



# Presenter Biographies

**Joe LaBelle**  
Director of Programs Impact, Family Network on Disabilities

Joe La Belle is a pioneering figure at the intersection of AI and education, serving as the Director of Programs Impact at Family Network on Disabilities. In Florida, he oversees four key programs and lends his expertise to OSEP-funded Technical Assistance centers, enhancing support for students with disabilities through technology.

Notably, Joe has played a crucial role in advocating for AI's role in education, engaging with the Secretary of Education, presenting to the US Department of Education staff, and sharing insights nationwide. His efforts focus on how AI can personalize learning and increase accessibility, making him a respected voice in the field.



**Michael McSheehan**  
Owner and Lead Consultant, Evolve & Effect, LLC

Michael McSheehan is a systems-thinker and implementation specialist. A leader in the field of MTSS and inclusive education, he assists schools and districts to braid multiple initiatives and build coherent approaches to teaching and learning. Michael co-led the Center on Inclusive Education at UNH and helped establish the SWIFT Education Center. Michael founded Evolve & Effect, LLC to collaborate with schools and districts who are asking hard questions and seeking significant change in the education of all students, especially those with disabilities and those who have been historically marginalized.



**Marc Purchin**  
Owner, Purchin Consulting

Marc Purchin's goals, education, experience, achievement, reputation and vision combined to prompt the establishment of Purchin Consulting in 1997. Beginning some two decades before that, Marc has personally conducted more than 3,000 mediations, mostly through contracts with the California Special Education Hearing Office, the Department of Developmental Disabilities, several public school districts and numerous non-profit organizations. In addition to that work, he has developed Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) programs for Special Education Local Plan Areas (SELPA) in partnership with Community Advisory Committees (CAC) throughout the state of California.

Marc earned his bachelor's degree at Southern Illinois University, majoring in Speech Communication with an emphasis in Interpersonal Communication and Theatre. He then completed the distinctive Master's in Business Administration (MBA) program in Non-Profit Management offered by American Jewish University (formerly University of Judaism.) That program added him to its faculty in 1996 and has taught courses such as "Conflict Resolution and Negotiation" and "Organizational Development and Leadership". Marc has also taught a "Collaboration" course in the School of Education at Cal State Dominguez Hills.



**Christi Kasa, Ph.D**  
**Professor, UCCS Department of Teaching and Learning**



Christi Kasa, Ph.D., is a Professor for the Department of Teaching and Learning and the Director of the Office of Inclusive Services at the University of Colorado. Her passion guides her teaching, research, and consulting to create successful, inclusive schools. Christi's expertise is in Universal Design for Learning, best practices for inclusive schooling, and inclusive post-secondary education. Christi began her career teaching in the public schools of California as a general and special education teacher. She now spends time in schools all over the country, working to end the segregation of students with disabilities.

**Shayna Laing**  
**Community Engagement Manager, IN! Pathways to Inclusive Higher Ed**

Shayna Laing, the Community Engagement Manager for IN! Pathways to Inclusive Higher Education, is a dynamic advocate for students with Intellectual Disability within postsecondary settings. With a Master's Degree in Special Education and a Graduate Certificate in Disability Services in Postsecondary Settings from BSU, she is dedicated to increasing access to and preparation for inclusive higher education pathways throughout Colorado.



**Debi Grebenik (presenting at UCCS)**  
**Founder and CEO, Trauma Training Institute**



Debi Grebenik is known for her expertise in healing child trauma. She provides engaging and enthusiastic presentations on healing for children, families, teams, and systems. Her education includes Masters' Degrees in Social Work and Religious Education; and a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Innovation. Debi is the Managing Director of Healing and Belonging for Alia, a nonprofit focused on innovations for people and systems impacted by trauma. Debi's mission is for everyone to experience an "aha" moment about trauma's impact on their lives. She is known for loving her 8 grandchildren, the color pink, and Starbucks plus her nonstop energy.

**Jae McQueen, LCSW (presenting at UNC)  
Assistant Director for Mental Health, Cherry Creek Schools**



Jae McQueen has diverse experience focused on meeting social, emotional and behavioral needs of children, youth and families. She is a proud social worker who began her career providing intensive in-home therapy to families involved with the child welfare system. She also directed a child placement agency and residential treatment center. Jae has also worked as a child protection school social worker within a school district, a unique partnership between a school district and a county department of human services. She is a skilled presenter, teaching social work practice at the University of Denver and presenting on various topics at national conferences. Her most recent work includes implementing social emotional learning interventions guided by equity-based, trauma-informed practices.

**Emily Harvey  
Attorney, Disability Law Colorado**

Emily Harvey graduated from George Mason University School of Law in 2013. She joined Disability Law Colorado in March of 2014, and after pursuing an opportunity to work as an attorney at the Office for Civil Rights with the U.S. Department of Education in 2020, Emily returned to DLC as a Team Leader in 2021. Emily is a co-founder and the board president of LIM359, a nonprofit that provides activities-based support for people with limb loss and limb difference in the Denver area. She also serves as LIM359's youth camp director. Emily is the author and illustrator of a children's book series called The Girl with the Robot Leg. In her free time, Emily enjoys walking, reading, jigsaw puzzles, and spending time with her husband, dog, cats, and the horses at Zuma's Rescue Ranch.



**Sara Pielsticker  
Attorney, Disability Law Colorado**

Sara Pielsticker joined Disability Law Colorado as a Staff Attorney in 2021. She graduated from the University of San Diego in 2016 with a degree in Education and Nonprofit Management and from Syracuse University in 2020 with a dual degree. She received her law degree from the Syracuse University College of Law with a curricular focus in Disability Law and Policy and a Master's of Science in the Cultural Foundations of Education with a Certificate of Advanced Study in Disability Studies. Sara is originally from Colorado and has spent most of her life working for nonprofits that promote inclusion for people with disabilities. In her free time, she enjoys photography, jigsaw puzzles, and being outdoors as much as possible.



**Jackie Joseph, PhD**  
**Research Associate Professor, University of Denver, PELE**

Dr. Jackie Joseph is a Research Associate Professor at the University of Denver Positive Early Learning Experiences Center, where her work promotes high-quality inclusion across the early care and education system. She specifically focuses on family partnerships and evidence-based strategies for fostering each and every young child's social, emotional, and behavioral development. Jackie's experience working in child care administration offers her an applied understanding of implementing and scaling high quality inclusion. Dr. Joseph has two young children herself, one of whom happens to have a rare genetic syndrome. Her family's experiences strongly influence her anti-ableist research and work, and Jackie strives to co-create opportunities and spaces that ensure that all young children, disabled and nondisabled, and their families experience meaningful inclusion and belonging.



**Rebecca Pauls**  
**Executive Director, Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (PLAN)**

Rebecca is the Executive Director of Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (PLAN), a Vancouver-based social enterprise that partners with families and people facing social isolation to secure their future by mobilizing relationships and leveraging community assets. Since joining PLAN nine years ago, Rebecca has led a complete re-design of planning practices to integrate principles of person centered planning, ABCD, narrative practices and independent facilitation. After demonstrating the strength and flexibility of this community approach, Rebecca is regularly invited to consult with organizations about how it can be scaled and applied to population groups across North America. Rebecca serves as a faculty member with the Asset-Based Community Development Institute at DePaul University in Chicago.

Rebecca Pauls is an enthusiastic leader and creative facilitator with a broad range of experiences in community development and collaboration with people who have disabilities. She is passionate about seeing the unique gifts each person has, and is convinced that our communities will be stronger, safer and more resilient when each of us is contributing and recognized for our gifts.

**Laura Trapp, Ph.D.**  
**Professor, University of Northern Colorado**

Dr. Laura Trapp is a passionate educator with over 15 years of expertise partnering with multidisciplinary teams to promote meaningful educational opportunities for students, families, and teachers. Currently, she serves as an Assistant Professor at the University of Northern Colorado. Laura specializes in family-school partnerships, special education teacher preparation, special education law, culturally responsive applied behavior analysis, trauma informed care, as well as alternatives to restraint, seclusion, and suspension. Laura is enthusiastic about the value and necessity of team collaboration to honor, celebrate and educate each individual student. In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with her family, riding horses and being in nature.



**Erin Camper, RN, BSN**  
**Parent Advisor, PEAK Parent Center**



Erin Camper is mother to a child with an ultra rare genetic condition who requires significant support related to his multiple diagnoses as well as two teen daughters. Erin has served as a Parent Advisor at Peak Parent center for just over two years. Erin is also a Registered Nurse of nearly 18 years who has worked in a variety of settings that have given her first hand experience with the medical side of disability to include Pediatric ICU, schools, pediatric urgent care, Neonatal ICU, and currently as a private duty nurse. Erin serves on the Special Education Advisory Committee in her local school district and the Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee. Erin is passionate about inclusion in education and all areas of life and has watched her son thrive both academically and socially by being meaningfully included in his general education classroom since he started school. Erin enjoys sharing the ways she has partnered with Colton's team to foster friendships in the context of his significant support needs.

**Melissa Wiley,**  
**Deputy Town Manager, Erie, CO**

Melissa Akie Wiley is the only facially disfigured women to lead local government at an executive level in the United States. After surviving a severe pit bull attack at age 5, Melissa spent her childhood navigating over 30 reconstructive surgeries and relentless experiences of bullying and social rejection. She went on to attend an Ivy League school, work for the U.S. Economic Advisor to Northern Ireland, develop and lead Denver Peak Academy (the City and County of Denver's nationally-recognized innovation program), and publish her story in The New York Times.

