

The 19th Annual



DisCo

AT THE CAPITOL



CALIFORNIA **DISABILITY COMMUNITY**
ADVOCACY CONFERENCE

May 18-19, 2026

Presented by





WELCOME!

Welcome to the 19th Annual “DisCo at the Capitol: California Disability Community Advocacy Conference,” proudly presented by The Arc of California, Association of Regional Center Agencies, Easterseals, and United Cerebral Palsy.

Thank you for being here and for standing alongside hundreds of self-advocates, family members, professionals, community partners, and allies from across California who believe in the power of advocacy and the strength of our disability community. This year’s gathering comes at a critical moment. Across the country, we are witnessing unprecedented threats to federal funding and programs that millions of people with disabilities and their families rely on every day. Essential disability services and supports are under attack, and the decisions being made today will shape the future of our communities for generations to come.

That is why your presence here matters.

DisCo at the Capitol is more than a conference. It is a powerful reminder that when we come together, our collective voice can influence policy, protect vital services, and advance the promise of inclusion, equity, and opportunity for all Californians with disabilities. California’s disability rights movement has always been built on resilience, advocacy, and community. From protecting the promises of the Lanterman Act to advancing access, independence, housing, healthcare, education, employment, and civil rights, progress has only been possible because people were willing to speak up, organize, and demand better.

Over the next two days, we hope you leave feeling informed, inspired, connected, and empowered to take action. Every conversation with a legislator, every personal story shared, and every voice raised helps strengthen our movement and reminds policymakers that disability services are not optional – they are essential.

Together, we can protect what generations before us fought to build while creating a future where every person with a disability has the opportunity to thrive. Thank you for being part of this movement and for lending your voice to this important fight. We are honored to have you with us.

Warm regards,



Jordan Lindsey, Executive Director,
The Arc and UCP California
Collaboration



Amy Westling, Executive
Director, Association of
Regional Center Agencies.



Kathleen Kolenda, Vice President
of Adult Day & Employment
Services

ABOUT US



The DisCo at the Capitol: California Disability Community Advocacy Conference is brought to you by four of the most prominent nonprofit organizations in California dedicated to protecting the rights of people with developmental disabilities and advancing inclusion in all aspects of our communities.



The Arc of California promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively supports their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes.



The Association of Regional Center Agencies advocates on behalf of more than 500,000 Californians with developmental disabilities and the 21 community-based regional center system.



For more than 100 years, Easterseals has been leading the way to full equity, inclusion and access through life-changing disability and community services.



California affiliates of United Cerebral Palsy are a nationwide network of organizations providing support and services to children and adults with disabilities to live a “Life Without Limits”.



GUEST SPEAKERS

(In order of appearance)



Jordan Lindsey
Executive Director, The Arc/UCP
California Collaboration

“Event Host”



Sofia Sanchez
Actress, Model, Author & Advocate

“Event Co-Host”



Pat Hornbecker
President, The Arc of California
Board of Directors

*“Celebrating the 60th Anniversary
of the Regional Center System”*



John Tucker
Actor, Advocate, and cast member
of *Born This Way*

*“Celebrating the 60th Anniversary
of the Regional Center System”*



Amy Westling
Executive Director, Association of
Regional Center Agencies

*“Celebrating the 60th Anniversary
of the Regional Center System”*



Kristen Pedersen
Executive Director, The Arc of San
Francisco

*“Celebrating the 60th Anniversary
of the Regional Center System”*



Eric Zigman
Executive Director, Golden Gate
Regional Center

*“Celebrating the 60th Anniversary of
the Regional Center System”*



Rose Chacana
Associate Director of Service
Access & Equity, Frank D.
Lanterman Regional Center

*“Celebrating the 60th Anniversary
of the Regional Center System”*



Nic Novicki
Founder and Director, Easterseals
Disability Film Challenge

*“California Disability Innovation in
Advocacy Award Winner”*



Isaac Haney-Owens
Operations Assistant,
The Kelsey

*“California Disability Innovation in
Advocacy Award Winner”*



Mark Whitley
President & CEO, Easterseals
Southern California

*“Presenter, California Disability
Innovation in Advocacy Award”*

GUEST SPEAKERS

(In order of appearance)



Adan Correa

Creative Artist, Advocate, Cast Member of *Love on the Spectrum*

“Stronger Together: How Community Helps Us Dream Bigger”



Candis Welch

Strategic HR & Social Impact Leader, Former Ms. Wheelchair California

“The Power of Advocacy: Your Voice Can Inspire Change”



321 Pop

Co-Founders Hamza Ghazy, Sofia Sanchez, and Joaquin Sanchez

Mobile Popsicle Stand



MC Down & DJ Hymn
Musical Duo

Silent DisCo



DJ Lady Char
Disk Jockey

Silent DisCo

SPECIAL PERFORMANCE

by Access Dance Program

Lindsey Oester, Director



ACCESS Dance is a nonprofit 501c3 adaptive dance program for children and adults with disabilities. It is one of the state’s largest and longest-running adaptive dance programs.

ACCESS is designed especially for people who may need special attention to fully experience the joy of movement, self-expression, and the therapeutic benefits of dance.

CALIFORNIA DISABILITY INNOVATION IN ADVOCACY AWARD

Presented by The Arc of California, Association of Regional Center Agencies, Easterseals, and United Cerebral Palsy The California Disability Innovation in Advocacy Award honors organizations and initiatives that are transforming lives through bold ideas, inclusive practices, and impactful advocacy. The award recognizes groundbreaking efforts that expand accessibility, increase opportunity, and strengthen communities for Californians with developmental disabilities and their families.

This year's two honorees exemplify innovation in action, creating lasting change through visionary leadership, creative problem-solving, and a deep commitment to inclusion.



The Kelsey

Founded in 2017 through disability- and family-led advocacy, The Kelsey is transforming inclusive housing opportunities for people with developmental disabilities across California. By combining advocacy, innovative design, and community-based housing development, The Kelsey is helping redefine what accessibility, independence, and belonging can look like in practice.

Their groundbreaking developments include The Kelsey Ayer Station in San José and The Kelsey Civic Center in San Francisco, where 25% of apartments are reserved for individuals connected to developmental disability and Home and Community Based Services systems. Through disability-forward design principles, the innovative Inclusion Concierge model, and partnerships with public agencies, Regional Centers, and nonprofit organizations, The Kelsey is creating scalable housing models that strengthen inclusion, expand independence, and help move California toward a more equitable future for people with disabilities. Learn more at thekelsey.org



Easterseals Disability Film Challenge

Founded in 2013 by actor, comedian, and advocate Nic Novicki, the Easterseals Disability Film Challenge is transforming representation and employment opportunities for people with disabilities in film and television worldwide. Over the past decade, the Challenge has generated more than 850 short films from filmmakers around the globe, creating one of the entertainment industry's largest pipelines for disability-led storytelling.

The Challenge requires meaningful participation by people with disabilities both in front of and behind the camera, ensuring authentic lived experience is reflected in every project. Through mentorships, grants, industry partnerships, and professional exposure, the program has helped launch careers for filmmakers, actors, writers, and creators with disabilities while challenging stereotypes and expanding inclusion across media and entertainment. Learn more at disabilityfilmchallenge.com

AGENDA

- 6:00 to 6:30 p.m. **DOORS OPEN: Check-In**
Cafeteria 15 L, 1116 15th St, Sacramento, CA 95814
- Mix & Mingle, Enjoy Appetizers and Beverages
- Meet the Author and Book Signing with Sofia Sanchez
- Studio 700 Art Exhibit by The Arc of Placer County
- 6:30 to 6:35 p.m. **WELCOME MESSAGE**
Jordan Lindsey, Executive Director, The Arc & UCP California Collaboration
- 6:35 to 6:40 p.m. **SPECIAL GUEST APPEARANCE**
- 6:40 to 7:05 p.m. **CELEBRATING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REGIONAL CENTER SYSTEM**
Pat Hornbecker, President, The Arc of California Board of Directors
John Tucker, Actor, Advocate, Westside Regional Center Representative, Department of Developmental Services
Amy Westling, Executive Director, Association of Regional Center Agencies
Kristen Pedersen, Executive Director, The Arc of San Francisco
Eric Zigman, Executive Director, Golden Gate Regional Center
Rose Chacana, Associate Director of Service Access & Equity, Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center
- 7:05 to 7:10 p.m. **DYNAMIC MUSICAL DUO: MC Down & DJ Hymn**
Introduced by Nic Novicki, Founder and Director, Easterseals Disability Film Challenge
- 7:10 to 9:00 p.m. **MUSIC AND DANCING**
- 9:00 p.m. **EVENING RECEPTION ENDS**



AGENDA

- 8:30 to 9:00 a.m. **REGISTRATION CHECK-IN**
California State Capitol (West Steps), 1315 10th St, Sacramento, CA 95814
- 9:00 to 9:05 a.m. **WELCOME MESSAGE**
Host Jordan Lindsey, Executive Director, The Arc & UCP California Collaboration
Co-Host Sofia Sanchez, Actress, Model, Author and Advocate
- 9:05 to 9:10 a.m. **SPONSOR ANNOUNCEMENT with WAYMO**
- 9:10 to 9:20 a.m. **CALIFORNIA DISABILITY INNOVATION IN ADVOCACY AWARD - The Kelsey**
Presented by Kristen Pedersen, Executive Director, The Arc of San Francisco
Accepted by Isaac Haney-Owens, Operations Assistant, The Kelsey
- 9:20 to 9:30 a.m. **CALIFORNIA DISABILITY INNOVATION IN ADVOCACY AWARD - Easterseals Disability Film Challenge**
Presented by Mark Whitley, President & CEO, Easterseals Southern California
Accepted by Nic Novicki, Founder and Director, Easterseals Disability Film Challenge
- 9:30 to 9:35 a.m. **STRONGER TOGETHER: How Community Helps Us Dream Bigger**
Adan Correa, Creative Artist, Advocate and cast member of Love on the Spectrum
- 9:35 to 9:40 a.m. **THE POWER OF ADVOCACY: Your Voice Can Inspire Change**
Candis Welch, Strategic HR & Social Impact Leader, and former Ms. Wheelchair California
- 9:40 to 9:50 a.m. **POLICY PRIORITIES AND LEGISLATIVE ORIENTATION**
Jordan Lindsey, Host
- 9:50 to 10:00 a.m. **ORGANIZE INTO GROUPS: Prepare for Walk, Rally & Roll**
Find Team Leaders
- 10:00 to 10:15 a.m. **WALK, RALLY & ROLL TO LEGISLATIVE MEETINGS**
Capitol Annex Swing Space: 1021 O St, Sacramento, CA 95814
- 10:15 to 11:30 a.m. **LEGISLATIVE MEETINGS**
- 11:45 to 12:05 p.m. **LUNCH & RESOURCE FAIR**
- 12:05 to 12:10 p.m. **SPECIAL PERFORMANCE**
Access Dance Program, Lindsey Oester, Director
- 12:10 to 12:15 p.m. **321 POP**
Sofia Sanchez, Co-Founder, 321 Pop - Mobile Popsicle Stand
- 12:15 to 1:00 p.m. **SILENT DISCO**
MC Down & DJ Hymn
DJ Lady Char
- 1:00 to 1:15 p.m. **WALK, RALLY AND ROLL TO LEGISLATIVE MEETINGS**
Capitol Annex Swing Space: 1021 O St, Sacramento, CA 95814
- 1:15 to 2:45 p.m. **LEGISLATIVE MEETINGS OR SILENT DISCO**
- 3:00 p.m. **END OF PROGRAM**

THANK YOU

PRESENTING ORGANIZATIONS



ADVOCATE



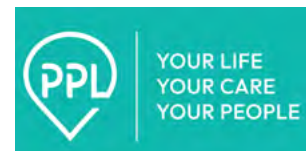
WAYMO

SUPPORTERS



The 19th Annual DisCo at the Capitol: California Disability Community Advocacy Conference

PARTNERS



FRIENDS



BENEFACTORS

Luther and Amy Nishimura, in memory of Lori Nishimura

Pat & Tim Hornbecker

Felisa Strickland

Dr. Lou Vismara

EXCLUSIVELY AT THE EVENING RECEPTION



MEET **SOFIA SANCHEZ**

Actress, model, author, & Advocate



*“You are Brave”
“You are Loved”
“You are Enough”*

BOOKS AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE

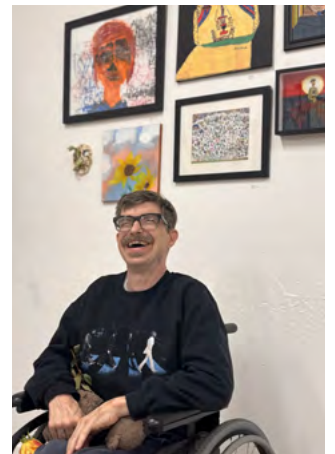
CASH | CHECK | CARD

Made payable to The Arc of California

STUDIO 700 CENTER FOR THE ARTS

A program by The Arc of Placer County. Studio 700 Center for the Arts is a program of The Arc of Placer County for artists with developmental disabilities. Studio 700 provides the creative space and guidance for the artists to find a stronger voice in art and in life. Their art is for sale to the public, which provides the artist the opportunity to earn wages. Fifty percent of proceeds from art sales goes directly to the artists, and 50% goes back into the program to cover supplies.

Art produced includes photography, ceramics, greeting cards, letterhead for local businesses, animated music videos, paintings, various three-dimensional works, wearable art and clothing lines, short films and theatre performances. Studio 700 Art Exhibit is on Monday, May 18 at the Evening Reception from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. Learn more about the art program at placercarc.org/services/studio-700-center-for-the-arts/



STAY CONNECTED WITH US ON FACEBOOK, BLUESKY, INSTAGRAM AND YOUTUBE!

DisCo at the Capitol: California Disability Community Advocacy Conference helps fuel the statewide movement for disability rights, equity, & access. Learn more DisCoAtTheCapitol.org