Celebrating a Collection of stories honoring those who help families of children with special needs

10th Anniversary

HAND IN HAND TOGETHER WE CAN
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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
- 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

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.
**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 disabilities. Adolescents and young adults will understand their strengths and weakness and how to advocate themselves.

**THREE**
Nevada PEP will conduct community outreach and public awareness activities to families, professionals, organizations, and traditionally underserved populations that directly or indirectly work with children with disabilities and their families to raise awareness of available support, link families with other families in similar circumstance, encourage community acceptance and enhance the family centered 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 accompanied with membership in their own community.
- 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.
- 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 we 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 levels to guide the development of meaningful services that are family-driven.
Welcome to our 10th anniversary of our Hand in Hand Together We Can yearbook. The Hand in Hand Together We Can program began in 2002. Nevada PEP wanted to find a way to honor the special people who have made a positive difference in the lives of children with special needs. Throughout the years, the stories have been heartwarming to read. This year is no exception.

At Nevada PEP, our goal is to educate, encourage and empower families to become advocates for their children, so that all children will be successful members of our community. This year Nevada PEP will be celebrating twenty years of helping families. Over those twenty years, we have served thousands of families and built an excellent reputation throughout the state. One way we measure our success is by families calling us just to say, “Thank you for being there,” or “My child enjoys going to school now”. As Chair of the Nevada PEP Governing Board, I would like to take a few moments to reflect on just a few our many accomplishments this past year.

Nevada PEP has enjoyed an outstanding year. A milestone achievement of 2012 was the first statewide Run Walk Roll Bullying Prevention event, in recognition of October as National Bullying Awareness month. The event was held in Reno on IGT property and at Tivoli Village in Las Vegas. The event was a success, bringing bullying awareness to the forefront. Nevada PEP partnered with schools in the month of October and provided Bullying Prevention Bulletin Boards and pledge bookmarks to help students recognize how they can stand up to bullying! Another milestone achievement was our annual Art Show in Reno. This year, Rorie Fitzpatrick, Deputy Superintendent for Instruction at the Nevada Department of Education, and Mary Ellen Horan, Executive Director of VSA Nevada Arts, both were recognized for their outstanding support to families and children with disabilities.

As we begin 2013, Nevadans are looking forward to a better year; our economy is starting to turn around and we see a brighter future for our state. 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.

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

Sam Lieberman, Nevada PEP Governing Board Chair
“Thank you for all the help you’ve given me. PEP guided me to know exactly what to do to get things done that I couldn’t get done without the information you provided.”

- Parent
FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

INCOME  Total: $1,446,457.00

EXPENDITURES  Total: $1,339,618.00

18,401 Individuals Served

- Grants & Contracts
- Contributions
- Other
- Memberships

- 18,401 Individuals Served

INCOME:
- $1,385,372.00
  - Contributions: $34,630
  - Other: $22,855
  - Memberships: $3,600

EXPENDITURES:
- Total: $1,339,618.00
  - Personnel
  - Building & Space
  - Professional Services
  - Supplies, Postage & Shipping
  - Family Training Stipends
  - Printing & Publications
  - Travel & Mileage
  - Conferences, Meetings & Trainings
  - Other Operators

- Total Income: $1,446,457.00
- Total Expenditure: $1,339,618.00
- 18,401 Individuals Served
Was the information presented at the workshop useful to you?  

...Yes, 92%

Because of the information you received at the workshop, do you feel you are more knowledgeable about how to work with schools?  

...Yes, 100%

Because of the information I learned and put to use from the workshop, my child has received more appropriate services?  

...Yes, 76%

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, 83%

Has the workshop provided you with the information you needed to make decisions about your child’s education?  

...Yes, 92%

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 to 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.

Statewide Training Certificates

Nevada Preschool Registry - 1,275
Foster Care Parents - 72

3,034 Individuals participated in the training workshops

270 Training Workshops Conducted
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 6,697 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

- Visual / Blind: 1%
- Orthopedic: 1%
- Hearing / Deaf: 1%
- Non Disabled: 1%
- Multiple: 2%
- Speech / Language: 3%
- Developmental Delay: 4%
- Intellectual Disability: 5%
- Health / Medical: 6%
- Undiagnosed: 8%
- Learning Disability: 10%
- ADD / ADHD: 17%
- Autism: 18%
- Emotional: 25%

VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS
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.

- Home visits: 208
- Child Family Team: 405
- Education Meetings: 992
- New “Intakes” Families: 1,418
- New Individual Assistance Contacts: 10,568
- Individual Assistance Contacts: 20,263
- New Individuals Contacting PEP: 3,341

84% Responded that the information and support from PEP helped to address a critical need related to their child’s education.

92% Responded that the information they received from Nevada PEP helped them to receive more appropriate services for their child.

92% Responded their child received more appropriate services because they put to use the information they have learned from Nevada PEP.

96% Responded that because of the information they received from Nevada PEP, they are more knowledgeable about how to work with schools.

100% Responded that the information they received from PEP helped them make decisions about their 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

1. Advocacy - 26%
2. Family Support - 24%
3. Behavior Issues - 14%
4. Special Education/IEPs - 13%
5. Disability - 7%
6. Assessments - 4%
7. Evidence-Based Practice - 3%
8. Transition - 3%
9. Placement - 2%
10. Related Services - 2%

140 Number of public forums, information fairs, & community outreach events

51,299 Number of yearly Website hits at nvpep.org

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

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

116,060 Number of E-Newsletters sent

303 Number of schools visited across Nevada
CONSUMER DEMOGRAPHICS

Gender of Children Helped
Male - 68%
Female - 32%

Ethnicities of Consumers
- Caucasian 52%
- Hispanic 23%
- African American 11%
- Asian 3%
- Not Determined 9%
- Native American 1%

Ages of Children Helped
- 0 through 2: 1%
- 3 through 5: 10%
- 6 through 11: 22%
- 12 through 14: 24%
- 15 through 18: 5%
- 19 through 21: 1%
- 22 through 26: 1%

YEARS
- 38%
- 10%
- 22%
- 24%

Consumer Relationships
- Parents 78%
- Service Providers 6%
- General Public 6%
- Other Educators 4%
- Other Relatives 2%
- Advocates 1%
- Foster Parents 1%
- Special Educators 1%
- Students 1%
FUNDING SOURCES

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 securely over the Internet

Visit our website @ www.nvpep.org
MAJOR FUNDERS
MGM Resorts Foundation
Nevada Community Foundation
Nevada Department of Education
Nevada Division of Child and Family Services
Nevada Institute of Mental Health
Nevada Office of Suicide Prevention
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
U.S. Department of Education
U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration

INDIVIDUAL FUNDERS
Edgar Barrera
Julie Beasley, Ph. D.
Anthony Cisson
James Hall
William Filipic
Dr. Joanna Fricke
Carol Gaberel
Andrea Guldin
Patricia & Brian Houle
Jacqueline & Walter Jagodzinski
Timothy Josselyn
Phyllis & James Kimball
Trish and Andy Leavitt

Jamie Martin
Kimberly Martinez
Tara McAdorey
Jeanette Miller
Rosa & Dan Morgan
Michelle Nichols
Dee Painter
Terri Peltier
Pam Peri
Nancy Radford
Danielle Smailes
Robyn & Robert Treska

COMMUNITY PARTNERS
1909 S. Jones Properties, LLC
Abbots Custom Printing
Advanced Imaging Solutions
Barnes & Noble
BJ’s Restaurant
Brownstein/Hyatt/Farber/Schreck
Buffalo Wild Wings
Chefs for Kids
Dermody Properties Foundation
Frontier Financial Credit Union
GROUPON
Hard Rock Café
Justin Timberlake Shriners
Hospitals for Children Open
Knights of Columbus
Marie Callender’s

Nevada’s Big Give
Nevada Center for Excellence in Disabilities
Nevada Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities
Nevada State Bank
Panda Express
Smith & Peltier and Associates
Southwest Airlines
Spring Mountain Treatment Center
The Sign Shop
The Lovaas Center
United Way of Southern Nevada
Wells Fargo Foundation
Willow Springs RTC

Thank you to our Anonymous Donors. We are truly grateful for your continued support.
Nevada PEP is proud to announce that Havander Davis (right) was awarded the honor of being the Private Sector Employee of the Year by WEET (Work Enhancement Employment Team)! Join us in congratulating Havander, as we all know he is deserving of the honor. Havander enjoys working at Nevada PEP as our Communication Specialist.

We are proud of Robin Renshaw (left) Transition Specialist at Nevada PEP, for receiving the Personal Advocate award from the Nevada Disability and Advocacy Law Center. As the transition specialist Robin enjoys educating students on transition. Congratulations Robin on this well deserving award!!
This year, Nevada PEP is celebrating ten years of the Hand in Hand Together We Can Appreciation Program. From the first edition of the yearbook to the tenth, Nevada PEP is proud to provide this avenue to honor and recognize the hundreds of individuals who exemplify what it means to be a community. I congratulate the recipients of Hand in Hand Together We Can Appreciation Awards for the incredible stories and what they do each day to make a difference in the lives of children and their families. You will be inspired as you read all the heartwarming stories that appreciative families have shared with us.

The stories in this yearbook highlight how valuable we are to each other. We learn that each of us has a role to play in strengthening our communities. It takes the neighbor who watches over the children at the bus stop, the teacher who encourages a student’s interest in learning, and courageous leaders who understand and address the human needs of their constituents to make a strong community. The families, the honorees and the sponsors of the Hand in Hand Together We Can Appreciation program are a reflection of the giving and caring communities Nevadans are proud to call home.

This excellent program wouldn’t be possible if it wasn’t for the generous sponsors of the Hand in Hand Together We Can Appreciation Awards. I want to thank all of our wonderful community partners for their amazing support.

I hope that you enjoy the encouraging stories and consider sponsoring the Hand in Hand Together We Can Appreciation Program. On behalf of the staff and volunteers of Nevada PEP, we congratulate the giving people whose stories show us that we all can make a difference.

With Appreciation,

Executive Director
Retta Dermody, Director of Program and Services for the Satellite Office and Certified Parent Support Provider (CPSP), has over twenty-eight years of experience in special education. Retta has advocated as a mom, step-mom, and grandmother of children with special needs. Her experiences include working as a teacher’s aide in resource rooms for the 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, in addition to serving on numerous boards and committees.

Natalie Filipic is the mother of two and grandmother of five. 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 seventeen 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 eight 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.

Stephanie Vrsnik is the Community Development Director. Stephanie is the mother of two and a very proud grandmother. Having a son with 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 our children to be successful contributing members of our community.” Stephanie is a member of the American Fundraising Professionals and the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce. She oversees the Annual Statewide Run Walk Roll fundraising event, bringing awareness to the community on Bullying Prevention. Building a stronger community for our children is her primary goal.
Dorena Ash is a Family Specialist at Nevada PEP and is a Certified Parent Support Provider (CPSP). 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.

d’Arcy Bostic is the Include Me Program Coordinator. She is the proud mother of three daughters and a son with Autism and Cognitive Impairment. The Include Me Puppet Program has been a wonderful, rewarding adventure of educating preschool and elementary age children, their families, and staff about Inclusion and Bullying Prevention. “My goal is to help educate the next generation of children about the importance of inclusion, friendship and bullying prevention skills.”

Dorithia Coleman is a Family Specialist at Nevada PEP and is a Certified Parent Support Provider (CPSP). 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 and is a Certified Parent Support Provider (CPSP). 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.”

Cheri Day is a Family 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 children with disabilities. Her goal is to help empower others as she has been empowered through PEP.

Santiago De La Torre is a Family Specialist, bilingual Training Specialist, and is a Certified Parent Support Provider (CPSP). 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.”

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 lifetime goal of helping others. This is the gratification of a lifetime!!!”
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 is the Statewide Family Network Coordinator for Nevada PEP and is a Certified Parent Support Provider (CPSP). The Statewide Family Network 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 two children with emotional and behavioral disorders, Charlene has had personal experience advocating for children with special needs. Charlene has called Nevada home for over 16 years and has been an active part of the Las Vegas community working on behalf of children.

Dunia Gutierrez is a bilingual Family Specialist from Honduras. Dunia is the proud mother of a son who has a learning disability. She enjoys helping parents of children with special needs as well educating, empowering, and encouraging families so they can be the best advocates for their children. “It is an honor and a blessing to be able to work here at Nevada PEP because my job is helping families.”

Guadalupe Henriquez is the Bilingual Information and Referral Intake Specialist at Nevada PEP. She is a student at College of Southern Nevada, pursuing a Bachelor’s Degree in Special Education. She provides information to families and refers them to the right places so they may obtain the correct services that they need for their children. She enjoys working with families and empowers them so they can be the best advocates for their children. Guadalupe also enjoys presenting trainings in Spanish that help provide more information to parents. Guadalupe’s inspiration to help families comes from helping her mother advocate for her little brother who has a disability.
Stephanie Houle is a Training Specialist at Nevada PEP. Stephanie is the mother of a feisty little red-head with a developmental delay. She enjoys sharing information and resources with families who also have young children with disabilities. Stephanie is grateful for the opportunity to support children and their families through education, encouragement, and empowerment activities at PEP.

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 Department 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.

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.

Teri Kirby is the Family Navigator Coordinator for the 360 Center and is a Certified Parent Support Provider (CPSP). Teri was introduced to PEP over nine 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.
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.

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 30 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 26 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.

Gabie Ramos is a bilingual Information and Referral Specialist at Nevada PEP. She is the proud mother of three wonderful girls. She is very passionate about helping families and enjoys working with families. She welcomes the opportunity to provide the much needed information and support to families in Nevada.
Robin Renshaw is a native of Las Vegas. “I’ve been with Nevada PEP for thirteen years as a Transition Specialist and I’m looking forward to thirteen more. There is absolutely nothing I would rather do; not only for youth with disabilities, but for myself. In the coming year, in addition to teaching youth personal advocacy skills, I want to show them how to advocate for others in our disability community.” Robin found that it’s powerful to advocate for yourself; but to him, it’s even more exciting to advocate for others!

Magdalena Ruiz is a bilingual Family Navigator for the 360 program. She is a proud mother of three boys; her oldest and her youngest son has a disability. Before she became part of the Nevada PEP family, she was lost and overwhelmed with stress. Thanks to the help she received from PEP, she was able to keep going. “I now feel confident and capable to do the same for all my families. My goal is to make a difference in a child’s life and to help families become better advocates for their loved ones.”

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 as a part of the PEP family.

Michele Santee is the Intake Specialist here at Nevada PEP. She is a proud mom of two children, one who has special needs. Nevada PEP was such a great help to her family and to her son! She knew this was where she belonged. Being a part of the PEP family has given her the opportunity to help other with the same support she received when she was first contacted PEP. Nevada PEP has taught her to be a better advocate for her son and helping families do the same for their children is definitely one of the most rewarding feelings!
Kathy Treants came to Nevada PEP over 7 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 proud father of an energetic eight-year-old girl and the Graphic & Web Designer for Nevada PEP. Chad maintains the organization’s website and its online social media networks. He also designs all of PEP’s materials and publications for families. In addition, Chad helps to support PEP’s efforts in spreading awareness about the effects of bullying in our community. “I traveled a lot when I was younger, which helped me learn to see people for who they are. Bullying prevention is important because it allows us to build stronger relationships with one another in our community.”
February 22, 2013

Nevada Parents Encouraging Parents, Inc.
2101 S. Jones., Ste. 120
Las Vegas, Nevada 89146

Dear Friends:

Nevada Parents Encouraging Parents, Inc. (Nevada PEP) has served as support and a resource to children with disabilities and their parents. Nevada PEP has worked to increase opportunities for home, community and school success for children with disabilities and their families since 1993.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the men and women being honored in this year’s “Hand in Hand Together We Can” appreciation program. Each Hand in Hand award recipient is an inspiration to all of us. It is with pleasure and gratitude that I thank these wonderful men and women for going above and beyond the call of duty to make a positive difference in the lives of children with special needs. Sincere thanks and appreciation to the staff and volunteers of Nevada PEP, your support has helped make Nevada PEP an effective and important resource for Nevada’s disability community.

I look forward to continuing to work with all of you to better the lives of children with disabilities. I wish you all continued success.

Sincerely,

HARRY REID
United States Senator
February 19, 2013

Dear Friends and Distinguished Guests:

It is my distinct pleasure to once again express my support for the Nevada Encouraging Parents “Hand-in-Hand Together We Can” Appreciation Program. This outstanding program recognizes and honors the dedicated individuals who touch the lives of children with disabilities, and I am proud to show my support for this important effort.

Countless children and families across our great nation must cope every day with challenges associated with a disability. We must never falter in the effort to ensure that these fellow Americans are treated with the dignity and care that they deserve, and that they enjoy every opportunity to succeed. Nevada PEP is an outstanding organization involved in making a difference in the lives of children with disabilities, and I commend all who work and volunteer supporting its noble mission.

On behalf of the state of Nevada and the United States Senate, I extend my deepest gratitude to all of the dedicated individuals who contribute to the “Hand-in-Hand” program. Thank you for the incredible difference you make in our community.

Sincerely,

Dean Heller
United States Senator
Nevada PEP’s Annual Art Show and Silent Auction was a great platform from which the Satellite Office in Reno could show-case our new office suite. The event was held May 31st in honor of Mental Health Awareness month. Families, state leaders, and community partners attended the event, enjoying the beautiful artwork provided by children.

Nevada PEP was pleased to honor Ms. Mary Ellen Horan, Executive Director of VSA (Very Special Arts) Nevada, The State Organization on Arts and Disability, and Ms. Rorie Fitzpatrick, Deputy Superintendent, Nevada Department of Education, for all of their hard work and dedication supporting families of children with disabilities throughout Nevada. Both women were also honored by Senator Reid, Senator Heller, Congressman Amodei, and Governor Sandoval by receiving certificates of appreciation.

A very special thanks to Thea Westin, a Nevada PEP board member, for all of her hard work soliciting donations for the event. PEP would like to thank the following individuals and businesses for their generosity in making our event a success.

- Judy Wilson, Massage Therapist
- Melinda Jensen’s Reed High School Students
- Trish Leavitt, Wine Basket
- BJ’s Restaurant & Brewhouse, Summit Mall
- Texas Roadhouse
- The Wet Hen
- Gold Dust West Casino
- Reno Bighorns
- Harrah’s/Hervey’s Casino
- Trader Joe’s
- Reno Aces
- Red Lobster
- Louie’s Basque Corner
- Roller Kingdom
- Starlite Bowling
- Grand Sierra Resort
- Atlantis Casino
- Pump It Up
- Rosewood Lakes Golf Course
- Lowes, Legends
- Southwest Airlines
- Moana Nursery
- Fitness for 10, Sparks
- Outback Steakhouse, Reno
- Squeeze In, South Reno
- Claim Jumper
- Eldorado Casino
- Zephyr Cove MS Dixie
- Sizzler
- Wolf Run Golf
- Rapscallion
- Wildcreek Golf Course
- Magic Carpet Miniature Golf
- Klassy Glass Jewelry
- Mt. Rose Ski Resort
- Sands Casino
- Scheels
- Costco, Spanish Springs
- Sam’s Club
- Walmart #2189
- Scolari’s Corporate Office
- Smith’s, South Meadows
Bullying is a serious issue that faces many children in Nevada. Nevada PEP is part of a nationwide movement to raise awareness of bullying prevention. October is National Bullying Prevention Month where communities unite to raise awareness of bullying prevention through events, activities, outreach, and education.

Recognizing the importance of working with schools and the community, Nevada PEP has, for the past three years, developed a statewide bullying prevention partnership with 22 schools. In 2012, Nevada PEP worked with the following schools: Doris Hancock Elementary School, Red Rock Elementary School, Kit Carson Elementary School, Ernest May Elementary School, Liliam Lujan Hickey Elementary School, Lemmon Valley Elementary School, Libby Booth Elementary School, Mark Twain Elementary School, Glen Duncan Elementary School, William O’Brien Middle School, and Mike O’Callaghan Middle School. Nevada PEP provided these schools with bullying prevention bulletin boards, pledge bookmarks, and suggestions on school-wide bullying announcements that will help students to discover 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 Michele Elliott, Counselor at Hancock Elementary said, “Hancock Elementary is taking the steps to stop bullying at our school. 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.”
Bullying is a serious issue that faces many children in Nevada. Nevada PEP is part of a national movement that’s putting a STOP to bullying. In recognition of October being National Bullying Awareness month, Nevada PEP held its statewide Run Walk Roll Bullying Prevention event. Teachers, parents, students, families, and friends showed up in droves for this spectacular statewide event. Nearly one thousand participants ran, walked, and, yes- some rolled with the same passion to put an end to the tragic effects of bullying.

Nevada PEP was proud to partner with Tivoli Village in Las Vegas, while the Satellite Office kicked off their event with the tremendous support of IGT. Both locations enjoyed expert emcees provided by local television stations. Marissa Mike of Channel 3 did the honors in Southern Nevada and Channel 4 Shelby Sheehan hosted the event in Northern Nevada.

Opening festivities included a gracious welcome by Mr. Sam Lieberman, Nevada PEP board chair, followed by a performance from the Las Vegas High School JROTC Wildcat Battalion Color Guard. The national anthem sung by Carly Matt in the South and Nevada PEP’s own Samantha King in the North. Miss Nevada 2012, Ms Randi Sundquist, addressed the crowd with some wise words about bullying prevention. Cheerleaders performed at both sites, with the Vegas Cheer Authority performing PEP in Your Step in the south and the Developmental League Team cheerleader’s rallied participants on at the northern event.

Nevada PEP’s very own Diane Lombardo also sang her original theme song called RUN WALK and ROLL. Las Vegas Stratosphere headliner, Frankie Moreno served as Grand Marshal counting down the 5K gun-timed race and 1.5 mile fun walk. The race was on! Taylor Barton signed autographs, thrilled the crowd by bringing his genuine NASCAR vehicle, and allowed fans to pose for pictures. The raffle drawing was expertly handled by Nevada PEP’s board member, Trish Leavitt.

The state came together in support of Nevada PEP, taking steps to end bullying, raising awareness and taking positive action. Join us for Run Walk Roll 2013!

**Take a STEP with PEP to STOP Bullying!**

Watch 2012 Event Video: [http://tinyurl.com/a4269ws](http://tinyurl.com/a4269ws)
Thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers for their time, dedication and support. We couldn't have done it without you!!
Nevada PEP’s Include Me Puppet Program enjoyed a successful year performing for over 560 preschool children and over 100 parents and professionals in local preschools and Las Vegas Clark County Libraries in Southern Nevada. Nevada PEP has developed a great partnership with the Las Vegas Clark County Library District educating preschoolers, their families and staff on inclusion and bullying prevention.

Our dedicated puppeteers have volunteered many hours to perfecting the scripts and bringing the puppets to life. The children are excited as they interact with the puppets by asking questions about different disabilities and bullying prevention. Educating younger generations with parents and professionals is an encouraging step towards building friendships and positive outcomes. The response we have received in our community has been extremely positive. Professionals, educators and parents all commented and said the program is very educational for children and they would like to see it expand to all children throughout the community. Our multicultural, child size, hand and rod puppets represent Cerebral Palsy, Autism, Learning Disability, Spina Bifida, Visual Impairment, and Hearing Impairment.

Our goal is positive inclusion for all children, with and without disabilities. By educating our community on disabilities we are building a brighter future for all children.

For more information contact Nevada PEP: 702-388-8899

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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: 6,697

Rita Varney,

I’m “just” a Volunteer. Yep, I said it. My daughter and I volunteer at PEP because it’s a cause we believe in. We believe Nevada PEP is teaching parents to advocate for their children which is giving opportunity and meaning to lives everyday. Each day leads to a lifetime. Showing parents they are the best advocate for their children is a gift that PEP gives families. Our roll in helping the staff in the office or at a fair allows them the time to do what they do best. An old saying that has always inspired me is...

“I am only one, but I am one.
I cannot do everything, but I can do something.
And I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do.”
~Edward Everett Hale
Hand in Hand
Appreciation Program
Sponsors

Gold

Kimberley Martinez
Julie Beasley, Ph.D.
Patricia & Andrew Leavitt

Silver

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In Special Memory of Anthony Cisson
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the LOVAAS CENTER

Julie Beasley, Ph.D.
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.
Michele Castle
Teacher

My daughter just received her 3 year IEP, and I celebrated. What once was a fearful time for her brother and I, is now a time to celebrate. Mrs. Castle has been patient, passionate, loving and professional. She has encouraged my daughter and challenged her to perform at her grade level. My daughter needed a teacher to be patient and go the distance. Having a child in Special Education has provided many opportunities for me to think outside the box, never give up or give in, and continue to do whatever it takes no matter what. Mrs. Castle deserves acknowledgement and recognition for her performance and heart it has taken to do what she does every day. From the bottom of my heart and a huge thank you from me, my family and my daughter’s future. Mrs. Castle we applaud you.

Malia Kekahuna
Mother

Betty-Jeanne Cousins
Family Friend

It wasn’t until the 2011-2012 school year when our son was in 3rd grade that his learning disabilities were discovered. He is dyslexic and struggles with reading and writing. As a result of a student intervention team suggestion, he takes tests alone with a person reading some of the test for him.

Due to my husband and I working full time, we were having a difficult time helping out at school. We are so grateful for Betty-Jeanne, a member of our church, who volunteered not only to help proctor our son’s tests but also to volunteer in his classroom. We will never forget how the generous gift of her time helped our entire family, particularly during this confusing and emotional “discovery” period. We will always remember her kindness and will be forever thankful.

Gina Venglass
Parent

Hector Cruz
Parent

A sido un exceiente esposo y padre para mi hijo. El ante no cmprendia el problema de el y poco a poco diciendole ha entendido su problema y trata de ayudarlo y entenderlo y yo estoy muy agradeada por su apoyo moral y economic y so pncencia en nuestras uldas ha sido de mucha ayuda.

Hector has been an excellent husband and father to my son. He did not understand the problem that my son had, and telling him slowly he started to understood his problem. He tries to help and understand. I am grateful for his moral and economic support and for his patience in our lives and for being very helpful. Thanks skinny. I do it with love for you and my son.

Eva Cruz
Parent
Erin D’Astolfo-Mesa  
*Coach*

Coach Erin is one of the coaches for the Shining Stars special needs cheer team, at 5 Star Athletics. Erin is like a superhero with a secret identity; teacher by day, super coach at night and on weekends. She never runs out of encouragement, and won’t take the word “can’t” for an answer! My daughter was injured (not at cheerleading) at the beginning of the season, and as she has healed and started back to tumbling, Erin has never failed to encourage her to keep trying and get over her fears. Thanks to Erin, my daughter has not given up! Her first cheer meet was on January 28th, and Coach Erin is very proud!

Yvette Hansen  
*Parent*

Cynthia Escamilla  
*Nevada PEP*

Nosotros queremos darle las gracias a la Sra. Cynthia Escamilla, ya que a ella es la persona que mas nos ayudo con la problematica que teniamos con el en la escuela. Nosotros sentimos que gracias a ella nuestro hijo logro terminar la middle school, con grados muy buenos. Muchas gracias Cynthia por ser la persona que es y a Nevada PEP. Ojalá y la sepan valorar los demas padres y otro personal que labore con ella.

We would like to give to Mrs. Cynthia Escamilla, because she is the one person who helped us with the problems that we had with son in the school. We feel that because of her our son was able to finish middle school with good grades. Thank you, Cynthia, for being the person you are and for Nevada PEP. Hopefully the other parents know how valuable you are as well the other people that work with you.

Eva Torres y Héctor Cruz  
*Parent and Son*

Rorie Fitzpatrick  
*Deputy Superintendent for Instructional, Research, and Evaluation Programs*  
*Nevada Department of Education*

It is with admiration that Nevada PEP honors Rorie Fitzpatrick as a recipient for Nevada PEP’s “Hand and Hand” appreciation award for all she has done to support student achievement and parent engagement throughout Nevada.

Rorie’s passion for children with disabilities, their families, and the professionals who support them developed in the mid-90s, when she was supervising environmental education camps for middle school students, and worked to support inclusion of students with special education needs. Knowing that inclusion was a critical issue for our society, Rorie has dedicated her career to embracing diversity and meeting the needs of unique learners.

Rorie has been and educator for over 20 years, for much of that time Nevada PEP has worked side by side with Rorie to increase parent engagement activities at all levels of education. Rorie is a respected leader both in Nevada and nationally. Rorie knowledge and passion for excellence in education shows in all that she does.

Rorie Fitzpatrick was recently named the Deputy Superintendent for Instructional, Research, and Evaluation Programs at the Nevada Department of Education. We know that in her new position, she will focus on educating “all” children; and she will continue to enhance the partnership opportunities for educators and parents.

Nevada PEP Family
Erica Gonzalez
 Daughter

Mi hija Erica es muy buena hija y me ha ayudado mucho con mi hijo Miguel. Cuando a él le pego la epilepsia ella lo ayudó mucho, habla mucho con él y le da muchos consejos. Por eso, le doy muchas gracias a mi hija Erica.

My daughter Erica Gonzalez is a very good daughter and has helped me a lot with my son Miguel. When my child had an episode of epilepsy, she helps him, talks to him a lot and gives him much advice. For these things, I give many thanks to my daughter Erica.

Maria Gonzalez
 Mother

Guadalupe Henriquez
 Nevada PEP

Le agradecemos a Lupita por todo su apoyo hacia nosotros. Lupita es una persona que está luchando día con día para que nosotros tengamos la información necesaria y así poder continuar ayudando a nuestro hijo Alfredo. Gracias Lupita.

We want to thank Lupita for all her support to us. Lupita is a person who is helping us day to day so we can have all the necessary information so that way we can continue helping our son, Alfredo. Thank you Lupita.

Maria B. Lucero
 Parent

Mary Ellen Horan
 Executive Director of VSA Arts

It is with great pleasure that Nevada PEP honors Mary Ellen Horan as a recipient for Nevada PEP’s “Hand and Hand” appreciation award for her dedication to families, children and adults with special needs, and the community as a whole. Mary Ellen has been the Executive Director of VSA Arts of Nevada since 1986. Mary Ellen has a small but dedicated staff, enthusiastic volunteers, and 12 committed board members. With Mary Ellen’s leadership VSA Nevada provides 3,000 hands-on art workshops each year in hospitals, after-school facilities, nursing homes, homeless shelters and in over 100 special and general education classrooms.

In 2004, Mary Ellen was instrumental in raising the funds and coordinating the move and extensive renovation of the historical Lakes Mansion to its present location. The mansion now serves as the non-profit’s administrative office, a house museum, a rental facility for events and a program site for VSA Nevada workshops and activities for children and adults with and without disabilities.

Mary Ellen has served at the national level on the VSA Arts Board of Directors representing all 50 states. She was awarded the Governor’s Millennium Award in the Arts and Humanities for Distinguished Service in the Arts, a State Historic Preservation Office award for preserving Nevada’s rich heritage, a Senatorial Recognition, a Business and the Arts Award for visionary and unique support of the Arts, the City of Reno’s Historic Preservation Award, and a Preserve Nevada Heritage Award for the careful and thoughtful preservation of the Heritage of Nevada.

Mary Ellen is a visionary and leader in our community. She has opened the door for “all” families, children, and adults to share their talents and strengths to make our community a beautiful place to live.

Nevada PEP Family
Melinda Jensen
Teacher
Melinda Jensen, CLS Teacher, at Reed H.S. Melinda has streamlined the CLS Program and provided innovative job skills, work stations and academic work stations as well. This has increased my son’s participation and given us new goals to write in his IEP. She has advocated for my son and provided training and support to others that will benefit Kevin both in and outside of the classroom.

Melinda’s communication has been wonderful. It has made it so I am aware of what is going on in my son’s school life.

I have walked into the classroom numerous times and noticed how quiet, structured, and on task the classroom was and seeing my son working on accomplishing the goals set forth. We recently had a meeting and my son had his PSP (Playstation Portable Gaming System) with him to help at the meeting, mind you this is a preferable activity during meetings, and he decided to put away his game and go over to start work at a work station. Then before we headed out my son got on the computer, not to surf the internet, but to start one of the “AT” programs and started working through it. How AWESOME is this as Parent and Teacher to see your son/student progressing forward like this.

I give my heartfelt “THANKS” to Melinda for helping Kevin progress forward in a positive and meaningful way.

Thea Westin
Parent

Christina Johnson
Nevada Early Intervention Services Intern
I will always remember the first time Christina worked with my son. She was friendly, professional and got to work immediately, building a rapport with my son almost instantly. Since that time, she has continually impressed me in her work with him, bringing out skills in him that no one else can. Christina always focuses on the positive and gives hope to a difficult situation. She has also empowered me as a parent, providing resources and information about how I can help my son achieve more. She is an asset to Nevada Early Intervention Service and all parents she works with.

Amanda Hughes
Parent

Martha Jimenez
Friend
Mi dedicatoria es para Martha Jimenez porque cuando yo supe de los problemas con los que mi hijo traiía, en ella encontré una buena amiga y una persona en quien confiar. Ella me supo escuchar y entender ya que ella también tiene un

Maria Orea
Mother

hijo con necesidades especiales. La quiero mucho y también fue elegida para ser la madrina de mi hijo por ser una gran persona y un gran humano.

My dedication is for Martha Jimenez because when I knew of the problems that my son has, in her I found a good friend and a person in whom I could confide. She knew how to listen and understand because she also has a child with special needs. I love her very much and also chose her to be my son’s godmother because she is a great person and a great human being.

Amanda Hughes
Parent
Ms. Johnson-Walker
4th Grade Teacher

The person that I truly appreciate the most this year in my son’s life is his teacher Ms. Johnson-Walker. She has been a great help to me in every way possible with my son. Ms. Johnson-Walker has given me great advice from personal experiences in her life. I just love who she is as a person and as my son’s 4th grade teacher. I truly Thank God for placing her in our life. She is an Angel from heaven that has been a great support. She has hung in there with my son when others would have given up. Thank you for being who you are Ms. Johnson-Walker.

Angelina Wiley
Parent

Simone Jones
PSR Worker- Hope Counseling

Realizing I wasn’t superwoman was hard, I felt completely out of control. When Simone, my Psychosocial Rehabilitation worker first showed up to my home, she said, “It was okay not to be superwoman and it was okay to cry.” Well more than a year later and many tears shed I can truthfully say, who needs superwoman. I have a real woman who picked me up and turned me around. Thank you Simone for helping me love myself for the first time. Please continue to tell everyone how much you love them.

Stacie Williams
Parent

Cheryl Jung
Advocate

We would like to thank a person who has become an angel and the voice of all the parents who she has helped through the IEP’s by advocating and fighting for our children’s rights. Thanks for being not only an advocate but a great human being and awesome friend.

Luis Villalobos & Olivia Espinoza
Parents

Lana Lee
Teacher

My family wishes to congratulates Lana Lee and help her celebrate 30 years of teaching at Helen J Stewart School. This year my son is fortunate enough to be in her class. The classroom theme is “Going from good to great” and that sums up the positive attitude which has served our son and many others before him. This leads to great progress and continues to raise the bar and challenge students to reach their fullest potential. Ms. Lana is a cut above the ordinary teacher. She is so dedicated to making a significant difference in the young lives she touches. She goes above and beyond, leaving an impression that will surely last a lifetime. She is a real game changer and we love having her on our team.

Diane Lombardo and Family
Parents
Diane Lombardo
*Nevada PEP*

I have been volunteering for two years and I love volunteering at Nevada PEP every Friday. Volunteering for Diane is like getting the very best hug. She is always cheerful, helpful and nice. She understands my disability and treats me like a human being. She has me do projects I am comfortable doing. I will keep volunteering as long as I can.

Natasha Young
*Volunteer*

Dr. Edward Lynam
*Psychiatrist*

We want to thank Dr. Edward Lynam at Alliance Family Services for all his help and support with our son. Dr. Lyman’s quiet and thoughtful manner is reassuring to our son, and his office is a calm environment where patients can feel safe. The doctor has been reassuring to us as parents, too, always offering alternative solutions to problems and never giving up. His wisdom and his kindness have been invaluable.

Erik & Holly Fields
*Parents*

Eric Medlin
*President-Digital Pros*

We would like to nominate Eric Medlin for our prestigious Hand in Hand Award. Eric has been so gracious in donating his time and knowledge to Nevada PEP, he has helped us with our server and Tech support. Eric has his own business that keeps him very busy, but he always finds time to volunteer for Nevada PEP and help us out whenever we call him. Nevada PEP sends a big Thank you to Eric for his expertise and time.

*Nevada PEP Family*

Dr. Dennis Moore II M.D.
*Pediatrician*

Dr. Moore is an awesome, passionate, and loving Doctor. He is the best pediatrician to care for children, especially those who have many disabilities. Dr. Moore goes above and beyond to care for his patients unlike many other Doctors. Dr. Moore’s knowledge about Autism, ADHD, and other disabilities is super. When visiting Dr. Moore you are able to see how passionate he is about what he does. So I say to all Dr. Dennis Moore is the best.

Ola Jones
*Parent*
Rito Erik Murguia  
*Husband*

Mi esposo siempre me ha apoyado con mi hijo. Él siempre se preocupa mucho por él. Mi esposo le busca actividades extras como el fútbol. Mi hijo le tiene mucho respeto a él. Mi esposo es el que lo controla y lo escucha. Estoy muy agradecida y muy contenta de tener a mi esposo en mi vida. Mi hijo ha cambiado mucho por él.

My husband has always supported me with my son. He has always been concerned about him. My husband looks for extra activities for my son to do, such as football. My son has much respect for him. My husband is the one who controls him and he listens. I am very grateful and very happy to have my husband in my life. My son has changed much because of him.

Jacqueline Murguia  
*Mother*

Yes! Mrs. Nelson helped me accomplish a lot of things. Mrs. Nelson is the best teacher I’ve ever had. Right now I’ll tell you about my favorite teacher: Mrs. Nelson.

In all my life I’ve never had a wonderful teacher like Mrs. Nelson. She really helped me finish a lot of things in math, science and social studies. In fourth grade story problems were hard but Mrs. Nelson helped me with them and then they were much easier. I love science but when we learned the body parts it was really hard. Again and again Mrs. Nelson helped me and things were back to normal. When we started to learn social studies I was always stumped. When I raised my hand Mrs. Nelson came as quick as a wink, she helped me and I did it in a snap. With the help of Mrs. Nelson, I finished fourth grade.

To me Mrs. Nelson is as fun as going to the school library. I’ll never forget Mrs. Nelson, Never ever.

Sabrina Linker  
*Student*

Coach Cassi is coaching the Shining Stars special needs team, at 5 Star Athletics Cheerleading in Reno. It is the first special needs team in Northern Nevada. Although she is a very busy college student, working more than job to pay for classes and coaching another team, she volunteers her time to coach our kids. Every Sunday afternoon finds her gently encouraging our stars to “just give it a try.” She practically throws a party when a new skill is learned,”I knew you could do it! Great job!” I am using this nomination to throw her the same praise, “Great job, Cassi!”

Yvette Hansen  
*Parent*
**Mrs. Emily Petosa**  
*Teacher*

Mrs. Petosa was an extremely great teacher for my child. She taught her more than she knows. She helped me understand IEP’s and gave me great knowledge of SLD classes referred lots of information that was provided to us. She took her time with not just helping my child but gave me as a parent more knowledge to help my child learn. She’s responsive, helpful, has a great personality and willing to go that extra mile for anyone.

I fully recommend her for anyone. Plus she deserves the greatest big star available.

**Crystal Boman**  
*Parent*

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**Debbie Pillman**  
*Parent*

Ms. Pillman has dedicated her life to the care and healing of children with disabilities. As a foster parent and advocate for children with special needs she has made a positive difference in the lives of others every day. I could not say enough to communicate how amazing Debbie is to our community, our county and our state. She is my hero.

**Sharon Winkelmann**  
*Community Partner*

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**Kathie Smith**  
*VP Student Activates & Attendance*

Kathy Smith, Vice Principal, has been a positive influence at Reed H.S. Kathy has kept the communication open and has answered any concerns I’ve had. She has made sure our IEP’s have gone smoothly and gives support to not only me, but to my son’s Teachers. The positive influence that she has made has enhanced the CLS Program. Thank you Kathy!

**Thea Westin**  
*Parent*

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**Katherine Stansberry**  
*Nevada PEP*

It’s nice to have a person who truly understands what your circumstances really are. I had been fighting so long with my children’s schools, therapists, welfare workers, family members, etc. to see that spark in their eyes when the light bulb finally switches on. However, I didn’t see that in anyone’s eyes, all I saw was doubt and disbelief. When Katherine first sat down with me at my kitchen table and listened to me explain what I needed. She looked at me and smiled and the most wonderful words came out of her mouth “I understand”. That was when my life first started to turn around. There are no words to express my gratitude and thanks.

**Stacie Williams**  
*Parent*
Katherine Stansberry

_Nevada PEP_
I have my life/my son back since meeting with Katherine and the 360 Center. She helped to connect me to agencies to find help and support for my son and myself. Thank you so much for giving me hope!

Abbassia Mehadji
_Parent_

Martie Velez
_Friend_
Martie se merece un premio, porque ella siempre es muy servicial y siempre nos ha ayudado en traducirnos y en muchas situaciones. Martie es muy buena persona y mi hija y toda nuestra familia la estimamos y le agradecemos por toda su ayuda. Gracias a ella.

Martie deserves to be nominated because she has been very helpful and has translated for us in various occasions. Martie is a wonderful person. My daughter and whole family are very thankful and appreciate all that she has done for us. Thank you.

Blanca Garcia
_Mother_

Nadine Villareal
_Teacher_
My son has been diagnosed with ADHD, as well as, some other emotional and behavioral problems. His 4th grade teacher, Ms. Nadine Villareal, has been aware of this since the beginning of the year. Ms. Villareal has come up with several special techniques to help my son with his school work, both at school and at home. She keeps in close contact with me so I know what’s going on with my son on a daily basis. We are truly grateful for all that she does. We are very blessed to have her in our lives. I know she must touch others in special ways as well. Ms. Villareal, you are truly a gifted and an awesome person!!

Sharon Peterson
_Mom_
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 & 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.