EFFECTIVE INCLUSIVE PRACTICES:
BUILD IT AND THEY WILL COME

Annual Conference
November 10 & 11 2017

The 6th Annual Inclusion Conference
CONFERENCE PROGRAM
Fox Rothschild Center for Law and Society
at Community College of Philadelphia
1750 Callowhill Street
Philadelphia, PA 19130

Wi-Fi connection: CCP WLAN
EFFECTIVE INCLUSIVE PRACTICES: BUILD IT AND THEY WILL COME

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR:

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SCHOLARSHIP SPONSORS

CONFERENCE SPONSORS & VENDORS
### Conference Schedule

#### Friday

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:15-9:00</td>
<td>Registration, Networking, Breakfast &amp; Welcome</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00-10:30</td>
<td>Dr. Erik W. Carter, <em>Keynote Speaker</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>10:45-12:15</td>
<td>Breakout #1</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:15-1:15</td>
<td>Lunch Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:15-2:45</td>
<td>Breakout #2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:45-3:00</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:00-4:30</td>
<td>Breakout #3</td>
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#### Saturday

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<td>3:00-4:30</td>
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# PEAC Inclusion Conference 2017
Friday, November 10th, 2017
Fox Rothschild Center for Law & Society of Community College of Philadelphia

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### #1 10:45 – 12:15

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<tr>
<td>10:45 – 12:15</td>
<td>Rethinking Prevailing Practice: What We Know Works for Fostering Inclusion, Relationships, and Belonging</td>
<td>MAIN LECTURE HALL (2nd Floor, Room C2-28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Charters, Cybers &amp; Special Education: Old Wine in New (and Leaky) Bottles!</td>
<td>LECTURE HALL (2nd Floor, Room C2-06)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What Happens When the Bus Stops Coming?</td>
<td>LECTURE HALL (2nd Floor, Room C2-10)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Families Promoting Early Childhood Inclusion</td>
<td>LECTURE HALL (2nd Floor, Room C2-13)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dr. Erik Carter</td>
<td>Caryl Andrea Oberman, Esq.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Michele A. Leahy, MS, CPWIC</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Nicole Gilchrist, Lisa Johanning, Erin May &amp; Mary Mikus</td>
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### #2 12:15 – 1:15 Lunch Break

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### #3 2:45 – 3:00 Break

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<td>3:00 – 4:30</td>
<td>Strategies for Developing College Readiness Skills for Students with Autism</td>
<td>MAIN LECTURE HALL (2nd Floor, Room C2-28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disability Voting Issues – Access, Assistance &amp; Accommodations</td>
<td>LECTURE HALL (2nd Floor, Room C2-06)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Family Guide to Understanding Evaluation Reports</td>
<td>LECTURE HALL (2nd Floor, Room C2-10)</td>
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<td>Using Peer Support to Promote Inclusion of Students with Disabilities</td>
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<td>Dr. Natalie Sokol &amp; Kristin Starosta</td>
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<td>Diane Perry</td>
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## PEAC Inclusion Conference 2017
### Saturday, November 11th, 2017
Fox Rothschild Center for Law & Society of Community College of Philadelphia

### 8:15 – 8:30
Registration, Networking Breakfast & Welcome
(2nd Floor) MAIN LECTURE HALL, Room C2-28

### 8:30 – 9:00
Keynote Speaker, Dr. Ann Marie Licata
(2nd Floor) MAIN LECTURE HALL, Room C2-28

### 9:00 – 10:30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#1</th>
<th>MAIN LECTURE HALL (2nd Floor, Room C2-28)</th>
<th>CONFERENCE ROOM (2nd Floor, Room C2-05)</th>
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### 10:30 – 10:45
Break

### 10:45 – 12:15

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<td>Francine Hogan &amp; Diana Morris Smaglik</td>
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### 12:15 – 1:15
Lunch Break
(2nd Floor) MAIN LECTURE HALL, Room C2-28

### 1:15 – 2:45

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Break

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This workshop will address a powerful—yet practical—approach for supporting inclusion and peer relationships in inclusive school classrooms. Learn step-by-step guidance for implementing peer support arrangements, including how to craft support plans, recruit peers, equip paraprofessionals and educators, support students as they work together, and evaluate the impact of these models. **Presenter:** Dr. Erik Carter

Disability Life Planning helps parents, family members plus the person with special needs set reasonable, attainable goals for the future. Michele discusses options for living arrangements, finding a job with or without supports, navigating the Social Security Administration and the state services including waivers and future planning. The person with a disability leads the charge with supports. The goal is to develop a foundation that is not exclusively dependent on governmental systems but uses them as a backbone to produce a lifetime of guidance. **Presenter:** Michele A. Leahy, MS, CPWIC

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) has been around in its various forms for more than forty years. It guarantees a free, appropriate public education to students with disabilities, and that they will be educated to the maximum extent appropriate with their non-disabled peers. The IDEA’s core principles, including full access to education, individualized evaluation and prescriptive program development, full parental participation, prior written notice, and parents’ opportunity to challenge educational decisions for students with disabilities, have had a profound impact on the lives of children and their families. How will the growing emphasis on school choice initiatives, including charter schools, cyber-charter schools, and school voucher programs, affect those lives? This session will explore the foundations of special education law and the impact of those initiatives on access, quality, and accountability for today’s special education students. **Presenter:** Caryl Andrea Oberman, Esq.
Room C2-28, Main Lecture Hall 2nd Floor
PBIS: Less Stress-More Success!

Everyone wants to be successful in life and build social relationships. Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports establishes a foundation of evidence-based techniques to help adults and children reach their goals. Through implementation of positive strategies, families and staff teach and motivate children to improve skills in all areas of development. Families and children can enjoy participating in activities and reaching their goals. In this session, participants will learn why positive behavioral interventions are successful. Parent partners will demonstrate how they use positive strategies to help their children learn and succeed. Participants will have an opportunity to access materials they can use in their interactions with children to teach and inspire skill development and improved social competence.

Presenters: Melissa Bressi, Rachel Fennell & Valerie Postal

Room C2-10, 2nd Floor
Building Community-One Small Act of Kindness at a Time

Teachers, families, students, and support professionals are provided the opportunity to build community practice and a sense of belonging for all each school day. This presentation will focus on a model of intentional inclusive practice involving differentiated instruction, a collaborative team approach, social curriculum, and child centered planning. Tools and strategies will be modeled and discussed, as well as how to shape a community mindset within the school culture.

Presenter: Amy McCann

Room C2-13, 2nd Floor
Self-Advocates Share their Stories of Inclusion

Join the current members and leaders of SAN at PEAC to hear each of their stories of inclusion (or not...) and what they have learned from it over the years. Gain insight into what can be possible, hear about some incredible self-advocates’ journeys, and you're sure to have a laugh along the way.

Presenters: Lauren Beller, Pierce Meier, Peter O’Halloran, David Perry & Aaron Ross

Room C2-06, 2nd Floor
The Path from High School to College: Navigating a Successful Transition for Students with Disabilities

Self-Advocacy, ADAAA, Reasonableness. Section 504, Qualified Status. Disclosure. Accommodations. Students with disabilities and their families can very quickly find themselves lost in a jumble of unfamiliar laws, standards, and phrases as they attempt to enter college. Not understanding how different laws influence the provision of disability services in the post-secondary environment can negatively impact a student’s ability to successfully transition to college. This session will focus on: changes in legal protections from HS to college, the goal of disability law in the post-secondary environment, typical procedures and documentation requirements for requesting and obtaining disability services in college, common examples of reasonable and unreasonable accommodations; and self-advocacy. Attendees will have a clear understanding of how disability services are provided in post-secondary education and will be empowered to navigate the transition to college with confidence and informed expectations.

Presenters: Joy Fleming, Esq. & Maria Zullo
College is a time of change for all students, but especially students on the autism spectrum. Struggles with juggling new-found responsibilities, connecting with peers, and learning in a different environment at a different pace are common challenges that can become barriers to learning and may lead to students with autism dropping out of college. Research demonstrates that many students on the autism spectrum who are accepted into college drop out within their first year due to lack of social and independent-living skills. What can schools and families do to help these students make a successful and lasting transition to college? This session will highlight key differences between HS and college. In particular, shifts in the roles of the student and parent, legal mandates, and environmental characteristics will be discussed. It will also provide families and educators with ideas and strategies focused on specially designed instruction, fading supports, and self-advocacy with the goal of students with autism thriving and graduating from college!

**Presenters:** Natalie Sokol & Kristin Starosta

Voting is a fundamental right, privilege, and duty. People with disabilities, however, may find themselves excluded from voting. People with physical disabilities may be unable to vote at their local polling places on Election Day due to physical barriers, precluding them from participating in local voting where they can meet their neighbors and polling officials and participate in civic life. People with intellectual or mental health disabilities may be excluded from voting because of poll workers’ prejudice and ignorance as to their capabilities or misunderstanding about the law. People with sensory disabilities may be unable to fully participate in the voting process due to communication barriers. This presentation will summarize some of the key legal requirements with which local Election Officials must comply to assure that people with disabilities have equal access to the voting process.

**Presenter:** Gabe Labella, Esq.

PDE asked the PEAL Center and several disability advocacy organizations across the state to develop a training for families on the newly updated evaluation/re-evaluation forms. The presentation will guide participants to better understand how each section of the evaluation forms assist parents with their IEP teams in developing goals and to better prepare the teams in identifying supplementary aides and services to benefit their child. Handouts will be available to assist in future planning of the IEP and in particular the transition section of the IEP. This session will be interactive, include Q&A, and presenters will be happy to speak with anyone individually regarding specific situations. There will be a focus on how families can share strengths and talents as well as the needs of their child to be sure that evaluators and the IEP team have all valuable information to be better informed decision makers. Parent input is critical and very valuable to the evaluation process. In addition to parent input, participants will gain an understanding of pertinent assessments that can be used for the transition process. Many local and statewide resources will be provided. **Presenter:** Diane Perry

Inclusive education is seen as a best practice for children with disabilities due to its many benefits. However, off-task behaviors of the student threaten their access to the general education classroom. Many interventions to reduce those off-task behaviors were developed and are considered evidence based but they all have limitations. One area of intervention that has many benefits is the use of same-age peers. This presentation will present the results of two studies that were completed with elementary-age students and preschool-age students. The presenters will discuss the outcomes and limitations of each study. Additionally, the adaptations made to utilize the intervention in a preschool setting will be discussed, including the addition of a parent feedback session.

**Presenters:** Ilene Goy, Stacy Lauter & Erin McCurdy
Until fairly recently attending a University or College was not an option available to students in PA who graduated with a certificate of completion. However, now there are some PA universities who are welcoming students into a full array of classes and university life. In this presentation, students who attended universities will talk about their experiences, and their parents will share the benefits of an inclusive post secondary education. Come hear about this exciting new reality. 

**Presenters:** Darcy Elks, Mary Elks, Adam Salomon & Karen Salomon.

### Room C2-10, 2nd Floor

**Modifying Work for Students Several Grade Levels Below Their Peers!**

The greatest barrier to a successful inclusive classroom for students who are many grade level below their peers is the limited knowledge on how to scaffold instruction so that students below and above grade level can learn the same content as those on grade level. In the session, methods for planning lessons, examples of modified content and resources that include digital tools will be shared.

**Presenter:** Linda Carmona-Bell

### Room C2-11, 2nd Floor

**Integrating Supports & Services on Campus for Young Adults**

We will take a deep dive and discuss real life situations where supports and services were integrated into students’ lives at home, on campus, and in the classroom to help create a successful post-secondary environment. We will review what planning was done prior to graduation, including transition planning and financial such as 529’s, Trusts, and ABLE accounts. We will discuss who was needed to be involved, the resources discovered, benefits available both private and public, including SSI, SSDI, and Waivers. This will be discussion based, with plenty of time and opportunity to ask questions, share and collaborate best ideas with parents, students, advocates, and educators. We will also share and discuss ideas on what planning can be done during this time to best prepare for possible employment and independent living goals.

**Presenters:** Branden R. Sacks & Brittney Yanchek

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The PEAL Center has just released a new resource. It is a booklet entitled, “Friendships: Building a Good Life. Strategies for Families of Children with Disabilities and their Peers, Communities, and Schools.” Participants will receive a copy of this booklet. This will be an interactive session for participants to help them understand how they can make a difference in someone’s life by facilitating natural opportunities for friendship building. Participants will review the design and organization of the booklet as well as reviewing and discussing the 3 guiding principles:

1. Everyone has a role to play in the development of Friendships
2. Friendships are important to ALL
3. Everyone benefits when we support friendship development.

We will also identify possible barriers to friendship development. **Presenters:** Lori Brew & Diane Perry
This session will focus on an overview of Inclusive Post-Secondary Education Initiatives that exist throughout Pennsylvania highlighting the initiatives associated with the Pennsylvania Inclusive Higher Education Consortium and providing details of the model program, Integrated Studies operating in its fourth year at Millersville University. Presenters will discuss the steps that parents of students in K-12 can take to prepare their children now for an inclusive experience in postsecondary education.

**Presenters:** Jen Betchel, Dr. Ann Marie Licata

**Room C2-05, Lecture Hall 2nd Floor**

**Becoming My Own Advocate and Setting Goals**

Self-Advocacy is an essential quality that all people need to possess. Young adults with disabilities or different abilities, as I like to refer, have the same need to express themselves, but sometimes do it in another way, according to individual need. This session will challenge youth to accept themselves, work to the best of their abilities, and learn more effective ways to have their personal goals met.

**Presenter:** Mary Beth Morgan, BSW

**Room C2-10, 2nd Floor**

**Early Intervention: A Catalyst to Support Inclusion in Childcare & Communities**

The “Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs,” released jointly by the Departments of Education (ED) and Health and Human Services (HHS) on September 14, 2015, states that all young children with disabilities should have access to inclusive high-quality early childhood programs, where they are provided with individualized and appropriate support in meeting high expectations. This session will focus the efforts of Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) to ensure state policies support high-quality inclusion and align with recent federal inclusion policy. Learn about OCDEL’s integrated approach to strengthen stakeholder and family engagement, provide resources and training for professionals and families, and enhance childcare quality. Local examples of the impact of this policy in promoting inclusion across disability, language, and culture from both a childcare provider and a family perspective and concrete tools for families will be shared.

**Presenters:** Sarah Holland, Mary Mikus & Anna Perng

**Room C2-11, 2nd Floor**

**Emergencies, First Responders & Planning: Skills for Independence**

This presentation will delve into a topic not often talked about in schools or the community: SAFETY. Safety Skills are a Life Skill which needs to be taught to students starting at a young age and becomes a priority during Transition. Not intended to solve all issues, this presentation offers suggestions, resources and identifies approaches such as evaluating student learning styles and needs, incorporating community supports and opening the lines of communication with 1st Responders. Building a safety net within our systems—including the education system—is a key in creating safe responses to emergencies for many students. These needs become more apparent as students age and are more likely to have interaction with 1st Responders. Options for communicating with individuals with limited communication skills and having elopement plans in place at schools will be discussed.

**Presenters:** Francine Hogan & Diana Morris Smaglik
Room C2-28, Main Lecture Hall 2nd Floor
An Exciting Reality: University and College Are an Option

Until fairly recently attending a University or College was not an option available to students in PA who graduated with a certificate of completion. However, now there are some PA universities who are welcoming students into a full array of classes and university life. In this presentation, students who attended universities will talk about their experiences, and their parents will share the benefits of an inclusive post-secondary education. Come hear about this exciting new reality.

Presenters: Darcy Elks, Mary Elks, Adam Salomon & Karen Salomon.

Room C2-05, 2nd Floor
Inclusion in Worship: Creating Faith Communities that are Accessible to Families

After a challenging experience for her son with a disability in faith formation as well as participation in worship services, the presenter, a parent and educator, began to question why the experience was so negative and what could be done about making the faith experience more accessible and positive for her child as well as her family. She will share her own experiences, facilitate discussion among session attendees and offer helpful suggestions for both families and faith communities.

Presenter: Geralyn Anderson Arango, Ed.D.

Room C2-10, 2nd Floor
Creating a Vision for Life After High School

Creating a vision and beginning to plan for the future is essential for success for students leaving high school and entering adult life. The PA Family Network Advisors will teach students and their families how to develop a vision of a good life, identify experiences and opportunities during transition, and figure out how to integrate the supports they need to achieve success. This interactive, hands-on workshop will introduce the Charting the LifeCourse Framework and Tools and will teach families the skills they need to plan for a good life now and into the future.

Presenters: Lisa Butler & Christa Joy

Room C2-11, Lecture Hall 2nd Floor
So What’s It Really Like Going to College?

This will be a panel discussion, moderated by Kathy Miller with first year and second year students from Temple University’s Academy for Adult Learning and Leadership & Career Studies major. The students will discuss their experiences studying, working and playing on Temple University’s main campus. Students will discuss how youth can prepare themselves to successfully develop and grow in college and how their families can support them to have a quality experience.

Presenters: Jonathan Ateincia, Jessica Costanzi, Kenneth Jones, Khalil Hills, Kathy Miller & Rachel Weeks
Room C2-28, Main Lecture Hall 2nd Floor
Inclusive Post-Secondary Education in PA: What You Can Do to Begin Today

This session will focus on an overview of Inclusive Post-Secondary Education Initiatives that exist throughout Pennsylvania highlighting the initiatives associated with the Pennsylvania Inclusive Higher Education Consortium and providing details of the model program, Integrated Studies operating in its fourth year at Millersville University. Presenters will discuss the steps that parents of students in K-12 can take to prepare their children now for an inclusive experience in postsecondary education.

Presenters: Jen Betchel, Dr. Ann Marie Licata

Room C2-05, 2nd Floor
Connecting the Dots: A Parent's Guide to Understanding Handwriting

This presentation takes a deep dive into the various terms associated with visual perception and visual motor integration, and the neurobiology behind what is happening in the brain and body. Parents and teachers will learn techniques to enhance specific areas of weakness by engaging the child in activities that can be done by all students in the classroom. This presentation explains the benefits of enhancing visual memory and provides strategies to do so.

Presenter: Cheri Dotterer, MS, OTR/L

Room C2-10, 2nd Floor
My Included Life

In 2005, Upper Dublin School District began inclusion of autistic support students into their general education curriculum. Nic was there from the beginning. Not all of his experiences were positive, and at times, he found it hard to be taken seriously. He wants to share his good, bad, and different experiences to show why the inclusion of students with all abilities in general education classroom is important, not only to the students who need to be included, but also for the communities that include them. This reflects his life as an included student, which, at times, has not felt very included at all.

Presenters: Nicolas Cuconati & Elizabeth Lipp

Room C2-11, 2nd Floor
Are There Long-Term Effects to Bullying?

Using personal stories and insights as well as empirical evidence, self advocates will evaluate how bullying occurs and how we as a society can better prevent it. There is a focus on what lasting consequences bullying can have and the potential severity of these effects. While there is a lean towards bullying of children with disabilities, all ages and abilities are discussed in this presentation.

Presenters: Lauren Beller, Pierce Meier, Peter O’Halloran, David Perry & Aaron Ross
The Bonnell Building (B)  The Center for Business and Industry [CBI] (C)
The Athletics Center (G)  The Mint Building (M)
The Pavilion (P)  The Winnet Student Life Building (S)
The West Building (W)

Directions from I-95
Take exit 22 towards I-676 West/US-30 West/Central Philadelphia. Merge onto the Vine Street
Expressway and continue on I-676 West. Exit on 15th Street and turn right at Vine Street. Make the
first right onto 16th Street and then turn left at Callowhill Street.

The conference is being held in the
CENTER FOR BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY (CBI) BUILDING
1750 Callowhill Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103
(corner of 18th & Callowhill Streets).

Parking Lot: The College’s private parking garage sits north of the CBI building (Callowhill Street)
with entrances/exits on both 17th and 18th Streets (see the posted signs for applicable fees and
hours of operation) [marked with a diamond ♦ on the map]. There is also a public, cash only, 24 hour
parking garage on the corner of 17th and Callowhill Streets [marked with a star on the map] (enter on
S. 17th Street) (see the attendant for fee information).

Friday Parking:
1. College’s parking garage is $6
2. Street meters, (most expensive option)
3. Paid lot next to the building, Day Pass Friday $10 (closest, best option)
4. Paid lot behind the building, (Overflow option, also around $10, furthest away)

Saturday Parking:
1. College’s parking garage is $4
2. Street meters, (most expensive option)
3. Paid lot next to the building, Day Pass Saturday $4 (closest option)
4. Paid lot behind the building, (Overflow option, not sure of the Saturday rate, furthest away)
KEYNOTE: Dr. Erik Carter is Cornelius Vanderbilt Professor of Special Education at Vanderbilt University and a member of the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center. His research and teaching focuses on evidence-based strategies for supporting inclusive education, peer relationships, and valued roles for students with intellectual disability, autism, and multiple disabilities. He has published more than 150 articles and chapters in the areas of educational and transition services, as well as six books. He received the Distinguished Early Career Research Award from the Council for Exceptional Children and the Early Career Award from the American Association for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. He works hard to bridge the research-to-practice gap and provide educators and families with practical strategies that can make a real difference in the lives of their students. He now lives in Nashville, Tennessee, with his wife and three children.

KEYNOTE: Dr. Ann Marie Licata serves as the Director of the Pennsylvania Inclusive Higher Education Consortium. With a background in educational administration and human development, Dr. Licata has a breadth of experiences in public and private school, as well as higher education and state level non-profit leadership. Her knowledge and innate ability to provide creative insights to the leadership role of implementing the TPSID grant funded Consortium which consists of nine institutions of higher education is driven by her desire to build meaningful relationships that make a difference in people’s lives. Dr. Licata’s research interest in disability studies, advocacy, and leadership are a natural fit for the worthy work she pursues each day. She has successfully presented her research at state, national, and international levels, including her most recent presentation at the 40th Annual AHEAD conference in July 2017 focused on preliminary results of research on the “Qualities of Life for College Students with Intellectual Disability.” Her most recent publication “Focus on Down Syndrome….A Case Study” is featured in Pediatric Physical Therapy, 5th edition. She serves as adjunct faculty at Millersville University. Inspired by her loving family which includes six children, Dr. Licata resides in Hummelstown, Pennsylvania.

Mina G. Abdollahi was born in Iran and moved to the US in 1968. She has a BA in Psychology from Temple University. She is the Director at KinderCare Learning Center from 1982 to present, and served on the board of Directors from Bucks County Association for the Education of Young Children. She co-chairs a child advocacy committee, is a mentor, offers professional development to early childhood educators and administrators, and is a member of NAEYC and Pennsylvania Child Care Association. She is also the PA Quality Assurance System (PQAS) Director Instructor.

Geralyn Anderson Arango is the mother of two young adults and a professor of special education at Holy Family University. She is the author of “What Would Nola Do? What My Mother Taught Me about Showing Up, Being Present and the Art of Caregiving” (SilverXord Publications, 2014). Currently on sabbatical, Geralyn is researching inclusion in worship as it relates to children with disabilities as well as their families. Geralyn lives in Wallingford, Pennsylvania with her husband, son and way too many pets.

Johnathan Atiencia is a second year student at Temple University's Academy for Adult Learning. He is involved in the Main Campus Program Board and is on the Admissions team for the Leadership and Career Studies.

Lauren Beller became a Self-Advocate Leader after joining PEAC in 2012, and helped in the formation of the Self-Advocate Network (SAN). She enjoys being able to use her degree in Elementary and Special Education from Temple University as well as her experiences as a person with a disability to help families and individuals with disabilities. She has proudly completed her fellowship as the inaugural Self Advocate Fellow in the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's (CHOP) Leadership and Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND) program organized by the Association of University Centers for Disability (AUCD). Lauren is currently working towards becoming a National Special Education Advocacy Institute (NSEAI) Board Certified Education Advocate (BCEA).

Jan Bechtel, MSW, Director of Integrated Studies, Millersville University and has been a part of the Millersville University community for 6 years, obtaining a Masters in Social Work in 2015. Ms. Bechtel is currently the Director of Integrated Studies at Millersville University. Previously, Ms. Bechtel served as the Interim Director of the Office of Diversity & Social Justice at Millersville University. In addition, Ms. Bechtel is an adjunct faculty for the School of Social Work and Educational Foundations Department.

Lorie Brew works for The PEAL (Parents Education & Advocacy Leadership) Center as the Project MAX Coordinator for Eastern Pennsylvania. Much of Lorie’s knowledge about disability related issues comes from individuals with disabilities themselves, families who support someone with a disability as well as her own personal experience of raising a child with autism. Lorie is dedicated to the principles of Project MAX, such as Presuming Competence, Fostering High Expectation and Empowering Families Leading Change. Lorie has two adult children and lives with her husband, Wayne, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Lorie’s background is in Counseling Psychology and Human Services.
Lisa Butler is the Coordinator for the PA Family Network which is part of the Supporting Families initiative in PA at Vision for Equality, supported by the Office of Developmental Programs to provide education, mentoring and support to families through the PA Family Network. Our network of Family Advisors teach families throughout Pennsylvania about the Charting the LifeCourse Framework and Tools. Each of our Advisors brings their personal experiences and expertise to the project. Lisa Butler is a parent of a transition age student and is a trained presenter in the LifeCourse Framework. Lisa Butler is also an expert in Independent Living Technology and is a Veteran. Pennsylvania joined the Supporting Families National Community of Practice in 2016. The overall goal of supporting families, with all their complexity, strengths and unique abilities is so they can best support, nurture, love and facilitate opportunities for the achievement of self-determination, interdependence, productivity, integration, and inclusion in all facets of life for their family members.

Linda Carmona-Bell is a member of the PEAC Parent Consultant Network (PCN), and an educational technologist for 20 years. She has participated in many activities and programs such as Confidence and Competence Partners in Policymaking (C2P2), Local and State Interagency Coordinating Councils, Pennsylvania’s Assistive Technology Advisory Council, and Pennsylvania’s SpecialQuest Leadership Team. She has worked with educators to modify work for all students including using digital tools to support learning. She offers professional learning opportunities on the Universal Design for Learning framework and specific learning strategies. Each experience has strengthened her resolve to foster change that ensures successful inclusive environments for her 17-year-old daughter with Down syndrome and for all children.

Jessica Costanzi is a junior Therapeutic Recreation major at Temple University. She has been a mentor for the Leadership and Career Studies program for three semesters and a tutor for the program for two semesters.

Nicolas Cuconati is an Upper Dublin High School student, metal detecting and elevator enthusiast, and a part-time employee at Regal Cinemas in Warrington, Pennsylvania, and a front desk employee at the Ambler Area YMCA. He recently has begun co-presenting his story with his mother, Elizabeth Lipp, for PEAC, and this presentation will represent a portion of his Senior Culminating Project. He also enjoys bowling, dining out and traveling with his family.

Cheri Dotterer, MS, OTR/L, is an occupational therapist with 20 years of experience in many aspects of practice, from acute care to skilled nursing homes, home care, and most recently pediatrics. Pediatrics is her passion and love! Her favorite part of practice is seeing the “light bulb” go on in the mind of parents, teachers, and children. Her mission is helping the child find his or her own motivation to improve the environment around them in school, at home, and in the community. Receiving a BS in Biochemistry in 1987, a second BS in Occupational Therapy in 1994 and a MS in Occupational Therapy in 2009, Cheri brings with her years of research. In addition to working with K-12 programs, she has worked alongside several universities creating unique experiences for OT students. Cheri is always looking at the world from a non-traditional perspective.

Darcy Elks is an educator, parent and advocate on behalf of people who are societally devalued. She is an international consultant and has traveled to many different countries to advocate for full meaningful inclusive lifestyles for marginalized people. The focus of Darcy’s work is to encourage attitudes and structures, which promote social value and inclusion for people who have disabilities and other people who have been devalued and excluded. Darcy’s passion is to help create inclusive communities: communities where we are all welcome and where we can each use our gifts for the good of one another.

Mary Elks lives in West Chester, Pennsylvania. Mary attended Renaissance Academy, a public college preparatory school, and had a desire to attend university – just as her friends were doing. Mary attended West Chester University for four years. She studied theater and health. Mary is now working in two jobs and thinking of starting her own business. She is involved in the local theater and has continued her theater studies within her community. Mary says that attending university was “the best” and encourages others to explore this awesome opportunity.

Joy Waters Fleming, Esquire is a solo practitioner in Dauphin County, Pennsylvania. Attorney Fleming concentrates her practice in education advocacy, juvenile and family law. She currently is a Guardian Ad Litem for dependent children and a consultant for the PA Inclusive Higher Education Consortium (PIHEC), based at Millersville University. As former Counsel for the PA Department of Education, Ms. Fleming advised the Bureau of Special Education. As a Special Education Hearing Officer for the Office for Dispute Resolution, she decided numerous IEP, placement, ESY and gifted disputes, throughout school districts in the Commonwealth. She has served Dauphin County as Juvenile Hearing Officer, attorney representing parents in contested termination of parental rights hearings and as arbitrator. After graduating from the Dickinson School of Law in 1987, she clerked for the Hon. David W. Craig in Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania and then served as Chief Counsel to the Health & Welfare Committee in the PA House of Representatives. Attorney Fleming and her husband are the parents of three sons, one in high school and two college students, both navigating the post-secondary world as young adults with exceptionalities.
Nicole Gilchrist is a recent graduate of Competence and Confidence: Partners in Policymaking (C2P2) and serves as the Parent Co-Chair of Bucks County Interagency Coordinating Council (BCIC) and the Curriculum Committee of Council Rock’s Diversity and Inclusion Council. She and her husband, Ray, have a 6-year-old son and 4-year-old daughter.

Khalil Hills is a first year student at Temple University's Leadership & Career Studies. Khalil is also on the board of Self Advocates United as One.

Francine Hogan is the Assistant Community Organizer for ARCIL. She is active in the Autism community and has been for the past 16 years, since her son was diagnosed. A certified Supports Broker and Person Centered Counselor; she has training on numerous cross-disability topics and is an avid advocate. She also sits on several Boards and numerous county and regional committees.

Sarah Holland is a Special Assistant with the Office of Child Development and Early Learning, focusing on Family Engagement. She is the mother of two sons. Sarah has been involved in family support and leadership efforts at both the local and statewide levels. She is a past chair of the State Interagency Coordinating Council, serves on the board of the Arc of Pennsylvania and a former PEAC board member. Sarah has been employed by Parent to Parent of PA, The Special Kids Network, and has worked as an independent consultant.

Lisa Johanning is the mother of Alex Johanning (10) 5th grade, and wife to Tim Johanning. A Lancaster County resident, Lisa has navigated the daycare, preschool and elementary settings to ensure inclusion for Alex since birth. Lisa is on the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors at Excentia (non-profit) in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. She is also a Parent to Parent of PA volunteer and connected with PEAC. Lisa is also the Director of Talent Acquisition at Fulton Financial Corporation.

Kenneth Jones is a second year student at Temple University's Academy for Adult Learning. Kenneth is a member of the OWL Choir at Temple University.

Christa Joy is one of the Advisors for the Central Region for the PA Family Network which is part of the Supporting Families initiative in PA at Vision for Equality, supported by the Office of Developmental Programs to provide education, mentoring and support to families through the PA Family Network. Our network of Family Advisors teach families throughout Pennsylvania about the Charting the LifeCourse Framework and Tools. Each of our Advisors brings their personal experiences and expertise to the project. Christa is a parent of a transition age student and is a trained presenter in the LifeCourse Framework. Christa holds a Master’s degree in Special Education. Pennsylvania joined the Supporting Families National Community of Practice in 2016. The overall goal of supporting families, with all their complexity, strengths and unique abilities is so they can best support, nurture, love and facilitate opportunities for the achievement of self-determination, interdependence, productivity, integration, and inclusion in all facets of life for their family members.

Gabe Labella is a Staff Attorney at the Disability Rights Pennsylvania. She is a graduate of Widener Law School and has extensive experience in disability rights law. Ms. Labella focuses on Special education Law and has provided trainings to hundreds of parents, advocates, and attorneys. She is also leading DRN’s work to assure that Pennsylvanians with disabilities have equal access to the right to vote and are actively engaged in the voting process. She is a member of the Pennsylvania Voting and Election Administration Stakeholders Work Group convened by the Department of State and serves on the Joint State Government Commission’s Advisory Committee on Aging Voting Machines.

Michele A. Leahy, MS, is Founder and CEO of M. Leahy & Associates, a firm dedicated to life planning for those with disabilities as well as their families. Michele understands disability challenges from both a professional and very personal perspective. After managing grants intended to navigate government benefits, including Social Security, Michele led the charge in Southeastern PA to reach out to students with disabilities and their families facing a future of uncertainty. She assists in developing strategies of funding special needs trusts with creating a roadmap to meaningful adult supports. Her drive led her to assist students with disabilities exiting the school system to develop a holistic planned approach of blending and braiding community and financial supports. Ms. Leahy had more than a decade of varied professional work experiences before she established her own company (http://www.leahylifeplan.com/).

Elizabeth Lipp is a long-time member of PEAC’s Parent Consulting Network (PCN).

Erin May is a recent graduate of Competence and Confidence: Partners in Policymaking (C2P2). She is a member of the Montgomery County Down Syndrome Group. She just started working as a paraprofessional with the students of different abilities in Springfield Township, Pennsylvania. Erin and her husband, Scott, live in Erdenheim, Pennsylvania, with their boys, Max (10), Gus (8), Charlie (6), and Henry (5).
Amy McCann encourages learning opportunities by bridging connections and building relationships, sparking imagination, and sharing in the delight of inquiry based experiences. As an inclusive educator, Amy began her teaching career in the School District of Philadelphia. Currently, Amy is the Learning Specialist at Friends School Haverford, an intentionally diverse school family. Amy's teaching practice focuses on empathy training, building self-regulation strategies, and mindfulness related to how a student learns and works to their best. Amy introduces various habits of organization to build executive function, while also supporting teachers to differentiate their academic and social curriculum. Amy is the founder/director of Carousel Connections. A program that provides community experiences and training for teenagers and young adults with disabilities who are transitioning to greater levels of independence. The program includes a six-week summer residential program on the campus of Haverford College, adventure weekends in the Pocono Mountains, community “crew” and volunteer experiences, and family/individual consulting to share resources related to the transition process. Amy is on the board of Families CCAN and supports families in exploring resources and “next steps.” She is a Community Connector for several circles of care in the Philadelphia area.

Dr. Erin McCurdy is the Director of Clinical Services for Elwyn SEEDS. She earned a Ph.D. in school psychology from Lehigh University and is a licensed psychologist and board certified behavior analyst-doctoral. Her professional experience has included providing training, assessment and consultation to teachers, parents and multi-disciplinary teams in the schools with an emphasis on supporting inclusion.

Pierce Meier is a graduate of Science Leadership Academy High School and is currently a student at Community College of Philadelphia who will shortly begin a work internship. He has a passion for film and theater and has created numerous videos, including two presented at Citizen's Bank Park for Autism Awareness night. Pierce is a strong advocate for social justice and for people with disabilities being included in all facets of life, especially in the school system.

Mary Mikus is a Consultant with Early Intervention Technical Assistance (EITA). EITA supports the Bureau of Early Intervention Services, Office of Child Development and Early Learning. In her role with EITA, Ms. Mikus works on the statewide initiatives of inclusion, autism, and Parents as Partners in Professional Development (P3D). Prior to EITA, Ms. Mikus was employed as Family Inclusion Coordinator at the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University. She served as Parent Co-Chair of the Philadelphia Interagency Coordinating Council and as Co-President of the Committee for Special Education, a parent group in her school district. Ms. Mikus credits her son Sean, who brought her into this field and who unexpectedly passed on in 2012, as her greatest source of learning and inspiration.

Kathy Miller is Director of Community Services, she directs Leadership & Career Studies, Temple University's inclusive postsecondary educational program for young adults with intellectual disabilities. Kathy is also responsible for overseeing the Institute's leadership development training programs. Kathy has a Master's Degree in Social Work from Rutgers University, and has worked alongside people with disabilities and families for more than 30 years.

Mary Beth Morgan, BSW has worked in a leadership role regarding disability from three aspects of life. At the age of 12 year old, Mary Beth was hit by car, resulting in Traumatic Brain Injury. Re-learning how to do everything again was not only a challenge, but an endeavor because most things had to be re-taught in a different style to accomplish the same thing. As a result, Mary Beth went to Temple University and became a Social Worker, having a passion for helping others “get the job done in a way that works for them.” Mary Beth works at Liberty Resources Inc. as an Independent Living Specialist - Youth/Young Adult Transition. Mary Beth has engaged in many different aspects of Transition, developing a program entitled Mentoring/Transition/Voices (MTV) which is based on a 17 topic program, teaching young adults to accept/work with their disability. Efforts within Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia Counties as the Region 7 Coordinator for the Youth Statewide Transitioning Initiative was also completed for 2 years (the length of the grant). MTV is a weekly program within three Philadelphia schools. Mary Beth is also an active participant in various transition groups throughout the city; including being the Secretary for PEAC. Finally, Mary Beth is also the mother of twin boys, born premature and receiving therapies from the age of 3 months. Being the mother of a son with Muscular Cerebral Palsy is not only an advocacy lesson learned but practiced daily. Broadening the transition opportunities are constantly shared, worked on, and studied through MTV.

Diana Morris Smaglik is the mother of six young men, two of whom would have difficulties in an emergency situation. She is the Special Projects Supervisor for the Anthracite Region Center for Independent Living (ARCIL) and has worked in the disability field for over 25 years as an advocate and trainer. She recently received her Supports Brokerage Certification and is also certified in Person Centered Counseling.
Caryl Andrea Oberman, Esquire is the principal of the law firm that bears her name. For over four decades, her practice has focused on the legal needs of persons with disabilities and their families, and of gifted students. She has lectured and published extensively in the areas of civil rights, education rights, and estate planning, especially for families of children with disabilities. Formerly law clerk to the Hon. Merna B. Marshall (Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas), director of the Legal Department of Philadelphia Association for Retarded Citizens, senior staff attorney at the Education Law Center and litigation consultant at the Disabilities Law Project, she has served on the boards of numerous agencies advocating for children and adults with disabilities and serves as a hearing officer for the Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. Ms. Oberman currently chairs the Pennsylvania Bar Association Education Section’s Special Education Committee and is a member of the Section’s Executive Board. She has been an adjunct professor of School Law in the graduate education programs of Arcadia University, Holy Family University, Cabrini College and Antioch University. She received her B.A. with Honors in Political Philosophy from Syracuse University in 1971 and her J.D. from Villanova University School of Law in 1974. Her firm serves families in the eastern half of Pennsylvania, with offices in Willow Grove (Montgomery County).

Peter O’Halloran is a recent graduate from Upper Dublin High School, where he was the manager of the school’s football team. He has completed the Office Managements Program at Eastern Center for Arts and Technology. Now, he is a full-time administrative assistant at Quality Progressions. Peter has experience in speaking on the importance of inclusion for people with disabilities.

Anna Perng is the mother of two children on the autism spectrum. Prior to becoming a mother, she was a Development Officer for Community Legal Services of Philadelphia. Anna served on the Obama-Biden Presidential Transition Team and later joined the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Since 2015, Anna has co-led the Temple University Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Initiative, a partnership between families, Elwyn, Chinatown Medical Services, Temple University College of Public Health Occupational Therapy, Chinatown Learning Center, and Chinese Christian Church and Center. In September 2016, the initiative received a $150,000 grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Education to provide linguistic and cultural translation, education, and strategies for bringing classroom and health interventions into homes, and to identify the most common and important challenges and barriers these families face when accessing services, create programs to meet those needs, and evaluate their efforts. Anna serves on the Executive Advisory Board of a national project called “Participation and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (ID/DD).” This project aims to engage diverse individual, family, health care, community, and policy stakeholders, both regionally and nationally, in research development activities. This project was awarded funding in 2017 by Eugene Washington PCORI Engagement Awards program, an initiative of the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI). Anna is a proud community organizer with Organizing for Action, a nonpartisan nonprofit organization that provides training and support to community organizers so they can affect change in their communities. In 2017, the Philadelphia 76ers recognized Anna with the Game Changer Award.

David Perry is a young man who loves life to the fullest. He enjoys many sports, hanging out with his friends, writing stories, and working out at the gym to build his muscles. Music is very important in David’s life. He plays the drums, keyboard, guitar and jams with his band, Voo Doo Medicine Man. David lives at home with his parents, but is working towards his ultimate goal of moving out and living on his own. David works for PEAC as part of the Self-Advocate Network and he does guest lectures at local colleges and universities sharing his story and journey of his life. He recently accepted a position at Sonic and continues to work at Aramark at Widener University. He also serves on the Board of Directors for the Sean King Fund for Inclusive Practices.

Diane Perry has worked in the field of educational advocacy and family leadership for the past 20 years. Diane’s son, David, who is 24 received special education services and continues to experience transition in many ways such as exploring college, working, and volunteering. David’s education throughout his lifespan has been included and learning alongside his peers with supports and services. Diane is the Eastern Region Parent Advisor for the PEAL Center. The PEAL Center is the Parent Training and Information Center for the state of Pennsylvania. Prior to the PEAL Center, Diane was the Southeast Regional Coordinator for Special Kids Network, a program within the Department of Health. Diane has also worked at the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University and Parent to Parent of PA. Diane has been very involved with volunteering at non-profit organizations over the past several years, most recently serving as Past President of PEAC. Diane serves on the Special Education Advisory Panel to the Governor of Pennsylvania and has presented at many regional, statewide, and national organizations. Diane joined the board of directors for the Arc of Delaware County in January 2015 and currently serves as the Legislative and Governance Chair.

Aaron Ross graduated from the Vanguard School in 2004 and joined PEAC’s Self-Advocate Network (SAN) in 2013 as a Self-Advocate Leader and is currently helping to train other self-advocates. He has spoken at the Annual PEAC Inclusion Conference. Aaron has a strong belief in the inclusion of people with disabilities. He enjoys playing Magic the Gathering in his local community, and welcomes others to join. He does foam sword battles, hangs out with friends and on Sundays during the winter season does ice-skating for Special Olympics.
Branden Sacks is a Wealth Management Advisor with GSL & Associates. He joined Merrill Lynch in 2011. Branden oversees special needs planning for the team, working with special needs families to help them coordinate the appropriate supports and services for their loved one into their estate and retirement planning goals. This includes the coordination of care, benefits planning, funding options, corporate trustee selection, employment and independent living.

Adam Salomon is a student at Millersville University in the Integrated Studies Program, where he lives on campus in the dorms. A graduate of Upper Dublin High School, he also attended the two-year REAL certificate at Arcadia University. Adam is an avid skateboarder who also competes in skateboarding contests. He volunteers with the Get on Board program, which provides free skateboard lessons to individuals with autism.

Karen Salomon is a parent of two boys. She entered the special education maze with her son, Adam. Karen is a strong advocate for inclusion and for presuming competence for all students. Karen is a parent consultant with PEAC. She also chaired a parent support group in her school district for over 10 years. Her other volunteer roles include bring art to elementary school classrooms with Art Goes to School, and organizing workshops to teach kids with autism how to skateboard with the Get on Board organization.

Dr. Natalie Sokol is an Educational Consultant for the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) with over 25 years of experience in the field of special education and behavior analysis. She was an inclusion specialist for the Central Bucks School District and a training consultant for Colonial Intermediate Unit 20 prior to joining PaTTAN. In addition, Dr. Sokol spent four years at Lehigh University as a research scientist coordinating federal grants funded by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and eight years as an adjunct professor in Lehigh University’s Department of Special Education. Dr. Sokol is the statewide lead for Project MAX, a State Personnel Development Grant funded by OSEP. She also supports Pennsylvania’s Autism, Behavior, and Speech/Language initiatives. She has co-authored several articles in the area of functional behavioral assessment. She holds teaching certifications in speech/language pathology and special education and is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst. Dr. Sokol currently attends Gwynedd Mercy University’s Superintendent Letter of Eligibility Certification Program.

Kristin Starosta is an educational consultant with PaTTAN (Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network), with a focus on the Autism and Inclusive Practices Initiatives. Prior to working at PaTTAN, she was a Training and Consulting Staff (TaC) with Colonial Intermediate Unit 20, working primarily with schools implementing Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). She began her educational career in special education as a teacher of students with intellectual/developmental disabilities at an approved private school for students with behavioral challenges, and has also worked as a behavior consultant, grant coordinator, and adjunct instructor at Lehigh University.

Rachel Weeks is a Junior at Temple University majoring in Elementary Education with a minor in Special Education. She has been working as a mentor with the Academy for Adult Learning for the past year and a half.

Brittney Yanchek joined Merrill Lynch in 2014. She works exclusively with the team’s special needs clients, drawing on her experience as a supports coordinator. Brittney has experience helping families and individuals with disabilities to locate, coordinate and monitor services to see that all health, safety and individual needs are being met in order to support them appropriately. This includes the coordination of care, benefits planning, funding options, corporate trustee selection, employment, and independent living.

Maria K Zullo, M.A. is an experienced post-secondary education administrator, disability support services provider, and learning support specialist. Ms. Zullo currently works as the Access Associate in the Center on Disability at Community College of Philadelphia. Ms. Zullo uses her expertise to assist parents and students through the transition to college and works with students to develop self-advocacy skills and ensure they have equal access in the college setting.

Enjoy the conference!