

Maryland's
PARTNERS IN POLICYMAKING®

Our Stories



2019

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About Partners in Policymaking

It's back! This year, The Arc Maryland, with Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council and People on the Go of Maryland, were incredibly excited to usher in the return of Partners in Policymaking, a program that prepares adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) and parents of children with I/DD to be effective advocates at local, state, and national levels.

Partners in Policymaking® was created in 1987 by the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities once they identified the need for a formal training process covering best practices on a variety of issues that people with I/DD and their families face. "Partners" is about systems change: creating, working towards, and achieving a vision of shared values about people with disabilities. 32 years and over 27,000 Partners graduates later, the program continues to enlarge the power base of disability rights advocates.

The year-long, class-style program is available in over 30 states, and in 2019, The Arc Maryland had the opportunity to manage Maryland's Partners in Policymaking® program for the first time since 2007, making this Partners graduating class the first of its kind in 12 years!

You can learn more about the national Partners movement on the Minnesota Department of Administration Council on Developmental Disabilities Website, at mn.gov/mnddc/pipm/.

This Year in Partners

Our 2019 Partners class spent 9 extensive sessions, spanning from January to September of 2019, covering a variety of issues faced by people with I/DD and their families. Each session featured presentations and activities lead by subject matter experts from Maryland and beyond. Session highlights included:

- Learning about the history of the developmental disabilities movement.
- Speaking with State Legislators in Annapolis at Developmental Disabilities Day at the Legislature.
- Practicing Charting the LifeCourse™ with certified instructors.
- Understanding the components of truly inclusive education.
- Discussing how to advocate locally, statewide, and nationally from advocates, lobbyists, and community outreach experts across levels.
- Discovering innovative housing options at The Arc Maryland State Convention.
- Using Person Centered Planning to create life and career paths.
- Testifying in a mock hearing.
- Exercising leadership skills and doing some self discovery along the way.



Program Sponsors and Coordinators



The Arc Maryland is the contributing funder and directs the Maryland Partners in Policymaking Program. The Arc Maryland is the largest statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to the rights and quality of life of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. We do this through public policy, advocacy, public awareness, and training and membership support.

The Arc Maryland is a membership-based organization of 8,000 members. With our ten local chapters serving 23 counties and Baltimore City, we encompass all ages and more than 100 different diagnoses of intellectual and developmental disabilities. Our local network of chapters provides a wide range of human services and other supports to people with I/DD and their family members, including individual and public policy advocacy, residential, educational, and vocational services, employment, family supports and early intervention that promote people with I/DD to participate and be included in their communities.



Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

EMPOWERMENT • OPPORTUNITY • INCLUSION

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council has made the Maryland Partners in Policymaking Program possible through a grant which it awarded to The Arc Maryland.

The Council is an independent, self-governing organization

dedicated to advancing the inclusion of Marylanders with developmental disabilities in all facets of community life. The Council is 100% federally funded. The annual federal funding allocation is administered through the federal Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD).

Council members are appointed by the governor and are similar to a board of directors in that they establish the priorities of the Council and help guide the Council's work. Council members include people with developmental disabilities, family members, local and non-profit organizations, state agency representatives, and representatives of Disability Rights Maryland and the Maryland Center on Developmental Disabilities. The majority of Council members are people with developmental disabilities and family members. The Council is in a unique position to bring together people with diverse perspectives, experiences and knowledge in meaningful partnerships.



People on the Go of Maryland (POG) is a partner with The Arc Maryland in presenting the Maryland Partners in Policymaking Program. POG is a grassroots organization advocating on behalf of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who use their voices about the importance of choice and the freedom it brings with the reward of independence. POG believes all people should be active participants in their communities and POG strives to eliminate discrimination. POG began in 1989, as the

Maryland statewide self-advocacy group and has grown across the state over the last 30 years with active local county groups.

Meet the 2019 Graduates

29 Marylanders joined the global network of Partners graduates in 2019. We can not be more excited for these distinguished individuals to become long-term agents of change in Maryland, and beyond.

As you read through this yearbook, remember the names and stories of the 2019 Partners Class. Surely, this will not be the last time you hear from them!

Over the course of 2019, Partners were tasked with developing a project to put their skills as change agents to the test. Class members identified issues they recognized in their communities and crafted plans of action to address them. Some class members discovered their projects covered similar issues and decided to team up on the project. Talk about a Partners partnership! You can read about each graduate's project on their yearbook page.



Mohamed Agabein

“

*I learned
so much.*

My name is Mohamed Agabein and I have Cerebral Palsy. When I was 10 months old, I had a high fever, which resulted in my diagnosis. I joined the Partners in Policymaking program not knowing what I would gain but wanted to know how to advocate better. I feel that there should be more transportation options in life for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. I have advocated for myself and rights before I joined the class. I would like to use the skills and information that I have learned to help others.

My Project

My project is finding connections between people with and without disabilities so they can better communicate with each other. I want both sides (with and without disabilities) to try different and new approaches to building stronger relationships that could even lead to marriage. Nowadays and unfortunately not all people want to be around differently abled people. They do not even want to try it. Some people do not fully understand living with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities, but they are open to learning. Others don't even want to try it. As we say, "every finger is different from another," but never give up. Once we give up, we limited ourselves.

A portrait of Donné Settles Allen, a Black woman with her hair in braids, wearing a denim jacket and large hoop earrings. She is looking slightly to the right with a gentle smile.

Donné Settles Allen

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Participating in
Partners in
Policymaking has
been invaluable
in recognizing my
full potential as an
advocate. I am more
equipped with the
network, skills, and
knowledge that I
need to continue to
forge ahead and effect
change on a policy
level.

My Project

Working with fellow Partner, Donna Herring, our project is to provide guidance for families to use in creating or refreshing the vision of their son or daughter as they navigate each stage in life. Using the Life Course Framework tools, we will adapt a one-page skill questionnaire that is easily accessible for families to cultivate an adaptable mindset about the life their son or daughter leads. This can be a useful reflection tool for families to use to develop a personal inventory of current and future skills necessary for the creation of a good life in the future. Thus far, we have curated the inventory of questions for each life stage and identified a graphic designer to assist with the creation of the tool. We plan to target distribution the following: NICUs, Infants, and Toddlers, SEACs, therapy centers, family support groups, etc.

I am currently the Assistant to the Executive Director and Parent to Parent Program Coordinator at SEEC, an innovative nonprofit agency providing individualized, community-based supports about 400 people with developmental disabilities to help them live lives of their choosing. In 2015, I was appointed by Governor Hogan to serve on the Maryland Commission on Disabilities to represent parents of children with disabilities. In my role as the Parent to Parent Coordinator, I cultivate peer support relationships, curate and promote interactive community events for parents raising children with disabilities. I also serve on the statewide leadership team for the Maryland Community of Practice for Supporting Families and is a Life Course Framework Ambassador. In my previous career, I was a financial analyst with Prudential Retirement in Edison, NJ. I hold a bachelor's degree from Rutgers University in Economics and Africana Studies. I developed a passion for advocacy after completing the LEADers program, an advocacy course through the Parents Place of Maryland. I believe that armed with support, knowledge, and access to community resources ALL children and their families can thrive which I applied to my own family.

Nyesha Allen

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Partners in Policymaking made me grow and showed me opportunities that I wasn't aware of. The classes provided me with various ways to view what advocacy really is. I learned how to advocate for the right things such as communication devices and tools for those who are disabled. I enjoyed the sessions!

My Project

My project was person-center-based on learning about the discovery of one's self-advocacy skills. My project was able to show people how to create goals and gain positive outcomes in all aspects of life.



I am currently in my mid-30's and reside in Prince George's County. I have been vision-impaired since I was 13 years old. I have always found my friends to be supportive of me, especially when researching how to live a full life of being visually impaired. I am enthusiastically involved with my church, volunteering and participating in many outreach activities they support. I also am active with People on the Go of Maryland. I am a self-advocate for people with all types of disabilities. I have had to advocate for myself to go to the School for the Blind. I went in front of the Prince George's School Board of Education several times to promote advocacy rights not only for people with disabilities. In addition to education, I am passionate about advocating for people to find jobs that are suited to their specific skills and talents. I want the world to be aware and understand that inclusion in education and the workforce will make it a better place for all.

I feel so fortunate to have been able to participate alongside so many seasoned advocates and self-advocates so early in our journey. From person-centered planning to effective policy advocacy to partnering with my child's school for the best education experience possible, among many other topics. This has given me the tools in my toolkit that I wasn't aware I needed. Connecting with the guest speakers, staff, and the other Partners has been a treasure and a powerful networking opportunity, making this an invaluable experience and one that I hope will allow me to be a change-maker for my son and others.



Angie
Auldridge



My Project

Working with fellow Partner, Kalani Brown, we created a resource guide for parents in Washington County and Montgomery County regarding Special Education in Maryland. The resource guide provides information in each respective county and includes programs, services, support and advocacy provided by the school system, county, and state. This guide will serve as a source of support for caregivers navigating educational options in the State of Maryland. It will serve as a tool for caregivers to be an educated and supported member of the child's IEP team.

We vetted this resource guide through our respective networks, special education departments, and special education advisory committees in each of our counties as well as through the Family Support division of the Maryland State Department of Education.

We hope that this guide will be reproduced by each Maryland county. We also would like to see this guide provided at IFSP and IEP meeting along with the Parental Rights Guide and the Guide to Habilitative Services and updated by family support network personnel.

I am the mother of three children, Jillian (8), Mark (6), and Luke (2). My son, Mark, has autism as well as a rare genetic mutation, SCN2A. I have a master's degree in clinical-community counseling from Johns Hopkins University and work as a Disability Advisor and Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) member at Hagerstown Community College. I serve as the Co-Chair of the Washington County SECAC (Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee), the SPARK's Community Advisory Committee, Columbia University's Stakeholder Advisory Committee, Maryland's Washington County chapter of Community of Practice, Washington County Transition Council, Project Act Now, and was recently appointed to the Washington County Disability Advisory Committee. Currently, I am awaiting my governor's appointment for a position on the Maryland Developmental Disability Council. I am also a writer, chronicling my family's journey on my blog, MightyAndTheBean.com.

com.

Alex Barnes

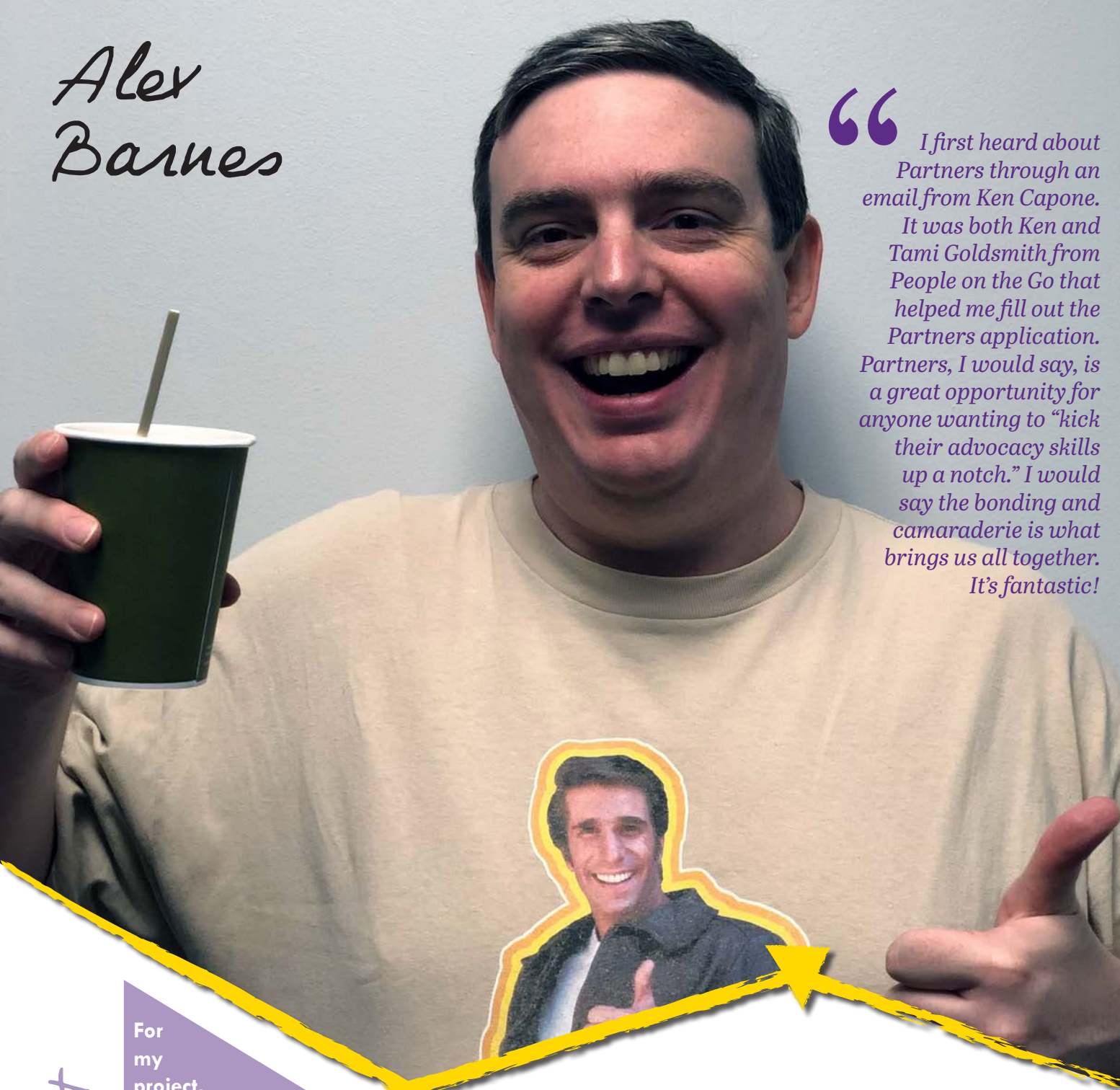
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I first heard about Partners through an email from Ken Capone.

It was both Ken and Tami Goldsmith from People on the Go that helped me fill out the Partners application.

Partners, I would say, is a great opportunity for anyone wanting to “kick their advocacy skills up a notch.” I would say the bonding and camaraderie is what brings us all together.

It's fantastic!



My Project

For my project, I have been researching and developing a list of mentors in the legal field. Through my investigations of programs and grants for continued education in the legal field, I have found various resources.

I was born in Columbia, MD. I was diagnosed with Autism at birth. I am an alumnus of the Ivy Mount School and Wilde Lake High School. I have experience as a self-advocate presenter talking to students and teachers at school assemblies about Autism and what it's like to grow up with it. I've wanted to practice law since my youth, despite being autistic. I credit tv shows such as “LA Law” and “Night Court” as the influence. I plan to continue with online classes in Psychology at UMUC to earn a bachelor's degree and going on to law school hopefully. I was also lucky enough to meet some famous people, such as Debbie Allen and Henry Winkler.

A portrait of Kalani Brown, a woman with dark, curly hair, smiling. She is wearing a dark blue top with white polka dots. The background is a light, neutral color.

Kalani
Brown

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The Maryland Partners in Policy Making program provided me with valuable information and with tools to effectively advocate for my child as well as other people with developmental disabilities. As much knowledge as I gained, having the opportunity to work and network with so many amazing people, made this an incredible experience.

I have been in the education sector for over 20 years. I have held positions in strategic planning, transition/change management, financial management, data analysis, organizational development, grants management, budget development and implementation in Washington D.C. at the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), and in New York at the New York City Council Finance Division. At OSSE, I worked with the Office of Special Education at both OSSE and DCPS to review Nonpublic schools and create better tools for assessing programs. This work eventually led to the successful removal of DC from court receivership (Petties vs. D.C.). I received my Montessori Early Childhood credential and taught for three years. I also co-authored a research poster for the 2015 American Montessori Society (AMS) conference in Philadelphia, PA – “The Impact and Application of Movement in Fostering Inclusive Classrooms”. I am a Montgomery Montessori Institute (Rockville, MD) instructor for Montessori Early Childhood and Infant and Toddler adult learners. I developed a Child Development curriculum with a large focus on developmental disabilities. I have a five-year-old son with Down Syndrome and am an active member of the Down Syndrome Network of Montgomery County. I am the current Chairperson of the Maryland Development Disabilities Council.

My Project

Working with fellow Partner, Angie Auldridge, we created a resource guide for parents in Washington County and Montgomery County regarding Special Education in Maryland. The resource guide provides information in each respective county and includes programs, services, support and advocacy provided by the school system, county, and state. This guide will serve as a source of support for caregivers navigating educational options in the State of Maryland. It will serve as a tool for caregivers to be an educated and supported member of the child's IEP team.

We vetted this resource guide through our respective networks, special education departments, and special education advisory committees in each of our counties as well as through the Family Support division of the Maryland State Department of Education.

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Amanda Del Reigo

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I hate to miss a class. This class is awesome. I am learning so much!

I am 35 years old. I enjoy advocating for people with disabilities because I believe that people with all types of disabilities deserve civil rights and the right to work live and be happy in the communities of their choosing. I would like to be happy and healthy in the community that I choose as well. I enjoy going out with friends, watching movies, and being around other people with disabilities because I believe that I can help them as much as I can.

My Project

My project is to research other providers like CHI and how to get housing in Montgomery County. I have been living with my family in Howard county since grade school and for my project, I have been researching residential options in Montgomery County to access. I met classmates from two providers that I have been meeting with to explore choosing them as providers for my day and residential services. Things I'm considering include access to transportation, shopping, and community activities.

Katy Donahue

Working with Partners has been a wonderful experience. I have met new people with similar and quite different experiences, and I enjoyed learning their stories. I found the talks interesting and beneficial if not a bit overwhelming. Overall, I am glad I got to be a part of this experience.

I am a 32-year-old autistic archivist aide at the Smithsonian Archives of American Art. I have a bachelor's degree in studio art from the University of Maryland College Park. I participated in the 2013-2014 class of Project Search Smithsonian which is how I got my job. I joined the SEEC board and gala committee this past year. I love painting, drawing, reading, going on hikes, riding my horse Willow, and spending time with my family, friends, my cat Leo, and my dog Sherlock.

My Project

For my project, I am doing a presentation on my experiences with the inclusive theatre company Artstream.

Paul G. Hamilton



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I have gotten a lot of new information during my time with partners. I feel this should be open to everyone.

I was born in Maryland, where I have lived my entire life. I was born with handicaps that I have started overcoming. I have been at CHI, Inc. for six years. I recently started working with the staff there during dismissal. I joined Partners to hear about policy & getting things on the right track because I want to see where my advocacy can go. I want all restaurants to be wheelchair accessible because when I go to restaurants, I have to wait in the car. That is unacceptable and frustrates me. With the skills that I have learned from Partners, I hope to advocate for others and make sure that all restaurants are accessible. After graduation from Partners, I also hope to take the knowledge that was taught and share it with others.

My Project

My project was to help recruit people outside and inside CHI to join the upcoming Partners classes in Maryland.



I am a mom to Simon, age 13, who has a great sense of humor and loves to play the drums. He has complex medical needs and physical and cognitive disabilities. I have advocated for Simon since he was born. Together with dad Brian, and sister Olivia, we are a founding family of the Little Lobbyists, a family-led, volunteer-powered advocacy group. We visit legislators giving them a chance to meet our children and hear our stories, creating opportunities to garner support for the health care, education, and inclusion of children with complex medical needs and disabilities.

As Vice President of Little Lobbyists, I regularly meet with legislators and fellow families to facilitate communication and discuss the impact of legislation. I have been interviewed by news agencies, given speeches at numerous rallies and press conferences; most notably in the Capitol with Speaker Pelosi and members of Congress for a press conference covered live by news outlets.

When not advocating with Little Lobbyists, I work full-time as an award-winning creative consultant through my design firm, Hatcher Design Office, LLC, where I specialize in creating human-centered design solutions for non-profit organizations. I have been an Adjunct Professor of Graphic Design at Towson University for 17 years. I am the Chair of the Maryland Institute College of Art Alumni Council, Chair of the 50,000 Kids Committee for the Board of Young Audiences of Maryland and am a member of the Development Committee for the Board of Make-Studio in Baltimore, Maryland.

Laura
LeBrun
Hatcher



I applied for Partners because I needed help with one of the biggest projects I've ever undertaken—the leadership and development of Little Lobbyists. Though my only qualification was being the mother of a child with disabilities, I found myself at the table of some powerful people in our country, and they were asking for my help in guiding policy and strategy that would impact millions of people like my son. Connected to thousands of parents through social media, I valued this opportunity and was determined to be worthy of it.

The day I was accepted I was deeply grateful and excited, and today I'm even more so. Not only have I learned a ton (and now I know how much more I don't know...), but I've been given tremendous resources to connect with for continued learning and growth. I've gained much needed confidence and have been not only sitting in that seat at the table, but actually using my voice to raise concerns and share ideas.

With support from Partners, I've educated legislators and presidential candidates, about the issues of the disability community and been part of a coalition working to include long term services and supports in the Medicare For All Bill. I have supported a group of moms in Tennessee as they advocated (and got!) the first-ever Medicaid Waiver in their state, raised national awareness about the abhorrent use of electric shock, and worked to build a bridge of trust with adult self-advocacy organizations like ADAPT and ASAN. I've been interviewed about kids with disabilities and the education system; I've written, edited, and ghost-written speeches, blog posts, and articles (including one tweeted by President Obama!); and every single day I share what I have learned with parents online.

My "project" is ongoing and evolving. I'm sad our class is ending, but looking forward to keeping in touch, working together, and continuing to lift one another up to be the change our families and our country needs.

My Project

Donna Herring

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My time in Partners - Priceless! The Partners program has provided exceptional learning opportunities and the tools to unlock a world of possibilities. A bonus is all the wonderful people I've met and worked with while participating in the Partners program.

I am a mother, daughter, sister, advocate, leader and favorite Auntie. I'm also the youngest of five children and a Prince George's County, Maryland native. I grew up in Glenarden, MD and had a wonderful childhood where fun consisted of unlimited outdoor activities wherever our imaginations would take us! I graduated from Eleanor Roosevelt High School and continued my education at Towson State University where I earned my B.S. in Business Administration with a Finance concentration. After college, I married and had a beautiful baby girl, named Ashley, who 27 years later I still consider to be my biggest accomplishment! She was born with a genetic syndrome called Bardet-Biedl and diagnosed with an intellectual delay. Ashley later lost her vision, at 10 years old, and although she faces constant challenges in her life; she continues to be a caring, loving young lady who wants to help others, has a great sense of humor and positive outlook on life! She's taught me so much!

In addition to being Ashley's biggest cheerleader and advocate, I have over 28 years of experience in the accounting field. I've spent the majority of my career working with non-profit organizations in various accounting roles and the last 15 years as part of the Senior Management team. I'm also a member of, and actively volunteer with, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. In my spare time, I enjoy gardening and watching the sunrise on the beach with a good cup of coffee.

My Project

Working with fellow Partner, Donné Settles Allen, our project is to provide guidance for families to use in creating or refreshing the vision of their son or daughter as they navigate each stage in life. Using the Life Course Framework tools, we will adapt a one-page skill questionnaire that is easily accessible for families to cultivate an adaptable mindset about the life their son or daughter leads. This can be a useful reflection tool for families to use to develop a personal inventory of current and future skills necessary for the creation of a good life in the future. Thus far, we have curated the inventory of questions for each life stage and identified a graphic designer to assist with the creation of the tool. We plan to target distribution the following: NICUs, Infants, and Toddlers, SEACs, therapy centers, family support groups, etc.

My Project

My final project is focused on awareness to families who are seeking assistance for the Self-Directed Program. In June 2018, I coordinated with the Self-Directed Program Advocacy Group and they granted me permission to spread awareness of their mission. To achieve my goal of awareness, I made contact with Clear Channel Outdoor, which specializes in outdoor advertising. After a few meetings with the Graphic Designer, they loved the awareness idea and we scheduled to have a photo session in Ocean City, Maryland.

The theme of the photoshoot was centered around the idea that individuals with disabilities can indeed live the life they want. To relay this message, we utilized my son Kenneth and me in the picture because he is a living testament to the services of the Self-Directed Program. As a marketing scheme to capture the attention of drivers passing by our billboard, we chose to use the same colors that represent the newly designed Downtown Salisbury Maryland area.

In closing, my goal of increasing the awareness of the Self-Directed Program has been a success. The initial number of families from June 2018 to the present has increased from 600 families to 900 families and counting.

Karenna Jones



It was truly a blessing to collaborate with various colleagues from all over the state of Maryland. I will cherish every moment we spent together, as I continue in my endeavors as a partner in policymaking. The guest speakers were phenomenal, as they offered a plethora of information and knowledge and knowledge about the grassroots of policymaking. In closing, these last 6 months have enabled me to become a member of the Disabilities Council, and a newly Certified Support Broker which enables me to help even more families.

I am a native of Salisbury, Maryland, where I reside as a wife and mother of four children total, one of which is a Special Needs son. I also have two grandchildren. I have a 10-year background in Special Education with Wicomico County Board of Education, 25 years of Retail Management and customer service. I take pride in helping others within my community. I am in a leadership role at my church in Seaford, Delaware.

Ann-Marie Koger



“The Partners program has inspired me by letting me share in the energy and passion of so many individuals — guests, staff and class members — who are all focused on creating authentic connections of respect and empowerment within the disability community. Shared inspirational stories have been just the starting point in discovering how the passions of an individual with conviction, imagination, and creativity can make a lasting impact.

My Project

I am a homeschooling parent with a Bachelor's in International Relations from the University of Pennsylvania and a master's in Comparative Culture from Sophia University, Tokyo who is inspired by doing community coordination. I have had several careers working in product education, curriculum development, and community organization. I currently serve as a Board Member and the Sensory-Friendly Concert Chair for The Musical Autist, a non-profit focused on equal access to the musical fine arts and the creation of platforms of self-advocacy based in Annapolis, MD. I just relocated with my family to Hampton Roads, Virginia where I hope to continue learning about self-advocacy within the disability community as well as develop tools for individuals utilizing self-directed service programs and philosophies, enabling them to make the most of community networks and resources to more fully grow/live into their desired life.

Working with fellow Partner, Lucinda Nobles, our project has focused on introducing the Charting the Life Course material via an easy-to-use resource guide. Charting the Life Course is an adaptable tool for creating a vision for the future. As stated on its website, “It is designed to help you think about the questions to ask, as well as the choices, options, and life experiences to consider as you ‘plot a course to a full and meaningful life’.” We have used the material that is directly available at no charge from the program website and diagramed it in a short outline and presentation. From the resulting individual goals (or goals developed through other processes) we developed a planning logic tree based on the Life Course Integrated Supports Cheat Sheets to move from goals to concrete tasks and skill development. The further development of a tracking sheet to coordinate and follow the tasks and skill growth of that learning process is something I hope to continue to work on, eventually finding the resources to build an app/shared Google/digital communication tool to guide and inform the process of living into that desired future.

“
Your limit is
only a thought,
a dream. Wake
up and you'll
have no limits.

Lilia
Leon-Arce



My Project

Working with fellow Partners, Jessica Macauley and Adriana Toro, our project aims to develop a program that minimizes the emotional impact on parents when they learn of or confirm the diagnosis of the special needs/disabilities of their child. To achieve an adequate grieving and acceptance process, this support will be provided through professional mental health therapy to parents or guardians at the time they receive the child's diagnosis. The program would produce a clearer and less traumatic vision of the diagnosis to the parents, as well as provide at least 8 to 10 mental health therapy sessions after the diagnosis was received.

I was born in Cochabamba, Bolivia. I moved to the USA over 30 years ago, became married and have two adult sons, 4 grandchildren in addition to two nieces living with disabilities. This has been my first experience with supporting a loved one living with disabilities. I did not know I would have the joys & struggles of families that have a loved one with a disability. I am a Certified Life Coach and Certified Medical Assistant as I have worked for 25 years in the medical field in the USA. I have an undergraduate degree in Psychology from the University of San Simon Cochabamba in Bolivia. I'm fluent in Spanish and English. I am currently the Executive Director of Comunidad de Recursos Hispanos (Hispanic Community Resources) HCR supports children, teens, and adults living with disabilities from Spanish Speaking Families in the DC Metro area. After graduation, I would like to give a workshop for Spanish speaking families and be part of an organization for the advocacy of people with developmental disabilities. Every human has the right to live a good comfortable life.

Audri Levering



“Thank you for giving me the tools and knowledge to become a more effective change agent for individuals with disabilities. Thank you to my classmates who bravely shared their journeys and helped make this experience so enriching and valuable.”

I am a Speech-Language Pathologist, mother of two teenagers, and Chair of Queen Anne's County Public Schools Special Education Citizen's Advisory Committee (SECAC). I am passionate about bridging alliances, increasing awareness, and advocating for policies centered around the protection and advancement of the educational civil rights of students with disabilities. I am an ardent proponent for educational equity, vigorous and ambitious expectations, and preparing students for meaningful post-secondary opportunities. I believe in promoting best practices, data, and authenticity to advocate for systematic improvements that result in better outcomes for students with disabilities. I received my master's degree in Communication Disorders from the University of Texas at Dallas. I live on beautiful Kent Island with my husband and children.

My Project

My project evolved from a call to action from Jerry Adams who presented in our first class, “Your job is to change America's mind and shift perspective.” In the Spring of 2020, I will be hosting a screening of the movie **INTELLIGENT LIVES** by award-winning filmmaker Dan Habib on the Eastern Shore at Chesapeake College. Here is a brief description of the movie:

“**INTELLIGENT LIVES** stars three pioneering young American adults with intellectual disabilities – Micah, Naieer, and Naomie – who challenge perceptions of intelligence as they navigate high school, college, and the workforce. Academy Award-winning actor and narrator Chris Cooper contextualizes the lives of these central characters through the emotional personal story of his son Jesse. **INTELLIGENT LIVES** challenges what it means to be intelligent, and points to a future in which people of all abilities can fully participate in higher education, meaningful employment, and intimate relationships.”

I am developing a marketing campaign and working on community partnerships to ensure that multiple stakeholder groups are invited to attend. After the screening, there will be a moderator led discussion. Knowing that perceptions shape actions, my goal is to help shift current negative and outdated stereotypes to a positive paradigm shift of competence, opportunity, and choice. The project is a natural progression of my passions, volunteer partnerships, and a desire to effect positive change and outcomes in my local community.

Jenn
Lynn

“
Participating in
Partners not only
motivated and
empowered me
to take a risk and
make a change,
but I now have
many like-minded
friends!



I have a rich background in serving people with developmental and intellectual differences. I gained my experience as a Special Education Substitute Para-educator for Montgomery County Public Schools and Ivymount Private School Multiple Learning Needs program in addition to an Applied Behavior Analysis Technician for Community Services for Autistic Adults and Children (CSAAC) of Maryland. I have experience working in education advocacy for the Weinfeld Education Group. I am a Commissioner on the Commission for People with Disabilities in Montgomery County, a member of the Montgomery County DD Advisory Board, a member of Autism Spectrum Partners, consults and presents with area doctors on the needs of families with challenging children, works closely with ADW and Special Needs Ministries at her home parish and across the Archdiocese. I present at conferences with/without my son through her LLC, Empowering Autism Caregivers, and Pathfinders for Autism on the topic of Law Enforcement Safety and Autism. The former TV News Producer writes an encouraging blog about raising a child with autism called The World According to Jake and has published chapters on the subject. I am a freelance writer and a professional flutist. My husband, Chris, and I are the proud parents of a son on the Autism spectrum.

My Project

My project was the creation of our Calming Communication Kits, which were designed with law enforcement in mind. The small, convenient rings with pictures and symbols help police to communicate with those they may encounter in the community. Additionally, those in schools, hospitals, and churches are also interested.

Jessica Macauley

“If you stand up for people, they only have a voice when you are around, but if you teach them to stand up for themselves, they will have a platform for a lifetime.”

My Project

Working with fellow Partners, Lila Leon-Arze and Adriana Toro, our project aims to develop a program that minimizes the emotional impact on parents when they learn of or confirm the diagnosis of the special needs/ disabilities of their child. To achieve an adequate grieving and acceptance process, this support will be provided through professional mental health therapy to parents or guardians at the time they receive the child's diagnosis. The program would produce a clearer and less traumatic vision of the diagnosis to the parents, as well as provide at least 8 to 10 mental health therapy sessions after the diagnosis was received.



I am from Statesville, North Carolina and I am currently a homemaker living with my growing family in Accokeek, Maryland. In 2016 the birth of Harmony Himmel Heart Macauley connected me to the world of Civil Rights in a new way. Having graduated from Xavier University of Louisiana (B.S. Biology) and The George Washington University (Master of Health Services Administration), I am eager to enter challenging environments and engage my analytical, planning, and problem-solving skills in the Disability Rights arena. Whether I am in the classroom, choir room, or board room, I can be heard saying, “There must be a way that we can get this right.”

I have more than 20 years of experience as a Career Coach, senior federal HRD Training and Development Specialist, Facilitator, motivational speaker, and HRD and mentor program developer. I am currently using all these experiences in new roles as President of Maryland Career Development Association, National Career Development Association (NCDA), President of Jackson & Nobles Consultants and Vice President of With These Hands by Audra, both family businesses.

I am passionate about my coaching and life work within the intellectual and developmental disability community. My involvement in the community includes several years as a PG County Arc board member. She joined the lobbying effort to launch the PG County Adults with Developmental Disabilities Citizens Advisory Council (ADDCAC) through the Maryland legislature. I enjoy my work engaged with my disability community. She uses her passion and education to serve the life and career goals of self-advocates and entrepreneurs for employment success.

I am a native Washingtonian and live in Maryland with my family. I am a graduate of Trinity Washington University and earned an MSA degree in Organizational Development. I was recently commissioned as a member of the Stephens Ministry at Reid Temple AME Church. I am a member of the National Career Development Association (NCDA), Maryland Career Development Association (MCDA), and Maryland Counseling Association (MCA).

My Project

Working with fellow Partner, Ann-Marie Koger, our project has focused on introducing the Charting the Life Course material via an easy-to-use resource guide. Charting the Life Course is an adaptable tool for creating a vision for the future. As stated on its website, "It is designed to help you think about the questions to ask, as well as the choices, options, and life experiences to consider as you 'plot a course to a full and meaningful life'." We have used the material that is directly available at no charge from the program website and diagramed it in a short outline and presentation. From the resulting individual goals (or goals developed through other processes) we developed a planning logic tree based on the Life Course Integrated Supports Cheat Sheets to move from goals to concrete tasks and skill development. The further development of a tracking sheet to coordinate and follow the tasks and skill growth of that learning process is something I hope to continue to work on, eventually finding the resources to build an app/ shared Google/digital communication tool to guide and inform the process of living into that desired future.

Lucinda Nobles



“My understanding and appreciation for the training offered in Partners for Policymaking have increased with each new training session. I applaud The Arc of Maryland for bringing this valuable training back to Maryland self-advocates and supporters of our community.”

This opportunity to work, learn and hear the perspectives from such a profoundly diverse cohort was just what I needed personally and professionally. It allows me to continue my work with self-advocates and their families in a wide range of topics. Sadly, we can't do it all. However, we now have the expertise to serve better and share resources with our clients.

Olusola
Oludairo



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Being part of the Partners in Policymaking has been an awesome experience for me. The facilitators have been very helpful with information and resources beneficial to advocating for people living with disabilities. Partners in the class have been such an inspiration. Sharing their personal experiences has provided insight, needed support and passion to advocate for this population.

My Project

I joined the Direct Support Professional (DSP) Team at the Arc of Howard County about 18 months ago. I have a nine-year-old son diagnosed with cerebral palsy and ADHD. He is a very special child with a unique interest in automobiles and computers. Having a very dear son with special needs who communicated non-verbally but has unique skills have spurred my interest in policy making for him. I can understand and relate better with him because of the training received at my job and the Partners class. My goal in joining Partners was to be impacted by skills, strategies, and information that would enable me to engage in policymaking for the population of people with intellectual/developmental disabilities. Also, in my spare time, I love traveling and reading.

My project aimed to acquire discounts from places like gyms, spas, yoga classes, etc. to the families of people living with a disability. This provides the opportunity and venue to go to decompress and have a time-off for ourselves. It's meant to be a kind of discounted support for families of people living with a disability to relax.

My life of service with people who are differently abled started because of my daughter, Loren, who was born with special needs. I wanted to learn as much as I could to help her. I switched my career path and became a Parent Educator with Parents Place and then The Arc Montgomery County. Switching gears, I helped a Grassroots newspaper come to life in the Greater Olney Area. I spent 15 months with Volunteer Maryland and became an AmeriCorp Alumni. Currently, I am the Community Engagement Coordinator with CHI Centers, Inc. I love working with an organization that's mission is Breaking through barriers for people to contribute, connect and lead lives they choose.

I was honored on 3 different occasions with a Governor Citation for the work I do with people with disabilities. I've received the President's Volunteer Serve Award, Nominated for The Greater Olney's Athena Award and countless honors with organizations I volunteer with. Besides volunteering with Special Olympics and throughout our community, I serve on the TaxiCab Service Commission, representing people with disabilities.

My Project

Smarter Transportation for People with Differing Abilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires transit agencies to provide paratransit services to people with disabilities who cannot use the fixed-route bus or rail service, also known as mainline service. In general, paratransit service must be provided within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of a bus route or rail station, at the same hours and days, for no more than twice the regular fixed-route fare. In my opinion, transportation for people who are differently abled is a systematic problem, for not only the people living within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of a bus route or rail station and for those who live beyond the $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile.

How can we include people who live outside of the " $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile border?" The ADA further requires that paratransit rides be provided to all eligible riders if requested any time the previous day, within an hour of the requested time. Back in the day, this may have been workable, but not in the 21st century. The Developmental Disability Administration (DDA) is at the forefront of moving people directly into the community and phasing out day programs. More people with differing abilities are going directly from home to employment. I've been working with a Senator and a few others to bring this issue upfront.

People with differing abilities are unable to get transportation from county to county. Currently, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit (WAMATA) can be accessed by Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. If someone with differing abilities lives in Montgomery County and has a job opportunity in Howard County, MetroAccess, through WAMATA, will not cross to Howard County. I believe the solution is to strategically place "Transport Hubs" at meeting points between two counties.

Joyce Plaxen



“

Partners in Policymaking has been an amazing training for me and the others in the Cohort. After 30 years of being Loren's mom and working in the field to make the world better for my daughter and others, I thought I knew most of the ins and outs of advocacy on all levels.

Partners in Policymaking helped me and the others to focus on the importance of how to pick your topic and never give up. Whether, lack of funding, poor transportation or public perception, our voices will be heard, and changes can be made.

Eva Queen



“ Being a Partner has been an amazing journey of self-discovery, learning, networking, and community. Through this opportunity, I have gained so much. Knowledge. Leadership skills. And, most importantly - friends who are committed to the same work that I am passionate about supporting self-advocacy and equality for persons with developmental and other disabilities.

My Project

As the mom of a high school student with developmental disabilities, I know first-hand what the challenges to independence will be for my child. Just simple tasks like budgeting and being able to cook your meals can be overwhelming ideas for my daughter. With that in focus, I have chosen a life skills project. My project, in collaboration with Black Girls Cook, Inc., will provide a 4 to 6-week course for young women with developmental disabilities. The course will cover budgeting, farming, and cooking. We are currently working on the application process, and logistics (which include identifying a venue with classes and a space to grow healthy foods). Our launch is tentatively scheduled for Spring/Summer 2020. Ms. Lucinda Nobles (Partner) is also collaborating with us on this project.

I am the Founder and Executive Director of Community Advocates 4 You, Inc. (CA4Y) (advocates4you.org). CA4Y is a network of parents, professionals and community partners who have joined forces to provide support to children with special healthcare needs and their families. CA4Y is a fiscally sponsored project of Strong City Baltimore (strongcitybaltimore.org).



“
I intend to keep reaching, stretching, being aware and being active to make the changes that we need for all people to live their fullest lives. I have met some truly incredible activists and have just begun my journey of disability activism.

Becky
Rosenberg



My Project

Now in my 27th year in education, I am becoming a stronger and more fearless advocate. Education is a right for everyone, and all children and their families deserve to grow and be nurtured with their educational experiences, both academic and social. I believe that we are social beings, striving to belong, be seen and be authentic. My work is about celebrating and including others in learning communities, and I love it. I have always been a person who has been aware of others, perceptive of struggle and hardships, strengths and passions. Perhaps this has been intensified in the last eight years since becoming a parent, and a parent of a child with disabilities. I am also grateful to my parents for instilling in me the values of service, activism and embracing diversity. My whole career I have identified as an inclusion educator. I am proud of this lens and share this perspective and action of inclusion in all facets of my life.

When I started out thinking about projects, I had many ideas. I hope that I can follow through on all of them, over time. First, I want to design or collaborate with researchers and offer a course for parents and caregivers of people with disabilities to empower them with strategies to manage stressors. I've begun reaching out, globally, to people about this work. I'd like to raise awareness around my County about legislation that affects families and the educational trajectory of their children, with alternative placements (an area of struggle for us, currently). I want to make sure students with disabilities can participate in after-school activities, with the same access and supports needed to full participate (which we haven't yet experienced for my son). Lastly, I want to thank Laura Hatcher, a fellow Partner, for inspiring me to be more active with those who receive critical medical care. And, she has inspired me to raise my voice to educate others, which I hope to do with a book I'm writing for children about the disability rights movement. I've come to the realization that kids don't know about this history, and they need to. They need to know about the struggles and celebrations, history, heroes and heroines, the fights that families have engaged in for their family members, and about what people still need to live the lives they want and deserve. So many projects, and so little time. The time is now, and my body and soul are devoted to this work.

Thank you, Partners in Policymaking, for giving me courage and strength to advocate for my friends, their families and for friends I have yet to make.

Jennifer Rudolph

“The Partners program has helped prepare me with the tools that I need to successfully advocate for people with different abilities at all levels of the community. My favorite quote from the program comes from Partners presenter, Tracy Wright. She said, “Nothing about us without us.” This is a quote that has stuck with me because so many decisions are made for people receiving supports without their input. As a result of both this quote and the Partners program, I now look at all aspects of the service world from a person center view.

My Project

Working for a provider, I recognize the complexity of administering services to people with different abilities. High turnover and vacancy rates, regulatory requirements, and changes in Medicaid rules have created an environment where inconsistent and conflicting information has become a regular occurrence. As a result, a web of confusion and uncertainty exists where there needs to be clarity and direction. These factors have a negative impact on direct care professionals as well as the quality of services people with different abilities receive. For this reason, I have embarked on a project highlighting these effects and calling for the delivery of clear and concise guidance to be administered from the top. Additionally, my project highlights the need for better training tools that address all aspects of new and existing services. These tools should be transparent and individually tailored towards all groups involved in the person-centered planning process, including the person being supported, their families, resource coordinators, and service providers. I hope that providing clear and proper training will help to truly empower those receiving supports to make decisions about how they receive supports. In other words, as Partners presenter Tracy would say, “Nothing about us without us”.

I am the Financial Controller for the Arc of Southern Maryland, helping people with different abilities live inclusive lives. I live in Southern Maryland with my family and adored dog, Lilly. I hold a master's degree in Business Administration and Financial Management, both from the University of Maryland University College. Currently, I am pursuing my Doctorate Degree in Leadership from Liberty University where my dissertation will create a framework to extend retention rates for direct support professionals.

Growing up, I witnessed the struggle my brother faced on a day to day basis to just fit in. His struggles are what compelled me to join the Arc and become an advocate for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. I believe that the world we live in has come quite a bit of ways since we were younger, but feel that we still have a long way before fully achieving inclusiveness.

Andrew C. Salatto

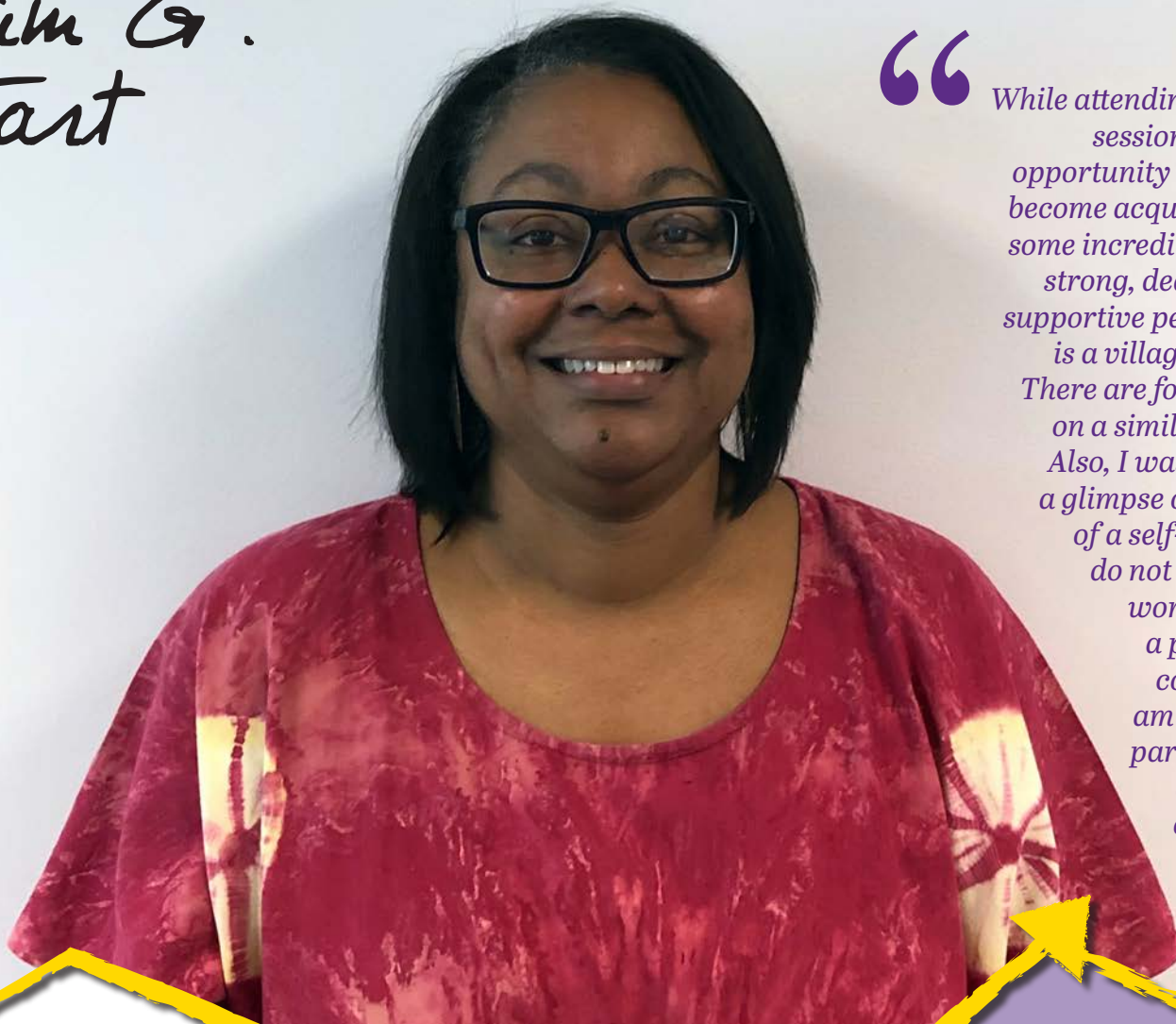
“
Every time I come to a session, I get stronger. I applied to the Partners in Policymaking program to be able to make changes in my community and make it easier for people to obtain and/or fix adaptive technology equipment. This program has made me grow as an individual. I have grown my contacts as well as gotten better at voicing my options.

My Project

My project was to address the problem at the statehouse with the accessibility of a room and the ramp that is currently used because it was hard to navigate up the ramp when I was there. I contacted an individual that assisted me with writing and preparing the letter that I will send to the statehouse. After I graduate from this class, I will get involved in the system.

I was born in Maryland to a large family. I was born with Cerebral Palsy but through the help of family and friends, I began overcoming barriers that I had. I came to CHI in 1987 and started and moved into Inwood house in 1988. In the late 80s/early 90s, I held an official position as Chairman with the Client Advisory Group at CHI. This began my advocating experience as I moved on to advocating with Wall Busters.

Kim G.
Tart



“While attending Partners’ sessions, I had the opportunity to meet and become acquainted with some incredible, tireless, strong, dedicated and supportive people. There is a village out there! There are folks who are on a similar journey! Also, I was able to get a glimpse of the world of a self-advocate. I do not live in their world, but I am a part of their community. I am proud to be part of such an exceptional community.



I am the proud mother of Montgomery (also known as Monty), who was diagnosed with Down syndrome. I am his supporter, advocate, and cheerleader. I am directly involved in promoting services and providing resources that enable people, like Monty, to take full advantage of all opportunities without the barrier of a label; and to reach their potential --“beyond” expectations. My motto is: Do not allow perfection to get in the way of progress.

My Project

My project is to develop and establish a “Monty’s List” App – a directory of services, websites, books and advocacy groups that support the needs of people with disabilities. Monty’s List will be available via an App. Customers will have the ability to rate service providers. My high-level project plan: (1) Organize recommended resources and service provider information that I have collected from families and self-advocates; (2) Conduct market research to expand scope; (3) Create a Web App; and (4) Market App.

Jorge Tirigall

“My experience in the Partners in Policymaking class was like what I call ‘pleasant party meetings’ combined with intellectual learning and amusement.

When I went to Annapolis for two days in a row in February of this year, I had the memory of seeing and talking to all of the elected officials from both the Republican Party and the Democratic Party about my story. In response, the elected officials started to feel sympathetic towards me. These ‘pleasant party meetings’ that were combined with intellectual learning and amusement changed my outlook and goals to the point that I should continue to become selfless and humble.

In these past months that I had with the class, my attendance at the ‘pleasant party meetings’ has meant that I had the motivation and courage to initiate collaborations so that I could work with somebody who has the same flavor as I have.

I was born in Towson, Maryland on October 24th, 1997 to my Argentine parents Roxana Caruso and Luis Tirigall. I am the descendant of Jose Marzano who was a loyal best buddy of Jose De San Martin (the Liberator of Argentina, Peru, and Chile). I found that I had a talent on camera when my father made home videos. In middle school years and during my freshman year, I was bullied because of my achievements as well as my autism. These years were not nice for me. In high school, my life was changed when I joined Best Buddies. In August 2013, I joined the Reservoir High School’s chapter of Best Buddies to enrich my social skills.

My project is a script that I made. The purpose of this script is to educate those who have never heard about people with autism and convince them to accept people with autism. So far, I’ve delivered copies of the script to Luc to distribute to the whole class. In addition, I’ve considered recording the lines for the script. Finally, in the future, I could begin filming in accordance with the script’s lines.

My Project

Adriana Toro

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My time in this program has given me a clear vision in different aspects that help me understand the best way to advocate for the community of people with disabilities and give me the fundamentals to start developing my goal of opening a non-profit.

Also, through this program, I have received a clear vision about many aspects that I did not know before being part of this program. The program has energized me with great motivation and commitment to continue advocating for the rights of the I/DD community.

It has been a magnificent growing experience not only personally but also professionally.



My name is Adriana Toro, I was born in Colombia, South America. I am a psychologist for a non-profit organization, which works for the community's mental wellness. This is work that fascinates me and fills me professionally and personally. I have been happily married for 27 years and the mother of two daughters. My oldest is a 25-year-old who will give me my first granddaughter in December and my youngest is an 11-year-old with Down syndrome. I have learned to advocate for the community of people with disabilities, which has made this aspect my life motivation. Through this program, my goal is to develop a non-profit organization that provides mental wellness for parents with children with special needs/disabilities.

My Project

Working with fellow Partners, Lila Leon-Arze and Jessica Macauley, our project aims to develop a program that minimizes the emotional impact on parents when they learn of or confirm the diagnosis of the special needs/disabilities of their child. To achieve an adequate grieving and acceptance process, this support will be provided through professional mental health therapy to parents or guardians at the time they receive the child's diagnosis. The program would produce a clearer and less traumatic vision of the diagnosis to the parents, as well as provide at least 8 to 10 mental health therapy sessions after the diagnosis was received.

A portrait of Justin Valenti, a young man with short brown hair, smiling and wearing a blue and white plaid button-down shirt. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The portrait is partially overlaid by a yellow arrow pointing towards the 'My Project' section.

Justin Valenti

“
I have gained a lot of knowledge about topics related to self-advocacy and leadership. I have also met many amazing people while in the Partners program who are great examples of leadership and self-advocacy. Partners in Policymaking helped me gain new leadership skills and meet new people.

My Project

I live in Gaithersburg, Maryland where I am currently in a job training internship at the National Institute of Health. I am a self-advocate who has spoken to both the Maryland State Assembly and the U.S. Congress for the inclusion of students with disabilities. I am a member of STAND Together and People on the Go of Maryland. Justin is also an artist, author, and drummer. I have worked with the VisAbility Art Lab at VisArts in Rockville, Maryland. I have published two books and my band, Neurodiversity, performs at disability-related events in Montgomery County. I like photography, digital art, animation, and graphic design. Also, I have a pug named Tom.

My project is a PowerPoint presentation about the benefits of inclusive housing for people who have disabilities. The purpose of this project is to tell people with and without disabilities about why inclusive housing is a good fit for them. I have finished collecting research for my presentation and I have added the research to my presentation. I have also added visuals that are related to my presentation to my PowerPoint.

Diana Wingate-Gaiser

“

“No Stone Left Unturned” - I feel honored and humbled for the opportunity to be a part of the Partners 2019 Class. To be surrounded by so many like-minded individuals was empowering. My advocacy skills were undoubtedly strengthened. I made some wonderful, new friends. Finally, a big thank you to the people who taught me the most; our amazing self-advocate colleagues.



My Project

I am the mother of two boys on the autism spectrum. I have a vested interest in homeopathic and alternative therapy for treating the symptoms of autism as well as the environmental toxicity link to autism including vaccines.

I have volunteered extensively for six years with Autism Speaks fundraiser for the annual walk, recruiting legislative support, spreading awareness within the community and was the District Area Chair for their grassroots advocacy. I spent countless hours advocating, emailing, calling and meeting with legislatures to help mandate insurance coverage in Maryland for children and adults with an autism diagnosis. This includes meeting with the Autism Technical Advisory Group at The Department of Mental Health and Hygiene and The Maryland Insurance Commission. This goal was accomplished through the collaboration of efforts with stakeholders in the community. The revised Habilitative Mandate went into effect on April 17th, 2014.

I have 19 years of professional and financial experience with Johns Hopkins University. I am a warrior for my kids and a dedicated advocate in the local and national community.

MTHFR is a complex, genetic mutation. It's believed that more than 40% of the population has it. It can be detected by a simple blood test. Very little science has been done to date, but we do know enough that precautions should be taken if you have this mutation. For years it's been an afterthought and tested for once other developmental and genetic complications have been identified. By testing at birth, we can take precautions and make better, informed decisions for our healthcare.

Partners Class of 2019 Autographs

We at The Arc Maryland would like to thank everyone that participated in the return of the Partners in Policymaking program in Maryland. Your time and commitment to the program displays your passion to inspire others to embark on this tireless journey of advocacy for people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. Graduates, please use this space for your classmates to sign and leave notes to commemorate this invaluable experience and future successes that are to come!



Thank You Partners Presenters!

Jerry Adams, Former Executive Director, Human Services Coalition of Prince George's County
Donné Settles Allen, Assistant to the Executive Director and Parent to Parent Coordinator, SEEC
Rene Averitt-Sanzone, Executive Director, Parents' Place of Maryland
Elizabeth Benevides, Associate Director of Outreach, the Hussman Institute
Damon Briggs, Advocate
Molly Burgdorf, Director of Rights and Policy, The Arc of the United States
Mary Anne Kane Breschi, Director of Family Supports, Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration
Wes Campbell, Senior Manager, Birth to Five Programs, Anne Arundel County Public Schools
Ken Capone, Public Policy Director, People on the Go of Maryland
Amanda Cheong, Founder, AT Discount Sales and Services
Julia Cramer, Program Director, The Arc Washington County
Jennifer Dorsey, Owner/Director, World of Friends School
Tami Goldsmith, Project Coordinator, People on the Go of Maryland
Ande Kolp, Executive Director, The Arc Maryland
Laura LeBrun Hatcher, Vice President, Little Lobbyists
Rebecca Hutchcraft, Program Specialist, The Arc Washington County
Tyi-Sanna Jones, Professional Learning Facilitator, Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education
Bethany Lilly, Director of Income Policy, The Arc of the United States
Rachel London, Executive Director, Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council
Jenn Lynn, Executive Director, Upcounty Community Resources, Inc.
Lori Markland, Executive Director, Maryland Department of Disabilities Technology Assistance Program
Kim McKay, Constituent Services and Outreach Specialist, Maryland Department of Disabilities
Christian Miele, Deputy Secretary, Maryland Department of Disabilities
NaToya Mitchell, Statewide Coordinator of Self Directed Services, Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration
Linda Prochaska, Family Engagement and Navigation Coordinator, The Arc Central Chesapeake Region
Carol Quirk, Chief Executive Officer, Maryland Coalition for Exclusive Education
Cathy Raggio, Former Secretary, Maryland Department of Disabilities
Mat Rice, Self-Advocacy Specialist, People on the Go of Maryland
Rylin Rodgers, Director of Public Policy, Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Joan Rumenap, Support Broker, Accessible Resources for Independence
Megan Rusciano, Attorney, Disability Rights Maryland
Patricia Sastoque, Director of Programs, Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration
Jamie Stoner, Transformation Executive, The Arc Baltimore
George Tilson, President, Tilson and Diaz Solutions
Amy Wallish, Chief Executive Officer, Full Circle Employment Solutions
Liz Weintraub, Senior Advocacy Specialist, Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Grace Williams, Former Assistant Director of Public Policy and Advocacy, The Arc Maryland
Tracy Wright, Voting Advocate, Disability Rights Maryland

Thank You to Our Partners Staff

Arylon Brooks **Luc Chausse** **Sharon Dols** **Kathy Swanson**