



## **Speaker Bios**

### **Katie Arnold**

Katie Arnold is the first Executive Director of the Sibling Leadership Network (SLN), a national nonprofit with state chapters dedicated to providing information and support to siblings of people with disabilities throughout the lifespan. Katie has been involved in the SLN since the organization's inception in 2007. At the state level, she has been a leader of the SLN chapter SIBS-Supporting Illinois Brothers and Sisters.

Katie grew up in New Jersey as the second oldest of four siblings with disabilities. Katie's sibling experience has shaped her worldview in many ways. After graduating from the University of Chicago, Katie lived at L'Arche Chicago, a community based on mutual relationships where people with and without developmental disabilities live together. She received her Master's in Disability and Human Development at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Katie currently works full time as the Director of Community Education in the Institute on Disability and Human Development, Illinois' University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities. In this role she provides education and training on various topics which include enhancing self-directed supports, healthy relationships and sexuality for people with disabilities, and supporting families. Katie's passion for her work stems from her experience growing up with her siblings with disabilities. Katie lives in Chicago with her husband, Gary, who is also a disability advocate.

### **Hillary Dunn**

Hillary has an older brother with Angelman Syndrome, and, as a result of this experience, she has devoted her career to assisting individuals with disabilities and their families. As an attorney with the Disability Law Center in Boston, she works with individuals with disabilities and families on issues including special education, community access and integration, and abuse/neglect. She previously worked in the Special Needs and Elder Law Practice Group at Fletcher Tilton PC where her practice focused on special education, advocacy with adult human service agencies, and special needs planning. She has been involved in legislative and regulatory advocacy regarding issues involving persons with disabilities and their families and has trained individuals with disabilities, families and professionals in various areas of disability law. She serves on the Board of Directors for the Massachusetts Sibling Support Network. Hillary earned her law degree from Northeastern University School of Law and a B.A. from Tufts University where she also played basketball.

### **Anne deBeaupre Williams**

For the past 13 years Anne has worked with nonprofit organizations helping to maximize their marketing, public relations and fundraising efforts. She currently serves as Communications Specialist for Care Dimensions and previously worked at the Cape Ann

Chamber of Commerce and Work/Family Directions, now W/FD Consulting in Watertown. Anne also has a background and a passion for helping children with special needs and their families, working for many years at the May Institute's Early Intervention Program where she helped to start their first integrated preschool. Anne is excited to be a member of the MSSN Board and eager to help spread the word about the importance of all sibling relationships.

## Cynthia Haddad

Cynthia is in charge of educational initiatives at the MSSN. As a result of her experience with an adult brother with special needs, Cynthia has dedicated her career to helping other families address their unique financial planning requirements. For over 20 years, she has held positions of leadership in a variety of public policy advisory organizations and is a frequent speaker at conferences for individuals with special needs and their families. She has shared her experience and expertise by co-authoring *The Special Needs Planning Guide: How to Prepare for Every Stage of Your Child's Life* (Brookes Publishing). Cynthia is a Certified Financial Planner® and a Director of Special Needs Planning, a division of Shepherd Financial Partners. Cynthia earned her BA in Finance and Economics from Simmons College. She lives in Belmont, MA with her husband and 2 children. She recently published an eBook entitled *Sibtips, Vocabulary for Siblings*. Her eBook and a Letter of Intent can be downloaded at [www.specialneedsplanning.com](http://www.specialneedsplanning.com). Securities and financial planning offered through LPL Financial, Member FINRA/SIPC.

## Hannah Hoffman

Hannah is the Development and Marketing manager at Gateway Arts in Brookline Village, Massachusetts. Gateway Arts, a Vinfen service, is a studio art center for over 100 adults with disabilities providing careers in the arts for over 40 years. Hannah graduated from Lynn University in Boca Raton, FL with a Bachelors Degree in Early Childhood Education with specialization in Reading and English Language Learners. She also holds a Masters Degree in Non-Profit Management with a specialization in Leadership from Northeastern University. She is the proud sister of Benjamin Hoffman.

## Carol Iancu

Carol's older brother had developmental disabilities and ultimately passed away at age 52. He profoundly affected her life and supporting other siblings remains an important and personal issue for her. Carol is an environmental attorney with the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office, with a focus on climate change, air and energy issues. Prior to earning her law degree, Carol earned an M.S. in aquatic ecology from the State University of New York, College of Environmental Science and Forestry and a B.S. from Cornell University. Carol is also devoted to practicing and teaching yoga.

## John Kramer

John is Treasurer and co-founder of the MSSN and is also a co-founder and the chair of the Sibling Leadership Network (SLN). John received his Ph.D. in Disability Studies from the University of Illinois at Chicago, with his dissertation addressing the mutual support

roles in aging families of people with disabilities and issues of future planning for people with intellectual disabilities and their brothers and sisters.

## Kerry Mahoney

Kerry Mahoney has worked with chapters of The Arc for 31 years. She has developed and managed a variety of supports, services and resources for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. Kerry first began working with children and adults with special needs in high school as a recreation volunteer at a local Arc.

A graduate of Emmanuel College, she received her degree in Psychology/Rehabilitation Counseling. Since college Kerry has directed residential programs for adults with intellectual disabilities, worked in a special needs classroom, has overseen family support resource centers and expanded Personal Care Assistance and Adult Family Care programs. From these experiences, Kerry has developed a broad knowledge base of the state, federal and private resources that support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Kerry is the manager of Support Brokers at The Arc of Massachusetts. The program assists families and individuals on a fee for service basis to help them find appropriate services and supports to thrive in their community. Person-Centered planning is a key tool among others utilized by team members.

## Don Meyer

As the award-winning director of the Sibling Support Project, speaker, author, and creator of the Sibshop model, Don Meyer has presented on issues facing families of children with special needs all over the world. Don created the Sibshop model, which provides peer support and information to thousands of young brothers and sisters of children with special health and developmental needs. His trainings on the Sibshop model have resulted in the creation of over 450 Sibshops throughout the United States as well as in countries as diverse as Argentina, the Czech Republic, Guatemala, and Turkey. He is also a best-selling author and editor of six books on families of children with special needs. He has presented more than 300 lively, highly-rated workshops on the concerns of siblings, fathers, and grandparents of children with special needs to professional and family audiences around the world. Finally, Don created SibKids, SibTeen, and SibNet, the Internet's first and largest Yahoogroups and Facebook groups for young and adult siblings of people with disabilities, reaching over 3000 siblings every day. When we were planning the conference, Don's name came up again and again as one of the key advocates for sibs. We are so excited that Don was able to travel to be with us this weekend and we hope you enjoy his speech!

## Sonny Mullen

Sonny Mullen, 30, has been working at Good Morning America as Robin Roberts' assistant for the past six years. Sonny is a graduate of Fordham University, where she got her degree in Communications and Media Studies in 2006. After college Sonny volunteered for a year with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps in Mobile, AL working as a case worker with Catholic Social Services.

While she has lived in Manhattan for the past 12 years, Sonny is originally from the Main Line of Philadelphia where her parents and her younger brother Tristan currently reside.

She also has an older brother, Ian, who lives with his family in Berkeley, CA. For the past six years Sonny and her family and friends have been running the Philadelphia Full/Half Marathon to raise money for The Tristan Mullen Fund at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

## Alex Nadworny

Alex joins SFP as a wealth advisor and a member of the Special Needs Planning group. In addition to her 5 years of formal experience in the financial services industry, she grew up with and now joins her father, John, in his financial advisory practice. Alex has her Series 6,7, 66 and life, accident and health insurance licenses. She is a registered representative with LPL Financial and is currently studying to take the CFP exam this fall.

Alex grew up in Melrose, MA with two younger brothers, one having Down Syndrome. She is an active participant in several organizations and fundraisers benefiting people with disabilities. Alex also gives her time to Donate Life Melrose, a nonprofit for which she plans and attends events to spread awareness of the need for organ donation. She enjoys traveling and experiencing different cultures and having quality time with her family.

Alex is a Registered Representative with and securities and advisory services offered through LPL Financial, Member FINRA/SIPC.

## Gael Orsmond

Dr. Gael Orsmond's research has focused on the social aspects of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) across the life course. Dr. Orsmond's academic background in developmental and clinical psychology, and situation in an occupational therapy department, provides her with a unique perspective. She has conducted research in two primary areas: (1) the life stages of adolescence and adulthood and the impact on family members; and (2) social participation of adolescents with ASD.

Dr. Orsmond collaborated with Dr. Marsha Mailick (University of Wisconsin-Madison) on a NIH-funded longitudinal study of 406 families of adolescents and adult with ASD, where she focused her investigation on the mother-child relationship and maternal well-being, sibling relationships and well-being, and social participation and activities of individuals with ASD. She also received a grant from the NIH/NICHHD to study adolescent siblings in these families.

Recently Dr. Orsmond has focused her work on social participation in adolescence and adulthood. She has worked with Dr. Paul Shattuck (Washington University, St. Louis) to analyze data from the National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS-2) to describe social participation adolescence and adulthood in this population. She recently completed, with Dr. Ellen Cohn, a study on a social intervention using videos to improve friendships in adolescents with ASD, funded by the Deborah Munroe Noonan Memorial Fund.

Ultimately, Dr. Orsmond is interested in contextual factors that promote positive outcomes in adolescence and the transition to adulthood in individuals with ASD.

## KristaRose Popek

KristaRose Popek is a speech-language pathologist at Spaulding Outpatient Center at the Lurie Center in Lexington, Massachusetts. She works with children, adolescents, and adults on an individual and group basis. Patients typically have a developmental diagnosis. She most commonly works with patients who have a diagnosis of autism spectrum

disorder, speech delay, global delay, and receptive/expressive language disorder. Many of her patients use augmentative or alternative communication (AAC) systems to communicate. She achieved her bachelor's degree in communication disorders at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in 2009 and her master's degree in speech-language pathology at Worcester State University in 2011.

## Emily Rubin

Emily is President and co-founder of the MSSN. She is also the Director of Sibling Support at the Eunice Kennedy Shriver Center of UMass Medical School, where she is conducting a research study to support siblings of children who are admitted for psychiatric hospitalization.

## Mark Saldaña

Mark spent most of his youth in Lexington, Massachusetts. His older sibling Amanda has intellectual and mental health disabilities. Mark is a community-based researcher and instructor interested in mental health and young adult sibs. He enjoys playing guitar, basketball, and board games.

## Ken Shulman

Ken Shulman's general estate planning practice includes estate planning and related issues for elders and for families who have disabled children. He is a former board member of the Massachusetts Chapter of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys. Ken regularly speaks to consumer groups, professionals in the field, and others interested in issues related to aging, disability, advocacy, financial planning, and the preservation of government entitlements. He previously served as a board member for several human service agencies, including the Greater Boston ARC. He has also served as a consultant to the Massachusetts Office of Handicapped Affairs, the Massachusetts Disability Law Center, and the Massachusetts Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee. Currently he is cochairman of the Elder and Disability Planning Committee of the Boston Bar Association, and is a member of the Board of Directors of the Asperger's Association of New England and he serves on the Combined Jewish Philanthropies Committee on Disabilities and on its Committee on Caring and Social Justice. Ken frequently represents clients in guardianship matters and often serves as a Trustee for families.

Ken is a frequent participant in lawyer training sessions sponsored by the Massachusetts Continuing Legal Education organization and a regular contributor to their publications, having cochaired conferences on estate planning and preserving eligibility for government benefits for elderly and disabled clients. He has been a featured speaker on Medicare and Medicaid Liens in Personal Injury Cases at several MCLE Elder & Disability Law Conferences and he is the author of the chapter entitled "Planning for the Disabled Child" in *Estate Planning for the Aging or Incapacitated Client in Massachusetts*, MCLE (revised 2007). He is a regular speaker on various legal issues affecting the elderly and disabled at seminars sponsored by the Suffolk University Law School, Center for Advanced Legal Studies, the Boston Bar Association, the Massachusetts Bar Association, and PESI. Recent presentations have included seminars on preserving public benefits when settling personal injury lawsuits. Ken recently co-authored *Managing a Special Needs Trust: A Guide for Trustees*, DisABILITIESBOOKS, Inc. (2012).

Ken also has extensive experience in real estate and business matters in addition to his estate planning practice. He is an approved attorney for First American Title Insurance Company and several other title insurance companies and has represented real estate developers, purchasers and sellers, as well as other financial institutions in real estate financing transactions.

## Allegra Stout

Allegra Stout is the Community Organizer at the Boston Center for Independent Living, a disability rights and services organization. In this role, she brings together a grassroots base of people with disabilities to create change on issues affecting their lives, including healthcare, affordable and accessible housing, and transportation. Allegra also serves on the Advisory Board to the Boston Commission for Persons with Disabilities, and is a member of the Massachusetts chapter of ADAPT, a national grassroots disability rights direct action group.

Allegra graduated from Wesleyan University in 2012, with a B.A. in Psychology and Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, with a concentration in Disability Studies. While in college, she founded Wesleyan Students for Disability Rights, which works to increase understanding of disability as a social justice issue and advocates for accessibility and inclusion on campus and beyond. Allegra has published chapters about student disability rights organizing in the Autistic Self Advocacy Network's *Empowering Leadership: A Systems Change Guide for Autistic College Students and Those with Other Disabilities*, and an article on the relationship between campus disability rights groups and the field of disability studies in *Disability Studies Quarterly*.

As one of four disabled siblings, Allegra is deeply committed to the disability rights movement and always excited to connect with members of the disability and sibling communities. She can be reached at [astout@bostoncil.org](mailto:astout@bostoncil.org) or 617-338-6665.