A Collection of stories honoring those who serve families of children with special needs

Encouragement

Education

Empowerment

October 2009
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Our Mission Statement

To increase the opportunities for home, community and school success for children with disabilities, including those who are at risk or who have serious emotional disturbances, their families and their service providers, through education, encouragement and empowerment activities.
What Is Nevada PEP?

PEP is Nevada’s statewide Parent Training and Information Center for families who have children with disabilities and the professionals who support them. Nevada PEP believes that the family is the fundamental unit in society. Our philosophy is that children with disabilities, without regard for the nature and severity of the disability, have an inherent value, that all life has a purpose, that communities benefit from providing appropriate interventions and that citizens with disabilities make valuable contributions to society.

What Services Does PEP Offer?

Information and Referral
Statewide Lending Library
Quarterly Newsletter
Conflict Resolution Support
Individual Assistance
Parent Mentors and Advocates
Training Workshops
Volunteer Opportunities
Family Support Services

Who Should Call?

• Parents of children with special needs, illness, and disabilities.
• Parents of children with mental health needs.
• Parents needing encouragement and support from other parents.
• Family members, friends and persons with disabilities.
• Professionals in the medical, educational, and human service fields.
• Community Leaders who make decisions about programs of support for children with disabilities and their families.
Thank you for the info and support. I really felt like if I needed help, PEP would be there for me. I went into the school meeting knowing I had backup in case there was a communication breakdown. Thank you for your encouragement and positive feedback.

--Parent

Governing Board

Sam Lieberman
Chairperson

Nancy Radford
Vice Chair

Teri Peltier
Secretary

Alexia Conger
Treasurer

Melissa Bakker
Trish Leavitt
Dee Raymond
Jason Sadow
Nilza Shellhamer
Board Members

Dr. Lois Tarkanian
Craig Wetzel
Advisory Board

Juanita Matz
Bob Zauhar
Alumni Board
Thank You and your organization for all you do for families.

--Parent

Your trainings are the best. I would rather take trainings there than anywhere else.

--Parent

Nevada PEP is the expert for information and support for Nellis families.

--Specialized Training Of Military Parents Staff (STOMP)
Letter From the Chairperson of Nevada PEP’s Governing Board

As the Chairperson of the Nevada PEP Governing Board, I am proud to share with you the many accomplishments over the last year. Throughout the state, Nevada PEP takes great pride in the respect and reputation that we have built over the years. Many families’ lives have changed because of the support and information that they have received from Nevada PEP. When kids with disabilities are successful in school and out in the community, families become stronger. Nevada PEP continues to grow with each family we support.

Nevada PEP has enjoyed an exhilarating and productive year. Nevada PEP marked another year of collaboration with the Nevada Department of Education on the Rules, Rights, and Relationship annual conference with over 250 parents and professionals participating. This year, Nevada PEP participated in the planning of the Families First conference with over 200 attendees; we conducted trainings for over 150 parents and professionals on topics such as Early Intervention, ADHD and Positive Behavioral Interventions. Nevada PEP had an exciting media milestone, with the support and partnership from Cox Communications- a Baldy Bash PSA was created and aired on all cable television channels for the month of September.

As the New Year begins, families are faced with a lot of different challenges a consequence of the economic downturn. With the rising unemployment rates, families are struggling financially. Nevada PEP will continue to strengthen families and keep true to our mission. The need for Nevada PEP’s services has continued to increase. Information and guidance is a critical component in keeping families together. Our services are about empowering families to be life-long advocates for their children through education and skill building. Nevada PEP recognizes that parents are experts on their children and must learn about disabilities, intervention needs, and how to develop a support system to meet those needs.

As we look forward to an exciting and productive new year, we would like to thank all our generous supporters and our dedicated volunteers. Nevada PEP depends on the charitable support of our community leaders and our committed members. Together we are building stronger families for a better tomorrow.

Sam Lieberman
Nevada PEP Governing Board Chairperson

Sam Lieberman
“Our services are about empowering families to be life-long advocates for their children through education and skill building. Nevada PEP recognizes that parents are experts on their children and must learn about disabilities, intervention needs, and how to develop a support system to meet those needs.”
FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

**Income**  Total: $1,163,203.00

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**Expenditures**  Total: $1,154,270.00

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Nevada PEP was so great when I needed help with my son so when I became a Foster Mom and needed help, I knew exactly who to call for the right answers.

--Parent
COMMUNITY TRAININGS

Nevada PEP offers training opportunities for parents, students and professionals. Trainings are conducted throughout Nevada. Core training topics include: Understanding ADHD, IEP Clinics, Positive Behavioral Interventions, Bullying and Literacy. Other trainings addressing the IEP process are done in collaboration with community agencies, or are presented by special request. The information obtained is used to help provide better services for families who have children with disabilities. Trainings are presented in both English and Spanish.

Families of Children with All Disabilities Attend Nevada PEP Training Workshops

Nevada PEP is just the BEST! I love working with them...

--School Administrator
**Volunteer Contributions**

Nevada PEP encourages volunteers, board members and family members to be involved in their communities. Students, parents, professionals and the general public have donated over 5,000 hours of valuable service to Nevada PEP. Volunteers provide office assistance by helping with general office tasks: answering telephones, copying, faxing, assisting with bulk mail, filing office forms and assembling training packets. Volunteers assist with community fairs, special events, outreach, public awareness, trainings and support groups. Nevada PEP encourages family and student involvement on task forces, focus groups and at committee meetings. Thank you to all of the valuable volunteers who contributed to Nevada PEP.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Was the information presented at the workshop useful to you?</td>
<td>.....Yes, 96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because of the information you received at the workshop, do you feel you are more knowledgeable about how to work with schools?</td>
<td>.....Yes, 96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has your child received more appropriate services because of the information you have received from the Parent Center?</td>
<td>.....Yes, 84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because of the information you received at the workshop, were you able to work with the school to address a critical need related to your child’s education?</td>
<td>.....Yes, 80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has the workshop provided you with the information you needed to make decisions about your child’s education?</td>
<td>.....Yes, 100%</td>
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I attended your ADHD Training and want to say it was so nice to hear personal stories about how you are going through the same thing and I am not alone.

--Parent
The Parent Center provided me with the information I needed to make decisions about my child’s education.

Nevada PEP provides support services by first providing Information & Referral Services and helping parents find their way through the maze of services. Another important support service is individual assistance which targets the specific needs of the individual or family. If a family requires additional support, Nevada PEP attends Education, Wraparound, or Child & Family Team meetings.

How useful was the information you received from your contact with the Parent Center?

- Very Useful: 100%
- Not Useful: 0%

749... Education Meetings
287... Child & Family Team Meetings
56... Home Visits
1,251... New Individual Assistance Contacts
11,155... Individual Assistance Contacts
COMMUNITY OUTREACH & PUBLIC AWARENESS

Nevada PEP provides outreach presentations for advocacy organizations, service providers, professional organizations and parent groups throughout Nevada. By educating community members, Nevada PEP continually enhances understanding of the needs of children with disabilities and their families.

Top 10 Reasons People Contact Nevada PEP

263
Number of public forums, back-to-school fairs, and health fairs in which Nevada PEP has participated

98
Number of committees to which Nevada PEP representatives provided advocacy and the parent perspective

455
Number of meetings attended to enhance the support systems for children with special needs and their families

“It’s wonderful to see the community pull together for our kids. I will continue to be a part of PEP.”

- Community Agency
CONSUMER DEMOGRAPHICS

CONSUMER RELATIONSHIPS

Disabilities of all Children Served

Ethnicities of Consumers
Over the past year, Nevada PEP has raised over $84,109.00 to help support its mission. It is only through the continued support and commitment of our special community partners that we continue to grow. Our greatest need is for corporate sponsors. In giving to Nevada PEP, you will be rewarded with a lifetime of achievement and partnership.

To Donate...
Visit our website at www.nvpep.org to donate securely over the Internet!
**Funding Sources**

### Major Funders

- Center for Mental Health Services
- Department of Health and Human Services
- MGM Mirage Voice Foundation
- Nevada Department of Education
- Nevada Division of Child and Family Services
- Nevada Office of Suicide Prevention
- United Advocates For Children
- United Way of Southern Nevada
- US Department of Education

### Individual Funders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sally &amp; Jay Acebo</td>
<td>Steven A. Horsford</td>
<td>Lawence Pellegrini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don Abney</td>
<td>Kathryn Jenkins</td>
<td>Terri Peltier</td>
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<tr>
<td>Angela Ortiz-Alexis</td>
<td>Guillermina Jones</td>
<td>Randy Perry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tammy &amp; Dan Allred</td>
<td>Vickie Pence-Johnson</td>
<td>Neal Pomroy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heather Banaszek</td>
<td>Gaby &amp; Ron Jurica</td>
<td>Robert F. Purdy, Esq</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kriss &amp; Jim Baron</td>
<td>Tim Josselyn</td>
<td>Angelica Ramirez</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stanley Beckwith</td>
<td>Valerie Juicik</td>
<td>Robery Raymond</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary Benson</td>
<td>Eliepa Kaupoe</td>
<td>Gary Reese</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laurie Bisch</td>
<td>Maryanne Klingenberg</td>
<td>Arline &amp; Morris Reisman</td>
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<td>Donna &amp; Donald Bishop</td>
<td>David Kohlmeir</td>
<td>Shannon &amp; Patrick Rooney</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dean Boswell</td>
<td>Matthew Kopicko</td>
<td>Yale Rowe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deanna Brooks</td>
<td>Trish Leavitt</td>
<td>Kim &amp; Gary Schofield</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nick Caldwell</td>
<td>Andrew Leavitt, Esq.</td>
<td>Carol &amp; Gerald Schwartz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karen Cantu</td>
<td>Judge Michelle Leavitt</td>
<td>Judge Joseph Sciscento</td>
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<td>Elias Cardenas</td>
<td>Afrodit &amp; James Ledstrom</td>
<td>Donal &amp; Charles M. Silvestri</td>
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<td>Lynne &amp; Tim Carlson</td>
<td>Joanne Libertelli</td>
<td>Danielle Smailes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tom Clearwater</td>
<td>Marsha &amp; Rodney Linder</td>
<td>Steven Smith</td>
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<td>Stephanie &amp; Carl Combado</td>
<td>Sam Lionel</td>
<td>Lydia Snead</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bill Cunningham</td>
<td>Letha Lofton</td>
<td>Ryan Sprott</td>
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<td>Dietrich Dejean</td>
<td>Toby Maldonado</td>
<td>Rick Taft</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jamie Drissler</td>
<td>Jaqulyn &amp; Jason Manuma</td>
<td>Thomas H. Thomas</td>
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<td>James Dummond</td>
<td>Joseph Marshall</td>
<td>Elizabeth Toothman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bob Duran</td>
<td>Julie Mastroianni</td>
<td>Natalie &amp; Michael Walls</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anthony Eliades</td>
<td>Christine Mazza</td>
<td>Hans Walters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leon Farmer</td>
<td>Paula McHugh</td>
<td>Leyla Walters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Will Filipic</td>
<td>Mai McNulty</td>
<td>Kermit Waters, Esq</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jay Fletcher</td>
<td>Carrie Messina</td>
<td>Charles Watt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary Francis</td>
<td>Diane Morales</td>
<td>Amy &amp; Danny Whitt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mark Gore</td>
<td>John Moran III</td>
<td>Lana Wilcox</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catherine &amp; David Gregory</td>
<td>Hector Moreno</td>
<td>Richard Wilk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tina Groves</td>
<td>Joseph Mouzon</td>
<td>Chris Zaferes</td>
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<td>Kathleen &amp; Tom Hawkins</td>
<td>Daniel Nunez</td>
<td>Scott Zolman</td>
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<td>Dan Hellman</td>
<td>Vicki O’keefee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Valli Casazza-Hill</td>
<td>K Nick Page</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kim &amp; Mikel Holt</td>
<td>Wayne Peck</td>
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</table>

“PEP does great work for the community. I will always support PEP.”

Steve Schorr

Cox Communications
Funding Sources

Community Partners

Allegiant Air
Angel Park Golf Club
Cactus Joe’s
Carlson & Associates
Circus Circus Hotel & Casino
Cox Communications
Disneyland Resort
Firefighters of Southern Nevada Burn Foundation
Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #1
Hard Rock Hotel & Casino
Henderson Police Department
IBM Corporation
Imperial Palace
International Gaming Technology
Las Vegas City Fire & Rescue

Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department
Light’s Up
Lone Mountain Dental
MGM Mirage
Nannies & Housekeepers USA
North Las Vegas Police Department
Snap Towing/ Snap Auto Sales
Sonic Corporate Office
Southwest Airlines
Spurlock’s Gun Shop
Ted Wiens
The Dolce Group
The Salon at Lakeside
West Tropicana Medical Center
Westin Casuarina Hotel
Letter from the Executive Director

I would like to congratulate this year’s honorees. The Nevada PEP Hand in Hand Together We Can Appreciation Awards celebrate the amazing people who go the extra mile to make a positive difference in the lives of children and their families. This is the seventh year that Nevada PEP has provided this program as a way to express appreciation and highlight the remarkable individuals who make a difference. As you read the touching stories that grateful families send in each year, you are reminded that we all can make a difference.

The stories in this yearbook showcase how together we are strengthening our communities as we support children with special needs and their families. It takes the neighbor who watches over the children playing in the yard, the teacher who sees potential in each student, and leaders who recognize and respond to the needs to make a strong community. The families, the honorees and the sponsors of the Hand in Hand Together We Can Appreciation program are a reflection of the giving and caring individuals who take great pride in building a strong community for all Nevadans.

Not only do we celebrate the individuals who received the Hand in Hand Together We Can Appreciation Awards, we must recognize that it is the generous support of the program’s sponsors which makes it possible to honor and recognize the extraordinary people who have made a positive difference in the lives of Nevada’s children and families.

I hope that you enjoy the heartwarming stories this year as they serve as a reminder that we all can and do make a difference. From the family who shows their appreciation for the support they receive to the individual that goes the extra mile for a child, it takes all of us to strengthen the community that we are all proud to call home. On behalf of the staff and volunteers of Nevada PEP, we congratulate the outstanding individuals who together make our community a better place.

With Admiration,

Karen Taycher
Executive Director

“We don't have to engage in grand, heroic actions to participate in the process of change. Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world.”

Howard Zinn
Department Directors

Retta Dermody, Director of Programs and Services for the Satellite Office has over 26 years of experience in special education. Retta has advocated as a mom, step-mom, and grandmother of children with special needs. Her experience includes working as a teacher’s aide in resource rooms for WCSD, and as a Child and Family Advocate and Director of Family Services for the Committee to Aid Abused Women. As the Nevada PEP Director of Programs and Services, Retta combines her responsibilities involving the “Collaborating for Children” grant and directing the Satellite Office staff, providing rural outreach, training and other individual assistance to parents and professionals. She serves as vice-chairperson on the Washoe County Children’s Mental Health Consortium and is a member of the Rural Children’s Mental Health Consortium, as well as serving on numerous boards and committees.

Natalie Filipic is the mother of two and grandmother of four. As the Director of Operations, Natalie is generally responsible for the business and information management of Nevada PEP, ensuring the smooth operation of the organization’s infrastructure. Natalie enjoys the day to day routine of office management at PEP knowing what she does makes a difference in the lives of others.

Robin Kincaid brings 13 years of experience in advocating parental involvement in representing children with disabilities. As the Director of Training, Robin provides information about special education law, advocacy, best practice, parent/professional collaboration and positive behavior supports. Robin has served on the First Step/SCC Reorganization Board and the IMPRV Committee. She also helped coordinate the focus panel that developed the Parent Handbook which has statewide circulation.
TJ Rosenberg is the Statewide Family Network Director for Nevada PEP. She has served in this position for the past ten years. Her department focuses on Systems change, helping families who are involved with more than one child serving system, focusing on children with serious emotional disturbance and behavior disorders. TJ is a parent who has had personal experience and has a young adult son with a disability. TJ serves on many subcommittees for the Clark County Children’s Mental Health Consortium as well as other boards and committees to be a parent voice in the community. She is also a Wraparound trainer and does System of Care training and Parent training both locally and nationally.

Stephanie Vrsnik is the Community Development Director for Nevada PEP. Stephanie is the mother of two, and soon to be a first-time grandmother. Having a son with a disability brought her to Nevada PEP. Her passion and expertise is focused on bringing public awareness and community support to Nevada PEP. “It is vital, that the community supports and helps our children to be successful contributing members of society.” Stephanie is a member of the American Fundraising Professionals and the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce. She has overseen the “Baldy Bash”, a collaborative effort with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, to raise funds and public awareness for Nevada PEP. Building a stronger community for all Nevada families is Stephanie’s primary goal.

I have to tell you that my son is grown and out of the house now but he might not be alive today had it not been for PEP. You guys are awesome!

--Parent
Professional Staff

Dorena Ash is a Family Specialist at Nevada PEP. Her experience with her daughter’s disability has inspired her to work at PEP. She enjoys working with the families of children with disabilities; it helps to know that families don’t have to go through this alone. Dorena is honored to be a part of the PEP family.

Jennifer Cunningham is the Rural Family Specialist in the Satellite Office. She is proud to have the opportunity to help families every day. This has been a very rewarding experience for her. Learning from her own experience, Jennifer is able to continue to support and help families by listening, providing information, and just letting them know that they are not alone and that Nevada PEP is here is help.

Cheri Day is the Information and Training Specialist working in the Satellite Office. After her own personal experience she discovered that there is wonderful help if you know where to find it. She joined Nevada PEP after a year of working with the staff on her own IEPS to work with Autism, ADHD, RAD, PTSD as well as Sensory Integration. It is her goal to help empower others as she has been empowered through Nevada PEP.

Cynthia Escamilla is one of the bilingual Family Specialists at Nevada PEP, hoping to reach out to the community and to be of service to the families with children of special needs. It is an honor to be part of Nevada PEP. I will be able to accomplish a life time goal of helping others. This is the gratification of a lifetime!!!

Kimberly Fincher comes to Nevada PEP with a passion for training and for children. Kimberly is the proud parent of three amazing children, ranging in age from 8-13 who constantly inspire her and keep her busy. Kimberly has joined Nevada PEP to combine her passions of children and training and to further her knowledge of special education in order to support children and their families.
Professional Staff

Tamara Grubaugh is the Program Management Specialist at Nevada PEP. As the older sister of a young adult with special needs, Tamara takes pride in supporting her sibling. Tamara began as a volunteer. She is passionately learning about advocacy for families and the resources available to them. Tamara finds being a part of the Nevada PEP family a very rewarding experience.

Ron Kopicko is the Outreach Specialist for the Satellite Office. Ron knows that families can have a difficult time looking for support. He finds it rewarding to assist the families to navigate the process. Ron has been actively involved for NV PEP in the Washoe County Juvenile Justice system. He is a member of the Washoe County Juvenile Services “Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative.” Ron also provides training through the Reno Police Dept Regional Crisis Intervention Program for Northern Nevada law enforcement agencies, focusing on children and adolescents who have severe emotional disorders. Ron is glad to be a part of Nevada PEP.

Samantha King is the Transition Specialist in the Satellite Office. She has two children with learning disabilities. She works with middle and high school students getting ready to transition into postsecondary education, employment and independent living. She believes that life after graduation can be overwhelming and wants to do the best she can to provide families with strategies and resources for their young adults future.

Teri Kirby is the Family Navigator Coordinator in Nevada PEP’s 360 Center. Teri was introduced to NV PEP over eight years ago while seeking help for her own family. She values the opportunities to give unparalleled support back to families who face challenges in the community and schools. Helping to educate, empower and encourage families is not only an honor but a drive for her.
Flo LaRoy is a founding member of PEP and currently is the Special Projects Facilitator. She is inspired by her experiences as a parent of a child with a disability and the challenges of navigating the service delivery systems. Her passion for teaching and sharing information with parents and professionals is evident in her training workshops on positive behavioral interventions.

Diane Lombardo is fulfilling her lifelong dream of helping families through Nevada PEP. She moved to Las Vegas in 1986 for a better opportunity for herself and family. After seeking help for her own two boys at Nevada PEP, she began volunteering to give something back. She has been helping families through PEP for four years. She has a dream of one day staging a huge fundraiser and ultimately helping children with disabilities through her musical talent and Nevada PEP.

Dr. Christa Peterson is a licensed psychologist with 25 years of experience developing, administering and delivering services to youths who have developmental disabilities and behavioral health disorders. In the last ten years, Christa has served as principal investigator for several grant initiatives including the Neighborhood Care Center Project. Christa has co-authored many research and other publications in professional psychology, including studies of the wraparound process. She is also the parent of a child with behavior health problems. Christa has recently joined the Nevada PEP staff as director of the Family Support 360 Project.

Angelica Ramirez is the Bilingual I&R Intake Specialist at Nevada PEP. She provides Information and Referral to families. Angelica enjoys providing assistance to families and empowering parents so that they can be the best advocate for their children. She is currently Majoring in Special Education and hopes to become a special education teacher.
Professional Staff

Sally Reeves is a Training Specialist at Nevada PEP. She has a bachelor’s degree in Allied Health & Rehabilitation Services from the University of Florida. Her inspiration to help families comes from watching and assisting her mother advocate for services for Sally’s younger brother who has Down Syndrome. Sally is excited to be able to provide information and support to families through Nevada PEP.

Robin Renshaw has been with PEP for eight years now as a Transition Specialist. He advocates for and educates youth with disabilities transitioning from middle school to high school, from high school to college, or from college to the work force. He enjoys his work at PEP because as a person with a disability, he recognizes the need for an advocacy organization in Nevada to be that voice for kids with disabilities and their families.

Lydia Snead is a family specialist in the satellite office. She supports families through difficult times. She enjoys working with families, making sure she gives them all the support they need. As she works with families every day, she finds it a very rewarding that she can give them the support and information that they need.

Katherine Stansberry is the mother of two daughters. They each have their own special needs. I think the most valuable experience I can bring to my position at Nevada PEP, is that I am a parent and advocate for my children. It is gratifying to work at Nevada PEP, helping to make a difference in families’ lives.

My husband and I are and will forever be grateful for PEP’s support, expertise and advice on behalf of our daughter. Because of PEP’s help, our daughter is able to enjoy the benefits of success and happiness at school.

--Parent
Kathy Treants came to Nevada PEP in 2006. She is the “best mom” to Brianne who has given her nearly 27 years of experience in the area of advocacy and respect for the abilities of those further challenged in life. Kathy brings first-hand experience to the Transition Department as the department’s Coordinator.

Pat Warnke is the Graphic/Web designer for Nevada PEP. Pat maintains the organization’s website as well as the online social networks and is in charge of designing the mail out material that is sent to families. I enjoy working for Nevada PEP and designing new material in order for families to receive our information.

Philip Webb is a Family Specialist within Nevada PEP’s Statewide Family Network Department in Las Vegas. A father of three and a devoted husband, he has with a genuine compassion for helping people. Philip comes to Nevada PEP with the life experience of raising a child with a disability. Philip says that it is an honor and a privilege to work for an organization that allows him the opportunity to advocate and support others everyday!

Lynne Windle is originally from England and has been in the USA since 1987. Most of my working life has been in financial institutions so this is very different for me. I am the mother of two wonderful children one who is SED. Having received services from PEP in the past, I am thrilled and excited to be here and aspire to be the best advocate I can be.

Monica Zapata is a bilingual community education specialist. She enjoys working with families and empowers them to advocate for their children. Monica is a graduate from UCI with a bachelor’s degree in Psychology and Social Behavior. She has experience as an ABA therapist and as a tutor for children, adolescents and adults with disabilities. Monica enjoys presenting trainings in Spanish and sharing information and experiences with the local community.
December 28, 2009

Parents Encouraging Parents, Inc
2355 Red Rock Street, Suite 106
Las Vegas, NV 89146-3106

Dear Parents and Friends:

Let me take this opportunity to commend Nevada PEP for its significant effort and dedication in providing family and community based support services to those families of children with special needs. A commitment of all of your participants has made it possible for these special children in our communities to reach a high potential and goals that otherwise would not be available for them.

I am pleased to write in support of the "Hand in Hand Together We Can Appreciation Program," which has been so successful. Everyone should be supporting your Baldy Bash, which is your premier fundraising event. Its success will mean so much to ensuring that your programs are successful and all inclusive.

With best wishes for the coming year, sincerely,

[Signature]

William Raggio
Senate Minority Leader
December 10, 2009

Parents Encouraging Parents, Inc.
2355 Red Rock Street, Suite 106
Las Vegas, NV 89146

Dear Friends:

I write today in support of the "Hand in Hand Together We Can Appreciation Program" which is implemented by the Nevada Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) organization. This program has been a constant positive force in the lives of many Nevada families who have children with disabilities.

I consider it an honor to congratulate and commend Nevada PEP for its dedication and commitment to providing family and community based support services to families of children with special needs. The types of beneficial services include information and referral programs, training workshops, public awareness outreach, a resource library, and a community specialist network.

Your commitment and assistance ensure that all children in our community have the opportunity to reach their highest potential and goals. Therefore, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation and support to your organization.

Sincerely,

Steven Horsford
Nevada Senate Majority Leader
Actions are priceless when they are the reflection of a caring and loving heart that cares about its community. Volunteering not only helps families, but it gives a sense of accomplishment and personal fulfillment. Nevada PEP provides opportunities for families, youth, school groups and other community members to experience the rewards of contributing time and effort to an organization that cares about others. We are very proud of our volunteers statewide and appreciate their commitment to Nevada PEP and the communities in which they live. Volunteering is without a doubt a “noble” profession.

**CRS Volunteers Make A Difference!**

Our Community Resource Specialist Volunteers are parents and professionals that represent Nevada PEP by providing information about PEP services and resources at community events, assisting in parent training and providing public awareness in their own communities throughout the State of Nevada.

**VIP Program**

**Very Important Partners!**

Nevada PEP has provided our Very Important Partners with volunteer experiences in our Central and Satellite PEP offices. Parents, students and community partners, including our special school groups, have volunteered their time in business related activities, community based activities and back to school fairs. Not only does Nevada PEP benefit from their assistance, the VIP volunteer learns new skills and experiences that will contribute to their success in future opportunities.
The Baldy Bash is Nevada Pep's premiere fundraising event, showcasing Southern Nevada's finest first emergency responders and accepting donations from the community in support of our "Baldy's." The Las Vegas 51's helped us kick off the bash by buzzing Officer Joseph Marshall on the pitcher's mound. This event brought public awareness to the community about the services available to families who have children with disabilities. Phil Shalala, Vice President, Marketing, Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, threw out the first pitch. It was a night to remember!

Mayor Oscar Goodman proclaimed the week of September 21st, Baldy Bash Week. The week began with the buzzing of Battalion Chief Dan Allred, Las Vegas City Fire & Rescue, at Hard Rock Hotel & Casino. Chief Allred and fellow firefighters arrived in a fire truck to lend support to Nevada PEP. Phil Shalala challenged the Hard Rock staff to support the Baldy Bash and Nevada PEP. Sheriff Doug Gillespie also challenged the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department. This year we were honored to have a record number of participating "Baldy's."

The 8th Annual Baldy Bash took place at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino on Sunday, September 27th. This year, brave men and women with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, Las Vegas City Fire & Rescue, Nevada Department of Public Safety, Parole and Probation, Henderson Police Department, North Las Vegas Police Department, Pahrump Fire & Rescue, and Clark County School District Police participated as "Baldy's."

The event kicked-off with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Honor Guard posting of the colors in preparation for the national anthem, sung by Lt. Randy Sutton. The performance inspired appreciation for our community heroes and their dedication to Southern Nevada. Our Honorary Baldy, Mr. Jeff Gillan, Las Vegas One, proudly announced, "Let the buzzing begin."

Our Master of Ceremonies, Kim Sherwood-Schofield did a wonderful job. She interviewed the "Baldy's" and applauded their participation.

This year our “Top Baldy” was Eliepa Kaupoe, Las Vegas City Fire & Rescue. Ms. Kaupoe went to almost every fire station in the valley collecting donations to support this most worthy cause. Her efforts paid off in that she raised over $5,000 for Nevada PEP. Anthony Eliades came in second place, followed by Nate Pechacek with Las Vegas City Fire & Rescue. Thanks to the many generous businesses in our community, each of our “Baldy’s” received fantastic gifts in appreciation for their efforts in raising funds for Nevada PEP.
Liaisons Salon & Spa donated several talented stylists for the event who performed the buzzing on our "Baldy's." The stylists closed their salon for the day and donated all their time and talent for this event. Their dedication to Nevada PEP throughout the years is amazing. Without the talent, dedication and contributions of these stylists, the Baldy Bash would not be as successful.

For the third year, we were all privileged to have the talented Miss Kaila M. Leavitt, harpist, and a new addition, Mr. David Chavez, violist. Both of these amazing Las Vegas Academy of the Performing Arts students, graced the event with their unbelievable talent. The live performances were enjoyed by all in attendance.

As the contributions came in during the event, Citibank employees donated their time and professional accounting expertise. Our sincere appreciation goes to all of them for their hard work and dedication at this event.

This year's event had over 400 supporters in attendance, with over 75 "Baldy’s" participating. The Bash generated over $42,000 in contributions in support of Nevada PEP. These donations will help Nevada PEP to continue to offer critical community based support services.

Nevada PEP greatly appreciates Balloons with a Twist, Mad Science, Sonic the Hedgehog, and Smokey the Bear. These businesses donated their time and special talent to entertain the children. The kids smiled with delight as clowns created special balloon animals and had their faces painted with creative designs. The children enjoyed taking pictures with Smokey the Bear and Sonic the Hedgehog. The children also had the opportunity to create science projects with Mad Science.

Nevada PEP extends its deepest gratitude and thanks to all those who contributed so generously to the Baldy Bash. Our Chairwoman, Trish Leavitt did an outstanding job coordinating the event, along with the committee members, to make sure it was a success. All those involved, including the staff of Nevada PEP, worked together to bring the event to fruition.

Nevada PEP extends our utmost gratitude and thanks to the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Save the Planet philanthropic committee for their support. Their help throughout the planning stages and on the day of the Baldy Bash was outstanding.
Nevada PEP offers a very special and heartfelt thank you to our sponsors without whom this event would not be possible. By providing opportunities to those who work to better the lives of children with special needs, you are not only honoring our community’s heroes and first responders but also supporting the fundraising that provides much needed services. We salute you and truly value the lasting partnerships we have formed. We extend our most sincere appreciation and recognition for the support you have given to the Baldy Bash event and are proud to endorse your contributions as evidence of your amazing community spirit. Thank you!

2009 Baldy Bash Sponsors

Corporate Sponsors

Hard Rock Hotel & Casino

Individual Sponsors

Andrew Leavitt, Esq.
Jim Leavitt Esq.
Judge Michelle Leavitt
Kermitt L. Waters, Esq.
On October 14th, 2009, Nevada PEP recognized Children with Special Needs Month by honoring Assemblywoman Sheila Leslie at PEP’s 4th Annual Children’s Art Show and Silent Auction. Ms. Leslie was presented Nevada PEP’s Hand in Hand award for her dedication to families and children with disabilities.

VSA arts of Nevada hosted the successful event at the beautiful, historical Lake Mansion. Over 50 pieces of art were donated by local children with special needs, their siblings, and their peers. Children, families, services providers, and educators community and state leaders enjoyed the art display, while Beverly Colgan and her students from Harps and Vibes provided the glorious music.

Nevada PEP would like to thank all who supported this event by sponsoring, attending and participating in the silent auction.

Alex Metscher, Local Artist
Amber O’Bryan
Anchor Auctions
Angelica Ramirez
Applebee’s
Atlantic Casino Resort Spa
Reno
Austin’s Steakhouse
Bill Cunningham, Local
Photographer
BJ’s Restaurant
Bobbie, Local (8 yr old)
Photographer
Catherine Gregory
Chevy’s Fresh Mix
Dan Hellman, Local Artist
Diamond Peak Ski Resort
DTR Fitness
Eldorado Hotel and Casino
Reno
Element Spa
Fleischmann Planetarium
Gold Dust West
Grand Sierra Resort and
Casino
Harrah’s Reno Casino and
Hotel
Harvey’s Tahoe
Heidi’s Family Restaurants
Hot August Nights
Jen O’Bryan-Taft
Jim and Retta Dermody
Julie Mastroiani
Kelderman Klassy Glass
Lydia Snead
Margo Brown
Mathew Kopicko, Local Artist
Mt. Rose Ski Tahoe
Naan and Kabab
Outback Steakhouse
Peppermill Resort Spa and
Casino
Pump It Up
Raeanne Morton, Local Artist
Rapscallion Seafood House and Bar
Rick Taft, Local Photographer
Ron Chalmers, Local Artist
 Sands Regency Hotel and Casino
Southwest Airlines
Squeeze In
Teque West
Smith, Peltier & Associates
Tessera Glass
Texas Roadhouse
Tina Groves
Wild Island Family Adventure Park
History of the Hand in Hand Program

The “Hand In Hand, Together We Can” appreciation program was designed to proudly recognize and honor special people who have made a positive difference in the lives of children with disabilities. The program began in October, 2002 when Hand In Hand forms were mailed to thousands of interested parents and professionals across the state. With each special story sent to us, Nevada PEP delivered the Hand in Hand award recipient a beautiful certificate and lapel pin to display as a proud supporter of Nevada’s community of people with disabilities. The stories are also recognized in our quarterly PEP Post newsletter. The inspiring stories you are about to read are celebrations of wonderful teachers, doctors, therapists, family members, and many others who have worked with children with disabilities and have gone above and beyond to make a positive difference in a child’s life. Touching and original, the stories in our 2009 Yearbook span over a one year period. We at Nevada PEP are excited to honor these very special Hand In Hand recipients and will continue to do so throughout the years to come.
Hand in Hand
Together We Can
Stories

Angela Adami

Angela is special to me because she has helped us out a lot. She is helping me get my temper calm because it was sky high before we met her. She gave me someone to talk to.

Tryston Hastings
Student

Angela Adami

Angela is the bomb. She has helped us organize our lives. Angela has taught us to understand each other. She put us on a path of healing. We can never thank Angela enough for all she has done for us. Angela has been here for us even when insurance was an issue. She has always been a great sounding board with many great ideas to help us. She has changed our lives for the better. Thanks Angela.

Sheryl Hastings
Parent

Katherine Alvarez
Maple Star

I would like to thank Katherine Alvarez from Maple Star, for her excellent work with our family throughout the whole year that she has been with us. If I had the money to continue the therapy, it would be wonderful. Thank you, Katherine. Thank you for being so professional and sensitive.

Quiero agradecerle a Katherine Alvarez de Maple Star, por su excelente trabajo con nuestra familia durante todo el año que estuvo con nosotros. Si yo tuviera el dinero para continuar en terapia con ella, eso sería súper Maravilloso. Gracias Katherine. Gracias por ser tan profesional y humana.

Maria M. Celis
Parent

Jayme Beal
Speech Therapist

Jayme has been our son’s speech therapist for almost a year now. I cannot express in words the gratitude and thanks we have for her. Our son was very delayed in both expressive and receptive language when we first brought him to see Jayme. Because of her patience and hard work our son is now a typical and talkative two year old. Her loving and patient attitude with our son has changed our family’s life. She brought our little boy’s sparkle back and helped him find his voice. Thank You Jayme!

Sara Chown
Parent

Elizabeth (Ely) Campos
Hermana

Ely me ayuda a darle de comer a su hermana menor y la recoge cuando el bus escolar llega a dejarla. Ella la motiva y le da mucho cariño. Ely es muy servicial y tiene muchas cualidades. Ella juega, baila, y canta con su hermana. Ella es un amor y es una hermana muy querida. Ella ama a Ely.

My daughter helps me feed her younger sister, and she picks her up when the school bus drop her off. Ely motivates her little sister and gives her lots of affection. She is very helpful and has many good qualities such as playing, dancing, and singing with her sister. Ely is a loving and dear sister. My youngest daughter loves her big sister Ely.

Silvia Campos
Madre

Cindy Carroll
Caseworker

Cindy came to us through Maple Star; she helped me push my son into trying to succeed in school. She also made him see that we are his parents, and that he needs to listen to us. His attitude toward us is starting to change, he is growing up. It was hard on my son when Cindy left; things were just starting to look up for him. We just want Cindy to know that we will never forget the special person that she has been in our lives. We wish she had never left.

Kristin & Jason Mastne
Parent
International Union of Painters and Allied Trades District Council 15 Floor Cover

This Hand in Hand story is dedicated to all the hard workers who went above and beyond to give Nevada PEP a new office look. The District Council 15 Floor Cover gave Nevada PEP a hand, at the beginning of September; they arrived with carpet and tile they donated and installed at Nevada PEP. PEP was in desperate need for new carpet, and is ever so thankful for the offer. The crew provided their expertise and hard labor to lay new carpet and tile in our offices. Moving all of our office furniture was no easy task, but under the supervision of Bob Blackman and Louie Preciado they got the job done. As an added touch, they embedded our new logo into the tile and added color and character throughout the office with different shapes and symbols, adding a sense of family and warmth through the office. A huge “Thank You” goes out to the entire crew who worked so hard to make our office look so professional and beautiful.

Thank you
From the very appreciative staff at Nevada PEP

Gilberto Campos
Hermano

Gilberto siempre tiene tiempo para motivar y jugar con mi hija menor. El sale a caminar con Ella y le pone su música favorita. Gilberto ayuda a darle de comer, le habla, la lleva a pasear en su carro y la lleva de compras.

Gilberto always has time to motivate and play with my daughter. He goes out for walks with her and plays her favorite music. Gilberto helps me feed her; he talks to her, takes her for rides in his car and takes her shopping.

Silvia Campos
Madre

Mr. Richard Covington

Mr. Covington is sincere, kind and always has my children’s best interest in mind. He always returns our calls and has gone out of his way to help us.

Frank & Lynn Scialabba
Parents

David Mazy
Father

I am very grateful to David for all of the help that he has given us with our child. David Mazy is always aware of everything that is going on with my son’s diabetes. I hope that when he reads this newsletter, he knows that without his help, I would not know what to do. I am very happy to always have my son and David by my side.

Estoy muy agradecida con David por tanta ayuda que nos ha dado con nuestro hijo Gabriel. El siempre está al tanto de lo que está pasando con la diabetes de mi hijo. Ojalá que cuando el lea este boletín informativo sepa que sin su ayuda, no sabría que hacer. Yo estoy muy feliz por tener a Gabriel y a David siempre a mi lado.

Graciela Castrejon
Mother

Mrs. Jenifer Davis

Before I joined tae kwon do I was unsure of myself unwilling to put myself out there and try anything new. I tripped a lot and didn’t have good balance. Mrs. Davis a great tae kwon do instructor she is kind, encouraging, and motivating. She takes time to work with me if I do not get something she will help me get it no matter how big the class gets and if I do the wrong thing she will explain it to me then teach me how it should be done in a caring and supportive way. I look forward to every class because she makes practicing tae kwon fun. Mrs. Davis believes in me and that I can go far in tae kwon do, I am now a purple belt.

After I joined tae kwon do I developed skills like balance, coordination, stamina, better control of my muscles and confidence to feel good about myself. Mrs. Davis inspires the class to be great not just in class, but in life.

Now I know nothing is out of my control, my confidence level has grown; I know the importance of team work and team spirit. I do not worry so much. It gave me the discipline to overcome obstacles that arise. I have a new found sense of pride for myself.

Kenny Taycher
Katie Deines
When my son and I first moved here we were an emotional mess. We came from an abusive situation which we lived in for 9 1/2 years. Then along came Katie. She stood beside us, giving us encouragement. She gave our lives a much needed sense of stability. With Katie’s help we were put in touch with other people and organizations that have been beneficial to us. She would even visit my son at school and give him encouragement. Whenever we felt we were in great need Katie offered us the greatest support we could ever manage. Katie is an angel and we love her.

Sheryl Hastings
Parent

Rosemary De Vito
Teacher – Duane D. Keller Middle School

My son attended four general education classes this last semester. Mrs. De Vito consistently provided him with the tools he needed to learn best. I truly believe she worked magic with John and provided him with not only the accommodations his IEP afforded him, but also the best educational experience he has had. He learned excellent study techniques, participated daily and worked hard in her class. The confidence he gained there, spilled over to his other classes. If I had a question, I could count on a quick response to my e-mails. It was because of Mrs. De Vito’s attention to my child’s IEP and her gift as a teacher he became so successful. I wish I could clone her.

Deanna Macaluso

Jim Dumond
Vice President/ Compliance Officer
MGM Mirage

Nevada PEP is honored to nominate Mr. Jim Dumond for our Hand in Hand award. Jim has truly been an inspiration to our youth. Recently, we asked Jim if he would write a forward for our College Bound book telling his life story about how he struggled in school and accomplished high achievements with the help of family, friends and teachers. Our College Bound book, entitled “You Can Do It!” is geared toward older youth with disabilities who want to go to college. When asked to write the motivational forward, Jim didn’t hesitate for a second. He said: “Sure, I’ll be happy to.” Jim has accomplished so much in his lifetime. He is proof that you can do what you set your mind to, from overcoming and conquering your struggles in school to reaching your dreams. Jim also went a step further in giving Nevada PEP a helping hand -- he coordinated having 500 College Bound books printed. Jim is truly an inspiration to the community and to all youth in Nevada. Jim thank you for your wonderful support, it is truly appreciated.

Nevada PEP staff

Cynthia Escamilla
Nevada PEP

Nosotros queremos dar las gracias a Cynthia Escamilla. Ella es la persona que nos ha ayudado a entender la discapacidad de nuestro hijo, Tony. Antes de conocerla no entendiamos el comportamiento de él y ya estábamos desesperados. Gracias a ella y su paciencia, nosotros hemos podido ayudar a nuestro hijo y él ha mejorado mucho. También queremos agradecer a Nevada PEP por tener a personas que se preocupan por nuestros hijos. Gracias Cynthia de todo Corazón por su apoyo

We want to thank Cynthia Escamilla. She is the person who has helped us understand our child’s disability. Before we met her, we did not understand our son’s behavior and we were desperate. Thanks to her and her patience, we have been able to help our son, Tony, and he has greatly improved. We also want to thank Nevada PEP for having people who care about our children. Cynthia, thanks very much for your support.

Eva y Hector Cruz
Padres

Karen Fardelman
Occupational Therapists

Karen has helped me out a lot with school. The things she refers for me to do at school have really helped me and have made going there the most fun thing in the world. She has helped me out my self control.

Tryston Hastings
Student
Karen Fardelman
Occupational Therapists
Karen is the best. She is very child oriented and really cares for all of her clients. She tailors each session to meet the child’s needs. Karen always has the best ways to encourage us. Her creativity has given us many ideas to help my son learn self control and body awareness. Everyone should have Karen for an Occupational Therapist. I would recommend her OT services to families.

Sheryl Hastings

Fay Garcia
Foster Mom
When my child was taken out of the home and placed with Fay and Ernie, they took my son into their lives and treated him as family. We weren’t sure if we could handle him being away, but we think that Fay is an Angel sent to help our family, to make the changes in order to be more understanding of each other. She is the Angel that my son really needs in his life. We want her to know just how special she is and how grateful we are that my son has a foster mom like her.

Kristin L. Mastne

Alyssa Green & Debra Rhodes
They helped me when I was going through a lot with my son and daughter. They were very big help to me and my kids. I love them for that.

Michelle McCoy
Mom

Ron Guanieri
Imperial Palace
The Nevada PEP family would like to send a big Thank You to Ron from the Matsuri Show at the Imperial Palace. It was so gracious of Ron to invite Nevada PEP staff to see this incredible show. Some of the staff shared wonderful comments about the show: it was a dazzling array of talent, an enthusiastic team of characters. It was fantastic to be able to attend a family oriented show that all could attend. Again thank you for a wonderful time we truly appreciate it.

Staff at Nevada PEP

Help of Southern Nevada
My family wishes to thank Help of Southern Nevada for the warmest holiday season of a lifetime. A pacific storm had just brought frigid air and snow to the valley. We were in the middle of one of the coldest winters ever when we suddenly lost the heat in our home. My eighty-four-year-old father became extremely anxious. We were all freezing and he was being told that the furnace was not repairable. We needed a whole new unit. It was the week before Christmas, things were looking pretty bleak. We had no extra money for this unexpected crisis. We did our best to hide the grim reality of our situation from my son with autism who was so excited about a visit from Santa. We thought we had exhausted all of our possibilities when a real miracle occurred. Help of Southern Nevada came to our rescue. They had a crew working diligently on Christmas Eve to restore our heat, bringing about the most wonderful holiday memories we will cherish forever. Thank you Help of Southern Nevada and may you have a Happy and Prosperous New Year!

Diane Lombardo and family

Michelle “Chelly” Hawkins
Teacher
Chelly is a special education teacher at the New Horizons Academy, a school with a curriculum that focuses on students with processing or focusing issues. She is also a therapeutic riding instructor with Dream Therapies in Las Vegas, and she also chooses to work the after school program at the New Horizons Academy. As you can tell, Chelly is a dedicated and tireless teacher of children/teenagers with special needs. Even though she spends almost every waking hour helping these children, she has been known to bring these children to her home (with their parents blessings) to go that extra mile, and make sure that they succeed. Chelly is a unique and talented gift to our Las Vegas special needs community (especially our teens).

Thank you Chelly.

Karen Siran-Loughery
Parent

Odessa Hawkins
Psychosocial Rehabilitation Counselor
When I was told that my child was eligible for a Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services I wasn’t thrilled. Then this vibrant young lady came into our lives and with her came an abundance of wealth. She has enriched my son’s quality of life, social successes, and has guided him delicately through the process.
of learning about feelings along with social cues and being able to play with friends. She has enhanced his ability to trust again and has made great gains in helping him re-build his self esteem.

Our entire family has become empowered by her presence and insight. She is a key player in his Positive Behavioral Support Nevada team. Her understanding and encouragement have been meritorious. She has re-opened my confidence in others. She reached out her hand and touched our hearts.

Cheri Day
Parent

Daniel Holmes
Dad

Today April 2, being world Autism Day, I would like to nominate Dan Holmes for your Hand in Hand Together We Can Program. Dan is very generous, he gives in every way he can. Being a devoted parent of an Autistic son, Dan is building a non-profit foundation called “Take a Look through My Eyes”. He plans to raise money to help families affected by Autism through bike runs. He is building 3 custom motorcycles that are all Autism themed. ThankYou for acknowledging Dan. He truly cares about our special kids.

Karen Holmes
Mom

Berna Huete OTR/L
Occupational Therapist

Berna Huete OTR/L is a pediatric Occupational Therapist with Dream Therapies. She came all the way from Florida to service children with special needs in Nevada. She has very special qualities, was an ABA tutor for children/teens with autism for 8 years while attending college to be an OT. She is one of the most amazing tutors I have ever seen, in addition to being a fantastic OT. She is also one of the few bilingual therapists in the Las Vegas area and sooo helps our Spanish speaking community. Thanks for bringing your talents to Nevada Berna!

Karen Siran-Loughery
OTR/L

Beth Irvine
Speech Therapist

Beth is truly an amazing speech therapist. Her patience and dedication have helped our son immensely. She is constantly coming up with new language activities during our speech sessions. Our son loves to go and see Ms. Beth every week. Because of her hard work, our son has increased his ability to speak and understand language. Words cannot even begin to express our thanks. She gave us hope and encouragement during a time when we needed it most. Thank You from the bottom of our hearts, our lives has been changed!

Sara Chown
Parent

Assemblywomen Sheila Leslie

It is with great pleasure and respect that Nevada PEP honors Assemblywoman Sheila Leslie as a recipient for Nevada PEP’s “Hand and Hand” appreciation award for her dedication to families and children with special needs.

Assemblywomen Leslie is currently employed by the 2nd Judicial District Court as the Specialty Court Coordinator; managing the Adult, Family, and Juvenile Drug Court and the state’s first Mental Health Court. For seven years she was the Executive Director of the Children’s Cabinet here in Reno.

Ms. Leslie has served in the Nevada Assembly since 1999 as a strong advocate for children and families. She has also worked tirelessly for individuals with mental health issues. This past legislative session she supported Assembly Bill 162, which requires certain policies of health insurance and health care plans to provide coverage for screening and treatment of autism.

Assemblywomen Leslie has a long list of affiliations and honors that are well deserved. During the Legislative Session her interaction with colleagues and the public is with respect listening to their concerns. She is a leader, a team player, and never runs away from a challenge. For the past 25 years Ms. Leslie is best known for her dedication to Nevada’s children, youth, and families. Because of her passion she has made a difference in the lives of Nevadans.

Nevada PEP

Scott Linker
Volunteer

Scott is very enthusiastic and always willing to help Nevada PEP. Scott goes the extra mile when volunteering for our organization. He donates his time and talent, as well as, provides resources to share with other families. Most of all, Scott’s positive outlook, willingness to volunteer and continuous kind words he has for our organization
Diane Lombardo
Nevada PEP

We moved here from Ohio with an IEP, the school advised me we had to make a new IEP for the State of Nevada. They informed me they would allot 15 minutes for this. When we started the process, the school district kept saying there was nothing they could do due to budget cuts. I was floored!

I’ve worked with a PTI in Ohio so I went in search of one in Nevada. That is where I met Diane. She has helped my son get his speech therapy back, put in an appropriate class for his needs and got adaptive PE back! She’s been very attentive in letting us know about social activities (Challenger baseball GO LOAN RANGERS!!) and support meetings for the family.

With his annual IEP coming up in a few weeks, I know his needs will be well looked after with Diane’s help. I want to thank her for all her dedication and help, she’s become more than a “PEP representative” I consider her my friend! Thanks Diane for a job well done!

Betzy, Keith and Jacob Hull
Parent

Sally Reeves
Nevada PEP

Diane Lombardo
Nevada PEP

A few years back my daughter was diagnosed with Tourette’s syndrome. A neighbor of mine referred me to Nevada PEP to help me navigate through the red tape of the school system to assure that she received all the proper accommodations. This is when I met Diane. She has been a godsend since I first arrived at PEP. She has helped me not only with my daughter but with my son also, who has learning disabilities. Diane has been with me every step of the way. She has been an advocate, an educator and a shoulder to cry on. I couldn’t imagine how we would have made it through without her or the services of Nevada PEP but the future looks bright knowing that we have Diane beside us. Calling PEP and meeting Diane was the best thing I could’ve done in this situation and I’m happy I did.

Flora Casas
Parent

Deanna Macaluso
Nevada PEP

I met Deanna at about the middle of my case, and she has supported and helped guide me through some very hard times. I don’t know if I could have made it through them without her. She has extended her hand at a level where it’s not just her job. She continues to go above and beyond to guide through this long and hard process. She is open and honest and I trust her very much. This is not something I can say about anyone else that I have come into contact. She has made a difference in my niece’s life and also mine. I will never forget all the hard work she does that helps families like mine get through a crisis. This award is exactly what she does Hand in Hand.

Tarae Rivera
Aunt

Tom McNutt
Sp Ed Teacher

This Special Education Teacher was a life saver for my son and our entire family. He took my son as he was and made him understand the special person he is and what he is capable of achieving in his education and life. Again we thank you for your patience and understanding and I hope he gets the chance to have another teacher like you again.

Tammy Shaffer-Bage
Mother

Sally Reeves
Nevada PEP

I have a very gifted Artist who has great strengths in Math and science. I began looking for services to help him in school when we found out he has Tourette’s and Aspergers syndrome. We called Nevada PEP and this is when we found my shining star in my darkest hour, my PEP advocate, Diane. She is teaching my family how to advocate for my son and has also helped us get home bound services last year. With Diane’s help my son is back in school this year. Nevada PEP is the place to exchange stories with other parents that have children with disabilities and to know you are not alone.

Tanya Panou
Parent

Diane Lombardo
Nevada PEP

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Tarae Rivera
Aunt

Flora Casas
Parent
**Tari Mason**  
Mrs. Mason is invaluable. She has so much patience with my son and her imagination to inspire him to learn is immeasurable. She always has a big bright smile even when it hasn’t been the easiest day. We love her and are so grateful for her.

_Brian & Laura Godley_  
_Parent_

**Jim Overton**  
Good Friend  
Jim Overton was brought into our lives through Maple Star; he is a very special person. He not only worked with our sons, he counseled me and my husband too. He was able to keep us close. He not only took my boys to do a lot of outdoor activities, he also taught them the importance of education and my son never forgot it. It’s because of Jim that my son is doing so well now. We don’t want to lose the connection with him, so please help us recover the lost connection and help Jim to understand that he will always be family to us.

_Kristin & Jason Mastne_  
_Parent_

**Tom Steinline**  
Service Provider  
Tom Steinline is a provider at Majestic Basic Skills Day Treatment Program. Mr. Steinline and his wife Linda have gone beyond the call of duty on his daily tasks at Majestic. My family and I are blessed to know the Steinlines. Mrs. Steinline has been there for me numerous times in many different ways. If I could have chosen my parents I would have chosen the Steinlines.

_LeQuitta Smith_

**Lydia Snead**  
Nevada PEP  
For 4 years I have been trying to get my son on an IEP because of his many health issues. This year I was referred to Lydia. She has stood beside me at meetings where the educational staff tried to pressure me into making a decision I was not comfortable with. Lydia encouraged me with phone calls and e-mails when I needed them. All my questions and concerns she already knew the answers to, or she would find out the answers for me. Lydia has been an angel to us and has helped my son get an IEP. I will always be grateful; she has changed our lives for the better! Thanks Lydia!

_Sheryl Hastings_  
_Parent_

**Lindsay Terrett**  
Program Coordinator  
I don’t really have a big story to tell but I really wanted to nominate Lindsay, Program Coordinator at DSOSN, due to her kind, caring and warm heart, which she opens to everyone who comes to the organization needing help, support or understanding. My family is new to this state and did not know anybody; Lindsay welcomed us with open arms and made us feel like we were friends forever. I had never volunteered before and now not a week passes by without me helping at DSOSN. I wish that our society would have more people like Lindsay, who treats kids very special and not because of their disabilities but because all the kids are truly special and unique; disability or not. Thank You Lindsay for changing our lives!!

_Lana Miranda_  
_Parent_
Worthwhile projects such as the “Hand In Hand Together We Can” program would not be possible without the charitable support Nevada PEP receives from dedicated individuals throughout the state. Thanks to grants, donations, and contributions, Nevada PEP has been able to celebrate its seventeenth year of providing support and education to parents and professionals. In partnership with the caring supporters listed below, the Hand In Hand program was created, developed, and continues to grow. Nevada PEP is honored to acknowledge the following businesses and individuals as dedicated contributors in enriching the lives of children with disabilities.
A special thank you to all of our “Hand in Hand” Sponsors!
A very special thanks to everyone who participated in the “Hand in Hand Together We Can” Appreciation Program!

Please send in a nomination to:
Nevada PEP
2355 Red Rock Street,
Ste. 106
Las Vegas, Nevada, 89146.

You may fax your stories to 702.388.2966 or email them to: pepinfo@nvpep.org.

Please limit your entries to THREE nominees per family per year, and ONE nominee per form.

Thank you to all the extraordinary and devoted people throughout the state of Nevada who have given that extra hand to help our children.

Thank you for the info and support. I really felt like if I needed help PEP would be there for me. I went into the school meeting knowing I had back up in case there was a communication break down. Thank you for your encouragement and positive feed back.

--Parent
Annual Sponsorship
Hand in Hand Appreciation Program

Show your support for the special people across the state who make the lives of children with special needs better by becoming a sponsor of the Hand in Hand Appreciation Program. Help us to recognize, honor and publicly applaud those who partner with parents and make a difference for children with special needs.

**Silver Sponsorship**    $100 up to $1,000
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- Receive Yearbook
- Receive the PEP Post Newsletter
- Recognized on the Web-Site
- Receive a Lapel Pin

**Gold Sponsorship**    $1,000 up to $3,000
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- Hand in Hand Sponsorship Plaque

**Platinum Sponsorship**    $3,000 and up
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- Receive Yearbook
- Receive the PEP Post Newsletter
- Recognized on the Web-Site
- Receive a Lapel Pin
- Hand in Hand Sponsorship Plaque
- Honorable Mention in “Hand in Hand“ Literature

October is Nevada’s Month recognizing children with special needs. In honor of this annual recognition Nevada PEP will produce the “Hand in Hand” yearbook each October. Honorees will also be highlighted in the quarterly PEP Post throughout the year.
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