

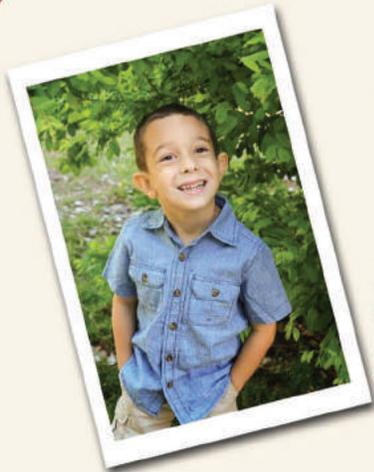
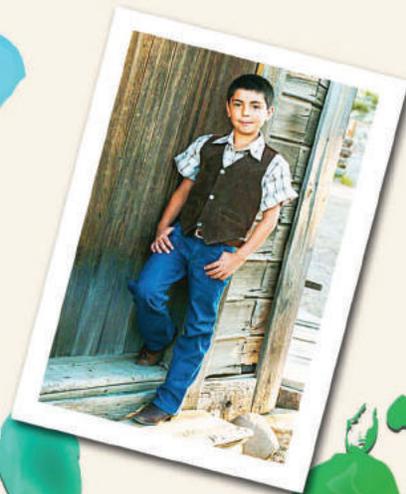


Yearbook

Celebrating a collection of stories honoring those who make a difference for children and their families.

2016

nvpep.org



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

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www.nvpep.org



"Thank you so much for listening, you've made my day brighter."

~Parent

GOVERNING BOARD



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mission Statement / What Is Nevada PEP?	1	Congratulations from	23
Fundamental Goals / Guiding Principles	2	- Senator Hardy	
Letter from Executive Director	3	Congratulations from	24
Letter from Chairperson of Governing Board	4	- Senator Parks	
Annual Report	5	6 th Annual Run Walk Roll Against Bullying	25
Funding Sources	11	Volunteer Connection	27
Get to Know the PEP Leadership	13	History of Hand in Hand Program	28
Get to Know the PEP Staff	15	Hand in Hand Stories	29
Include Me! Disability Awareness Program	21	Hand in Hand Sponsors	43
Congratulations Nilza & Magdalena	22	Sponsorship Levels	44

OUR MISSION

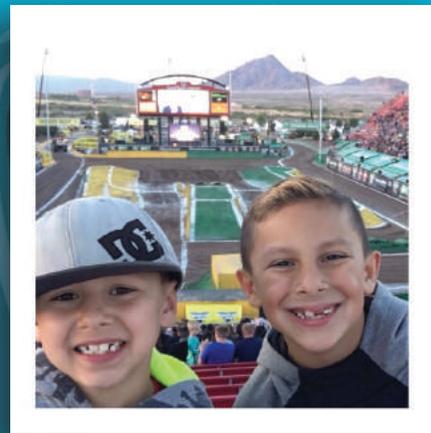
To increase the opportunities for home, community and school success for children with disabilities, including those who are at risk or who have serious emotional disturbances, their families and their service providers, through education, encouragement and empowerment activities.

WHAT IS NEVADA PEP?

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

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



WHAT SERVICES DOES PEP OFFER?

- Information and Referral
- Statewide Lending Library
- Newsletters Biannual
- Conflict Resolution Support
- Individual Assistance
- Training Workshops
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Family Support Services
- Monthly E-Newsletters
- Webinars

FUNDAMENTAL GOALS

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, 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.

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NEVADA PEP

This year marks the 15th anniversary of the Hand in Hand Appreciation Program. Nevada PEP set out to create a program to celebrate all of the teachers, service providers, neighbors, family and friends that go above and beyond to make a difference for children and their families throughout Nevada.

This year's Honorees are inspirations, their acts of kindness demonstrate the best of what it means to be a community. It is my honor to congratulate the individuals who are highlighted in this 2016 Hand in Hand Together We Can Yearbook.



The Hand in Hand program grows and flourishes with the support of the generous contributors who donate their resources to promote this valued appreciation program. It is with the partnership of the sponsors that Nevada PEP is able to share with the community the remarkable individuals who are this year's Hand in Hand Honorees.

It is only with the unwavering support of the Nevada PEP Governing Board, our staff and our volunteers that we have been able to continue supporting families throughout Nevada for over 20 years. This Yearbook demonstrates value and effectiveness of our services; illustrates the passion and dedication that motivates our work; and exemplifies the words in our State song, "Home Means Nevada".

I want to applaud all of the Hand in Hand Together We Can Honorees for their generous kindness and compassion. I also want to show my appreciation for the families who have submitted nominations; we all benefit from having these wonderful honorees in our community. Hand in Hand together we all can and do make a positive difference for children and families.

With Appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Taycher". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Karen Taycher
Executive Director

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF NEVADA PEP'S GOVERNING BOARD

Welcome to the 2016 Hand in Hand Together We Can Yearbook. The Hand in Hand Together We Can program began in 2002 when Nevada PEP wanted to find a way to recognize and 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 inspiring to read, and this year's stories are no exception.



As Chair of the Nevada PEP Governing Board, I would like to share with you just a few of Nevada PEP's accomplishments. In recognition of National Bullying Awareness month Nevada PEP held its 6th Annual Run Walk Roll Against Bullying event. With the generosity of our "Trailblazer" sponsors, students from twenty-two schools were able to participate. The event was a success with over 1,000 attendees. I would like to personally thank the University of Las Vegas for hosting the event and supporting bullying prevention.

Additionally, Nevada PEP partnered with the Nevada Department of Education on the planning and presenting of the Nevada Transition Conference. This event included national speakers as well as state and local experts covering topics such as Employment; Models for Success; Post-Secondary Education. Over 300 educators, parents and students learned about best practices in special education and transition programs. With technology becoming the way of communicating Nevada PEP continues to increase its social media outreach and have gained numbers in Facebook friends and Twitter followers.

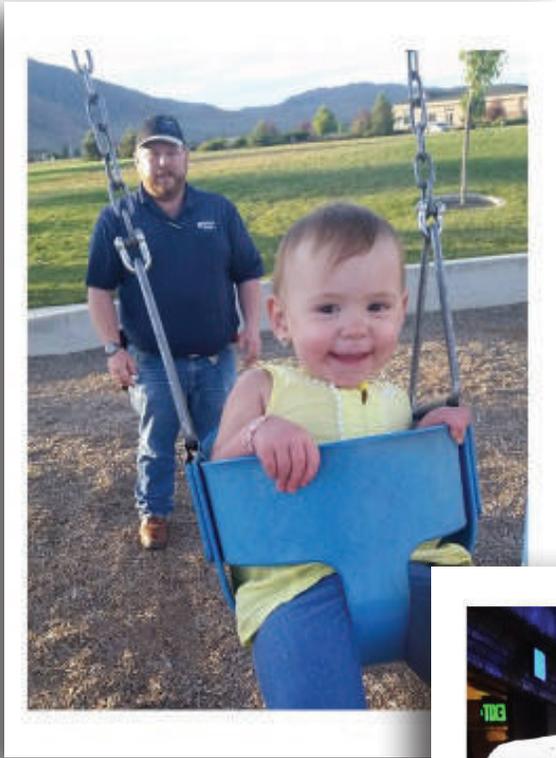
Nevada PEP has served thousands of families over the years; and we pride ourselves on the excellent reputation that we have earned statewide. Nevada PEP remains committed to supporting families and we will continue to strengthen families through education, empowerment, and encouragement activities. Nevada PEP has seen an increase in the need for our services. Your support at this time is more vital now than ever. Nevada PEP remains committed to supporting the ongoing needs of children and youth with disabilities and their families as they strive to become more successful adults living life to their full potential and benefitting their communities, the workplace, and society as a whole.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bryce Loveland".

Bryce Loveland
Nevada PEP Governing Board Chair

Annual Report 2016



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

14,988 Individuals Served

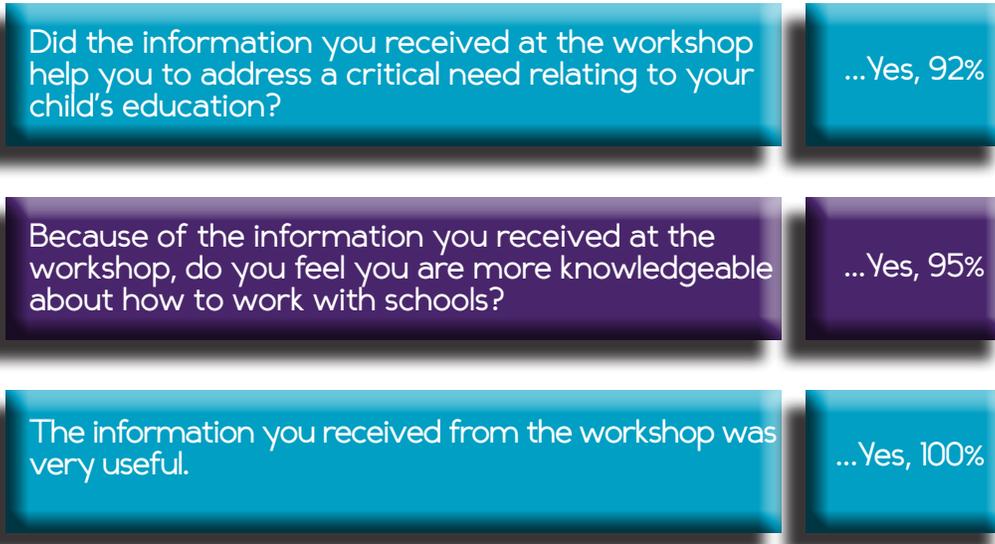


“I will forever be grateful for the guidance Nevada PEP gave me along the way.”

~Parent

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 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, and include live and archived webinars.



Statewide Training Certificates
Nevada Preschool Registry - 678
Foster Care - 14

3,595
Individuals
participated
in the training
workshops

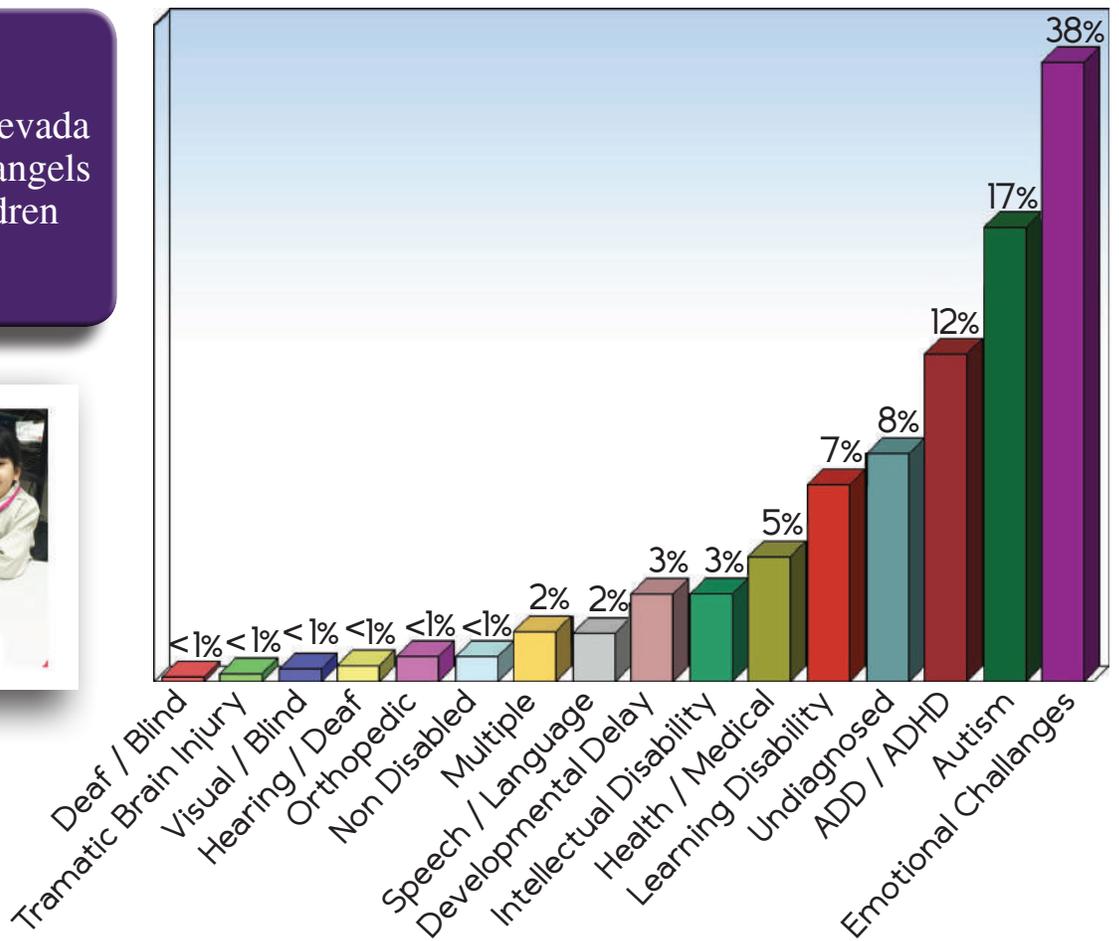
254
Training
Workshops
Conducted



DISABILITY CATEGORIES

Disabilities of all Children Served

“Thank you so much for everything your organization does. Nevada PEP is the guardian angels of families with children like mine.”
~Parent



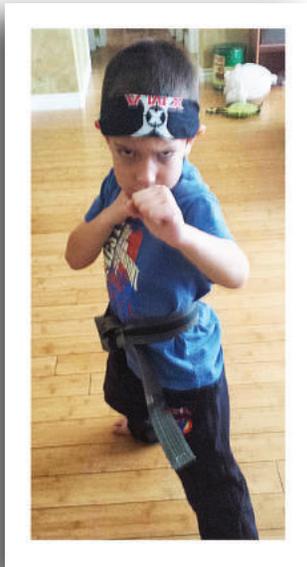
Volunteer Hours:
5,867.5

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 5,867.5 hours of valuable service to Nevada PEP. Volunteers provide office assistance by helping with general office tasks: answering telephones, copying, faxing, assisting with bulk mail, filing office forms, and assembling training packets. Volunteers assist with community fairs, special events, outreach, public awareness, trainings, and support groups. Nevada PEP encourages family and student involvement on task forces, focus groups, and at committee meetings. Thank you to all of the valuable volunteers who contributed to Nevada PEP!



SUPPORT SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS



Home Visits	23
Child Family Team	482
Education Meetings	617
New "Intakes" Families	1,825
New Individuals Contacting PEP	3,021
New Individual Assistance Contacts	13,753
Individual Assistance Contacts	21,926

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.

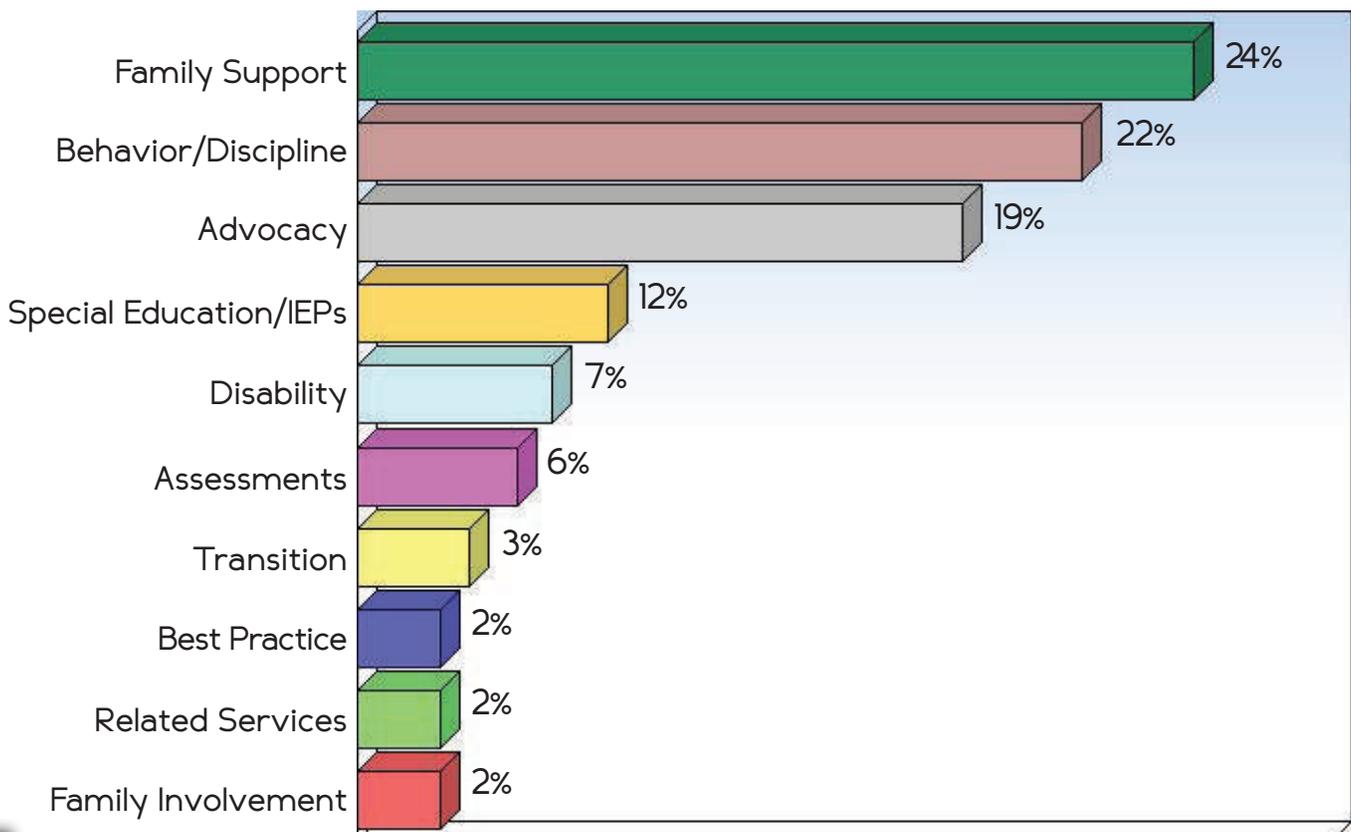
	N/A	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The information or support you received from Nevada PEP met your needs.	0%	0%	41%	59%
The information Nevada PEP provided helped you learn more about how to meet your child's needs.	0%	0%	53%	47%
The information Nevada PEP provided was useful.	0%	0%	47%	53%
Did the information and support received from Nevada PEP help you to feel confident in your ability to work with your child's school or service providers.	6%	0%	59%	35%
	No	Maybe	Yes	
Would you recommend Nevada PEP to your friends or family?	0%	6%	94%	

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.

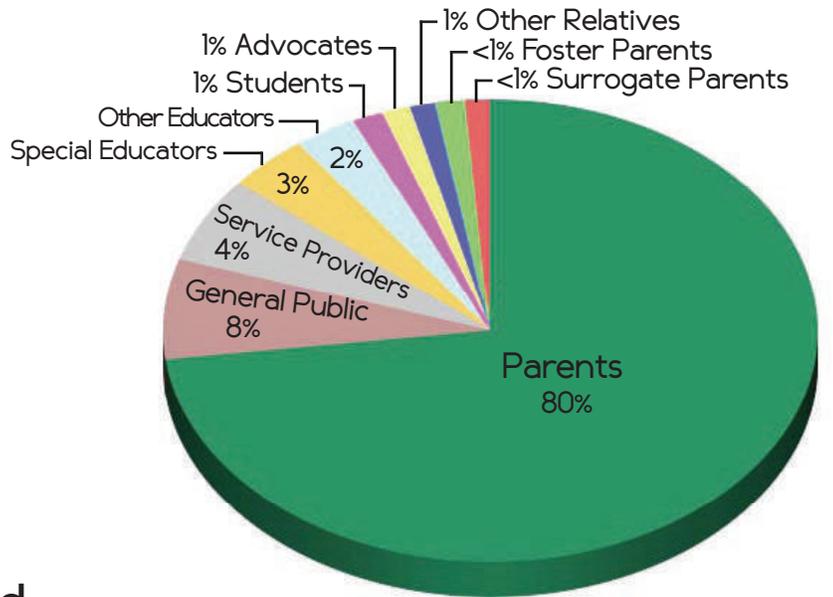
<p>185 Number of public forums, information fairs, & community outreach events</p>	<p>325 Number of meetings attended to enhance the support systems for children with special needs and their families</p>	<p>617 Number of school meetings visited across Nevada</p>	<p>2,359 Facebook Likes</p>
<p>101 Number of committees to which Nevada PEP representatives provided the parent perspective</p>	<p>92,707 Number of yearly Website hits at nvpep.org</p>	<p>306,668 Number of E-Newsletters sent</p>	<p>1,713 Twitter Followers</p>
			<p>264 Instagram Followers</p>
			<p>4,495 YouTube Subscribers</p>

Top 10 Reasons People Contact Nevada PEP

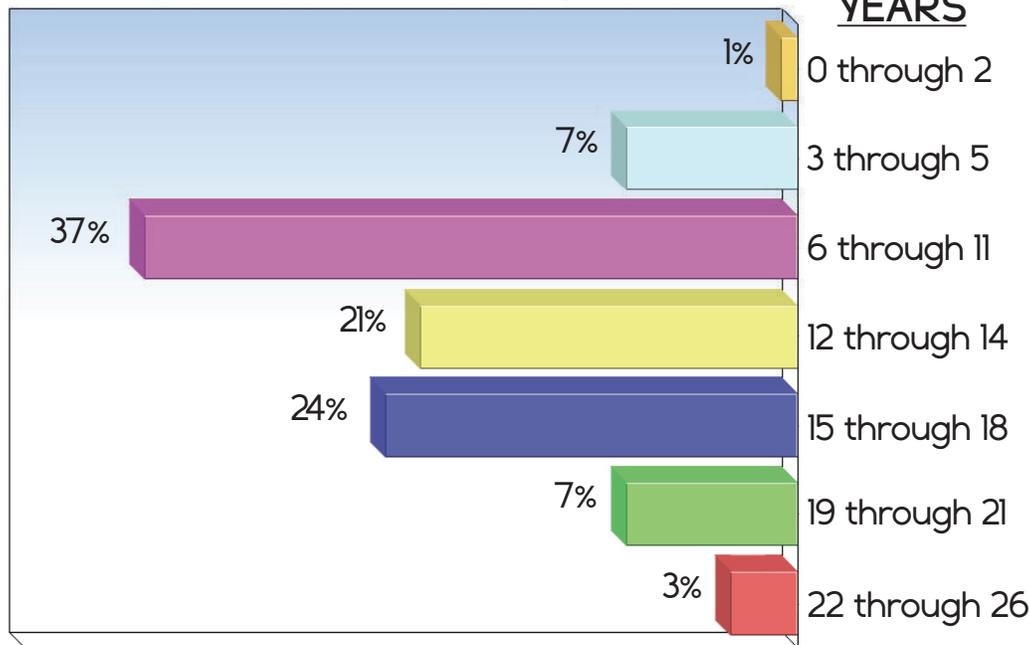


CONSUMER DEMOGRAPHICS

Consumer Relationships



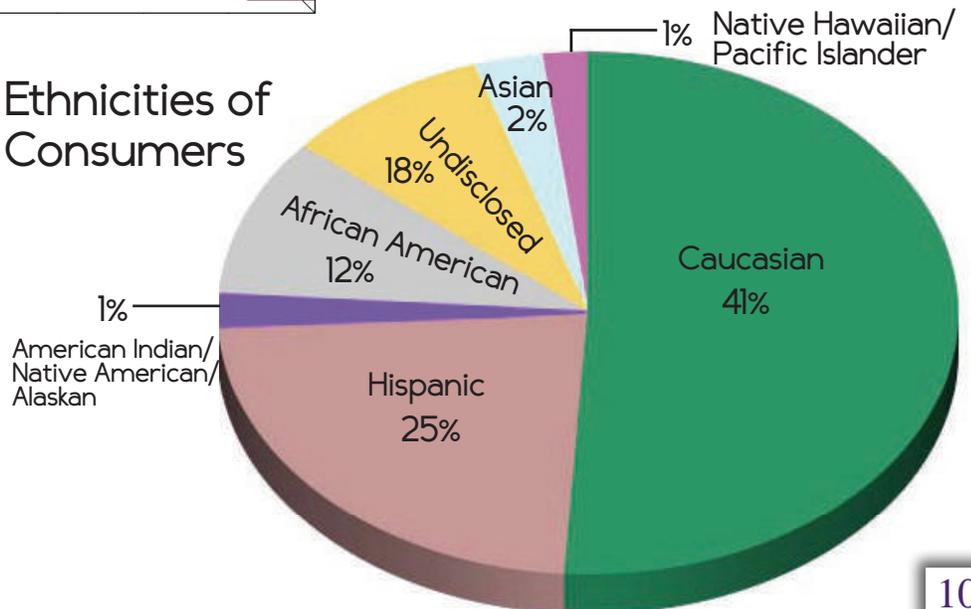
Ages of Children Helped



Gender of Children Helped
 Male - 65%
 Female - 35%



Ethnicities of Consumers



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

“You are awesome. You provide amazing information and support. I feel more hopeful for my son’s future.”

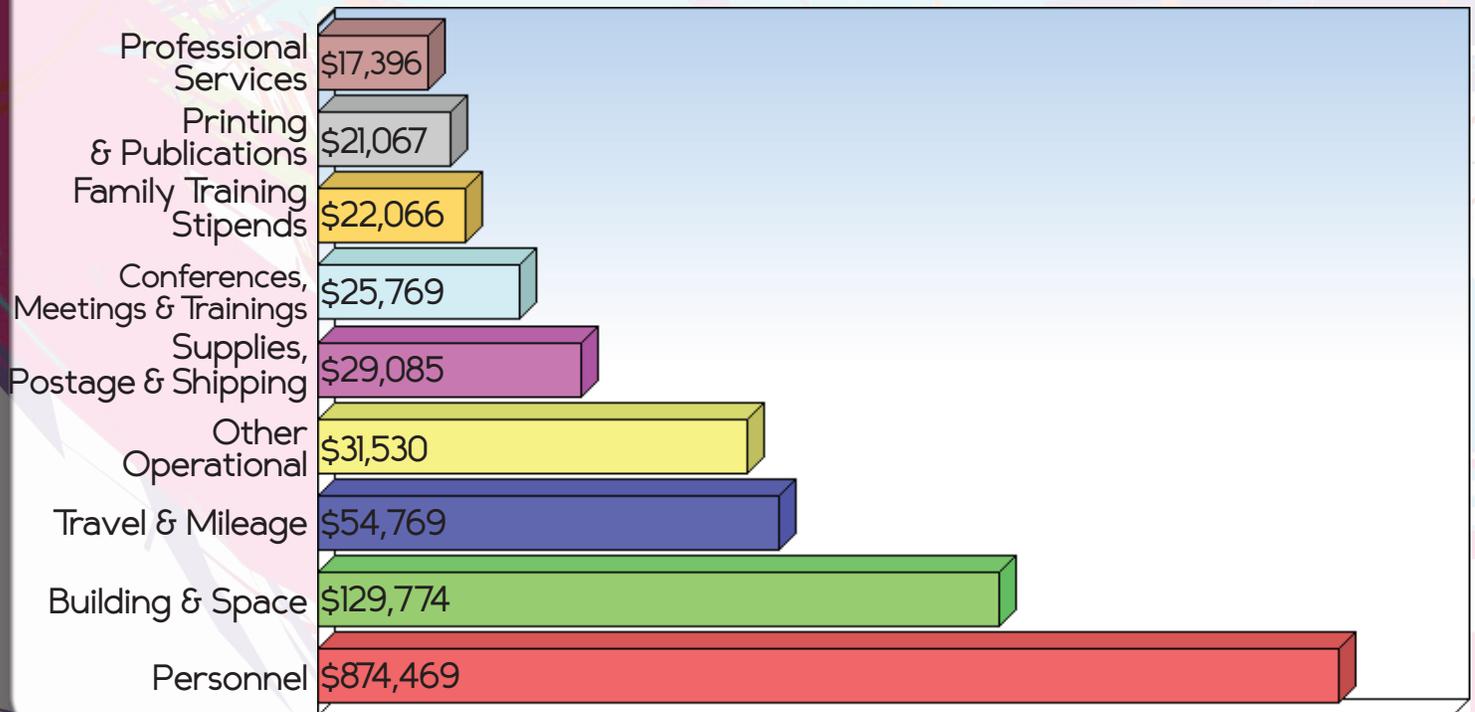
~Parent



EXPENDITURES

Total: \$1,205,925

Income Total: \$1,274,162



MAJOR FUNDERS

MGM Resorts Foundation
National Institute of Mental Health
Nevada Department of Education
Nevada Department of Health and Human Services

Nevada Division of Child and Family Services
University Nevada Las Vegas
U.S. Department of Education
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration

INDIVIDUAL FUNDERS

A.Eliades
Amy & Jim Leavitt
Assemblyman Richard Carrillo
Bonnie & Frank Martin
Chonie and Robert Marshall
Christina & Brian Nelson
Commissioner Chris Giunchigliani
Councilwoman Lois Tarkanian

Juanita Fain, Ph.D.
Dr. Julie Beasley, Ph.D.
Dorithia Coleman
Doug Whitener
Erika and Bryce Loveland
Judge Michelle Leavitt
Retta Dermody
Macie and Harley Nichols

Rita Varney
Robin and Dean Bryan
Sam Lieberman
Steven Leavitt
Helen Jo & Seaynoah Mayfield
Trish and Andy Leavitt
Nilza Shellhamer

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

AIS	Door Mitts	Lev Restaurant Group	Seaworld Park- San Diego
Abbott's Custom Printing	Fast Lap Indoor Kart	Limestone Reality	Serverpoint
All Family Fun Center	Findlay Automotive Group	Lion Habitat Ranch	Sierra Pacific Federal Credit Union
AMC Promenade Theatre	Findlay Cadillac/Saab	Lowe's	Sky Zone Trampoline Park
American Legion Youth	Findlay Chevrolet	Macayo's Mexican Restaurant	SlotZilla Zip Line
Auxiliary	Findlay Fiat	Mary Kay (Dana Moody)	South Point Casino
Bahama Breeze Island Grille	Findlay Honda Henderson	Massage Envoy	Smith's Food and Drug
Bike World	Findlay Honda Northwest	Mob Museum	Sport Social
Bone Fish Grill Restaurant	Findlay Toyota	Montevista Hospital	Sunrise Casablanca
Bonnie Springs Ranch	Findlay Volkswagen	Nature's Bakery	Southwest Airlines
Brio Tuscan Grille @ Tivoli	Gold Rush Jewelry	Nevada State Bank	Southwest Gas
Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck	Gravady Extreme Air Sports	Our Little World Treatment Center	Smith's Food and Drug Store
Burger King	Grimaldi's Pizzeria	Olive Garden	Spring Mountain Treatment Center
Carrabba's Italian Grill Restaurant	Hash House a Go Go	Orleans Arena	Spring Preserve
Carson Hot Springs	Home Depot	Outback Steakhouse	Sports Authority
Casablanca Mesquite Resort	Hush Puppy Restaurant	Panda Express	Sprouts Grocery
Casa de Shenandoah	Imperial Wine Wholesalers	People Dedicated to Quality	The Adventure Dome at Circus Circus
Chefs for Kids	In-n-Out Burger	PDQ Restaurant	The Lovaas Center
Cheesecake Factory	Jamba Juice	Pepe's Tacos	Trader Joe's
Children's Discovery Museum	Kara Foundation	Pete Rose Sports Bar & Grill	Triple Play American Grill
Chili's Restaurant	King Putt Indoor Mini Golf	P.F. Chang's	US Bank
Chipotle Mexican Grill	Lake Mead Cruises	Pole Position Raceway Indoor Karting	Uniform Sports
Chuck E. Cheese	Las Vegas 51's	Pump It Up	Valley Health Systems - Summerlin Hospital
Coffee Bean and Tea	Las Vegas Ice Center	Red Lobster Restaurant	Vcore
Cox Charities	Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department	REI	Whole Foods
Crystal Palace Skating	Las Vegas Mini Grand Prix	RIO Voo Doo Zip Line	Youth Charities of Southern Nevada
David Barton Gym	Las Vegas Motor Speedway	Rogue Toys	
Department of Juvenile Justice Probation Officers Association	Laser Quest Las Vegas	RSG Consulting	
Dimensions	Lazy Dog Restaurant	Roy's Hawaiian Fusion Las Vegas	
Disneyland Resort	Law Office of Andrew M. Leavitt	Sassafras Restaurant	

Thank you to our Anonymous Donors. We are truly grateful for your continued support.

LEADERSHIP



Natalie Filipic is the mother of two and grandmother of six. 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.

Charlene Frost is the Statewide Family Network Director 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 20 years and has been an active part of the Las Vegas community working on behalf of children.

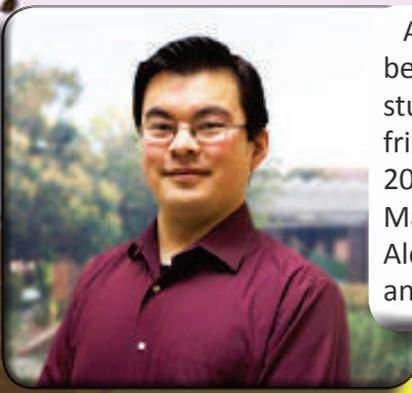


Robin Kincaid is the Director of Educational Services. Robin has over twenty years of experience educating parents and professionals on special education law, advocacy, best practice, parent/professional collaboration, and positive behavior supports. Other responsibilities include outreach activities and individual assistance to families. Robin has served on the Interagency Coordinating Council for the past ten 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 Alliance of Nevada Non-profits. She oversees the Annual Run Walk Roll Against Bullying event, raising awareness in the community about bullying prevention. Building a stronger community for all children is her primary goal.

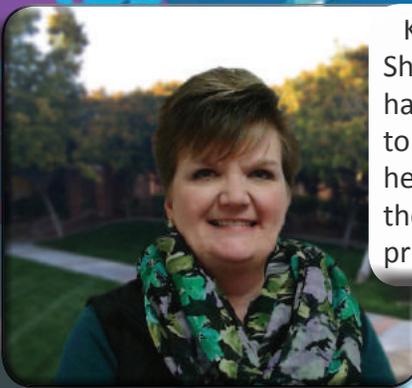


LEADERSHIP



Alex Cherup is the Director of Transition Services at Nevada PEP. Alex first became involved in disability advocacy during his time as an undergraduate student at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan, where he met his close friend Micah Fialka-Feldman, a fellow student, advocate and speaker. In May of 2014, Alex graduated from Northeastern University School of Law, in Boston, Massachusetts with a Juris Doctor degree. As the Director of Transition Services, Alex supports families of youth ages 14 to 26 in their transition into a meaningful and inclusive adult life.

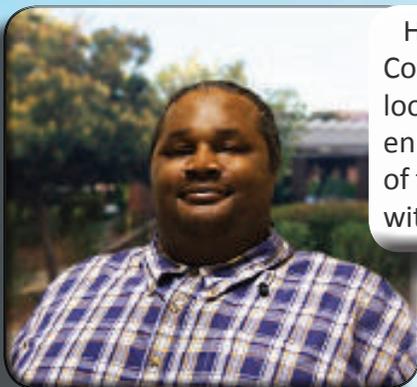
Dorithia Coleman is the SOC Family Support Services Manager at Nevada PEP and is a Certified Parent Support Provider (CPSP). She is a wife and mother of an incredible teenage son with special needs. Dorithia serves as a member of the State of Nevada Medicaid Infrastructure Grant Program Advisory Group. 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.



Kelli Walker is the Information and Training Specialist for the Satellite Office. She has four children. Her youngest is 18 years old and has Autism. Since she has had many struggles getting what her daughter needs at school, she has wanted to help others learn how to advocate for their children. Working for PEP has given her the opportunity to help parents get the tools they need, let them know that they are not alone, and there is help. She is so thankful for the opportunity and privilege to work with families and make a difference.



PROFESSIONAL STAFF



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.



Kelly Figueroa is a Family Specialist at Nevada PEP. She is the proud mother of five children who received information and support from Nevada PEP. She now feels empowered as an effective advocate for her children. Kelly's goal at Nevada PEP is to support and empower families to do the same for their own children.



Joanna Gonzalez is a family specialist. She has two daughters who are her pride, joy and the main reason she came to Nevada PEP. Before she found PEP, she struggled to get the services and help for her children. One of the reasons she came to PEP was to learn more about advocacy. Joanna liked that the PEP organization helps families get services within their community and also makes a difference in collaboration with schools and agencies. Her passion is to help families to have higher expectations and know what services they could receive to be successful in school and in their communities.

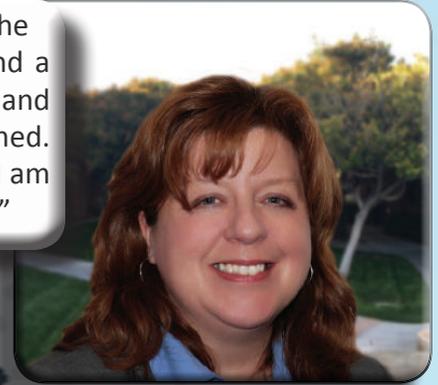


PROFESSIONAL STAFF



Michele Jennings is the Information and Training Specialist; she was born in San Francisco, and is a proud US Army Veteran she has made Las Vegas her home. Michele is a parent and has received PEP's services for her daughter in the past. Her goal is to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a Free Appropriate Public Education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment and independent living.

Jennifer Jones is a Family Specialist working in the Reno Satellite Office. She is a single mom of a 17 year-old son who has unique emotional needs and a learning disability. Her work at NV PEP has increased her empathy for parents and families of children with special needs in ways she could never have imagined. Jennifer shares, "I find my work at Nevada PEP extremely satisfying because I am constantly learning more as I help families with situations similar to my own."



Elisa Kline is a Family Specialist. Elisa is the mother to a son with a disability. When she needed an advocate to support her at a meeting, she was referred to NV PEP. Elisa was in awe of the passion and knowledge her advocate had while helping her and she wanted to be able to help others in the same way.

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 nine years. She has a dream of one day staging a huge fundraiser and ultimately helping children with disabilities through her musical talent and PEP.

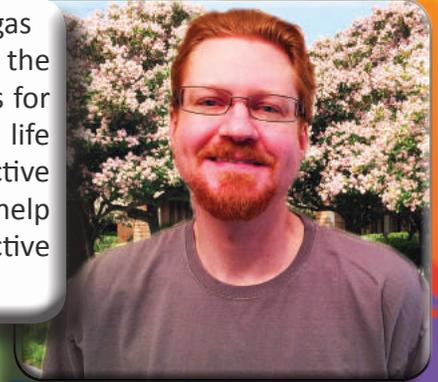


PROFESSIONAL STAFF



Tiffany Montgomery is the Information and Training Specialist in the Satellite office. She is a mother of two children, an 11 year old son and a feisty little 3 year old daughter who keeps her on her toes. Advocating for her son who has ADD, Dyslexia and Central Auditory Processing Disorder brought Tiffany to Nevada PEP. She wants to help other parents who want to know more about how to help support their child and to encourage, empower and educate them to be the best advocate they can be.

Aric Neumann is the Youth M.O.V.E. Nevada Youth Facilitator for the Las Vegas office and has always had a passion for helping his peers ensure they have the skills and confidence to be their own best advocates. Youth M.O.V.E. stands for Motivating Others Through Voices of Experience. Aric enjoys sharing his life experiences to help youth get engaged and share their voice to have an active role in systems level change. "Being able to share my lived experience and help youth improve their lives is an incredible experience and one that is truly effective and meaningful!"



Zelinna Palma is the Program Accountability Specialist here at Nevada PEP. Zelinna is currently going to college in pursuit of her business degree and has a passion in helping others. What brought her to Nevada PEP was all the amazing work that PEP does for families and their children. Zelinna makes sure that the office is always running smoothly, process memberships, donations, and many other administrative duties.



Yvonne Penkalski is a Transition Specialist in the Central Office. Yvonne is the mother of four wonderful children and two family pets. With a passion for helping others and having a son with a disability is what made her a part of the Nevada PEP family. Her passion is to support families in their transition process from middle school and high school into their journey to post-secondary education, employment, and independent living. Her goal is to do her best in providing families and youth with the self-determination and self-advocacy skills needed to achieve the highest quality services within schools and in the community.

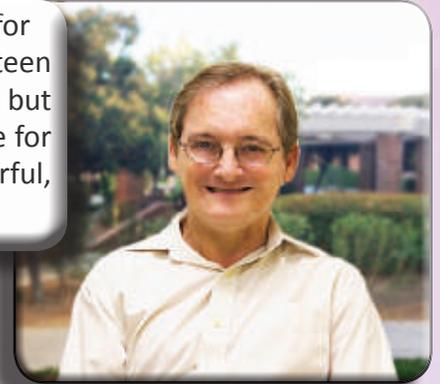


PROFESSIONAL STAFF



Dr. Christa Peterson is a licensed psychologist with over 30 years of experience developing, administering, and delivering services to youths who have developmental disabilities and behavioral health disorders. In the last fourteen 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 enjoys being a part of the Nevada PEP Family.

Robin Renshaw is a native of Las Vegas. "I've been with Nevada PEP for seventeen years as a Transition Specialist and I'm looking forward to seventeen more! There is nothing I would rather do, not only for youth with disabilities, but for myself. In the coming year, I want to show young adults how to advocate for others in our community." Robin found that advocating for yourself is powerful, but it's even more exciting to help others advocate for themselves!



Liliana Resendez is the Family Support Specialist. She is a proud mother of two wonderful boys; her youngest son's behavior concerns brought her to Nevada PEP. Before being aware of what Nevada PEP is and what the organization is about, she believed her parenting skills was the problem to her child's behavior. She was feeling lost and overwhelmed trying to figure out how she could help her child. Liliana attended a few trainings at PEP and soon learned she was not alone, that there were other parents having the same thoughts as her. After joining the PEP family she has gained knowledge and learned how to advocate for her children.

Magdalena Ruiz is a bilingual System of Care Family Facilitator. She is a proud mother of three boys; her oldest and her youngest son have disabilities. 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."



PROFESSIONAL STAFF

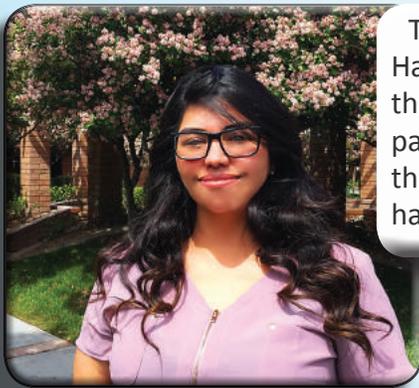


Lori Robertson is a Family Specialist in the PEP Satellite office. As a mother of three she enjoys her family time watching her children play sports. Lori came to work for PEP after receiving family support from PEP herself. She credits PEP for being there when no one else seemed to care about the bullying her daughter was enduring at school. She welcomes the opportunity to support other families. Lori is an active member of the community donating much of her time to many non-profits and charities.

Gwendolyn Robledo is the Outreach and Training Specialist. She is proud to be the sister of her sibling with a disability. Growing up with her sister has given her the passion to want to help other's and pursue a career in medicine. Gwendolyn is currently attended the University of Nevada Reno and majoring in Psychology. She is bilingual and loves helping all families out in the community.



Theresa Rodriguez is a Family Specialist, wife, and mother of two energetic boys. Having a son and nephew with a disability has taught her a lot about the struggles that are often presented to individuals with disabilities and their families. She is passionate about providing families with comfort knowing they are not walking their path alone and empowering them with knowledge to ensure their children have maximum opportunities to become successful adults.



Nicole Rush is the Agency Administration Specialist and a proud mommy of two. After being a stay at home mom Nicole is excited to be working at Nevada PEP helping families like hers. Nicole is proud to say she is a Pepper and enjoys being a part of the PEP family.



PROFESSIONAL STAFF

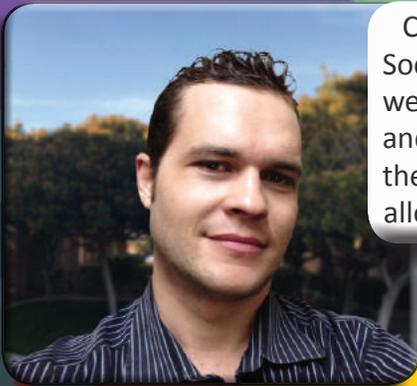


Kenneth Taycher is a Special Project Mentor at Nevada PEP. He enjoys being a part of the PEP team and PEP's commitment to helping people with disabilities and their families. He is truly passionate about helping young adults to be a part of their community. Kenny has been involved in the Challenger baseball program as a coach for the last 13 years. Kenny's goal is to Educate, Empower, and Encourage people to be their best advocate.

Roslyn Timmerman is the System of Care Youth Facilitator- Youth M.O.V.E. Nevada. She is a Graduate of the University of Nevada, Reno and has been an advocate for individuals with disabilities, substance abuse and co-occurring mental health since 2012. Roslyn found her passion for supporting individuals with disabilities while growing up with her sibling with ADHD and a learning disability who also happens to be one of her best friends! In her free time Roslyn enjoys spending time with her family and exploring the Nevada Wilderness with her two pups Sterling and Rue!



Chad Uhl is the proud father of an energetic twelve-year-old girl and the Social Media & Internet Marketing Specialist for Nevada PEP. Chad maintains PEP's website and online social media networks. He also designs PEP's e-newsletters and publications for families. Chad is passionate about spreading awareness of the effects of bullying in our schools. "Bullying prevention is important because it allows us to build stronger relationships within our community."



Maureen Younce is an Information and Training Specialist at Nevada PEP. She was born and raised in Las Vegas and have seen many changes throughout the valley. She has 5 awesome boys one of which has autism. She has worked in early childhood most of her career teaching pre-k. Her passion is to help families. Through her own journey to find answers for her son she has found a voice and wants to share that by educating and empowering families like hers.



Include Me



Our goal is positive inclusion for all children,
with and without disabilities.



Glenda and Rich Faila

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. Nevada PEP's Include Me Puppet Program enjoyed a successful year performing for over 1,900 preschool children and their caregivers.

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

Include Me Sponsorship

\$100 - \$300 - Puppet Partner

- Receive a unique PEP Puppet Partner Certificate
- Individual recognition in the PEP POST newsletter and Hand in Hand Yearbook

\$301 - \$699 - Exceptional Partner

- Attain a personalized Exceptional Partner Certificate
- A photo of you and the puppets as a keepsake
- Individual recognition in the PEP POST newsletter and Hand in Hand Yearbook

\$700 plus - Proud Parent

- Honored with the prestigious PEP Proud Parent Certificate
- A photo of you and the puppets as a keepsake
- Individual recognition in the PEP POST newsletter and Hand in Hand Yearbook
- Recognition on Include Me Puppet Program materials

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. This program teaches all children good things happen by learning together and building friendships. The Include Me Program was established by Walter and Jackie Jagodzinski in honor of their daughter Andrea.

By educating our community on disabilities,
we are building a brighter future for all children.

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

Congratulations Nilza Shellhamer, Family Advocate Award Winner!

The Nevada PEP family would like to congratulate Nevada PEP Board Member Nilza Shellhamer for receiving the “Family Advocate” award at the Nevada Disability and Law Center’s (NDALC) 2016 Advocacy Awards. The award is given to “Someone who advocates on behalf of his/her family member.” Nilza’s commitment, love and passion for Nevada PEP and her daughter Jessica are unmatched, her efforts in the community represent Nevada PEP’s spirit of promoting high expectations, family engagement and the will to make a difference for families and children with disabilities. A resident of Carson City, Nilza serves with excellence on the Nevada PEP Board of Directors. Over a decade of support and service for Nevada PEP, Nilza has been devoted to the cause. Although advocates do not fight for special distinction, acknowledgement of recognition is important to illustrate the power of advocacy.

Every year, NDALC honors “outstanding individuals who have made extraordinary efforts to protect and advocate for individuals with disabilities.” As the state’s Protection and Advocacy system, NDALC provides legal and advocacy support for individuals with disabilities statewide. On behalf of Nevada PEP and advocates throughout the state, thank you Nilza for all that you do!



Congratulations Magdalena Ruiz!

In November, the 27th Annual Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health (FFCMH) Conference was held in Phoenix, Arizona. This annual conference is a national conference dedicated solely to issues impacting children and young adults with behavioral health challenges and their families. This year FFCMH introduced a new award for a Parent Support Provider that demonstrates overall excellence in the provision of support to families who are parenting children and youth experiencing behavioral health challenges. The award is named for a pioneer in the movement of family peer

support, Jane Adams who was there with her daughter to present the Jane Adams Peer Support Award to Magdalena Ruiz, Certified Parent Support Provider (CPSP), Family Facilitator for Nevada PEP.

Magdalena has demonstrated extraordinary skills and dedication in the provision of support to the families she serves; Nevada PEP joins the Federation of Families in recognizing not only her accomplishment, but also her empathy and genuine caring for the families that she works with. Congratulations Magdalena!



JOSEPH (JOE) P. HARDY, M.D.
SENATOR
District No. 12



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(775) 684-1400
Fax No.: (775) 684-6522
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www.leg.state.nv.us

DISTRICT OFFICE:
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Boulder City, Nevada 89006-0306
Home: (702) 293-7506

State of Nevada Senate



Dear Nevada PEP,

It is my sincere pleasure to write this letter of support for your “Hand in Hand Together We Can” program and to congratulate all of this year’s incredible nominees.

For 15 years now, the “Hand in Hand, Together We Can” program has served to recognize and honor those individuals that go the extra mile to make that difference in the lives of our children with disabilities. It is impossible to measure the true impact that these nominees and all of the previous recipients have made for these children and families, but to each individual child, it is the world.

Additionally, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to the staff and volunteers of Nevada PEP, and congratulate you on the difference that you too make for children, families, and advocates. Like you, I believe emphatically that hand in hand, together we can!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joe Hardy".

Joe Hardy
Nevada Senate, District 12

DAVID R. PARKS

SENATOR
District No. 7

COMMITTEES:

Chair

Government Affairs

Member

Finance

Revenue and Economic Development



State of Nevada
Senate

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(775) 684-1400
Fax No.: (775) 684-6522
Email: David.Parks@sen.state.nv.us
www.leg.state.nv.us



Greetings:

It is with great pleasure that I write in support of the "Hand in Hand Together We Can" appreciation program organized by Nevada Parents Encouraging Parents Inc. (Nevada PEP). As a past Front-Runner for Children award honoree, I am especially pleased to congratulate the recipients of this year's awards given by an organization that truly understands the unique experiences and considerations of children with special needs and their families.

For over 20 years, Nevada PEP has strengthened families through education, empowerment, and encouragement. They understand that the parents of children with disabilities are experts about their children, and Nevada PEP teaches them to be advocates in their children's care. This organization provides a community of support in which families can receive information, services, and training.

I thank Nevada PEP for all the great work it has done in the past and look forward to a better future for children with disabilities because of the work done by caring men and women who work with this organization. The "Hand in Hand Together We Can" appreciation program recognizes individuals who have given of their time, talents, and energy to help children with disabilities, their families, and their service providers.

I would like to extend my personal thanks to the recipients of these awards by making a difference in the lives of children with special needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David R. Parks".

David R. Parks
Nevada State Senator

Run Walk Roll

AGAINST BULLYING



Nevada PEP hosted its 6th annual Run Walk Roll Against Bullying on a picture perfect day in September to kick off October as National Bullying Prevention Month. A record crowd gathered at the UNLV Moyer Student Union. The crowd cheered after opening announcements so graciously

provided by PEP's Governing Board Chairman Mr. Bryce Loveland and Executive Director, Karen Taycher. The festivities began with the presentation of the prestigious "Front Runner for Children Award" honoring Nevada's most deserving, long time champion for children's issues, Senator David R. Parks, he has served our State for 30 years and has lead Nevada's ground-breaking legislation on anti-bullying and cyber-bullying laws. A very moving and uplifting presentation by the Las Vegas High School JROTC Wildcat Battalion Color Guard immediately followed by the National Anthem performed by Patt Mueller, who for 9 years sang for the Seattle Mariners.

The crowd cheered at the arrival of Grand Marshall Ricardo Laguna as he thrilled spectators with his bike riding antics and everyone agreed there is no one quite as charming as Ricardo as he wowed the crowd with his tricks and stunts upon his Champion BMX bike. Emceeding the event for the second year in a row was the infamous; Chet Buchanan. Chet provided his awesome talent and entertaining personality to the event. He was sure to mention the generous donors and sponsors and highlight some of the top notch raffle prizes. Chet took command as he recognized and acknowledged the incredible sponsors of the twenty- two schools that were generously sponsored by community partners, such as the eight Findlay Dealerships who sponsored nine of the Clark County schools this year.

Families were treated to face painting and balloon artistry by Amazing Face Painting as well as appearances by several famous area mascots including McGruff the crime dog, Smokey the Bear, Cosmo of the Las Vegas 51's, Hey Reb and Lil Reb of UNLV's Running Rebels, Panda Expresses Big Panda was on hand and some of the schools even brought their very own Mascot. The Guardians of Tomorrow provided by the Super Hero Foundry and Several Disney Princesses and characters from the movie Frozen provided by Party Ever After, enchanted the crowd during onsite registration and throughout the marvelous event.

Nevada PEP Governing Board Member Trish Leavitt, the Event Chairperson, worked tirelessly from start to finish ensuring the event was a tremendous success. The collaboration and teamwork of PEP's Board Member Regent Sam Lieberman, Board Member Rita Varney, staff and VIP volunteers, and the countless community partners all working together to raise awareness and taking steps to end bullying was incredible. Thank you to each and every one who contributed and supported this remarkable event, without you this would not have been possibly. See you next year!!

Remember the END of Bullying begins with YOU!



CHAMPION SPONSORS



HELEN JO &
SEAYNOAH MAYFIELD

TRAILBLAZER SPONSORS

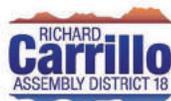


TRISH & ANDY LEAVITT



COUNCILWOMAN LOIS TARKANIAN

COMMISSIONER CHRIS GIUNCHIGLIANI



RAFFLE SPONSORS

ADVENTUREDOME CIRCUS CIRCUS
ALL FAMILY FUN CENTER
AMERICAN LEGION YOUTH AUXILIARY
BAHAMA BREEZE
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BONNIE SPRINGS
BRIO @ TIVOLI
BURGER KING
CARRABBA'S ITALIAN GRILL
CASA BLANCA
CASA DE SHENANDOAH
CHEESECAKE FACTORY
CHILDREN'S DISCOVERY MUSEUM
CHIPOTLE MEXICAN GRILL
CHUCK E CHEESE
COFFEE BEAN & TEA LEAF
CRYSTAL PALACE SKATING CENTER
DAVID BARTON GYM
FAST LAP KARTS
GRAVADY
GRIMALDI'S PIZZA
HASH HOUSE A GO GO
HUSH PUPPY
IN-N-OUT
KING PUTT
LAKE MEAD CRUISES
LAS VEGAS 51'S
LAS VEGAS ICE CENTER
LAS VEGAS MOTOR SPEEDWAY

LASER QUEST
LION HABITAT RANCH
LOWES
L V MINI GRAND PRIX
LAZY DOG
MACAYO'S MEXICAN RESTAURANT
MARY KAY (DAYNA MOODY)
MASSAGE ENVY
MOB MUSEUM
OLIVE GARDEN
ORLEANS/ BASKETBALL
OUTBACK STEAKHOUSE
PANDA EXPRESS
PEPE'S TACOS
PETE ROSE SPORTS BAR & GRILL
PF CHANG'S
POLE POSITION RACEWAY INDOOR KARTING
PUMP IT UP
RED LOBSTER
RIO VOO DOO ZIP LINE
ROGUE TOYS
ROY'S HAWAIIAN FUSION
SKY ZONE INDOOR TRAMPOLINE PARK
SLOTZILLA
SPORT SOCIAL
SPRINGS PRESERVE
SPROUTS
TRADER JOE'S
TRISH AND ANDY LEAVITT



Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers for their time, dedication and support. We couldn't have done it without you!

DIGNITARY SPONSORS



A. ELIADES



SOUTHWEST GAS

STEVE LEAVITT

LEAVITT LAW FIRM

nature's bakery

LIMESTONE REALTY

AMY AND JIM LEAVITT

ENERGY FOR LIFE'S GREAT JOURNEYS

JUDGE MICHELLE LEAVITT

MACIE & HARLEY NICHOLS



ERIKA & BRYCE LOVELAND

BONNIE AND FRANK MARTIN

LAW OFFICES OF ROBERT E. MARSHALL, INC.



VOLUNTEER CONNECTION

The gift of time is priceless and Nevada PEP sincerely appreciates every one of our VIP volunteers. PEP volunteers are simply the BEST and their continued loyalty to PEP's mission is admirable. Likewise, our volunteers consistently let us know that they value the rewarding feeling they gain from contributing time and effort to an organization that truly cares about others. Nevada PEP provides opportunities for families, youth, school groups, and other community members to give back by volunteering. Volunteers are always needed statewide at Nevada PEP! Apply online or visit one of our offices for details.



BETTY DAVIS - VIP VOLUNTEER

I love volunteering at Nevada PEP because I believe in what PEP is doing in the lives of children with disabilities and their families. The work is priceless. I am honored to be part of the PEP family. It is my hope to be a positive influence to others considering joining the PEP team of volunteers. There is no disability too small and none too large for PEP staff. The awesome team of employees is eager to help one and all. They make the volunteers feel welcome and valued. The support they give to families is unmatched. Nevada PEP is the place families reach out to for much needed support and a wealth of knowledge that helps them cope with their everyday challenges. Volunteers of PEP are the backbone of all of the extraordinary services provided. I am most thankful for the chance to empower others while also empowering myself. By: Betty Davis

VIP PROGRAM!

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:
5,867.5

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 parents and professionals across the state. With each special story sent to us, Nevada PEP recognized the Hand in Hand recipient with a beautiful certificate and an original Hand in Hand lapel pin to display as a proud supporter of Nevada’s community of people with disabilities.

These inspiring and uplifting stories are celebrations of wonderful teachers, doctors, therapists, family members, and many others who have worked with children with disabilities who have gone above and beyond to make a positive difference in a child’s life. Touching and original, these stories have shown the true commitment that many people have for our children in Nevada.

At the end of each year the stories are recognized in our annual Hand in Hand Together We Can yearbook. Each nominee and honoree receives a yearbook that includes their special story. The stories are also recognized in our bi-annual PEP Post newsletter.

Nevada PEP is proud to be the only organization in the state to recognize and honor these very special Hand In Hand recipients and will continue to do so throughout the years to come.

Nevada PEP always welcomes new individuals or businesses to be a part of this amazing program by becoming a Hand in Hand Sponsor. For additional information contact Nevada PEP Hand in Hand Together We Can!



Hand in Hand Together We Can Stories



RICHARD ACOSTA

Director of Security and Safety at Station Casinos

Many of you know firsthand, as I do, what it is like being robbed of a “normal” life style. This is why this story must be told and the Security Department at Texas Station deserves this award. My son has autism and once again his insurance was denying his name brand medication; even though we had already done a failed trial of the generic type with near tragic results. Our family’s life felt more like an incarceration of some sort. If we were not at work, we were at home. We had no socialization or recreation. We were virtually “SHUT IN’s.”

One weekend I found the courage to take my son out to a movie. It didn’t go well. He began to melt down as soon as we entered the building. I watched in horror as his anxiety mounted into a full scale panic attack. He bolted away like lightning. I ran as fast and as hard as I could for as long as I could trying to catch him, before collapsing onto the casino floor. I helplessly looked up at the Security booth that was miraculously in front of me and pathetically pleaded, “Help me please and don’t hurt him. He has autism and we have to catch him before he gets outside.” The Security officers quickly surrounded him using their communication devices to gather more of their man power. I latched onto my son’s t-shirt and he simply dragged me along for the ride as he weaved through the Security officers. He managed to take us to the top of the escalator where we were again met with more Security guards. They greeted us with kind and gentle

words attempting to calm my son down. However, he had lost all control. He turned recklessly towards the top of the escalator and leaped forward, trying to go down. I grabbed his shirt again just in time to pull him into safety. The Security guards had made a human wall around us so my son couldn’t burst through. He made a sigh of surrender and we were promptly escorted to the car.

I would like to thank Richard Acosta and his team at Texas Station for giving a new meaning to the words, “De-escalating the situation.” Thank you for a job well-done, your expertise, professionalism, and for your genuine compassion. Your service is appreciated and truly lifesaving.

DIANE LOMBARDO & FAMILY

Parent

AIDA OBANDO

Friend

I would like to nominate Mrs. Aida Obando, because since I received my child’s Autism diagnosis, she has been like the light on the road. She will always help and advise me on the correct steps to follow to get the best services for my child. Thanks to her, I felt that I was not alone on this path and that I, as a mother, can educate myself to continue helping my child in his development. Now with the help I received, I feel more encouraged to continue focusing on the therapies that my child needs.

Quisiera nominar a la Sra. Aida Obando, porquedesde que recibí el diagnóstico de autismo de mi hijo, ella ha sido como una luz en el camino.

Ella siempre me ha ayudado y aconsejado sobre los pasos correctos en cual seguir para obtener los mejores servicios para mi hijo. Gracias a ella, senti que no estaba sola en este camino y que yo, como madre, puedo educarme a mi misma para seguir ayudando a mi hijo en su desarrollo. Ahora con la ayuda que recibi, me siento mas animada para continuar enfocando sobre las terapias que necesita mi hijo.

ANGELA M. VALERIO SANTILLANA

Mother

CYNDY ANANG

Teacher

Ms. Cyndy is my daughter's preschool teacher and has gone out of her way to have her integrated in her classroom; even going so far as to adapt daily activities for full inclusion. She has worked hard to help my daughter become an active member of the classroom with daily chores, as well as class participation, even though my daughter is non-ambulatory and non-verbal. With the loving help of Ms. Cyndy, I have watched my daughter become more social, more daring, and happier than ever. They have even started a communication system with her! My daughter loves Ms. Cyndy.

TANYA HINER

Mother

JENNIFER ANDRETTI

VIP Volunteer

Nevada PEP is proud of all of our wonderful volunteers and among them is a shining star who has deserved this award for a very long time. Her name is Jennifer Andretti. She came to PEP three years ago after surfing the internet for an organization



that helps people. Fortunately for us, she decided after the initial interview that Nevada PEP's positive environment would be her perfect fit. She has been a tremendous asset to the organization especially in times of our greatest need- the bulk

mail projects. She's a very skilled individual who works tirelessly, making sure we get our training flyers mailed out in a timely fashion. We fold, tab and label thousands of them in house so it is by far our largest project. She has learned the project very well and continues to be our go to gal at each and every mailing. We owe her a ton of gratitude and take this golden opportunity to present her with this great honor.

DIANE LOMBARDO

Volunteer Coordinator

WILLIAM ANDREWS

Teacher

Although our son no longer attends Quannah McCall Elementary school with Mr. Andrews. Mr. Andrews was instrumental in bringing our son up to speed and bring out the best in him. He worked tirelessly to guide and nurture our son to the level where he is at today. Although still in kindergarten, our son reads at almost a 2nd grade level. His comprehension and communication has vastly improved. Needless to say Mr. Andrews helped lay a strong foundation for my son's academic future.

SELMA ZAKAI

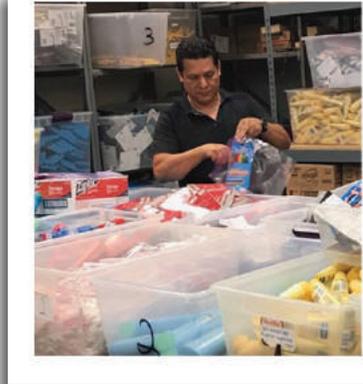
Parent



JUAN ARIAS

Inventory Control Clerk

I am nominating Juan Arias for the “Hand in Hand, Together We Can” award! In our office he is in charge of organizing, creating, and distributing basic need items to students who are homeless all over the Clark County School District. For many years he has facilitated a special partnership with Helen J. Stewart to work with students who have special needs. The students come to the HOPE office and they work with Juan to help create basic toiletry bags and nice backpacks. Juan loves the students and always makes them feel at home with encouragement, snacks, goodies, and friendly conversation. He gives the students a boost in their confidence as they are completing their job skills training. He is patient and helpful no matter what student behavior arises. I am much honored to work with Juan and believe he is a true unsung Hero!!! Thank you!



VELVETTE WILLIAMS

Parent

KATHERINE BERNARDO

Therapist

Kat has been an amazing support to me for my son. She will recommend what the school should be providing for my son and she will encourage me to fight for my son’s rights.



MIKE BERNSTEIN

Children’s Mental Health Consortium

Mike Bernstein has participated on multiple community committees, task forces, and boards throughout his tenure with the Southern Nevada Health District. On the Clark County Children’s Mental Health Consortium, he has been a champion for children’s mental health for 10 years and has served as the Chair of the Public Awareness Workgroup. In that time, he has worked tirelessly to reduce stigma associated with mental health and increase awareness around suicide and suicide prevention efforts. Mike’s efforts have also included activities to reduce incidences of bullying in schools and increasing the general public’s awareness of the impacts of bullying on youth. With every contribution that Mike made to further the efforts of the Clark County Children’s Mental Health Consortium, he did so with passion and commitment that could not be mistaken or go unnoticed.

WITH SINCERE APPRECIATION,
Nevada PEP

BROWNSTEIN HYATT FARBER SCHRECK

Community Partner

Nevada PEP is privileged to recognize Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck as a recipient of our “Hand in Hand” appreciation award. We are honored to have Mr. Bryce Loveland, Shareholder Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck as Nevada PEP’s Governing Board Chairperson; from folding training flyers to conducting Board meetings Bryce demonstrates his commitment to community service. Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck is an amazing company and is a true community partner. For the last five years they have been a generous sponsor of PEP’s Run Walk Roll Against Bullying program, many Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck employees and their families participated in the event. Last year, Brownstein adopted Halle Hewetson

Elementary School and sponsored the school to attend the Run Walk Roll Against Bullying. We are proud to acknowledge all of their continued support and dedication to Nevada PEP and the many children and families in our community.

WITH SINCERE APPRECIATION,
Nevada PEP

TONY CANALES
Football Coach

Tony Canales is an amazing person and coach, he runs the Junior Crusader Youth Football Team. He has coached for more than 8 years, which proves he genuinely cares by giving our youth a positive outlet. He personally sponsors my child and more than 20 other children. He provides registration fees, uniforms, football gear, rides to and from practices or games. Most importantly he provides a positive environment for boys between the ages of 5 and 14 to help them stay out of trouble. Tony Canales is not only a great coach, but an OUTSTANDING MENTOR!

Thank you for devoting your time and energy year after year, you are truly an amazing individual!

FELEASHA HARRIS
Parent

LORENA CUEVAS
Therapist

Lorena has been a great blessing to our family. She has helped us tremendously, she has been very patient, and we've learned a lot from her. She has taught my son a lot of techniques; in



how to relax when he's upset or mad. She has been very patient with my son when he is mad or has a big frown on his face. She doesn't judge him when he's upset, but instead talks to him to find out the problem. Lorena has been very helpful in letting us express ourselves and has been very understanding. In order to relate to us, she will put herself in our shoes. I also want to thank her for not only trying to help out my son, but going above and beyond in helping me as well. She has taught me to be more patient with him and has taught me a few techniques to keep calm; from counting to ten and breathing exercises. She has helped me with resources to find programs or classes that would help me overcome some difficulty in my past. She has been a great blessing to our lives. Lorena, thank you for all you do and may God continue to bless you.

Lorena ha sido una gran bendición para nuestra familia. Ella nos ha ayudado muchísimo, ha sido muy paciente, y hemos aprendido mucho de ella. Ha sido profesora de mi hijo y le enseno muchas técnicas; cómo relajarse cuando está molesto o enojado. Ha sido muy paciente con mi hijo cuando está enojado o tiene un gran ceño fruncido en su cara. Ella no lo juzgar cuando él está molesto, pero habla con él para encontrar el problema. Lorena ha sido muy amable en dejarnos expresarnos y ha sido muy comprensiva. Para relatar a nosotros, ella es pone en nuestros zapatos. También quiero agradecerle no sólo tratando de ayudar a mi hijo, pero va más allá en ayudarme. Ella me ha enseñado a ser más paciente con él y me ha enseñado algunas técnicas para mantener la calma; de contar hasta diez y ejercicios de respiración. Ella me ha ayudado con recursos para encontrar programas o clases que me ayude a superar alguna dificultad en mi pasado. Ha sido una gran bendición para nuestras vidas. Lorena, gracias por todo lo que haces y que Dios siga bendiciendote.

DOREEN RODRIGUEZ
Parent

KIM CUNNINGHAM

Principle

I would like to nominate and thank Kim Cunningham, the principle of Goolsby Elementary School for providing a safe environment for my son who was diagnosed with autism last summer. The beginning of the school year was a struggle and with her patience, hard work and understanding she has been a wonderful support in helping me make sure my son gets the education he needs. She has even answered my questions if I had any concerns and gave her all to communicate and to check and see how my son is doing throughout the school day. She's great with him and I appreciate everything that she has done.

JUANITA STIPP

Mother



MICHAEL DEAGOSTELO

Parent

I would like to nominate Michael Deagostelo, the father of my child for the Hand in Hand, Together We Can award. Our daughter was diagnosed with Selective Mutism, which requires a lot of patience. We have tried other sources to help our daughter but the only one who manages to gain her trust is Michael. My husband has been very understating and supportive; he helps her with homework, attends parent conference meetings



regularly and I would like to add he has the patience of an angel. Thanks to Michael our daughter is learning a lot she's completing her homework and turning them in on time. I know she wouldn't be where she is now if it wasn't for him.

Michael, we love you and appreciate everything you do for us!

SEVERIANA LORZA

Parent

AURELIA DIAS

Parent

I am nominating Aurelia Dias for the "Hand in Hand, Together We Can" award. We met 6 years ago in a local church. Since then we have discovered that our children have similar disabilities, as parents, we understood each other. Aurelia is an incredible person that is constantly showing what unconditional love really means. She takes care of my children while I run errands and when I do not have time to cook she makes sure that my children are fed. I am beyond grateful for Aurelia and her husband who also helps us.

Aurelia, thank you for all the love and help you give to my family without ever asking for anything in return. You are truly appreciated!

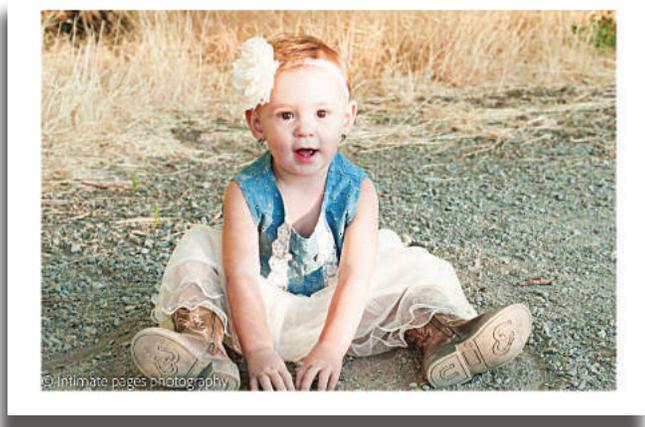
NORA HERNANDEZ

Parent

KASINA DOUGLASS-BOONE

Safe School Professional

Kasina Boone is a leader in our community like no other and it goes without saying that Nevada PEP is honored to work with Kasina. Kasina runs Batteries Included, which is an initiative with the City of Las Vegas, CCSD and Nevada Partners. They help Las Vegas teens reach their greatest potential by providing after school educational activities on leadership, career planning, college preparation and more. Kasina also heads T.U.L.I.P.S. (Teaching and Uniting Ladies to Inspire Success) and has helped Nevada PEP and Youth M.O.V.E. Nevada



tremendously with the Youth & Family Mental Health Engagement Summit and the Youth & Family Advisory Councils. She brings so much energy and passion to the Council meetings that the youth keep coming back and are excited about what they can accomplish when we work together as a community. Kasina is helping to bring the youth and family voice to the right people so we can begin to create the systems change we need for our youth. Kasina is truly a champion for our youth, her dedication, and commitment to empowering youth is unmatched. Again it's an honor to work with Kasina and to call her our friend. Thank you Kasina for all your hard work!

WITH APPRECIATION,
Nevada PEP

KELLY FIGUEROA

Family Specialist

I'm nominating Kelly Figueroa for the "Hand in Hand, Together We Can" award. Kelly has been a huge help in the process of qualifying my son for an IEP. Without her support I don't think we would've had the great outcome we have now. She has helped me understand that when it comes to my children's needs I shouldn't worry about overwhelming the teachers or anyone. In the past I've expressed my concerns to the teachers, but held back some concerns due to not trying to overwhelm them. Thanks to Kelly I've learned how to be a great advocate for my children in a positive matter.

Thank you Kelly, you're AWESOME!

LILIANA RESENDEZ

Parent

REBECCA HILL

Super Mom

Rebecca typifies what PEP's Hand in Hand program is all about. She is an amazingly devoted, caring, and compassionate individual and one of the strongest "Super Moms" I know. Over the last few years, I've been fortunate to have found a new friend in her as she volunteered to take care of my daughter before school. Rebecca greets my daughter every morning with love and kindness. On her harder mornings, Rebecca opens her heart even more to give my daughter the patience and positivity she needs to turn her day around. On what we jokingly refer to as my own "Hot Mess Mom" days, Rebecca reassures me and reminds me that I'm a Super Mom, too. Thank you, Rebecca, for all of your support over the last few years. It's meant more to me than you know. "Together We Can."

STEPHANIE HOULE

Parent



BOB HUMPHREYS

Advocate

When my niece came to live with me, there were a lot of challenges we had to face concerning her education. It seemed like everywhere we turned, everything was against us, until Bob Humphreys from Nevada PEP became our Family Specialist. He has been the most helpful person we've encountered on this journey. He has gone above and beyond to help me find valuable resources that I would have never found on my own. I am so very thankful that when everyone else seemed against us, we had Bob on our side! He deserves to be recognized for the hard work he has done to help my family and many others, what a valuable resource Bob Humphreys is!

SABRINA BRADLEY-MCLAUGHLIN

Aunt

GLORIA KENITZER

Teacher

I would like to nominate Ms. Kenitzer, a kindergarten teacher. All her students loved and adored her. If there were more teachers like her in the world, all the children would love to go to school. She's a beautiful person inside and out. She had a lot of patience for her students. When they were upset, she would comfort them. She didn't only speak with them, but taught them about respect and value.

Everyone in her classroom was like family. One

35

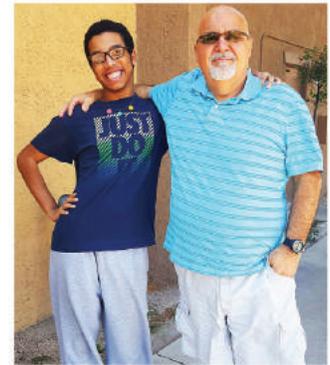
of the things that most impressed me

about my son when he was taking her class was that one day he asked me, "Mommy do you know about the Golden Rule? It means treat others like you would like to be treated, with respect." The children learned a lot because Ms. K was very patient with them. The first time my son had to start using glasses and braces, Ms. K gave her class a lesson about children who had to wear glasses, braces, and hearing aids. She spoke about the different necessities that children need. Thanks to her lesson none of my son's classmates teased him. She has also helped, advised, and supported me. She has made a big impact in our lives. Because of her, my son loved to go to school. Teachers and classmates do affect our life in some sort of way. Thank you Ms. K, for everything you've done.

Me gustaria nominar a la Sra. Kenitzer, una maestra de kindergarten. Todos los ninos la quieren y la adoraban. Y si uberan mas maestras

como ella en el mundo, los ninos les en cantaria ir a la escuela. Ella es una persona hermosa. Les tenia mucha paciencia a todos su estudiantes.

Cuando lloraban los consolaba. Ella platicaba con ellos y les enseñaba respecto y valores. En su salon todos eran como familia. Una de las cosas que mas me impresiono de mi hijo fue cuando un dia el me dijo, "Mami tu sabes de la Golden Rule? Significa trata a otros como quieres que te traten, con respeto." Los ninos aprendian mucho porque les tenia paciencia. La primera vez que mi nino tenia que usar lentes y braces, la Sra. K les dio una leccion sobre los nino que usaban lentes, braces en los dientes, o aparatos para los Oidos. Les hablaba de las diferentes nesecidades que ninos nesecitaban. Gracias a su clase, nadien se burlo de el. Ella es



una persona que me ayudo y me a consejado. Ella impacto la vida de mi hijo y la mia. Por ella, a mi nino le gustaba ir a le escuela. Los maestros y companeros afectan nuestra vida en cierta maneras. Gracias Sra. K, por todo lo que has hecho.

MARICEL ROCHEBLAVE

Parent

BRETT KINCAID

Brother

My brother Brett, is so good to me. He makes sure that I get to work and to the bowling alley so I can bowl with my friends. He is my friend and a great guy. Often on his day off, he surprises me with lunch! Sometimes he takes me to see a movie and we get a snack. He watches out for me and finds ways to be supportive. He works at a bank and so many times he has taken the time to teach me how to handle money and manage my time. I am lucky to have such a great brother! Thanks "B"

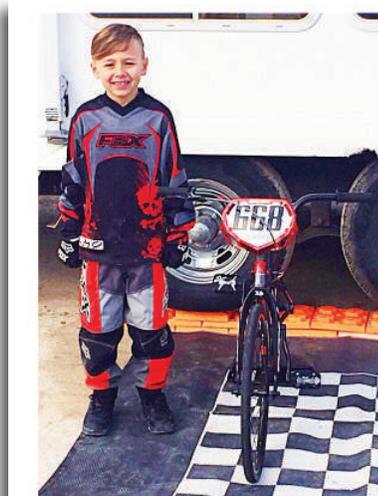
KAYLA KINCAID

Sister

ROBIN KINCAID

Educational Services Director, Nevada PEP

As a parent who was first introduced to the daunting process of an IEP, and at the same time accepting that my child would face challenges, internally, it was impossible not to panic. I did not know how much of a voice I could or could not have in my son's upcoming success or failure with education. NVPEP was recommended to me, and I reached Robin Kincaid. Several months before I would meet her in person, we would speak by phone,



where I found the guidance, support and direction I needed each and every time I made contact. Robin treated me with kindness and understanding, while at the same time, didn't let me stagnate with inaction. Each time we spoke she gave me a list of things to do next



that would keep me moving toward the goal of getting my child what he needed at school.

In January, it came to pass that my son's IEP meeting was due. The process was intimidating. I again reached out to Robin. She took the time to understand what was going on and read his file. Robin never seemed put out to assist us and her presence was so strong and professional that I felt it impacted the results positively. That level of experience was needed in the room and it was very reassuring to have someone be a presence and help me advocate for my child. Thanks to Robin and PEP, my son was given all the accommodations that we requested and is thus far thriving. Through

this process and Robins continued guidance, I find myself with a stronger voice now, and certainly a more thorough understanding of my son's rights. It is hard to limit the words of appreciation for someone who takes you through an experience like that, but at the end of it, Robin should know that what she does matters, to our family, Robin really mattered, and we are humbly grateful.

ANN BURTLESON

Parent

PAUL S. LANDAZ

DCFS Professional

Paul era la única persona que pudo hablar con mi hijo con tranquilidad y brindarle confianza. El fue la única persona que mi hijo no le cerró las puertas. Paul hizo que mi hijo se sintiera que tenía a alguien con quien hablar, un amigo. El Sr. Landaz le ayudó a mi hijo aceptar los servicios que él nos ofrecía. Por él, mi hijo aceptó ir a terapia y regresar a la escuela. Gracias Sr. Landaz, por ser tan motivador y por todo lo que haces.

Paul was the only person who was able to speak to my son with calmness and provide confidence. He was the only person who my son didn't shut out. Paul made my son feel like he had someone to talk to, a friend. Mr. Landaz helped my son accept the services that he was offering us. Because of him, my son agreed to go to therapy and return to school. Thank you Mr. Landaz for being so motivating and for everything you do.



EVA LOPEZ

Mother

MRS. MARTIN

Teacher

I would like to nominate Mrs. Martin. She was able to help my son who has autism, get a diagnosis. My son was able to get the Occupational and Physical Therapy he needed and is now doing better. If it wasn't for

37 Mrs. Martin, my son wouldn't be where

he is now. Thank you Mrs. Martin, for being a life saver.

DANIELLE FAITH HILL

Parent



MICHELLE METHENY

Parent

My sister and I grew up with parents who had no idea on how to parent myself yet alone a child with a disability. After 3 years of foster care from the ages of 9 months to 3 years old; I moved in with my father and step mother, Michelle, who had 4 children of her own. As my step mother, she had no voice. My parents weren't given any help and school was difficult to handle. My sister wasn't getting any help. Michelle noticed the issue and took action. She fought tooth and nail, moved heaven and earth for my sister. After 14 years of being "Mama Bear" and "Hell hath no fury like my mother scorned." Michelle remarried her new husband, Dan, who are full guardians of my sister now. Both have worked so hard for her. Dan has stepped up and stepped in. My mother has never encountered any teacher who has overcome her; especially when my sister was in need.

MELINDA GOLIGHTLY

Daughter

TIFFANY MONTGOMERY

Transition Specialist, Nevada PEP

Tiffany has changed our IEP meetings from a challenging environment, to a place of harmony. Since she has been our advocate, she has helped figure out what accommodations our son really needs to succeed. She doesn't

only take time for us, but also takes the time to get to know our son. Tiffany invited us to the Nevada Transition Conference and encouraged my son to join us. It was such a great experience for him. He has grown so much as a young man since meeting Tiffany and continues to be empowered by her.

ANDREA GREEN

Parent

LETICIA NAVA

Parent

Me gustaria nominar a la Sra. Leticia Nava. Leticia es una mamá que también tiene una hija con una discapacidad. A pesar de sus horarios muy ocupados por el gran labor que desarrolla en Milagros Escondidos, siempre se toma el tiempo para poder orientarnos sobre las ayudas y apoyos que podemos obtener. Por ejemplo, como terapias y doctores disponibles. Ella siempre se esta educando y impulsando a varios padres y madres como yo. Ella es una persona muy dedicada a su labor y merece esta nominacion. Leticia, gracias por tu ejemplo y dedicacion.

I would like to nominate Ms. Leticia Nava. Leticia is a mother who has a daughter with a disability. Despite her very busy schedule for the great work she does at Hidden Miracles; she always takes the time to guide us on the support and help that we can obtain from therapies or available doctors for our child. She's always educating herself and encouraging parents such as myself. She's a very dedicated individual and deserves this nomination. Ms. Nava, thank you for being a great example and for all your dedication.

ANGELA VALERIO

Parent



CARRIE NYMAN

Adaptive Physical Education Teacher

Carrie has been an inspiration not only to the students she works with at Lassen Community College, but to the community as well. She is the Adaptive Physical Education Teacher for the College and goes above and beyond every day for her students. She encourages her students and has high expectations for them not only at school but out in the community. She makes sure that her students are fully included in the activities and events around town and out of state. Her students have the utmost respect from the community, which is all due to her.



TIFFANY MONTGOMERY

Parent

MARIE ALICE PANTOJA

Parent

My mother has eleven children of her own who she raised. She went on to starting a home day-care business

where she cared for children for many years. After her youngest son lost his wife and mother to his children to cancer; my mother made the decision to commit and dedicate herself to help raise her grandchildren. She provided them with the love and support they needed after losing their mother at such a young age. You could say a mothers job is never done.

BLANCA E. GONZALEZ

Daughter

JANELLE FRANK PEARCE

Advocate

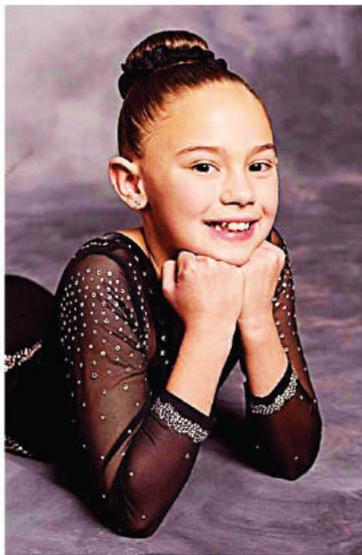
Janelle Frank Pearce is a true advocate and deserving of a Hand in Hand Together We Can Appreciation Award.

She has participated in multiple committees and effort to improve mental health services in

Las Vegas throughout the years. Her personal and professional commitment, as a longtime member of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, has ensured that decision-makers were aware of the mental health service needs. In 2013 she was unanimously elected as the Chair of the Clark County Children's Mental Health Consortium. During her tenure on the Consortium, Janelle has proven herself to be an outstanding advocate for families and children who are struggling with behavioral and/or mental health issues by providing thoughtful consideration to all points of view on any given topic. Her leadership style has been one of advocacy delivered with quiet dignity,

strength and resolve which has resulted in improved collaboration across the community to improve access to care for all children, youth and their families.

WITH APPRECIATION
Nevada PEP



JEFF PENNETA

Teacher

I would like to nominate and send a huge thank you to my son's teacher, Jeff Penneta. He has come into our lives and immediately took my son as one of his own. Jeff is very gentle and knows how to recognize the students' needs. He made sure he took time to make a personal connection and also made sure to be positive and encouraging. He has helped my son learn in ways that has helped him commit concepts to memory. For this, we are much appreciative! We need more teachers like Coach P!

YVONNE PENKALSKI
Mom

BRIAN PETTY
Counselor

We would like to nominate Brian Petty for making a positive difference in our son's life. Mr. Petty is the guidance counselor at Coral Academy of Science Las Vegas. Our son is in the 5th grade at CASLV and has ADHD. He has attended the same school since kindergarten. From kinder through 3rd grade, he was bullied, both mentally and physically. The past few years it's been very challenging to get teachers to follow his 504 plan. Mr. Petty has been the one constantly involved in our son's school years. He has stood up to the administration when we needed help advocating for our son. He has constantly given him positive reinforcement, helping him boost his confidence. His door is always open if our son

feels that he needs a safe place to go to during the day to have some quiet time or talk about any problems he's having. Mr. Petty has also encouraged us to stay at this school, even with its challenges, because our



son is happy there. We think the world of him and would love to see him recognized for the difference he makes in the student's lives, especially our sons.

CYNTHIA & TYLER EATON

Parents

PAM ROBERTS

Therapist

Pam Roberts has been a pillar of support to our family. She has almost become a part of our family. The past two years have been a trying time for us. I firmly believe that had it not been for Pam, we would've been in a much worse place. We love Pam and wish all the best for her and much success, so that she can keep helping people like ourselves.

SELMA ZAKAI

Parent

DANIELLE RODRIGUEZ

Professional

Danielle works with the Shinning Star organization, she has been our family's Safety Worker for two months. She taught my family and I how to become closer by helping each other out. Danielle is a very loving and caring person. She is always ready and willing to help. We want to thank Danielle for her amazing work and for everything she has taught us.

TIA FLOWERS

Parent



JON PAUL SAUNDERS

Consultant

Jon Paul has been our consultant since my son was 2 1/2 years old. When we first started ABA we were really nervous and depressed about our beautiful little boy's challenges and the uncertainty of the outcome. That all changed when Jon Paul became involved. He helped us attack weaknesses and exploit strengths. He helped us focus on individual victories. Most importantly, he helped us feel empowered and confident that we could be a part of our son's recovery. Because of his role in our lives, my son can communicate his wants, express his needs and enjoy life on a grander scale. We will forever be grateful for Jon Paul's contributions and are lucky to have him as our consultant.

SHARON QUIROZ

Mother

KIM SEDWAY

Professional

I would like to nominate Kim Sedway, the schools nurse for the Hand in Hand, Together We Can award. She is a very positive person; she has been very attentive and understanding to my sons needs. My son is none verbal and his needs have to be addressed in a sensitive caring manner as he cannot communicate his needs. Kim has gone above and beyond in helping my son overcome his anxiety while being in school. She has helped my son adjust to the schools environment along with a few challenges. I feel comfortable and happy knowing Kim is caring for him while he's in school. Kim is an OUTSTANDING person! Kim, we appreciate and thank you for being a huge part of our lives.

ADELE HANCOCK

Parent

MS. TRISHA SHINMEI

Teacher

I would like to nominate Ms. Shinmei because I feel that since my son became her student, he has shown more interest in wanting to attend school. He has also shown more security, confidence, and desire to learn; and he's always naming her as an example. She's a teacher who has set up structure and has given me an example of how to help my child; not only with his behavior, but also improving his speech difficulty. I feel that when my son attends Ms. Shinmei's class, he's always learning something new. Thank you Ms. Shinmei for being an amazing teacher and for doing all you do for your students.

Me gustaría nominar a la Sra. Shinmei porque siento desde que mi hijo se convirtió en su alumno, que ha mostrado más interés en querer asistir a la escuela. También ha demostrado más seguridad, confianza y deseo de aprender; y siempre está nombrando a la Sra. Shinmei como un ejemplo. Ella es una maestra que ha creado estructura y me ha dado un ejemplo de cómo ayudarlo a mi hijo; no sólo con su comportamiento, pero también mejorando su dificultad para hablar. Siento que cuando mi hijo asiste a su clase, el siempre esta



aprendiendo algo nuevo. Gracias Sra. Shinmei por a ser un maestra increíble y por todo lo que haces para tus alumnos.

ANGELA M. VALERIO SANTILLANA

Parent

JILL SPATAFORE

Mother

So first and foremost, Jill is not my biological mother, but has taken me under her wing and became my adopted mother. I grew up in a dysfunctional home, but God blessed me with such a beautiful woman to call mom. She has stepped in and has helped us, especially with our son, Cameron, who has autism. She has helped my son Cameron through not only his learning ability, but with his everyday life. She has given her own expertise from being a Special Ed High School teacher at Basic High School to help create a beautiful IEP program to help Cameron. She has been a praying mom and one who will not only invest in me, but invest in every single one of my children. She is a role model to so many. She gives endlessly of her time, talent, and even her finances without ever wanting anything in return. With only the exception of complete satisfaction of knowing that the person she helped has gone out and done great things with their lives. She is extremely special and an amazing teacher, mentor, and friend to all those who meet her.



THOMAS FADDEN

Son

COACH TOM TAYCHER

Challenger Coach

Mr. Tom Taycher has been giving children with disabilities the opportunity to play baseball for decades. This year he did something wonderful when he restructured Challenger Little League to include a senior division which allows the young adults to continue to play. I am the respite provider to one of the players and also his buddy on the field. Last year he sat out the season, having aged out of the program. This year he got the great news that he would play and his bright smile has never left his face. He is virtually non-verbal. However repeats the word baseball over and over again. Saturday mornings are a treat at the ballpark when Dean meets his friends and team mates who are just as happy as he is to be playing Challenger again. Thank you Coach Tom for recognizing the need for these individuals to keep playing as long as possible. You are simply the greatest.

KRYSTAL GARTNER

Buddy

JOHN WALKER

Husband

Raising a child with a disability takes a village, as they say. That is very true in my case, but I especially want to give a shout out to my amazing husband.

He and I make such a great team in raising our daughter, and caring for her. He's an amazing Dad, to all four of our grown children. I'm so grateful that we have each other and having our daughter has drawn us closer together. I love you, John. Together we're a TEAM!

KELLI WALKER

Wife

J'MON WEBB

Brother

I'm nominating my baby brother J'mon. He's the kindest person that I know. He doesn't ask for anything in return other than paying it forward. My brother will pick my son up from school and take him to get his favorite nuggets and fries; usually a couple of days out of the week. He talks to my son, plays with him, and lets him know that he is truly loved. My brother deserves so much more than I could ever give him and I just want him to know that he is truly appreciated.

ELISA KLINE

Sister

JAVONNTE' WILLIAMS

Son

I would like to nominate my son who has been not only my everything and my rock, but my daughter's as well. When my daughter was born, two months later our lives changed. He has given up so much to help and see his sister succeed. He knows I can't lift her and her wheel chair up because I have my own medical issues. When I can't go to her appointments he does and never complains or wishes for a different life. I know he loves us unconditionally despite of our struggles and what we've put him through.

I wish I could do more to show him how much I appreciate him and for all that he does, gives, and sacrifices for us. He works with her, advocates for her, helps care for her, and most importantly loves her. Once again thank you for all that you do for us!

NATAUSHA WILLIAMS

Mother

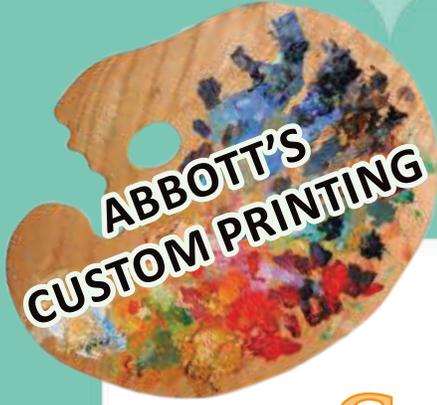


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Show your support for the remarkable people across the state who make the lives of children with special needs better by becoming a sponsor of the Hand in Hand Appreciation Program. Help us to recognize, honor, and publicly applaud those who partner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

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- Receive Yearbook
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- Recognized in the Yearbook
- Receive Yearbook
- Receive the PEP Post Newsletter
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- Honorable Mention in "Hand in Hand" Literature



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 bi-annual PEP Post throughout the year.



