

# I SPEAK

**Independence · Success · Power · Education · Advocacy · Knowledge**

A Self-Advocacy Newsletter Brought to You by Self-Advocates and SCDD San Diego Imperial

**Fall 2021**

## Doing Hard Work at My Job

by Jerome Williams

What is your definition of “hard work”?  
**It is constant, earnest, and energetic work.**

What type of work do you do?  
**I work in Jacobs Medical Center at UC San Diego Health packaging silverware in the kitchen for the patients in the hospital. I also work disinfecting the Cove Café tables in the Center’s cafeteria.**

What is different about your job now compared to a year and a half ago before the COVID-19 pandemic?

**My job is different now because I have to social distance myself from others, wear a mask, and tap my badge at the employee entrance.**

What is hard about my position now compared to before?

**Wearing my mask is hard because I wear it all day long. I wear it on the bus to work, at work, and then on the bus home. I do this because I do not want to get sick. I am unable to sit next to my friends.**



**For current guidance regarding COVID-19, check the following national and local government web-sites: [Centers for Disease Control](#), [State of California](#), [San Diego County](#), [Imperial County](#)**



Photo by Priscilla Gyamfi on Unsplash

## **Activism: The Key to Change**

by Paul Mansell

True systemic change that affects the lives of those of us with developmental disabilities happens only when many people invest the hard work, effort, and time necessary to make changes. We make change in the system by voicing our concerns, hopes, and dreams. Not just individually, but as a group. With activism, the goal is to let everybody know what problems we face and then suggest solutions. We tell our family, friends, direct care providers, and service coordinators. But we don't stop there.

As self-advocates, we talk to anyone who will listen to us—government officials and the media for example. We attend and contribute to public meetings regarding our issues. We do all this not just as individuals but as a group by writing letters, making posters, joining marches, and raising our voices and chanting. We do this for the long-haul—because making real systemic change can take years to accomplish.

It takes a good deal of educating self and others to make systemic changes because many people just will settle for the status quo. Some even get angry about change. To them, we say: “Enough is enough, we want action and we want it now. We have put up with this problem long enough.”

In activism it is OK to express our feelings and it's essential that we tell our stories. You may say: “Activism is not for me, but others.” I say: “Do you want the ‘same old same old’ to continue?” I don't think so, so let's get walking.

[Read more from Paul on his Self Advocacy Blog](#)



## INTERNATIONAL WEEK OF DEAF PEOPLE

### International Week of Deaf People

by Peter Salgado

During the week of September 20th the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) focused on talking about the International Week of Deaf People.

We watched the movies “The Silent Child” and “The Miracle Worker”.

I decided to write about this because I am taking sign language classes. This semester I am taking ASL Level 3 and Deaf Culture. I am learning how to sign different vocabulary and classifier signs, learning how to gloss (or convert) English sentences into ASL, doing presentations in ASL, and learning about the deaf culture as well.

I became part of the community just recently and was nominated as an officer of the ASL Club at my school. There are various types of sign language too, but American Sign Language came from the American school for the Deaf which is known now as the Connecticut School which is located in West Hartford.



### Jokes

by Zach Hill

I chose to have jokes as my article because I feel it is important for everyone to laugh.

- What did the fish say when he swam into a wall?

*Dam!*

- There are three types of people in the world. Those who can count and those who can't.

- What was Forrest Gump's email password?

*1forrest1*

- I like elephants. Everything else is *irrelephant*.

- What's red and bad for your teeth?

*A brick.*

- Which kind of tea is hard to swallow?

*Reality.*

- Why don't dinosaurs talk?

*Because they're dead.*

- What did the janitor say when he jumped out of the closet?

*“Supplies!”*



## Trip to Oaxaca

by Octavio Ramirez

This September of 2021, I took a two-week vacation with my parents. I flew by airplane from Tijuana airport straight to Oaxaca, Mexico. I waited two hours to board the plane at the Tijuana International Airport. This was my second time traveling in an airplane. One thing that I like about it is that they have chips and soda for just \$100 pesos. It took four hours to get to Oaxaca from Tijuana. I arrived at the airport in Oaxaca City around 8 p.m. and took a taxi to the hotel located in downtown.

During my visit to Oaxaca, I ate delicious, authentic Mexican food. Some traditional foods from Oaxaca are mole (sauce), enchiladas, and enmoladas (enchiladas covered with mole).



I also went on a tour for mezcal tasting where I savored different types of mezcal from the state of Oaxaca. Mezcal is a type of alcoholic beverage similar to Tequila, which is made from an agave plant called *maguey*. The Mexican state of Oaxaca is known to be the “Capital of Mezcal”.

I got to visit many historical places in the state of Oaxaca like the beautiful cathedrals, ancient pyramids, and museums. Although most of the public places were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I really enjoyed walking through the streets of downtown, Oaxaca.

In the month of September, the people from Oaxaca celebrate traditional festivities where they do a big show with fireworks. I definitely want to visit this beautiful state of Oaxaca again, hopefully soon.

## Jewish High Holidays: Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur

by Alison Portner

Here are some interesting facts on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, which are Jewish High Holiday traditions.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, my family and I would go to Temple Emanuel for Jewish High Holidays. The seats in the sanctuary used to be in theater style and row by row. Now that COVID-19 is among us, the seats in the sanctuary are 6 feet apart from each other. We watch services in my parent's living room through a live-streaming platform on the television.

On Rosh Hashanah we have a small service called *Tashlich* at Lake Murray. During this gathering we read prayers in Hebrew and English, sing songs, and throw bird feed into the lake. By doing these traditions we believe it helps to cast away our sins as we ask for forgiveness.

For Rosh Hashanah services, we hear the sounding of the Shofar which is a ram's horn that sounds like a trumpet or a trombone.

Some traditional foods that we eat on Rosh Hashanah (Sweet New Year) are round raisin *challah* (bread), apples dipped in honey, and *tsimmes* which are carrots or sweet potatoes cooked in honey.

On Yom Kippur we ask for forgiveness. Yom Kippur is a day of fasting that starts at sundown and lasts until dinnertime on the next evening. An example would be to start on Wednesday, September 15<sup>th</sup> and end on Thursday, September 16<sup>th</sup> evening. At sundown there will be a "dairy meal" consisting of bagels, lox, and cream cheese.

For more information on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur please search the Internet for "Jewish High Holidays".



Photo by Hannah Busing on Unsplash

## Inclusion: A Perspective

by Natalie Jackson

In De Portola Middle School, I was attending special education classes with a bunch of classmates. During that time, I'd been experiencing friendship struggles. On my first day, when I walked through the doors, I felt invisible. Then one day I saw a club flyer posting a Circle Of Friends group. I asked the club advisor if I could join and she approved.

I started attending club meetings at lunch time and actually meeting new people. I started small talk which led into conversations. I really enjoyed attending club outings, movies, ice cream socials, and holiday parties.

When I was attending Serra High School, I was also involved in Theater with a bunch of people who I eventually became friends with. Our theater group would study Shakespeare plays, work on improving in front of our peers, and perform monologues from other Shakespeare plays, including learning Disney Channel plays, script writing, and finding prompts and sets to use while performing.

Joining Arms Wide Open—a dance, music, and theatre arts program—was a giant step in my acting career, and inclusion became crucial for mostly everyone with disabilities or special needs attending the same studio. So, during this next production with AWO it's time to focus on other things in life.



## The Halloween Special!

by Alex Tenorio

I wrote my first book in 2020 called "All You Need for Halloween". I am doing a second book with the same name, "All You Need for Halloween 2". It is available on October 2021.

You can get the books on Amazon for \$13.00 + tax. [All You Need for Halloween \(2 book series\)](#).

I also have an Instagram account @a.tenorio.author.nightmares and a YouTube channel. Check them out for new updates. A sneak peek of one of my new poems, [The Thirteen Nightmares of Halloween](#), is featured on my YouTube channel.

Have a spooky Halloween!



## My Experience with Takeout Dinner

by Cali Williams

My parents and I have been doing takeout for dinner on Saturdays before COVID-19 started and we still continued to do so during the pandemic.

Now that life is almost getting back to normal, we are continuing to get takeout on Saturdays as long as there isn't another event planned.

We go to different takeout restaurants and bring it home to eat for dinner. Also, on those nights we have dessert. We enjoy eating popcorn while we have family time and watch our TV shows.







### **Zach Hill: A Rising Star**

by Paul Mansell

Zach is bright, intelligent, a great leader, and a winning personality. He goes to school at ECC (a campus of San Diego Continuing Education) and is taking classes on community living and wellness, and independent living. He is also attending classes through the SCDD San Diego Imperial Office.

Zach sees his strengths as communicating and being a helper. He is interested in sports. In ten years, he sees himself having a career coaching kids in sports. He likes leadership because it opens career doors for him and can be included in his resume.

He likes to travel and eat. He likes fruit because it is good for him and bacon because it tastes good! He has visited several ball parks across the country—San Francisco, Boston, Seattle, and Colorado. He likes Petco Park because his favorite team is the Padres.



**People with disabilities stand**



**stronger together**

*Deanne Alloche*

### **San Diego People First Conference Logo Contest**

by Cali Williams

We have an update on the conference logo contest. To all who participated in this wonderful contest and sent in their beautiful artwork we all would like to say a major “Thank you!”

We are proud to announce the winner of the 2022 San Diego People First Self-Advocacy Conference logo contest. Her name is Deanne Alloche.

Deanne, congratulations on winning the contest—we all love your logo! (Pictured above.)

To everybody else who was a part of this contest, in my eyes you all are winners!





## Ms. Wheelchair California 2022 Competition

by Viri Salgado

The Ms. Wheelchair California Leadership Institute holds a pageant each year in which the winner goes on to compete for the national title. This is not a traditional beauty contest. Rather, it is a competition to find the most accomplished and articulate spokeswoman to represent and advocate for people with physical disabilities. According to the foundation, the ideal candidate is someone who is an articulate public speaker and is actively involved in advocacy within the disability community with a résumé to prove it. During the pageant, contestants present themselves as well as their chosen platform and how they plan to carry it out in a series of interviews with a panel of judges. Some of the platforms have been based on subjects such as parenting rights, independent living, and healthcare costs for people living with disabilities.

I'd like to introduce you to this year's winner of Miss Wheelchair California, Jacquelyn Yawn from Santee. She is an individual who doesn't let her disability get in her way. Her platform of advocacy focuses on disability in media and she identifies as being compassionate, intelligent, kind, witty, and empathetic.

What is Miss Wheelchair California Leadership Institute you may ask? As it says in their mission statement: "The mission of The Ms. Wheelchair California Leadership Institute is to recognize the achievements of women in wheelchairs. We are



dedicated to improving the lives of all people with disabilities through advocacy, community building, and being lifelong learners who support each other to be our best selves."

What a great opportunity to empower not only people with disabilities but encourage women and girls with disabilities to strive for more! I invite you to learn more about this empowering event at the [Ms. Wheelchair California Leadership Institute website](https://www.ms-wheelchaircalifornia.org/).



Join the *I Speak* newsletter team. Share your ideas and stories or support self-advocates by contributing to the newsletter.

If you would like to join the team, please contact Debbie Marshall at (619) 913-8232 or [debbie.marshall@scdd.ca.gov](mailto:debbie.marshall@scdd.ca.gov)



## SCDD Supported Self-Advocate Zoom Meetings

### Monday

**1<sup>st</sup> Monday of the Month – 12 noon – SDPF Conference Planning Meeting**

[Zoom link](#) | Meeting ID: 937 0215 8975 | Passcode: 123763

### Tuesday

**11:00 a.m. – Cooking Prep**

[Zoom link](#) | Meeting ID: 937 0215 8975 | Passcode: 123763

**2:00 p.m. – Disaster Preparedness (4-week series, contact Debbie for dates)**

[Zoom link](#) | Meeting ID: 937 0215 8975 | Passcode: 123763

### Wednesday

**10:00 a.m. – Health and Wellness**

[Zoom link](#) | Meeting ID: 937 0215 8975 | Passcode: 123763

**4:00 p.m. – Afternoon at the Movies**

[Zoom link](#) | Meeting ID: 937 0215 8975 | Passcode: 123763

### Thursday

**4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the Month – 11:00 a.m. – I SPEAK Newsletter**

[Zoom link](#) | Meeting ID: 937 0215 8975 | Passcode: 123763

### Friday

**1<sup>st</sup> Friday of the Month – 2:30 p.m. – Imperial Valley Self-Advocacy**

[Zoom link](#) | Meeting ID: 937 0215 8975 | Passcode: 123763

**3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of the Month – 2:00 p.m. – San Diego People First**

[Zoom link](#) | Meeting ID: 937 0215 8975 | Passcode: 123763

Additional trainings will be scheduled. Flyers will be sent out via email to let you know about them. Please contact **Debbie Marshall** to be added to the email list.

If you have questions or suggestions for future trainings, please email [Debbie.Marshall@scdd.ca.gov](mailto:Debbie.Marshall@scdd.ca.gov) or call (619) 913-8232