



# VOICES of SSAN

March 2018 Volume 12

**Meet new SSAN Member Sean Sullivan from SCDD Orange County**



Hi my name is Sean Sullivan.

In case you are not aware, I am the SCDD Orange County Regional Office Representative to SSAN!!

The reason why I joined SSAN is because I wanted to be part of a network that has members that has people who have similar philosophies and ideals that I do!

My main objective is to bring more

awareness to the autism community to and from this network and bring updates on my findings!

I have autism; refuse to allow my disability to defeat me, to conquer me and to define me!

I will never have time for failure and always have time for success; I will never have time for anything and or everything that is not benefiting for me, my life and my success!

Speaking of successes and happy times I am very happy to be part of this amazing network with many talented and caring individuals! Thank you!

**In this edition of the Voices of SSAN**

**Meet new member**

**Upcoming Events**

**Meet SCDD's new Deputy Director of Policy- Cindy Smith**



Check out the Statewide Self Advocacy Network (SSAN) webpage at [www.scdd.ca.gov/selfadvocacy](http://www.scdd.ca.gov/selfadvocacy)

**Updated info on: Self Determination & the ABL Act!**





## Importance of

## VOTING!

By Wesley

Witherspoon



2018 is the year of the mid-term elections and CA statewide races. There are 4 levels of government: federal, state, county, city (or unincorporated area). According to Disability Rights of California, more than 35 million Americans with disabilities are eligible to vote. But only 15 million do vote. That means 20 million people with disabilities are not voting. In the State of Virginia in 2017, one politician won the election by one vote.

Voting is life. Voting is a part of self-advocacy. Prior to the 60s, people died for the right to vote. Minorities and people with disabilities did not have to right to vote prior to the 60s. Federal and state laws allow people to vote, if they are a US citizen, Resident of CA, and 18 and older and had not lost their rights to vote. Everything that we do is from our laws, some people like tax breaks, guns, alcohol, tobacco, tattoos, church, gyms, pets, trucks, junk food, and cars. The reason why voting is important is because it is our expression of what we want. There are many political parties; the main 2 parties are the Republicans and Democrats. As a voter for the last 28 years,

sometimes what you vote for will not pass or a candidate may not win. Do not be discouraged, how something is passed or candidate wins is by the amount of votes. People's values are different. Some people like business, civil rights, gambling, smoking, having fun, freedom. Voting can be confusing, if you feel that something on the ballot is too hard to understand, you have the right not to vote on a particular issue or candidate. There are several steps to Voting: registering, learn about the issues and candidates, finding your polling place understanding accommodations, and actually voting. There are many types of elections: Presidential, **(Continued on page 3)**



**(VOTE-from page 2)**

Governor, Mayor, City Council, School Board, etc. In order to vote, you have to register 15 days before the election. You also can register to be an Absentee Voter. An Absentee Voter is a voter that do not go to the polls on election day, they can mail in their vote. It is your choice, you can register to vote in person or to vote absentee. If you vote absentee, you have to mail in your ballot before the actual Election Day, or your vote will not count. If you make a mistake, you can get another ballot to vote on. If you vote at the polls, you need to understand where are the polls located. You have to have transportation to go to

the poll (car, bus, bicycle, paratransit, walking, Uber, or Lyft). When you vote, you should expect to spend some time at the polls. In California, the polls are open from 7am to 8pm. When you are finished with voting at the polls, you give the workers your ballot and you can find out about the results in a few days. I am encouraging people to vote if they want to.

\*\*\*\*\*



**Meet the New Deputy Director of Policy- Cindy Smith**

I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Cindy Smith and I am the Deputy Director of Policy at the State Council on Developmental

Disabilities. Before joining the State Council on Developmental Disabilities, I worked as the Director of Policy at the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities, in Washington, D.C. Throughout 10 years in Washington; I was impressed by the power of personal stories in affecting change. I am excited about the prospect of getting to know the advocates of SSAN and getting your input on what issues are important to self-advocates across California, as I familiarize myself with the landscape of such a vast state.



**(Continued on Page 4)**



**(Smith- continued from page 3)**

My job is to educate lawmakers on the issues that affect Californians with intellectual and developmental disabilities so that they can participate fully in their communities. I have worked with the National Disability Rights Network, Children and Adults with AD/HD (CHADD) and the Institute for Community Inclusion (an UCEDD). I have a JD in Disability Law and Policy from Syracuse University.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Diversity**



**By Paul Mansell**



**SSAN** is a self-advocacy organization dedicated to building bridges of awareness and understanding throughout California. California is such a vast and diverse state in terms of geography, economics, and people. It makes sense then to try to build bridges with the various ethnic and cultural groups. They need to hear our story and we need to listen to theirs.

No person is an island. We all benefit with our relationships and interactions with others. We find our true strength when we stand in unity with others. California is so richly diverse, with so many people from all over the world with different cultures, experiences, and traditions.

People of all cultures, races, and ethnicity need to hear our story because developmental disabilities affect people from all cultures. They need to hear what our common life is like—the good, the bad, and the ugly. They need to hear the barriers and challenges we face, our successes and victories, and our hopes and frustrations. They need to hear that all people regardless of level of disability have value and worth and can live meaningful and worthwhile lives integrated into their communities.

We need to hear from all cultures, races, and ethnic groups—their stories of family, self-worth, **(Continued on Page 5)**



**(Diversity continued from page 4)**

and what make a meaningful day and a fulfilling life. We need to hear their joys and sorrows, their worries, and what they take pride and satisfaction in. We need to hear their hopes and dreams.

Let's join a circle of all people and celebrate our diversity. We will be richer and wiser for it.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Celebrating SSAN's 6<sup>th</sup> Birthday!**

**By Robert Levy, SSAN Rep from UC Davis MIND/UCEDD**



The SSAN group began meeting back on April 11, 2012. Now there are currently 20 members from throughout the state who take the resources from SSAN to their local Regional Centers, to their local agencies, and their local communities.

The SSAN group members did travel to San Diego back in June 2013 for their meeting. SSAN hopes to have another southern CA meeting again at some point.

On October 9, 2013 both the Employment First Policy and The Self Determination

bills were signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown.

Early in 2015 SSAN launched its first newsletter.

SSAN has had a lot of members who decided move on to different things.

SSAN had kept up to date on the bylaws.

Since SSAN began the SSAN members came up with a logo by building bridges including to listen, learn and lead.



It has also has grown as the SSAN members **(Continued on Page 6)**





**(SSAN-continued from Page 5)**

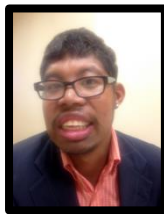
Have done powerpoint presentations to let their local communities know about Employment First, Self Determination, ABLE Act and the about SSAN.

The next SSAN Meeting will be June 27-28, 2018 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Sacramento. All are welcome! Check out [www.sccd.ca.gov/selfadvocacy](http://www.sccd.ca.gov/selfadvocacy) tab for all the information!

So Happy 6th Birthday to SSAN and here is to many more years to come!



**UPDATE ON THE ABLE ACT- by Chen Curtiss**



The SSAN members had a presentation from CalABLE staff at the December SSAN meeting. We learned about the updates to the program. Since that presentation, there has been more information about CalABLE. SSAN has updated the CalABLE PowerPoint and it is on the SSAN webpage. See CalABLE factsheet.



**CalABLE**  
Providing People With Disabilities Greater Financial Security

**About**  
CalABLE is a new program that allows people with disabilities to establish a tax-advantaged savings account and save up to \$15,000 per year and up to \$100,000 in total without losing vital public benefits, such as Supplemental Security Income. Earnings in these accounts are not subject to federal income tax or California state income tax, so long as the earnings are spent on qualified expenses. CalABLE began operations July 1, 2016 and is anticipated to open for business in Spring 2018.

**Who is eligible to open an ABLE account?**  
An individual who has the onset of a disability before age 26 may qualify by meeting one of the following:  

- Is eligible to receive benefits based on disability, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI);
- Has a disability certification, including a copy of the diagnosis signed by a physician.

**What are the benefits of a CalABLE account?**  
The following features and benefits are being considered by the ABLE Board:  

- Ability to contribute automatically through routine deductions from a bank account.
- Ability to invite friends and family to contribute directly to an account.
- Deposit online or by check.
- Diverse investment options.

State Treasurer John Chiang

DETAILS ARE AVAILABLE AT: [www.treasurer.ca.gov/able](http://www.treasurer.ca.gov/able)

**Timeline for the CalABLE Program**

**2013**  
Prior to 2013, a person with a disability receiving support from a public benefit program was not able to save for future needs without fear of losing vital government assistance, such as SSI. Also, any assets counted against them.

**2014**  
President Barack Obama signs the Stephen Beck, Jr. Achieving a Better Life Experience Act.

**2015**  
The California State Legislature passed SB 324 (Fran Pavley) and AB 449 (Jacqui Irwin), supported by State Treasurer John Chiang, which implements the ABLE program in the state.

**JULY 1, 2016**  
CalABLE began operations.

**Spring 2018**  
CalABLE expects to be open for business.

**How You Can Help**  

- Identification of public agencies and private and nonprofit organizations that work with people with disabilities and their families and can help with outreach and education.
- Identification of state laws, regulations and public benefit enrollment or eligibility processes that need to be changed and/or updated to ensure there are no conflicts.

**Questions?**  
For more information on CalABLE, email [calable@treasurer.ca.gov](mailto:calable@treasurer.ca.gov) or call 916-653-1728.

**Connect on Social Media:**  
Facebook.com/CalABLE @CalABLE\_Board

State Treasurer John Chiang

DETAILS ARE AVAILABLE AT: [www.treasurer.ca.gov/able](http://www.treasurer.ca.gov/able)

For more info go to [www.treasurer.ca.gov/able](http://www.treasurer.ca.gov/able)



**SAVE THESE DATES!!!**



**Supported Life Institute**

23<sup>rd</sup> Annual  
Statewide  
Self Advocacy  
Conference  
May 4- 5, 2018 at the  
Crowne Plaza Hotel  
Sacramento.



14<sup>th</sup> Annual Capitol  
Action Day  
June 7, 2018  
Cesar Chavez Plaza &  
State Capitol  
Sacramento  
Info at:  
[Disabilityactioncoalition](http://Disabilityactioncoalition)



**Supported Life Institute**

32<sup>nd</sup> Annual  
Supported Life  
Conference  
October 4- 5, 2018 at  
Crowne Plaza Hotel  
Sacramento

**2018 East Bay  
Legislative Coalition  
Breakfast  
By Regina Woodliff**

On February 2, 2018, I had the opportunity to participate in the East Bay Legislative Coalition Breakfast. I had the opportunity to share my thoughts on housing, Medi-Cal, social services, and disabilities in general with many different people. Here are the thoughts that I shared:

**My thoughts on  
Housing:**



We need affordable housing for people with developmental disabilities. They cannot afford outrageous rent out there. If you don't have section 8 or HUD,

you can't afford to live anywhere. The only income most people with disabilities have is social security.

We need affordable housing for teachers and service providers and social workers. We need them to have easy access to their jobs so that they can help people with developmental disabilities.

We also need more accessible housing for people that use wheelchairs and people who are blind.

**My thoughts on Medi-Cal:**



We need Medi-Cal for dental work, for medical emergencies, and for regular care.

**(Continued on Page 8)**



**(East Bay – Continued from page 7)**

We need Medi-Cal for medication – medication is so expensive, very, very expensive.

Vision care is important too.

If people have to go to the ER or need an ambulance and they don't have good coverage, they end up with huge bills or copays that they cannot pay.

We need health care for specialists like podiatry, because people have to walk a lot, and many people have diabetes.

**My thoughts on Services:**



It's important that youth have help with transition services

when they are getting ready to leave from school. The youth are the future.



Employment is very important, people with developmental disabilities need a chance to work and need employment services to help them get a job and keep a job – job coaches are so important.



Services help people with disabilities build their confidence to live life and live independently.

Yes, we all have a disability, Disability is second. Ability is first. Dis stands for

Determination, Independence and Services and self-reliance, for ourselves and for others.



Picture: Bay Area Statewide Self Advocacy Network Representative Regina Woodliff talks with advocates, lawmakers and community members at the East Bay Legislative Breakfast.



Regina Woodliff and fellow SSAN Member, Kecia Weller at March 2018 SSAN meeting.





## SSAN Members

- Vacant 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
- Sean Sullivan Orange County
- Daniel Fouste San Bernardino

- Paul Mansell San Diego Imperial
- Desiree Boykin ARCA
- Christina Mills CFILC
- Nicole Patterson DDS
- Scott Barron DRC
- Robert Levy Mind Institute
- David Forderer SCDD
- Kecia Weller UCLA Tarjan Center

**NEXT SSAN Meeting  
will be June 27-28,  
2018 at the Crowne  
Plaza Hotel in  
Sacramento!**

**All info will be in the  
SCDD website!**

**Join us!**