A collection of stories honoring those who help families of children with special needs
When I think of Nevada PEP- I instantly smile. Sometimes it is the only positive thought of my day. Sometime it changes my day from dreary to hopeful. This is more than just a parent center - it's a lifeline.

-Parent

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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.
ONE
Nevada PEP will be a long-term reliable statewide resource to families and the individuals who support them by providing information, support, and training programs to empower them to better advocate for the needs of their children, adolescents, and young adults.

TWO
Nevada PEP will assist families and the individuals who support them to better understand the nature and needs of the disabilities. Adolescents and young adults will understand their strengths and how to advocate for themselves.

THREE
Nevada PEP will conduct community outreach and public awareness activities for families, professionals, organizations and traditionally under-served populations that directly or indirectly work with children with disabilities and their families. To heighten the awareness of available support, link families with other families in similar circumstances and enhance the family driven community based service delivery.

Guiding Principles

- We believe that children, adolescents, and young adults have a right to access appropriate intervention as well as participate in all opportunities available as members in their own communities.
- We believe that children, adolescents, and young adults reach their full potential when families and professionals build a partnership based on trust and respect.
- We believe that children, adolescents, and young adults and their families deserve the opportunity to live, learn, and participate fully in their communities.
- We believe that the family is the child’s first and best teacher, that professionals must be sought after as experts in their fields to enhance the family dynamics.
- We believe that the family’s strengths, weakness and cultures must be respected to meet the true needs of the family.
- We believe that information, support and training enrich and empower families and professionals.
- We believe that every person has an unrealized potential for growth and that services should be designed to maximize that potential.
- We believe that a diverse culture is essential in an interdependent world and believe in acknowledging, embracing, and respecting diversity.
- We believe that it is crucial that families participate in policy-making decisions at the local, state, and national level to guide the development of meaningful available services that are family driven.
For the first time in so long, I finally feel like I am standing on solid ground. Thank you for caring about my child.

-Parent
As another year comes to an end, we look forward to 2012. Nevada PEP continues to help families throughout the state. We are very proud of our reputation and the respect that we have built over the last seventeen years. Families have improved their lives with the information and support they have received from Nevada PEP. As Chair of the Nevada PEP Governing Board, I would like to take a few moments to reflect on our many accomplishments this past year.

Nevada PEP has enjoyed an amazing and positive year. A milestone achievement of 2011 was the launch of our disability awareness program called “Include Me.” Nevada PEP held an Open House and invited the community to be entertained by our very own Include Me puppets. The event was a success with a personal visit from Congresswoman Dina Titus, Assemblyman Richard Carrillo along with many other special guests. Another important accomplishment was Nevada PEP conducting its very first Bullying Awareness Walk in recognition of October as National Bullying Awareness month. Special guests included Taylor Barton, Las Vegas’ very own NASCAR driver and TJ Quicksilver aka Captain Jack Sparrow leading the walk. Nevada PEP had the honor of promoting bullying awareness month on radio stations in the month of October. The event was a huge success, bringing bullying awareness to the forefront. Additionally, Nevada PEP was honored by the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce as a finalist for the second year in a row in the Annual Small Business Excellence Awards. Nevada PEP was named one of the top three non-profits of the year.

As we begin the New Year, we remain optimistic that 2012 will be the year that the economy turns around. Nevada PEP recognizes that parents are the true experts on their children and must learn about disabilities, intervention needs, and how to develop a support system to meet those needs. Nevada PEP remains committed to supporting families, and we will continue to strengthen 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. Nevada PEP continues to grow with each family we support.

On behalf of Nevada PEP we are grateful to all of our community partners, volunteers and generous donors who continue to believe in our mission. Working together we are building stronger families for a better community.

- Sam Lieberman, Nevada PEP
  Governing Board Chair
FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Income Total: $1,442,062.00

Expenditures Total: $1,490,582.00

17,852 Individuals Served

- Conferences, Meetings and Trainings: $33,675.00
- Family Training Stipends: $38,187.00
- Supplies, Postage and Shipping: $48,943.00
- Printing and Publications: $64,807.00
- Travel and Mileage: $65,517.00
- Other Operational: $65,517.00
- Professional Services: $75,574.00
- Building and Space: $125,552.00
- Personnel: $982,072.00

- Grants & Contracts
- Other
- Memberships
- Contributions
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 trainings helps families learn about best practices and how to advocate for services for their children. Trainings are presented in both English and Spanish.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Was the information presented at the workshop useful to you?</th>
<th>......Yes, 96%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Because of the information you received at the workshop, do you feel you are more knowledgeable about how to work with schools?</td>
<td>......Yes, 96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has your child received more appropriate services because of the information you have received from the Parent Center?</td>
<td>......Yes, 92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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?</td>
<td>......Yes, 88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has the workshop provided you with the information you needed to make decisions about your child’s education?</td>
<td>......Yes, 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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3,622 Individuals participated in the training workshops

307 Training Workshops Conducted
TRAINING OUTCOMES

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 7,132 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.

Disabilities of all Children Served
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?

- Very Useful: 96%
- Not Useful: 4%

Home visits: 261
Child Family Team: 486
Education Meetings: 957
New "Intakes" Families: 1,368
New Individual Assistance Contacts: 10,242
Individual Assistance Contacts: 18,929

The Parent Center provided me with the information I needed to make decisions about my child’s education.
COMMUNITY OUTREACH & PUBLIC AWARENESS

Nevada PEP provides outreach presentations for 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Support</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Issues</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education/ IEPs</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessments</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidenced Based Practice</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placement</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related Services</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Number of public forums, information fairs, and community outreach events:** 215
- **Number of meetings attended to enhance the support systems for children with special needs and their families:** 410
- **Number of committees to which Nevada PEP representatives provided the parent perspective:** 123
CONSUMER DEMOGRAPHICS

Ethnicities of Consumers

- Caucasian: 49%
- Hispanic: 27%
- African American: 11%
- Asian: 3%
- Not Determined: 9%
- Native American: 1%

Ages of Children Helped

- 0 through 2: 1%
- 3 through 5: 9%
- 6 through 11: 39%
- 12 through 14: 22%
- 15 through 18: 24%
- 19 through 21: 4%
- 22 through 26: 1%

Other Relatives: 2%
Foster Parents: 1%
Other Educators: 2%
Special Educators: 1%
Students: 1%
Adovcates: 2%
General Public: 5%
Service Providers: 13%
Parents: 73%

25,324
Number of Yearly Website hits at [nvpep.org](http://nvpep.org)
Nevada PEP has formed strong relationships throughout the community with corporations, professional organizations, and individuals. It is only through the ongoing support of our 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 @ www.nvpep.org to donate securely over the Internet!
Major Funders

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

Individual Funders

Julie Beasley, Ph.D.
Cathy Bennett
Alexia and Bill Conger
Sue Covey
Bill & Jennifer Cunningham
Debra Dean
James Dumond
Cynthia Escamilla
Will Filipic
Romaine Gibson
Daniel Giordano
James Hall
Valli Casazza-Hill
Senator Steven Horsford
Walter & Jacqueline Jagodzinski
Shannon Johnson
Timothy Josselyn
Shirley Leavitt
Trish and Andy Leavitt
Sam Lieberman

Erik Lovaas
Bryce Loveland
Keith & Valerie Lucas
Diane Morales
Denis Pecoraro
Sean McNulty
Gleen & Cathy Meyer
Thomas & Carmela Monahan
Nancy Radford
Kim Riggs
Norton A. Roitman, MD
Danielle Smades
Lois Tarkanian
Tom Taycher
Franko Thompson
Congresswoman Dina Titus
Rita Varney
Maritza Velez
Pamela Watkins
Edward & Leann Weiss

Community Partners

1909 S. Jones Properties, LLC
Abbott’s Custom Printing
Amazon
Brownstein I Hyatt I Farber I Schreck
Bank West of Nevada
Canyon Falls Spa & Salon
CMIT Solutions
Dermody Properties Foundation
DigitalPros.net
Freeman’s Carpet
FSI Flooring Solutions
Green Valley Kiwanis Club

Jennings Strouss & Salmon, LLC
Maximum Audio Video
Microsoft
MJ Christensen
Montevista Hospital
Nevada Center for Excellence in Disabilities
Republic Services
Select Air
Spring Mountain Treatment Center
South Point Casino

*Thank you to our Anonymous Donors. We are truly grateful for your continued support.*
Nevada PEP Honored at the Las Vegas Chamber Luncheon

The Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce honored Nevada PEP for the second consecutive year as a finalist in the Non-Profit of the Year category through the Small Business Excellence Award. Nevada PEP acknowledged this prestigious distinction in the community while attending a generous gala luncheon for all nominees at the Rio Hotel & Casino.

Nevada PEP proudly embraces this recognition and will remain true to its mission, serving families in the community and across the state. This continuing support and vote of confidence serves to further establish the statewide Parent Center that prides itself on strengthening all of Nevada’s families. With the generous support by the following sponsors, PEP staff had the honor of attending this exciting event.

Check out the youtube video:
Small Business Excellence 2011
www.youtube.com/nevadapep
Congratulations to all of the “Hand in Hand, Together We Can” award recipients. Your selfless efforts have made a positive difference in the lives of so many children with special needs throughout Nevada. This year has been a challenge for many families in our state; the economic downturn has impacted all of us in some way. Yet the humanity of our neighbors, friends, and family is evident in each story submitted by grateful families who sincerely appreciate the acts of kindness summarized in this yearbook.

Thank you to the families for taking the time to write these wonderful stories that showcase the hope and generosity demonstrated by our fellow Nevadans. As families who have children with disabilities, we want the best for our children. We know that we must engage with many people to achieve the best results for our children and our family; and when these people go above and beyond to make a positive impact, it is important to show our appreciation.

The “Hand in Hand, Together We Can” Appreciation Program would not be possible if it was not for the generosity of the program sponsors who give of their funds to ensure this well deserved recognition continues year after year. Our admiration goes out to the sponsors of the program. You are truly enthusiastic community partners.

Nevada PEP is often called a family of families. I am proud to know and work alongside the wonderful staff and volunteers who work tirelessly to support each other and thousands of families in Nevada. I would like to wish everyone a New Year full of hope, health, and happiness.

With Heartfelt Regard,

Karen Taycher
Executive Director
Department Directors

Retta Dermody, Director of Programs and Services for the Satellite Office, has over twenty-seven years of experience in special education. Retta has advocated as a mom, stepmom, 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, 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, in addition to 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, knowing that what she does makes a difference in the lives of others.

Robin Kincaid is the Director of Information & Training Services. Robin has over sixteen years of experience educating parents and professionals on special education law, advocacy, best practice, parent/professional collaboration, and positive behavior supports. Other responsibilities include outreach activities and individual assistance to families. Robin has served on the Interagency Coordinating Council for the past seven years representing 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.
TJ Rosenberg is the Statewide Family Network Director for Nevada PEP. She has served in this position for twelve years. Her department focuses on systems change and helping families who are involved with more than one child service system, specializing in children with serious emotional disturbance and behavior disorders. As the parent of a young adult son with a disability, TJ has had personal experience advocating for children with special needs. 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 also trains parents and professionals in the areas of wraparound and system of care 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.
Lupe Alvarez is the Bilingual I&R Intake Specialist at Nevada PEP. She provides information to families and refers them to the right places so they may obtain the correct services. Lupe’s inspiration to help families comes from helping her mother advocate for her little brother who has a disability. She enjoys providing assistance and encouraging families to become the best advocates for their families. “I am currently majoring in Education and hope to one day be a really good teacher so I can make a difference in children’s lives.”

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.

Dorithia Coleman is a Family 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 parents are the first and best teachers of their children. Her goal is to empower families with useful strategies and provide resources that address their child’s needs through 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 PEP is here to help.
Havander Davis is the Communications Specialist at Nevada PEP. As the Communication Specialist, he enjoys talking to families who call or come into PEP looking for help, support, and resources. “I am proud to serve an organization that enhances opportunities for those with disabilities. I am honored to be a member of the PEP family and look forward to continue to help families who have children with disabilities.”

Cynthia Escamilla is one of the Bilingual Family Specialists at Nevada PEP. She hopes 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 PEP. I will be able to accomplish a life time goal of helping others. This is the gratification of a lifetime!!”

Santiago De La Torre is a Family Navigator for the 360 Program and a Bilingual Training Specialist. Santiago enjoys working with families and finds it very rewarding when parents find their voice in order to help their children through education, empowerment, and encouragement. “I have two great kids, one of whom has autism. Working with families and helping them to find the help they need has been especially rewarding. I am proud to be a part of the PEP family.”

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 assist her child(ren) with disabilities. Her goal is to help empower others as she has been empowered through PEP.
Kiara Estill absolutely enjoys supporting families and their children as the Intake Specialist at Nevada PEP. With a BA in Communications and her personal experiences as a single parent of a child with special needs, Kiara encourages others to advocate for their children. She believes that no one knows your children better than you do and is very grateful for the opportunity to educate, empower, and encourage families through PEP.

Charlene Frost-Gumber is a Family Specialist at Nevada PEP. Char is the mother to two children with disabilities. Char has been an active part of the Las Vegas community working on behalf of children with Nevada PTA and Look Out Kids About – A Traffic Safety Coalition for many years and has called Nevada home for 15 years. She is proud to be part of the PEP family and enjoys working one-on-one with families of children with special needs.

Keisha Hopkins is one of the Family Specialists at Nevada PEP. Her own experiences of having a child and a sibling with a disability have made working at PEP an incredible journey for her. She finds supporting and encouraging families very fulfilling, and is honored with each and every opportunity she has to reach out, empower, encourage, and educate.

Stephanie Houle is the Training Specialist at Nevada PEP. She is a recent graduate of UNLV and a new mother of a daughter with special needs. From a very young age, Stephanie knew that she wanted to help people understand their true potential. Her position at Nevada PEP has enabled her to accomplish this dream by empowering families to advocate for their children. She is eager to continue growing as both a professional and a parent.
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.

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 families in navigating 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 PEP.

Teri Kirby is the Family Navigator Coordinator for the 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.
Professional Staff

Judy Martin is a Family Specialist at the satellite office in Reno. She is a “Native” Nevadan, born in Owyhee and raised in Reno. She has worked in different professional settings, advocating for people with mental health disabilities for 29 years. “My biggest accomplishment in life is my two children. I am also blessed with three beautiful grandchildren!” Her philosophy – “We, all of us, have purpose! There is no greater or lesser. We are here to teach and to learn.”

Dr. Christa Peterson is a licensed psychologist with over 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, such as 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 joined the Nevada PEP staff as director of the Family Support 360

Sally Reeves is a Training Specialist at Nevada PEP. Her inspiration to help families comes from watching and assisting her mother advocate for her younger brother who has a disability. Sally is excited to be able to provide information and support to families through PEP.

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, she began volunteering to give something back. She has been helping families at PEP for over six years. She has a dream of one day staging a huge fundraiser and ultimately helping children with disabilities through her musical talent and PEP.
Robin Renshaw has been with PEP for twelve years as a Transition Specialist. He advocates for and educates youth with disabilities who are 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.

Whitney Sadow is our Program Communications Specialist. She is the mother of two girls. Nevada PEP has helped her family over the years with their children. She is excited to be here and help other families with their struggles. Whitney works closely with the Administrative team to keep programs running smoothly. She brings with her experience from many fields and enjoys working on PEP’s

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 an advocate for my children. It is gratifying to work at PEP, helping to make a difference in families’ lives.”

Kathy Treants came to Nevada PEP over 6 years ago. 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.
Chad Uhl is the Graphic & Web Designer for Nevada PEP. Chad maintains the organization’s website along with the online social media networks. In addition he designs all materials that are mailed to families. “Advancing our website and designing materials that can be better utilized by families is what drives me at PEP.”

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 has a disability. Having received services from PEP in the past, I am thrilled and excited to be here at PEP and aspire to be the best advocate I can be.
On September 14, Nevada PEP unveiled an exciting new program. The Include Me program—a disability awareness program, established by Walter and Jackie Jagodzinski in honor of their daughter Andrea. Invited guests by Sam Lieberman Chairman of Nevada PEP’s Board, heard about the long journey to bring these extraordinary puppets to PEP.

Benefactor Jackie Jagodzinski was on hand to see the “puppets” perform in public for the first time. Congresswoman Dina Titus came to show her support and hear what the puppets had to say. Attendees were treated to a first class puppet show. The puppets came to life thanks to some very talented volunteer puppeteers. Nevada PEP is excited to take this awesome new approach of teaching disability awareness to children of all ages and taking the message into preschools and local libraries in order to raise awareness and promote inclusion for all.

If you are interested in becoming a Puppet Partner, Exceptional Partner or Proud Parent or to learn more about the Include Me program contact Stephanie Vrsnik.
Dear Friends at Nevada PEP:

It is with great pleasure that I write a letter of support for the Nevada PEP’s *Hand in Hand Together We Can Program*. I commend the 2011 *Hand in Hand* recipients, their dedication to helping kids with disabilities is truly admirable. I was honored to have the opportunity to participate in Nevada PEP’s “Bullying Awareness Walk” in October. These kind of activities are key to keeping the awareness high around the devastating effects bullying can have on kids especially those with disabilities. Bullying is an issue that is close to my heart as I was bullied growing up. For that reason, I formed the Taylor Barton Foundation to provide a place for young people to come together, share stories and learn from each other.

Additionally, I stand with Nevada PEP in their effort to make a difference in the lives of children with disabilities and their families. The Taylor Barton Foundation feels so strongly that children with disabilities deserve to be included in our schools and community that we have created an advisory board with prominent disability advocates to help us be effective in bullying awareness. Our goal is to end bullying for all children. Our work is stronger with agencies like Nevada PEP leading the way in disability awareness.

Thank you Nevada PEP for the important work you do helping families who have children with disabilities. Together we are building a stronger community.

We, at the Taylor Barton Foundation, salute you and are honored to be part of your work.

Sincerely,

Taylor Barton
President, Taylor Barton Foundation
Dear Ms. Vrsnik:

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

It is with great pleasure that I write to congratulate all of the honorees of the 2011 Hand in Hand Together We Can Appreciation Program yearbook. These dedicated individuals all have given their time and energy to help make a positive difference in the lives of children with special needs.

I am honored to add my letter of congratulations and admiration to the many others included in this yearbook. I wish Nevada PEP continued success for the coming year.

Sincere regards,

BRIAN SANDOVAL
Governor
Recognizing October as National Bullying Prevention month, Nevada PEP partnered with Tivoli Village and held its first Bullying Prevention Walk on Sunday October 23rd. Nevada PEP’s board chair, Sam Lieberman, officially kicked off the walk by introducing TJ Quicksilver, a.k.a. Capt. Jack Sparrow, who promotes bullying prevention in his “Fear No Bully” program. Taylor Barton, Las Vegas’ very own NASCAR driver joined in leading the walk. Taylor runs the Taylor Barton Foundation- “no one is alone”. Taylor speaks to youth and promotes the foundation’s message that “no one is alone.”

The community came out to participate in the walk and proudly wore the “PEP takes steps to STOP Bullying” t-shirts. Bringing awareness to bullying signs were placed throughout the walk for participants to read. Nevada PEP plans to make this an annual event. Tivoli Village merchants were especially generous in donating over $300 in gift cards for our raffle prize. Nevada PEP would like to thank the following businesses for donating and supporting this very important event.

Check out the Bullying Walk video on the Nevada PEP youtube channel: www.youtube.com/nevadapep

Bullying Walk Sponsors
- All-Star Ballons
- The Sign Man
- Holy Sheets
- PETRA
- Brio
- VASARI
- Leone Café
- Republic of Couture
- Ritual-Salon & Spa
- The Dog House
- Southwest Special Dee’s
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, Nevada PEP provided Bozarth Elementary, Long Elementary, and Park Elementary, Jydstrup Elementary, and Robert L. Taylor Elementary 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.

As Dr. Janet Dobry, Principal at Robert L. Taylor Elementary said, “The community reaction to bullying has been very apathetic. Working with community providers like Nevada PEP provides tools to help students recognize the need to report and respond to bullying incidents. We have to raise the awareness so students will stand up to bullying.”

nvpep.org
This year the Nevada PEP Satellite Office Children’s Art Show honored two local advocates for children Pam Becker, Children’s Cabinet, and Shelby Sheehan, Channel 4 Anchorwoman. Both women were presented with Nevada PEP’s Hand in Hand Award for their work addressing children’s needs in Nevada.

Nevada PEP would like to thank the following individuals and businesses for their support and generosity. A special thanks to VSA Nevada for hosting the event in the beautiful Lakes Mansion.

- Scentsy - Andrea Barrie
- Barb Crisp - Artist
- Bill Cunningham Photography
- Celeste Alas - Valle
- Digiprint
- Eldorado Hotel Casino
- Elements Spa
- Gold Dust West Casino
- Harrah’s / Harvey’s Hotel Casino
- Jacque Matteoni
- Lia Sophia Jewelry - Amanda Kent
- Lightning Auctions
- Motivision
- Mt Rose Ski Resort
- Outback Steakhouse - Ron Matteoli
- PJ&Co.
- Port of Subs - Bear Olson
- Rascallion
- Reno Aces
- Ron Charlmers - Artist
- Sam’s Club
- Squeeze In
- Two Spiritwind Designs - Photographer
- Western Village
- Wet Hen Café’
Volunteer Connection

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:

7,132
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.

**Gold Sponsors**

- Levi’s
- William Filipic
- Erik Lovaas
- In honor of John A. Martin Sr.

**Silver Sponsors**

- Michelle Nichols
- Andrew & Patricia Leavitt
- Sam Lieberman
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 2011 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.
Toya Adams
Behavioral Health Specialist

I am so happy that Toya came into mine and my child’s lives. I just want to say Thank you for all the help she has given my child and getting her back on track. I hope God keeps blessing you.

Michelle Love
Parent

William Altman
High School Teacher

Mr. Altman has been our son’s favorite high school teacher for the past 3 years. He’s an outstanding instructor, excellent role model and is so very patient with our son’s placement after graduation. Mr. Altman guided us through the application process for the PACE program. We were thrilled and so proud when our son was chosen to attend the Northwest career and Technical Academy. His self-esteem and confidence have gone sky high. Thanks to Mr. Altman’s guidance and support. We are proud to know this hard-working, dedicated professional who has definitely earned this special recognition.

David & Carol Gaberel
Parents

Luz A. Alvarenga
Relative/ Relativa

Le doy gracias a dios y a mi mamá por tenerla conmigo porque es la única que tiene la paciencia con mi hijo Emanuel. Ella le da mucho amor, lo entiende, y lo apoya en todas las frustraciones que él tiene. Ella se preocupa mucho por él y por mi y quisiera decírselo que gracias por su dedicación diaria que tiene con nosotros.

I would like to thank God and my mother for having her with me because she is the only person that has patience with my son Emmanuel. She is very loving, understanding, and supportive during all of the frustrations that he comes across. She is always worried about my son and me. I would like to thank her for the daily dedication she has with us.

Alba H. Barrillas
Parent

Dorena Ash
Nevada PEP

You have no idea what an angel you are. From the moment I sat down with you that day at the PEP office, I felt less alone in the nightmare our lives were in. Finally, there was someone who understood our fears and who knew the frustration of trying to get help when there was none that we knew of. You listened, that in itself was more comforting than you will ever know. I owe so much to you. You were a hand holding me onto the end of a very thin rope, giving me hope and help when I thought there was no hope left. You were a source of information in a jumble of paperwork that seems designed to confuse parents into giving up. You are truly a special woman; an answer to a prayer I thought was never going to be answered. You were put in our lives for a reason and your help has done more than just help our son. Your ability to ease a frazzled mother is a gift not many possess.
You gave us a wealth of places to contact and you went that extra mile, to find even more. Your never-ending digging has lead us to a place we never thought we would be. Our son is finally where he needs to be to start on the road to a much better quality of life and Phil & I are finally able to breathe. There are not enough words to say thank you for all you’ve done. We are so grateful that you entered our lives. Please continue to do what you do. There are others that need your help. And when your day is done and you are dog tired just remember that Phil & I are thinking of you and telling someone how blessed we are because you took a moment to enter our lives and listen to a crying mom who had no clue. You are definitely the guiding light through the darkness.

Phillip & Julie Davis
Parents

Dr. David Barton
Lied Pediatric Center (UMC)

Dr. David Barton is my son’s pediatrician and ADHD specialist. He began treating my son 12 ½ years ago, guiding us through the initial testing and diagnosis of his condition. As we traveled down this daunting and confusing path, Dr. Barton provided a great deal of information and advice to help us on our way. Dr. Barton genuinely cares about his patients, and takes the time to understand their unique needs and talents. During every office visit he made sure to encourage my son by pointing out his strengths and acknowledging a positive achievement he had accomplished. All doctors treat a patient’s medical conditions, but Dr. Barton went beyond that to heal the person inside. We will always be thankful that we found Dr. Barton and that he was a part of our son’s life.

Alison DiMilte
Parent

Elizabeth Bates
Teacher

I would like to say that Elizabeth Bates from Dorris Reed Elementary is a great teacher she’s helped my boys through their troubles and has helped give one son hope for his future.

Keith Johnson
Parent

Rubí Castaneda
Amiga de Familia / Family Friend

Le agradezco los consejos que les ha dado a mis dos niñas. Una de ellas tiene 14 años de edad y la otra tiene 13 años. La menor padece de problemas mentales y soy su padre tutor y guardian. Rubi les ha enseñado cómo comportarse y el respeto en todo momento. Ella también les ha enseñado a portarse bien, y a no entrar en casa ajena. Para ir a otra casa a estudiar, el padre debe autorizar y se debe mostrar respeto al padre. Mis niñas no buscan darle problema al padre tutor ni a la familia. Ellas casi no tienen familia en las vegas, no salen de noche solas a no ser conmigo, el padre o con su hermana mayor que vive en las vegas. Yo, su padre soy mayor y con experiencia y tengo años aquí en las vegas. Rubi estoy agradecido de su cuidado

Ernesto Colas Garcia
Padre / Father

Alex Cherub
Friend

I would like to nominate my friend, Alex Cherub for the Hand in Hand Appreciation program. Alex is a friend, a buddy, a confident, a mentor, role model, and truly special person. He gave me the best gift, he gave me confidence to believe in myself.
He helped me realize my skills which gave me more self esteem, confidence, purpose, drive, and pride. Alex really went above and beyond for me. Taking me under his wing; giving me a lot in a short time and expanding my mind to new possibilities and new directions. His nurturing guidance made it possible, by someone believing in me I am able to go far.

Alex gave me great inspiration, he opened the doors to new community experiences and so much more, he opened my eyes to a world of possibilities. Alex showed me the importance of networking. He taught me a new awareness, and motivated me to use my skills to be involved and a leader. With Alex, I had such a great enriching growing experience. Alex exemplifies what the hand in hand stands for.

Kenny Taycher
Friend

Patricia Chinen
Relative

My mom, Patricia, is the guardian of my son. She is amazing and wonderful. She takes care of him when I’m working. She is there 100% and I just want to thank her for everything.

Michelle Chinen
Parent

Joanne Christoph
Special Ed Facilitator- Greenspun Jr. High

When my son moved from elementary school to middle school, I was concerned that the transition would be overwhelming for him. Thanks to the efforts of Joanne Christoph, the experience became a positives event in my son’s middle school experience from our first encounter. Utilizing her experience and vast knowledge with special education and her genuine concern for the students she works with. Ms. Christoph developed an IEP for my son that helped to build his confidence in the classroom and ensure his academic success. Ms. Christoph continued to monitor my son’s progress throughout middle school. On many occasions, she worked directly with my son’s teachers to accommodate his unique needs. Although Ms. Christoph’s name does not appear on my son’s school transcripts, she was a vital part of his education team and his success in middle school.

Parent

Christa Clayton
Teacher

I want to thank Christa Clayton for her support at Dorris Reed Elementary School. She has always been there for us and helped my family. We appreciate her and honor her with this recognition.

Keith Johnson
Parent

Janie A Coheen
Teacher

Todas las gracias por ser la persona que eres. Siempre te estás preocupando por las otras personas. Siempre vas más allá de tu trabajo. Especialmente con tu apoyo, he encontrado mucha ayuda para mi hijo y mi familia. Con nuestro cariño gracias Miss. Coheen

All of the thanks in the world for being the person that you are. You are always concerned for the well being of others and you always go way beyond your job to help. Especially with your help, I have been able to find help for my son and my family. With all of our affection thank you Miss Coheen.

Ramona Ponce and Family

Herminia Cortez
Friend

Quiero reconocer a las Sra Herminia Cortez por su apoyo. Para mi y para mis hijos, es una persona que siempre piensa en ayudar a los demas mas que a si misma. En el tiempo que nos conocemos a sido como una madre para mi y abuela para mis niños, siempre, nos motiva a luchar, seguir adelante, nos cuida, nos enseno que la vida es Hermosa. Gracias Herminia por todo.

I want to acknowledge Ms. Herminia Cortes for her
support for me and my children. She’s a person who always thinks of helping others. In the time we’ve known her she’s been like a mother to me and a grandmother to my children. She motivates us to fight, and to continue on. She’s taken care of us and taught us that life is beautiful. Thanks for everything Herminia.

Maria Vedolla
Parent

Eri Cronin
Tutor

Eri always has a big smile for our son; she is not only his tutor but a great friend. She is always there to make him happy and no matter how tired she gets she still has the energy to play with him. Eri knows how to get into his world and little by little she brings him to our world. We thank God for putting her in our lives. THANK YOU ERI!

Luis & Olivia Villalobos
Parents

Cheri Day
Nevada PEP

Cheri Day I believe helped save my son’s life. We needed a voice that would be heard. We needed to be taught how to get and use services. Cheri has taught us and opened our eyes. We learned how to build working relationships with school and doctors.

Ann Marie Naswall
Parent

Cheri Day
Nevada PEP

Miss Cheri Day has made a positive difference in my child’s life. She always has time to listen to my concerns. She also always has advice from personal experiences. I am able to better understand my child because of her. I understand that my child has disabilities and that having disabilities is not a bad thing. The passion that Cheri has to defend/advocate for our child, as he was her own, has truly been a blessing to our family.

Wilma A Johnson
Parent

Cheri Day
Nevada PEP

Cheri has been awesome with helping my husband and I get our son the help he needed with an IEP at school. She has also taught us skills. So we know what to do and how to be prepared for our meetings. She has been able to direct us to many other resources that have helped our family out. I know he would not have received the help at school without her knowledge and guidance. She is appreciated. Our family is grateful for what she has done for our son.

Denise & Frank Espino
Parents

Cynthia Escamilla
Nevada PEP

Cynthia es ona persona admirable con mi hijo ha trabajado maruillosamente en la escuela. Me le dieron la que el necesita y todo, gracias por tener a una persona como Cynthia trabajando con ustedes.

Cynthia is an admirable person. She has worked marvelously with my son. He is receiving everything we asked for thanks to all of Cynthia’s support and dedication. Thank you for having a person like Cynthia working at Nevada PEP.

Martina Eva Torres
Parent

Cynthia Escamilla
Nevada PEP

Mi nina America tiene autismo y la informacion proporcionada por Cynthia Escamilla sobre las diferentes organizaciones de ayuda o acistencia. Fue excelente. Sobre todas las clases son perfectamente explicadas, podemos hacer preguntas y participar. Eso es muy importante para nosotros. Padres de familia y nuestros hijos.
My daughter has autism and the information given to us by Cynthia Escamilla regarding different organizations that provide help are excellent. Her support groups are perfectly explained, we can ask questions and participate. This is very important to us as parents of children with disabilities. We value the support groups at PEP.

Luis M. Calderon  
Parent

Kiara Estill  
Nevada PEP

Before I met Kiara, I was a single mother of a son with Autism and ADHD. I had been doing it all on my own and I felt like I was lost in the system. Kiara really went above and beyond to point me in the right direction. She gave me insight and knowledge that was truly invaluable. More than anything, however, Kiara provided me with friendship. She opened her arms and really listened what I had to say. She always checked up on me and made me feel like I wasn’t just another number. Thank you, Kiara.

Wendy Johnson  
Parent

Alanna Fitzgerald, MSW, LSW  
Family Resource Center Coordinator

Alanna Fitzgerald made a direct positive difference in the lives of my two special children. She made a difference in their life direction. Her efforts are outstanding and her impact is commendable. We thank her for assisting in all the processes it took to attain guardianship, food, health, and other needs in the lives of two homeless people. Without her help they would be in a state institution. The dollar amount she saved to foster two children I’m sure would make a tremendous difference on the budget. She made their Christmas grand by submitting them to an organization to receive gifts, which they continue to treasure, helping them to continue to learn and grow. She also helped me and my life become less burdening. We salute and thank her.

Marietta Shaw  
Parent

Ricardo Fontillas  
Doctor

Queremos dar las gracias al Dr. Fontillas por todo su apoyo con nuestro hijo. Gracias a él nuestro hijo ha mejorado al 100% es un adolescente que tiene estrategias y ha mejorado en la escuela. Gracias Dr.Fontillas.

We want to give thanks to Dr. Fontillas for all his support with our son. Thanks to him our son now has strategies and has improved 100% in school. Thank you Dr. Fontillas.

Martina E. Torres  
Parent

Elizabeth Foster  
Assistant Director at “Children’s Choice”

Mrs. Elizabeth Foster was the first person I met when I was trying to sign up my son for daycare. She has been so supportive, nice and helpful. She has always been there for my son. It’s been so hard for the staff members to handle his complicated disability. They never gave up. Mrs. Foster has been guiding us all these months and supporting us. She is one amazing person with a huge warm heart! Thanks we love you.

Ross Kap  
Parent

Mrs. Athena Garrison  
Teacher

Mrs. Garrison is my daughter’s 4th grade teacher. She made my daughter feel at home in her new school. She is a great role model and a great teacher. My daughter talks very highly of her. She loves her students as if there were her own. Great Job Mrs. Garrison.

Nina Fernandez  
Parent

Anagladys Ghiorsi  
Teacher

I appreciate the help of God through Anagladys. She has been there since my daughter was 4 years old at Head Start. She helped teach my daughter lots of things. She does so with a lot of patience and love.

Dunia Yescas  
Parent
Ms. Goodman
Valley High School

I would like to thank Ms. Goodman for being very helpful and understanding. She is also patient and shows genuine concern about my son’s well being. She has connected us with a lot of help we didn’t know that we could get, making our lives much easier and enabling us to cope better with issues.

Lourdes Garcia
Parent

Edith Hallmark
Relative

I would be in a lot of trouble if it weren’t for my mother, Edith Hallmark. She has been my rock in helping me with all of my son’s problems. Her understanding has been the key in letting me know that I am strong enough to take care of any problem that is thrown my way. She has been there for me, when other people turned their back on my son and me because he does have problems. I thank God every day that he gave me the gift of such a wonderful mom! Thanks mom we love you!

Robin (Nikki) Bryant
Parent

Rosenda Hernandez
Wife

Yo le doy los honores a mi esposa porque es una mujer muy batalladora. Ella ha sabido tener todo el tiempo disponible para mis hijos. Ella ha sacado adelante a otros tres niños que ahora tenemos en custodia y que posiblemente nos den en adopción. Ahora van a ser seis niños con los cuales ella va a compartir todos sus triunfos y todas sus dificultades. Ella ha podido sacarlos adelante y llevarlos por un buen camino. También ha podido saber qué es lo que quieren llevar a cabo con sus metas y ella siempre tendrá mi apoyo. Todos los honores y meritos para mi esposa por ser luchona y aguantar los momentos difíciles con los niños y por darles fortaleza y las ganas de seguir adelante.

I would like to give this honor to my wife because she is a fighter. She has been able to spend all the time that is available on our kids. She has also helped three other children which are currently under our custody and that we will possibly adopt. Now there will be six children with whom she will be able to share her triumphs and also the difficult situations. She has been able to help them move forward and lead them in the right direction. She knows what my children want and their goals and she will always have my support. Every honor and merit goes to my wife for being a fighter and dealing with the difficult moments with our children and for giving them the strength and the will to move forward.

Víctor Vasquez
Husband

Nancy Johnson
Special Educator

I would like to nominate Nancy Johnson for a Hand in Hand Award. I met Nancy recently at a conference we attended in Lake Tahoe, NV. Nancy introduced herself as a Special Educator to me. I was inspired by Nancy as I watched her eyes light up when she spoke so enthusiastically about the children she loves to work with, each one of them hold a very special place in her heart. Nancy is a wonderful, dedicated teacher who puts her whole heart into caring for the well being and future of her students. I wish to recognize Nancy’s dedication and unconditional love and support for her students.

Katherine Stansberry
Nevada PEP

Mr. Jeff Kepner
School Psychologist

In many ways my family and I are in debt for our lives & future strides. If it weren’t for Mr. Kepner’s educated love of child psychology and having such a kind, opening-loving heart. I’d hate to imagine where my learning disabled child would have gone in the public school system. Unknowledgeable of the age limitations and restrictions for State Assistance, my son would never have had the chance and opportunity to have the appropriate attention needed for his behavioral developmental delays.

Melissa Gray
Parent
Ms. Marissa Kester  
*Teacher*

Ms. Marissa Kester has done a great job working with my son. She is his 1st grade teacher. She goes the extra mile in order to support her students. Ms. Kester is a very caring and loving teacher. She bought my son juices out of her pocket! And so many other materials the children needed. She obviously loves her job and has a lot of knowledge about special education. She’s a great professional and loving woman! Thanks Ms. Kester

Ros Kap  
*Parent*

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Teri Kirby  
*Nevada PEP 360 Center*

Teri is a hard, friendly, caring worker. She goes and does 2000%. She is knowledgeable & understanding. Our family recently moved from IL to Las Vegas. She has been great on helping us to get established.

Dori Khadder & Bill Steward  
*Parent*

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David Konoza  
*Therapist*

David has helped me with a lot of stuff. When I do something wrong he lets me know what I can do better if it happens again. He also helps my parents by letting them know how they should help me. He tells them what they can do and not to let them be frustrated with me. I’d like to let him know how much I appreciate him.

Manuel Larrea  
*Student*

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Dallas McCord  
*Principal – Turning Point School*

Ms. McCord is always there helping me out. She is the greatest principal in the world. My mom thinks she helps me out when I have rough times. She will always help me through it all. Ms. McCord is the only person I can think of that best deserves this award.

Michael Jaeger  
*Student*

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Mrs. Tracie Moultrup  
*Teacher*

Mrs. Tracie Moultrup is a loving, kind and sincere teacher. She always looked out for my child’s best interest. He did great in her class because he knew she truly cared about him and his feelings. We only wish he could have had her again this year. I know he felt safe and very comfortable in her class and enjoyed being there and had fun learning. We were grateful for him to have an excellent teacher like her. Thank you for your support.

Denise & Frank Espino  
*Parents*

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Carol & Rusty Olk  
*Family Friends*

We are so lucky to have such great people next door, true friends. I am a single mother and our family is back east. Carol and Rusty took us into their family with open arms. They help me with my son and watch him when they can. They love him and he loves them. I will never forget all they do.

Genevieve McSweeney  
*Mom*

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Pat Person  
*Grandmother*

Pat is a special person to me and my child. I wish you and your family well and bless you all. I hope good things keep coming your way.

Michelle Love  
*Parent*

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Ms. Rosas  
*Teacher*

Ms. Rosas has shown true compassion for me and my daughter. A long day of dealing with my daughter’s behavior has never stopped her relentless effort to
teach my daughter and give her, her best. I am truly grateful for having her as my daughter’s 1st grade teacher.

Malia Kekahuna
Parent

Wendy Ryan
Therapist

Wendy has gone above and beyond helping our son with his behavior and his coping skills about not being the only child. Our son has ADHD and ODD and possible Asperger’s syndrome. Wendy has taken special consideration with helping our son. She is helping him to understand words that a child his age should know. She is also helping him to understanding facial expressions on his level.

Scott & Sonne Ouellette
Parents

Jennifer Sanderson
Administrative Secretary

Jennifer is part of the Administration Team at William Bailey M.S. In the past few years she has went out of her way to help me and my son get assistance at school and in the community. Jennifer is a great asset to the Clark County School District and also to the parents and children of William Bailey M.S. I appreciate her very much.

Nina Fernandez
Parent

Monica Sparta
Center Director of “Children’s Choice”-MGM

Mrs. Monica Sparta is a great loving person who always goes the extra mile to help out others. She is the most understanding and polite person I’ve ever met. She allowed my son to visit the center every day, even though he is hard to take care for. She’s always been so nice and good to my son, giving him extra love and support. Thanks for always being there for him and us!

Ross Kap
Parent

Katherine Stansberry
Nevada PEP 360 Center

I was put with Nevada PEP through the Clark County Juvenile Justice System I was blessed to get Katherine Stansberry as my counselor. She has gone above and beyond to help me and my family with the holidays and with my son’s education. Also she is helping me with Community Resources. She is the Best!! Also I want to thank Nevada PEP for Katherine she is definitely an asset to the company. Great Job Katherine Stansberry!!

Nina Fernandez
Parent

Mr. Andrew Sullivan
Math Teacher

I cannot say enough about Mr. Sullivan, My son’s seventh grade math teacher. He goes above and beyond to get his students to understand math. Mr. Sullivan stays after school just to help my son.

Nina Fernandez
Parent

Dreana Sweeney
Mobile Mental Health Support Services

I would like to nominate Dreana Sweeney for a Hand and Hand award. Dreana works at an agency that provides families with mobile mental health services. I have seen how she works with families in a very caring and compassionate way. Dreana goes above and beyond in her service with the families, and uses every resource available to assist them. I witnessed her dedication and compassion recently, when a family of 10 was in desperate need of food a day before Thanksgiving this year. When she learned that this family had no resources to buy groceries for themselves and the food banks were going to be closed for the holidays. Dreana loaded up her own vehicle with food from her own home and provided
them with enough groceries for a Thanksgiving meal and more. Thank You, Dreana for your outstanding commitment to the families you serve, and for being an awesome individual.

Katherine Stansberry  
NV PEP

Mrs. T  
Science Teacher

Mrs. T is the science teacher at Truckee Meadows School inside Willow Springs Center. Ginny teaches all levels of science to students 7 through 12 grades.

She is one of the most talented, caring, and supportive teachers I have ever had the privilege to work with. Her students say she is the best teacher they have ever had.

She is a shining light for emotionally disabled kids. She is changing their futures for the better!

Terri Peltier & Rod Smith

Kenny Taycher  
Deputies Coach

I watched in awe as my son and Coach Kenny rounded the bases hand in hand. It struck me like a fast ball. You see my son has autism and is non verbal. He just spoke to me with his eyes and with his smile. And this is what he said, “Thank You Kenny for giving us all what every human being deserves, the chance to feel good about ourselves.” My son has come a long way since his start with Challenger Little League 7 years ago. Back then he was anxious to even get on the field. Kenny’s encouragement and mentoring convinced him to try the game of baseball. Today he looks like a pro out there.

He has confidence, a sense of teamwork, belonging and friends. Kenny’s been a positive influence to all of the players throughout the twenty glorious years of Challenger Little League baseball. The kids thrive on his enthusiasm. They are motivated by his energy. He is more than a coach, a friend, a teacher, a role model. He is a gift. He is appreciated.

Diane and Dean Lombardo  
Parent and Child

Tom Taycher  
Coach of Challenger Little League

On behalf of our family and ALL the Challenger Little League families, you rock hard. You guys are the best!! We all remain, so grateful for all your dedication to and for all the players the time you spend on and with baseball Does NOT go unnoticed. We love you thank you so very much without you the world as us parents know it would be a dark place!!

The Leavitt family  
All the Challenger Little League families  
All our supporters

Sam Thomas  
LVHS Head Baseball Coach

Las Vegas High School Baseball coaches and team, thank you so very much for taking the time to “mentor” and appear at the 20th Anniversary opening day for Challenger Little League baseball!!! Your presence was so far reaching and so much appreciated. You may never fully understand the full affects of your actions but we appreciate you coming out and supporting our kids. We just want to
thank you all so much. On behalf of Challenger Little League, Nevada PEP and our families, we all remain so grateful to have had the players attend and be great role models.

Leavitt Family  
Nevada PEP  
Challenger Little League  
(Coach Tom & Kenny Taycher)

Danielle Tomlin  
*Daughter*

I do not know what to say, I want to recognize my daughter, Danielle. She helps in the community and donates her time to the public schools. She volunteers her time on top of being a great daughter and mother to my grandchildren. Also she is an exceptional granddaughter because my mom is very ill and Danielle is our back bone. She keeps everyone positive and goes above and beyond to help wherever she can.

Nina Fernandez  
*Parent*

Ruth Waite  
*Manager*

We gave recognition to Ruth Waite, who goes beyond the call of duty! She is the manager for the Carriage Park Villas. For any of her tenants, especially our youth, she is very compassionate and always there to give praise, have ears to listen, or a shoulder to cry on. Ruth will always let you know where you stand with her, however she does this with the at most respect. Ruth is true to herself. She has been truly a heaven sent.

Nikkie Weiland  
*Student/Artist*

Nevada PEP is honored to recognize Nikki Weiland for her commitment to creating a beautiful mural for our Include Me puppets. When the word went out that Nevada PEP was looking for an artist to paint our puppets their own community, Nikki sent in her ideas. After winning our art contest Nikki came into the PEP office over the summer and painted a community for our puppets. She spent long days prepping and outlining the mural. Her creativity and talent gave us the perfect community for our puppets. Thank you Nikki for your time and dedication to this project, our puppets love their new home.

With much appreciation,  
Nevada PEP

Brenda Weathington  
*CMO Worker*

Brenda Weathington became our CMO worker in 2007. She worked with all 3 of my children one on one to help meet all of their needs. I have a son w/ ADHD & ODD. Brenda came to every meeting that was held at the school to advocate for our family in getting him a 504 plan, which took us almost 2 years to get. At the same time she was able to get the company she worked for to pay for my son to be in gymnastics. This helped him with an outlet to release all his energy he had inside during the weekends. Brenda has gone through many great lengths in helping our family with so many other things like support groups, mentors for my children, writing letters and advocating for our entire family. And she is still a big support for us.

Marisa Briggs  
*Parent*

With much appreciation,  
Nevada PEP
Tracy Wiese  
_Psycho Social Rehabilitative Worker_

Tracy has gone far beyond the call of duty when it comes to providing PSR services to my daughter. When Medicaid cut the number of hours that they would pay Tracy for providing services. She worked it out with her supervisor so that my daughter was still receiving the quality/quantity services that she needed from her. I don’t know where we would be if Tracy had not been here for us through one crisis situation after another. Tracy is the best!

Kiara Estill  
Parent

Marifloyd Wright  
_Speech Teacher_

Marifloyd was my son’s speech teacher. She came every week for 11 months. I would like to recognize her because she is amazing. She really truly cared about my son and his development. She always stayed after her time was up if she wasn’t getting what she wanted from him. She always gave 100% and we are truly grateful for her services and the time she gave to my son and all the children she serviced. It is not about the paycheck she really cares! My son is doing so much better because of her and my mind is at ease with all the information she provided and advice she gave.

Brenda Miller  
Parent

Monica Zamora  
_Information Services Director_

Monica has a way of bringing out the BEST in everyone she comes into contact with. Her warm confidence in our abilities makes coming to work a pleasure and a joy. She’s always available to answer all of our questions regardless of how small. Monica encourages us to trust our own knowing in ways that we have never previously encountered. She has an effortless ability to give and share wisdom from the heart. She also approaches all people in a non-judgmental way.

Monica is an advocate, friend, and supervisor full of passion, understanding and integrity. She has made a lasting impression in the lives of each of us. We hope that she will carry us always with her in her mind and heart. She is very helpful and always encourages us to do better. Monica is a person of diverse talents and the lessons that she taught us carry us through our day. We measure everything by the bar that is set by her. She is an awesome trainer with everlasting patience and kindness.

Monica has an amazing spirit that has touched and positively changed us forever. She is very sweet and we have never had a supervisor that is so caring about her team before. We wish her goodness and love and we know that she is destined for greatness and will be successful in whatever she chooses to do. Thank you Monica, for being a wonderful boss!

The Information Services Department  
(Past & Present)

A Special Thank you to all of our “Hand in Hand” Participants!
Annual Sponsorship
Hand in Hand Appreciation Program

Show your support for the remarkable 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 these special children.

**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
- Recognized 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
- Recognized 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

Every October, Nevada recognizes children with special needs. In honor of this annual recognition, Nevada PEP will produce the “Hand in Hand” yearbook. Honorees will also be highlighted in the quarterly PEP Post throughout the year.