

9:00 – 10:00am**AUDITORIUM****WELCOME: PLANNING COMMITTEE****KEYNOTE: MICHAEL BONGIORNO**

Director, Designer, Design Group
Secretary, Greater Columbus Arts Council Board of Directors
Columbus, OH

Michael is a noted design leader with a focus on community impacting, mission-driven architecture that supports and enhances the fabric of the city and furthers a fundamental belief that great design is the essential building block to vibrant, healthy communities.

His work has garnered numerous awards nationally, most recently named *The Wall Street Journal's* "Best Architecture of 2015" for the design of Columbus Museum of Art's Margaret M. Walter Wing.

Michael has presented and written extensively on design and creative placemaking. Michael's 2012 TEDx Columbus talk, entitled "Looking Over the Overlooked," took the audience on a journey to discover new ways to re-imagine cities.

Born and raised in Brooklyn, NY, he is a cum laude graduate of the prestigious Pratt Institute School of Architecture in New York City and has lived and traveled extensively abroad.

10:00 – 11:00am**AUDITORIUM****Session Title: The Glass Menagerie (Through the Prism of Autism)**

Presenters:

Wendy Duke

Co-Founder, Center for Applied Drama & Autism

Wendy Duke is co-founder of The Center for Applied Drama & Autism. She wrote, directed, and acted in her first play in the 5th grade and hasn't stopped producing theatre since! She obtained a BA and MA in theatre arts from the University of Akron and created and implemented the drama program at Miller South School for the Visual and Performing Arts in Akron for 22 years, recently retiring from that position to work full time on The Center for Applied Drama & Autism. She is a mask-maker and performer and attended the Leonard Pitt School for Mask & Mime in Berkeley, CA. She has a passion for bringing theatre to those who could benefit from the training, from the very young to senior citizens, special needs populations and people on the

autism spectrum. Her dog Hamlet is a trained therapy dog who has a special talent for working with students with autism.

Laura Valendza

Co-Founder, Center for Applied Drama & Autism

Laura Valendza is co-founder of The Center for Applied Drama & Autism. She is currently an intervention specialist at Miller South School for the Visual and Performing Arts in Akron, Ohio. Laura has worked as a professional actor, director, and artist in residence in schools throughout Ohio. She has a BFA from Otterbien College, a MFA in acting from Case Western Reserve University, and a MA in special education from The University of Akron. She is currently working towards becoming a registered drama therapist through The North American Drama Therapists Association's Alternative Training Program. Laura is passionate about developing programming and producing productions that empower individuals on the autism spectrum and their families as well developing awareness in the communities which they live.

Several cast members will be on hand.

Session Format: Performance/Artistic Demonstration

Theme Alignment: Creating; Learning; Living

Genres Addressed: Drama/Theatre; Advocacy

Ages Addressed: Transition; Adult

Session Description:

The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams opened in Chicago in 1944 before moving to Broadway in 1945. In 1943, Leo Kanner was the first to describe (in English) characteristics that he labeled as a diagnosis of autism. Williams' play was autobiographical and dealt with the guilt he felt upon abandoning his family as a young man. His sister Rose, was disabled and also suffered from unnamed mental problems that eventually resulted in a recommendation for a lobotomy by her doctors. Unfortunately, the lobotomy was botched and Rose was institutionalized, ironically in the same year that Kanner wrote his initial findings on autism. In *The Glass Menagerie*, Williams's description of the character Laura, based on his sister, haunts us with their similarities to descriptions of autistic people. Laura collects glass figures. She spends hours every day tending to them and lining them up on the shelf. When her mother sends her to typing school, Laura cannot tolerate being in the classroom and leaves on her first day. She pretends to go to class every day but ends up wandering in the park until it is time to go home. In times of severe stress, Laura puts a record on the old fashioned gramophone and cranks the handle as a form of "stimming" as self-regulation. In the play, the father is absent, having abandoned the family. Laura's mother wishes desperately to settle her daughter if not in a job -- in a marriage. She dreams of finding Laura a Gentleman Caller, like those who pursued her in her youth. Unfortunately, Laura's disabilities prevent her from taking action on her own. Meanwhile, the son Tom dreams of leaving his factory job and his family in order to pursue his dreams of becoming a writer. Theatre on the Spectrum has selected this play to be our first full-length production. The cast and crew will consist of people on the spectrum and theatre worker allies. Most of our cast will be people on the spectrum who have been working and training in theatre with us for a number of years. We have found that theatre provides a safe and supportive environment for autistic people to develop social and communication skills. In the

presentation, company members will share their personal and professional stories, along with their experiences performing and touring with this production.

www.centerforada.org

video: <https://youtu.be/cbCdgiyjhr4>

Facebook Channel: Center for Applied Drama & Autism

Twitter @centerforada

Instagram: centerforada

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| READY ROOM |
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Session Title: Process and Product: A Music Therapist's Approach to Traditionally Performance-Based Activities

Presenters:

Alyssa Graber

Music Therapist at Bridgeway Academy

Alyssa Graber, MME, MT-BC, Music Therapist

Alyssa has been a board-certified music therapist at Bridgeway Academy since June 2014. She is a supervising music therapist for the music therapy internship program at Bridgeway, and serves as public relations chair for the Association of Ohio Music Therapists. She is an alumna of Concordia College in Moorhead, MN where she majored in music and minored in psychology. She then went on to pursue a graduate equivalency and master's degree in music therapy from the University of Kansas. Her master's thesis focused on using transition songs with children with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Kristin Kummer

Music Therapist at Bridgeway Academy

Kristin Kummer, MA, MT-BC, Music Therapist

Kristin Kummer has been a music therapist at Helping Hands Center (now Bridgeway Academy) since January 2008. She originated the theater group and is one of the co-leaders of the school choir. She has facilitated a grant of collaboration between Catco for Kids and the theater group. She trained in the Hunter Heartbeat Method and continues to work with the Shakespeare and Autism Project through Kelly Hunter, The Ohio State University, and the Nisonger Center. She has been trained in LAMP (Language Acquisition through Motor Planning) and has worked in co-treated sessions with speech language pathologists to facilitate communication with SGDs. Kristin graduated with a bachelor's degree in music and English literature from Capital University and a master's degree in English literature from Middlebury College in Vermont. Prior to working for Helping Hands, she was an early childhood music and movement teacher for four years. She then finished a music therapy equivalency program at Baldwin Wallace College and completed her music therapy internship at Helping Hands before being hired. Kristin lives in Columbus with her husband and 5-year-old daughter.

Liz Woolley

Music Therapist at Bridgeway Academy

Liz Woolley, MT-BC, Music Therapist

Liz has been a music therapist at Bridgeway Academy since October 2012. This year she is on the executive board for the Association of Ohio Music Therapists, serving as the state editor. Liz graduated from Utah State University with a degree in music therapy in 2012 and is a supervising music therapist for the music therapy internship at Bridgeway. She also has a strong background in music performance, including vocal and piano jazz, and bluegrass, and has been a songwriter and recording artist for several years. She hails from Utah but now calls the Columbus area home.

Session Format: Presentation/Lecture

Theme Alignment: Learning

Genres Addressed: Music

Ages Addressed: Early childhood; School age; Transition; Adult

Learner Objectives:

- 1) Participants will learn how music therapists make music learning and education accessible to all types of learners.
- 2) Participants will learn about the collaboration between music therapists and speech language pathologists in a "theater group."
- 3) Participants will learn how drama-based interventions can address communication and social skills with people of varying ages with special needs.

Session Description:

Music therapists focus on the process of helping their clients achieve their goals. Music therapy does not usually result in a product such as a performance, and performances, in many cases, would be detrimental to the therapy process. However, there are music therapists who teach adaptive music lessons and lead "theater groups." Music lessons and musical theater productions are performance-driven mediums, so how do therapists utilize their therapy training to incorporate both the process inherent in therapy and the product that is expected from lessons and theater productions? In the first half of this session, Alyssa and Liz will show examples of materials they use and how they adapt traditional methods to teach students with different learning styles and ability levels. They have experience teaching piano, guitar, and voice lessons to children and adults at all levels. There are very few resources and method books that are made specifically for people with different learning styles so they use a mix of traditional method books, materials they have created themselves, and games to teach musical concepts to their students. No two students are the same, so they are constantly making adaptations and coming up with new ways to teach. They will share tips and advice for other teachers who may have students with special needs. Different method books will be discussed, as well as original teaching materials and technological resources. In the second half of the session, Kristin will introduce the concept of a "theater group" targeting social and communication skills through drama-based interventions and culminating in the production of a musical. Kristin founded the theater group 6 years ago, co-treating the group with speech therapists, under the impetus that there are individuals in the special needs community who are motivated by performing for an audience but may not be able to participate in their school or community theaters because of various limitations. She will discuss the goals that can be targeted during drama-based interventions and during rehearsals. Because therapy is client-centered and client-driven, she will discuss the adaptations for each individual in the group and

the way in which each client's strengths and interests are utilized and emphasized in performances.

STUDIO**Session Title: Yo! N.B.D!**

Presenter:

MsWritten (Qori Moorehaul)

Artist

MsWritten is an American painter. She is self-taught and expresses her creativity in the expressionistic style. MsWritten started her creative life out on the stage. MsWritten was always known as the "weird girl" and often became a subject to ridicule and bullies. Due to anxiety taking over in middle school from negative energies, MsWritten lost the desire to perform. Feeling lost and mediumless for a decade, it wasn't until leaving Ohio in 2009 that MsWritten finally discovered her inner painter. A year after relocating to Philadelphia, MsWritten (originally a penname for a writing project) found a muse, an abundance of art supplies, many experiences and has yet to drop the paint brush.

In November 2014, at 27 years old, it was discovered that how MsWritten's brain works can be described with an acronym – NLD. Nonverbal Learning Disorder had entered the picture. This diagnosis became a tool to understanding the creative process. MsWritten has had solo and group shows around the Eastern Seaboard and is currently on a mission to gain a residency to work on a "passion project." She is committed to showing how those with cognitive learning disorders have a very brilliant and artistic way of living. The idea behind the artwork is to take pain from negativity and turn it into something positively beautiful. MsWritten has also taught art to adults and youth, worked on murals, painted live at events, and has directed/curated multi-genre art shows in Hoboken, NJ and Manhattan.

Session Format: Class/Workshop

Theme Alignment: Creating

Genres Addressed: Visual arts; Art therapy

Ages Addressed: School age; Transition; Adult

Session Description:

I have had a project in mind for a little over a year now. I was diagnosed with Nonverbal Learning Disorder in 2014 at the age of 27. I use this as a tool to help me understand myself and my creative practice. A.D.H.D was tossed around a lot when I was a kid. Misdiagnosis and my family not really addressing the fact that I was "different" was very hard, especially in middle school. I grew up in Cuyahoga Falls. In 7th grade my mother and I moved to Kent when my mother met my stepfather. I went from being weird around kids that had known me since kindergarten to being 13 and tossed in with kids who had no idea how great my quirks were! I was into musical theater. After moving I grew a distaste for the stage. It was from the bullying and negativity at my new school. I spent over a decade feeling lost. I moved to Philadelphia in

2009 and that all changed! A year after moving, I found a muse, and the desire to paint. I am now on a mission to turn every negative experience I've ever felt into something positive. Even as an adult, "being weird" had subjected me to ridicule. People with autism, at any level, are wildly misunderstood. We are more brilliant and amazing than those realize. I have been seeking a residency so I have space, time, and funding to work on my project called, "Yo! N.B.D!" It's a series of 6"x6" paintings. Each one has a word assigned to it. The words are negative words that people have used to describe me. The goal is to make a piece of art fueled by the emotions felt in that moment. The outcome is to turn negatives into positives. It's also cathartic and a very therapeutic process. I also want to curate a group show with the same theme, inviting artists with autism and cognitive learning disorders to participate. I also planned in making this a workshop! I would like to do an hour session talking about negativity and what it's like to go through this world a little different than others. I think young adults and middle school aged kids would enjoy this most. Everyone will get a 16"x20" canvas, and acrylic paints. I will have a pile of papers with words like "slow," "dumb," "lazy," "retarded," and you get the point. Everyone will draw a piece of paper. That word is the theme of their painting. They are to use emotions that arise when dealing with this word. They have an hour to interpret the word. They will use feeling to show that they are in fact not that. I would love to debut the workshop side of "Yo, N.B.D!" at the conference in Cleveland. I was planning on reaching out to Art Ability, an annual art show in Paoli, PA featuring those with cognitive and physical disabilities (I showed in their last art show), The Art of Autism Organization based in California, and the Learning Disorder Associate of America's New York City chapter. This would be an amazing opportunity to help spread positivity and change how we view those who are slightly different!

INNOVATION LAB**Session Title: Songwriting: A Real and Inclusive Experience**

Presenter:

Ben Shinabery

Executive Director, The Dick & Jane Project

Ben Shinabery is co-creator and executive director for The Dick & Jane Project. As executive director, Shinabery has produced over 70 professionally recorded songs written in collaboration between Columbus music producers and middle school students throughout central Ohio. Among these 70 songs are 4 that were written through a pilot program experience that facilitated a collaboration between Columbus music producers and students on the autism spectrum. Shinabery has since shared the results of these pilot experiences with a multitude of experts within the autism field, and is currently planning an expansion of these songwriting experiences throughout school districts in Central Ohio.

Session Format: Presentation/Lecture

Theme Alignment: Creating; Learning; Living

Genres Addressed: Music

Ages Addressed: School age; Transition; Adult

Session Description:

The Dick & Jane Project partners young people with professional music producers to create radio-ready songs. Young people write the lyrics for the song and guide its artistic direction. The producers collaborate with the students in order to synthesize their ideas into a professionally produced song, ultimately played on the radio in Columbus, Ohio.

The Dick & Jane Project values the power of collaboration. The Project brings together people of all ages, musical ability, and life experiences to write songs – songs no one person would have ever created by themselves. It's this philosophy that led The Project toward the idea of including students on the autism spectrum within the songwriting experiences. Four pilot inclusive songwriting experiences were facilitated in the spring of 2015, each intentionally different from one another in order to explore best practices and better understand the unique value for all students, family members, and teachers who participate in the songwriting experiences.

This session will highlight each of the conference themes in how they relate to The Dick & Jane Project's songwriting experience:

Creating: The session will highlight how the collaborative songwriting experience facilitated an environment where individuals with autism engaged directly with their peers and community artists to co-create a piece of music - a final product that everyone was proud to call their own.

Learning: This session will discuss how Dick & Jane music producers valued the input from individuals on the autism spectrum, including their personal interests and talents in art, music, and general creativity. Also highlighted will be the benefits that the songwriting process had on families of individuals with autism, including the effect of hearing a song their child created played live on the radio.

Living: This session will look into the relationships formed between the Dick & Jane music producers, typically developing students, and students on the spectrum, highlighting the special environment that was created during the songwriting process which truly valued the input of everyone involved.

11:00 – 11:15am MORNING BREAK

11:15am – 12:00pm

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| INNOVATION LAB |
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Session Title: The Boy Who Only Liked Red

Presenters:

Darren Thompson

Creative Arts Specialist, Franklin County Bd of DD

Darren Thompson is a creative arts specialist for the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities Early Childhood Education Partnership. He has a bachelor's degree in fine art, a master's degree in education and is a licensed early childhood educator and intervention specialist. He resides in Westerville, Ohio with his wife and two sons.

Danielle Norman

Creative Arts Specialist, Franklin County Bd of DD

Danielle Norman is a creative arts specialist for the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities Early Childhood Education Partnership. She has a bachelor's degree in fine art and has been an early childhood educator for 15 years. She resides in Columbus, Ohio with her husband and two sons.

Therese Brady

Creative Arts Specialist, Franklin County Bd of DD

Therese Brady is a creative arts specialist for the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities Early Childhood Education Partnership. She has a bachelor's degree in fine art and has been an early childhood educator for over 20 years. She is a mother of three grown children and resides in Columbus, Ohio with her husband.

Sharon McJannet

Creative Arts Specialist, Franklin County Bd of DD

Sharon McJannet currently lives in Blacklick, Ohio with her husband and two children. She has been working with Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities and Early Childhood Center since 2014 as a member of their Creative Arts Specialist team. Sharon received her Master of Fine Arts degree from The Ohio State University in 2004 and has gained numerous awards of recognition in her field and continues to show in exhibitions throughout the United States and Europe.

Session Format: Presentation/Lecture

Theme Alignment: Creating; Learning; Living

Genres Addressed: Across arts disciplines; Visual arts

Ages Addressed: Early childhood

Session Description:

Creative arts specialists from Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities Early Childhood Education Partnership will discuss experiences that are accessible to all children but focusing mostly on those on the autism spectrum. They will explain the value of an inclusive environment for children with ASD to build relationships with peers and adults. The physical environment will also be discussed so that attendees can learn how to use lighting, sound, and materials to create a positive environment for creative expression for children with ASD. The presenters will share personal experiences as well as photographs and videos to show how they scaffold art experiences to bring children out of the familiar and into new modes of self-expression. A hands-on component will be included to allow attendees to experience a variety

of materials that have proven successful in providing meaningful experiences for children on the autism spectrum.

READY ROOM**Session Title: Setting Life with Autism to Music**

Presenters:

Andrea Moriarty

Author, Parent, Advocate

Andrea Moriarty is the co-founder of the music therapy nonprofit Banding Together, blogs at *Autism Unplugged*, and recently published *One-Track Mind*. Her refreshing, spiritual take on both the challenges and triumphs of parenting a differently abled child offers affectionate humor and unending hope. Moriarty and her husband Jim are the proud adoptive parents of twins, Allie and Reid. Allie currently studies music education and music therapy at Berklee College of Music in Boston. Reid writes music, performs regularly, and hosts his own podcast, *Talk Time with Reid Moriarty*. Moriarty lives in Solana Beach, California, where she accumulates books, cooks from scratch, and whistles while she works.

Reid Moriarty

Musician, Podcast host

An assistant will accompany me

Reid Moriarty brings a contagious sense of joy to every audience. A charismatic performer on keyboard and seasoned vocalist, he has a song in his heart, music on his lips, and two recordings to his credit: *Purple Party* and *Shine*. His podcast, *Talk Time with Reid Moriarty*, is a series of 7-minute interviews with people he finds interesting, and others might too! Reid's voice breaks through social barriers to inspire.

Session Format: Presentation/Lecture

Theme Alignment: Creating; Learning; Living

Genres Addressed: Music; Advocacy

Ages Addressed: Early childhood; School age; Transition; Adult

Session Description:

Andrea Moriarty is convinced that every child has a purpose and a creative contribution to make in the community. Gleaned from her book, *One-Track Mind: 15 Ways to Amplify Your Child's Special Interest*, she will share candidly both the struggles to reach her son with autism and effective strategies that helped maximize his special interest (er, obsession) in music to create a purposeful life for him. At 22, he performs music regularly and has a podcast, *Talk Time with Reid Moriarty*, on which he interviews the likes of Temple Grandin, Murray monster of *Sesame Street*, and Andy Grammer.

After exploring countless interventions, Moriarty discovered that music was more than the most effective therapy for Reid. Music provided a catalyst for learning, a vehicle for engaging with people, a platform for showcasing his strengths, and the key to unlocking his potential. With many examples of music therapy applications and extensions beyond the clinic, her talk highlights principles revealed in hindsight that will assist and inspire parents and educators. These include: Study Your Child, Embrace Differences, Teach to the Strength, Cultivate Mentors, Generalize Everywhere, and Never Mind the Box. Through Moriarty's journey, participants will discover ways to guide their own differently abled child and clients by harnessing the power of their greatest fascination. A sequence of questions will help participants personalize and apply the material, frame their journey, and develop similar platforms.

As the climax, Reid Moriarty will perform original songs he has written collaboratively with his music therapist of 15 years and deliver his multi-media presentation titled, *My First 50 Podcasts*. Educators, parents, and other musicians will be eager to interact in the Question and Answer portion. Reid becomes living proof of the power of music as well as a joyful illustration of what happens when students are supported to pursue their passion.

www.andreamoriarty.com

www.reidmoriarty.com

<https://soundcloud.com/talk-time-w-reid-moriarty>

Attendees will:

- learn to identify learning strengths in their children/clients
- learn how to discover their children's/clients' special interests
- hear how effective music therapy can be over the course of a lifetime
- see creative extensions of music and performance in the community
- understand how music connects us in ways that language cannot
- be equipped with strategies for using music to connect and teach
- be prepared to maximize special interests for purposeful living
- be inspired to use music in home, school, therapy and public settings
- be encouraged to think outside the box about vocation for adults on the spectrum

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| AUDITORIUM |
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What It Takes: A Resource Development Panel

You have lots of great ideas and a passion for making the arts more accessible for people with autism. Now what? This panel is focused on turning plans into action, and identifying the resources you will need to make it happen: people, spaces, time, and money. Panelists will discuss resources their organization has to offer, as well as accommodation options that go from high to low to no cost. Panelists include Brianna Dance (Ohio Arts Council), Erin Hoppe (VSA Ohio), and Ryan Scarlata (Columbus Children's Theatre).

12:00 – 1:30pm**LUNCH****PAVILION, 2ND FLOOR**

Panel: Self-Advocacy and the Arts

This panel is focused on people with autism who are creating, learning, and living through the arts. Each approaches their art form in a unique way and has been influenced by different sources. The arts are woven into their lives as a source of work, for recreation, for expression, and for ways of connecting with others. Panelists will discuss why they like art, works they have accomplished, how the arts impact their lives, and their visions for the future. Panelists include Jenny DeBrier (visual arts), Andy Willmore (music), and Peter Crawford (drama). Moderated by Amy Hess (OSU's Center for Autism Services and Transition).

1:30 – 2:30pm**AUDITORIUM**

Session Title: Building Lives One Act at a Time: An Inclusive Approach to Theater

Presenter:

Cary Johnston

Creative Director, Shopworks Theatre Company

An assistant will accompany me; I will be bringing 5 actors for a performance

Cary Johnston has taught and created various art forms throughout the community for over 20 years. Her service to the DD community has included presentations exploring "limited use of physical interventions through skill building" with The Nisonger Center. She has sat on many meetings regarding the Positive Culture Initiative held by the FCBDD, as well as roundtables held with COSI and the Ohio Arts Council. Cary developed the Shopworks program within the framework of the 11 years she has served this community.

Session Format: Performance/Artistic Demonstration

Theme Alignment: Creating; Learning; Living

Genres Addressed: Across arts disciplines; Dance; Drama/Theatre; Music; Visual arts; Advocacy

Ages Addressed: Transition; Adult

Session Description:

This presentation will include a short performance by an inclusive theater company, followed by a how-to for groups and organizations inspired by the Shopworks Model. A handout will be provided addressing how to create, produce, and perform your own stories.

Enrollment at Shopworks offers the opportunity to accept responsibilities such as maintaining attendance, and establishing ownership of the roles in which they are cast. Shopworks members are expected to behave professionally and proudly while in the community on and off stage. Responsibility for other members of the company include acknowledging and supporting other viewpoints and learning to practice constructive criticism. We believe the situations we act out through characters and stories form a roadmap for life. Emotions, conflict, and resolutions can be safely explored through the theater arts. We also look for inspiration from the greater arts community. We are connected to a much larger group with our shared interests.

Through building relationships, we are able to honor the challenges of our actors with autism, while supporting the strengths and gifts that all the actors bring. Our company members learn how to express an idea to others. We encourage our actors to engage our typically developing neighbors, and our productions include tasks for direct marketing and advertising. Within the presentation, we will introduce individuals that have benefitted from the program.

INNOVATION LAB**Session Title: Dancing Wheels Teacher Training for Mixed Abilities**

Presenter:

Mary Verdi-Fletcher

President/Founding Artistic Director, Dancing Wheels Company & School

Mary Verdi-Fletcher, President/Founding Artistic Director, has been a pioneering force in the development and success of physically integrated dance worldwide for over three decades. As one of the first and foremost professional wheelchair dancers, she has worked and studied with many esteemed artists worldwide. After the inception of the Company in 1980, Mary realized the dire need for training and career advancement for dancers of all ability levels, which ultimately lead to the creation of the multi-arts Dancing Wheels School in 1990. Attracting students from around the globe, the school rapidly became the most sought-after site for training in the formal techniques of physically integrated dance. As an educator, Mary has conducted master classes and lectures, and has consulted with notable arts institutions across several continents. Also a tireless arts administrator and advocate, Mary has contributed to the development of state and national programs for arts and disability service organizations. She has worked to help pass significant pieces of legislation including the Americans with Disabilities Act established in 1990, which has paved the way for others in their quest for full and equal access.

She leads a full-time company of 15 dancers who travel the globe performing and educating hundreds of thousands of individuals with and without disabilities. The Company tours to over 70 locations each year offering first-rate performances from some of the nation's best choreographers and since 1980, more than 5 million individuals have witnessed the beauty and unique performances of her revolutionary troupe. Dancing Wheels Company & School has made an indelible mark on the way society views the artistry and ability of people who live with a

disability. Mary along with her artistic advisor, Mark Tomasic, co-authored and produced a manual and DVD on the training methodologies taught by the Company. Throughout her career, Mary has been featured internationally on television, in numerous digital and print media articles, and has been honored with numerous awards including: an Emmy for an arts series entitled "Short Cuts to Happiness," the Outstanding Young Clevelander Award, the James Brady Award for Rehabilitation, the YWCA Woman of Achievement Award, the National Rehabilitation Achievement Award, the Northern Ohio Magazine Achievement Award for 25 years of service (2005), and the Ohio Theater Alliance Award. She was one of 14 finalists for the National Leadership for a Changing World Award, and a finalist for the Henry Betts Award. In 2014, Mary was awarded the Governor's Award for Arts Education in Ohio, the Ohio Dance Award for major contributions to dance in Ohio, and the Henry Viscardi Achievement Award, exemplifying leaders in the disability community who have had a profound impact in raising awareness and improving the quality of life of people with disabilities. In 2015 she was the recipient of the WrightChoice Exemplary Manager Award.

Session Format: Class/Workshop

Theme Alignment: Learning

Genres Addressed: Dance; Advocacy

Ages Addressed: School age; Adult

Session Description:

Mary Verdi-Fletcher and members of the Dancing Wheels Company will take participants on a step by step journey in the development of integrated dance training. For over 35 years the Company has experimented and applied methods in translation, partnering, choreography, and integrated classes in ballet, modern, and other genres of dance. Participants will gain an understanding of the growing field of integrated dance in a scientific and artistic approach. Participants receive an overview of the manual, view a short PowerPoint presentation, be a part of hands-on exercises and activities in partnering, improvisation, and translation. This workshop will afford participants the opportunity to have an enlightened experience in the realm of arts activities that are not only inclusive but are also immersed in the beauty of movement and dance that can be achieved by people of all abilities!

STUDIO**Session Title: Introduction to CLAY!**

Presenters:

Lisa Culp

Owner, Bareclay Studio and Consultant, Sunapple Studio

Lisa Bare Culp is an Ohio native and holds a 1993 bachelor's degree in fine arts/ceramics from the Columbus College of Art and Design. She has been teaching ceramics for twenty years, most of which have been in her studio, Bareclay. She has implemented adaptive ceramic programs for people with disabilities in association with such groups as the Franklin County Board of DD, Recreation Unlimited, VSA Ohio and Easter Seals. Lisa served as an artist-in-

residence at the Arrowmont School, Gatlinburg, Tennessee from 1993-1994. She served as the pottery market coordinator and resident clay artist for Mayco Colors, Hilliard, Ohio for six years. Her own ceramic and mixed media artwork has been widely exhibited and awarded in galleries across the country. She currently creates her art and teaches her students at Bareclay Studio in Columbus, Ohio. Lisa is also the ceramics/production consultant for Sunapple Studio, a collaborative art venture under the auspices of ARC Industries and the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities. She has initiated many new programs with Franklin County to incorporate artists with disabilities into the job market and the community via the arts.

Featured Artists: Tony Harrington, Krystak Okeke

Session Format: Class/Workshop

Theme Alignment: Creating; Learning; Living

Genres Addressed: Visual arts; Art therapy; Employment and Community Integration opportunities

Ages Addressed: Transition; Adult

Session Description:

Bareclay Studio is teaming up with Sunapple Studio to offer the 2016 Arts & Autism Conference a Teach/Reach workshop. Teach/Reach is a program in which artists with different abilities share their skills with the community. Sunapple is a working art studio offered by the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities and ARC Industries.

Our workshop, entitled Introduction to CLAY, will allow participants to hold, feel and squish clay. By doing so, attendees will be able to determine if they enjoy clay (or NOT). If they do, we will assist them in artistic, therapeutic making.

We will explore pinching and coiling and assist makers in some additional forming techniques if they wish. Our goal is free uninhibited exploration of the medium. We will focus solely on process, not product.

At the end of the class, we will add all of our clay items into a large, collaborative sculpture to be recycled back at Bareclay. The emphasis will be on process and exploration, not on individual pieces or ownership of a piece.

Relevance to the themes are as follows: CREATING something from clay. LEARNING a new art form. LIVING as a paid, professional artist is exhibited by our Teach/Reach artist presenters.

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| READY ROOM |
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Session Title: The Story Is You!: Musical Theater Tools for Special Education Classrooms

Presenters:

Heather Meeker

Executive Director, The Musical Theater Project

Heather Meeker has directed public relations and fundraising efforts for arts, education, and cultural nonprofits for more than 20 years, including the National Inventors Hall of Fame, Hiram College, Young Audiences of Northeast Ohio, and The Repertory Project (now VERB Ballets). In addition to managing TMTP, Heather directs the organization's student education programs, including Kids Love Musicals! She is a graduate of Hiram College, earned her MFA in theater at Virginia Tech and serves on the adjunct faculty of Hiram's Professional & Graduate Studies Program.

Jodi Kirk

Theater Education Specialist and Teaching Artist, The Musical Theater Project

Jodi Kirk is an arts educator, director and actor who has worked extensively in Northeast Ohio theater for more than 25 years. Jodi formerly served as director of theater at Laurel School, associate artistic director at Near West Theater and as the director of the school residency program at Great Lakes Theater. She is a graduate of the University of Mount Union and earned her MA in theater from Bowling Green State University. As a theater educator, she has taught and worked with Cleveland School of the Arts, Lorain County Community College, Cleveland Signstage, and BGSU.

Molly Andrews-Hinders

Teaching Artist, The Musical Theater Project

Molly Andrews-Hinders joined TMTP in 2013 following two years at Cleveland Public Theater's Brick City and Student Theatre Enrichment Programs, and is a Cleveland-based professional actor and stage manager. She earned her MFA in theater from Wright State University and is a certified Pilates instructor.

Session Format: Class/Workshop

Theme Alignment: Creating; Learning; Living

Genres Addressed: Across arts disciplines; Dance; Drama/Theatre; Music; Art therapy

Ages Addressed: School age; Transition

Session Description:

Become the "King of the Swingers" as we explore the "Bare Necessities" of integrating musical theater to serve students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The Musical Theater Project's Kids Love Musicals! curriculum uses *The Jungle Book* to immerse students in the action of creating a dynamic story through character, song, and movement. We'll explore proven strategies that incorporate rhythm, call and response, risk-taking, improvisation, and syncopation to empower every student to become a storyteller.

In addition to supporting English Language Arts and Core Performing Arts Standards, research shows that this curriculum improves social and emotional learning outcomes including eye contact, turn taking, sharing and cooperative learning, engagement, social awareness and self-confidence, symbolic flexibility, and emotional understanding. Experience how this multi-discipline approach helps students take safe risks and support academic success, all through the magic of story.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION:

The Musical Theater Project (TMTP) is a nonprofit arts education organization that creates local and national programs celebrating and honoring the glorious tradition of the American musical. All of our work encourages participants to reflect on the universal themes and values that connect every generation to the art form. TMTP's signature school program, Kids Love Musicals!, encourages participants to explore the major elements of a musical and helps students of all ages – even adults – use its themes to find personal relevance in the art form. Children meet memorable characters who express their deepest emotions through song and dance. It's a world of imagination, feeling, thinking, and creativity.

Participants will be able to:

- a. use musical theater songs to create engaging classroom "rituals"
- b. explore theater techniques for balanced sensory exploration
- c. investigate the importance of review and processing time in creative play
- d. use simple theatre games to encourage teamwork, empathy, and social engagement/interaction

2:30 – 3:00pm**AFTERNOON BREAK & NETWORKING**

3:00 – 4:00pm

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| AUDITORIUM |
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Session Title: The Album Project

Presenter:

Charles Mintz
Photographer

Photography is Chuck's third career and the result of a passion acquired in Maine many years ago. He has degrees in electrical engineering, he has done course work in photography at Maine Media Workshop, Parsons, ICP, and Cuyahoga Community College. Life trustee of the Jewish Family of Cleveland, board of the Friends of Photography at the Cleveland Museum of Art, and advisory boards of the Cleveland Print Room and the Artists Archive of the Western Reserve, Chuck is a recipient of the Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Award for 2015. Chuck is married to Patricia Mintz and they have two grown children, Isaac and Laura. Isaac is a 41-year-old young man with autism.

As someone who started full-time late in life, his work is about things that are important to him. Built around his biography, but not about him. At least not yet. Since starting this full-time, his work has become intensely personal – often involving portraiture. This can be seen in "The Album Project," "Precious Objects," "Costumes," "Lustron Stories," and, still in progress, "Held Notes" and "Station Hope: Bound." Even "Every Place I Have Ever Lived," where people in the images are largely unrecognizable, is uniquely personal, beginning with his childhood home that

was in foreclosure and continuing in all his lifetime neighborhoods, the work has become less traditionally photographic both in form and method.

Session Format: Presentation/Lecture

Theme Alignment: Creating; Learning; Living

Genres Addressed: Visual arts

Ages Addressed: School age; Transition; Adult

Session Description:

Around the time of his fifteenth birthday in 1990, our son Isaac developed a serious curvature of his spine. Isaac has autism and a limited ability to communicate. In an attempt to help him understand the surgery, we bought him a Polaroid Spectra camera. We hoped to use it to show him what was happening. Somewhat to our surprise, the camera became his constant companion at family events - a tool for him to order his world.

This project is a record of Isaac and his photographs. The five-hour scoliosis surgery, so intimidating at the time, becomes no more than the background for this story. The story is his ability to overcome his limitations and build a life independent from his parents. It is a history and a tribute to the family members and friends, many of whom are no longer with us that live in his albums. But, that is not why I did it. The project is about telling your story with a limited palette and language, both verbal and written, and body language and photographs. It is about the discomfort and frustration of using every tool you have and still not being understood. It is at the heart of Isaac's disability but a shared frustration for us all.

I struggled for a long time trying to understand why Isaac so enjoyed doing this project with me. He does not naturally like to stand still or take detailed directions on how to hold things. Since he cannot really tell why he was so comfortable, we can only guess. A trap with him is that he frequently is comfortable doing something he has done before. No secret, he likes repetition. But, this was different and he took to it from the start. I finally realized what was going on watching him work with his music therapist. He and I were collaborating.

There is a message here for all of us that work with and live with people like Isaac. I have been told that cognitive scientists call this "joint attention." Rarely seen in Isaac and a delight for us both at the core of the making of "The Album Project."

The conference presentation will be built upon the content of the book combined with showing of four videos. The first is of Isaac making the Polaroids that shows how he sets up each shot and then creates the albums themselves. The second video is of Isaac in the studio showing how the pages in the portraits were chosen and how he handled himself in front of the camera. The last is a video of him practicing the piano, another medium that he uses through his music therapy to help order his world. I will also have a small number of the 24"x64" photographs. These were first seen in Cleveland and were exhibited at the Butler Institute of American Art in Youngstown, OH in 2013. A similar presentation was made The American Music Therapy Association's national convention in November 2010. You can see "The Album Project" at <http://www.album-project.com>.

Session Title: Complementary Aesthetics: Creativity and Autism

Presenter:

Andrew Thomas Lopez

Artist / Photographer

Andrew Thomas Lopez earned his MFA in photography at Columbia College Chicago and BFA in photography at the Mary Schiller Myers School of Art, University of Akron. Lopez's focus in photography began with his interests in constructing realities that embraced filmic narratives, influenced by his study of cinema and philosophy. In 2009, his son Sabas was diagnosed with autism. His artistic interests coupled with an aspiration to better communicate and engage with his son, have fueled his drive and inspiration as an artist and father. His ongoing project, "This Means Something... This Is Important," mixes complementary aesthetics of an artist trained at the photographic craft and a child with an intuitive ability to create art. The images capture the many creative facets of a child's perspective, to build meaning in the world around him. The series has been exhibited in multiple venues and given recognition, including the Hyde Park Art Center's Ground Floor biennial exhibition of new and emerging Chicago artists and the Albert P. Weisman Award for project funding and development.

Session Format: Presentation/Lecture

Theme Alignment: Creating; Learning

Genres Addressed: Visual arts

Ages Addressed: Early childhood; School age; Transition; Adult

Session Description:

The format of the session is a discussion and PowerPoint presentation about the ongoing photographic project with my son titled, "This Means Something... This Is Important." The project is a series of portraits, capturing how my child with tactile and kinesthetic tendencies, and little interpersonal communication interacts with the environment around him. His acts of creation mirror the aesthetics of art practice, such as the intentional use of color, the compositional arrangement of objects, and how these elements interrelate with their surroundings. My son makes patterns, building worlds imbued with mystique and imagination, and I act as a documentarian and co-creator of the resulting conceptions – portraits and still lifes. The creations in the images represent the manifestations of a brilliant mind, despite, or perhaps because of, my son being on the autistic spectrum. We create together by making photographs that align our imaginative capacities on the unusual configuration of various objects in the real world. It is a form of communication that relates not only to childhood, but also to the complementary aesthetics of a parent trained in the craft, and a child naturally inclined to create art, unintentionally and intentionally.

On a personal level, the project is something that my son and I enjoy doing together, and creating a sacred space for us to make art. Secondly, it is about showing a different perspective on autism, that can be shared with everyone, in order to break through outdated perceptions people may have about individuals on the spectrum.

The goal of the session is to use the project as an example of what makes an individual with autism unique, and to tap into their interests in order to build a positive relationship through the act of creating art. Making photographs for this project shows a creative outlet that can be integrated, shared, and showcased to others not as familiar with autism. My son and his preferred medium is photography, however individuals can discover similar and very different ways to create art with autistic individuals, further encouraging them to succeed in their areas of interest. As a parent, I want this session to be a personal perspective on developing a dialogue with a child on their level, and to build positive actions and aesthetic outcomes. As an artist, I encourage individuals autistic, non-autistic, and those with misconceptions about autism to shift ideas away from the definitions of normalcy, and see our children as creative artistic beings that can use their strengths to build worlds filled with imagination. The intention of these topics is to express the need to continue to advocate for autism and art by expressing our own experiences, obsessions, loves, and to share our sacred spaces with others through art making.

www.andrewthomaslopez.com

STUDIO**Session Title: Curiosity, Creativity & Connection**

Presenters:

Patty Mitchell

CEO, Creative Abundance Group

Patty Mitchell is the chief executive officer of Creative Abundance Consulting. She has worked for more than 20 years as an artist and social innovator specializing in collaborations between artists with and without perceived differences. As an artist in residence, Ms. Mitchell has helped organizations nationally and internationally start up arts programming ventures. Some examples include: Our Town Studios, Flor de Arte, Soaring Arts Studio, Passion Works Studio, Pieces of Heart Studio, Up and Away Studio, Hope Studios, Kudos Studio, Kan Du Studio, Dream Out Loud Studio, Colores del Alma, Just Imagine Studio, and AccessPoint Studios. Ms. Mitchell received a Distinguished Alumna Award from Ohio University's College of Fine Art, Ohioana Citation for Art and Education, Individual Artist Award from the Ohio Arts Council, Citizen of the Year from Civitan and The Keystone Award from Ohio University for outstanding community service. Ms. Mitchell received her BFA and MFA from Ohio University's Fine Art Photography program. She is currently a community fellow at Ohio University with the Barbara Gerald's Storytelling Institute.

Susan Dlouhy

COO, Creative Abundance Group

Susan Dlouhy is the chief operating officer of Creative Abundance Consulting. She has worked for more than 30 years in a variety of administrative and executive roles supporting people with disabilities. She served as the director of two sheltered workshops in Ohio and has consulted with organizations in more than 20 states. She worked as the administrator for a statewide association for 12 years, where she developed training and provided technical assistance to sheltered workshops across Ohio. She is also the president of Norwich Consulting Services, which provides technical assistance and training in the areas of community employment, strategic planning, and executive leadership mentoring. She has served as the interim director for numerous organizations and has helped transform programming to the Creative Abundance Model. Ms. Dlouhy obtained her bachelor's degree from Kent State University and her master's degree in rehabilitation counseling from The Ohio State University. She is a certified rehabilitation counselor and licensed professional counselor.

Session Format: Presentation/Lecture

Theme Alignment: Creating

Genres Addresses: Across arts disciplines; Visual arts

Ages Addressed: Early childhood; School age; Transition; Adult

Session Description:

Susan and Patty will share approaches of organizing “making spaces” with the intention of encouraging and identifying individual interests. Through the investigation of materials, supporting personal exploration, and developing an environment that encourages discovery – the power of the human spirit and how to translate a person/group’s creative process into programming options for people with autism and other abilities will be made evident. S&P demonstrate how individual curiosity/making can lead to community connection and positive impacts for individuals, families, and the larger community. Susan and Patty co-authored the book *Upcycling Sheltered Workshops*, published by Ohio University Press, and the film documentary *Creative Abundance* (PBS/WOUB) features their approach.

www.CreativeAbundanceGroup.com

Photos of projects: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/22993679@N00/albums/72157638580365474>

Photo story/video of creating a "making space":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jHzKyn7pPM>

READY ROOM**Session Title: Art Projects for Children with Food Acceptance Issues**

Presenters:

Eric Marlow

Visual Artist

As a professional artist, I work in a wide variety of mediums, from drawing and painting to sculpture and jewelry. A graduate of The Ohio State University, I taught drawing, painting, and sculpture classes while in graduate school. I have taught jewelry classes at the Columbus Cultural Arts Center. I sell my work at craft shows and in fine crafts galleries. I am currently a teaching artist for the Ohio Arts Council’s Artist-in-Residence program, the Greater Columbus Arts Council, and the Ohio Alliance for Arts Education’s Artist-in-Schools program. I am represented by VSA Ohio, where in 2014 I did a residency with special needs children at the Bridgeway Academy (formerly the Helping Hands Center) in Columbus, Ohio.

Lara Pytlik

Occupational Therapist

Lara Pytlik, MOT, OTR/L is an occupational therapist who is a member of the Food Acceptance Team at Bridgeway Academy. She has been working at Bridgeway Academy since August of 2012. Lara is trained in Handwriting without Tears and the Zones of Regulation. She has completed the AOTA Fieldwork Educator Certificate Program. Lara completed her education at the University of Pittsburgh where she received a Bachelor of Science degree in rehabilitation sciences, minor in social work, and a Master in Occupational Therapy degree.

Session Format: Presentation/Lecture

Theme Alignment: Creating; Learning; Living

Genres Addressed: Visual arts; Art therapy

Ages Addressed: Early childhood; School age

Session Description:

Children on the autism spectrum often have limited diets which lack nutritional value. They are averse to trying new foods, especially healthy fruits and vegetables. Bridgeway Academy (formerly Helping Hands Center), an educational and therapeutic center for children with autism, has many students with these limited diets and hoped to increase their exposure and tolerance to new foods. In 2014, Bridgeway Academy's Food Acceptance Team collaborated with VSA Ohio and artist Eric Marlow to develop a school-wide program in which students would be exposed to new healthy foods without the expectation of needing to eat the food by creating non-edible art through sculpture, collage, and other art forms. At the end of the collaboration, an "Art Opening" reception was held for the young artists along with invited guests to enjoy light refreshments and the children's artwork.

The 30-minute presentation will begin with the showing of a 6-minute YouTube video from the WOSU TV program *Broad and High* series highlighting Bridgeway Academy and VSA Ohio's collaboration. The video depicts the food art being made by the children in their classrooms, as well as being exposed to the new foods. It also incorporates interviews with resident artist, Eric Marlow, and the Bridgeway Academy staff – video link: <http://video.wosu.org/video/2365250263>. A 15-minute PowerPoint presentation will then be given by Eric Marlow, highlighting still photos and videos of the food acceptance art projects he developed with step-by-step instructions on how the projects were constructed. Lara Pytlik, Occupational Therapist, will also discuss the link between art, fine motor skills, food tolerance, and sensory integration, along with the outcomes of the collaboration. After the presentation, a Q&A session will be held with the audience.

There will also be a table set up with samples of the projects and support materials. An illustrated instruction book of the projects from the residency can be made available as a hard copy or e-book.

The collaboration was a huge success and has since morphed into new projects throughout the school. This presentation hopes to give families with children with autism the tools to introduce new healthy foods during mealtimes using a fun approach, while engaging children in various artistic mediums, constantly encouraging their creativity.

SPLIT SESSION / SHARED

Session Title: Fun with Food: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Food Acceptance in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Presenters:

Jennifer Swetnam

Speech-Language Pathologist, Bridgeway Academy

Jennifer Swetnam, MA, CCC-SLP is a speech-language pathologist who is a member of the Food Acceptance Team at Bridgeway Academy. She has been working at Bridgeway Academy since June of 2012. She is level two PROMPT trained and is LAMP certified. She has presented at the Milestones Conference in Cleveland on the topic of incorporating the LAMP approach while using the LAMP Words for life app on the iPad. Jennifer received her Bachelor of Arts in speech and hearing science from The Ohio State University and her Master of Arts in speech-language pathology from The University of Akron.

Samantha Lyle

Speech-Language Pathologist, Bridgeway Academy

Samantha is the speech department supervisor, a member of the Food Acceptance Team, and is one of the speech therapists in Bridgeway Academy's Theater Group. She has been with Bridgeway Academy since June 2010. Sam is level two PROMPT trained and working towards her Award for Continuing Education and LAMP certification. She has presented at several conferences including OCALI, Milestones, and various music therapy conferences on the topics of collaboration, social skills, and augmentative and alternative communication. Sam graduated with her bachelor's degree in speech and hearing science and her master's degree in speech-language pathology, both from The Ohio State University.

Session Format: Class/Workshop

Theme Alignment: Creating; Learning

Genres Addressed: Across arts disciplines; Culinary Art

Ages Addressed: Early childhood; School age

Session Description:

Eating difficulties have been observed in children with autism since the earliest diagnostic descriptions of the disorder (Twatchman-Reilly, Amaral, & Zebrowski 2008). Many individuals on the spectrum prefer starchy, crunchy foods. As a result, they have a very limited diet, lacking in nutritional foods. This can cause stress at home as parents try to expand their kids' diets. Often, mealtimes become one of the most stressful events in the day for both the children and parents. At Bridgeway Academy, we have seen food aversion widespread throughout our school. Many children have diets that do not include fruits or vegetables. In 2014, our Food Acceptance Team collaborated with Eric Marlow, an artist with VSA Ohio, to develop a school-wide experience in which the children would be exposed to healthy food without the expectation to eat the food. The students learned about food and created food art through sculpture, collage, and other artistic mediums. After this experience, our Food Acceptance Team, consisting of speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, and board certified behavior analysts, developed school-wide "snack parties" in which we exposed students to creative snacks with

actual fruits and vegetables. Snack parties were incorporated into weekly lessons during Bridgeway Academy's Summer Camp. During snack parties, students were encouraged to explore the food using their five senses, without emphasis on eating the food. This past school year, we have had the opportunity to partner with Local Matters, a not-for-profit organization in central Ohio working to inspire action because food impacts the quality of our health, our land, and our communities. Local Matters has allowed Bridgeway Academy to incorporate the Food Matters curriculum into our weekly health and science lessons school-wide. Food Matters is a 24-week food and ecology curriculum that provides children with an understanding of what healthful food is, where it comes from, how it grows, and how to prepare it in a fun and creative way. We have seen change in the students at our school as a result of these programs. In this session, we will describe techniques used in all three programs, share stories of student success, and provide a hands-on lesson for participants to learn how to present food in fun, creative ways for students to enjoy.

INNOVATION LAB**Session Title: ASD Puppet Theater in the Elementary Classroom**

Presenter:

Katherine Lloyd

ASD Teacher, Orange County Public Schools

Katherine Lloyd has a background in the arts, law, and education. She uses her opera and musical performance experience to inform her teaching students on the autism spectrum. She has taught students with disabilities from age three to fifth grade. Ms. Lloyd works at a Title I elementary school in Orlando, Florida. Her school has six ASD units, the largest ASD school in the county. She uses her experience as a lawyer to advocate on behalf of her students and to help their parents understand ESE laws, rules, and regulations as they relate to their children. She is currently a master's degree candidate in exceptional student education, with a concentration in Autism Spectrum Disorders. Ms. Lloyd's music performing background is extremely useful in keeping students engaged and learning in the classroom. Last spring, her pre-K class of four-year-olds performed two plays for their parents and other classes. Fourth-grade neurotypical peer-mentors worked with the pre-K students with their parts. The performances were a great success and enjoyed by parents, the school community, and most importantly, the student actors. With the support of administration and faculty, she will continue to teach her students through drama and music.

Session Format: Video/Presentation/Lecture

Theme Alignment: Creating; Learning

Genres Addressed: Drama/Theatre; Music; Social Skills

Ages Addressed: School age

Session Description:

This session will include a video, presentation, and discussion of a performance-based training project at an elementary school in Orlando, Florida. Five ASD students from grades three to five will perform a puppet theater adaptation of *Jack and the Beanstalk*. They will be assisted by neurotypical peers from general education classrooms. The project will culminate with performances by the students for parents and the school community. The session will include a description of the process of creating the script collaboratively with students and will end in a video-taped performance. The format of the play is important. The students are mostly non-verbal. Where most autism theater projects focus on verbal students and those high on the autism spectrum, with Asperger's Syndrome, or PDD-NOS (pervasive developmental delay, not otherwise specified), this project uses puppets to convey feelings and emotions. The students will help make their papier-mache masks and choose the masks which illustrate the characters' emotions. The purpose of this project is to allow our ASD students to create and become engaged in the creative process. Our students' general education peers will also engage in the creative process and engage with individuals with autism. The hope is that our students, faculty, and family members will become aware of the benefits the arts offer to individuals on the spectrum.

4:00 – 4:30pm**CLOSING SESSION**

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ReelAbilities Film Festival Short Film: *Bumblebees***Closing Comments**