Celebrating a collection of stories honoring those who make a difference for children and their families.
“Nevada PEP is like my second home, thank you for being so supportive and understanding.”
~Parent
Governing Board

Lois Tarkanian

Advisory Board

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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.

WHAT IS NEVADA PEP?

WHAT SERVICES DOES PEP OFFER?

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

WHO SHOULD CALL?

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

OUR MISSION

To increase the opportunities for home, community and school success for children with disabilities, including those who are at risk or who have serious emotional disturbances, their families and their service providers, through education, encouragement and empowerment activities.
Welcome to the 2019 Hand in Hand Together We Can yearbook. The Hand in Hand Together We Can program began in 2002 as a way to recognize and honor the people who have made a positive difference in the lives of children with special needs. Each story is special and they all are a testament to the outstanding work that people do to help children with special needs. This year’s stories are no exception. I am proud and honored to be a part of an organization that recognizes people who have made a positive difference in the lives of children.

As Chair of the Nevada PEP Governing Board, I would like to reflect on a few of our many accomplishments this past year. First, Nevada PEP collaborated with the Clark County School District, Nevada Community Foundation and Grant a Gift to bring acclaimed disability advocate and speaker, Jonathan Mooney to Southern Nevada. Jonathan shared a powerful message that motivated parents and students. Another accomplishment was that through working with the Nevada Department of Education, PEP was able to provide opportunities for parents to attend a statewide conference to learn more about Supported Decision Making as an alternative to guardianship.

A huge milestone for 2019 was the 9th Annual Run Walk Roll Against Bullying. This year we were honored to partner with Findlay Automotive as our presenting sponsor. I would like to personally thank Tyler Corder, CFO of Findlay Automotive for his continued support of this event. With the generosity of our Hero and Trailblazer sponsors, we were able to invite thirty-four sponsored schools to attend the event free of charge. The event took place at UNLV with over 1,500 attendees.

Nevada PEP continues to stay true to its mission. Our goal is to educate, encourage and empower families to become their child’s best advocate; Nevada PEP believes that children, adolescents, and young adults and their families deserve the opportunity to live, learn, and participate fully in their communities. Nevada PEP remains committed to supporting families and we will continue to strengthen families through education, encouragement, and empowerment activities.

As we move into another new year, we are looking forward to celebrating our 25th year of providing support and information to families who have children with special needs. The need for our services continues to grow. Your support is always welcomed and appreciated. On behalf of Nevada PEP, we are grateful to all of our community partners, volunteers, and generous donors who continue to support and believe in our mission. Working together, we are building a stronger community for all Nevada’s children.

Bryce Loveland
Nevada PEP Governing Board Chair
Dear Readers,

I would like to congratulate the amazing individuals who are the 2019 Hand in Hand Together We Can honorees. This appreciation program began over 17 years ago to recognize Nevadans who selflessly work to make a positive difference in the lives of children and their families. Nevada PEP believes that it is essential to help families acknowledge the kindness and dedication of individuals who make a difference for their children.

After reading all the stories written by families, I am sure that it is kindness and selflessness that makes the difference. Recently I heard a saying “people heal people” and knew that this truly what makes a healthy community. One kind gesture at a time will make the difference.

With a community focused on healing, our children will be embraced and included. Our families will be empowered and the professionals in our lives will be appreciated. We know you will be inspired by the heartwarming examples about the nominees and the families who nominated them featured in this yearbook.

Nevada PEP would like to thank the families, their nominees, and the generous sponsors for their support and participation in the Hand in Hand Together We Can appreciation program. Together, we can all make the difference.

With Appreciation,

Karen Taycher
Executive Director
“Nevada PEP, helped my son graduate high school. Now he’s a business owner, we are incredibly grateful.”
~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.

277 Training Workshops Conducted

2,432 Individuals participated in the training workshops

Was any of the information presented useful to you? ...Yes, 97%

Have you been more effective or involved in your child’s educational program with the information you received at the workshop? ...Yes, 94%

Because of the information you received at the workshop, do you feel you are more knowledgeable about how to work with schools? ...Yes, 95%
**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 5,648 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!

**Volunteer Hours:**

5,648
SUPPORT SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS

Nevada PEP provides support services by first providing Information & Referral Services and helping parents find their way through the maze of services. Another important support service is Individual Assistance, which targets the specific needs of the individual or family. If a family requires additional support, Nevada PEP attends Education, Wraparound, or Child & Family Team meetings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home Visits</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Family Team Meetings</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-related Meetings</td>
<td>902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New &quot;Intakes&quot; Families</td>
<td>1,899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Individuals Contacting PEP</td>
<td>2,556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Individual Assistance Contacts</td>
<td>10,355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Assistance Contacts</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The information or support you received from Nevada PEP met your needs.

- Not Applicable: 0%
- Disagree: 0%
- Agree: 22%
- Strongly Agree: 78%

The information Nevada PEP provided was useful.

- Not Applicable: 0%
- Disagree: 0%
- Agree: 39%
- Strongly Agree: 61%

The information Nevada PEP provided helped you learn more about how to meet your child’s needs.

- Not Applicable: 0%
- Disagree: 0%
- Agree: 33%
- Strongly Agree: 67%

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.

- Not Applicable: 0%
- Disagree: 5%
- Agree: 50%
- Strongly Agree: 45%

Would you recommend Nevada PEP to your friends or family?

- No: 0%
- Maybe: 0%
- Yes: 100%

Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree
0% 0% 22% 78%
0% 0% 39% 61%
0% 0% 33% 67%
0% 5% 50% 45%
0% 0% 100%
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.

- 173 Number of public forums, information fairs, & community outreach events
- 371 Number of meetings attended to enhance the support systems for children with special needs and their families
- 646 Number of school meetings visited across Nevada
- 3,927 Facebook Likes
- 106 Number of committees to which Nevada PEP representatives provided the parent perspective
- 188,749 Number of yearly Website hits at nvpep.org
- 425,424 Number of E-Newsletters sent
- 2,162 Twitter Followers
- 1,461 Instagram Followers
- 4,456 YouTube Subscribers

Top 10 Reasons People Contact Nevada PEP

- Behavior / Discipline: 30%
- Advocacy: 21%
- Sp Education / IEPs: 12%
- Assessments / Eligibility: 10%
- Family Support: 9%
- Disability: 6%
- Placement: 4%
- Family Involvement: 3%
- Section 504: 3%
- Basic Needs Assistance: 2%
Gender of Children Helped  
Male - 64%  
Female - 36%

Ethnicities of Individuals Contacting PEP
- Caucasian: 32%  
- Undisclosed: 21.6%  
- Hispanic: 27%  
- African American: 11.4%  
- Asian: 2.5%  
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 1%  
- American Indian/Native American/Alaskan: 1%  
- Two or More Races: 3.5%

Ages of Children Helped
- 0 through 2: 1%  
- 3 through 5: 5.5%  
- 6 through 11: 25%  
- 12 through 14: 26%  
- 15 through 18: 4%  
- 19 through 21: 11.4%  
- 22 through 26: 21.6%

Consumer Relationships
- Parents: 84%  
- Service Providers: 5%  
- General Public: 2%  
- Special Educators: 1%  
- Students: 2%  
- Other Educators: 1%  
- Other Relatives: 2%  
- Foster Parents: 1%  
- Advocates: 1%  
- Other Relatives: 2%  
- Surrogate Parents: 0%
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.

“I feel that I can see the light at the end of the tunnel. I have hope now.”
~Parent

To Donate securely over the Internet
Visit our website @ www.nvpep.org

EXPENDITURES

Income Total: $1,668,574

- Personnel: $1,043,480
- Building & Space: $143,512
- Travel & Mileage: $84,946
- Supplies, Postage & Shipping: $46,008
- Family Training Stipends: $46,207
- Printing & Publications: $48,778
- Conferences, Meetings & Trainings: $36,922
- Professional Services: $23,936
- Other Operational: $20,238
MAJOR FUNDERS

National Institute of Mental Health
Nevada Department of Education
Nevada Department of Health and Human Services
Nevada Division of Child and Family Services

U.S. Department of Education
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration

INDIVIDUAL FUNDERS

Alexia Brett-Bacon
Alisha Tobler
Allison Stephens
Ann Alexander
April Mishler
Ashley Joyce
Ashley Schuster
Assemblyman Richard Carrillo
Barb and Dave Callahan
Bonnie & Frank Martin
Chris Sheperd
Christina Backus
Carolyn Ellis
Donna Smith
Doug Whitener

Erika and Bryce Loveland
Ginger Reed
Hannah Jacobs
Harley and Suzy Nichols
Heather Sullivan
Ingrid Ramirez
Jacqueline Harris
Jessica Frank
Karen Taylor
Kate Lowenhar-Fisher
Kelly Wooldridge
Leann and Phil Baier
Lisa Leviton
Margaret Harrington
Marsha and Tyler Corder
Melissa Hawkes
Suzy and Harley Nichols
Nilza Shellhammer
Natalie Filipic
Patricia Lesavoy
Patrick Reilly
Rebecca Marsh
Renee Reyes
Retta Dermody
Ruby Agabas
Rita and Roger Varney
Robin and Craig Kincaid
Robert F. Purdy
Sam Lieberman
Sandy Simanton
Shannon Koenen
Sherry Roesch
Stacy Mitchell
Stephanie Ford
Stephanie Vrskin
Suzan Dibella
Tracy Fugazzi
Troy Wanta
Trish and Andy Leavitt
Terri Peltier
Yolanda Cruz
Valerie Touchstone
Wendy and Jim Wussow
William Falkner

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

AIS- Advanced Imaging Solutions
Abbott’s Custom Printing
Aloha Pacific Federal Credit Union
Amazon Smile
AMC Promenade Theatre
American Legion Youth Auxiliary
#14 Juniors
Audi Henderson
Axe Monkey - Indoor Axe Throwing
Bahama Breeze Island Grille
Bearizona Wildlife Park
BOYD Gaming
Buca di Beppo Italian Restaurant
Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck
Carraabba’s Italian Grill Restaurant
Sunrise Casablanca
Channel 3
Cheesecake Factory
Children’s Discovery Museum
Chipotle Mexican Grill
Chuck E. Cheese
Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf
Colorful Creations
Congregation P’Nai Tikvah
Department of Forestry
Department of Juvenile Justice
Probation Officers Association
Dickinson Wright Law Group
Disneyland Resort
Distinctive Homes Magazine
Findlay Automotive Group

Findlay Cadillac
Findlay Chevrolet
Findlay Honda Henderson
Findlay Honda Northwest
Findlay Kia
Findlay Mazda
Findlay RV
Findlay Toyota
Findlay Volkswagen
Findlay Volkswagen-Henderson
Flat Rate Window Cleaning
Galaxy Theaters
Grand Canyon University
Grimaldi’s Pizzeria
Impact Archery
Imperial Wine Wholesalers
Jersey Mikes
Jamba Juice
Land Rover Las Vegas
Las Vegas Aviators
Las Vegas Mini Grand Prix
Las Vegas Cause Players
Las Vegas Ice Center
Las Vegas Lites
Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department
Las Vegas Police Protective Association
Law Office of Andrew M. Leavitt

Lev Restaurant Group
Lexus of Las Vegas
Limestone Reality
Lowe’s
Maximum Audio Video
Merrilynn School
Mesquite Casablanca Resort Hotel Casino & Spa
Michael Boychuck’s COLOR Salon Mondays Dark
Natural Dry Carpet
Neil C. Twitchell PTSA
Network for Good
Nevada State Bank
Nevada System of Care
Olive Garden Restaurant
Our Little World Treatment Center
Paradise Ranch
Pole Position Raceway
Prism Medical Products, LLC
Reddy Ice
Reflexology Relief
REI Boca Park
RSG Consulting
Rogue Toys
Royce Chocolate
Run Vegas Run
SeaQuest Las Vegas
Sletten Construction
Smart and Final Extra

Smith’s Community Rewards Program
Smith’s Food and Drug #334
Southern Hills Hospital
Southwest Airlines
Sparkletts Water
Sportsman’s Warehouse
Spring Mountain Treatment Center
Springs Preserve
Sprouts Grocery #559
Sprouts Grocery #502
Subaru of Las Vegas
Sunrise Casablanca
Supercuts
The Kara Foundation
The Lovaas Center
The North Face Outlet
The Valley Health Systems-Summerlin Hospital
Target
Texas Roadhouse
Trader Joe’s #86
Trader Joe’s #98
UFC
UNLV
Vegas Golden Knights
vCORE
Young Men’s Service League
Zia Records

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

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

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

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

Allison Stephens is the Statewide Family Network Director and the proud mother of a teenage son and daughter. Allison was referred to Nevada PEP when her son was in elementary school and has loved the organization ever since. She enjoys being a part of the Leadership Team, and values her role in collaborating with the Statewide Family Network and advocating for children and youth with mental health concerns.

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 thirteen 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.
Magdalena Ruiz is a bilingual Family Support Services Manager. 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.”

Lyn Morales is the Statewide Family Network Coordinator in the Satellite office. She is a mother of seven, three of which struggle with mental health. Lyn has life experiences navigating mental health systems which makes her a great fit at Nevada PEP. She has been her children’s best advocate and has the passion for helping families and creating systems change. Lyn likes hiking and going to the movies with her friends and family in her spare time.

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.
Lexie Beck is the Youth MOVE Facilitator in the Satellite office. She grew up volunteering for Nevada PEP through Challenger Little League of Southern Nevada. When moving up to Reno she decided she wanted to be more involved and engaged in advocacy. As a youth with lived experience, Lexie encourages the importance of the youth voice in youth-serving systems. She is passionate about empowering others and raising awareness about mental health.

Lynn Curns is a Family Specialist in the Satellite office. A native Nevadan and a Mom to three wonderful children. Lynn loves that she is a part of Nevada PEP. She is excited to have the opportunity to help other parents who has a child with a disability. Lynn enjoys spending time going on adventures with her family. Lynn is the type of person who is always willing to lend a hand and support those around her.

Susana DeNeef is the Communication Specialist at Nevada PEP. She is the proud mother of three and has two wonderful grandchildren. Susana is excited to be working at Nevada Pep helping families like hers. I am proud to serve this organization that enhances opportunities for those with disabilities.

Tameya Duckworth is a Transition Specialist. She was born and raised in Las Vegas. Tameya is the sister of three siblings with disabilities and her family has used PEP’s services for years. Tameya has a passion for working with people and her goal is to connect as many families as possible to resources and information, so that their children can reach their post-secondary goals.
Ashlee Forman is a Transition Specialist in the Satellite office. Ashlee truly believes that every individual has an unrealized potential for growth and that the services she provides to families should maximize that potential. She enjoys the work that she does, helping and teaching families how to advocate for their child. Ashlee uses her unique lived experience to provide understanding and support to the families she serves.

Kendra Gipson joined Nevada PEP as a Family Specialist. Receiving assistance from PEP in the past with understanding IEP’s, effective advocacy, and parents’ rights it ignited a passion to help others. She is enthusiastic about supporting families that have children with special needs so they can reach their full potential in school and in their community.

Suzie Glenn is the Transition Specialist in the Central office. She is the proud mom of three adult children and one adventurous grandson. I wish there had been a Nevada PEP to help me when I was beginning my journey many years ago with my son. I am so fortunate to have the opportunity to help educate and support families during their transition journey.

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 services and help for her children. One of the reasons she came to PEP was to learn more about advocacy. Joanna liked that PEP 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.
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 Nevada 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.

Ryley Harris is the Youth Mentor at Nevada PEP in the Las Vegas office. Ryley is a native Nevadan and enjoys engaging youth through shared lived experience and is passionate about reducing stigma around mental health. He is committed to sharing the youth voice to and helping other youth develop advocacy skills to make positive changes in the systems that serve youth.

Michele Jennings is the Information and Training Specialist; she was born in San Francisco, and is a proud US Army Veteran who 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.

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

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Sara Nunez is the Program Accountability Manager in the Satellite office. She is a proud mother of a 13 year old teenager. Sara loves being a part of an organization that empowers, educates and encourages families to become their child’s best advocate. As part of the administration department, her role is to make sure the office runs smoothly by helping out in different departments that make up the organization.

Kathryn McKay is an Information and Training Specialist. She is a proud Mom of three children; two of whom are attending college, and the youngest in high school. She started her journey with Nevada PEP as a volunteer, and quickly fell in love with the organization and the amazing work that PEP does for families and their children. Kathryn is passionate about helping others and is excited to be working at Nevada PEP helping families like hers.

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 sixteen 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.

Sky Prince is a Family Support Specialist and the mother of one brilliant son with Asperger’s Syndrome. Sky has always been passionate about helping others and getting support for those who are underrepresented. Sky thoroughly enjoys working at Nevada PEP because she loves that she gets to support families in becoming their own best advocates. In her free time she likes to read, hike, and travel.
Robin Renshaw is a native of Las Vegas. “I’ve been with Nevada PEP for nineteen years as a Transition Specialist, and I’m looking forward to nineteen 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.

Nicole Rush is the Program Accountability 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.

Dan Sapp is a Family Specialist and a proud father of six children, two with disabilities. Dan is passionate about educating families and helping them to work through different systems. As a parent, he understands how important it is for families to have support and resources. He is privileged to be able to support families as they advocate for their children.
Brittney Young is a Family Specialist in the satellite office. She is the proud mom of a silly and outgoing 7 year old son with Autism and Sensory Processing Disorder. She enjoys connecting with families, sharing information & resources and encouraging families to be the best advocate they can be for their children. Brittney’s family has lived in the Reno area for over a decade which makes her passionate about her local community. Brittany enjoys helping families and making a positive difference in their lives.

Chad Uhl is the proud father of a flourishing fifteen-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.”

Dani Schexnayder is a Family Specialist. She has two wonderful boys and a husband in the military. She came to Nevada PEP feeling alone and felt like no one was listening when having problems with her son’s school. Nevada PEP was the first place to actually listen to her and offered so much help. Dani is excited to have the opportunity to make a difference and help other families as she was helped.

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 fifteen years. Kenny’s goal is to Educate, Empower, and Encourage people to be their best advocate.
In early March Nevada PEP’s Statewide Family Network attended the 32nd Annual Research & Policy Conference on Child, Adolescent, and Young Adult Behavioral Health with our DCFS System of Care Partners. Since 1988, this annual conference has been a leader in promoting the development of the research base essential to improved service systems for children and youth with mental health challenges and their families. At this year’s conference Nevada PEP’s Executive Director, Karen Taycher was honored to present alongside our System of Care partners, Beverly Burton and Elizabeth Christenson and Dr. Eric Bruns on lessons learned implementing high fidelity wraparound in Nevada.

In September 2019, Nevada PEP was the organization picked to be the recipient for the Celebrity Spin Zone on the FOX5 MORE show. Nevada PEP is honored to be recognized by Findlay Automotive. The Celebrity Spin Zone raised over $7,500 for Nevada PEP! Thank you Findlay Automotive for your continued support.
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.

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:

5,648

By: Catherine Godenzi - VIP Volunteer

Nevada PEP is an organization that helps families with their children. I have been volunteering for many years on a weekly basis. I love to help out in any way I can because it is so rewarding to complete a variety of tasks and projects. I am sharpening my reading, writing and organizational skills all while making new friends and being a part of something good.

There is always something to do at PEP and I have learned so many new things like filing, labeling and helping with bulk mail. I appreciate the opportunity to volunteer in such a welcoming environment. My socialization has improved as I have grown much more comfortable working in collaboration with other awesome volunteers in the office. The atmosphere at PEP is always so positive. My communication skills are so much better and my confidence level has soared. If you are looking for a great organization to volunteer go to PEP, I know you’re going to love it as much as I do. Call or go online to sign-up.
I am honored to write this letter of support for Nevada PEP. The “Hand in Hand, Together We Can” appreciation program was established in 2002 with the important mission to make a difference in the lives of children with special needs.

I have a high regard for the dedicated PEP staff, for the Hand in Hand program, and the tremendous individuals who freely donate their time, knowledge, skillset, and join in community outreach to facilitate and assist this important mission. Your work provides opportunities to change lives. I have witnessed firsthand how small acts of giving and local advocacy can ripple outward to uplift our communities. I commend PEP for the work it has done.

Thank you and congratulations to this year’s recipients of the “Hand In Hand Together We Can” Awards. Your contribution to improving the lives of families and children in our communities is inspiring and critical to the organization’s success.

Sincerely,

AARON D. FORD
Attorney General
I am honored to write this letter of support for the 2019 Hand in Hand Together We Can Yearbook. I have followed the work of Nevada Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) and have always been inspired by their mission and accomplishments within our community.

Families who have children with disabilities face challenges most people do not or cannot understand. PEP’s ability to not only connect these parents with each other but with much-needed resources is extraordinary. They truly take the time to educate, encourage and provide support whenever they can. I commend them for their unwavering passion and commitment.

It has been a pleasure for me to watch PEP grow and prosper in our community since the early 1990’s and I am grateful for all they have done and continue to do for the children of the great state of Nevada.

Sincerely,

Barbara K. Cegavske
Nevada Secretary of State
The Las Vegas community came out to celebrate unity, and bullying prevention with Nevada PEP at the 9th Annual Run Walk Roll Against Bullying event. Findlay Automotive Group, was the presenting Corporate Sponsor of the Run Walk Roll against Bullying 2019.

The event kicked off with Board Chairperson Bryce Loveland welcoming everyone with his opening comments. Amber Dixon, anchor at Channel 3 did an awesome job emceeing the event. This event is in partnership with the National Bullying Prevention Center. Governor, Sisolak proclaimed October as Nevada’s National Bullying Prevention Month.

Chance from the Vegas Golden Knight’s was this year’s Grand Marshal. Tyler Corder, CFO of Findlay Automotive Group was this year’s Front Runner recipient. Tyler has been the voice of Findlay Automotive Group and a positive influence in the community. Findlay Automotive Group has supported this event since its inception.

With the continued support of Findlay dealerships and outstanding Community Partners we were able to invite 34 schools. Students and Families were in high spirits as they began to line up for the walk. Everyone was excited wearing their anti-bullying t-shirts, it was a sea of blue t-shirts. The mascots were outstanding high fiving and taking pictures with participants was the highlight of the morning.

Nevada PEP Governing Board Member Trish Leavitt, the Event Chairperson, worked diligently from start to finish to ensure the event was a magnificent success, the ongoing support of Board Member Regent Sam Lieberman, and Rita Varney, for being on the planning committee sharing their ideas made the event a huge hit! Staff and Volunteers from Grand Canyon University, Young Men’s Service League and Nellis AFB worked hard to manage the many volunteer stations. A big shout out to our outstanding community partners who continue to support us each year and help to raise awareness in our community.

Thank you, to each and everyone who contributed and supported this remarkable event, without YOU this would not have been possible.

See you next year!!

Remember the END of Bullying begins with YOU!
Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers for their time, dedication and support. We couldn’t have done it without you!

Thank you for sponsoring all the goodie bags!

Trish & Andy Leavitt
Robert F. Purdy Esq.
Suzy & Harley Nichols
Chonie & Robert Marshall

A heartfelt gratitude to our community businesses who have shown their dedication to bullying prevention by donating goods to our raffle.

Raffle Sponsors

Albertsons
AMC Promenade Theatre
American Legion
Axe Monkey
Bahama Breeze
Bearizona
Buca Di Beppo
Cheesecake Factory
Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf
Galaxy Theaters
Grimaldi’s Pizza
Impact Archery
Imperial Wine

Las Vegas Ice Center
Las Vegas Mini Grand Prix
Lowe’s
Margarita’s
Michael Boychuck
Northface
Olive Garden
Paradise Ranch
Pole Position Raceway
Reflexology Relief
Rogue Toys
Royce Chocolate

Sea Quest
Smart and Final
Southwest Airlines
Sportsman’s Warehouse
Springs Preserve
Sprouts
Supercuts
Target
Texas Roadhouse
Trader Joe’s
UNLV
Vegas Cause Players Alliance
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!
LAURIE ADAMS
Case Worker

Laurie has helped me so much with my daughter. She went above and beyond looking for community resources and services. Laurie was very efficient and was there for me when I needed help or anything else. I appreciate all the help she gave my family. Laurie is very good at her job and was excellent when it came to making my family feel secure. I miss her being my caseworker.

SOLEDAD CARRENO
Mom

CLAUDIA ALCANTAR
Parent

My mom has been of great help to my family and I. She is there when we need her even though she lives in another state. She is always available to speak to and deescalate the rough moments my son has from time to time. My mom is a very positive motivator for my son. I can reach out to her for whatever I need or if I just need a listening ear. I love her and appreciate her for all she does.

ALEXANDRA ALCANTAR
Mom

MANUEL ALCANTAR
Paraprofessional Aide

My dad is our biggest support. Not only does he motivate my son to do better, he also actively listens to him when he is upset. My Dad not only helps us financially, but also offers us emotional support when we need it. My son developed a love for soccer when my Dad became my son’s coach and it has created a bond between both of them. My Dad is willing to work with him and offer positive reinforces for a good day and a job well done.

DEBBI BLOCK
School Counselor

I would like to thank Ms. Debbi Block for all she has done for my son. As his high school counselor, she has been so supportive and a true cheerleader for him. She is on top of everything and always has helpful suggestions. His high school experience has been better because of Ms. Block. From the bottom of my heart, thank you.

LISA LEVITON
Mom
CHRISTOPHER BORSELLINO  
**Therapist**

I would like to nominate my son’s Speech Therapist, Mr. Borsellino. He has been a great support for him and has taught us that we can trust people outside our family. He not only does his work but he does it whole heartedly. That’s why my son likes his therapies with Mr. B.

Quisiera nominar al Terapista de Lenguaje de mi hijo. Él ha sido un gran apoyo y le ha enseñado que se puede confiar en las personas que no son familia. El no solo hace su trabajo, sino que lo hace con el Corazón. Por eso me a mi hijo le gusta trabajar con Mr. B.

MARCELA/EDWARD ROBLES  
**Mom/Son**

MARIBETH BURT  
**Professional**

Mrs. Burt has worked so hard to keep my son on track and help him see his own potential. She has taken him under her wing in choir class and has been such a big help in getting him to be more positive about school. Ms. Burt helps my son by holding him accountable and responsible for the choices and the actions that he takes. Thank You Ms. Burt!

LISA BENOIT  
**Mom**

MANUEL F. CANO  
**Sibling**

Manuel is my daughter’s twin brother. Even though he is the younger of the two, he helps and supports her. He has a way of pushing her out of her comfort zone. He is his sister’s biggest fan.

ANGELLIKA D. CANO  
**Mom**

CARDENAS FONG FAMILY  
**Friends**

I would like to thank this great family who loves my son very much. They accept him without seeing his disability, always looking out for his well-being. I appreciate all the love and affection they show him. To the Cardenas Fong Family, my son is a great warrior.

A esta gran familia les doy las gracias por querer tanto a mi hijo y lo han aceptado sin ver su discapacidad. Siempre se han preocupado por él y miran por su bienestar. Les agradezco todo el cariño que le demuestran siempre. Para ellos, mi hijo es un gran guerrero.

MARCELA ROBLES  
**Mom**
**BENHUR CARDONA**  
*DRC*

Benhur has supported us during family meetings through DRC. He is always there when we ask for support. He looks out for my son’s well-being and provides us with community information. He is available to give us information about my son’s future needs and supports us during IEP meetings. Benhur provides us with all that is necessary to advocate for my son’s future. Thank You!

Benhur nos a ayuda en juntas a través de DRC. Siempre nos acompañado a las junta, está pendiente del progreso de mi hijo y nos proporciona información. Él nos proporciona con información de lo que mi hijo va a necesitar en el futuro y nos apoya en las juntas de IEP. Benhur siempre nos ofrece la ayuda necesaria para abogar por el futuro de mi hijo. Muchas Gracias!

**ROCIO DELGADO**  
*Mom*

**URSUS CARDOSO SUAREZ**  
*Professional*

My son was diagnosed with muscle weakness when he was born. I was told that he would not be able to do “normal” things like other kids. No one wanted to give him a chance or work with him. One day, we met Ursus, he gave me hope and offered to work with my son.

He provided aquatic therapy to help with the tension in his muscles. My son improved with his social skills and has learned how to swim and float in water. Thank you Ursus!

A mi hijo le diagnosticaron debilidad muscular desde que nació. Me dijeron que no sería capaz de hacer cosas “normales” como otros niños. Nadie quería darle una oportunidad o trabajar con el. Un día conocimos a Ursus, el me dio esperanza y se ofreció a trabajar con mi hijo. Brindo terapia acuática para ayudar con la tensión de sus músculos. Mi hijo mejoró con las habilidades sociales y aprendió a nadar y flotar en el agua. Gracias Ursus!

**MARIA DEL CARMEN MOLINA**  
*Mom*

**ALEXANDRA CARTER**  
*Teacher*

My grandson had the good fortune to have Ms. Carter as his first grade teacher. She talked to his kindergarten teacher to get advice on how to best handle my grandson. Ms. Carter kept in contact with me about my grandson’s behavior and grades. He thrived in Ms. Carter’s class. He even received a Certificate of Personal Success for reading and math. Ms. Carter, thank you for all that you do! You’re appreciated.

**RUBY LARA-LEON**  
*Grandmother*
KAREN CASTANEDA
WIN Facilitator

Karen has helped me get the services my son needed when he was being treated at one of the centers here in the community. She has helped me coordinate services with DRC. Karen will send me emails to ask how I’m doing and is always on top of everything. I appreciate all the help she has given me for my son. She is always there when I am going through difficult times. Thank you Karen.

SOLEDAD CARRENO
Mom

CHALLENGER LITTLE LEAGUE

I would like to nominate Challenger Little League of Southern Nevada for this award to commemorate twenty-eight years of excellence. I’m proud to have grown up with this extraordinary team of individuals who positively enriched my life and the lives of countless others. I look forward to each and every game. It absolutely warms my heart and fills my soul with joy to help players find the same motivating, uplifting, and inspiration that has empowered me throughout the years. I want to say a hug thank-you to this special and unique league as another successful season comes to a close. I am happy and confident that Challenger will transcend into the future for many more generations.

KEDNY TAYCHER
Coach

CARMEN CHAVARRIA
Therapist

For more than a year now, Carmen has worked with my son giving him ABA therapy at the Lovaas Center. I have noticed very positive changes in my child’s behavior during this time. She does her job with responsibility and love for children. She is a person with tremendous knowledge in ABA therapies.

Gloria Torres
Flores
Mom

CAROL CHERRY
Nurse Practitioner

It is a refreshing experience to meet a service provider who genuinely makes a remarkable difference in the life of a special child; a person who actually restores some faith in an imperfect system. Someone with great skills and vast knowledge of her life’s work, who makes an immediate connection with her patients, instantly instilling confidence; a person whose positive spirit lights up the room when she enters. Carol Cherry, nurse practitioner at Doctor’s Center is one such person. We were a weary family searching for answers when we told Carol of how impossible it was to get lab work done on my son with autism. We explained how important these tests were to accomplish since he was taking medicines for many years. He is nonverbal and unable to reveal even the slightest changes in his health. We voiced our concerns. She listened, she heard, and she acted. Carol scheduled the procedure without hesitation and with the help of her capable staff accomplished the miracle we needed for so long. We honor her with this prestigious award for her dedication and lifesaving approach to her work.

Diane Lombardo & Family
Mom
Nethanya is my children’s therapist who comes to my home. With her support, we have grown as a family, we are able to communicate amongst each other and we are better equipped to resolve behavioral issues. Nethanya has helped us see the potential in our children; we can now set long term and day to day goals. Thank you Nethanya!

Nethanya es la terapeuta de mis hijos que viene a mi casa. Con su apoyo, hemos crecido como familia, somos capaces de comunicarnos entre sí y estamos mejor equipados para resolver problemas de comportamiento. Nethanya nos ha ayudado a ver el potencial en nuestros hijos; ahora podemos establecer metas a largo plazo y metas diarias. Gracias Nethanya!

Isaura Lagunas Tamayo
Mom

Javier Curiel
Dad

Javier is my son’s dad. He stands by his side in the moments that my son needs help the most. Always supporting him, listening and speaking to him with words that he needs to hear. Javier is great at making our son feel strong.

Javier es el papa de mi hijo. Él siempre ha estado a su lado en los momentos en que más lo necesita, apoyándolo, escuchándolo y diciéndole las palabras que él necesita escuchar. Lo acompaña y lo hace sentir fuerte.

Leticia Segoviano
Mom
JAVIER VIDAL CURIEL
Son

Vidalito is my oldest son. He always helps his younger brother with dilemmas that arise at school with his peers. He gives his brother the best advice possible to move forward with the situation. Now, his brother enjoys going out with him to the movies and other places because he feels comfortable and protected. My son has taught his brother to express his feelings and thoughts.

Vidalito es mi hijo mayor. El siempre ayuda a su hermano menor con cada problema que se le presenta con sus compañeros en la escuela. Le da los mejores consejos para poder salir adelante. Ahora, mis hijos disfrutan mucho de ir al cine junto. Su hermano se siente protegido y confortable. Mi hijo ha logrado que su hermano se exprese mucho más.

LETCIA SEGOVIANO
Mom

SHAE LYNN DANIELS
Teacher

Shae Lynn is my cousin and a teacher. She not only has the kindest heart, but she would do anything to help anyone. She is a Special Education teacher that works with kids who have multiple special needs in early childhood at Desert Heights Elementary School. She has been teaching kids for over 15 years and she does it with pure love, a caring heart and commitment. Often, she is in her classroom on the weekends working on assignments and other things for her class. She spends late hours at home, working on projects and getting ready for IEP meetings. She comes up with creative ways to help her students learn, often times without the support of an aid. Shae Lynn also helps with my son who has a disability. She is an amazing and compassionate person.

SHANNON ASHE
Mom

ELAINE DAYON
Teacher

We volunteer at Nevada PEP every week and there is always so much to do. We are learning to do work that we’ve never done before. The volunteer coordinator is so good to us. She has made our lives good by giving us the chance to help out in so many ways. We are a mother and daughter team and requested to work on separate projects to gain some individual independence. PEP projects are provided to I truly appreciate Elaine for helping my son when he was at B. Mathis ES. My son came home each day happy and eager to show me all his classwork, I have never seen him so happy and excited about school. Thank you for helping him and motivating him when he was in your classroom.

MONICA PAREDES
Mom
ERIN DORNAN
Professional

When my husband and I were going to school to become Foster/Adoptive parents, we had a guest speaker at one of the classes. It was Erin, the founder of TIES for Families. She explained how TIES for Families could support us throughout the adoption process. We went to a TIES class and it was the best decision we could have made. We contacted them as soon as we started visitations with our son. Erin was our therapist and I don’t know what we would have done without her. She was with us through thick and thin and we were honored to have her in the courtroom on adoption day. I believe that people come into our lives for a reason, season or a lifetime. Thank you Erin for the season of love and support you gave our family. All our Love,

THE LEVITON FAMILY
Steve, Lisa and Brian

HEATHER DUCKSWORTH
Mom

This nomination is for my mother Heather. She is the strongest, kindest and most selfless person I know. My mom has 5 kids and 3 of them have disabilities. Although all of her kids are out of school now, when they were in school she was the best advocate for them. No matter what, she always went to bat for her children to ensure they were getting proper services, a good education and fair treatment. It is difficult to raise kids while also dealing with the challenges of special education and simultaneously working, taking care of a family and juggling a personal life. My mom did it well and made it look easy. For that I am forever grateful for the person she is and what she has done for her children.

TAMEYA DUCKSWORTH
Daughter

TAMEYA DUCKSWORTH
Bullying Prevention Specialist

I came to Nevada PEP after my son was being bullied at school and in the neighborhood. The school would not work with me and Tameya was a big help. She helped me understand my son’s rights and was there when we felt lost. She is knowledgeable and compassionate. She always gives me resources and is a big reason my son is doing well. I know I can always call her for support and she will help me. Thank you Tameya, we appreciate you.

JACQUELINE QUINTANA
Mom

SHANNON PAYEUR
Dance Instructor

I have never seen a more patient dance instructor as Shannon Payeur. My daughter has been in her program since she was just 2 years old and Shannon has always been patient with her. She always manages to reel her back into the class and my daughter is always
able to put on a great performance at the recital; knowing every move and dance step. Shannon, I just want to thank you for all the patience and time you have dedicated to my daughter. You’re truly amazing!

JENNIFER ROLLS
Mother

SANDRA DUDLEY
Catechist

My son is a bundle of pure joy and energy, think Tigger from Winnie the Pooh. School can be very challenging for Tiggers and we have faced many of them. But it turns out that they are welcomed at St. Elizabeth Anne Seaton Faith Formation classroom. From the start, Ms. Sandra has made my son feel welcomed and included. In the 2 years my son has been there, Ms. Sandra has been patient, kind, understanding and encouraging. She sees the very best in everyone, never gets crossed when you laugh out loud or too shy to speak. Ms. Sandra’s kind soft spoken manner draws children in and class is always fun and exciting. She exhibits all the best virtues we hope to impart on our children. We are so lucky to have her and we would like her to know how special she is to us. Thank you Ms. Sandra!

KRISTI SIRCHER
Mom

KATE FAULKNER
Elementary School Teacher

I would like to Miss. Faulkner from Tate Elementary; she was my son’s 4th grade teacher. When my children and I moved to Nevada, we had several challenges. My son was having a hard time adjusting to a new environment, making new friends, with his parents’ divorce, and also his ADHD. I can’t remember how many times I had to go to school to pick up my son, because of his behavior. When we finally met Miss Faulkner my son’s life quickly turned around. Instead of being quick to punish, she showed empathy, understanding, and support, and in turn, my son started to improve in his social and personal life within months. My son is in 10th grade now, he still talks about Miss Faulkner and the impact she made in his life. We will always be grateful for her passion and dedication in making a difference in my son’s life. We miss her and love her very much.

DEXTER AND MAGDALENA
Mom

WILLAMAE FELDER
Mom

I am nominating myself. I was told that I didn’t give myself enough credit. Six years ago I had a baby, I was told he had a disability when he was one. At that time, I had already spent four years working with adults and children with disabilities. I love what I do. It has taught me how to manage hurdles I face with my own child. I will forever be a caregiver at heart. I wouldn’t change the way I take care of my baby or the many individuals I have cared for, for anything in the world.

WILLAMAE FELDER
Caregiver
GEORGINA FONTEIN
Professional

Georgina went above and beyond to address the mental health needs of my daughter in Residential Treatment. Not only did she advocate for my daughter, she advocated for my involvement in all the processes and decisions as her mother. Georgina is a constant and clear communicator, insightful and caring professional, always hard-working and consistently available. Georgina navigated our often tumultuous emotional terrain with grace and compassion, offering gentle but forward guidance which precipitated major breakthroughs and a plan for continued work. She played a crucial role in getting our family on a path towards wellness, and out of the path of chaos, crisis and hopelessness. Georgina, from the bottom of our hearts, thank you.

JAMIE SULLARD
Mother

but has never stopped having faith in God and continues pushing forward. Maria has always been our son's best advocate and defender. She has never given up in looking for resources and services to obtain the necessary help for our son. Without her, the progress in our child would have not been possible. I admire everything she does. Maria, thank you for everything that you do for us!

PEDRO ZARATE CHAVARIN
Esposo

AMYSUE GLASZ
Teacher

My son was in fourth grade and had Mrs. Glasz as a teacher. I have never met a teacher that would take their time to tutor and help a child succeed the way she did. She helped my son on her personal time. She motivated my son to be the best that he could be. We need more teachers like her. She was a major positive influence in my son’s school journey.

HILDA HARRISON
Mom

I would like to nominate Maria. Maria is my wife and the mother of my child who has autism. Maria has taken care of our son since he was born; from his studies, to his health, and everything else in general. She looked for help, such as therapy sessions and resources for our son. She has been ignored, rejected,
DOUGLAS GRANDSTAFF
Teacher

Mr. Grandstaff has a quiet Zen like manner. He likes kids, he likes his students and they like him. He never raises his voice or gets angry with his students. Even though my son is a bundle of energy, Mr. Grandstaff immediately took him under his wing. He always has a smile on his face and he doesn’t sweat the small stuff. He inspires his students to live up to the ideals of Super Heroes, asking if they are ready to be the most awesome. Some people have infinite patience, kind hearts and those are the people that make the best teachers. I know that every success my son has had this year is because of the foundation that Mr. Grandstaff built last year. I could not be more grateful to him for cheering my son on every day. Thank You Mr. Grandstaff.

KRISTI SIRCHER
Mom

PAMELA GRAY
Teacher

I want to personally thank Ms. Gray for helping me with my son. I appreciate the support she has given him in academics and for showing him positive strategies. Both of these have helped him in more ways than you could imagine! Thank you for everything you do!

MARIA PADILLA
Mom

JON GUAJARDO
Teacher

I want to say a special thank you to my son’s teacher, Mr. Jon. He goes above and beyond to look for different learning styles to help my son learn and stay focused in class. He is also very patient with my son and I truly appreciate that. His patience has helped my son not to hate school the way he used to. I just want to thank Mr. Jon for understanding my son’s disability. I cannot express what a great teacher he has been to my son. Thank you so much Mr. Jon!

KAREN RAMIREZ
Mom

ROBIN HARGETT
Physical Therapist

Robin is the Physical Therapist that comes to my home for my daughter’s therapy. She is always thinking of different exercises that will benefit her. She introduces her to new techniques and challenges her to do better. Robin finds ways for my daughter to achieve goals set for her even if it means changing the routine. She and my daughter hold conversations during therapy like two old friends talking about their day. But the interaction that I love the most is the laughter I hear during her therapy sessions. Robin, we have spent many days together, there has been many difficult times but we have seen the accomplishments in my daughter. We are eternally grateful to you. You have showed us that you are not only a true professional but also a valuable human being.

OLALLA AGUILAR
Mom
**FELICIA HAYES**  
*Teacher*

I nominate Ms. Hayes for the great teacher and mentor that she is. She has been of great help not only to me but to my family as well. She’s been helping us for so many years. She makes sure that we are always on our prime with our grades and attendance in the best way that she can. Ms. Hayes gives us tips on how to take care of our family. In our time of need, she has been there to support us, showing us right from wrong and helping us with our homework and projects. Whenever we have an event, she is there to support us. We know that with her, we have a shoulder to cry on and someone to talk to. She started out as a teacher but now she is family.

**ROSA莉A GOMEZ**  
*Mom and Daughter*

**ROBIN HARGETT**  
*Occupational Therapist*

Aliza has been my daughter’s Occupational Therapist since she started school. She will set goals for my daughter to achieve and it shows in all the advances that my daughter has made. One of the memorable moments that I have of her great work is when I received a handwritten note that said that it was written by my daughter. She did it all by herself! I felt so much happiness that I stared at that note for days. Thank you Aliza for teaching my daughter all the skills that she has accomplished and for helping her to be self-assured so she can have the same opportunities in life as others. I am thankful that you were put in my daughter’s life to make a difference. Thank you again for the dedication to your work, your patience and for implementing new methods to maximize my daughter’s potential. I will forever be thankful.

Aliza a sido la terapista de mi hija desde que entro a la escuela. Aliza le pone a mi hija nuevos retos y su constancce y buen trabajo se ve en los avances que mi hija a tenido. Uno de los momentos mas memorables que tengo del trabajo de ella fue cuando recibí un papel que decia, “esta es la letra de su hija”. Lo hizo sola! Me senti muy feliz! Admire la nota con su letra por muchos dias despues. Muchas gracias

**OLALLA AGUILAR**  
*Mom*

**MS. MICHELLE HICKEY**  
*Teacher*

My son has various disabilities. Ms. Hickey has the patience to help him and love him as well. From day one, she has not given up on him and thanks to her, my son has made may advances. My son has told my husband and I how nice she is and how comfortable he is with her and that she is the teacher he would pick to nominate. If my son could pick his teacher each year, it would be Ms. Hickey.  
So, with that being said, we know that our son is in great hands.

**EUNICE RIVERA**  
*Parents*

**SHANNON HOLMAN**  
*Therapist*

Shannon makes a difference in the lives of children every day. My son has been working with her since he was two years old – he is now ten! He has made amazing progress. Not only is she an exceptional occupational therapist who truly cares about her kids. She also works with them on social emotional development. She has gone above and beyond to help kids in her care, and has even attended IEP meetings with us. She has been a blessing to our son, family, and all the children who are lucky enough to work with her.

**MANDI BLACK**  
*Mom*
**STEPHANIE HOULE**  
*Fiancée*

My fiancée has been an amazing mother to her daughter with a disability. She has been going to college, working a job, taking extra care of doctor appointments, and her daughter’s extracurricular activities for several years. This last year she graduated with her specialist degree and is currently working in the school district. Not only has she educated herself, family, and me on disabilities, but she has moved into a career helping parents who have children in similar circumstances. She is a loving caring person and I consider her a role model in the community. I look forward to us getting married and taking the journey of life with her and her daughter.

**CHAD UHL**  
*Fiancé*

**LAUREEN JAMES**  
*Professional*

Laureen is an exceptional person. She is passionate about her job and helping people. She is a great human being that words are short to describe her. I really appreciate all the support and above all else I would like to thank her for all she does for my family, especially for my son, Thank you for the moral support and may God always bless you and your team.

Laureen es una persona excepcional. Ella tiene mucha pasión por lo que hace. Es un gran ser humano. Mis palabras son cortas, podría yo continuar con muchas más. Realmente aprecio todo el apoyo, sobre todo, gracias por todo lo que ha hecho por mi familia, especialmente por mi hijo. Gracias por todo el apoyo moral y que Dios los bendiga siempre a ti y al equipo.

**ROSALIA GOMEZ**  
*Mom*

**RICH LABRECQUE**  
*Teacher*

I would like to nominate my son’s teacher, Mr. LaBrecque. He is very patient with my son and he gets along with him. I know that my son struggles in school. I really appreciate all the help and support he has provided for my son. I would like to thank him so much for his time and support.

**WHITNEY MCINTYRE**  
*Daughter*

**LYNN KERR**  
*WIN Supervisor*

I would like to thank Lynn for referring us to Nevada PEP. She has helped us find resources in our community. She would visit us every week to offer my family support in what we needed. Lynn is a very nice person and a professional at her job. Thank you Lynn!

Quiero darle las gracias a Lynn por referirnos a Nevada PEP. Ella nos ayudó a buscar recursos en nuestra comunidad. Lynn nos visitaba cada semana para apoyarnos en nuestras necesidades de familia. Ella es muy Buena gente y muy profesional. Gracias Lynn!

**CHRISTINE JONES BRADY**  
*Mom*

My mother has four children; three of her four children has a disability. In school, I would struggle in math and science. When the school wouldn’t help me or my brothers get the resources that was needed, my mother would go to the school and advocate for our education. When my younger brother was at risk due to his disability, my mother stood solidly at his side and made sure he had all resources, therapy and rehabilitation that was needed. I am successful because my mother taught me the importance of advocating for myself and my disability.

**MARIA PADILLA**  
*Mom*
LYLE MARHENKE
Teacher

There are so many nice things I can say about Mr. Lyle Marhenke. He is kind, generous, and amazingly patient. He has worked hard with my son and has helped him exceed. My son has Autism and Mr. Marhenke is his Special Education Teacher. Luckily, Mr. Marhenke has been there to help my son with his transition skills and is now mostly in general education classroom. My son is excelling and now is in the gifted and talented program. He is moving on to middle school next year and I know my son and I will miss him. Thank you so much Mr. Marhenke!

SKY PRINCE
Mom

ANTHONY MARISA
Husband

Anthony es el padrastro de mi hijo. El tiene la paciencia para enseñarle a estudiar con calma y tranquilidad. El lo hace con mucho amor pero con la autoridad de un padre que mi hijo no a tenido. Anthony es nuestra armonía y nuestra paz. Eso es lo que el nos ensena en casa. La llegada de el a nuestras vidas a sido una bendicion.

Anthony is my son’s Step-Dad. He has the patience to help him learn and he does it in a calm and tranquil way. Anthony helps him with love but with the authority of the father that my son has never had. Anthony is our peace and harmony and this is what he teaches us here at home. The arrival of his presence into our lives has been a blessing to us.

YURIDIA GARCIA
Wife

BARBARA MASON
Teacher

I am so appreciative of my son’s 2nd grade teacher Ms. Mason. She worked tirelessly to support and teach my son. She was patient and understanding of his needs, and if she didn’t know something she always took the time to research it and become more knowledgeable of his disability and how she could help him. Ms. Mason was a great advocate and a voice for my son when he didn’t have one. She continued to be inclusive with my son and other students while keeping him safe when I was afraid to send him to school. Ms. Mason was so helpful to my family and I. She is a model teacher and more school staff should be like her. Thank you Ms. Mason! You have made an everlasting impact on us.

AMANDA WARREN
Mom

MADISON MCHALEY
Professional

Ms. Madison is very patient and hands on with our son. She makes an effort to teach my son new ways for him to communicate with people. Ms. Madison makes sure that my son gets all the help and one on one time that is needed for him to be more productive and active.

LEANDRE MCINTYRE
Dad

ROSY AND LIBRADO NUNEZ
Friends

I would like to thank Rosy and Librado for all the help and support they have given me and my daughter. From the beginning, they so generously offered to take us to Doctor’s appointments, hospital visits and any other trip that was necessary for my daughter, without caring about the amount of time that was spent sitting and waiting. They are always looking
out for my daughter’s well-being. I am thankful that they are in our lives and for being my daughter’s Godparents. Rosy and Librado are very important people to us, especially for my daughter. Thank You!

Yo quiero agradecer a Rosy Y Librado por la ayuda que le han brindado a mi hija. Desde aquellos tiempos cuando con toda su voluntad, ustedes me llevaban al hospital o las citas de Doctor, sin importarles el tiempo que ahí pasábamos, siempre al pendiente de mi hija. Le doy gracias a Dios por haber tomado la decisión de escogerlos de padrinos. No nos equivocamos, son unas personas muy importantes para todos nosotros. En especial para mi hija. Gracias por todo.

DORA ESCOBEDO
Mom

COLETTE PARR
Teacher

Ms. Parr was my son’s Pre-K teacher for two years. During that time, she was extremely patient, loving, truly kind and caring towards my son. My son’s behaviors, education, social emotional and communication skills soared during the two years he was in her class. She made a huge impact on my son’s life. My son loves and respects Ms. Parr. The very next year when he started kindergarten, he was very disappointed to find out that he had a new teacher. My family is so grateful for the time Colette was my son’s teacher. We are honored to know her.

DANI SCHEXNAYDER
Mom

VERONICA PEREZ-KAHL
Therapist

Veronica is my son’s therapist. She has a way of making my son feel comfortable and self-assured. She is always ready to help and give the best advice to my son. Veronica has helped my son lift his self-esteem and have more self-control. Thank you!

Veronica es la persona que le da terapias a mi hijo. Ella sabe cómo hacer que mi hijo se sienta mejor y con más seguridad en sí mismo. Siempre está lista para ayudar y dar los mejores consejos y terapia para él. Le ha ayudado muchísimo con su autoestima y a controlar un poco más su carácter, gracias a ti.

LETCIA SEGOVIANO
Mom

DYANTE PERKINS
Intake Coordinator

I would like to honor Dyante Perkins. He has made such a positive difference in my son’s life and has been a true inspiration for him. He never talks down to him or judges him. He has gained my son’s trust which few have been able to do. Dyante and my son share a love for sports and now he has someone to talk to about that. Young men need great role models and Dyante is certainly that. My son still has a way to go but as long as we keep being blessed with people like Dyante helping out, I know my son will make it.

ELIZABETH JONES
Mom

MR. PAUL POWELL
Attorney

I would like to say thank you to a great man. Mr. Powell provided funds for my special shoes. He helped me last Christmas and is helping me again this year. We stood in a long line during Thanksgiving just to meet him and say thank you. Mr. Powell is very generous to the community; he gave out turkeys to families in need. He is very nice and kind. My mom and I are happy to know him and he deserves to be honored.

CHRISTIANA TAYLOR
Nevada PEP Volunteer
SKY PRINCE
Family Specialist

I want to thank Sky so much for her help with my daughter in the IEP process. The things that I learned in the IEP process and what our rights are, helped so much. So far, the school is implementing her IEP and it appears that my daughter is having a much better time. Again, thank you so much for the help and for explaining things so clearly. Without Nevada PEP and Sky’s help, I believe that I would still be struggling with the school regarding my concerns for my daughter.

MORGAN HAYWOOD
Mom

CESAR ROBLES
Dad

My husband has been my son’s number one support in all aspects and is his Superhero. Cesar has been responsible for our son’s care since he was born. He has always been able to teach me to look for the positive things in our son’s life. He devotes 2 days a week for just the two of them; it’s Dad and Son time.

Mi esposo ha sido el soporte número uno de nuestro hijo y es su Súper Héroe. Cesar ha sido muy responsable con todo el proceso desde que nuestro hijo nació. El encuentra la forma de ensenarme a ver el lado positivo en la vida de nuestro hijo. El dedica 2 días completos solo para ellos, días dedicados a papa e hijo.

MARCELA AND EDWARD ROBLES
Mom and Son

MR. STEVEN ROMERO
Teacher

Mr. Romero has helped my son concentrate and focus in class. When he has conversations with him, he also gives him the best advice. Thank you Mr. Romero for your support towards my son and your guidance. For educating and listening to him, because you believed in him, he had the best school year. I hope you are proud of the work that you do. Many Blessings to you.

Isaura Laguna
Mom

MAGDALENA RUIZ
Family Specialist

When I met her, she greeted me with kindness. She spoke to me about Nevada PEP and its process. Magdalena accompanied me to my daughter’s IEP meeting and talked about how best to help her. She’s helped me cope with some obstacles in school. Magdalena is a great contribution and support in our school environment. She has motivated me to continue advocating for my child’s rights.

Al conocerla, Ella me recibió muy amablemente. Me hablo de Nevada PEP y sus procesos. Magdalena me acompaña a la junta de IEP de mi hija y hablo sobre como mejor ayudarla. Me ha ayudado afrontar algunos obstáculos en la escuela. Magdalena es un grand aporte y soporte en nuestro entorno escolar. Me ha motivado a seguir abogando por los derechos de mis hijos.

Angela Turcios
Mom
CARLENE SAN – FILIPPO
Teacher

Carlene started teaching my daughter how to play violin about two months ago. In that time, she has discovered a newfound love for music and her violin. Carlene makes learning and practicing an instrument fun, with silly sounds, tricks, competitions, and games. She’s a superb violinist and also great with children. We feel so fortunate to have crossed paths with Carlene this year.

STEPHANIE HOULE
Mom

DAN SAPP
Family Specialist

We met Dan Sapp through Nevada PEP. My son has been struggling in school with Reading and Comprehension. Dan became a great source of information and support for me while advocating for my son. He took the time to listen to me while I expressed my concerns. With his help and guidance, we were able to get my son’s IEP started right away without any problems. Despite his busy schedule, he offered to attend the initial IEP evaluation meeting with us and he still continues to check in to see how things are going with my son.
Thank you so much, Dan. We appreciate you and I am truly grateful for all the help and support you have given us.

MICHIELLE SCHEIWILLER
Physical Therapist

Michelle has been my daughter’s therapist for the past 2 years. She was the person that taught my daughter how to climb the steps on the slide. When I saw that accomplishment, my heart was so overjoyed that I cried. I became aware of what my daughter can achieve and all the love and patience that Michelle shows when doing her job. She is not only knowledgeable but a visionary and will challenge my daughter because she knows what will benefit her in the future to make her an independent adult. Thank you Michelle for believing in her potential, for your patience and dedication. My family and I will forever be grateful.

MARIA LORENA DOMINGO
Mom

OLALLA AGUILAR
Mom
MARIA SERNA
High School Counselor

I would like to thank Ms. Serna for supporting me and giving me the guidance I needed to help my son. With the information and resources you provided, I was able to get my son the support he needed. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for everything you did to help us! Thank you!

MARIA PADILLA
A Thankful Mom

AMANDA THATCHER
Family Member

I would like to recognize my sister, Amanda! She has been the best moral support to me! She has helped me find my way through my highs and lows of motherhood. She is an amazing aunt, and a brilliant role model to my daughter. I am so thankful the kids and I have her! Thank you sister for your heart of gold!

MALLORY FAIRMAN
Mom

MARCY VOLK
Family Member

I would like to honor my mom, Marcy! She has been such a wonderful person and caregiver not only to me, but my children. She is truly one of a kind, and has always showed us unconditional love. When I have gone through tough times with my daughter, she was always a strong supporter. She is my number one emotional helper, and is always guiding me through this long path of motherhood! Thank you mom!

MALLORY FAIRMAN
Mom

MARISSA WAGENHOFFER
Kids R Kids

My son attended Kids r Kids daycare for about 2 years and Marissa was so caring from the very first time we walked in the door. He started kindergarten in the fall and academically is doing great. Marissa really helped him transition into a day care setting after being home with me for almost 3 years. She always took the time to comfort him so I was able to leave and go to work. Quite often she let him help her at her desk because that was literally the only place he wanted to be when I left. Thank you so much Marissa for taking such good care my son and making me feel like he was in good hands while I was at work.

NICOLE RUSH
Mom
VANAVIA WEATHERLY  
*Teacher*

I want to give this award to Ms. Weatherly. She has helped my son be able to stay at Equipo Academy when no one else wanted to put in the effort. She has gone above and beyond to adjust programs, provide modifications and give my son the accommodations he needs in order to be successful in his classes. Ms. Weatherly has taken the time to make sure the classes are inclusive and that my son is not left out of anything. I want to thank her for being the reason my son is able to get his education at a school he loves.

ELVIRA BRAMBILA  
*Mom*

MS. WEBB  
*Adult Assistant*

Ms. Webb is my daughter’s one-on-one aid for Kindergarten at Signature Preparatory School. This is our first year having an aide and we were a bit apprehensive but very optimistic. Ms. Webb quickly made all our apprehensions disappear and she has become a vital asset in our lives. My daughter gets so excited going to school when she sees Ms. Webb, her hands start moving and verbally starts to giggle and vocalize. Ms. Webb has become not only a friend and ally to us, but she is truly our daughter’s advocate throughout the day. She is my daughter’s voice, legs, heart and support in all ways possible as she navigates through her day to day activities. We are very blessed to have her in our lives.

MARY ELLEN YATES  
*Speech/Language Pathologist*

Mary Ellen has helped our son to accomplish academic goals during school over the last few years. She always says wonderful things about our son, boosting his confidence and he enjoys his time with her as well. This alone speaks volumes considering his ASD. We really appreciate Mary Ellen.

TANYA HINER  
*Mom*

REBECCA WOODWARD  
*Babysitter*

I would like to give thanks to my babysitter, Rebecca! She has been a major help! My husband and I truly appreciate her! The kids always look forward to seeing her. My daughter can have some difficult moments, and she has been supportive and understanding of my daughter’s needs.

MALLORY FAIRMAN  
*Mom*

NANCY SILVA  
*Mom*
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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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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.