining, lively and important for children (and adults) to hear. Our goal is to promote positive inclusion of children – with and without disabilities- in libraries, schools and in the community. Nevada PEP’s puppets will give children a comfortable opportunity to:

- Listen to how children with disabilities feel, think and move
- Ask questions and learn about different disabilities
- See and talk about hearing aids, wheelchairs, Braille and other adaptive equipment
- Discover that children with disabilities are like everyone else

Thank you so much Walter and Jackie for giving us the opportunity to bring the “Include Me” Disability Awareness program to Nevada.



# History of the Hand in Hand Program

The “Hand In Hand, Together We Can” appreciation program was designed to proudly recognize and honor special people who have made a positive difference in the lives of children with special needs. The program began in October, 2002 when Hand In Hand forms were mailed to thousands of interested parents and professionals across the state. With each special story sent to us, Nevada PEP delivered the Hand in Hand award recipient a beautiful certificate and lapel pin to display as a proud supporter of Nevada’s community of people with disabilities. The stories are also recognized in our quarterly PEP Post newsletter. The inspiring stories you are about to read are celebrations of wonderful teachers, doctors, therapists, family members, and many others who have worked with children with disabilities and have gone above and beyond to make a positive difference in a child’s life. Touching and original, the stories in our 2010 Yearbook span over a one year period. We at Nevada PEP are excited to honor these very special Hand In Hand recipients and will continue to do so throughout the years to come.



# Hand in Hand Together We Can



## Stories

### Antonio Barraza

*Intake Coordinator*

Last summer, when I was making plans to relocate to Southern Nevada, I called the NV Department of Mental Health to find out about children services in this area. I eventually left a message for Tony and he called me back within 24 hrs and told me about Nevada PEP. When we arrived here in October, he immediately made time for my daughter and went out of his way to ensure we had a smooth transition, as a result of his efforts on our behalf. I now have a very positive attitude about children's mental health care in Nevada.

*Kiara Estill  
Parent*

### Mateen Barekzai

Mr. Mateen Barekzai, of United Studios of Self Defense, has helped make that a place where every child has an IEP. He has taken challenged students that other places of learning couldn't, or wouldn't. With firm caring hands, elbows and feet he embraces their challenges and guides them to success. Karate's 360 degree movement addresses a whole host of issues for the out-of-sync child. Don't know if Mateen has read any books on the autism spectrum, but he could write one...

*Scott & Ariel Linker  
2 Grateful Parents*

### Rachel Brown

*Speech Therapist*

My son and I owe our lives to one incredible woman, Rachel Brown.

About 2 years ago we lived on the East Coast, living in an emotionally unhealthy situation. Rachel and her

husband, Todd, heard about our situation and took it upon themselves to help us out. They invested hundreds of dollars and countless prayers to help us come to Nevada to start a new life.

She directed me to the resources that my son & I needed to start living a healthy life. Rachel gave me encouragement and helped me realize that this was our new home and I no longer had to be afraid. Now we are living a changed life, a happier, healthier life.

Our family is not the only family that Rachel, a Speech Therapist, has changed. I have witnessed children who come to see her go from not being able to talk to being able to communicate.

When Rachel was close to death last year, some of her "kids" (as she calls her clients) decided they would rather go without speech therapy for a few months rather than leave her practice. One of the parents told me that because of her their son feels more confident and self assured. Rachel is considered a member of their family. She is a member of my family too. Rachel Brown is my sister and I am nominating her for the Hand in Hand award because she changes the lives of children every day.

*Sheryl Hastings  
Parent*

### Trina Boring

*Rose Warren Elementary*

Trina has worked very hard with my son. She puts 100 percent in every day and has shown him so much love, God Bless Trina for all she does. Thank You Trina!!!!

*Melanie Altman  
Mother*

### Ana Bracomonte

*Guidance Counselor*

Ana has worked with my son these last 9 months. She has been a great counselor and mentor. My son has ADHD and is not on any medicine, and Ana has all the patience in the world for him. It is her job to help him but she doesn't have to treat him as lovingly as she does. He loves her & looks forward to seeing her every chance he gets. I just want to have her recognized for all her hard work.

*Johannah Chacon*

*Parent*

### Elizabeth Castro

*Relative*

The most significant thing for me is that ever since daughter was born, my sister in law, Elizabeth Castro has supported me financially and morally by providing good advice. In times of emergency, she provided her assistance unconditionally. For that reason and much more, my family and I would like to thank her for all of her support.

Lo mas importante para mi es que desde que América nació, mi cuñada Elizabeth Castro me ha apoyado económica y moralmente con buenos consejos. En el momento de emergencias, no ha reparado en gastos. Por eso y muchas cosas más, le doy las gracias y mi familia también.

*Leticia Nave*

*Parent*

### Ivonne Castro

*Relative*

My Sister, Ivonne, is my right hand. She has helped me with my son since he was 3 months old. With her my son shows a lot of affection and he calls her mom. She is very nice and has a noble heart; she deserves to be recognized for her heart of gold. Thank you Sister. God Bless you.

*Gloria Egan*

*Mother*

### Janet Citron

*Special Ed Teacher*

When we were trying to get an IEP for our daughter the best friend we had, even before we met her, was Special Education Teacher, Janet Cintron, at Piggott

Elementary. When I expressed the frustrations for our daughter I saw the same tears fill her eyes. Her knowledge, care and professionalism made such a difference between the problems of before our IEP and the solutions after. All the love and care in the world isn't enough without the kind of help Janet Cintron gave us.

*Scott & Ariel Linker*

*Parents*

### Susan Crawford

*Teacher*

Mrs. Crawford has only been working with my son for a few months, but she has made great progress with his reading. She is a very caring teacher at Spring Valley High School. I wish more teachers were like her.

*Johnetta Rayford*

*Mother*

### Ms. Dallas

*Teacher, Ullom Elementary*

Ms. Dallas is a very good teacher. She has spent a lot of time working with my children before and after school. I would like to thank her for all she has done, because of her dedication; my children have come a long way.

*Mary Lorenzana*

*Mother*

### Cheri Day

*Nevada PEP*

I would like to give a special thanks to Cheri with Nevada PEP for her tremendous efforts, listening ear, and having empathy and compassion for a parent who was really frustrated with my son's teacher, and the lack of concern for my son's non-implementation of IEP.

I did not start out with having Cheri on our Team, but I am sure glad that we ended up getting her. At first I was skeptical with starting with a new team member and I asked many questions to see if she knew much about what was needed for my son to receive FAPE



and in regards to non-implementation of his IEP. I felt at the beginning I was going to have to get her up to speed in everything that had happened and how much participation I was going to need because I kept hitting road blocks.

Cheri did not take long to figure out that we had some serious issues going on and that this was going to be a lengthy process. She helped me to figure out how we needed to navigate and to move in a positive and respectful manner. I am truly glad that I was able to lean on her for morale support at a time I did not see daylight. It was comforting that she was able to relate to my needs and the needs of my son by her own experiences. Cheri is truly an asset to Nevada PEP and the parents of children with special needs.

*Thea Westin*  
Parent



**Dr. Lori Ernsperger**  
Doctor

Dr. Lori Ernsperger is a very good person and has been great to our family. She has been helping us with everything we need for our daughter. We appreciate every minute she is with us. I want to thank her so much for all she has done to help us.

*Maria Rios*  
Parent

**Kimberly Fincher**  
Nevada PEP

Kimberly spent her Saturday with a group of parents needing information for their children. She was very informative and knows the importance of educating families. Her IEP clinic gave me a wealth of information and her dedication to helping others truly shows.

*Angela Dryden*  
Parent

**Jamie Horachek**  
Special Ed Teacher

Our daughter was first diagnosed with schizophrenia in the 7th grade. She progressively got worse, to the point of not being able to get up in the morning and attend to her own personal hygiene. Jamie, is a special education teacher at Greenspun Junior High School, who developed a sincere, trusting and kind relationship with our daughter. She also extended her professionalism and understanding to our entire family. Her patience, kindness, and support supersedes anything the school district has presented to us, it has been a struggle. She has been a sincere advocate and confidant for our daughter, she is an asset to the community. Thank you.

*The Hardaway's*

**Amy Janoff**  
Special Ed Teacher

Ms. Janoff is excellent in helping children with disabilities, in particular my son. She was his Special Ed Teacher and she went above and beyond to make accommodations for him. Ms. Janoff was always interested in his progress as a student and his well being as a human. There's no one more deserving of the recognition.

*Jamika White*  
Parent

**Mark Kenny**  
School Psychologist, Piggott Elementary

Mark Kenny, School Psychologist at Piggott Elementary, might not have guessed I'd be writing this. We had several meetings before our daughter even started and many more after the school year had begun.

He thought a 504 was more appropriate. We, parents, teachers from before and our daughter's O.T., felt we needed more. It's even more powerful to have someone who doesn't completely agree with your assessment help you anyway.

He has continued to illuminate the path ahead of us. His dedication to our most precious gifts, the ones that come with the complicated operation instructions, is to be loudly applauded.

*Scott Linker*  
Parent

**Ms. Carolyn Lewis**

Special Ed Teacher

Getting started with our IEP we briefly met Ms. Carolyn Lewis, Special Ed Teacher at Piggott Elementary. Just one look and you could see all the love, warmth and humanity in her eyes. I've never made a quicker or better judgment.

She explained last year that she'd be working with us this year and next. She has already been a big help with our daughter and us. Her face is the very picture of why a parent would gratefully trust the teaching of their most precious gift.

*Scott & Ariel Linker*  
Parents



**Connie Lustig, RN**

*Canyon Springs High School*

Connie was the nurse for the school, Arturo Camberio. When my son started having diabetes, we had the pleasure of meeting Connie. She helped us find all of the information that we would need so that my son would be better assisted. Her intelligence always impressed me. Last week, I spoke with her again. It had been three years since I had seen her. Now, she became a teacher and as always, she is very attentive. I am very grateful to know her, since it is very difficult to find people that lend a helping hand and provide all of the time necessary to meet our needs. She is a very special person in our lives and to our family. Thank you.

Connie era la enfermera de la escuela Arturo Camberio. Cuando mi hijo empezó con la diabetes, tuvimos la dicha de conocer a Connie. Ella nos busco toda la información que necesitábamos para que mi hijo estuviera mejor atendido. Su inteligencia siempre me sorprendió. La semana pasada me la

encontré después de tres años que no la veía. Hoy es maestra y como siempre, ella es muy atenta. Le estoy muy agradecida, ya que es muy difícil encontrar personas que tienden la mano y tienen todo el tiempo necesario para uno. Ella es una persona muy especial en nuestras vidas y nuestra familia. Gracias.

*Graciela Castrejon*

*Mother/Madre*



**Carolyn McIntosh**

*Lyon County School District Superintendent*

Since the second year that Mrs. McIntosh has been the Superintendent of Lyon County School District. I have seen positive change in the way that parents are perceived as partners in their children's' education. We recently had a "Parent Summit" that was an outstanding collaboration of community and school services, presented in a positive setting at a centrally located school. The information that I obtained has been very valuable and has already headed me in the right direction towards transitioning my son from post high school.

I have felt Mrs. McIntosh's support in the challenge of educating my son. As a result of a medical condition it has taken a large effort between me and the school district to provide a meaningful school experience for him. He has many issues and disabilities to cope with, but together with Lyon county school district under the direct supervision of Mrs. McIntosh he continues to thrive educationally, surpassing all expectations of him!

Thank you Mrs. McIntosh and Lyon County School Board

*Alyce Volberding*

*Parent*

## Marla Mentaberry

Teacher

My son and I were walking through the halls of his elementary school after hours on a Tuesday afternoon. We had been cleaning out his desk looking for homework. Not only had his 5th grade teacher was willing to stay late, but as we walked we passed by five people who warmly greeted my son by name and was given good wishes. I was awed at the incredible changes in him since attending this school and at the gracious behavior and attitude of this school. Everyone is always kind and thoughtful and makes it pleasant to come to school.

The school is the way it is because of the strong, competent and gifted leadership, whose dedication to her staff and students makes her a shoe in for a hand in hand award. Mrs. Mentaberry we will always be grateful for your support.

*Sheryl Hastings*

Parent

## Leslie Molina

Teacher

For 8 yrs., we have tried to seek our daughter special help in California. The programs were not meeting her needs. We moved to Nevada, and found Leslie Molina, at Albert Lowry High School. Ms. Molina has made a tremendous impact on our daughter's life. She no longer throws tantrums, her academic and life skills are improving, and she is going to begin a job at the local music store next week, all because of the efforts of Ms. Molina. Thank you

*Karen Lovelace*

Mom



## Grace Montemayor

Relative

"Auntie Grace", as our family fondly calls her, has extended her assistance to us numerous times and to many others as well. She has always been very supportive and optimistic about our plight in many ways, including offering to watch our son on numerous occasions, despite having a hectic schedule with her own family. Words cannot describe the depth of our appreciation. We wish to express our heartfelt thanks to her for being a blessing to our family, and a "guardian angel", especially to our son.

*Florabel M. & Family*

## Geri Moshrefnory

Teacher

In October of 2009 my son transferred to the Social Resource Program at Dunn Elementary. We had some major issues at first. Through the patience,

understanding and willingness to listen by an incredible educator I now have a son who stands up straighter, has friends, and believes in himself again. His 5th Grade teacher's name is Geri Moshrefnory. She is a strong, outstanding and a gifted educator and deserves a hand in hand award because of her dedication to making the lives of our students richer and better.

*Sheryl Hastings*

Parent



## Tom Myers

CSN

We would like to applaud Tom Myers, the Department Chair of Media Technology, at the College of Southern Nevada (CSN). Tom supported the Computer Graphics Department in a "real world" multimedia project. Students majoring in Computer Graphics created a website for Nevada PEP. Because of Tom's creativity and compassion for kids with disabilities, both of these on-line courses are becoming a reality. Thank you Tom, we truly appreciate your support.

*Nevada PEP*

### **Katie Navrides**

*Teacher*

Miss Katie was open to my son's difficulties and abilities from the very beginning. She was willing to listen to suggestions of things that have worked in the past. She also had new ideas. Miss Katie has always been available for questions. She cares very much about my son and his progress. She has made my son feel confident and comfortable at school. He really enjoys being a part of her class. She has also made me feel like a very important part of his education "team."

*Jolene Stever*

*Parent*

### **Linda Platshon**

*Katherine Dunn Elementary*

I like to call her "Ms. P" She is one of my sons special teachers. She is special in our hearts and special to all of us in our family. I am happy to have moved into our neighborhood. Ms. P makes my life easier by calling me anytime to let me know everything about my son. My son has a very hard time learning at school; he's smart but doesn't apply himself. Ms. P works hard with all children to help them learn. Children need teachers that care and are willing to help. Ms. P, thank you for being a hard worker and teaching all children. You're the best! I wish they all could be like you!

*Regina Calhoun*

*Mother*

### **Nancy Radford**

We would like to nominate Nancy Radford for the Nevada PEP "Hand in Hand "Together We Can award. Nancy has graciously served the State as a Nevada PEP Governing Board Member and volunteer for over 10 years. As past Chairperson for Nevada PEP, Nancy was a strong leader guiding the organization through our growth, always keeping the family at the center of PEP's principles. Her long term dedication to the families of Nevada was evident in everything she was involved in. Nancy has spent countless hours promoting awareness of children's mental health; she has a special way of putting people at ease with her loving and supporting nature.

Nancy has advocated with passion at all levels county and state. She has supported both the Central and

Satellite Offices by attending planning meetings for fundraising and program development. It is because of Nancy's expertise the Satellite Office has an up to date telephone system. From donated reams of paper, making public PEP presentations to tutorials on phone systems, we knew Nancy was always just a phone call away.

As Nancy moves from the PEP Governing Board to the Alumni Board, we on behalf of the families Nevada PEP serves want to thank her for the years of service and support to families. Nancy came to PEP as a parent looking for support with her son's IEP and has paid it forward tenfold. What a great example for all of us.

With Our Sincere Appreciation,

*Nevada PEP Governing Board Members*

*Karen Taycher, Executive Director*

*Retta Dermody, Director of Programs and Services*

### **Sally Reeves**

*Nevada PEP*

Sally has been very helpful to me and my husband in getting the attention our son needed. She is very knowledgeable about a lot of things my husband and I had no idea existed. She is a great asset to your organization. We really appreciate her.

*Anthony & Joletta Bibbs*

*Parents*

### **Sally Reeves**

*Advocate*

Sally Reeves really helped me in getting help to for my grandson with his IEP Meetings; which I knew nothing about. She came at a time when I had just about given up on getting him educational help, after trying for over a year and a half. I didn't know what to do.

Sally also conducted 2 classes here in Pahrump and I really learned a lot. She is so dedicated to helping families!! I don't know what I would have done without her. No one would listen until Sally got involved. Sally is "one in a million."

*Judith Crain*

*Grandparent*



**Carla Santana**

*Teacher's Aide*

Miss Carla has been my son's teacher's aide for the last 2 years. She has been a necessary part of his success in school. She has helped him feel more confident in the classroom. She was an integral part of his transition from Pre-K to Kindergarten. She truly cares about my son. She has made a large impact on his ability to feel comfortable so he can learn.

*Jolene Stever*

*Mother*

**Jodi Sorocco**

*Special Ed Teacher*

My Son had developed some inappropriate coping strategies, because he has Asperger's Syndrome, our IEP team decided to place him in a Social Resource Program at Katherine Dunn Elementary. It was the best move we could have made for him at the time. The Social Resource Program at the school is headed by Special Education Teacher, Jodi Sorocco. She used her vast knowledge and creativity to help my son discover some of his deeper issues and devised a plan to help him work through his issues. This individualized care and concern has changed his life. We will always be grateful for her.

*Sheryl Hastings*

*Parent*

**Michael Stansberry**

*Parent/Volunteer*

Michael Stansberry is a treasured VIP volunteer. Mike has the genuine heart of a volunteer and a soul that is selfless and sincere. Nevada PEP is experiencing a time of growth and change. We have moved into our new building this summer. We have turned to all of our wonderful volunteers in a greater capacity than ever and they did not disappoint our expectations. Mike shines as a key team player. He leads by example continuing to work relentlessly, doing whatever is necessary to accomplish the variety of tasks surrounding this monumental move. He



gives willingly of his time and energy and his skills and his talents. He is always pleasant and quick with a smile. He treats everyone with respect and integrity even when teasing and taunting them with his great sense of humor and quick wit (which can be very entertaining at times). We are fortunate to have him and embrace him as part of the PEP family. We appreciate him. We honor him. We acknowledge him as the very heart and soul of the Nevada PEP volunteer program. Thank-you MIKE!!!!

*Nevada PEP*



**Adam Valentiner**

*CSN*

We would like to honor and recognize Adam Valentiner, an Instructor in the Computer Graphics Department at the College of Southern Nevada (CSN). Under Adam's great leadership, he led the class into creating a "real world" multimedia project. His students majoring in Computer Graphics participated in creating a great website with multimedia. The class spent 8 weeks creating the website for Nevada PEP which will provide online access to two popular training courses. The goal was to make the training content more engaging and interactive by utilizing popular multimedia techniques including a talking character animation called Kevin. Adam worked closely with each of the students. Many hours went into this project, and Adam made sure that each of the students completed their assignment. Thank you Adam. You are AWESOME.

*Nevada PEP*

### **Makinna Velvor**

*Teacher's Aide*

Last year we met a most wonderful teacher's aide. Her name is Makinna Velvor. She has a real heart to reach children who need an extra boost of confidence. She helped my son learn to acknowledge his feelings and deal with them more appropriately. She lifted his spirits when he was down and listened when he needed an ear to express his frustrations. Her easy manner, quiet, gentle nature and approachability made her someone he could go to when he was so frustrated. We wish her all the best as she continues her education in Criminal Justice. She will go far!

*Sheryl Hastings*

*Parent*

### **Nevada PEP Volunteers**

I take great pleasure in recognizing Nevada PEP's volunteers for a Hand in Hand award. This past year our volunteer center was graced with some of the most extraordinary people I have ever met. We had record number of hours in volunteerism. Individuals with a genuine love for giving continue to return each and every week even into the New Year. There was outstanding help on every possible level. Scores of volunteers gave their time and energy at PEP events. They did everything from maintaining resource tables at back to school fairs and other community events to numerous runs to bulk mail. I am humbled by the growing interest of the caring people in this community who lend a hand for our great organization. I want to express my deep gratitude to every one of our volunteers. Because of you the PEP family is stronger and more capable of strengthening the many families that we serve.

*Nevada PEP*

### **Shannon Ward**

*Area Administrator*

I would like to give a special thanks to Shannon Ward with the WCSD because of her tremendous efforts on the issues of my son's IEP and implementation.

By the time Shannon started coming to my son's IEP meetings I was frustrated by the lack of concern for my son's education and had little confidence with the School. It had been an uphill battle and little by little with the help of Shannon chipping away at the issues,

I started feeling more comfortable that she was truly there to benefit my son's best interest. Shannon was able to give support where needed, she was able to give advice when needed, and she was able to deal with the issues when needed. To her, I give my most heartfelt "Thanks" and hope she will always be able to remind everyone that we are a team and were here to help the students.

*Thea Westin*

*Parent*

### **Sarah Zita**

*Zita Group*

Nevada PEP would like to recognize Sarah Zita for our prestigious Hand in Hand award. Sarah has spent many countless hours designing our newsletters. Her tireless dedication has given our PEP POST and CFC Communiqué newsletters it's very own "PEPPY" look. Thank you Sarah for all of your expertise and creativity. Your hard work is truly appreciated by all of us. You are awesome!!!

*Nevada PEP*



# Hand in Hand

## Appreciation Program

### Sponsors

Worthwhile projects such as the “Hand In Hand Together We Can” program would not be possible without the charitable support Nevada PEP receives from dedicated individuals throughout the state. Thanks to grants, donations, and contributions, Nevada PEP has been able to celebrate its seventeenth year of providing support and education to parents and professionals. In partnership with the caring supporters listed below, the Hand In Hand program was created, developed, and continues to grow. Nevada PEP is honored to acknowledge the following businesses and individuals as dedicated contributors in enriching the lives of children with disabilities.

## Platinum Sponsor



# Gold Sponsor



Senator Steven Horsford

*Thank you for your Dedication to our community*

IGT

*We applaud your community support.*

William Filipic

*Thank you for your continued support.*

Willow Springs

*We commend your commitment to families*

# Silver Sponsors



Bill & Alexia Conger

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Andrew and Patricia Leavitt

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Scott & Ariel Linker

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*A special thank you to all of our  
"Hand in Hand" Sponsors!*



A very special thanks to everyone who participated in the "Hand in Hand Together We Can" Appreciation Program!

Please send in a nomination to:  
Nevada PEP  
2101 S. Jones Blvd.,  
Ste. 120  
Las Vegas, Nevada, 89146.

You may fax your stories to 702.388.2966 or email them to: [pepinfo@nvpep.org](mailto:pepinfo@nvpep.org).

Please limit your entries to THREE nominees per family per year, and ONE nominee per form.

Thank you to all the extraordinary and devoted people throughout the state of Nevada who have given that extra hand to help our children.



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Strengthening Families *with*  
Education • Empowerment • Encouragement





## Annual Sponsorship Hand in Hand Appreciation Program

Show your support for the special people across the state who make the lives of children with special needs better by becoming a sponsor of the Hand in Hand Appreciation Program. Help us to recognize, honor and publicly applaud those who partner with parents and make a difference for children with special needs.

### **Silver Sponsorship      \$100 up to \$1,000**

- Recognized in the Yearbook
- Receive Yearbook
- Receive the PEP Post Newsletter
- Recognized on the Web-Site
- Receive a Lapel Pin

### **Gold Sponsorship      \$1,000 up to \$3,000**

- Business Card Size Recognition in the Yearbook
- Receive Yearbook
- Receive the PEP Post Newsletter
- Recognized on the Web-Site
- Receive a Lapel Pin
- Hand in Hand Sponsorship Plaque

### **Platinum Sponsorship      \$3,000 and up**

- Half Page Recognition in the Yearbook
- Receive Yearbook
- Receive the PEP Post Newsletter
- Recognized on the Web-Site
- Receive a Lapel Pin
- Hand in Hand Sponsorship Plaque
- Honorable Mention in “Hand in Hand “ Literature

October is Nevada’s Month recognizing children with special needs. In honor of this annual recognition Nevada PEP will produce the “Hand in Hand” yearbook each October. Honorees will also be highlighted in the quarterly PEP Post throughout the year.



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