

Film Premiere



Together They Were Stronger

The story of how four Seattle women mounted a civil rights campaign to establish the first-ever disability rights law in the U.S.

Wednesday, May 25, 2022
6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

**UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON -
HARING CENTER**

Auditorium CD150
1981 NE Columbia Rd
Seattle, WA 98195

A Thriving Communities Documentary
www.thrivingcommunities.org

Table of Contents

Event Program	3
Program Forward	5
Evelyn Chapman	8
Katie Dolan	11
Cecile Lindquist	14
Janet Taggart	19
William Dussault	29
Stacy Dym	33
Ilene Schwartz	37
Amy Dussault	39
Ivanova L. Smith	42
Gene Boes	43
Jerry Millhon	45
Hannah Guggenheim	47

Pictured on the cover: Washington Gov. Dan Evans signs what became known as Education for All on May 25, 1971. With him are the bill's authors, Northwest Center founders Janet Taggart, left, Cecile Lindquist, Evelyn Chapman and Katie Dolan, and University of Washington law students Bill Dussault and George Edensword-Breck. Photo: Washington State Archives

Event Program

- 1 Introduction of Producers and Context of Film
- 2 Run Film
- 3 Panel Introduction and Review of Three Questions Provided to the Panelists
- 4 Panel Discussion / Questions and Answers

Panelists

- **Janet Taggart**, Northwest Center Founder & Law Author
- **Bill Dussault**, Law Author, Aiken St. Louis and Siljeg/Dussault Law Relationship Foundation
- **Stacy Dym**, The Arc of Washington
- **Ilene Schwartz**, UW Haring Center
- **Amy Dussault**, Northshore School District
- **Ivanova L. Smith**, Chair of Self Advocates in Leadership (SAIL)
- **Jerry Millhon & Hannah Guggenheim**, Producers
- **Gene Boes**, Executive Director Northwest Center

Panelists and Question and Answer (Q&A) Segment Following the Film

We posed three questions for each panelist to answer ahead of the film premiere event:

- 1 Where are we today as it relates to Inclusive Education, Community Rights and Equity for individuals who experience disabilities? (Data and sources encouraged)
- 2 What changes need to be made and why?
Name 3 actions anyone attending can make to improve the circumstances for individuals who experience disabilities. (Providing potential resources encouraged)
- 3

Panel Discussion

Please join us for a panel discussion following the film.

Attendees may submit questions through Zoom chat or notecard at the event via the moderator to be answered after the panelist dialogue.

Please be sure to specify which panel member or members you would like to address the questions. We will do our best to respond to as many questions as possible.

Please also specify if you would be interested in obtaining information about future events and provide your e-mail address.

Each panelist shares their responses to the questions posed here along with their biographies (starting on Page 25).

Thank you to our sponsors.



Program Forward

Honoring "The Moms", Two Young Law Students, and Politicians who could Act on behalf of ALL children.

This film is the untold story of four women and two young law students who in 1970-71 created a grassroots movement in under a year! **The Education for All Act** was passed into law on **May 10, 1971**.

Their passion, devotion and dedication opened the doors to the good we see in the world today! We honor those efforts today 51 years later on May 25, 2022 as we premiere the film, "Together They Were Stronger."

“Some women fear the fire. Some women simply become it.”

– R.H. Sin, Author

These women were on fire in a time when women had few rights themselves, were still repressed, and in many cases mothers who birthed a child who experienced a disability and were blamed for their conditions.

Program Forward, continued

Katie was accused of being an “icebox mother” so cold and “emotionally unavailable” that Patrick “could not develop correctly.” She (like so many mothers of that time) was blamed for his condition. Today we understand that Patrick experiences Autism and can live in the community as he does now.

Evelyn was told to put her son Coolidge in an institution when he was 5, because Seattle Public Schools refused to accept him as a student. She refused. Today, we understand Coolidge experiences intellectual differences, as well as hyperactivity. Coolidge could finally attend school when he was 12, thanks to the Education For All law. He earned his diploma in 1983 and now lives independently in the Seattle area. His favorite job so far has been as a wheelchair attendant at the airport.

Janet was told she could not enroll Naida, who experienced an intellectual and developmental disability, into kindergarten. She had to stay at home without supports or as the doctor recommended then, “Place her in an institution and go on with your life.” Naida was enrolled in school at the age of 12 after the Education for All Law became reality. She lived a happy and full life in the community until her passing in 2018. Today Janet lives fully independent in the community and is still active in her letter writing!

Cecile’s sons, who were typically developing were taught the importance of accepting and including children who experience disabilities. Cecile also had a nephew who experienced a disability. Today her grandchild benefits from the efforts she gave to early childhood intervention programs and the Education for All Act, now IDEA.

51 years later, we all reap the benefits of their efforts. Yes, there is still more to do and didn’t your mother ever tell you...“There’s always more work to do—now go do your chores!”

“Here’s to strong women: May we know them. May we be them. May we raise them.” – Unknown

And here is to the two young men George Breck and Bill Dussault who supported their efforts without question and with humility!

George continued a career in law in Seattle and Bainbridge Island and remained in touch with the women until his passing in 2019.

Bill Dussault, in addition to drafting the Act, drove them all in his 1970's van across the State to obtain support for the Act. He went on to become one of the first disability law attorneys in the country and is a well-known national expert. Today Bill continues to practice serving his legacy clients (relationships he has had for over 45 years) and consults on full spectrum needs of individuals who experience disabilities and their families.

And, last but not least, we recognize former Governor and Senator Dan Evans who guided the six EFA committee members and signed the Act into law on May 10, 1971, as well as all the Representatives and Senators (both Republican and Democrat) who worked together to approve the bill into law. Today we continue our gratitude and remember back to a time when politicians worked together and got things done to improve the lives of ALL children.



"Where, have all the good guys gone? Long time passing. I want to know. When will we ever learn?" When will we ever learn!"

(Adapted from: **Peter, Paul & Mary**, "Where Have All The Flowers Gone.")

Evelyn Chapman

Co-founder of Northwest Center, and co-facilitator in the Education for
All Law and Disability Civil Rights Movement
1935-2016

Biography



It was 1971 and Chapman was on the phone with the latest in a string of Seattle school officials she'd had to fight for years, just trying to make it possible for kids with developmental disabilities, like her son, Coolidge, to get an education.

"I was talking to the Superintendent of the Seattle Public Schools," she remembers. "The Special Ed director was keeping out kids like Coolidge. So, I called his boss. I was very frustrated. He had a million excuses: We don't have any money, we don't have any mandate from the state, and on and on. I was on my kitchen phone, and I just kicked a hole in the wall."

She fought in the 1960s. After she helped form the Mother's Guild of Northwest Center, a place where Coolidge could finally go to school, Chapman was infuriated when the center's first director began to reject kids deemed "too difficult to serve." So, she broke into the offices after hours, baby daughter in tow, and stole the list of board members' contact information. The Mother's Guild then lobbied the board members to replace the director.

Chapman, continued

Co-founder of Northwest Center, and co-facilitator in the Education for All Law and Disability Civil Rights Movement

In the early 1970s, Chapman was part of the small group who tirelessly wrote and lobbied for legislation that changed national laws for people with disabilities. In the mid-to-late 1970s, she served on the committee to write the rules and regulations for how the newly passed House Bill 90 would be implemented and continued to lobby for the rights of people with developmental disabilities.

And through it all, she managed to get her son Coolidge, born in 1961, into every education program she could find. Today, she speaks glowingly of one group in particular. "The Seattle Parks Department is the most wondrous organization," she says. "They will serve anybody with any disability without discrimination. When Coolidge was about two, somehow, I got connected with the swimming program at Green Lake. And so the Parks Department knew Coolidge for many years."

At the same time, Coolidge was attending the Spastic Children's Pre-School, but was "large for his age and hyperactive," Chapman says. In an interview with Susan Schwartzberg for the book *Becoming Citizens: Family Life and the Politics of Disability* (University of Washington Press, 2005), she remembers that particular struggle:

"After two years, the preschool told us they could only keep him for a few more months. They advised us to get him on a waiting list for Buckley School, but this was a state institution and my husband and I were unwilling to do this. We took turns caregiving. My husband used to take Coolidge for a two-hour drive every night to visit the waterfront. He seemed to enjoy the ships and industrial activities."

The preschool kept Coolidge until he was 5 "as a favor to me," she says. It was then Chapman had her first run-in with the then-Special Ed Director of Seattle Public Schools. "He took one look at Coolidge and said, 'No. We can't serve him,'" she remembers. "I was very concerned about finding another program. The Parks Department recommended Northwest Center for the Retarded, which had just started up a year earlier."

Chapman, continued

Co-founder of Northwest Center, and co-facilitator in the Education for All Law and Disability Civil Rights Movement

Biography, continued

Coolidge enrolled in Northwest Center's Specialized Training Program, which was run in conjunction with the Parks Department, where children and adults learned appropriate classroom and work behaviors. "It had all the kids that had been denied services from every other agency," she says. She recounts how the head teacher was trained to instruct students using positive reinforcement, an approach that was progressive at the time, but also referred to as an "M&M economy." "Back then, that was one of the methods," Chapman says. "If you could sit still for 30 seconds or whatever the period of time, you got an M&M. That was your reward. And then you would sit still for a little bit longer and a little bit longer and a little bit longer. This didn't work for all of the people in the Specialized Training Program, but for Coolidge, it was like a miracle," she says. "They trained him to sit still long enough to learn. They trained him to read and to write and do a little bit of math."

In *Becoming Citizens*, Chapman says of the method, **"It's now laughed at, but I couldn't complain, the parents saw results in kids they were told couldn't learn anything. This program started a revolution. We learned that our children could learn."**

Coolidge is now in his 50s, and still a large presence at 6'6" tall. One day this past winter, at the home he shares with his mother, a few Northwest Center founders got together to reminisce. Coolidge was keenly interested in the equipment belonging to the photographer hired to document the event. After chatting briefly with the women around the table, all of whom he's known since 1965, he took off to catch a bus to an appointment. **Today, the boy who was once rejected by local public schools is a man who easily navigates the city of Seattle on his own.**

***Reprinted with permission from the Northwest Center**

<https://www.nwcenter.org/our-blog/always-a-fighter-evelyn-chapman-northwest-center-founder>

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/seattletimes/name/evelyn-chapman-obituary?id=13207232>

Katie Dolan

Katie Dolan, Northwest Center, and co-facilitator in the Education for All
Law and Disability Civil Rights Movement
1924-2006

Biography



When you ask longtime friend or colleague about Katie Dolan, certain words come up over and over again: dynamic, charming, tenacious, audacious. In 2006, a *Seattle Times* editorial described Dolan as “the former model with the inner Big Bad Mama Bear” who “used that potent arsenal to better the lives of children with disabilities in Seattle, throughout Washington, and beyond.”

A former model and actress who wrote, produced and hosted "Women's World" and "Eye on Seattle" on KIRO-TV-CBS. But when son, Patrick was diagnosed with autism, her life changed forever. The belief at that time that parents — specifically the mother — caused autism required that Katie undergo psychological counseling. The physical/emotional demands of Patrick's severe autism, grand mal seizures, and multiple allergies plus indifference and lack of knowledge of doctors and nurses and society's belief that such children should be kept in back rooms or institutions might have led to despair. But Katie Dolan refused to accept that nothing could be done. She realized that she had to find the answer herself. She researched the world, meeting and corresponding with authorities in the field, reading, studying obscure journals, until she became an authority herself.

Dolan, continued

Northwest Center, and co-facilitator in the Education for All Law and Disability Civil Rights Movement

Biography, continued

She lectured to medical students, gave classes for parents to teach them how to access the services their children were entitled to. She and fellow advocate, Janet Taggart traveled to Europe and Scandinavia researching their systems. Every denial, every rejection, every NO made her more determined to fight for the civil and human rights of children with lives like Patrick. No place for him in public school led Katie to be instrumental in passing the Washington State Mandatory Education Law, guaranteeing education for all children.

Desperate families who had nowhere to turn - no one to help, led Katie and Janet to found The Troubleshooters, which became The Washington State Protection and Advocacy Agency — first of its kind and model for the nation. Its publication The Inside Scoop provided creative solutions, resources, support and friendship and had an international readership. After she retired as director, she founded The Chain Reaction, a civil and human rights organization. Following this came the Houlahan Foundation, providing scholarships and mentoring for students choosing a career in Developmental Disability. She wrote and produced documentaries, plays, stories, articles and TV specials on D.D. She taught and lectured at schools and universities across the country, in Europe and India. She was winner of the Rosemary F. Dybward Award, Matrix Award for Outstanding Women of Achievement, The Jefferson Award for Citizenship Service, 2004 Grand Dames, Women Who Influence and Change Our Community Lives, President's Committee on Mental Retardation National Award and many others. At the time of her death, she was active in development of Medicaid for All, a single card which would serve for all prescriptions and services, bypassing six to ten different offices and mountains of red tape.

Dolan, continued

Northwest Center, and co-facilitator in the
Education for All Law and Disability Civil Rights
Movement

Because of Katie Dolan's dedication and tireless determination doors have been opened, barriers surmounted, parents and professionals educated. But the struggle is not over. Katie's legacy is to refuse to hear 'it can't be done'—to refuse to accept NO for an answer. She leaves us knowing that because of her the cause of Developmental Disability continues to change the NO of backrooms and institutions to the YES of full participation and happy, productive lives for our Developmentally Disabled Americans.

***Reprinted from Northwest Center and Katie Dolan's Obituary**

<https://www.nwcenter.org/our-blog/a-force-and-a-friend-katie-dolans-lasting-legacy-at-northwest-center>

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/seattletimes/name/katie-dolan-obituary?id=28982620>

Cecile Lindquist

Cecile Lindquist, Northwest Center, and co-facilitator in the Education for All Law and Disability Civil Rights Movement
1937-2019

Biography



Cecile joined with Seattle mothers of kids with disabilities to found Northwest Center, and then to write and pass the very first law in the nation, House Bill 90 or “Education for All,” to mandate public education for children with disabilities. **But Cecile’s work didn’t stop there—in fact, it never stopped.** It’s been more than 50 years since Cecile Lindquist first served as president of the Northwest Center Board of Directors. But she’s just as likely today to press a flier about a proposed education bill into your hand, ask you to contact your elected officials, and work with local parents of kids with developmental disabilities.

In the early 1960s, Lindquist was a high school teacher with degrees in political science and education. She helped found what would later become Northwest Center when her cousin Tommy, who had Down syndrome, was rejected by Seattle public schools.

She went on to serve on the team that wrote and lobbied to pass House Bill 90 (HB 90), Education for All, the first law in the nation mandating public education for all children regardless of disability. **By the time HB 90 passed, Tommy was too old to benefit. But Lindquist went on to spend the next five decades helping make education available for countless other kids like him.**

Lindquist, continued

Northwest Center, and co-facilitator in the Education for All Law and Disability Civil Rights Movement

Not long after Northwest Center was founded in 1965, Lindquist took a job with the Experimental Education Unit (EEU) of the University of Washington, a school for children with and without disabilities, working both in admissions and as community relations manager — “Which I loved,” she says now. In fact, Lindquist loved the job so much she stayed there for more than 30 years. Her boss there was the founder of EEU, Norris Haring, PhD, who proved to be exceptionally understanding when Lindquist needed to juggle work duties with the time she was devoting to writing and lobbying to pass HB 90.

“I said, ‘Dr. Haring, I don’t know what to do because I’m going to work with a lot of mothers and fathers; we’re going to change the law,’” she remembers. “What if I have to leave for a meeting?’ He said, ‘Just go to the meeting. This is all part of the same thing, providing what is needed for these children.”

When HB 90 was signed into law in 1971, Lindquist was the only woman from the original team who wrote the bill to be asked to serve on the rules and regulations committee. She was not pleased by this, to put it mildly. She and Janet Taggart, who also worked on the bill, recount the story:

“We get the law passed, and that was really a big accomplishment,” Lindquist begins. “The State Superintendent of Schools set up a committee to write the rules and regulations, every bill has to have one. And honest to God, they only put Bill Dussault [a law student who also helped write HB 90] and me on it!”

“Not wanting the rest of us,” says Taggart.

“I just erupted,” Lindquist says. “I called the State Superintendent of Schools, who I didn’t know very well, you know? I said, ‘This is just outrageous, because this fight and this crusade came from the parents! They have to be on this, writing the regulatory language!’”

Lindquist, continued

Northwest Center, and co-facilitator in the Education for All Law and Disability Civil Rights Movement

Biography, continued

At first, the rules committee wouldn't budge. "At the first meeting, there were enough chairs for all the committee members, but not us," Taggart recalls. "They said they were 'Really sorry,' but they didn't have any chairs. So we sat on the floor," she shrugs. "But we made a big enough stink that they eventually put everyone on the committee," Lindquist says.

More Coverage for More Kids

It took two years for HB 90 to be implemented statewide. By that time, Lindquist was on to her next challenge. HB 90 mandated that public schools serve children of any ability from age 5 to 21; she set out to get the starting age lowered to 3.

"I had heard from parents who said, 'My little guy got in at 5, but he lost so much time, waiting to get to that age,' or, 'It's great what you did, but my younger child is ready to get help, and there isn't any.' I knew how critical it was to lower the age, because by then I was working at the EEU and saw how important those early years are. So I said, 'Well, we're just gonna have to put together a team of new families.'"

Lindquist started "a coalition of young moms and who had little guys. They were a feisty group," she says. "It took us 'til '84 to get this law passed, just changing the age range so that all children with disabilities, 3 to 21, would be served."

The years it took were challenging for Lindquist. "We kept working and working and working, and finally I talked to a Republican Senior Senator from Bellevue, Dan MacDonald. I said, 'Dan, I don't understand. It didn't take us very long to get the bill passed for 5 to 21.'

"He just looked at me and said, 'Cecile, they've caught up with you. They've realized when you guys start to push something, it's gonna be a big cost to the State.' Ha! I was quiet and then I said, 'But Dan, I know you know it's the right thing to do.' He was one of the Republicans who stuck with us on HB 90. It wasn't too long until he told me, 'I'm gonna help you.' He made the difference to push it through."

Lindquist, continued

Northwest Center, and co-facilitator in the Education for All Law and Disability Civil Rights Movement

Senator Barney Goltz made a big difference, too. It was 1984, and Lindquist was in Olympia, trying for the fourth year in a row to get the State Senate to pass the bill. “Barney Goltz was running the Senate. It was the last day. The time is ticking away and we’re all sitting in the gallery, and I’m wondering how I’m going to keep the parent group active. Finally, I stood up and I went like this (she makes a pleading, desperate face) to Barney. He said, ‘Oh!’ Then he pounded the gavel and said, ‘We were going to hear the bill on school for children starting at age 3. I don’t care how late we’re here; we will discuss this.’ And that bill passed after-hours.”

Another decade of working with children with developmental disabilities, and Lindquist knew the next logical step: that intervention and education should start at birth. “That was the next project,” she says with typical matter-of-fact delivery. She joined up with another group of mothers led by Cassie Johnston (“Just a wonderful, warm person who was able to connect with people around the state”). **Though organizations like Northwest Center had provided early intervention to children from birth since the 1980s, the state law mandating such services wasn’t passed until 2006.**

Lindquist is now retired, but still an active advocate for families of children with developmental disabilities. In 2010, she worked on a bill that ensured that services for children with disabilities would come not from the Department of Social and Health Services, but from the Department of Early Learning. “Those people are the early childhood experts,” she says. Just this past spring, another group of families enlisted her help in lobbying the state legislature for additional funding to help identify disabilities and delays in infants.

Lindquist, continued

Northwest Center, and co-facilitator in the Education for All Law and Disability Civil Rights Movement

Biography, continued

“For me, it’s the fairness, it’s the equity,” she says of her work. “Ensuring that a child with a disability has absolutely the same rights as any other child. They’re all children. They all need to have the best possible opportunity to use their own skills.”

***Reprinted with Permission from Northwest Center**

<https://www.nwcenter.org/our-blog/founder-profile-50-years-later-cecile-lindquist-still-works-for-kids>

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/seattletimes/name/cecile-lindquist-obituary?id=13198645>

<https://haringcenter.org/blog/2019/04/11/remembering-cecile-lindquist/>

In the pages that follow, our panelists share their biographies and responses to the questions we posed to them prior to today’s event, *in their own words.*

Janet Taggart

Northwest Center, and co-facilitator in the Education for All Law and Disability Civil Rights Movement

Biography



Janet helped found Northwest Center and helped change the world for children with disabilities. But the way Janet Taggart sees it, she just did what she had to do.

Taggart's daughter Naida was born in 1956 with a developmental disability and cerebral palsy. At the time, kids like her were considered "uneducable" and housed in institutions. **It was those institutions that first sparked Taggart's activism for people with disabilities. "A local institution had weekend tours. For a price, you could look at all the 'funny people,'" she says with disgust. "That was to me the absolute bottom. Hell."**

Janet and her husband Phillip were determined to raise Naida themselves, but "it really was a struggle," she says. "People who had children in institutions had already developed their support system and had their political friends. We were upstarters. And I say 'we' because I was certainly part of a group that never even entertained the idea of their child going to an institution, even though that was always presented as an option."

Taggart, continued

Northwest Center, and co-facilitator in the Education for All Law and Disability Civil Rights Movement

Biography, continued

But other options were few for Naida, who was turned away from public school and even Sunday school. A typical scene occurred when they tried to get Naida health insurance. "I filled out the application and they said I had to bring her in for an examination to see whether or not she qualified," Taggart remembers. While she waited with Naida for their appointment, a doctor she knew walked through the lobby. That doctor urgently whispered to Taggart a kind of warning. "She said, 'What are you doing here? Get out of here!'" Taggart recalls. "I just said, 'I gotta go; they're calling me.' But she knew what she was talking about. The doctor we saw never touched Naida; just glanced at her. He said, 'Well, I'm sorry, we can't enter her into membership.' And I said, 'Why?' And he said, 'Because she's retarded.' And I said, 'I know.'" The exasperated emphasis Taggart puts on the last two words is humorous. But she's clearly endured more than her share of exasperation through the years.

Toughening Up

The doctor's stage whisper was a symptom of the culture of shame around disability that was much more overt at the time. When Taggart and other parents formed the Central School for the Severely Retarded, the rudimentary "basement school" held classes in loaned space at a local temple. The rabbi was sympathetic to their needs because he himself was the parent of a child with a developmental disability. But he forbade anyone to discuss it. "That was an order. We were not to mention that," Taggart says. **A child with a disability was viewed as 'obviously because of something you did wrong,' she explains.**

Then there was the extra work the parents always seemed to have to do. At the Central School, they did everything from hiring teachers to cleaning the facilities. "The temple used it on the weekend," she laughs wryly. "We had to move all of our equipment out on Friday, and then Monday, move all the stuff back in. A woman who was the manager always inspected the rooms for cleanliness and always had us come back for some extra cleaning!"

Taggart, continued

Northwest Center, and co-facilitator in the Education for All Law and Disability Civil Rights Movement

But hard work only strengthened Taggart's resolve to make changes for her daughter. In a 1977 interview with *The Seattle Times*, she called it the same kind of "radicalizing, disillusioning, but toughening experience many youthful protestors got from going to jail."

Making Breakthroughs

The basement schools also demonstrated that their kids could, in fact, learn. Taggart tells the story of how a woman named Margo, despite having no official teaching certification, helped Naida make a profound breakthrough. "Naida didn't know what her limits were," Taggart begins, meaning it in a literal sense. Naida had so much trouble navigating her surroundings that, at one point, she was diagnosed as blind. ("Which she isn't. At all.") Seattle Public Schools rejected Naida in part because they didn't think she could learn to sit in a chair. Margo saw things differently.

"Margo wrapped her in a quilt, day after day. And somehow that made Naida feel that there were limits, you know? 'My world is here, and here's other people.' It was a brilliant piece of work. Yet Margo had no qualifications for doing that, just some instinct that gave her the truth of what to do. And pretty soon," Taggart concludes, "Naida was sitting in a chair."

Taggart met the other women who would go on to found Northwest Center—Cecile Lindquist, Katie Dolan and later, Evelyn Chapman—when she formed a speakers bureau. **The women presented slide shows not only to educate the public about what kids like Naida could learn, but to raise the money to help make it happen. ("I figured, as long as I'm doing education, I'm doing the money request.")**

By the time Northwest Center was up and running, the women were skilled at combating public perceptions about disability. But there was one foe Taggart could never persuade: the very person who was elected Northwest Center's first board chairman, who began to reject students she felt would be too difficult to handle. "

Taggart, continued

Northwest Center, and co-facilitator in the Education for All Law and Disability Civil Rights Movement

Biography, continued

"I remember thinking that if I could persuade her to think right, I would conquer the world," Taggart says. "I wanted everybody to come on board." Instead, she and other founders eventually had to "organize a revolution," she says with a laugh. "We had a huge turmoil and we had terrible meetings. We ousted the people who were serving as administrators at Northwest Center. The whole board."

She continues, "I think at that point, I said, 'Oh, well, I can't change me. I guess I'll have to change the world.'"

She did with House Bill 90, "Education for All," which paved the way for education rights across the nation. It's a bill that she and the other founders wrote and lobbied into law by 1971.

More to Do

2015 marks Northwest Center's 50th anniversary. It's also the first year that Janet and Naida Taggart are living apart since 1956. Taggart moved into a retirement community not long ago, finding a place for Naida at a nearby group home. She's confident Naida will thrive.

"She's had a good background. She gets along well with people," Taggart says. Though Naida has never spoken, she is good at communicating with others. "If she wants something, she will get it," Taggart says. "She'll have fun." Naida passed in 2018 — Naida's family remembers her this way: "In spite of not being able to speak, Naida accomplished all of her goals by the use of limited sign and body languages and gestures to communicate her preferences. We are so grateful to have had Naida in our lives and family. She gave us love, revelation and fun."

With all she's accomplished in the past 50 years, Taggart focuses on how much more there is to do. For decades, she's made countless trips to the Statehouse, calls to legislators, written to newspaper editors and school officials, and even campaigned once for district representative.

Taggart, continued

Northwest Center, and co-facilitator in the Education for All Law and Disability Civil Rights Movement

But politicians have continued to “chip away” at provisions in House Bill 90, she says.

She shakes her head as she relates how her grandson is in Special Ed in Seattle Public Schools which, in just five years, cycled through seven Special Ed directors. **The solution, she says, is “political activism.”** But in my day we had the luxury of the father working and the mother being free all day. I'd like to see parent organizations, but how to do that, I don't know. Parents work. They can't run to Olympia five days a week like we had to do.”

“Had to do” is a telling phrase; Taggart isn't interested in kudos for her work. When she's asked what she's most proud of, she instead shares another memory of that first Northwest Center board chair. “We were in the office, and she said, ‘Oh, I feel so good when I'm helping people. I just love to help these people.’ It was so degrading. I thought it was the most hideous thing I'd ever heard. Because we weren't there to feel good,” Taggart says.

“I don't think I ever took pride in what I did,” she continues. “I never thought, ‘Oh, I'm a wonderful person.’ We just did what we had to do. And I still don't take any pride in it. If anything, I'm just grateful for having had the opportunity. I was just happy to have come along at a period of history where Naida was able to stay home so she could have a very active, normal life. Which she has. A regular member of the family and a regular member of the community. And a lot of fun.”

***Reprinted with permission from Northwest Center**

<https://www.nwcenter.org/our-blog/we-did-what-we-had-to-do-a-profile-of-janet-taggart-northwest-center-founder>

<https://www.heraldnet.com/news/how-moms-in-a-vw-van-achieved-a-civil-rights-milestone-in-71/>

Janet's Hand-Written Letter

We included Janet's hand written letter on the following pages to honor her writing in its purest form. Janet and the women she helped organize, wrote hundreds of letters. In the 1970's people hand wrote letters of support and put them in the mail. Written exchanges often took weeks.

Drafts of the Act had to be carefully researched, then typed. They went through multiple revisions, and corrections were made with correction tape and then retyped, often more than once.

Today, communication is instantaneous! We have access to as much information as we can think of with a swipe of a hand or simply showing our face into a small hand-held computer device. We can even make a change to a document with voice commands—things that were the domain of science-fiction novels at that time.

Just imagine...What can you do to become a grassroots fire that spreads from today into history?! What differences can you make? Or are you waiting for the world to change?

Taggart, continued

Northwest Center, and co-facilitator in the
Education for All Law and Disability Civil
Rights Movement

Panelist Questions and Answers

1.) Where are we today as it relates to Inclusive Education, Community Rights and Equity for individuals who experience disabilities?

April 27, 2022

To: Bill & Kate
From: Janet Taggart
RE: Three Questions.

Answer to Question #1

I have not seen any local or national data accounting for the success or failure of children with disabilities in the goals of inclusion and quality of life for them, so I won't comment on it.

I've certainly seen individual instances of successful outcomes and applaud them. I feel great joy on these occasions. If studies are available I would appreciate sharing them.

As much as I want one-hundred percent of our children enjoying an inclusive and good quality program I have heard from some parents who have encountered problems with the implementation of plans, people in the system and policies that interfere with the goal of meeting their needs.

But, most concerning to me at this point in our history is the threat coming from politicians who are critiquing and condemning text books and creating legislation without input from educators that prevent the goals we seek in the classroom for our children.

Governor DeSantis of Florida is one voice heard above all others, but followed

Taggart, continued

Northwest Center, and co-facilitator in the
Education for All Law and Disability Civil
Rights Movement

Question 1.), continued

page 2
by several like-minded officials who
are imposing limits on what can be
legally taught in their public schools.
In a direct quote from Florida's Governor
he defines and reports the five skills
we seek for our children of self awareness,
self-management, responsible decision
making, social awareness and relationship
awareness.
Instead, he is quoted as saying "Getting
the right answer should be the goal of a
lesson."
These ^{same} stated goals, he said, should
be abandoned and calls them "a distraction".
"Math," he continues, "is about getting
the right answer!"
Apparently he distains the art of teaching,
goals of persistence and cooperation, learning
together, cooperation and emotional growth.
We, parents and teachers, aim to teach
our kids to get along with each other
and persevere when something is hard to do!
To have leaders in our government sneer
at these goals is not only off-putting, but
a threat to our children's ability to become
productive and part of our community.
I think those of us here today have
a challenge that brings a potential
political battle that is unwanted, but
inevitable.

Taggart, continued

Northwest Center, and co-facilitator in the
Education for All Law and Disability Civil
Rights Movement

2.) What changes need to be made and why? And 3) Name 3 actions anyone attending tonight can make to improve the circumstances for individuals who experience disabilities. (Providing potential resources encouraged).

	Answer to Question # 2
	We need people in both the Education and Political field to join forces on behalf of our children to meet the challenges, again, to our children's rights to an appropriate education.
	We must monitor programs and see what works and what doesn't.
	An independent advocacy system would be helpful to parents seeking support for their children's rights.
	Find a niche in any system that can influence the development of school textbooks, policies & public opinion.
	Answer to Question # 3
	We need a lobbying system at both the national & local level of government.
	Choose & support a single goal for presentation each year to the U.S. Congress.
	Develop a system of feedback from state & federal committees dealing with our legislation as it passes through the system.
	As special committee of experts at public relations that can respond immediately to any attack or concerns about children with disabilities.

George Breck

George Edensword Breck-Education for All Law Student Drafter and Washington Attorney
1946-2019

Biography



George attended the University of Washington School of Law graduating in 1971. George was very active in the Seattle Senior Center and also in the “Education for All” bill which was signed by Governor Evans.

George practiced Law in both Seattle and Bainbridge Island specializing in Estate Planning, Trusts, and Guardianships with a special interest in Disability Planning. He passed away peacefully in 2019 from Dementia.

<https://www.bainbridgereview.com/obituaries/george-edensword-breck/>

William Dussault

Law Author, Aiken St. Louis and Siljeg/Dussault Law Relationship Foundation
wledussault@outlook.com

Biography

In 1970 William was the one of the originating authors of the first state Mandatory Special Education Law-known as the "Education for All" law, as well as numerous revisions to many states' Guardianship and Conservatorship laws and the original special needs trust for use in estate planning and public benefit preservation for persons who experience disabilities.

He was also the originating author of 42 U.S.C. §1396p(d)(4)(A), the federal legislation authorizing use of special needs in conjunction with continuation or establishment of eligibility for certain federal benefit programs.

William received his Juris Doctorate from the University of Washington School of Law in 1972. He is a member of the Washington State Bar Association, and has been admitted to practice in the State of Washington (1972), Colorado (2006), U.S. Federal District Court (1973), U.S. Supreme Court (1982). He maintains a private practice in Seattle with an emphasis on the rights of persons with disabilities.

He has been actively involved with numerous state and national groups concerned with legal issues impacting persons with disabilities, and has served as counsel to TASH, vice-chair of the American Bar Association Family Law Committee on Mental Disability, and as a legal advisor, committee member or chair for the Autism Society, ARC, UCP, BIA and the Epilepsy Foundation, among others.

He was selected as one of Washington's Super Lawyers by Washington Law & Politics annually from 1999 through 2006, and by Washington Law & Politics and Butch Blum as one of the four best lawyers in Washington State in 2003. In 2013 he was awarded the Washington State Bar Association Award of Merit, the Bar's highest honor.

William has frequently presented on special education, disability rights, coordination of public benefits and private resources, estate planning for families affected by disabilities and other related topics.

Dussault, continued

Law Author, Aiken St. Louis and
Siljeg/Dussault Law Relationship Foundation

Panelist Questions and Answers

1.) Where are we today as it relates to Inclusive Education, Community Rights and Equity for individuals who experience disabilities?

Jane Smith, a woman in her 80's recently contacted me. Her husband had passed a year ago and her 50+ year old son, John, who experiences a developmental disability is still living at home with her. She has no idea where to turn. John has no day programs, no job, no independent living, no in home care or assistance. His "education" did not prepare him for independence, employment, or inclusion in any community other than living at home with his parents. Jane has no idea how to maintain his Guardianship and has no plan for John when she passes.

They have no other family members. This is not an unusual scenario. Jane is afraid and their situation is not unique. I receive these calls weekly and have hundreds of clients in the same situation. This is a current major concern and next generational issue for families that include individuals who experience disability. This is the first time in history individuals who experience disability will routinely outlive their parents.

This is the first time in history individuals who experience disability will routinely outlive their parents.

Dussault, continued

Law Author, Aiken St. Louis and
Siljeg/Dussault Law Relationship Foundation

2.) What changes need to be made and why?

To address Jane and John's situation, our public services need to focus on supported independent living, real employment, continuing education, supervision and guidance to encourage independence wherever possible. We must provide meaningful advocacy that is accessible to the individuals and their families. Community education and acceptance is critical to generate social opportunities and sincere friendships. **A new coordinated approach to a currently fragmented system in the public—governmental sphere will be critical.** Effective outreach and coordination of public and private benefit and service programs will be essential to the survival of generations who have already aged out of the public education system.

For children, we need to start in preschool to provide and develop tools of independence wherever possible—that isn't a philosophical position—it is based on practical survival. During K-12 years we need to provide an individualized educational program that is truly focused on each student's needs and emphasizes functional skills. In the middle school years, a meaningful transition program should be developed to prepare the student for post-graduation life. This includes training and mentoring for adult education, employment opportunities, and independent living. The transition program must be coordinated with the government and community adult benefit and service delivery systems.

3.) Name 3 actions anyone attending tonight can make to improve the circumstances for individuals who experience disabilities. (Providing potential resources encouraged).

a) Join an advocacy organization that supports individuals who experience disabilities—preferably one that includes active engagement of self-advocates—**“Nothing about me without me.”** Stay involved with the organization and support its systems advocacy approaches as requested.

Dussault, continued

Law Author, Aiken St. Louis and
Siljeg/Dussault Law Relationship Foundation

Question 3.), continued

b) Find out who your public representatives are. Let them know who you are and what your concerns are for you or your family member. Get involved with their campaigns. If you support them, they will support you.

c) Pick the issue that is of greatest concern to you. Locate others with a similar concern. The internet is magic for this. Form a group, decide on the fix you want (advocate, legislate or litigate and at what level). Organize, Communicate and ACT! Get LOUD if you must! If there is anything Education for All teaches—it is that you can make change—but only with real focus, true commitment and dedicated action.

Organize, Communicate and ACT!

Stacy Dym

Executive Director, The Arc of Washington
stacy@arcwa.org

Biography

Stacy Dym has a 30-year history in the disability rights field. She is the Executive Director for The Arc of Washington State, and previously served as Executive Director for The Arc of King County. The Arc is an 86-year-old organization founded on promoting and protecting the human and civil rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Stacy formerly directed Governor Inslee's Office of the Education Ombuds where over half of all cases involved children with disabilities. She previously worked for the Dussault Law Group, a disability rights law firm, where she specialized in mediation and litigation support for special education cases on behalf of parents in Washington state and in Alaska. Stacy was an advocate at the Disability Law Center of Alaska, the state protection and advocacy system, for over 8 years investigating abuse and neglect and providing policy consultation. She is a trained special education teacher and mediator. Most importantly, Stacy is a sibling and her sister Colleen lives in the community close to family and friends.

Panelist Questions and Answers

1.) Where are we today as it relates to Inclusive Education, Community Rights and Equity for individuals who experience disabilities?

EDUCATION: **Washington state is 44th in the nation for inclusion of students with disabilities in general education settings.**

<https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/wa-special-ed-kids-shut-out-of-regular-classes-more-often-than-most-other-states/281-552757498>

<https://awsp.org/informed-principal/blog/blog-detail/awsp-blog/2020/03/06/what-s-the-t-on-the-inclusionary-practices-professional-development-project>

<https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/specialed/inclusion/IPP-Data-Update-Year-2.pdf>

Dym, continued

Executive Director, The Arc of Washington

Question 1.), continued

<https://medium.com/waospi/washington-putting-more-focus-on-the-promotion-of-inclusive-education-c02e7f50c77>

And this is the capstone for our new State Assistant Sup. Of Special Education, Tania May: Disrupting racial segregation in special education —

https://digitalcommons.tacoma.uw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1054&context=edd_capstones

COMMUNITY RIGHTS: **Washington state is ranked 39th in the nation in spending on developmental disabilities.** See the State of the State's annual report. Currently, the website says it is down because they are moving from the University of Colorado to the University of Kansas <https://stateofthestates.org/> (check back to the site). In 2015, we were listed as 45th in fiscal effort for IDD services, in 2017, we moved to 41st and for 2019, we were listed as 37th (see second page of attached document).

Washington State houses more than 600 people in state-run Residential Habilitation Centers (RHCs).

Washington State houses more than 600 people in state-run Residential Habilitation Centers (RHCs). One RHC is in federal jeopardy and may no longer receive federal dollars. More than 16 states have closed their state institutions, including Oregon, and only provide community-based care, services, and supports.

<https://www.disabilityrightswa.org/reports/shut-them-down-its-time-to-close-washingtons-dangerous-residential-habilitation-centers/>

<https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/feds-pull-medicaid-money-at-washingtons-rainier-school-citing-health-and-safety-failures/>

<https://komonews.com/news/local/buckley-school-for-developmentally-disabled-loses-federal-money>

Dym, continued

Executive Director, The Arc of Washington

Our state continues to avoid “caseload forecasting” community-based services which would put DD services at the “front” of the budget as an essential social and health service <https://www.cfc.wa.gov/default.htm>

And now a recent article feels alarming - one of the largest national providers of care to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities is moving into Washington state: <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/kendalltaggart/kkr-brightspring-disability-private-equity-abuse>

Washington state is long overdue for a commitment to youth and adults with developmental disabilities.

Washington State is long overdue for a commitment to youth and adults with developmental disabilities.

2.) What changes need to be made and why?

Washington is a wealthy, progressive state that must commit to tackling the misperceptions about IDD that underpin “basic human value” and we must fund educational practices and community-based supports for people with developmental disabilities to live their best lives. **Specifically, we must end the idea that people with IDD are a burden on society, that rights can depend on ability, and that state run institutions or nursing homes can be a good option for people with IDD to live.** This would be aided by creating a new generation that thinks about people with IDD accurately—which happens early in a person’s life through successful inclusive practices in schools—and by using state budgets to express our values for people with IDD through caseload forecasting of Home and Community-Based services (HCBS) and expanded housing inventory through the Housing Trust Fund.

Dym, continued

Executive Director, The Arc of Washington

Questions 2.), continued

Too many people still believe that the rights of an individual with IDD can depend on their abilities — their rights are conditional. People's expectations and ideas about people with IDD change when they have had one relationship with someone with IDD.

Expectations about having a social life, falling in love, deciding how to spend their time, living on their own or outside their family, deciding where to live and with whom, getting married, managing or making decisions about their finances or medical care are all changed when someone knows someone with IDD. We must change the notion that living in state run institutions and nursing homes is acceptable and we must reduce the prevalent misperceptions about someone with IDD. Most people vastly underestimate the need for supports for the IDD community and their families which are now severely limited. 80% of people with IDD live with their families throughout their lifetimes in Washington State.

3.) Name 3 actions anyone attending tonight can make to improve the circumstances for individuals who experience disabilities. (Providing potential resources encouraged)

Join the movement. Belong to The Arc of Washington State and/or your local chapter!
<https://arcwa.org/donate/giving/>

Sign up for our Action Alerts: <https://arcwa.org/action-center/>
Come to Advocacy Days every Wednesday of the legislative session:
<https://arcwa.org/advocacy-days/>

Find out who YOUR legislators are and get to know them, **TELL YOUR STORY**, or tell them that you care about people with developmental disabilities and their families:
<https://app.leg.wa.gov/districtfinder/>

Join the movement. Tell your story or Say
you Care!

Ilene S. Schwartz, Ph.D., BCBA-D

Professor in the Area of Special Education at the University of Washington and the Director of the Haring Center for Inclusive Education at UW
ilene@uw.edu

Biography

Ilene earned her Ph.D. in child and developmental psychology from the University of Kansas and is a board certified behavior analyst (BCBA-D). Dr. Schwartz has an active research and professional training agenda with primary interests in the area of autism, inclusive education, and the sustainability of educational interventions.

She serves on a number of editorial review boards including the Topics in Early Childhood Special Education and the Journal of Early Intervention. Dr. Schwartz is the director of Project DATA, a model preschool program for children with autism that has been in operation since 1997 and was started as a model demonstration project with OSEP funding.

She is currently working on projects to improve the quality of instruction students with disabilities receive in charter schools and strategies that can be used to improve access to services for young children with ASD in under resourced areas.

Panelist Questions and Answers

1.) Where are we today as it relates to Inclusive Education, Community Rights and Equity for individuals who experience disabilities?

In some ways we have come a long way since Janet, Cecile and the others paved the way for the education of students with disabilities in Washington State, but unfortunately, **there are still many children and families who do not receive Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and certainly do not have access to inclusive educational opportunities.** In Washington State, luckily, we have many examples of where inclusive education is working. With support from OSPI we have been working with demonstration sites across the state to document their inclusive practices and to have them provide professional development for other educators across the state. These practices can be viewed at (<https://ippdemosites.org/>).

Schwartz, continued

Professor in the Area of Special Education at the UW and the Director of the Haring Center for Inclusive Education at UW

2.) What changes need to be made and why?

One change that needs to be made is that all schools should adopt a framework of neurodiversity and universal design for learning (UDL).

One change that needs to be made is that all schools should adopt a framework of neurodiversity and universal design for learning (UDL). If we assume that all students are general education students first and then we wrap the supports around them that they need to succeed, issues of where children go to school go away. They go to their neighborhood schools like everyone else. We live in inclusive communities because we believe in inclusive communities.

3.) Name 3 actions anyone attending tonight can make to improve the circumstances for individuals who experience disabilities. (Providing potential resources encouraged).

1. **Talk to and engage with people with disabilities and their families**—find out what is important to them. What are their dream, goals, priorities and then help them access the opportunities and supports to make them happen.
2. Consider, think about, and ask about access.
3. Assume competence and then provide instruction (as needed) to ensure competence.

Amy Dussault

Northshore School District
adussault@nsd.org

Biography

A Seattle native, Ms. Dussault earned double bachelor's degrees from CWU in K-12 Special Education and K-8 General Education, then a MA at SPU in Specialized Curriculum and Instruction. She has over 25 years teaching and coaching experience with students who struggle to show their knowledge and skills. She specializes in the middle grades- 6th through 9th grades and loves supporting students at this difficult and critical time in their development.

She has a long family history of acknowledging the importance of including all our community's citizens. Her mother, Diana Dussault-Hovland created the Special Populations Recreation Program in the Seattle Parks Department of the City of Seattle, in 1975. Her father, Bill Dussault, is a panelist and specialized his law practice in serving individuals who experience disability. She feels blessed to be raised in the presence of this powerful team that pushed for the recognition and equitable opportunities we build upon today. It came naturally that she would want to be a part of educating children in inclusive environments so, she became a Special Education teacher and is filled with passion to serve this population every day.

Organizational affiliation:

Northshore School District teacher, Special Education Advisory Team member, Special Education Department Head, Inclusive Schools Committee member, Northshore Education Association Executive Board Member

Dussault, continued

Northshore School District

Panelist Questions and Answers

1.) Where are we today as it relates to Inclusive Education, Community Rights and Equity for individuals who experience disabilities?

In just over 45 years, the progress is astounding, but we do have further to go. As a special education teacher in a local middle school, I have a unique opportunity to see what supports and IEP interventions look like in the classroom, on a daily basis. One of the biggest challenges to a quality inclusive education program is consistency and a cohesive planned approach when there are often between 7-15 adults who support a student with an IEP.

One of the biggest challenges to a quality inclusive education program is consistency and a cohesive planned approach when there are often between 7-15 adults who support a student with an IEP.

A well-trained team needs time together to review successes, struggles, and curriculum or program accommodations or modifications. Unfortunately, not a lot of general education teachers have the training to accommodate or modify, and more importantly, don't understand why a more inclusive environment is so important. One of the biggest successes is the community-based programs that include students in social and vocational experiences with support and coaching; allowing practice of those skills our students need as they become adults and welcomed members of our community.

(link to NSD Adult Transition Program information)

<https://www.nsd.org/schools/programs-services/adult-transition-program>

Dussault, continued

Northshore School District

2.) What changes need to be made and why?

From an educator's perspective, I have seen a shift to push more and more of our students into a college bound track. I believe higher education is very important and perfect for many students, including students with more impactful struggles. Bellevue College is a great example of a higher education opportunity with more diverse opportunities and support in place for more diverse learners. However, I would like to see a return of important skills-based programs to schools. High schools need more classes that support the trades, adult living skills, and support students to be prepared to enter the workforce after high school. It's important to recognize and honor those individuals who will make a huge contribution to our community without attending college or a university.

High schools need more classes that support the trades, adult living skills, and support students to be prepared to enter the workforce after high school.

3.) Name 3 actions anyone attending can make to improve the circumstances for individuals who experience disabilities. (Resources?)

*Contact your representative, senator, or the Governor to express your support for current legislation that increases funding for student needs; mental health, specialized programs, and support staff.

*As the parent(s) of an individual with a disability, continue to passionately and collaboratively advocate for your child's needs, gifts, and future plans.

*As community members, **recognize every human with dignity and kindness regardless of ability, communication method, or transportation method.**

Volunteer at a local school, talk with your own children and your neighbors and share a similar message with them.

Ivanova L. Smith

Chair of Self Advocates in Leadership (SAIL)
lauralovesian@hotmail.com

Biography

Ivanova Smith Self advocacy Faculty at UW LEND and and activist advocate for Atwork!
Ivanova A Leader in several self advocate run Organizations and happily married her husband Ian with two little girls.

Gene Boes

Executive Director of Northwest Center
gboes@nwcenter.org

Biography

Gene Boes joined Northwest Center as CEO in 2017, after serving on the Northwest Center Board of Directors for three years. Previously, Boes was a management consultant serving as Principal for the Seattle office of the North Highland Company. In addition to his consulting duties, Gene also served as an Adjunct Professor at Seattle Pacific University and Seattle University, and is a Mentor for the Albers School of Business. Prior to joining North Highland, he was Managing Director at Loft9 Consulting, a Bellevue-based Management Consulting Firm. His career also includes nearly 14 years at Microsoft, two years with Deloitte Consulting, and nine years serving in the US Navy.

Throughout his career, Gene has been an active participant in community and non-profit organizations, and served on the Board of Directors for Cure Autism Now, prior to their merger with Autism Speaks. Gene and his wife June are parents of two adult children: son Andrew and daughter Tori. Tori, who has autism, is also a client of Northwest Center Employment Services.

Panelist Questions and Answers

1.) Where are we today as it relates to Inclusive Education, Community Rights and Equity for individuals who experience disabilities?

Although the Northwest Center Founding Mothers changed the world with HB90, we are far from realizing the world they imagined back in 1969. While we have certainly seen progress achieved, particularly in the past 10 years—where therapies to address developmental delays, like Applied Behavioral Analysis, Speech & Language Therapy, and Occupational Therapy have become more accepted and integrated into the classroom environment—the overall attitude and environment still needs enormous improvement.

Boes, continued

Executive Director of Northwest Center

2.) What changes need to be made and why?

From the late 1990's through 2013, I personally felt the IEP process was an annual ritual where my wife and I spent several hours hearing from our daughter's educators and administrators about how broken and incapable she was; and from my recent conversations with parents, that experience has changed very little. The fact is, people with disabilities aren't broken. They don't need to be fixed. They are fully realized human beings with talents and abilities. What needs to change is society's perspective, and how we "abled" people view the world. We've created the barriers to engagement, and must help remove those barriers. **Until EVERYONE is allowed to engage and contribute, none of us will reach our potential.**

3.) Name 3 actions anyone attending tonight can make to improve the circumstances for individuals who experience disabilities. (Providing potential resources encouraged)

I encourage you to do these 3 simple things to help create the inclusive world we all deserve:

1. **Self-reflect — consider what you can do to move further along in your "inclusion journey."** How can you expand your learning, and in turn amplify your voice in educating the community around you on the importance of inclusion?
2. Share with your educators and/or employer your passion for disability inclusion, and encourage them to play a bigger role in creating a more inclusive and accessible environment.
3. Visit nwcenter.org/inclusion and explore ways to help us make progress "North" — to a world where 100% of kids have equitable access to education, and the employment rate for people with disabilities is the same as the employment rate for the general population."

Jerry Millhon

Founder and Director of Thriving Communities
jerry.millhon@thrivingcommunities.org

Biography

Serves as team leader for the Thriving Communities Initiative which began in 2011 as a program of the Whidbey Institute during my time as the Executive from 2010 through 2015. We have focused on common people doing uncommon work for common good and have produced over 60 films to date.

Previously served as the Executive Director of the Foundation for Vascular Cures in San Francisco, California, Director of the Fossil Rim Wildlife Center in Glen Rose, Texas and headmaster of several independent schools. In the 1980 began a software support and development firm, serving both medical and fundraising clients. Have extensive experience in organizational and project management. Underlying focus has been science and education with emphasis on youth.

www.thrivingcommunities.org

Panelist Questions and Answers

1.) Where are we today as it relates to Inclusive Education, Community Rights and Equity for individuals who experience disabilities?

The beauty of doing this film is how quickly I became a learner. **I knew much, I thought, and I found I knew little.** For instance, I saw the impact of the early legislation as a tipping point for those families working with disabilities. It was a great piece of legislation with baby teeth.

- Little or no training in schools of education
- no sustainable budgetary allocation
- no coordination with teacher's association or even pilot studies of best practices

Sadly, in 2022 the progress over 50 years I feel would make the 4 women cringe...I believe Janet may feel this way.

Millhon, continued

Founder and Director of Thriving Communities

2.) What changes need to be made and why?

3 thoughts:

1. Grassroots action like the 4 moms undertook. Bottom up will drive the day but this is not work for the faint hearted.
2. I wonder what it might look like if all disabilities organizations in the country united under 1-2 common goals for the children facing disabilities in the classroom and workplace. Funding and access perhaps?
3. The why is easy!
 - A heart, broken open to children facing challenges because of disabilities breaks open to each of us through our own limitations.
 - A community open to encouraging people of all abilities without judgement (and with support as needed) is a thriving community.

A community open to encouraging people of all abilities without judgement (and with support as needed) is a thriving community.

3.) Name 3 actions anyone attending tonight can make to improve the circumstances for individuals who experience disabilities. (Providing potential resources encouraged)

1. **Easy—Open your awareness by being open to little things each of us can do. For example, do not park in parking places reserved for people with mobility limitations.**
2. Join one organization serving those with disabilities as a volunteer for at least 1 year.
3. Choose one organization and provide meaningful funding support.

Hannah Guggenheim

Storyteller and Social Justice Advocate
GuggenheimFilms@gmail.com

Biography

Hannah began her film career at the Saul Zaentz Media Center, a celebrated media facility in Berkeley, California, where she attended San Francisco State University's MFA program with a focus on documentary filmmaking.

Her award winning collaborative film "Benji and Judah" investigates disability, the healthcare system and its relationship to poverty in Oakland, California.

Hannah is currently the filmmaker of Thriving Communities, a thought leadership institute, which leads community gatherings using films as a catalyst for deep dialogue and social change.

She is in the final stages Masters degree in Social Work through the University of Washington.

Her focus is filmmaking, multi-generational trauma and narrative therapy.

Storyteller and social justice advocate Hannah Guggenheim wants to hear your story.

Storyteller and social justice
advocate Hannah Guggenheim
wants to hear your story.

Thank you to everyone involved in this historical and present day effort to create equality and quality of living for persons with disabilities and the wonderful producers of this important film.

Stay connected!

Visit **Thriving Communities**
(www.thrivingcommunities.org) and
Dussault Law Relationship Foundation
(www.dussaultlaw.com) for more information.