



Voices of SSAN

Newsletter of the Statewide
Self Advocacy Network
Volume 3- September 2015

SSAN's Mission

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

"We have a voice! The strength of our voice needs to be heard by all individuals in California. Our job is to make their voice loud as well. As we strengthen those voices they will be empowered to speak up and express what is needed to improve their lives."

*~Cheryl Hewitt,
SSAN Chair*

From Cheryl Hewitt, SSAN Chair

Welcome to "Voice of SSAN," a newsletter of the Statewide Self Advocacy Network (SSAN)!

Meet our Two Members!!!



My name is Paul Mansell. I am a San Diego native, have an identical twin (John), and fraternal twin-half-sisters (Susan and Cheryl), deceased parents, received a BA in Political Science and a MA in Educational Technology both from SDSU. While a senior in college, I interned at the GAO in Washington D.C. I enjoy and devote a great deal of energy to writing and love to read. My literary hero is Jean Valjean of Les Misérables, my favorite novel. Matters of mercy, redemption, and transformation resonate with me and my life experience. My favorite non-fiction author is Raymond E. Brown. I enjoy poetry and carrying on deep conversations with those whom I know well. I am partial to talking about Philosophy and Theology. (Continued on page 5- see **Mansell**)



Hello, my name is Lisa Cooley. I lived in Sacramento for over 30 years. I have done disability advocacy work for nearly 19 years. I started with disability advocacy work on local transportation issues at the transportation committee. I started regional center work in 2001 as a member of the board (Continued on page 5- see **Cooley**)

SSAN Members

- Charles Adams, North Coast
- Robert Balderama, North Valley Hills
- Desiree Boykin, ARCA
- Lisa Cooley, Sacramento
- Chen Curtiss, North Bay
- Rebecca Donabed, Sequoia
- David Forderer, SCDD
- Julie Gaona, Los Angeles
- Ramon Hernandez, Central Coast
- Cheryl Hewitt, Silicon Valley Monterey Bay
- Charles Horne-Nutt, North State
- Ted Jackson, CFILC
- Arman Khodaei, San Bernardino
- Robert Levy, UC Davis MIND Institute
- Paul Mansell, San Diego Imperial
- Joe Meadours, PFCA
- Kyle Minnis, Orange
- Nicole Patterson, DDS
- Kecia Weller, UCLA Tarjan Center
- Regina Woodliff, Bay Area

Capitol Action Day 2015 by Robert Levy

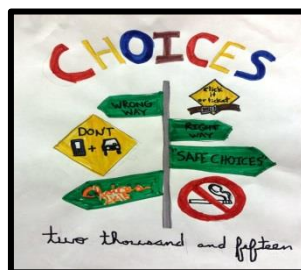
On May 20, 2015 there were many thousands of people there at Capitol Action Day. Cheryl Hewitt, Regina Woodliff and myself went down to the State Capitol to speak with our local Representatives meeting with our local State Assemblyman or Assemblywoman including their Staff members also with our local State Senators meeting their staff members and we said we wanted to support Senator Jim Beall's decision being 10 percent



increase so they can keep the Developmental Services and Daytime programs running and not have to be cut. It doesn't solve anything where would they go. This would be a waste of time for other people with a Developmental Disability to stay home, and watch TV. This would be an unproductive life. We all had the support of both staff members David Grady and Gabriel Rogin. Remember the date Capitol Action Day 2016 being the 13th annual will be held on 5/18/16 at the west steps of the State Capitol then.

SAFE CHOICES 2015 Conference **By Robert Balderama**

The 2015 CHOICES Conference was held in Stockton, CA at the San Joaquin County office of Education. There were over 500 people who came,



most were self-advocates! Safety Stu from Get Safe was the keynote speaker! There was a legislative panel too. Everyone learned a lot and had fun! The next conference will be April 8,

2016!

SSAN Partner Agencies

- Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA)
- California Foundation of Independent Living Centers (CFILC)
- Department of Developmental Services (DDS)
- Disability Rights California (DRC)
- People First of California (PFCA)
- State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD)
- University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD)
UC Davis MIND Institute
- UCEDD UCLA Tarjan Center
- UCEDD USC

SSAN Officers

Cheryl Hewitt, Chair
Regina Woodliff, Vice Chair
Desiree Boykin, Secretary

Newsletter Committee

Robert Levy-chair
Desiree Boyton-vice chair
Cheryl Hewitt
Joe Meadours
Kecia Weller

SSAN Members Present at the Statewide Self Advocacy Conference!!



The Employment First Presentation and how it works by Robert Levy

For me I talked about a 34 slide presentation with Charles Horn Nutt at the 20th annual Self Advocacy Supported Life Conference. There were about 36 people who were self-advocates and we talked about how Employment First works. Such as Micro Enterprise like two clients who are from PEC, Some people like me with Developmental Disabilities and talked about experiences about their employment and many more. For Steve Ruder who was there for both me and Charles Horne- Nutt by supporting us to do this presentation. I am glad that this bill became law. Now we are approaching the 2nd anniversary coming up on October 9, 2015. We will always remember that day being part of History when Governor Jerry Brown signed this bill into law.

Self Determination presentation by Charles

Horne-Nutt and David Forderer



We worked with our SSAN members to put the power point together on Self Determination. On the presentation given at the Statewide Self

Advocacy Conference, David said "It was really well received. All the comments that were made were positive". Charles said "I thought it went AWESOME. It took a lot of team work to put it together".



Americans with Disabilities Act- 25th Anniversary! By Cheryl Hewitt

In August, 25 years ago, a new piece of legislation was put in place for all people with disabilities. It began to break down barriers in education, public access, reasonable accommodation and many other areas. Justin Dart was an attorney that went all over the United States and gathered information on all these areas of accessibility, both from individuals and from his own personal experience. This process took him over 10 years to complete. He was instrumental in drafting the American with Disabilities Act. This opened the door for people with disabilities to have more equal access to public domain. There were laws in place for education and educational rehabilitation; however, they did not encompass what the large criterion of equal accessibility was at the time. The ADA was signed and was noted as a civil rights act for people with disabilities. As the ADA has opened up many doors for individuals with disabilities it allowed them for the first time to sue for lack of access or denial of services. The ADA has changed the way people look at access for individuals with disabilities. It allowed them to become more of an active part in their communities, however, they still need to work on the access and accept that people with disabilities have a right to do whatever they choose without any barriers. Within the first 25 years we've seen many major changes and yet still have some frustrations. In the next 25 years we hope to see more changes and less frustration. **Happy 25 years!**



SSAN Elects a New Vice- chair!!!

See Regina's article on page 7!

SSAN Officers

(Pictured From left to right)

Cheryl Hewitt-chair
Regina Woodliff- Vice chair
Desiree Boyton-Secretary

(Mansell-Continued from page 1)

I am employed full-time as the Client Information Specialist for the San Diego Regional Center for almost 14 years. My job duties include making PowerPoint presentations, shooting videos, maintaining the IEP Day Website, sitting on a variety of committees, designing and developing on-line training modules, serving as the NVRA coordinator, facilitating the Job Club, and most importantly advancing self-advocacy. I serve as staff to the SDRC Client Advisory Committee.

I have been a member of San Diego People First for almost 14 years. I served as president for two terms and my chief accomplishment during my tenure was the production of the video: San Diego People First-Walking the Talk. Currently I am in a partnership with SDPF as a SDRC employee to carry out a Self-Advocacy Roadshow for clients at programs in San Diego. Legislative advocacy has taken me to Sacramento and Washington D.C.

I view my four principle strengths as faith, perseverance, gratitude, and humility. I put a lot of time and energy into self-examination. I want very much to deepen my ability to reach out and connect with others. I see my mission as to walk the road less traveled. Accordingly, I am skilled at using the mass transit in San Diego—riding buses, trolleys, the Sprinter, and the Coaster.

I have received the Michael Delisa Leadership Award (2003) and the Sandra Jesnen Advocacy Award (2007). I am Roman Catholic—serving as a Catechist, RCIA team member, Eucharistic Minister, and member of Knights of Columbus. I am author of the soon to be published children’s story, “Marvin lost His Way.” I maintain a website and blog, spiritualpathwalker.com

(Cooley- Continued from page 1)



of directors. I have been a part of several committees in Sacramento on developmental disabilities. I am a past member of the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. I am working on a legal assistant certificate at our local community college.



San Diego People First Conference

By Paul Mansell



On Saturday, May 15th, 16th, and 17th, San Diego People held its 25th Annual Self-Advocacy Conference at the Mission Valley Marriot in San Diego. The theme this year was “Living Longer, Growing Stronger.” Over 400 people attended. It began Friday night with a workshop on Self-Determination. On Saturday morning, the SCDD held a public forum where people with disabilities let the SCDD know where they want the SCDD to go in the next five years. Following that Karen Lynn delivered an exciting keynote address telling how she overcame obstacles in her life to become an aerobics instructor. Her website is <http://www.whispersofhope.org>. Workshop sessions followed her address. During Workshop Session 1 there were workshops on Internet Safety, Inner Dancer Performing Arts, Who Let the Dogs Out?, and R.E.S.P.E.C.T. Yourself. In Workshop Session 2, there was Join Your Healthcare Team, Adaptive Fitness, and Operation Bully Proof. Then there was a street fair where self-advocates sold things that they made and organizations presented information on the services they offered self-advocates. The evening was busy with a banquet and a dance, (Copies of my book, Marvin has lost his Way!, were given away at the dance.) Sunday began with breakfast and closed with open mic.



People First of California 4th Annual Gathering

June 12-14, 2015

By Joe Meadours

People First of California (PFCA) had its 4th Annual Gathering in June in Fresno. The former Executive Director from PFCA did the keynote on when the light went out. He led a session on our board of leaders. We had over 240 People First Self-Advocates there. It was great, in my opinion, to see many old friends and meet new friends from around the state. In August, we will be meeting and will talk about where we should have next year's gathering. (Continued on next page see PFCA)

(PFCA article continued)

I feel people who came got some great information and shared ideas on how they are going to stay healthy. Today PFCA is still looking for board members. If you think you are interested, join the PFCA board! Please call us at 916-552-6625.



Special Olympics was a GREAT event! Congrats to all the hard working athletes who made it there!

NEW SSAN VICE CHAIR

Hello everybody my name is Regina Woodliff. I'm originally from San Francisco, born and raised. I have been living in Martinez for the past 12 years. I'm a single parent, full time worker and super active self advocate. I believe in being independent and helping others do the same. My passion centers around school children because I believe they are OUR future.

While I was born with a learning disability, I always look to better myself. I started out as a program participant at ALIVE Central and worked my way to become a staff member. After several years doing direct care work I found another job as a cashier at a thrift shop.

I've been with People First since 2007. I started out as a member then progressed as Chapter President, Regional President and Board member at the State level. I am passionate about self advocacy because I believe in having the same opportunities as others without a DISability. I always tell others, D-I-S in the word disability means D for Determination, I for Independence and S for Self-Reliance.

I have been a member of SSAN since the beginning. I value the work we do and the things I learn along the way. Being voted as Vice Chair has given me more motivation to work harder to help this network do bigger things.



(pictured from left to right Regina & Ron Usac from SCDD- Bay Area Office).


SAVE THE DATE for Upcoming Event!

October 2015

*Supported Life Institute
and
SCDD - Sacramento Office
present our:*

29th Annual Conference

**SUPPORTED LIFE
2015**



**“Ready or Not ~
Change is Coming”**

*Empowering All People
with Developmental Disabilities
to be Fully Included in the Community*

Oct. 8 – 9, 2015

**Crowne Plaza Hotel
Sacramento Northeast
Sacramento, CA**

*“The Place to Train Your Staff
~ in an Inclusive Environment”*

Contact Supported Life Institute
916-567-1974
info@supportedlife.org

SCDD STATE PLAN SURVEY NOW IN MANY LANGUAGES!!



Go to scdd.ca.gov and find the language* you need and tell SCDD what you think should be on their next state plan!

Arabic* Armenian-Eastern*Chinese-Cantonese*Chinese-Mandarin* Farsi *Hindi *Hmong *Japanese *Khmer
*Korean*Russian*Spanish* Tagalog*Urdu*Vietnamese



The History of the Statewide Self Advocacy Network (SSAN)

By Robert Levy

Hello everybody, I wanted to tell you about the history of SSAN. On April 11, 2012-April 12, 2012, this group had its first meeting and it was formed. Back then it was called Area Boards 1-13 and the UCD MIND Institute, UCLA Tarjan Center and the USC Children's Hospital CEDD's, People First, DDS, Disability Rights of California, State Council on Developmental Disabilities and CFILC.

Now in the present this network has the UCD MIND Institute, UCLA Tarjan Center and USC Children's Hospital CEDD's, DDS, Disability Rights of California, SCDD, CFILC and the 13 SCDD regional offices throughout the state. They are Sacramento, Bay Area, North Coast, North State, Los Angeles, Central Coast, San Diego and Imperial Valley, North Bay, North Valley Hills, Sequoia, Monterey/Silicon Valley and Orange County. We now have regional manager and back then it was executive directors. It's sad for all of us to see 2 members and a staff member leave SSAN. We got some bills signed into law since the group got started. Back then when we started we didn't have any officers, by-laws or newsletters and the reports name changed. When this network first started we had Carol Risley as the SCDD Executive Director. Now as of 7/16/15 the SCDD had finally selected a new Executive Director being, Aaron Carruthers. (See his article on next page).

The other change is that Sacramento local members had stayed overnight at the hotel back then when this group first started. But now they don't have that option anymore only the members that are not Sacramento local members and also including the staff and the member who came and went from the last 3 years. We still have a lot of work to do. It's never over. So let's welcome the 3 new members, Charles Adams from SCDD North Coast, Chen Curtiss from SCDD North Bay and Arman Khodaei from SCDD San Bernardino.



WELCOME NEW SCDD EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



SCDD Chair April Lopez asks you to join her in welcoming Aaron Carruthers as the Executive Director of the California State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD). He brings many years of experience with legislation, advocacy, state administration, and council leadership.

Executive Director Carruthers first joined SCDD in June 2014, serving as our Chief Deputy Director. Since that time he has worked with headquarters and regional staff throughout California to rebuild positive relationships among Council Members, staff, and key community partners. Executive Director Carruthers has been instrumental in SCDD's recent achievements dealing with the alignment of the federal Developmental Disabilities and state Lanterman Acts. He led the SCDD's regional community engagement operation to advance the goal that an estimated 690,000 people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities and their families are able to exercise self-determination, be independent, be productive, and integrate in all facets of community life.

Prior to his work with SCDD, Executive Director Carruthers served as Chief Deputy Director of the California Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission, overseeing a \$9 billion investment in the community mental health system. He implemented rehabilitation programs for over 170,000 inmates in California's 34 prisons and 130,000 parolees in 58 counties and administered mental health service programs for prison inmates. He has been a board member of the University of California, Davis' Institutional Review Board enforcing medical ethics. Executive Director Carruthers has extensive legislative and policy experience having served as a principal consultant for State Senator Darrell Steinberg from Sacramento, a member of the California Attorney General's core team, a legislative aide for State Senator Liz Figueroa, and a field representative for State Assemblymember Liz Figueora, the representative from Silicon Valley. He also was a fellow in the nationally recognized Coro Fellows Program in Public Affairs, which trains "ethical leaders for uncommon times."

Self-Advocates find their way to the Governor's Office And meet with first assistant, Donna Campbell By Cheryl Hewitt



On August 14th, a group of individuals with developmental disabilities met with the Governor's first assistant, Donna Campbell. This meeting was set up by a group of independent self-advocates to express our concerns to the Governor over the funding for DD services. David Forderer, Tyle Fihe, Jeb Morrel, Lisa Cooley and I participated in the

meeting. We let Ms. Campbell know that we are concerned about our services and are willing to do whatever it takes to help maintain our lifestyle within the community. Each of us had a chance to express how these services give us a quality of life that allows us to be active participants within the communities we live in. Each story was personalized by all the individuals attending. Ms. Campbell was impressed with the stories. She stated that the Governor's intent is not to take services away; however, he needs to find a way to put the money into the needed services. After the meeting was completed Ms. Campbell took pictures with the group. Overall the group felt our voices about our concerns were heard. It was a very empowering day for all of us.

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California Memorial Project- Remembrance Ceremonies Held Across the STATE!

We REMEMBER & HONOR our Brothers and Sisters who died in developmental centers –Annual event held on the 3rd Monday in September!

