

Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Nothing About Us Without Us

Annual Gala

November 2022

Nothing About Us Without Us Award: Gavin Grimm, Ma'ayan Anafi
Mel Baggs Down In The Valley Award: Jordyn Zimmerman

Creating Community Together Award: Natasha Nelson

Ally to the Autistic Community Award: Unsilenced

Loud Hands Award for Autistic Storyteller: Evan Kleekamp

Harriet McBryde Johnson Award for Nonfiction: *We Move Together*

Proceeds will support our advocacy work and programs for the coming year, and will allow us to continue working to empower disabled people across the country.

Our Mission

The Autistic Self Advocacy Network seeks to advance the principles of the disability rights movement with regard to autism. ASAN believes that the goal of autism advocacy should be a world in which autistic people enjoy equal access, rights, and opportunities. We work to empower autistic people across the world to take control of our own lives and the future of our common community, and seek to organize the autistic community to ensure our voices are heard in the national conversation about us. Nothing About Us, Without Us!

Program

Tuesday, Nov. 1st

6:00 pm – Stop the Shock Night of Action

On Autistics Speaking Day, we need to continue to speak out against the electric shock devices still in use at the Judge Rotenberg Center. We will provide an update about the current legal and legislative status of the FDA ban and how our community can take action to demand Congress pass a law that would ban the use of electric shocks as aversives. The event will be held live on Zoom, but will also be streamed to YouTube. The event will remain on our YouTube channel after the event.

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81915056225?pwd=OFdGRIFYN E5tdjQ1dFhMU0w3WmFadz09>

Note: All times listed on the schedule each day are in Eastern Standard Time (EST).

Program

Tuesday, Nov. 8

7:00pm to 8:30pm – Panel 1: “As If Your Life Depends on It”
Voting and the Disability Community

Moderated by Noor Pervez, this conversation with disability advocates doing work that ensures our community can vote. We’ll cover what barriers exist for our community and others when it comes to voting and the work our panelists are doing locally and nationally to overcome these barriers. [The event will be held live on Zoom](#), but will also be streamed to YouTube. The event will remain on our YouTube channel after the event.

Panelists: Elissa Gershon, Ben Breaux, Héctor Manuel Ramírez, and Teresa Moore

Moderator: Noor Pervez, Community Engagement Manager

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82972287175?pwd=R1lGcXpmVnZlR1bWVlY0p0UT09>

Program

Tuesday, Nov. 15th

7:00pm – Awards Ceremony

The Awards Ceremony will include remarks by Julia Bascom, and we'll be honoring several awardees for their tireless work, including several new awards recognizing the variety of work our community engages in.

Nothing About Us Without Us Award:

Ma'ayan Anafi and Gavin Grimm

Creating Community Together Award:

Natasha Nelson

Mel Baggs Down In The Valley Award:

Jordyn Zimmerman

Loud Hands Award for Autistic Storytellers:

Evan Kleekamp

Harriet McBryde Johnson Award for Nonfiction:

We Move Together

Ally to the Autistic Community Award:

Unsilenced

Program

Tuesday, Nov. 22nd

7:00pm to 8:30pm – Panel 2: Our Rights Under Threat:
Reproductive Justice & LGBTQIA+ Advocacy

2022 has seen several overlapping attacks on reproductive and LGBTQIA+ rights. Given the rising attacks against both reproductive justice and LGBTQI+ rights over the past year, we feel it is important to highlight the current work being done in these movements to defend people's rights to bodily autonomy. This panel will cover how to share your story to impact change, coalition building, and how to make change nationally and locally. The event will be held live on Zoom, but will also be streamed to YouTube. The event will remain on our YouTube channel after the event.

Panelists: Victoria M. Rodríguez-Roldán, LaKeia Ferreira-Spady, Tony Alexander, and Maggie Scotece

Moderator: AJ Link, Policy Analyst

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87841136922?pwd=TjNmekpQSXMxNzFJa0NNMFM2Yzd3QT09>

Program

Tuesday, Nov. 29th

7:00 - 8:30pm – Closing Livestream

We will be closing the gala on Giving Tuesday with a conversation with ASAN staff, discussing both our work—in the past year and beyond to 2023—and our appreciation for the people that help us continue it. The event will be held live on Zoom, but will also be streamed to YouTube. The event will remain on our YouTube channel after the event.

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85903994294?pwd=UUxBQ3R1akdxWTIxODhUZEkwUGxMZZ09>

Giveaways

All Things Sensory Shop has donated two \$25 gift cards that we'll be raffling off during the gala! All Things Sensory Shop is a shop run by and for neurodivergent people. It has hundreds of fidgets, stim toys, and sensory aids for all ages. To enter to win a gift card, comment on our giveaway Facebook post to enter! We will use a random comment picker to pick the winner on Tuesday, November 29th.

We'll also be raffling off two year-long ASAN memberships at the Trivia Teammates tier, which includes a membership welcome pack, a member-exclusive newsletter, digital phone and computer wallpapers, an ASAN logo sticker, an ASAN mug, a \$5 gift card to ASAN shop, a physical copy of one of ASAN's books (Knowing Why, Navigating College, Empowering Leadership, Welcome to the Autistic Community, or Loud Hands), an ASAN pen, an ASAN lapel pin, an ASAN tangle, and a T-shirt!

Awardees and Speakers

Nothing About Us Without Us Award: Ma'ayan Anafi

Ma'ayan Anafi (they/them) is the Senior Counsel for Health Equity and Justice at the National Women's Law Center. Their work focuses on a range of topics related to meaningful access to health and health care, including issues facing disabled and LGBTQI+ people. Earlier this year, they authored the report *Forced Sterilization of Disabled People in the United States*, which revealed that 31 states and DC currently have laws explicitly permitting forced sterilization of disabled people. In their personal capacity, Ma'ayan is co-leading a national survey of trans disabled people with the Transgender Law Center's Disability Project, set to launch in 2023. Prior to working at NWLC, Ma'ayan was the Policy Counsel and Research Associate at the National Center for Transgender Equality. Ma'ayan received their J.D. from Harvard Law School and their B.A. from the University of Toronto. They live in Washington, DC with their delightfully chaotic cats, Bunny and Squeak.

Nothing About Us Without Us Award: Gavin Grimm

Gavin Grimm is a 23 year old autistic, transgender man and activist in the transgender community. In 2015, Grimm was banned from the boys bathroom at his high school in Gloucester County, Virginia. Grimm and the ACLU sued the school board and won in 2021 after a years-long battle that saw his case before the Supreme Court before ultimately being decided in the 4th circuit. Grimm continues to advocate for transgender people, especially youth in school settings. He also brings his perspective as an autistic man into conversations about gender and trans rights in and out of schools. Grimm left his hometown but still resides in Virginia with his 17 year old cat, Rascal.

Creating Community Together Award: Natasha Nelson

Natasha Nelson is a Certified Positive Discipline Educator (CPDE), veteran, military spouse, small business owner and Autistic mother to two autistic Black girls. Natasha has over seven years of exemplary leadership in the United States Army, over 5 years using Positive Discipline, and over a decade of experience in public speaking, community service, and facilitating in and out of the military. Natasha's small business Supernova Momma LLC. is an education resource for Black and Neurodiverse families to break generational curses from systemic racism and ableism in households, schools, and offices to receive support in a mutually caring, empathetic, and respectful environment. Natasha prides herself on making Positive Discipline, gentle parenting, and Conscious Parenting accessible and relatable specifically to Black and/or Neurodiverse Families with her NEED system: Network, Educate, Empathize, Demonstrate. One of the products of this system is Natasha's The Cool Calming Corner, a Time-In printable poster set that features Black and/or multicultural children of different shades and hair styles, and teaches them emotional intelligence and coping strategies through a love of hip hop.

Mel Baggs Down In The Valley Award: Jordyn Zimmerman

Jordyn Zimmerman, M.Ed., currently works as the Director of Professional Development at The Nora Project. In this role, she supports educators in their efforts to teach all students about disability as a valued and respected part of human diversity.

Prior to joining TNP, Jordyn earned her bachelor's degree in Education Policy from Ohio University and her Masters of Education at Boston College. As a nonspeaking autistic student who was denied access to effective augmentative communication until she was 18, Jordyn has personal experience challenging the educational status quo, which is featured in the 2021 documentary, *This Is Not About Me*. Jordyn frequently keynotes and presents at conferences, is board chair of CommunicationFIRST, and serves on the board of Hillel International. Most recently, Jordyn was appointed to serve on the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities.

An avid advocate for all students, Jordyn is passionate and determined to make a difference in the world of education — making sure everyone is able to access effective communication and exercise their right to a truly inclusive education that honors students as they are.

Loud Hands Award for Autistic Storytellers:

Evan Kleekamp

Evan Kleekamp is a writer and researcher based out of Los Angeles. Their work has received recognition from funding bodies including Creative Capital, the Andy Warhol Foundation, and the California Arts Council. Their essays have appeared in Open Space (SFMOMA), The Avery Review, and the Los Angeles Review of Books. They are the Research Director of NOR Research Studio, a consulting service that specializes in artist career development, and Development Director for Study Hall, a resource for media workers.

Harriet McBryde Johnson Award for Nonfiction:

We Move Together

We Move Together is a bold and colorful exploration of all the ways that people navigate through the spaces around them and a celebration of the relationships we build along the way. A 2022 silver medal recipient for the International Latino Book Awards' Best Educational Children's Picture Book and selected for the Ontario Library Association's Best Bets List of Top 10 Canadian Children's Picture Books for 2021, the book follows a mixed-ability group of kids as they creatively negotiate everyday barriers and find joy and connection in disability culture and community. We Move Together is the result of a creative collaboration between Kelly Fritsch, Anne McGuire and Eduardo Trejos, who came to this project from their unique and varying perspectives as disabled people, parents, disability activists, and disability studies scholars.

Ally to the Autistic Community Award: Unsilenced

Unsilenced is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization that serves victims of institutional child abuse. Founded in 2021 as an organization of over 50 survivors and allies, Unsilenced is committed to promoting appropriate, healthy, and effective alternatives to programs within the Troubled Teen Industry (TTI). To foster better health outcomes without placement in the largely unregulated industry, the organization advocates for constructive alternatives that circumvent institutionalization for children and youth who are struggling with mental health and educational challenges. Utilizing education, awareness, survivor/community support, policy change, and strategic partnerships with other organizations fighting in similar spaces, Unsilenced aims to protect the civil, social, and human rights of youth.

Panel #1: “As If Your Life Depends on It” Voting and the Disability Community

Moderated by Noor Pervez, this conversation with disability advocates doing work that ensures our community can vote. We'll cover what barriers exist for our community and others when it comes to voting and the work our panelists are doing locally and nationally to overcome these barriers. The event will be held live on Zoom, but will also be streamed to YouTube. The event will remain on our YouTube channel after the event.

Elissa Gershon (she/her) has been a contract attorney for NDRN since February 2021. She works on materials and training involving voting rights of people with disabilities subject to guardianship or conservatorship, voting and competency, and voting rights of people in institutional settings. She follows and provides technical assistance on current voting litigation and policy proposals.

Ben Breaux is a 21-year-old nonspeaking autistic with epilepsy from Northern VA. Ben has written many articles for numerous autism advocacy groups worldwide and is a proud representative for his community on several advocacy boards and committees, both in the state of VA and nationally. He feels it is very important that non-, minimal- and unreliably speaking autistics have equal rights, opportunities, and voices in society.

Héctor Manuel Ramírez (they/them) is an Apache & Mexican Two Spirits person occupying space in Yaanga, Tongva (Los Angeles, California) the unceded ancestral lands of the Fernandeano Tataviam Band of Mission Indians. Héctor is an Autistic person who is hard of hearing & has a psychiatric disability. Hector has done local, state, & federal level policy work in the areas of equity & disparities in Disability, Native American, Latinx, Indigenous, LGBTQIA2S+, Immigrant, Undocumented Americans, & most impacted & highly marginalized communities during COVID-19 pandemic. Héctor is on the board of directors with Disability Rights California & the National Disability Rights Network where Héctor provides oversight & accountability of the nation's only legally based advocacy organization established by Congress to protect

the rights of all individuals with disabilities in every state and U.S. territories.

Teresa Moore has been a self-advocacy leader for more than 10 years. She has been a member of the Board of Directors for Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE), a facilitator for Project Leadership, coordinator of the MY Voice, My Choice Project, Coordinator of the Vote Education and VOTE Projects and an advisor to the Board of Directors of SABE. Teresa is a trained facilitator in the Greenleaf Servant Leadership model and a consultant on accessible material development for state and Federal agencies.

The panel will be moderated by Noor Pervez.

Panel #2: Our Rights Under Threat: Reproductive Justice & LGBTQIA+ Advocacy

2022 has seen several overlapping attacks on reproductive and LGBTQIA+ rights. Given the rising attacks against both reproductive justice and LGBTQI+ rights over the past year, we feel it is important to highlight the current work being done in these movements to defend people's rights to bodily autonomy. This panel will cover how to share your story to impact change, coalition building, and how to make change nationally and locally. The event will be held live on Zoom, but will also be streamed to YouTube. The event will remain on our YouTube channel after the event.

Victoria M. Rodríguez-Roldán is the Director of Public Policy at GLSEN. Particular areas of expertise and focus are the intersections of issues affecting people living at the intersections of transgender identity, disability and mental illness through a social justice lens. She frequently speaks on discrimination issues impacting the trans and disability communities. Prior to joining GLSEN, she was Senior Policy Manager at AIDS United and senior policy counsel at the National LGBTQ Task Force where she led the Trans/GNC Justice Project and the Disability Justice Project. Victoria holds a B.A. in psychology with honors from the University of Puerto Rico, and a J.D. from the University of Maine School of Law. She lives in the Washington, DC area.

LaKeia Ferreira-Spady LBSW, CHW (she/ella) is a Black queer abortion access and reproductive justice social worker. Before the overturning of Roe v Wade she was a counselor and health educator at one of the highest volume abortion clinics in Texas. She now manages a travel support program for Texans seeking care out of state, and continues to offer pregnancy options counseling services pro bono in her home state. She also consults and provides organizing support for abortion providers and abortion advocacy organizations around the US. She is an outspoken advocate for decriminalizing and decolonizing abortion care.

Maggie Scotece JD (She/They) is a long-time abortion advocate, doula, and former Abortion Fund of Ohio (AFO) volunteer & Board Member, who is currently serving as the organization's Interim Executive Director. Since transitioning to this role in February 2022, Maggie has demonstrated her dedication to uplifting the stories of those most impacted by the barriers in Reproductive Justice spaces. Including preparing to launch AFO's new Legal Access Program which will provide direct legal assistance and pro-bono case referrals and management for Ohioans facing criminalized pregnancy outcomes. She is a licensed attorney in Ohio with six years of experience in civil-rights law and direct, short-term legal assistance. Maggie has worked to make civic engagement and public policy conversations more accessible through her tenure on the Fair Districts Mapping Competition Advisory Committee and the Ohio Democratic Disability Caucus. They bring deep-rooted connections to Disability Justice organizing to their work at AFO, including their experience as a disabled activist and co-founder of the Supported Decision Making Network of Ohio. Maggie continues to work with local clinic escort programs, Racial Justice organizing, criminal justice reform, and movement lawyering in Ohio and the greater MidWest.

Tony Alexander, JD (he/him), is a Program Associate at CommunicationFIRST, the only nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting and advancing the civil rights of children and adults in the United States who, due to disability or other condition, cannot rely on speech alone to be heard and understood. Prior to joining CommunicationFIRST, Tony served as the inaugural Policy Director for the Autistic People of Color Fund and the Policy Manager for the Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network. Mr. Alexander received his JD from Northeastern University of School of Law and BA in American Studies with a Sociology concentration from Ursinus College. He is most passionate about using collective organizing and policy advocacy through an intersectional lens as drivers for change and empowerment for fellow disabled and multiply-marginalized individuals. A metro Atlanta native, Mr. Alexander currently resides in Los Angeles with his partner and four dogs. His most effective means of communication is speech.

The panel will moderated by AJ Link.

Thank you for
celebrating with us!