

# CSLN 2014 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Leadership Conference

"Ethics, Advocacy, and Leadership"

# **CONFERENCE BROCHURE**

Thursday and Friday April 10 & 11, 2014

The Dana Hotel - San Diego, California



www.supportedliving.com

# CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

| WED     | TIME          | SESSION / EVENT  | LOCATION                   |
|---------|---------------|--|----------------------------|
| 4/9/14  | 5:00p-7:00p   | Early Registration and packet pick up  | Hotel Entry Area           |
| THU     | TIME          | SESSION / EVENT  | LOCATION                   |
| 4/10/14 | 8:00a-9:00a   | Registration and Continental Breakfast   | Mission Bay Ballroom Foyer |
|         | 8:00a-3:00p   | Exhibitors   | Mission Bay Ballroom Foyer |
|         | 9:00a-9:15a   | Conference Welcome and Logistics — CSLN President Mark Melanson<br>Key Person Award Presentation   | Mission Bay Ballroom       |
|         | 9:15a-11:00a  | GENERAL SESSION: Heather Simmons – "The Values of Inclusion""  | Mission Bay Ballroom       |
|         | 11:00a-11:15a | Break  |                            |
|         | 11:15a-12:30p | BREAK OUT SESSIONS:  |                            |
|         |               | Heather Simmons – "Values Into Practice – What Does That Look Like? – Part 1"  | Sunset Room                |
|         |               | George Suess - #1 "When the Shift Hits the Fan"  | Marina Room                |
|         |               | David Carothers – "Employment Law and Supported Living"  | Pacific Room               |
|         | 12:30-1:30p   | LUNCH KEYNOTE: Craig Gottwals — "The Affordable Care Act"  | Mission Bay Ballroom       |
|         | 1:30-1:45p    | Break  |                            |
|         | 1:45p-3:00p   | BREAK OUT SESSIONS:  |                            |
|         |               | Heather Simmons – "Values Into Practice – What Does That Look Like? – Part 2"  | Sunset Room                |
|         |               | George Suess - #2 "I Don't Care How Much You Know, till I Know How Much You Care"  | Marina Room                |
|         |               | Craig Gottwals – "The Affordable Care Act – Delving Deeper"  | Pacific Room               |
|         | 3:00-3:15p    | Break  |                            |
|         | 3:15 -4:30p   | General Session — Sue North, Dwight Hanson, Tony Anderson, Carol McKinney and Jacquie Dillard-Foss "The Evolution of the Lanterman Coalition"        | Mission Bay Ballroom       |
|         | 5:00 -7:00 pm | Hospitality Reception  | Tropical Pool              |
| FRI     | TIME          | SESSION / EVENT  | LOCATION                   |
| 4/11/14 | 8:00a-9:15a   | Continental Breakfast and Table Topic Discussions  | Mission Bay Ballroom       |
|         | 9:15a-11:00p  | GENERAL SESSION: Janice Fialka— "The Dance of Partnership: Why Do My Feet Hurt?"   | Mission Bay Ballroom       |
|         | 11:00p-11:15a | Break  |                            |
|         | 11:15-12:30p  | BREAK OUT SESSIONS:  |                            |
|         |               | Janice Fialka/Lisa Houghtelin/Beth Gallagher — "Understanding and Strengthening the Partnership Between Self-Advocates, Families, and Professionals" | Sunset Room                |
|         |               | George Suess #3 – "The Most Powerful Tool a DSF Will Ever Need, Yet Few Possess"   | Marina Room                |
|         |               | Debbie Moreno/Michael Emory – "The Power of the Person"  | Pacific Room               |
|         | 12:30p-1:30p  | Lunch  | Poolside Patio             |
|         | 1:30p-1:45p   | Break  |                            |
|         | 1:45-3:00p    | BREAK OUT SESSIONS:  |                            |
|         |               | Paul Wurst – "How's Your iPad Doing Today?" – Roundtable on the iPad and Other Mobile Devices  | Sunset Room                |
|         |               | George Suess #4 – "What Chance Does Gotham Have When Good People Do Nothing"   | Marina Room                |
|         |               | Carlene Holden/Marty Omoto – "An Overview of Scary Things to Come - Part 2"  | Pacific Room               |
|         | 3:00-3:15p    | Break  |                            |
|         | 3:15 -4:00p   | General Session — Carol McKinney/Jacquie Dillard-Foss — "CSLN Governmental Affairs Update and Conference Wrap Up"                                    | Mission Bay Ballroom       |

### **Table Topics**

Please join us during breakfast on Friday at 8:00 AM for our annual Table Top Discussions! This is a chance to discuss topics of your choosing in small groups. Some of the topics will be:

"Values"

"Parents and Families"

"Supporting People with Medical Challenges"

"Social Enterprise"

"Advocacy"

"SLS and Overtime Management" AND MANY MORE!



# Congratulations to Diana DeRodeff CSLN 2014 Key Person Award Recipient

In 2005, the Key Person Award was established by CSLN to recognize an individual's outstanding advocacy efforts for the advancement of supported and independent living services throughout the state of California. This year we recognize Diana DeRodeff, recently retired Executive Director of InAlliance.

Diana served on the 1993 California State Advisory Group of the Community Supported Living Arrangement (CSLA) pilot project out of which was to come supported living services. In Alliance, then Sacramento Vocational Services,

was one of the original CSLA agencies and was a pioneer in developing innovative services in northern California, not only in supported living services, but in the provision of supported employment, and inclusive community services. She served on the Board of the California Disability Services Association, as well as Area Board III, and the Alta California Regional Center Provider Advisory Committee. She is recognized by CSLN for her long time eloquent advocacy on behalf of supported living services for Californians with developmental disabilities.

# **CONFERENCE SESSIONS**

**Thursday, April 10 General Session** 

"The Values of Inclusion"

**Heather Simmons** 

**Thursday, April 10 Morning Break-Out Sessions** 

"Values Into Practice - What Does That Look Like?" Part 1"

#### **Heather Simmons**

Taking an in depth look at how our values drive the work that we do. How can we keep real, quality, empowered lives as the focus of our efforts. What can we do as individuals and as a system to practice the values of inclusion every day? Asking the challenging questions that expose what John O'Brien calls "The Integrity Gap".

### "When the Shift Hits the Fan"

# George Suess

In normal times, shifting corporate culture from reactivity to proactivity is arduous. In reactive times like these, when it's easy for individuals and organizations to wallow in apprehension and despair, those who dare to suggest a shift to proactivity and positivity might be considered impertinent, impractical or even delusional. Yet George Suess believes the time for such a Shift is now. In fact, the need for shifting perspectives and performance has never been greater.

Unpredictable, unresponsive and even uncaring funding sources along with increasingly draconian regulatory and accountability standards are a sign of the times. Now more than ever, a child or adult with disabilities needs forward-thinking, person-centered and energized people in their life.

George believes there is immense power in people and teams that

is sluggish or worse, dormant. "Our job", he says, "is to shift the corporate culture and unleash that power". Learn how this shift will benefit you, your organization and - most importantly, the people you support. Create the Shift, support the Shift, demand the Shift and let it hit the fan.

## "Employment Law and the Provision of SLS Services"

#### **David Carothers**

In this session, David will review both federal and state law related to the Fair Labor Standards Act, overtime laws and rules, the definition of joint employment and the implications for supported living providers.

He will also guide us through the alternative workweek rules related to staff scheduling and examine the sleep time pay requirements under Wage Order 15.

# **Thursday, April 10 Lunch Keynote**

#### "The Affordable Care Act"

# **Craig Gottwals**

The enormity of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act's ("PPACA or ACA") impact on your business is just beginning. In his Keynote address, attorney, professor and syndicated radio expert Craig Gottwals will give you an overview of the law's passage, scope, most challenging aspects and the recent changes that will reach deep into your business-model and force you to change the way you compensate your team. The federal regulator's definition of "common law" employee for Pay or Play standards means that your use of "shared", "leased" or IHSS employees could land your business with a substantial fine if those other entities are not providing health benefits to those workers. Without your knowledge of PPACA's most complex and nuanced commands, your organization will be fined as much as \$100 per employee per day.

# **CONFERENCE SESSIONS**

# **Thursday, April 10 Afternoon Break-Out Sessions**

## "Values Into Practice - What Does That Look Like? Part 2

#### **Heather Simmons**

Continuation of Prior Session

## "I Don't Care How Much You Know, till I Know How Much You Care"

# **George Suess**

Everyone believes they care, so when one talks about not caring, most people believe you are talking about someone else. Why do so many people and organizations say and deeply believe they care; yet, people receiving services too often disagree?

In this session participants will explore this conundrum utilizing a user friendly tool to assess caring relationships. Learn how to examine yourself, your program and your agency and most of all learn how all of us can and must improve in this critical area.

# "The Affordable Care Act - Delving Deeper"

## Craig Gottwals

In the breakout session, Craig will delve deeper into the nuances of the ACA to ensure that you are apprised of some of the most detailed requirements he sees businesses missing. Topics to be covered include:

- No employer waiting period for benefits may be longer than 60 days in California (but that could be changing to 90 or 120 days very soon under proposed legislation).
- How your use of "shared" employees could land you with substantial fines.
- Why you should probably already be tracking the hours of your variable hour employees to ensure you offer benefits to those folks the federal government deems your full time employees.
- How new non-discrimination rules will make it impossible for you to have tiered benefit structures for higher compensated personnel.
- How more than 60% of businesses in California will face the Cadillac Tax if the law is not changed.
- That you must be offering dental coverage to the children of your employees if you have less than 50 employees in California - but not if you have more.

## "The Evolution of the Lanterman Coalition"

# Sue North, Tony Anderson, Dwight Hanson, Carol McKinney and Jacquie Dillard Foss

The Lanterman Coalition consists of the 14 major stakeholders in California's community based developmental services system: The Arc and United Cerebral Palsy in California, the Association of Regional Center Agencies, Autism Society of California, California Alliance for Inclusive Communities, California Disability Services Association,

California State Council on Developmental Disabilities, California Supported Living Network, Disability Rights California, Family Resource Center Network of California, People First of California, and Service Employees International Union, Cal-TASH, and Easter Seals. Membership in the coalition requires a commitment to: (1) the Preservation of the Lanterman Act and the entitlement,(2) no categorical elimination of services, (3) no enrollment caps or waiting lists, (4) no reductions to services and supports important to people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and their families and (5) full support of the community imperative and the Olmstead decision.

Members of the Coalition will discuss how it began and evolved, the importance of advocacy and collaboration, and what it's focus is for the upcoming budget year.

## Friday, April 11 Morning Table Top Discussions

Friday, April 11 Morning General Session

# "The Dance of Partnership: Why Do My Feet Hurt?"

Janice Fialka

Friday, April 11 Morning Break-Out Sessions

# "Understanding and Strengthening the Partnership Between Self-Advocates, Families, and Professionals"

# Janice Fialka/Lisa Houghtelin/Beth Gallagher

Understanding and strengthening the partnership between self advocates, families and professionals. Taking a close look at the dynamics that make up the sometimes complicated relationships between all of the people that make up the support team. What are the belief systems in place and the myths that are adhered to in that triad? What are some strategies that can assist us to partner more effectively?

# "The Most Powerful Tool a DSF Will Ever Need to Know, Yet Few Possess"

# George Suess

In this session Mr. Suess will examine and explore a tool that should be the first one in everyone's tool box; yet, is most often missing. It is a tool proven to be effective not only with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities but also capable of transforming the workplace and even our personal and family relationships. There is no down side to the use of this remarkable tool and unlimited opportunity for those who obtain and master it. Come to this session and find out about the tool that can change people's lives and your career.



## Friday, April 11 Morning Break-Out Sessions

#### "The Power of the Person"

#### Debbie Moreno/Michael Emory

Staff training is an integral and essential part of Supported Living and the type of training staff receive is important to their success as well as the success of those they serve. While most agencies cover regional center training requirements, it is equally important to ensure that staff has training from the experts - the client's themselves. In this session, you will hear from Debbie and Mike, two individuals receiving supported living services who are actively involved in staff training and orientation within the agency providing their services. The stories of abuse, neglect and of life before supported living are profoundly impactful when told by those who have lived it. Both of these individuals are powerful self-advocates who are not only valuable assets within their agency, but for intellectually & developmentally disabled individuals throughout the country. As they share their stories, you will begin to see why their perspective is such an important part of staff training and you will gain a greater understanding of The Power of the Person.

## Friday, April 11 - Afternoon Break-Out Sessions

# "How's Your iPad doing today? -A Roundtable on the iPad and Other Mobile Devices"

#### **Paul Wurst**

Join a discussion on how mobile devices and computers are changing the lives of people we serve. Share stories about how recent software (voice recognition, word prediction, augmented voices, etc.) combined with hardware (device controls, individualized layout, gesture, movement and other modalities) can contribute to furthering community participation and inclusion. Bring your mobile device!

#### **Discussion Topics:**

- How to set up an iPad/iPhone & other mobile devices to enhance navigation, accessibility and usability.
- How to set up and use an iPad for AAC using the Dynavox/ Toby platform software to show one possible use of augmentative communications.
- Show and tell share favorite Apps & Mobile Solutions for people with developmental disabilities. How to create technology-based solutions for everyday tasks.
- Explore how we can facilitate the use of the iPad and other devices as tools for collaboration, co-learning and connections.
- Share insights from various approaches to interaction using technology in order to contribute to the development of new opportunities for people with a variety of disabilities.

Please visit our Exhibitors on Thursday, from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM in the foyer.

Take advantage of the resources and bring them back to your agency.

# "What Chance Does Gotham Have When Good People Do Nothing?"

#### George Suess

Organizations are organic. When they stop growing, they wither and eventually die. The times ahead will be challenging at best and heart breaking at worse. Organizations will need to adjust. Many decisions will be made.

Thoughtful leadership is needed for wise decision making more now than ever. And it's everyone's responsibility. The 3-Minute Assessment can help you help your organization. The 3-Minute Assessment process is quick, easy and effective. It is well designed for use in a hooligan variety of ways. For individual teams or residences or for organizations - As teams discuss the results of their assessments, complex issues become clearer. Thoughtful leadership crystallizes. Organizational priorities emerge and action follows.

Is it about a lack of resources?

Is it about lack of direction / support?

Is it about staff effectiveness?

Is it about integrity?

Come to this session to learn how to use the 3-Minute Assessment to help your team or organization. It's time for good people to do something.

# "An Overview of Scary Things to Come - Part 2" Carlene Holden/Marty Omoto

The federal government and the state are trying to find ways to contain costs. Medicaid and Medicare are planning to streamline the programs and make them affordable over the long run. Their plan is simple. It's known as the triple aim: serve more people, do it in a way that costs less, and improve quality.

Things are changing quickly and learning how to advocate for the needs of the people we care about is becoming challenging. Learn the changes that are hear now, learn what's coming soon, learn the problems to expect as managed care plans become more of a reality for services and long term supports. Help develop a plan of action to assure you program participants will get what they need and what they are entitled to receive.

# "CSLN Governmental Affairs Update and Conference Wrap Up"

# Carol McKinney and Jacquie Dillard-Foss CSLN Co-Chairs, Governmental Affairs Committee

In this session, the Co-Chairs of CSLN's Governmental Affairs Committee will summarize the challenges and successes of the past year, and activities planned by CSLN for the coming year.

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# CSLN 2014 CONFERENCE SPEAKER PROFILES

#### **Heather Simmons**

Since 1994 Heather Simmons has worked within the service system in roles as diverse as bus escort, support worker, development worker and group home manager. She worked with Scottish Human Services (SHS), a lead consultancy and development agency in the UK, for 3 years and was active in training staff across the human services sector in Scotland. The work of Scottish Human Services was influential in the closure of several long stay institutions for people with intellectual disabilities and chronic mental health issues. She has worked with people and organisations concerned with providing support in Mental Health; Aged Care and Intellectual and Physical disabilities. Her work is informed and deeply influenced by her lived experience as a consumer of mental health services.

Acknowledged internationally for her thoughtful approach to facilitating learning to create change, Heather has shared some her learning by publishing her explanation and understanding of the Values of Inclusion. She is committed to finding ways to support workers to be intentional, principled and person centered: able to understand what good looks like in the work and to translate their values in to practical, meaningful action.

Heather has published her learning including the following: *The Big Plan, A good Life after School*, Inclusion Press, 2006; *The Values of Inclusion*, Inclusion Press e-book, 2012

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### **George Suess**

George Suess, M.S. has worked with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities for over 40 years. He has been employed by The Arc of Delaware County, NY (Delarc) for 34 years and has served as CEO for the past 27. Delarc has published 3 best-selling books by Mr. Suess. Shift Happens . . . Making the Shift to Proactive Behavior Management, Vantage Point. . . A Dynamic Approach to Employee Orientation, and Welcome to Caring Without Restraint.

Whether it is on the topic of values-based leadership or positive behavior supports, audiences are intrigued by Delarc's common sense approach, innovative ideas and person-centered accomplishments. His goal is to inspire and motivate his audience and to unleash the power in people, teams and organizations. "The problem," he says, "is that common sense just isn't so common!"

# **Craig Gottwals**

As a healthcare policy attorney with an emphasis in employment law and a benefit consultant, Craig Gottwals delivers BB&T-Liberty's clients a unique blend of benefit knowledge and legal expertise. He specializes in benefit cost containment and compliance while working extensively with BB&T-Liberty's financial auditing division.

In addition to providing his clients with the most cost-effective benefit packages and solutions, Craig specializes in PPACA, FMLA, CFRA, Pregnancy Disability Leave, anti-harassment and discrimination practices, and paid family leave management.

He has consulted with over 250 businesses on COBRA, HIPAA, health reform, employee manuals, leave laws, sexual harassment, ADA, and other employment law issues as well as human resource director-level and finance officer recruiting assignments. He successfully negotiated hundreds of carrier rate concessions for his clients over the last decade amounting to well over \$2.5 million dollars in premium reductions.

He is a member of the California Bar Association and American Bar Association and has been affiliated with BB&T-Liberty Benefit since 1993. Office: 530-888-8748 Cell: 916-501-1748 E-Fax: 916-251-2784

# Janice Fialka, MSW, ACSW

Janice is a nationally-recognized lecturer, author, and advocate on issues related to disability, parent-professional partnerships, inclusion, raising a child with disabilities, sibling issues, and post-secondary education. She is the Special Projects Trainer with Michigan's Early On® Training and Technical Assistance (Part C of IDEA). Janice is also a parent, a poet, a compelling storyteller, and an award-winning advocate for families and persons with disabilities.



# CSLN 2014 Conference Speaker Profiles

### Lisa Houghtelin

Since her daughter Jamie's birth in 1984, Lisa has actively supported her participation as a full member of her schools and community. For the past 20 years, she also has supported other families and educators to provide effective supports to children with disabilities in inclusive settings, with a focus on collaboration, futures planning, and building positive advocacy skills.

Lisa has served as the Parent Liaison for the North Coastal Consortium for Special Education, a consortium of 14 school districts serving over 12,000 students with disabilities in San Diego County, California since 2002. Previously she brought a family voice to early childhood service providers through her work with the HOPE Infant Family Support Program and throughout California as a parent consultant with the SEEDS Project of the Sacramento County Office of Education, and the Beginning Together and CONNECTIONS projects of the California Institute on Human Services, Sonoma State University. She is a frequent workshop facilitator and has written several articles related to raising her daughter.

Lisa's current interests include meditation practices, writing, and starting a support group for parents who have young adults in supported living.

### **Beth Gallagher**

Beth Gallagher is the founder and CEO of Life Works of San Diego. Life Works was founded in 2004 after Beth moved to San Diego from Chico, CA. She has worked with people with developmental disabilities since 1987. While for over 2 decades her emphasis has been on creating personalized services, she began her career operating group homes for persons with behavioral support needs and/or medical concerns. The vast majority of her career has been focused on creating unique support situations for individuals with severe reputations. Beth is keenly interested in the infrastructure and operations of support teams. She co-authored the book, Intentional Teaming: Shifting Organizational Culture with her colleague Kirk Hinkleman. Beth also collaborates with other leaders in the the state of California to strengthen and enrich supported living services state wide while serving on the Board of Directors of the California Supported Living Network. When asked what her mission is Beth says, "My hope for the service system is that we can learn to team with people to achieve unique, customized and fully realized lives. We need to do this one person at a time in a way that makes particular sense to that person."

#### **Paul Wurst**

Paul Wurst is the director of Options In Supported Living in Sacramento. For 20+ years he has been a "Mac Addict" and an enthusiastic user of mobile tablet technology in serving people with disabilities.

#### **Debbie Moreno**

Debbie Moreno is a passionate advocate and has been a public speaker in the field of Developmental Disabilities for nearly 5 years. She strongly believes in educating the public on the disabled population to create awareness and understanding. When Debbie was born, the doctors told her father that she would "be a vegetable." They suggested that he put her in a home and forget about her. Because her father refused, Debbie is an independent, productive woman. When she is not busy advocating at the State Capitol or teaching orientation classes at a supported living agency, Debbie enjoys shopping, dining out and movies with friends and expressing her creative side through her business, Discrete Designs by Debbie.

#### Terri Tribble

Terri Tribble has been working in the field of Supported Living for approximately 3 years. She is an extremely committed and caring support person who enjoys finding creative ways to help those she works for maximize their independence and assertiveness.

# **Michael Emory**

Mike Emory is dedicated advocate who believes strongly in the principles of supported living. He greatly values his independence and is an ardent promoter of self-advocacy and speaking out against abuse of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Mike speaks out monthly during the Abuse, Neglect and Mandated Reporting portion of New Employee Orientation and often takes his advocacy on the road, speaking throughout California at various conferences and events. When he is not busy with his public speaking engagements, Mike enjoys bowling, barbecues and hanging out with friends.

# CSLN 2014 Conference Speaker Profiles

#### Patricia Lee

Patricia Lee has been a supporter and advocate of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities for over 15 years. She believes strongly that her work is her calling and is passionate in her pursuit of justice and equity for the individuals she supports. Not only is Patricia an advocate herself, but she is fervent in her efforts to support those she works with in finding their own voice and promoting their self-advocacy.

#### **David Carothers**

Passionate, focused and untiring are the qualities Dave Carothers brings to the courtroom when defending claims brought against his clients. Carothers is an experienced trial attorney having tried more than 75 cases to verdict in jurisdictions throughout California.

He has successfully defended employers in more than 50 jury trials against claims of wrongful termination, sexual harassment, breach of contract, ADA, wage and hour violations and discrimination. Carothers has defended clients as lead trial counsel in large complex actions involving representative actions, class actions and coordinated actions involving hundreds of claimants.

Carothers has been a longtime member of the American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA), an invitation-only organization with a membership comprised of plaintiff and defense attorneys and members of the judiciary. Carothers is frequently invited to address the group as a speaker on issues related to trials of employment matters, employment law and diversity in the workplace.

Drawing upon his trial experience, Carothers advises management teams on how to be proactive, execute preventive strategies in the human resources area, and achieve positive and productive work place environments. His clients include educational institutions, national retail chains, religious institutions, hospitality, banking and technology companies.

#### Carlene Holden

Carlene Holden, Executive Vice President of Easter Seals Southern California, chairs the Easter Seals California Public Policy Team, and is a mentor with the National Easter Seals Office of Public Affairs. Carlene holds a graduate of San Diego State University and an advanced degree from Ball State University with degrees in Psychology and Guidance and Counseling along with two years of additional post graduate work at the University of San Francisco's MBA program. Areas of professional development have focused on the development of innovative programs to meet of children and adults with a disability. Carlene is keenly interested in research and in systems to support best practices. As a result, she is extremely concerned about the ability to maintain quality as services are expanded to meet the federal aim of serving more individuals with lower costs and with increased quality outcomes. Making this a reality is going to be an enormous challenge. The federal government, the state government and the managed care insurance companies will all want lower costs. As advocates, we must make sure there are real options for the people we serve to make sure the "quality" promise is implemented.

# **Marty Omoto**

Marty Omoto, founder, organizer and director of the CDCAN, California Disability Community Action Network, a non-partisan advocacy network and produces the CDCAN Disability Rights Reports that goes out to over 65,000 people with disabilities, mental health needs, the blind, seniors and their families, community organizations, facilities and individual workers who provide supports and services, federal and state department heads and staff and media across the State. Marty currently serves since its creation in 2005, as member of the Governor's Olmstead Advisory Committee, and as board director for over a decade of an independent living center in Sacramento and Sacramento Paratransit Inc. He also serves on several State task forces and stakeholder groups dealing with disability issues. He is a family member of sister who had developmental and physical disabilities and is the proud father of four children. He previously served as legislative director of the Coalition of UCP Associations in California and was the first legislative representative in California for AARP (with 3.5 million members in the State). He served as the executive director of state associations dealing with community action, Head Start issues for the purpose of increasing access to the legal system for people with disabilities, low income families, victims of domestic violence and seniors. He was a senior consultant with the California Legislature. He started his work career as a direct support worker in a Sacramento work activity/sheltered workshop in the late 1970's and later served as vice president of its board.

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