



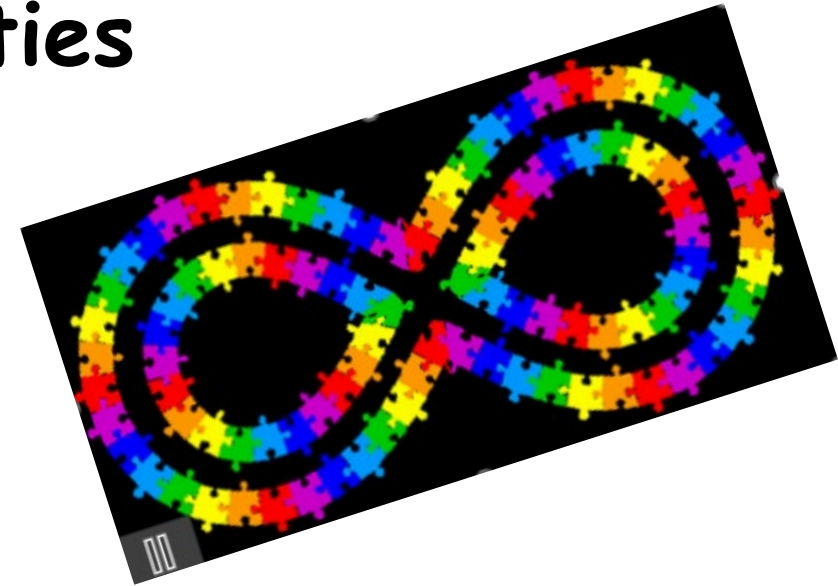
# California Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities


GCDD Keynote Speaker

January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023

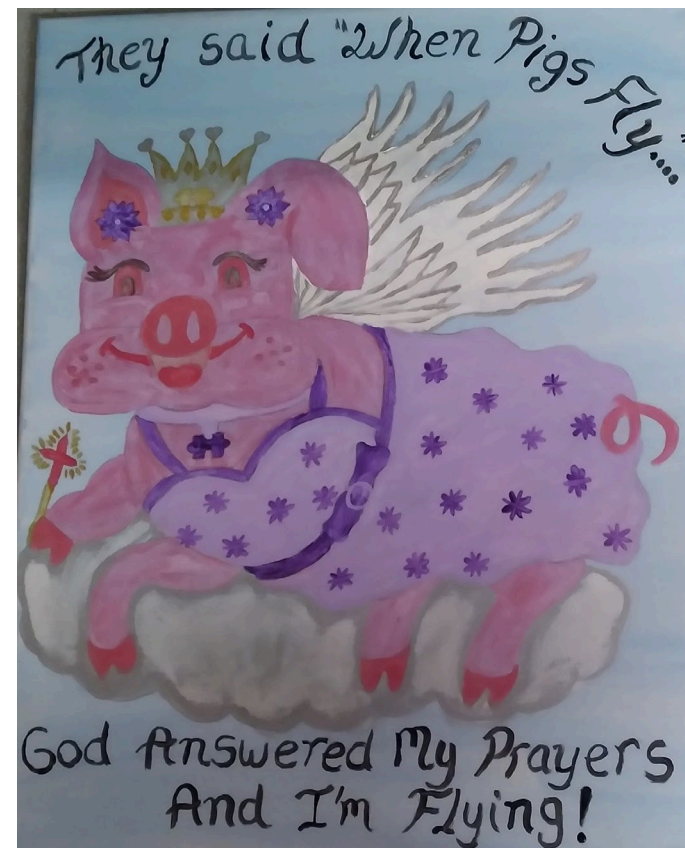
Presented By

Heidi Lieb-Williams





When we are given wings to fly,  
be excited to watch us soar!





**Hope that makes a difference.**

**Impossible?**

**Means...**

**I'm Possible!!!**

**Take "I cant's" and "You'll nevers" and don't underestimate the power of adding the word 'yet'!**





**Advocating allows dreams to  
turn into living a meaningful life  
as we define our success with  
the supports, we need, to achieve  
our American Dream.**



## **I'm Diagnosed With:**

- Autism
  - Anxiety Disorder
- Functionally Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- Attention and Concentration Deficit
- Mixed Receptive-Expressive Disorder
- Recurrent Major Depressive Disorder
- Spinal Cord Injuries/Partial Paralysis
  - Balance Disorder

## **As A Child Diagnosed With:**

- Developmentally Delayed
- Cognitively Impaired
- Learning Disabilities



# Chair of Alaska's Governor's Council On Disabilities and Special Education



**Former Governor Bill Walker**



**U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan**



**U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski**



**Governor Mike Dunleavy**



## **Who Am I? My Story... My Testimony...**

- **Serve on other Alaska committees**
  - **National Speaker/Advocate**
- **Founder of Alaska's Shining Abilities Craft Fair**
- **2020 NACDD Betty Williams Champion of Equality awardee**
  - **NACDD Leadership Circle Inductee**
- **2022 Herstory awardee for the Global Women's Peace Network through the Women's Federation for World Peace**
  - **2022 Ms. Elite National Heart of America**
  - **Author, Actress, Director, and so much more.**







Connect with Agencies, Community Organizations,  
& Family Supports To Obtain Disability – Related Information.

Artists & Disability Advocate Presentations  
Sensory Station Areas for Revamping  
Obstacle Course & Other Activities



**Where:** Alaska State Fair  
Events Tent (Yellow Gate Area)

**Date:** Monday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022

**Time:** 11am – 8pm



**More than Autistic! I am...**

**CEO Puzzled With Purpose – Autistically Inspired Creations**



**Handmade:**  
**Apparel & Artwork**  
**Blankets & Crafts**  
**Home Accessories**  
**Jewelry & Knits**  
**& Much More**



**Heidi Lieb-Williams**  
**National Speaker/Advocate**

**Puzzled With Purpose**  
**Autistically Inspired Creations**

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 **(907) 884-4189** 

**Connecting Autism & the Community**  
**With the Hope that Makes a Difference**

# Autism From The Autistic Eye



- A) Social
- ~◇ nonverbal
  - ◇ peer relationships
  - ◇ interests
  - ◇ perspective & insights

- C) Motivational/Body
- ◇ restricted interests
  - ◇ patterns - inflexible
  - ◇ physical mannerisms
  - ◇ focus on parts/difficulty with whole

- B) Communication
- ~◇ language development
  - ◇ conversation building
  - ◇ idiosyncratic words
  - ◇ imagination/problem-solving (imitation)

- D) Executive
- ◇ activation
  - ◇ attention
  - ◇ effort
  - ◇ affect
  - ◇ memory
  - ◇ sensory integration





How I understand this to mean

- ◇ never
- ~◇ sometimes struggle (maybe once a year)
- ⊕ rarely (not so much, but can't say never)
- ◇☒ definitely



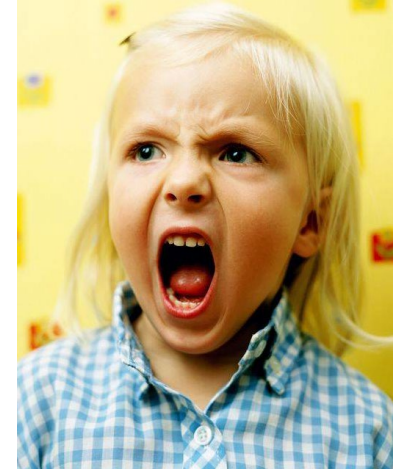
\* When you have two or more in each category of A, B, C, D you get diagnosed with Autism.

\*In the circle graph, I struggle with some of the issues inside of the circles at various times.  
All are a part of a person who has Autism.

Hopefully this helps anyone to further understand Autism a little more. There is a statement that once you have you met one Autism person, you've met one Autism person. No two persons are the same.

## **Difference between tantrum fit and a meltdown:**

**Tantrum is a behavior issue that is a result of not getting what you want, and you think you can manipulate a person by screaming and acting out to get what you want.**



**A meltdown cannot be stopped by handing something to them or diverting their attention with something else.**



# What a meltdown feels and looks like...

Your Brain vs My Brain

High Speed Internet vs Slow Internet Connection Rate



# Autism's Positive Strengths



- We live with intensity. Allows us to achieve some of our successes.
- We rely on our strengths like our focus to single task helping us to finish our tasks at hand.
- We work hard to try to survive in a world not easy to maneuver around and keep the pace of others.
- We live by trial and error to figure out what and how to do things.
- We live outside of our comfort zone. Used to accomplish things you didn't think you could do.
- We stood in the face of doubters that believed we couldn't accomplish something we eventually did.
- Since we know how to be different we contribute in other ways.
- We celebrate all accomplishments...even the little things.



The Way I see the world is...



# Essential skills for self-advocates/leaders

- Support goals of independence to live meaningful lives.
- Educate and assist others along their journey's.
- Understanding your diagnosis and describing your struggles. Use as a powerful example of how to move forward.
- Identify your values. What matters to you most and why.
- Know your worth. Identify where you want to go and want you want to achieve. What do you need to maintain your well-being?
- Know your strengths and how they can be used towards what you want to accomplish or be a part of within your team goals.
- Develop a growth mindset. Be teachable, learnable, & moldable.
- Present issues and gaps in a clear compelling way that makes others see the issues as worth solving.





# Essential skills for self-advocates/leaders

(Continued...)

- Be bold in the face of adversity. Have the courage, commitment, take risk, do the research, know your facts, and stand up. Be respectful, open-minded, listen, and understand others point of views.
- Find ways that what you're trying to convey makes sense to others.
- Give others a chance to speak up.
- Don't put limits on accomplishments you can achieve.

Skills also include:

Self-Control

Self-Respect

Self-Discipline

Self-Reflection

Self-Awareness

Self-Esteem

Self-Determination

Self-Confidence





# Advocacy

**Self-Advocate**

**Parent-Advocate**

**Professional-Advocate**





**You are good enough!**  
**You are smart enough!**  
**You have enough to offer!**  
**You are the person the world needs!!**

**Dream bigger than you think is possible!**

**Your voice matters in changing the  
course of history!!!**



# How do self-advocates develop their skills



- Tear down the walls of what's blocking anyone to achieve their pursuits.
  - Convey new definitions of unimaginable possibilities to become evidence of never giving up.
- Learn to connect the pieces, open doors, and realize what's possible.
  - Change your vision to see what you want out of life.
  - Be proud of who you are knowing the gifts and talents that you have to offer.
  - Be there for your community and serve those you're advocating for.
    - Listen, learn, and educate yourself.





## Getting involved on state and national levels

- Learning system advocacy through attending conferences, Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, becoming members of disability related committees, speaking with legislatures, National Association on Councils of Developmental Disabilities, or National Leadership Consortium training.
- Develop strong relationships showing you're a team player.
  - Articulate the value you bring and your contributions .
- Build evidence on what needs to change, how that change can happen, and raise attention about important issues.
- Encourages participation, shows the bigger picture, inspires others.
- Find mentors to help you and instill belief that you're the best person for the job. Show why.
  - Remember to give credit where credit is due.
  - Thank everyone along the way.



## State and National level advocacy is the process of:

- Educating policy makers to create laws and regulations, when none exist, change harmful or ineffective policies, ensuring the implementation is enforced.
  - Meeting with legislative staff
- Providing information to committees; testifying in floor sessions
- Having media involvement, capitol hill events and rally's, spreading the messages
  - Fighting for our rights, changing perceptions, & addressing barriers.



# Serve your team, organization, community, state, and the nation (Parent, Professional, and Advocate Roles)

- Empower someone to discover their passions.
  - Be supportive and build each other up.
  - Believe in us. Teach us to rise above.
    - Be an example in advocating.
- Serve one another with your special talents.
  - Uplift spirits when needed.
- Promote community, employers, co-workers, & education inclusion.
  - Teach how to use their story to implement and change laws.
  - Link their contributions to results.
    - Promote independence.
    - Utilize peer support.





# Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities

--GcDD--







## Developmental Disability Shared Vision Law

Alaskans share a vision of a flexible system in which each person directs their own supports, based on their strengths and abilities, toward a meaningful life in their home, their job and their community. Our vision includes supported families, professional staff and services available throughout the state now and into the future.

### Five priorities based on community input:

**Priority #1 - Every person directs their own supports:** Based on his or her strengths and abilities, the person receiving services will decide when, who and how services are provided. Families and other team members will help with supported decision making so that the person can direct services as much as they are able. This includes a commitment to making services available in the community where the person chooses to live as well as honoring the family's role in the lives of children receiving services.

**Priority #2 - Services will support lives with meaning:** Our system helps people create lives with meaning, purpose and inclusion as well as respecting individual choices. This will look different for each person. Opportunities for meaningful relationships and natural supports are highly valued. As Alaskans, we will support the diversity of cultures of people receiving services in our state.

**Priority #3 - Our system values the role of direct support professionals:** Direct support professionals will have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform job duties. This includes access to education and supportive supervision. A good direct support professional is engaged and assists the person to lead a meaningful self-directed life which includes helping the person develop and maintain a variety of respectful and authentic relationships.

**Priority #4 - Our system is flexible and simple:** Our system is responsive to needs and preferences throughout life. It is as simple and clear as possible so individuals and families understand how to get their needs met. Information is available in a clear, concise, and consistent manner. Also, the person understands the variety of services available and is assisted as needed to make an informed choice.

**Priority #5 - Our system uses resources wisely and measures outcomes focused on quality of life:** Alaska is committed to the vision above regardless of available resources. This vision drives quality improvement. In order to ensure the system is available into the future, resources are used wisely while innovation and creative problem-solving are encouraged.

The **Funny**  
**Side** of



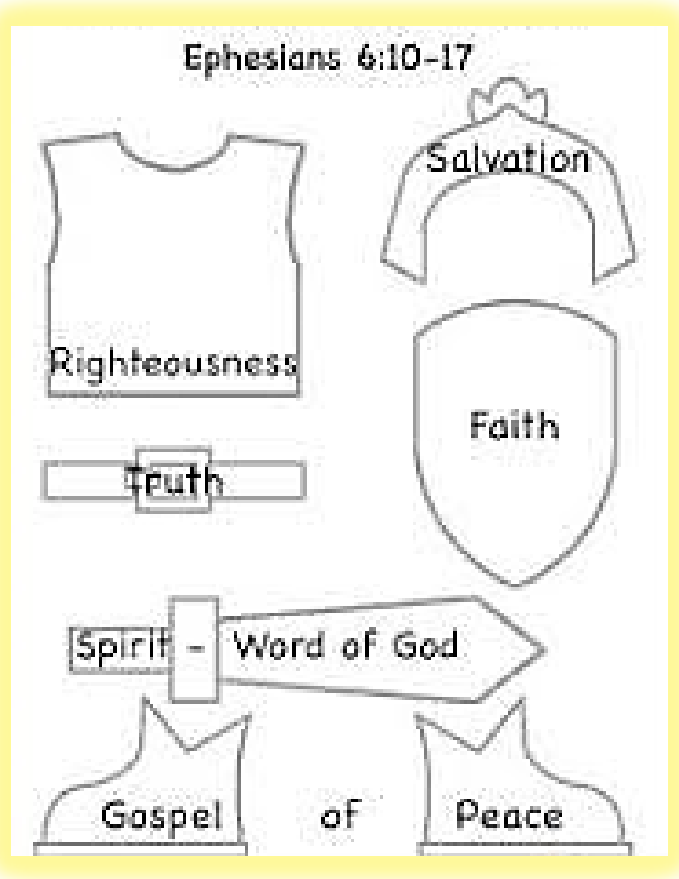
**Autism**



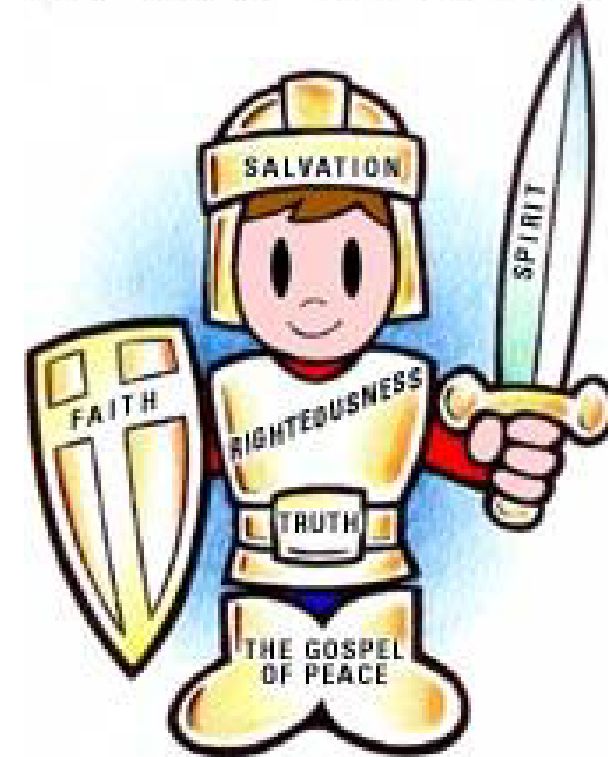
IGP= Individualized God Plan







# Armor of God









Still have trouble saying it!

Goodbye A.....

Hello Autism Spectrum!

# Inspiration



**Tolerance says I have to put up with you.**



**Awareness says I'm seeing a new perspective  
I didn't see before.**



**Acceptance says you are amazing  
because you are you –  
despite your differences.**





**Autism allows you to  
process information in ways  
some people never  
understand and see things in  
ways others find  
unimaginable and that  
means to me I actually have  
a pretty cool superpower.**



**Autism is like Alaskan snowflakes. Each one is unique, in its own way, but when it hits the ground, it makes quite an impact on everyone around.**



# Thank You For Coming Today!



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**(907) 884-4189**

**Any Questions?**

**I'll Answer the Best That I Can.**