



20th Annual U.S. Conference on disABILITY

Exploring Autism across the Spectrum: Building Inclusive Communities

Thursday, October 14, 2021

- 8:30 – 8:45 a.m. Opening Remarks
Rev. Joseph G. Marina, S.J., President, The University of Scranton
Debra A. Pellegrino, Ed.D., Dean, The Panuska College of Professional Studies
Edward R. and Patricia Leahy, Honorary Conference Co-Chairs
John W. Cosgrove, Executive Director, AllOne Foundation and Charities
- 8:45 – 9:45 a.m. Opening Keynote (live on Zoom) 1.00 CEU
Gently Shaking the World: 3 Dads Making a Difference
José Velasco, Program Director, Business Process Intelligence & SAP Autism at Work Ambassador
V. R. Ferose, Senior Vice President and Head of SAP Engineering Academy, Palo Alto
Thorkil Sonne, Specialisterne & Specialisterne Foundation Founder
- The journeys of three parents from very different backgrounds converged to support the transformation of the labor market for people on the autism spectrum in three continents, gently shaking the status quo, demolishing myths and helping ignite a movement that continues to transform corporate hiring practices. Join us and hear first-hand about the origins, motivations and intersection of these journeys and the world-changing outcomes the resulted.*
- 9:45 - 10:30 a.m. Break & Networking
- 10:30 – 12:00 p.m. Morning Keynote 1.50 CEU
The Black Side of Autism
Maria Davis–Pierre, LMHC – AutisminBlack.org
- This workshop will highlight the importance of cultural awareness when working with Black families with children with disabilities. Beginning with a detailed analysis and explanation of culture broadly, the presenter will lead the conversation toward helping attendees understand their cultural development and biases. Attendees will learn why cultural sensitivity is important in identifying, assessing, and providing services to children with autism and their families. The workshop will continue with the theoretical understanding of Black culture in relation to family beliefs, values, religion, and economic status and its implications for treatment. The presenter will also discuss the methods used to support parents, caregivers, and program leaders in the understanding of culture and shift their practice to be more culturally responsible. The aim of this presentation will illustrate the current state of the field in the area of cultural competence when serving diverse communities as well as opening the door to having more providers incorporate the discussion of culture into treatment.*
- 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. Lunch Break & Networking Opportunities

- 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. Disability Policy & Legislative Update **1.00 CEU**
The Honorable Robert P. Casey, Jr., U.S. Senator for Pennsylvania
Katherine Neas, Acting Assistant Secretary, Office of Special Education and
Rehabilitatiive Services (OSERS)
Dr. Michael Gamel-McCormick, Disability Policy Director, Special Committee on
Aging, for Senator Robert P. Casey, Jr.
- 2:00 - 2:45 p.m. Break
Please join us for *Exercises in Compassion*, a presentation by StudioBe’s Mary Rothfuz
- 2:45 – 4:00 p.m. Afternoon Keynote **1.50 CEU**
The Boy Who Spoke through his Art: A Story of Determination.
Finding Purpose and Beating the Odds
AJ Paron, Interior Designer, Author, Parent
Devin Wildes, Artist
- In this inspirational keynote, AJ shares the story of Devin and his life with autism. This story is about a young boy that beat the odds because he found his purpose and passion. Devin is a 26 year old, young man who is severely impacted by autism. He has few communication skills and needs 24/7 care. Art has transformed Devin's life and it has become his communication tool to connect to others, his community and the world. Devin and his mother AJ, will share his life story and Devin will present his latest art show.*
- 4:00 – 4:15 p.m. Closing Remarks
Our final doorprize will be awarded – a unique piece created just for our conference by a Verve Vertu artist will be awarded!

ADDITIONAL PRE- RECORDED SESSIONS
(Available on-demand on the YesLMS for registered attendees for up to 30 days)

Dual Customer Partnerships: Connecting Talent and Business

1.00 CEU

Kathy West-Evans, MPA, CRC – Director of Business Relations National Employment Team (NET) Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation --- Panel Moderator

Amber Nelson - Director of Employment and Education - The Arc of the Capital Area – Texas

Rhett Calvert, Data Analyst for the Global Inventory Management, Dell Technologies

Danielle Biddick, Senior Advisor, Diversity Talent Acquisition, Dell Technologies

Melinda M. Paninski, M.S., CRC, Specialist for Workforce Alliances Texas Workforce Commission-Vocational Rehabilitation Division NET Point of Contact

Join this interactive session to learn from partners in VR that are working with both individual and business customers to connect the talent of candidates to the career opportunities with employers. This collaborative model with Dell Technologies has a history of supporting neurodiverse candidates in the Texas market and has expanded those opportunities nationally, including working via a virtual platform. You will hear from the business, the employee with a disability and the partners at the local, state and national level that supported the development of this successful dual customer model.

Teaching the Way Our Students Learn: Inclusive Classrooms & Curriculum Strategies

1.00 CEU

Kerry Magro, Ed.D

In this presentation, you will hear from someone who was nonspeaking until 2.5 and now today has his Doctorate in Educational Technology Leadership with the goal of teaching at the University level about our disability community. In his session, you will learn about what helped him throughout his academic experience along with key resources in areas such as inclusion best practices, video modeling, the importance of parent collaboration, universal design for learning, and more!

Autistic People Like Me Just Want A Chance to Succeed: Employees Sharing Experiences with Work

Kerry Magro, Ed.D. (Panel Moderator)

1.00 CEU

Amanda Alonzo, CEO/Director of Blu Alliance Counseling Center

Colin Burke

Olivia Hops, Owner of Unbaked, an online business selling edible cookie dough

Amanda Alonzo, CEO/Director of Blu Alliance Counseling Center

Over 500,000 autistic children will become autistic adults within the next decade. With that, employment will be possible for some. In this panel conversation, you will hear from the first-person perspectives of autistic adults in different lines of work on what has helped them navigate the workforce. The panel conversation will be moderated by Dr. Kerry Magro Ed.D. who is also himself on the autism spectrum.

Science is the Secret Ingredient for Effective Intervention

1.00 CEU

Michael Kelley, Ph.D., LP, BCBA-D, The University of Scranton Faculty

Whether we realize it or not, science permeates our daily lives - from the phones we use to make calls, do email, surf the internet; to the cars and planes we travel in; to the bridges that span our rivers; to the way we transmit

electricity over vast distances to power our homes. The list is endless - making science inextricably linked to our everyday experiences, yet science remains mysterious. Science is also responsible for the final results when you walk out of a doctor's office or hospital - we expect medical professionals to be aware of and practice the most scientifically advanced, state-of-the-art medical knowledge. We expect our phones, cars, planes, bridges, and electricity to work, and we expect our doctors to make us well when we are sick. I argue that the same incredibly high standards should apply to how we assess and intervene for our most vulnerable members of society - those living with Autism and related disabilities. In this presentation, I discuss how science is the secret ingredient to effective and ethical intervention.

Creating Cohorts of Collaboration

1.00 CEU

Debra A. Pellegrino, Ed.D., Dean, The Panuska College of Professional Studies, The University of Scranton

John W. Cosgrove, Executive Director, AllOne Foundation and Charities

James R. Martin, Vice President/Chief Operating Officer, Friendship House

Ann Gillerlane, Director of Program Development & Grants, Goodwill Industries of NEPA

Jason Mackie, Executive Director, Greater Carbondale YMCA

Emily Camerer, Director of Community Outreach and Administrative Services, Hope Enterprises, INC

Colleagues across the 13 counties of Northeast and Northcentral Pennsylvania discuss collective impact approaches by building partnerships and network strategies to leverage resources for individuals with autism and their families.

Addressing Public Safety Concerns in your Community

0.50 CEU

Paul Balance, Project Life Saver

Project Lifesaver is a 501 (C)(3) community based, public safety, non-profit organization that provides law enforcement, fire/rescue, and caregivers with a program designed to protect, and when necessary, quickly locate individuals with cognitive disorders who are prone to the life threatening behavior of wandering. The organization was founded in 1999 in Chesapeake, Virginia. The necessity of this program was determined through the correlation between cognitive conditions and the act of wandering. With the dramatic increase of cognitive conditions since the inception of the organization, the program has grown from a localized program to a program recognized internationally as a proven and effective method of "bringing loved ones home." The method relies on proven radio technology and specially trained search and rescue teams. Citizens enrolled in Project Lifesaver wear a small transmitter on the wrist or ankle that emits an individualized frequency signal. If an enrolled client goes missing, the caregiver notifies their local Project Lifesaver agency, and a trained emergency team responds to the wanderer's area. The first responders will then use the client's individualized frequency to locate the position of the individual. The knowledge given from the community policing courses is best applied in this situation because the first responders will know how to best approach the client once found, and allow them to be brought back to safety.

Advocating for Your Community - Autism Training for First Responders

0.50 CEU

Meredith Tekin, President of International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards

Many law enforcement and first responders do not receive sufficient training in how to approach and communicate with individuals with autism, sensory needs, or other neuro-differences. This session will review Who What Why How of autism training for first responders in your community - who can or should participate, what options are available, why this is important, and how it can help a multitude of community members. The goal is to educate and empower individuals and community members to start a movement locally and encourage local departments to fund and complete additional training in these areas.