

Annual Gala

November 2023



Nothing About Us
Without Us Award

Joyner Emerick
Monique Botha
Naureen Hunani, RD

Creating Community
Together Award

EUCAP
Project LETS

Mel Baggs
Down In The Valley Award
Ira Eidle

Loud Hands Award
for Autistic Storytellers
A Day With No Words

Ally to the
Autistic Community Award
Kristen Bottema-Beutel

Harriet McBryde Johnson
Award for Nonfiction
Alice Wong

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.



Nothing about us without us!

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

Thursday, Nov. 16th

3:30 - 5:15 pm – Keeping the Promise: The Settings Rule and securing an end to institutions

The HCBS Settings Rule, which went into effect earlier this year, is all about our right to receive services that are truly community-based and that respect our rights, rather than being stuck in “institutions in disguise.” Moderated by Greg Robinson, this panel will talk about what this Rule means for the autistic and wider disability community, the advocacy that went into fighting for the Rule, and the continued work to secure what is promised by the Rule. [Register here.](#)

Panelists: **Eric Carlson, Esther Warwick, Max Barrows, Courtney Johnson**

Moderator: **Greg Robinson**, Deputy Director of Public Policy

5:30 - 7:15 pm – How to avoid unraveling: Building trans autistic community care

As attacks against trans communities continue to ramp up in state legislatures, in schools, at libraries and on the playing field, keeping joy and connection in our communities is more crucial than ever. Moderated by Alex Grandstaff, this panel will talk about building community at the intersections of transness and disability and how trans autistic joy is a form of resistance. [Register here.](#)

Panelists: **Alexis Vida Rangel, Nathan Dorcsey A. Johnson, Marrok Sedgwick**

Moderator: **Alex Grandstaff**, Programs Manager

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

7:30 pm – Award Ceremony

At this year's Awards Ceremony, we will be honoring several awardees for their tireless work in advocacy, research, community building, and so much more. We'll also hear remarks by Julia Bascom and ASAN staff members! [Watch the livestream.](#)

Nothing About Us Without Us Award:

Joyner Emerick, Monique Botha, and Naureen Hunani, RD

Creating Community Together Award:

The European Council of Autistic People and Project LETS

Mel Baggs Down In The Valley Award:

Ira Eidle

Loud Hands Award for Autistic Storytellers:

A Day With No Words

Harriet McBryde Johnson Award for Nonfiction:

Alice Wong

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Giveaways

We'll be raffling off 25 copies of Alice Wong's book *Year of the Tiger: An Activist's Life*, her debut memoir available now from Vintage Books.

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!

After the award ceremony, we'll be contacting the winners of our raffle. Make sure you're [registered for the gala](#) in order to be entered into the raffle!

Awardees

Nothing About Us Without Us Award: Joyner Emerick



Joyner Emerick is a dedicated advocate, community organizer, and transformational leader who was historically elected as Minneapolis's first openly autistic and first openly transgender School Board Director in 2022. In their field, Emerick is best known for their belief in the transformative power of inclusive education, and their commitment to dismantling the school to prison pipeline.

Emerick's path to public service on the Minneapolis School Board was sparked when a multi-year struggle to advocate for their own child's rights in the Special Education system led them to make the pivotal decision to confront systemic barriers from within the education establishment. Despite personal challenges and the unconventional nature of their run for office, Emerick's efforts inspired a unique grassroots movement. Balancing personal capacities, they designed a flexible campaign strategy that emphasized evaluation, experimentation, and adaptation. This approach fostered diverse engagement and empowered volunteers to creatively adapt their own involvement. The result was a sense of collective ownership over the campaign's success, and a deepened community understanding of the strengths of cross-ability organizing.

Guided by the principles of the Disability Justice Movement and abolitionist teaching, Emerick's advocacy extends beyond conventional bounds, challenging ingrained beliefs and amplifying marginalized voices. Their radical commitment to cross-coalition work for liberation, including and especially the liberation of children, makes Emerick a compelling advocate for a more just educational future for all students.



Nothing About Us Without Us Award: Monique Botha

Monique is an autistic and ADHD academic, advocate, and activist based in Scotland. They are passionate about the ways that research can be used as a powerful tool of liberation for minority

communities, when those communities are at the helm of it. They co-founded the Community Against Prejudice Towards Autistic People - a global network that connects autistic people, scholars, and activists interested in using research to help tackle stigma, discrimination, and prejudice towards autistic people, and its effects on autistic people. They helped to found the STARTS project - the Striving to Transform Autism Research Together Scotland, a participatory research group that aims to tackle research which is of most importance to autistic people alongside autistic people. Lastly, their current research focuses on the objectification, dehumanization, and stigmatization of autistic people by autism researchers, and the effects of that bigotry on autism research, as well as the role that participatory autism research, and autistic-led research can challenge this status-quo, leading to better, more rigorous autism research which can actually achieve social change for autistic people.

Nothing About Us Without Us Award: Naureen Hunani, RD



Naureen is an autistic, ADHD, and dyslexic registered dietitian, activist and a parent of two neurodivergent children. After encountering eating challenges with her children and not finding the resources needed, she developed a special interest in the intersection of neurodivergence, feeding differences and eating challenges. She believes that ND people are the experts in their own experience and advocates for challenging ableism, weight bias and neuronormative ideals around food and eating.

In December 2020, she founded RDs for Neurodiversity, the first ND-led online continuing education platform and community geared toward dietitians and providers committed to ND- affirming care. She has developed many courses and programs based on the Neurodiversity Affirming Model[®], a model she created over the last few years focused on embracing ND folks' eating and feeding experiences. The Neurodiversity Affirming Model[®] is a framework based on inclusion and acceptance. It challenges the medical model of disability, neuronormativity and pathological paradigm that currently pervades and anchors education and practice in dietetics and the mental health field.



Creating Community Together Award: The European Council of Autistic People

The European Council of Autistic People is an umbrella organisation for autistic-led organisations in Europe. EUCAP was founded in 2019, and currently has 24 member organisations in 16 countries.

EUCAP aims to promote the welfare of autistic people in Europe through participation in public discourse, by networking and engaging with decision-making bodies, and by supporting co-operation between autistic-led groups across borders. We welcome groups and organisations that have similar goals as either full or associate members. As part of its broader mission, EUCAP also seeks contacts outside Europe, engaging in global discourse, and cooperates with other types of organisations that focus on advocacy, research and policy related to autism, as well as organisations focused on neurodiversity in a broader sense.

Creating Community Together Award: Project LETS



Project LETS is a grassroots organization led by and for MMIND* folks, psychiatric survivors, and those navigating oppression-induced psychological, emotional, and spiritual distress. We build peer support collectives, lead political education, develop new knowledge and language around mental distress, organize and advocate for the liberation of our community members globally, and create innovative, peer-led, alternatives to our current mental health system. We work to challenge and dismantle the inherent ableism, sanism, and violence within our medical and psychiatric systems (and society), and to build the skills and capacities of all people to show up for our community members in anti-carceral ways. We fight for abolition of the psychiatric system as we know it, and the abolition of all carceral systems that trap our community members in death-making institutions.

* MMIND = Mad, perceived as/labeled with mental illness, neurodivergent, Disabled



Mel Baggs Down In The Valley Award: Ira Eidle

Ira is from Decatur, Georgia. He holds a Bachelor's of the Arts in Theatre and Performance Studies from Kennesaw State University. Ira participated in Autism Campus Inclusion in 2020. During their

senior year at KSU, Ira co-founded and was president of a student organization, Neurodivergent Advocates of Kennesaw. He has given presentations on the Neurodiversity Movement to Hirsch Academy and has moderated panels on Neurodiversity and fandoms at Dragon Con. He has been the curator of Autistic Archive since 2021. He has a fascination for exploring the archives and for obscure trivia related to his interests that has driven his passion for Neurodiversity history.

Loud Hands Award for Autistic Storytellers: A Day With No Words

Tiffany Hammond [she/her] is the voice behind the Fidgets and Fries platform. She is an Autistic mother, advocate, and storyteller who uses her personal experiences with Autism and parenting two Autistic boys to guide others on their journey. Tiffany has a Masters in Developmental Psychology and spends her time teaching, coaching, and mentoring others in Disability Justice issues. Her activism is rooted in challenging the current perception of Autism as a lifelong burden, cultivating a community that explores the concept of Intersectionality and inspiring thought leaders through storytelling, education, and critical discourse. You can usually find Tiffany writing in the light of the moon or thinking about what to write in the light of the day. When she isn't writing, she is building epic pillow forts with her two sons or going on long road trips with her family.



Kate Cosgrove [she/her] is the #1 New York Times bestselling illustrator of *A Day With No Words*. Cosgrove's other notable picture books include *And the Bullfrogs Sing: A Life Cycle*, a Bank Street Best Book of the Year, and a Maryland Blue Crab Young Reader Award Honors book. *The Dirt Book*, *Poems About Animals that Live Beneath Our Feet*, which juried into The Original Art 41st Annual Exhibition in NYC. She's usually hiding in her probably-haunted art studio, with pencil-smudged fingers and a smelly dog named Stanley.



Harriet McBryde Johnson Award for Nonfiction: Alice Wong

Alice Wong (she/her) is a disabled activist, writer, media maker, and consultant. She is the founder and director of the Disability Visibility Project, an online community dedicated to creating, sharing, and

amplifying disability media and culture. Alice is the editor of *Disability Visibility: First-Person Stories from the Twenty-First Century*, an anthology of essays by disabled people and *Disability Visibility: 17 First-Person Stories for Today*, an adapted version for young adults. Her debut memoir, *Year of the Tiger: An Activist's Life* is available now from Vintage Books. *Disability Intimacy*, her next anthology, will be out in 2024. In 2023, she was a voice actor in the Netflix animated series *Human Resources* where she portrayed a character loosely based on her life. Twitter: [@SFdirewolf](https://twitter.com/SFdirewolf).

Ally to the Autistic Community Award: Kristen Bottema- Beutel



Kristen Bottema-Beutel (she/her) is an Associate Professor of Special Education in the Lynch School of Education and Human Development at Boston College. Her research pairs qualitative and quantitative methods to better understand autistic communication, language, and sociality, and to develop school-based strategies to support autistic students' inclusion. More recently, she has explored meta-science topics such as researcher ethics and research quality in intervention research for autistic children and youth, and ableism in autism research more generally. She is a deputy editor of the journal *Autism in Adulthood* and an Associate Editor of the journal *Autism*. Dr. Bottema-Beutel is the director of a master's level autism certificate, a program that prepares future special educators to support autistic students, and also directs the Ph.D. program in Curriculum and Instruction. She earned her master's degree from San Francisco State University and her doctorate from University of California, Berkeley. Before joining the Lynch School in 2013, she was the IES Postdoctoral Fellow in Special Education Intervention Research at Vanderbilt University in the Department of Special Education.

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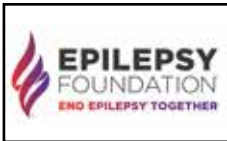
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The Future of Development and Learning

WHO ARE WE?

The International Council on Development and Learning (ICDL) is an international not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting each person's development to its fullest potential. ICDL is proud to be the official home of DIR® and DIRFloortime®. We provide training courses for parents, professionals, self-advocates, and active college students through the DIRFloortime® Training Program. Our Training Program is the original and official DIRFloortime® Certificate Program with trainings available online and in-person around the world. To date, we have had participants from over 150 different countries and this number continues to grow each year.

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ICDL'S BOARD PRESIDENT

Emile Gouws, Ph.D., Autistic Self-Advocate

"I was introduced to DIRFloortime® back in my childhood when my OT employed the approach in our sessions. By nurturing an interpersonal bond with me through Floortime fostered my trust and enabled me to communicate in my unique way. I wholeheartedly recommend the use of DIRFloortime to parents, educators, practitioners and, therapists alike."

WHAT IS DIR®?

DIR® is the Developmental, Individual-differences, and Relationship-based model. DIR provides a foundational framework for understanding human development and how each person individually perceives and interacts with the world differently.

WHAT IS DIRFLOORTIME®?

DIRFloortime is the application of the DIR framework into practice. Some think of DIR as the philosophy and DIRFloortime as the way to put this philosophy into action to promote human development.

DIR® & NEURODIVERSITY

The "I" of DIR stands for "Individual-differences". The center of DIR is about understanding how the unique individual differences of each and every person interacts with their development. When you connect the two, you gain a unique understanding of the neurodiverse development of each individual. As Jeff Guenzel, ICDL's CEO recently wrote, "DIR® is an evidence-based and effective approach to promote human development. It is a respectful and joyful approach that allows each person to grow and develop in the context of their own authentic self."



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**Everyone deserves
to speak for themselves.**

Verizon proudly
supports the
Autistic Self
Advocacy
Network.

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AT&T proudly supports ASAN for its ongoing commitment to equal access, rights, and opportunities for the autistic community.



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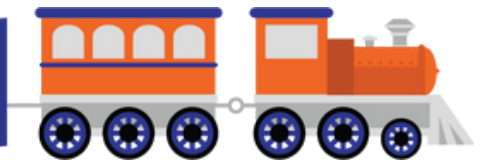
Centene is a proud sponsor of the 2023 ASAN Gala. We join others in celebrating the power of the autistic community in achieving change and ensuring that there is “nothing about us without us.”



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www.autisticadvocacy.org

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celebrating with us!**