



## ADDPC Newsletter

*Employment • Self Advocacy • Inclusion*

**The Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council continues our profile series to help community members get to know the people who represent Arizonans with disabilities.**

**Up this month is Council member and Self-advocate Kristina Lopez**



Kristina Lopez is a self-described strong, independent Mexican American mother and an assistant professor at Arizona State University School of Social Work who is driven by our community and her passion for supporting people with disabilities. She has two wonderful daughters and a service animal named Coco who helps alert her when she is about to have a seizure. One of her family's favorite pastimes is attending Los Angeles Dodgers spring training games in Arizona. Kristina also has epilepsy and is one of the self-advocates on the Council.

Kristina loves to rollerblade and has been in several marathons around the country and around the world. Her favorite place to rollerblade is the California coast where she loves hearing the crashing of the waves. She has also rollerbladed in London past Buckingham Palace, in the Netherlands, in Spain, and in Canada. Rollerblading became her passion because of her epilepsy: her driver's license was taken away for two and half years, she had to find a way to

get around, and rollerblading was her answer. Adapting to circumstances helped her overcome a situation that is all-too-familiar within the disability community.

First diagnosed with epilepsy when she was 12, Kristina's was a late diagnosis and she went through many different challenges related to the medical system, trying to get the right support. Kristina says her mom was instrumental in helping her move forward, calling everybody she could think of to get her daughter the assistance she needed, which Kristina is grateful for. During school she was placed in special education classes with other individuals who had disabilities, such as autism. In these special education classes Kristina felt accepted and at peace. But she began to wonder why she did not see more Latino students getting services. Kristina decided to make a career out of trying to answer this question.

Kristina got her M.A., M.S., M.S.W., and Ph.D. degrees in Psychology at the University of Michigan (Go, Wolverines!). During her graduate studies, she was in fellowship programs that were funded by the National Institutes of Health, which provided mentors. The work was focused on matching racial and ethnic minorities with the appropriate type of mentors that would help students understand their experience in academia. As a result, Dr. Lopez now asks her students to focus on the core of social justice, trying to guide them to focus on equity and anti-racism practices.

Among other published works, she is the author of [\*Methods to Decrease Disparities in Age of Autism Diagnosis and Treatment Access among Latinx Children\*](#). In this article, Dr. Lopez, along with her colleagues, reviewed the literature on Latinx children and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), identifying opportunities for social workers to be innovative in their use of frameworks, theories, and practice approaches to reduce disparities in ASD diagnosis and treatment among Latinx children. The article won the 2020 Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Council on Disability & Persons with Disabilities (CDPD) Disability Manuscript Award. CSWE is the national association representing social work education in the United States. Its members include over 800 accredited baccalaureate and master's degree social work programs, as well as individual social work educators, practitioners, and agencies dedicated to advancing quality social work education.

As a Council member, Kristina wants the Council to look at funding grants around the disparities in racial minorities and individuals with disabilities. She knows from her own experiences and research that there are potential barriers within racial minorities that other individuals do not have to experience. She also wants to help the Council with making culturally informed interventions available, making sure when a person receives services that culture and race are taken into consideration.

A few final words of wisdom from Kristina: "Sitting here as a professor, sometimes I think how did this happen? I have been through brain surgeries, and I've been through all these medical tests, and it could just fall apart with a seizure. I also think that a lot of people thought I couldn't get here because of epilepsy. The best advice I can give people is don't give up, whatever your circumstances are."

## Grant opportunities now open!

One of the main purposes of the ADDPC is to offer competitive grants targeted at filling in system gaps for people with developmental disabilities in Arizona. We use our grants to help individuals advocate for themselves and create more inclusive communities. Read below for current grant opportunities.

**[Support for Conferences, Symposiums or Trainings](#). Submission deadline is Friday, March 3, 2023, at 3:00 PM MST. Applications are to be submitted**

by email only.

**Pregnancy Support for Persons with a Disability** Submission deadline is Friday, March 3, 2023, at 3:00 PM MST. Applications are to be submitted by email only.



## **February is Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance and Inclusion Month (JDAIM)**

by Amy Hummell, Executive Director  
Geshher Disability Resources

Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance, and Inclusion Month (JDAIM) was created in 2009 when the Jewish Special Education International Consortium got together for its annual meeting. Two of the members presented the idea of selecting a specific month for all communities to raise awareness and share resources on the topic of disability. Becca Hornstein, co-founder of the Council For Jews With Special Needs (CJSN - known today as Geshher Disability Resources), served on the Consortium and helped demonstrate the need for worldwide inclusion and understanding. It was working in Arizona, so she knew it could work everywhere. The goal – Jews of all ages with any disability could participate in the mainstream of Jewish life.

This was personal to Hornstein. When she first arrived in Phoenix in 1983 and called looking for a religious school her son who has autism could attend, none of the synagogues were able to make accommodations for his needs. “Because of my son’s disability, my family was excluded from participation in Jewish life,” said Hornstein. She set out to find available resources for her son and other families, too, increasing awareness while challenging the status quo. People lined up and the programming began to flow.

In 1989, CJSN helped Jewish children adapt to and enjoy Jewish Summer Camp. In 2001, the agency opened its first residential home for individuals with disabilities; other accomplishments soon followed:

- 2007 – Simchat Shabbat, a “no hush” service, was created in partnership with Congregation Beth Israel
- 2010 – the first B’nai Mitzvah for adults
- 2014 – education professionals assisted with testing for students in Jewish Day Schools who required aides as an accommodation

All these community services brought about the desire to change the name of the agency to more widely reflect the mission, so in 2017, Geshher Disability Resources (Geshher) was unveiled. “Providing essential resources for inclusion isn’t about strategic plans and annual budgets,” said Hornstein. “This is about acknowledging the value and dignity of every member with 'k'lal Yisroel' and our obligation to accommodate their special needs in our Jewish communities.”

In reality, it costs money to provide certain programming and services. Continuing the growth trajectory, Geshher has taken another chance with an opportunity to increase revenue for programming while employing individuals with disabilities. Last year, Geshher acquired Damon Brooks and Associates (DB&A), a disability-focused speakers bureau. This acquisition fulfills Geshher’s mission to support individuals with special needs and their families in the Jewish community to lead fuller lives while allowing Geshher to expand nationally.



## Interactive Plain Language Glossary

The National Center on State Courts [Interactive Plain Language Glossary](#) is a new tool to encourage plain language when talking about courts and legal issues. Use the glossary to identify legal terms to use when communicating with the public. Forms, brochures, and other materials that incorporate plain language are provided as examples.

For additional information on the Interactive Plain Language Glossary, visit <https://www.ncsc.org/consulting-and-research/areas-of-expertise/access-to-justice/plain-language/glossary>.



## Are You Interested in Helping Shape Arizona's Vocational Rehabilitation Program?

The Governor of Arizona's State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is currently looking for new members who would like to have a role in shaping Arizona's VR program.

SRC Mission: Serving all citizens of Arizona, the mission of the Arizona Governor's State Rehabilitation Council is to advise, evaluate and partner with the public vocational rehabilitation program in support of improving access to employment and promoting a diverse workforce statewide.

### What is Your Commitment?

- Attend full council Quarterly meetings as scheduled
- Attend Quarterly subcommittee meetings (or more often if needed)
- Must take the loyalty oath supporting the Constitution of the United States and the State of Arizona
- Complete a background check
- Make a 3-year commitment

### Who Are We Looking For?

- Disability self-advocates
- Current or former VR clients
- Representatives from:
  - Business, Industry, and Labor
  - Parent Training and Information Centers
  - Community Rehabilitation Programs/RSA Vendors
  - Employment-related State/County agencies

- Various disability populations
- Anyone looking to enhance the VR program

[Click here for SRC details](#)

## Upcoming Events!

### Monday Mindset Chat

Presented by the Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities at the University of Arizona



Join us for monthly chats focused on addressing the challenges and successes of implementing Employment First in Arizona.

This is an opportunity for YOU to bring your questions, comments, and concerns to an informal meeting with Sonoran Center professionals and practitioners.

#### WHO IS THIS FOR?

Open to Supported Employment Professionals, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, DDD Support Coordinators, Educators, Providers, Job Coaches, and Job Developers.

[Click here to register for Monday Mindset Chats](#)



[Exploring the Ticket to Work Program to Elevate  
Employment for Job Seekers with Disabilities](#)

Come join the Disability Employment Technical Assistance Center (DETAC) as they put a spotlight on a Center for Independent Living (CIL) that is part of an Employment Network (EN) through Social Security's Ticket to Work Program. The program serves ticket holders by facilitating opportunities in competitive, integrated employment. In this webinar, we will hear from a national and local leader about the structure of the Ticket to Work program, how program involvement can support diversification of funding for a CIL or another service

delivery program, and how this innovative program helps people with disabilities find jobs in the community.

[Click here to register for Exploring the Ticket to Work Program](#)

**When:** Tuesday, February 14th

**Time:** 1:00 PM MST - 2:00 PM MST

**Where:** Virtual

**Presenters:** Robert Pfaff, Director, Social Security Administration, and Kris Carrier, Employment Specialist, New Horizons Independent Living Center

## **Social Security Benefits and Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Accounts Webinar**

ABLE is a federally-approved savings program that offer persons with disabilities, their families and friends the option to contribute to tax-exempt savings and investment accounts for disability-related expenses without affecting eligibility for state or federal benefits.

This webinar is offered by the National Association of State Treasurers' ABLE Savings Plans Network (ASPN) with guest speakers from the Social Security Administration.

You are invited to attend this special webinar to hear from ABLE state program administrators and Social Security Administration (SSA) experts. During this inaugural webinar of the ABLE Savings Plans Network (ASPN), participants will be equipped with the following:

- General knowledge about the benefits of owning an ABLE Account
- Knowledge of the relationship between ABLE Accounts and Social Security Disability Benefits
- Understanding of ABLE-related information that must be provided to SSA
- Resources on SSA benefits and ABLE Accounts

Who will benefit from this webinar? People with disabilities, their family members and legal representatives, SSA field office staff and leadership, disability advocacy and service provider organizations, and state ABLE program administrators.

[Click here to register for Social Security Benefits and ABLE Accounts](#)

**When:** Wednesday, February 22nd

**Time:** 11:00 AM MST

**Where:** Virtual

## **Jason's Advocacy Corner**

This month, Jason Snead, ADDPC staff member and self-advocate, talks with David Carey and Stephanie Miller from the Arizona Statewide Independent Living Council (AZSILC) about emergency preparedness in Arizona for individuals with disabilities. Stephanie and David answer a variety of questions, including:

What are some of the basic tips that individuals with disabilities should know in preparing for an emergency of any type?

## Jason's Advocacy Corner :



**Conversation with David Carey and Stephanie Miller from the Arizona Statewide Independent Living Council (AZSILC) talking about emergency preparation in Arizona for individuals with disabilities.**

### Service Provider Training: Addressing Sexual Violence in I/DD Communities

Presented by the Arizona Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence (ACESDV).

This free 4-hour training provides vital information on how to prevent, recognize and respond to sexual violence in I/DD communities. It will be offered twice virtually, on March 21st and May 18th.

Presenters will discuss the dynamics and traumatic impact of sexual violence and how to recognize abuse, as well as explore strategies for a trauma-informed response.

This training is for disability service providers who serve the I/DD community and can be used for DCW continuing education.

[Click here to register for Sexual Violence in I/DD Communities](#)

**1. When:** Tuesday, March 21st

**Time:** 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

**Where:** Virtual

**2. When:** Thursday, May 18th

**Time:** 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

**Where:** Virtual

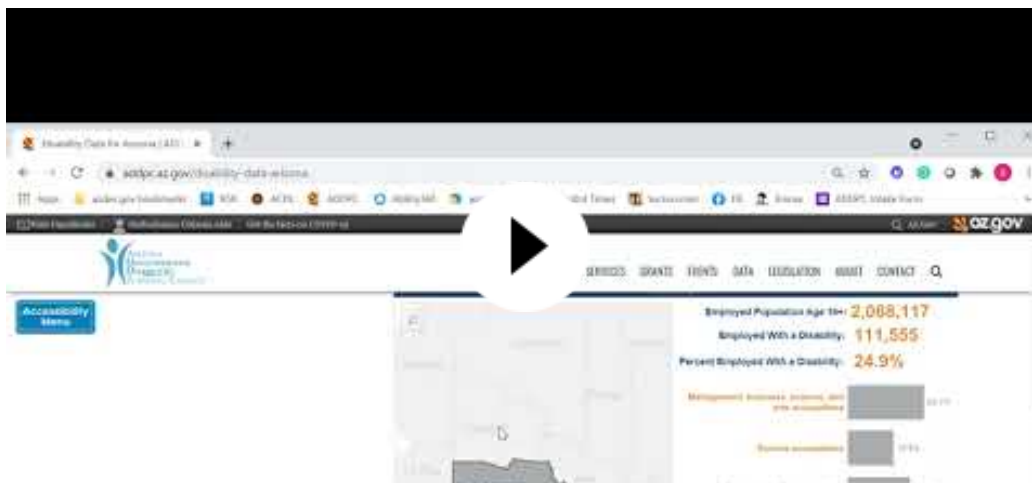


[Click here for updates on the Self Advocates Conference](https://swifamilies.org/2023sacommunityconference)

## Disability Data for Arizona

**Watch our brief video on how to use the Disability Data Hub for Arizona:**

Our data hub allows you to explore data on individuals with disabilities living in the state of Arizona. We believe free and easy access to data on individuals with disabilities is important to develop and support capacity building and systemic change. We update our data dashboards regularly, as governmental agencies make their public releases.



[Visit Disability Data Hub Here](https://addpcat.gov/disability-data/welcome)

**Correction:** In our January 2023 newsletter, we mistakenly identified Hayley Winterburg as Executive Director of the Arizona Peer and Family Coalition (APFC). Ms. Winterburg is Director of the Arizona Peer and Family Career Academy; Kristina Sabetta is APFC's Executive Director.

[See ADDPC website for more events. Click here.](https://addpcat.gov)





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