

VOICES of SSAN

December 2018 Volume 15

SSAN Members presented a Panel on Autism!

By Sean Sullivan



Daniel Fouste, Robert Levy and I presented a panel on Autism at the June 2018 SSAN meeting in Sacramento. At the SSAN meetings, members get a chance to practice giving presentations so we can go back to our local communities and do them. On the Panel Autism, we each took a turn to present what our lives are like living with autism. When it was my turn to talk about what it's like to live with autism. In the beginning I started to give my 2 scenes about my version of autism, I started to give my speech about the difficulties I face everyday!

Before I knew it I had question, after question, after question. Which is great and ended being better, more

exciting and more rewarding than me talking and rambling on about myself and continuing to give my speech!

All and all it was a very positive and amazing experience and if I had the chance I would do it again!!

CHECK OUT SSAN Member Wesley Witherspoon's article of his story living with Autism on Page 2!

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



SSAN Newsletter Editor -Robert Levy

Contributors to this edition:

Robert Levy
Paul Mansell
Sean Sullivan
Teresa Moshier
Wesley Witherspoon



My Story by Wesley Witherspoon

The prevalence of autism, now 1 in 39 boys are diagnosed with autism, 1 in 58 people overall. I started special education at age 5. I used to play on the swings while everyone else was in class. I did well in my classes. I started to take regular classes when I was 11 years old. I attended upper middle class school districts, despite the prosperity, people with disabilities were treated as second-class citizens. Our guidance counselors at school, under or over-estimated our abilities. I was placed in an electronic class, I did not understand anything. I was in the class for a week. By time I graduated from high school, I took mostly regular classes. I attended community college. I got support in order to graduate from community college. I started off in Basic English and math classes. When I was in college, I developed my writing and math skills by going to tutoring and

talking to my instructors. I took advantage of note takers, the disability resource center, and advisors from the school.



People with disabilities have to deal with physical abuse, verbal abuse, psychological abuse, financial abuse, and threats and bullying. Abuse is the way of life unfortunately for many people with disabilities. We are bullied because of the way we act. I was bullied in high school; I told my teacher about the person who was bullying me and the teacher kicked out the student who was bullying me. One day, after he got kicked out of class, he gave me a dirty look. I saw him bullying another student when I walked by. That was the last time I saw him.

Most people with disabilities do not drive cars. Many jobs in the community require you to have a car or to drive to their location.

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Since bus and paratransit services are limited, many people with disabilities cannot get to an interview. Many people with disabilities cannot get to an interview or another side of town.



Networking is crucial to finding a job. No matter how much education someone has, without the right networks, finding a job could be difficult. Many employers don't understand the social cues of some people with disabilities. Some people with disabilities can't read body language and some people with disabilities get frustrated easy.



My experience with employment has been mixed. My very first job, I was a janitor assistant. I did not like to clean tables and mop floors, but the job

was a foundation for other jobs to come. I learned how to take transportation to the job, dress up for the job, take my break and lunch, and know my limits. I worked for 8 weeks, then I quit so I could have 2 weeks on vacation. After my job in high school, I did not find a job for 8 years. I did not have any opportunities because there was a recession, and finding a job was hard. I got discouraged because I was filling out applications and I never got to response to come in for an interview. Employers did not take me serious as a candidate until I got my AA degree.



People with disabilities want to live life just like everyone else. We want to have fulfilling relationships, families, good jobs, housing, good transportation, dignity from others, recreational activities, and anything else that a person without a disability has. We did not have a choice to have a disability or not. We struggle because of our disability **(Continued on Page 4)**



(Continued from Page 3) that might cause us to talk, walk, think, and/or to behave differently than a person without a disability.

In closing, I want to tell everyone that success is possible. You need to find the right supports and networks to succeed. You have to keep trying and to know what your limits are. I remember when I was job hunting, I thought I would never find a job.



North State Region Resource Highlight

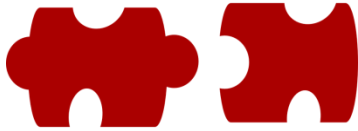
By: Teresa Moshier

Do you ever need someone just to rant to or forget to take your medications? Do you live alone and need someone to talk to? Are you concerned about a loved one? I have the answer for you. The answer is The Call Connection! The Call Connection is a community service of

AMJaMB’s Beyond Inclusion Program. I am an employee of The Call Connection and love calling people and helping them with what they need. It’s a great job and I’m working more hours each week.



The Call Connection started in 2013 and now employs approximately 30 people who work different shifts throughout the week. We all earn minimum wage and enjoy the experiences. My husband got a job there too, as well as my best friend. We all have assignments of people we call and an individualized protocol is followed based on what is best for the individual, including what day and time to call them. It really makes people happy when we call them and help them with whatever they need. The Call Connection is a great service and our supervisor is named Heidi and she is a wonderful boss. If you want to know more about this service, the website is www.amjamb.com and their number is 530-872-8526.



Interconnectedness By Paul Mansell

I love ideas and theory. Coming across a new idea makes my day. Sharing an idea with others is icing on the cake. One idea that has captured my imagination and my passion is interconnectedness. It holds that all people are connected with one another. It is through this interconnected that we achieve our greatest strength, worth, and dignity. Interconnection embraces the diversity of each and every unique individual. This variety adds and enriches the human experience and is cause for celebration. People are happiest when they have meaningful bonds with others and the greater human family. Self-advocacy takes on a new and richer meaning with interconnectedness. Self-advocacy moves beyond advancing self-interest and to connecting and bonding with our families, support providers, health care providers and our community. This is why integration, employment first, affordable housing, transportation, and inclusion are so very important. We all have

something to contribute and give to our community through our education, work, health, volunteering and relationships.

Communication becomes more than saying a few words, it becomes a means of connecting with others and being part of the human family. In this tapestry, loyalty, trust, love, honor, harmony, integrity, friendship, family, work, and community becomes expressions of our greater humanity. These connections are reasons for joy and celebration and give purpose and direction to life.

The Employment Panel Presentation Talk by Robert Levy SSAN Representative of the UCD MIND Institute UC/CEDD



Back on 7/31/18 me and fellow SSAN member, Desiree Boykin and many others did a power point talk at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Sacramento. I talked about my part time jobs at Target, The UC Davis MIND Institute and Progressive Employment Concepts and I also talked about what **(Continued on Page 6)**



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I've learned about the job tasks that needed to be done on typical work day. Desiree also talked about her typical work day at the ARC in South Central Los Angeles area. There were the Lending works who talked about the group works. There were numerous others who did their panel presentation talks that were a part of that panel. The people who attended were my sister and 2 of my co-workers here at the MIND and 1 co-worker at Progressive Employment Concepts and many others. They all learned a lot from me and the others who had presented and they will take it to their local communities However there were some others who participated by the phone conference. The next State Council Board meeting will be on 9/18/18 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel then.



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
- Vacant – CFILC
- Nicole Patterson – DDS
- Scott Barron – DRC
- Robert Levy – UC Davis Mind Institute
- Kecia Weller – UCLA Tarjan Center
- Wesley Witherspoon – SCDD

SAVE the DATES:

For an up to date list of upcoming Regional and Statewide SCDD meetings please visit www.scdd.ca.gov



Abilities Expo

Where: Los Angeles Convention Center, West Hall A.

When: February 22-24 for more information

visit: <https://www.abilities.com/losangeles/>



CFILC Statewide Membership Meeting – March 4 & 5

Disability Capitol Action Day – May 23 (Corrected)

AT Reuse for Earth Day – April 19

YO! Disabled & Proud Summit – May 17, 18 & 19

CFILC Statewide Membership Meeting – June 17 & 18

DOnetwork Summit – September 20, 21 & 22

CFILC Statewide Membership Meeting – October 13 & 14

IL Conference – October 15



WILDFIRES

Resources

Register with FEMA

FEMA is encouraging effected residents to register with them at <https://www.disasterassistance.gov/>