



## Giving Back to Your Community by Viri Salgado

This past November, a self-advocacy training was held at the Ballard Parent Center. The training was about community service and learning ways to give back to the community. It was presented by the State Council on Developmental Disabilities, San Diego Regional Center, the American Red Cross, and local self-advocates.



Above: Zach Hill and Viri Salgado at the Community Service Training

Community Service is volunteering to help people or communities in need—such as feeding and giving shelter to people who are homeless. Spending time helping your community is a great way to expand your views of the world. By getting involved in the community and surrounding yourself with people who are dedicated to making the world better, you learn a lot about how the world works. You get a sense of purpose by serving those around you.

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Above: Self-Advocates and staff prepare personal care kits for unhoused San Diegans.

## Giving Back to Your Community continued from page 1

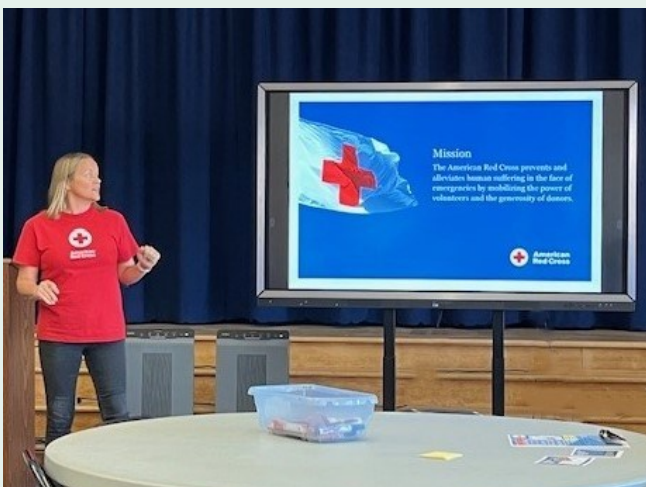
Not only does spending time helping at local shelters or food banks provide an important service, but it also helps to unite the community and build connections. Volunteering teaches you people skills, communication skills, and leadership skills. Dedicating time to help others teaches patience, kindness, and resilience.

There were two guest presenters at the training, Erik Valladares and Melissa Altman. Erik talked about the community service organizations that he's involved with. The first organization, which was founded by young adults, is called Community Plate Initiative or CPI. CPI provides warm, healthy meals to anyone in need. They also provide other resources like clothing and hygiene products.



*Erik Valladares presents information on CPI.*

The second organization Erik volunteers for is San Diego Canyonlands which focuses on the environment. This group of volunteers dedicate time to preserve and restore local natural habitats and organize canyon cleanups.



*Melissa Altman presents information on the American Red Cross*

Melissa Altman, of the American Red Cross, shared a presentation about the type of community service and volunteer opportunities they coordinate. The Red Cross conducts blood drives at different locations. People donate blood that could save someone's life. Red Cross volunteers receive first aid and CPR training and help people evacuate when a natural disaster happens.

After all the presentations were done, everyone gathered to participate in a fun community service activity. We put together personal care item bags for people who are unhoused.

There are so many important causes that need volunteers. Whether you're interested in advocacy, animal rights, or helping the homeless, you can find opportunities to donate your time. Check out websites like <https://www.redcross.org>, <https://www.sdcanyonlands.org/volunteer> and <https://www.communityplateinitiative.com> for volunteer opportunities.

Even if you only donate a few hours of time each month, you will be making a huge difference in the lives of others!



# People Who Are Important to Me

by Cali Williams



There are many people in my life that I care about and admire. What matters the most in relationships is being by someone's side, being there for them, and being their role model.

Here are a few of the people who are important to me:

- ♥ Family
- ♥ Friends
- ♥ Co-workers
- ♥ My day program staff and other program members
- ♥ San Diego People First members (especially the officers and Debbie Marshall)
- ♥ Neighbors

These are the people who I admire because of what they do for me.

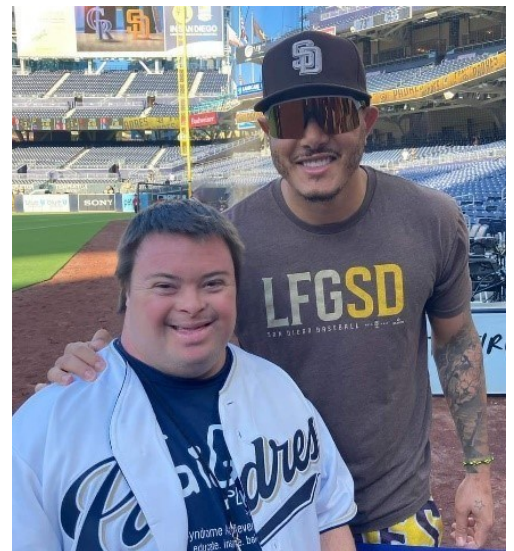
When it comes to life, there is always a way to keep the peace and love each other.

## Down Syndrome Acceptance

by Clark Gurley

We need more people who care about individuals with Down Syndrome. It is important to be educated and educate others about our needs. We are humans just like everyone else, we just have an extra chromosome.

It's all about being more supportive and changing lives. People in the world need to do better at this. This is why GiGi's Playhouse San Diego celebrated acceptance at the Padres Down Syndrome Awareness Night. I went as the Ambassador from GiGi's and was the perfect guy for the job to promote acceptance in the city.



Clark Gurley and Padre Manny Machado

Join the *I SPEAK* newsletter team. This is an opportunity for readers such as yourself to share your ideas and stories or support self-advocates to contribute 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)*

# My Christmas Traditions

by Sarah Wolfsheimer

What are the Christmas traditions that you have with your family? I have different Christmas traditions with both sides of my family and even with my best friend.

On my dad's side, we celebrate Christmas Eve at my aunt's house. My sister and I make our grandma's recipe for "Pumpkin Picecream." (See next page for recipe).

On my mom's side, we all eat tamales on Christmas day. We exchange gifts we got for each other, as well as gifts from my mom's boyfriend. Sometimes we go look at local Christmas lights.

On Christmas day, we open presents at my dad's house.



*Above: The Christmas tree at my mom's house.*



*Above: Me and my best friend wearing the Snoopy hoodie.*

My Christmas tradition with my best friend is a best friend gift exchange. We usually do it right before Christmas. Last year, we each gave each other a gift that was Snoopy-related. My best friend bought me a Snoopy stuffed animal and a mini-backpack. I got my best friend a Snoopy hoodie. We are both big fans of Snoopy.

I love all the traditions I have with the people I love. They are all so different, but it's all about spending time together.

## The Importance of Those with Disabilities Voting

My name is Megan Christian. I am thirty-eight years old. I am a person with autism and other disabilities.

I have participated in the American democratic process—called voting—since I was eighteen years old. I think, feel, and believe that it is important for individuals with disabilities to participate in this process. It is one way to get our voices heard and make our opinions known.

Voting makes a huge difference and impact. If you are eighteen or older, get out and vote! You will be glad you did.



**Pumpkin Ice Cream**  
**(also known as “Pumpkin Piccream”)**  
by Sarah Wolfsheimer



**Ingredients:**

- ♦ 1 pre-made graham cracker pie crust
- ♦ 3 cups vanilla ice cream
- ♦ 1 cup pure canned pumpkin
- ♦ 1/3 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- ♦ 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

**Optional:**

- ♦ Whipped cream or other whipped topping

**Instructions:**

- ♦ Combine vanilla ice cream, canned pumpkin, brown sugar, and cinnamon in a large bowl and mix until smooth. (Use a whisk or an electric mixer on low speed).
- ♦ Pour mixture into graham cracker pie crust.
- ♦ Freeze for 4 to 5 hours or overnight.
- ♦ Remove from freezer for 10 to 15 minutes before serving.
- ♦ Top with a little whipped cream or spoonful of other whipped topping (if you want).

***Enjoy!***



**SCDD Supported  
Self-Advocate Zoom Meetings**

**2nd Monday of the Month**  
1:00 p.m.  
SDPF Conference Planning

**Tuesday**  
11:00 a.m.  
Healthy Living & Cooking Prep

**Wednesday**  
4:00 p.m.  
Advocates @ the Movies

**4th Thursday of the Month**  
11:00 a.m.  
I SPEAK Newsletter

**3rd Friday of the Month**  
2:00 p.m.  
San Diego People First (SDPF)

**Zoom link for all meetings**  
**bit.ly/421knkO**  
**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.  
If meeting times or dates change, an email notification will be sent.

If you have questions or suggestions for future trainings or would like to be added to the email list, contact  
**Debbie.Marshall@scdd.ca.gov**  
or call **(619) 913-8232**

# SDPF Election Results by Cali Williams

In November, San Diego People First had their officer elections. Before the meeting, individuals interested and eligible to run for office went through the nomination process.

During the November meeting nominees gave a speech on why they are running for office and what they hope to bring to the position. After the speeches, the elections were held.

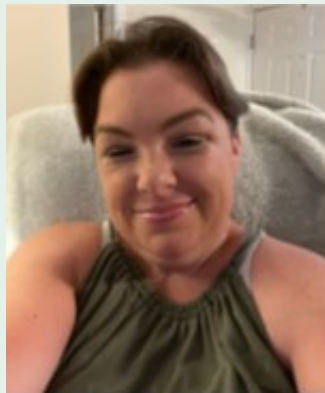
Newly elected San Diego People First officers for January 2024 – January 2026 are as follows:



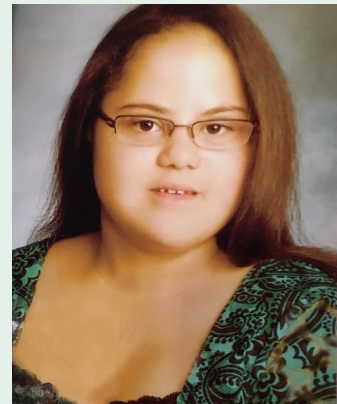
President Peter Salgado



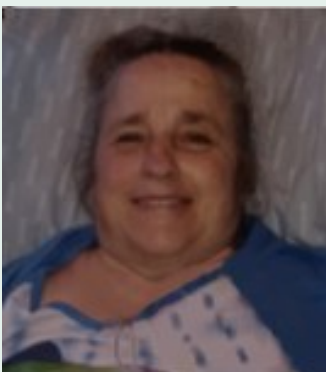
Vice President Paul Mansell



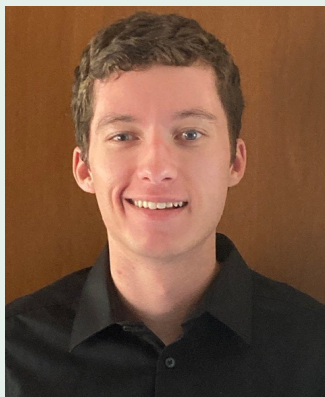
Secretary Taylor Wiesner



Treasurer Cali Williams



Sergeant at Arms Nora Parker



Member-at-Large Zach Hill



Ex Officio Viri Salgado

*Please join us at a San Diego People First meeting in the new year!*

## Where I Work

by Zach Hill

I work at *Villa de Vida* located in Poway, California. Villa de Vida is an apartment community that provides housing for adults with disabilities. Residents range in age from young adults to senior citizens. Villa de Vida also provides a healthy lifestyle and encourages residents to participate in fun community outings.

I have been working at Villa de Vida since May of 2022. My position is Activities Aide. Some of my job responsibilities include making attendee sign-in sheets for events, making coffee during coffee hour, and getting healthy store-bought snacks ready. I lead our virtual activities by organizing games or projects related to the monthly theme. I also take attendance and lead the icebreaker for each game or activity of the day.

Villa de Vida has a Social Club that is open to all adults with disabilities. Social Club activities are held both virtually (online) and in person. The Club goes to different places events in the San Diego County area. These places include strawberry fields in Carlsbad, the beach, museums, Padres baseball games, and many more.

To find more information about the Social Club or events go to <https://villadevida.org> and click on Social Club and Community Activities. You can also sign up to their mailing list to get updates about social club events and virtual activities on Zoom.



## San Diego People First Conference Planning Meeting for the 30th Annual Self-Advocacy Conference 2024

Join us to learn how you can play a part in shaping the best possible conference for advocates with developmental disabilities.

**When:** 2nd Monday of each month

**Time:** 1 p.m. – 2 p.m.

**Who can attend?** Self-Advocates and their support agencies.

**Where:** Zoom

Meeting ID: 937 0215 8975

Passcode: 123763

### Questions?

Debbie Marshall – [debbie.marshall@scdd.ca.gov](mailto:debbie.marshall@scdd.ca.gov)  
or Viri Salgado – [viridiana.salgado@sdcrc.org](mailto:viridiana.salgado@sdcrc.org)



**Please mark your calendar for the next conference planning meeting.**

**We need and want people on the committee to be active!**

**Your ideas and support are needed to help us make this a true community effort.**

**Everyone is welcome!**



# The Good Life

by Paul Mansell

I have a good life. Despite what people in power say about people with disabilities we have full and rich lives. We may have different abilities, lack college degrees or careers, own few items, or live in poverty. Does that mean we live limited lives? No!

We, people with disabilities, can lead complete and meaningful lives. For example, I get great joy and happiness from my self-advocacy activities and groups. I love writing because it is my great passion. I am 65 and have a life of experiences. I want to share what I have learned, especially as a mentor to the young.

I enjoy engaging in skills I am good at, especially my computer. I selected a new Mac mini that meets my needs now and well into the future. I am in the process of interacting fully with Ninox 3.10, a database program that I love.

Competency is something new to me because I have experienced failure nearly all my life. I have a reputation for persevering and pulling myself off the mat, but I need to be more competent. My failures fill up a shopping list, so I don't want to list them out. Reading it will only bore you, and writing it will get me down. But competency is exciting, something to be proud of. Designing data models, coding, or data entry excites me and gets my juices flowing; time stands still.

Computers can be beneficial. Having many accessibility features, they can serve as accommodations. My calendar programs are excellent examples.



I can enter and review my daily schedule to keep my memory fresh.

I can use it to stay organized, prepare for meetings, or keep deadlines.

It was tough to stay in a motel for a week without my Mac mini because getting by on my iPad Pro wasn't the same. I can spend almost all day on my Mac mini because I love computing.

I have a rich and whole life and wouldn't trade it for any other because I am one with myself and my God. I have many blessings: my faith, education, friends, Self-Determination, Self-Advocacy, and excellent healthcare providers.

Sure, there are things I wish for in my life, but everyone feels that way. I have enjoyed and made good use of the social welfare safety net. I have had a wonderful life.



SCDD San Diego Imperial  
& San Diego Regional Center present



**What:** Advocates at the Movies is an opportunity to get together with other self-advocates to watch movies about people with disabilities. After watching the movie, we will spend time talking about it.

**When:** Wednesdays 4:00 to 5:00 p.m.

**Where:** [Zoom](#)

**Meeting ID:** 937 0215 8975

**Passcode:** 1237

**Why:** Watching and talking about films that relate to various disabilities can help build your advocacy skills and increase your awareness and understanding of how a disability can impact your life.

**Who:** Self-advocates and support agencies.

For information contact:

[Debbie Marshall](#)

[debbie.marshall@scdd.ca.gov](mailto:debbie.marshall@scdd.ca.gov) or

[Viri Salgado](#)

[viridiana.salgado@sdrc.org](mailto:viridiana.salgado@sdrc.org)

## Enjoy a Healthy Holiday Season and Healthier New Year!

Many viruses (like COVID-19, flu, and RSV) are caused by tiny airborne germs that remain in the air when someone breathes, talks, sings, coughs or sneezes.

Following these 5 tips will help protect yourself, your family, and your community from getting sick:

1. Stay home if you are sick or have been in close contact with someone who is sick.
2. Wear an N95 mask. Make sure to wear it correctly. Wear it in all indoor public settings and outside if it's crowded.
3. Increase airflow in indoor spaces by opening windows and/or using air purifiers.
4. Get tested for COVID-19 before and after traveling or gathering. PCR tests are the most accurate.
5. Get vaccinated and boosted.

**Attention! A limited amount of COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Test Kits are available at the San Diego Imperial Office of SCDD.**

**To get your free test kits please email [sandiego@scdd.ca.gov](mailto:sandiego@scdd.ca.gov)**

# SAVE THE DATE



## 2024 SAN DIEGO PEOPLE FIRST CONFERENCE

When: Friday, June 7<sup>th</sup> &  
Saturday, June 8<sup>th</sup>

2-Day In-Person Conference

Where: San Diego Marriott  
Mission Valley Hotel  
8757 Rio San Diego Drive



***“Self-Advocates  
Take Charge and Be  
the Change”***

**Registration details will be coming soon!**

For more information please contact:

Creative Support Alternatives: [creativesupportalternatives@gmail.com](mailto:creativesupportalternatives@gmail.com)

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

or Viri Salgado: [viridiana.salgado@sdrc.org](mailto:viridiana.salgado@sdrc.org)

Contact your Regional Center Service Coordinator to add a  
Self-Advocacy **GOAL** in your IPP to pay for your conference registration fee.

For more updates on the conference follow us on Facebook:  
[San Diego People First Self-Advocacy Conference](#)



# SAVE THE DATE!

## Join the Self- Advocacy Movement



### **Celebrate with Imperial Valley People First**

### **“The Sky Is The Limit”**



## Imperial Valley's 29<sup>th</sup> People First Conference In Person

**Who: Self-Advocates and Allies**

**When: March 16, 2024**

**Where: Imperial Valley College (IVC)  
380 E. Aten Rd. Imperial, CA 92251**

**Why: Reconnect with the self-advocacy  
movement and have fun.**

### **Registration details will be coming soon!**

For more information please contact:

Debbie Marshall: (619) 913-8232  
[Debbie.marshall@scdd.ca.gov](mailto:Debbie.marshall@scdd.ca.gov)

Joab Gonzalez: (760) 355-8101  
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