



# VOICES of SSAN

Statewide  
Self Advocacy Network

September 2017

Volume 10

## Meet new SSAN Member

### Wesley Witherspoon USC UCEDD

Wesley Witherspoon is the SSAN representative for the USC UCEDD. Wesley did not talk until he was 4 years old. He attended Special Education classes up to 11<sup>th</sup> grade. He also was involved with traditional

the year of 2001. Wesley worked with the USC UCEDD since 2006. Wesley has met thousands of self-advocates in the state of California. Wesley's responsibility at USC UCEDD is to conduct research, education, and trainings that is important to participants who receive services at the regional center. Wesley writes out reports and papers to the USC UCEDD. Wesley goes to self-advocacy groups in the Los Angeles Area to ask about their needs so Wesley can implement possible changes to the system. Wesley was nominated for the Humanism Award for Children's Hospital of Los Angeles (CHLA) in 2013.

Wesley also attended the People First Conference, **(Continued on page 2- WW)**

classes when going to school. He received a high school diploma, and attended El Camino College and received an AA degree in General Studies. He graduated with a BS degree in Psychology from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.

Wesley started to work with people with disabilities in

*Newsletter of the  
Statewide Self  
Advocacy Network  
(SSAN)*



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For more information on SSAN see [www.scdd.ca.gov](http://www.scdd.ca.gov) website under self-advocacy.

SSAN Newsletter Editor and contributor-Robert Levy (UC Davis MIND/UCEDD)

#### Contributors to this edition:

- Chen Curtiss
- Paul Mansell
- Teresa Moshier
- Nicole Patterson
- Wesley Witherspoon

## SSAN Members



- **Charles Adams**  
North Coast
- **Teresa Moshier**  
North State
- **Lisa Cooley**  
Sacramento
- **Chen Curtiss**  
North Bay
- **Regina Woodliff**  
Bay Area
- **Robert Balderama**  
North Valley Hills
- **Vacant**  
Central Coast
- **Rebecca Donabed**  
Sequoia
- **Julie Gaona**  
Los Angeles
- **Vacant**  
Orange County
- **Daniel Foust**  
San Bernardino
- **Paul Mansell**  
San Diego Imperial
- **Desiree Boykin**  
ARCA
- **Christina Mills**  
CFILC
- **Nicole Patterson**  
DDS
- **Scott Barron**  
Disability Rights CA
- **Robert Levy**  
UC Davis MIND/UCEDD
- **David Forderer**  
SCDD
- **Kecia Weller**  
UCLA Tarjan Center
- **Wesley Witherspoon**  
USC Children's Hospital  
of Los Angeles

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Supported Life Conference (state), and Self Advocates Being Empowered (SABE USA) (national) conferences. In addition, Wesley has talked to legislators and lawmakers about issues for people with all types of disabilities. Wesley feels that everyone has a right to a quality life, no matter if they are White, Black, Latino, Asian, Native American, Republican, Democrat, Independent women or men, LGBT, people with a disability or not, living in a urban, suburban, or rural area, etc.



Wesley feels that the most important issues for people with disabilities are respect, accessibility, housing, transportation, safety, health care, finding employment, and relationships. Wesley wants to tell others in California that their voices are important, no matter what their disability.

## Happenings from Across the State North Bay – by Chen Curtiss



Randy Kitch has been a Consumer Advocate at North Bay Regional Center (NBRC) for several years. Although he now works from home, it is clear that he takes his job very seriously. I met with him on August 8, 2017, to talk about his most recent achievement, the Mary Cook Lifetime Achievement Award, but he was more interested to tell me about my rights which are protected by the Lanterman Act. When we finally got around to talking

about this very important award, Randy was very humble, explaining that while he was happy and honored to receive the award, he felt that others deserved it more. The Mary Cook Lifetime Achievement Award is a recognition given to a person with or without a disability who has made a big impact in the field of disability services. Randy received the award on June 7, 2017, at a ceremony at NBRC.  
**(Continued on page 3-see Kitch)**



**Mission Statement**

The Statewide Self Advocacy Network (SSAN) promotes leadership and builds bridges that strengthen advocacy among disability communities by focusing on policy change.

SSAN past Newsletters, Annual Reports, and Meeting info, can be found at [www.scdd.ca.gov](http://www.scdd.ca.gov) under self-advocacy tab

Let us know if you want to see anything specific in future newsletters!



How do you contact the SSAN Newsletter Editor Robert Levy? Leave a message for him by contacting the SCDD Self-Advocacy Coordinator **Riana Hardin at (916) 322-8403**

**(Kitch continued from page 2)**

Randy spoke about the day's proceedings with much joy, explaining that during the event his friends told stories about him, some true and others debatable.

Although he won the award, Randy says his work is not yet done; his long-term dream is to change negative attitudes that others may have about people with disabilities as he believes that this "is the number one barrier facing us". Randy explained that while laws are there to protect us, these laws cannot change people's attitudes. In the meantime,



**SCDD SSAN Central Coast Region Report**  
**By: David Forderer**

I have been very busy since our last SSAN meeting in June. My region of responsibility for the State Council (the Central Coast) extends from the Santa Clara County to Ventura County. The other representative is Dr. Sandra Aldana.

Since our last SSAN meeting:

however, Randy's advice is that we should live our lives the way we want and he urged us to ignore anyone who says we can't achieve our goals. Indeed, Randy continues to be an inspiration to us all.

**Randy Kitch**



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I met with California State Assemblyman Ash Karla to discuss the need for more financial support for the IDD community

I met with U.S. Congressman Ro Khanna to discuss concerns of self-advocates in my area and talk about the Council's efforts to encourage people to share their stories on the importance of Medicaid.

I am also currently following the issues of building access, which is very important to self-advocates in my area. **(Continued on page 6 see Forderer)**

## People First Gathering By Nicole Patterson



The People First of California Gathering took place

in Sacramento this year on June 23<sup>rd</sup> through the 25<sup>th</sup>. The theme was Magic Happens. The first night, Friday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> there was a Meet and Greet and kick-off ceremony. There were about 150 people there. To end the night, People First of California showed inspirational YouTube videos. Two that stood out to me the most were I'm Not Your Inspiration Thank You Very Much by Stella Young and Tim's Place.



Stella Young's TED Talk was about letting people know that people with disabilities weren't put on Earth to inspire people by doing every day, age-appropriate activities. She also stressed that people

with disabilities are more disabled by the society in which they live than they are by their actual disability.



Tim's Place was a about a young man who has Down syndrome who owned and ran his own successful restaurant in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Tim was all about hugs and good food. He has given away more than 60,000 hugs.



Saturday was full of sessions on travel, advocacy, health, social media safety, personal safety, and bullying. I attended the session called "You're In Charge of Your IPP". This session gave suggestions on how to keep in control of your IPP meeting by giving examples of kind statements that you can use when someone is trying to take control of your meeting. Attendees then **(Continued on page 5 PFCA)**



People First of CA held their Gathering in Sacramento on June 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>, 2017!

Department of Developmental Services SSAN representative, Nicole Patterson attended as did SCDD North State representative, Theresa Moshier

THEME:

**MAGIC HAPPENS**



**(PFCA continued from page 4)**

role-played with presenters and each other on how an IPP should go.

The dance on Saturday night was a success as always. Those who didn't want to go to the dance had the option of watching the movie Miracles from Heaven.

Sunday was wrap-up day with Open Mic and the President's speech.

It's always great to get together with other advocates that are trying to make the world better for people with disabilities.

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**Article by Teresa Moshier on People First of California Gathering**

The PFCA Statewide Gathering was held on June 23-25, 2017 at the Sacramento Marriott in Rancho Cordova, CA.



The theme was "Magic Happens."

Paradise People First Chapter received the Niki Award. The Niki Award recognizes the best Chapter in California by looking at what the Chapter did for their community, the types of fundraisers they did, and other work they do.

Paradise People First Chapter gave out two recognition plaques: one to the Far Northern Regional Center Director, Laura Larson for supporting self-advocates in Region 2; and another one to Cozy Diner in Paradise for hosting the Chapter meetings at the restaurant for the last 6+ years. The Chapter had a bowl-a-thon and sponsored

a child through the Angel Tree program.



The Gathering had close to 400 people in attendance. There were 8 different breakout sessions to learn information. Prove them Wrong; You are in Charge of Your IPP; Pack Your Bag; Living with Roommates; How to Be Safe at Night; Healthy Living; Building Allies; and Social Media Safety.

We had a dance, a movie night, and open mic. The food was good. People came from all over California.





**By Kecia Weller**



Dr. Raynor is the Director of the Tarjan Center at the University of California Los Angeles, and the National Arts and Disability Center (NADC). Within the Tarjan Center, Dr. Raynor founded four programs that provide technical assistance and training to advance policy and systems change for people with disabilities: The NADC, The Tarjan Center Service Inclusion Project, Open the Doors to College and the California Employment Consortium for Youth and Young Adults with Intellectual and Other Developmental Disabilities.

Dr. Raynor has extensive experience leading and facilitating multi-agency state and local level collaborations designed to build capacity, policy reform, and ensure equity and access for individuals with disabilities to gain access to employment in the arts.

In June, Dr. Olivia Raynor was an invited speaker at the inaugural Association of University Centers on Disabilities Leadership Academy at Georgia State University. She made a presentation about her leadership of the Tarjan Center and experience as a woman in a leadership position.

The Department of Developmental Services and USC UCEDD have been awarded a technical assistance grant from the National Center on Cultural Competence (NCCC) to address the issue of racial and ethnic disparities in purchase of services in the regional center system. At the end of July, Dr. Olivia Raynor was part of the state’s leadership team and attended a training by NCCC in Washington, DC.

In August, Dr. Olivia Raynor was a presenter at the quarterly Disability Employment Initiative, a project of the Employment Development Division on integrating services for persons with developmental disabilities and the America Job Centers.

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**(Forderer Continued from page 3)**

I attended the Santa Clara county Democratic Committee meeting and networked with local and state politicians introducing myself as a self-advocate and informing the members of the needs of our community for funding and support.

I Met with Hene Kelly, State of California Democratic committee Disability Caucus chair to discuss a number of disability issues.

I also am developing an idea and agenda for a course on disabilities that would be implemented into the state elementary school system. This course would educate students about the types of disabilities that individuals who are born with IDD issues face, in areas of education, employment, healthcare etc. The long term impact that this course could change the way people with disabilities are valued and treated.

## Employment Panel

by Paul Mansell from San Diego & Imperial



Competitive, Integrated Employment is important to self-advocates because it provides income that can help us achieve a greater degree of self-sufficiency, boost our pride and self-esteem, grow personally and professionally, expand our social network, and be a productive member of our communities.

On June 8, 2017, SSAN held an employment panel with Charles McCarron, Andrew Folies (Buca di Beppo), Chen Curtis (Walmart), Desiree Boykin (South Valley Regional Center), and Nicole Patterson (Department of Developmental Services) and Paul Mansell (San Diego Regional Center) moderating. Charles and Andrew have had their job since the holidays. Chen has worked at his job since 2015, Desiree since 2011, and Nicole since 2005.

The panel members had different ways they got their jobs. Charles, Andrew, and Chen had job developers/job coaches find their jobs. Desiree and Nicole had contacts with their agencies. All went through the interview process. Every one said that going through the interviews made them nervous. Nicole discussed how she did her homework to prepare for the interview.

Employment was important to all the panelists. For Andrew it was the money. For Charles it got him out of the house. For Chen, he likes to help the customers when they come to WalMart. Desiree thinks she always wanted to help other people. As a kid, she was always the one saying, "Let me help my grandmother out. Let me help so-and-so out." So becoming a consumer advocate, she got to do what she enjoys doing which is helping folks. Nichole said that it is important that people have a voice in all aspects of our services and it is really important for our voice to be heard on the State level so that is one reason. The second reason is that it's important for her personally for her daughter -- it is important for her to see that people with disabilities can work and do everything else as everybody else does.

The panelist were asked where can they see themselves in 10 years or a year and what would they be doing. Nicole said she hoped to be promoted as a civil service position in the next 3 years. Charles said he wants to be a professional cook. Desiree hopes in the future to be a service coordinator.

The panelists were asked what has been their greatest challenge. Charles said doing the pots and pans. The boss wants it a certain way. When he started out, he had to do the pots and pans. When they hired me, it was between Christmas and Thanksgiving, it was the hardest time for me because he had to work every day almost. Nicole said "the struggle for me, coming from the Self-Advocacy Council 6, where I was more of a community advocate, and had more ability to just do what I felt was right. When you work for the department and you have to be more political and more aware of what you're doing and how you do it, it's a little bit more tricky to find ways to advocate for folks. You have to do it in a more tactful way. **(Continued on Page 8- see Mansell)**

**Mansell continued from page 7**

You just can't do it outright because you've got to remember that you're representing the department and you're also representing the folks that receive services. So it's a balance. And that was hard to find a balance. Chen said WalMart is a pretty good job for him because he is successful at what he does at WalMart because sweeping is very important to him. Andrew said sweeping and mopping, cleaning the bathrooms and a lot of like janitorial stuff, and learning the order of doing those tasks.

Robert said to the panelists that they are all trail blazers in the sense of the fact that they are out there and within the public and representing people with disabilities. He admires that, especially Nicole Patterson because she represented us at a time when the job wasn't -- she was -- she was given the opportunity to open a new door for us. And in a sense, all of you are doing that and all of you are fine examples of people with disabilities and we should take inspiration from this because it is very important to all of us. We can all follow in their footsteps and do similar things.



***The next Statewide Self Advocacy (SSAN) meeting will be held at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Sacramento on December 6-7, 2017***

**Check out [www.sccd.ca.gov](http://www.sccd.ca.gov) Self Advocacy tab-SSAN tab for more info!**



## *Informed Choice, the Planning Team & Person Centered Planning* by Paul Mansell from San Diego & Imperial

A number of changes are coming to the DD world: Self-determination, Employment First, and Home and Community Based Services (HCBS). The common strands that unite these changes are informed client choice, the planning team and person centered planning.

Informed client choice means you have power and control over your life. People speak to you in words or use images you can understand, and provide you the information you need to make decisions based on your wants, needs, and preferences. They inform you of the consequences of your choices and remind you that you will be responsible for your decisions and actions.

The planning team consists of people you invite to the planning team meetings—family or friends, community partners, direct care providers, and your service coordinator. The team helps you to make plans to meet your goals. You are the captain of the team. The team talks about what is important to you, and looks at where you are now, where you want to be, and chart a course to get there. To achieve this, the team may use different models like Maps, PATHs, or Essential Lifestyle Plans.

During meetings, the team engages in positive, non-judgmental, solutions based conversations. It isn't a control game or power struggle. The team is optimistic and guided by hope, but also grounded in reality. They are not boxed in by histories or labels. The conversations are based on mutual respect, equality, and cooperation with the goal of reaching agreement and consensus. The team looks at what you are doing now and see about what your potential might be. The team will discuss the risks that you may encounter and plan how the team can support you in dealing with those risks. The goal of the team is your success, well-being, and to support and empower you to reach your potential and what you really want or need while keeping in mind what is needed to keep you safe, healthy and a good community member.

The person centered plan contains plenty of information and facts about you ranging from family and relationships, home and living arrangements, day activity and work, transportation, recreation and leisure activities, and health. The plan contains goals and outcomes that you want to achieve, how you are going to reach them, and who will help you along the way. The outcomes are simple, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time limited. Writing the goals and outcomes identifies responsibilities, and helps hold each and every member of the team accountable. The plan is arrived at by consensus and mutual sharing. It flows from your wants, needs, and hopes, and is not imposed upon you.

In summary, with all the changes coming to the DD world it is important to know that it is all grounded in your informed choice, the work of your planning team, and embodied in your person centered plan.