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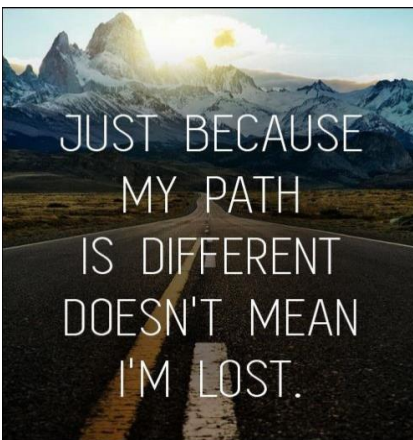
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**Editor:** Robert Levy

**Contributors:**

- Lisa Cooley
- Rebecca Donabed
- Project SAFEE
- Robert Levy
- Wesley Witherspoon
- Julie Gaona
- Robert Balderama
- Paul Mansell

## SSAN Employment Stories



Having a job, being employed, looks different to everyone and the paths that they take to get their jobs is unique to them. Some people work part-time, others full-time, and others own their own business. Here are just a few stories from SSAN members about how they got where they are today.

Lisa Cooley, the Sacramento Regional SSAN Representative started her job by learning how to advocate for herself. Her local transportation provider mistakenly thought that she could use fixed route transportation services because she was able to walk around her house. But walking around a house is very different than walking to a fixed route bus stop which may be far away from someone's home. To learn how to advocate effectively for herself she got help from a disability rights organization called Protection and Advocacy Incorporated (now Disability Rights California). One of their advocates had a disability, taught her how to advocate her needs and how to tell her story to the hearing judge so that she could get access to the accessible public transportation. Lisa ended up advocating for herself so well that she started to participate on hiring teams with Disability Rights California whenever they have needed help hiring people to work for them and almost 31 years later, she is still participating on hiring teams with their organization when she has time to do it.

Rebecca Donabed, the Sequoia Regional SSAN Representative has been looking for a job for so long that she almost gave up on the idea that employment was an option for her.



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Rebecca started out as a consumer of a regional center client and was told that having a job was not for her. Rebecca decided to go to college, where she did a lot of volunteer work with different groups, she even was able to help organize a symposium. Rebecca has had a part-time job at Denny's and served on the board of the Central Valley Regional Center (CVRC). She has been able to meet a lot of people through volunteering and make meaningful connections. Her case manager at the CVRC told her about the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) and she was able to get appointed to represent the Sequoia Office at the state level. Rebecca's position on the board of SCDD, helped her to build up her confidence and continue to look for opportunities to get involved in her community after her term expired. Rebecca is now the Systems Change Advocate at Resources for Independence Central Valley and looks forward to encouraging other self-advocates to follow their dreams to find meaningful employment.

## Employment Resources

[Job Accommodation Network \(JAN\)](#): Information about Reasonable Accommodations

[SCDD SB 639 Planning and Implementation Page](#): Get the latest updates on phasing out subminimum wage.

[Department of Rehabilitations Employment Services](#): The California Department of Rehabilitation has a lot of helpful tools for people with disabilities interested in looking for work.



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Project SAFEE stands for Self-Advocates For Emergency Education and is a committee of self-advocates and supported by SCDD staff. Project SAFEE has partnered with the Red Cross and are doing a series of disaster preparedness workshops. So far our Emergency Preparedness Training series has included topics of General Preparedness and Wildfires, both workshops have been well attended with almost 200 participants! Check out our future training times and topics. We hope to see you soon!

Join us for a FREE virtual  
Emergency Preparedness Training Series

Mark your calendars for these upcoming sessions:

Date	Time	Topic
September 9 <sup>th</sup>	9 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Earthquakes & Tsunamis
October 14 <sup>th</sup>	9 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Floods & Landslides
November 4 <sup>th</sup>	9 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Home Fires

*Get prepared before disaster strikes!*

**Registration Zoom Link:**

[https://bit.ly/ProjectSAFEE\\_ARCTRAININGS](https://bit.ly/ProjectSAFEE_ARCTRAININGS)

**For more information, or if you need an accommodation to participate in these trainings contact:**

**Jennifer Lucas:** [jennifer.lucas@scdd.ca.gov](mailto:jennifer.lucas@scdd.ca.gov)

**Debbie Marshall:** [debbie.marshall@scdd.ca.gov](mailto:debbie.marshall@scdd.ca.gov)

In collaboration with:



**American Red Cross**





## Recapping the 2022 Statewide Self-Advocacy Conference

By Lisa Cooley, Sacramento Regional SSAN Representative



This year's Statewide Self-Advocacy Conference took place on May 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. The theme for the conference was "Looking Forward to Seeing you Soon". What made this year's conference different from conferences in the past? This was the first time I have attended this conference (and I have attended or presented at a lot of supported life conferences) as a hybrid conference. This meant that conference participants could either attend the conference in person or from the comfort of their homes.

The conference had excellent presentations from three regional center client advocates, David Lopez, from Alta California Regional Center who talked about what it's like being a client advocate for the regional center and taking responsibility for your services and life in general even though you have a disability, Herb Hastings, a client advocate and public speaker, who talked about what a healthy relationship is and how to be happy, and finally, SSAN Chair Desiree Boykin, a client advocate from South Central Los Angeles Regional Center, who did a presentation talking about what her life has been like since losing her mother and dealing with grief. She shared memories of her mother and said that her parents support has made her the self-advocate that she is today.

Peter Mendoza, who works for the State Council on Developmental Disabilities did a presentation on knowing your rights and his life in disability advocacy. He started his professional life working in the Independent Living Center (ILC) side of our disability services system for several years. I learned a lot more about disability advocacy and his life that I didn't know before. The best part of the conference in addition to the presentations was getting to catch up with friends I haven't seen in person for a while. Here is a copy of the full [Conference Program](#) if you want to find out more about the sessions from this year's conference.

### SAVE THE DATE

36<sup>th</sup> Annual Supported Life Conference

Re-Emergence: Community, Work, Arts, Play

**Date:** Thursday-Friday Oct. 13-14, 2022

**Location:** DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel – Sacramento, CA

See details at [www.supportedlife.org](http://www.supportedlife.org)



## Update on the PCORI PAIR Grant Project

By **Robert Levy**, UC Davis MIND Institute UCEDD SSAN Representative

UC Davis MIND Institute was awarded a grant to fund a project looking at different ways to carry out inclusive research on people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Since starting the project back in November 2021, we have started holding monthly community committee meetings for self-advocates. In the future we plan on holding sessions for advocates who are non-verbal and use communication devices. The idea to include advocates who are non-verbal came out of a presentation talk my supervisor Steve Ruder gave at a meeting with the researchers about the importance of including non-verbal advocates in the project. We are starting the project small, but plan on reaching out to different communities like people who are clients at Progressive Employment Concepts in Citrus Heights and at Community Employment Services in Davis after that.

Self-advocates who are part of the grant will be doing a training with me and receive materials of information for the researchers to use first following going out in the community after that. We are in the process of working on phase 2 of the PCORI PAIR grant project. I will be interviewed along with 2 other self-advocates on the project. In the past I have presented with my co-worker Dr. Aubyn Stahmer on the purpose of this PCORI PAIR grant project and how it is going to help people with disabilities participate in future research projects by using the tools developed through this project, these tools may even help the wider community too. For all of us that are involved with this project we have done a lot of work, however there is still a lot more work to be done. If it wasn't for this grant project, we may not have had the tools for the researchers to connect with people with disabilities and the wider community. Stay tuned for more updates.

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## Register for Upcoming USC Trainings

By **Wesley Witherspoon**, USC Children's Hospital UCEDD SSAN Representative



Please join USC Children's Hospital for a series of online trainings for adults and youth self-advocates and their families. The training sessions are hosted by me, Wesley Witherspoon, the Consumer Advocate at the University of Southern California (USC) University Center for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) at Children's Hospital Los Angeles. Trainings are scheduled for Tuesdays or Thursdays depending on the month. Trainings are always scheduled between 11 AM to 12 PM. Upcoming training topics include: emergency preparedness, healthcare self-advocacy, voting, staying healthy, and much more! Please contact me for more information about upcoming training topics, dates, and times. [Register](#) for the next training today!



## Best Times in Your Life

By Wesley Witherspoon, USC Children's Hospital SSAN Representative

Life is full of so many moments worth remembering, sometimes we lose track of the fun accomplishments. Do you remember times in your life that were fun? Your first date, graduating from high school, going on vacation, finding your first job. Those are memories that you will have for the rest of your life.

Finding a job that you feel works with your skill set, is meaningful to you and that you enjoy is quite a big accomplishment. Meeting a significant other, that is someone who understands you and is supportive of you, who you can laugh and cry with is a major accomplishment.

Sometimes we celebrate our accomplishments and hard work by going on a vacation to relax, which is a wonderful experience. How do you relax and celebrate your hard work? Do you take a vacation to paradise? That is a great experience. Do you enjoy dancing or going to a sport game?

After all the hard work that you do in school or work: you deserve fun breaks and vacations to create memories. Enjoying your memories with your loved ones is important for the future when things can happen. We have pictures of our memories. Knowing how to celebrate is important.

## SSAN Members

- Nathaniel Florez – North Coast
- Charles Nutt – North State
- Lisa Cooley – Sacramento
- Ellen Sweigert – North Bay
- Regina Woodliff – Bay Area
- Robert Balderama – North Valley Hills
- David Forderer – Central Coast
- Rebecca Donabed – Sequoia
- Julie Gaona – Los Angeles
- Sean Sullivan – Orange County
- Eric Agular – San Bernardino
- Paul Mansell – San Diego Imperial
- Desiree Boykin – ARCA
- Recruiting – CFILC
- Nicole Patterson – DDS
- Scott Barron – DRC
- Robert Levy – UC Davis Mind Institute
- Kecia Weller – UCLA Tarjan Center
- Wesley Witherspoon – SCDD and USC Children's Hospital
- Maria Marquez – SCDD



## Working Relationships with Providers

By Julie Gaona, Los Angeles Regional SSAN Representative

Self-advocates that need providers to independently be able to do daily tasks, must know what they need from a provider. Self-advocates must do an interview with providers before they hire them. They must tell the providers they are interviewing everything they need assistance with.

Communication is very important as well. An example of this would be someone being nonverbal, deaf, or speaking another language. There may also be different forms of communication. The provider and self-advocate need to know how to work with each other. The provider and self-advocate must respect each other's time. Providers must realize that they need be respectful to self-advocates by being on time, reliable, and always remember it's what the self-advocates want in their lives. Providers must not treat a self-advocate like a child or disrespect their family and friends.

Self-advocates must not take advantage of their providers. An example of this would be asking them to stay late when you know they're not able to. Self-advocates should not treat their providers like slaves. An example of this would be asking them to do several things at once. They must have patience with the providers to complete their tasks that they need to do.

When problems arise, there has to be communication between providers and self-advocates. Without communication, it can lead to unnecessary arguments. Two of the most important factors in a successful working relationship are patience and respect for each other while working.

### SSAN 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's past Newsletters, Annual Reports, and Meeting info, can be found at [www.scdd.ca.gov](http://www.scdd.ca.gov) under the "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) 263-8196**

**Check out the [SCDD YouTube Page](#) for stories from self-advocates, past meetings, and more!**



## DDS' CAC is RECRUITING!

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) provides advice to DDS on policies, programs, legislation, and regulations that affect the lives of Californians with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

### About the CAC:

- ☀ Fifteen (15) self-advocate members from all over California
- ☀ Meets at least four (4) times a year in Sacramento, or online with Zoom
- ☀ Members share information with their local self-advocacy organizations
- ☀ Brings input from those groups back to the CAC
- ☀ Transportation, hotel, meal, and facilitator costs (if needed) will be paid by DDS

### If you would like to apply to be a CAC member, here is what you need to do:

- \* Check the link below to see if we are recruiting from your regional center.
- \* You must have an intellectual or developmental disability and received regional center services to apply.
- \* You must be a member of a local self-advocacy group or other organization that serves or empowers people with developmental disabilities.
- \* You **MUST** be nominated for membership by your local self-advocacy group or developmental disability organization.



**Please note:** Regional Center employees are not eligible for CAC membership.

Interested advocates should fill out the online [DDS Consumer Advisory Committee Application](#) and submit it with their nomination letter.





## What is Citizenship?

By Paul Mansell, San Diego Regional SSAN Representative

Human beings are a beautiful species (group). The most important gift we have as humans is the freedom of choice and the will power to decide our own destinies. With our decision-making power we can make decisions that focus only on our self-interest, or we can live our life in a way that helps others in addition to ourselves.

Each person is an individual and unique, varying in personality, ability, opportunity, race, ethnicity, language, and creed. We celebrate the wonder of our individuality through sport every four years in the winter and summer Special Olympics, where athletes push the limits of excellence, beauty, and achievement. Beethoven expresses the brilliance of individuality in the "Ode to Joy" chorus in his 9th Symphony. As individuals, we have the right of freedom of expression and individuality. There is a dignity that comes with being able to make our own decisions and share our creativity with the world. Our ability to express ourselves freely brings about a dignity to our existence as humans.

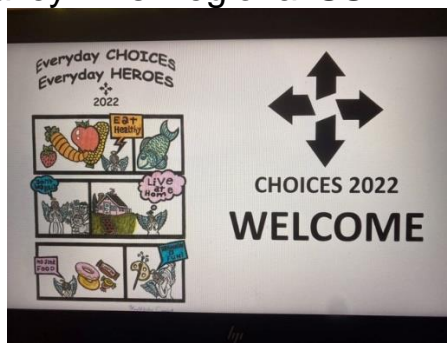
According to the US Declaration of Independence, human rights include: the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness and no person or government should be allowed to take away your rights. A society cannot be free and safe if a portion of its people are denied their human rights. A person does not lose human rights simply because of one of their identities (race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and identity, disability, or whether they live in a rural or an urban setting). While our freedom is inherent: it is not without limits. The idea of rugged individualism with limited interaction from the government fails to meet our needs as social beings. We live in societies and have social agreements on how we should treat others. In return for living by these agreements, we get benefits society has to offer: access to employment, the ability to buy items that we need and participate in the economy, exposure to cultural activities, access to healthcare and education.

Even though we have inalienable (can't be taken away) rights, simply for being human, people with disabilities (and other minority groups) have had to defend our right to access supports and services, as the way that society has viewed disability has changed over time, including the amount that people with disabilities should be included in their communities. As a Self-Advocate, I challenge people in positions of power to make decisions (elected leaders, governments, non-profit and for-profit leaders, and service providers) to remember that people with disabilities are deserving of human dignity and respect. We have human rights, abilities, hopes, and dreams too. I remind all that self-advocacy is the civil rights movement advancing the cause of people with developmental disabilities to live with the supports they need in order to follow their dreams and share their abilities with their community. People with disabilities have given much to society and will continue to contribute to positive change as long as we are offered the opportunity. The disabled are not a burden to society but complement the others in the community. We ask our community to give us justice, fairness, and our due.



## Recapping CHOICES 2022: *Everyday CHOICES Everyday Heroes*

By: *Robert Balderama*, North Valley Hills Regional SSAN Representative



It's a wrap!!! Great job to the CHOICES Conference Planning team! We had nearly 500 folks join in virtually this year.

Thank you to our emcees for the day- PJ Swain & Chuck Struther!

To Doug Bonnet from VMRC- Best tech support!

Congratulations to the Poster, T-shirt & Video Contest winners!

**Links to videos contest winners:**

PCS- Living Life <https://youtu.be/wSuXrdBWLH8>

PCS- I Need A Job <https://youtu.be/UzJjk4t4sn4>

PCS TNT CLASS- We Choose to be Heroes <https://youtu.be/P6nZbLLskPY>

Super job by our keynote speakers- Emily Grunder, Jessica Allen and Tim Cabral!!

Can't forget to thank Tony Anderson- VMRC Executive Director for his support of this event and Dr. Dave Demetral for his inspirational words!

And to **The ADVOCATES** who entertained us!

There were many HEROES at the conference!!

Check out the CHOICES Institute rebooted website for more info!

<https://choicesconference.org/>

**We hope to see you all at the April 14, 2023 CHOICES Conference!!**



## Good News Corner

Here are some examples of websites that you can find uplifting news:

- [The Good News Network: California](#) for up to date information of interesting positive things happening.
- [Positive News](#) is a site that you can check out about what is happening around the world that is positive.
- [Good Good Good](#) shares really good news, not just feel good news.
- [Happy News](#) celebrates all that is good in the world.
- [Optimist Daily](#) is a site that shares solutions and good news from around the world.

## Kudos Corner

By Paul Mansell, San Diego Regional SSAN Rep

Kudos to Scott Barron! Scott has been a great representative for Disability Rights California (DRC) on SSAN since 2017. He has an associate degree in Liberal Arts from Fullerton College and a bachelor's degree in Communications, specializing in Entertainment and Tourism from CSU Fullerton in 2006.

Scott is from Whittier, CA and works as a Peer Advocate for DRC and is a part of the Outreach team to connect community members to DRC resources, while helping staff to find opportunities to outreach to communities. He sits on many DRC and outside committees, giving feedback on projects. If that wasn't enough, Scott also helps with individual advocacy, working with clients 1 on 1.

Scott has always been interested in politics and believes that people should have a voice, so he figured why not start with his own. Scott was encouraged to join SSAN after learning about the group from the former DRC SSAN Representative. He was excited about the opportunity to represent DRC on such a passionate group. He hopes that one day other states can see the hard work that SSAN does and start collaborating with us because they want to create a similar organization. SSAN sets a high standard for how people with disabilities should be viewed in California, the United States, and on a global scale. What a dream: Kudos to you Scott!

## Learn About SSAN

### Member Organizations

- [Association of Regional Center Agencies](#)
- [California Foundation for Independent Living Centers](#)
- [Department of Developmental Services](#)
- [Disability Rights California](#)
- [University of California, Davis MIND Institute](#)
- [University of California, Los Angeles, Tarjan Center](#)
- [University of Southern California, Children's Hospital](#)

### Self-Determination Update

Self-Determination is LIVE in California. Check out the [DDS Self-Determination Newsletter](#) for the latest on California's Self-Determination Program. Talk to your service coordinator to learn more.



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## Tips for Staying Positive in Trying Times

There is so much happening in our communities right now and at times it can feel over whelming. Here are some tips for keeping calm that we want to share with you:

- Remember your ABC's: Always Be Caring
- Listen to music: your favorite artist, or type of music
- Have a dance party and move around
- Try boxing or Thai Chi
- Talk to a friend or family member
- Mentor another advocate
- Write about how you are feeling or thinking
- Read and learn something new
- Take a break outside: fresh air is good for you
- Check out a coffee/tea shop and people watch
- Volunteer for an issue that you care about
- Share your story/experiences with others
- Get plenty of rest to feel energized for the next day
- Try to eat healthy
- Practice Yoga/stretching or mindful meditation
- Know that you are not alone

## Community Resources

- [SARTAC Zoom Meetings](#)
- [ARCA Regional Center COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [COVID-19 Stimulus Checks Won't Affect Your Benefits](#)
- [DRC's Build Back Better Resources](#)
- [Social Security Administration Blog](#)
- [SSA Ticket to Work Tips to Open Your ABLÉ Account](#)
- [Office of Self-Determination Ombudsperson](#)
- [How to Talk About Disability Sensitively](#)
- [World Institute on Disability News](#)

## SAVE THE DATES

### Disability Rights California



#### [Events and Trainings](#)

### CalABLE



#### [News and Trainings](#)



#### [DO Network Training Library](#)

### Plain Language COVID-19 Resources Available on:

#### [SCDD Website](#)

### Register for the Monthly California Statewide Self-Advocacy Chats on Zoom



#### [Current Issues and Resources](#)

### [2022 Voting Resources](#)

DRC Voting Hotline:  
888-569-7955

[Disability Vote California](#)

[DVCA Nov 2022 Series](#)