



SUMMIT 2024 SPEAKERS VOICES OF THE NEURODIVERGENT COMMUNITY

Alex Kimmel is an experienced speaker and owner of The SelfDeterminator www.alexkimmel.com. He is contracted at the local, state, national, and international levels for keynote and breakout sessions on key issues such as Inclusion, Disability Acceptance, Neurodiversity, Culture of Gentleness, and Self-direction. He has educated and inspired students, teachers, professionals, congregations, and the community at large since 2006. Alex is the inaugural recipient of the 2023 Jane Vermuellen Leadership State Award from Michigan Developmental Disabilities Institute as best representation for the passion Jane had for self-determination, advocacy, person-centered planning and community life.

Alex is honored to be selected as the foundational featured presenter for the Tony Richards Leadership Academy. "LAUNCH You!" Life Leadership offers unique opportunities to think, learn, and talk with experts and peers. (yourleadershipacademy.org) Alex is honored to have been selected to be included in the 2020 Michigan Arts and Humanities Touring Directory. He is honored to be the 2019 recipient of the ROBERT THOMAS SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL award from The Arc of Oakland County. "A social worker who displays exceptional concern for persons with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities and shows his/her concern by providing quality care." Alex is also honored to be the 2017 co-winner of the prestigious Dan Moran Award for inclusion and advocacy. "This individual actively promotes the rights of individuals, encourages self-advocacy, raises awareness about mental illness or developmental disabilities; breaks down boundaries, creates new relationships that end stigma; and serves as a role model to others."

Kristy Forbes is an Australian autism and neurodiversity support specialist with a rich background in education and family support. Drawing on her extensive experience as an educator, integration aide, and behavioural specialist, Kristy offers support to neurodivergent individuals and their families, as well as professionals seeking to enhance their understanding and skills. Her qualifications span Political & Social Sciences, Education, Literature, Film, and Art, enriching her approach with a broad perspective. What sets Kristy apart is her unique combination of professional expertise and personal insight. Diagnosed as autistic with ADHD and Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA), and as a parent to four neurodivergent children, she brings a deeply empathetic view to her work. Kristy's personal journey through challenges such as addiction, family violence, and homelessness, alongside her professional achievements, informs her commitment to recognizing and valuing individual neurodivergent experiences.

Meghan Ashburn is an educational consultant, former elementary school teacher, parent mentor, and co-author of *I Will Die On This Hill*. She advocates for inclusion and communication rights at the local, state, and national levels of government. Her website, *Not An Autism Mom*, is loaded with resources to help educators and parents support Autistic children inside and outside the classroom.

Jules Edwards is a neurodivergent Anishinaabe parent, advocate, writer, and speaker. Her professional development includes a Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities fellowship, Association of University Centers on Disability National Training Directors Council trainee, and Wilder Foundation Community Equity Program graduate. Jules serves as a Board Member of the Ombudsman for American Indian Families, a Member of the national Intertribal Disability Advocacy Council, a Board Member of The Arc Minnesota, and a co-founder of MN Autistic Alliance. Her culture shapes her worldview and decision-making, and she is committed to making the community a better place for generations to come.

Jenny Hunt (Autistic Sighentist) is a multidisciplinary published researcher who focuses on medicine, medical law, and ethics and has since shifted their interest to Neurodiversity. Their current objective is advocating for further education to be considered for those looking to support Neurodiverse populations; namely professionals, parents, and other Neurodivergent individuals.

Tiffany Joseph, Hi, I'm TJ, or Tiffany, creator of the social media platform, Nigh Functioning Autism. I am a single mother of three neurodivergent teens. I live and work in and around Maryland and Virginia, primarily in Washington, DC. I am Autistic, diagnosed in my late teens. However, I was diagnosed with other conditions when I was in elementary school, like central auditory processing disorder and ADHD. I also have had epilepsy and OCD since I was a child. I am hard of hearing as well. As such, I use many ways to communicate, like ASL, mouth words, high-tech AAC, and other ways depending on how accessible my speech and memory are to me at the moment. I work in special education or more preferred, 'accessible education', as a paraeducator for elementary school and a communication teacher/ partner to mostly teen and young adult Autistic nonspeakers. My passion in the disability space is

communication and education rights for people of all disabilities. I specifically love teaching how to implement high-tech speech-generating devices in schools and homes. I always say I would have access to my own speech if I had text-based or high-tech speech-generating strategies earlier in my life.

Jody Carter, Ed.S. Jody has over 15 years of experience serving students in some of the most restrictive settings, including residential and separate school facilities. During this time, he has provided professional learning to caregivers, educators, and mental health professionals on state and national levels. He is extremely passionate about ending physical restraints and seclusion in the settings above through CPS implementation, which has led to several behavior programs and schools eliminating these practices completely. His primary focus is to improve the well-being of children and those who serve them.

Ross W. Greene, Ph.D. is the Founding Director of the non-profit Lives in the Balance and originator of the evidence-based Collaborative & Proactive Solutions (CPS) model, as described in his books *The Explosive Child*, *Lost at School*, *Lost & Found*, and *Raising Human Beings*. He served on the faculty at Harvard Medical School for over 20 years and is now an adjunct Professor in the Department of Psychology at Virginia Tech and an adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Science at the University of Technology Sydney in Australia. Dr. Greene developed and executive produced the award-winning documentary film *The Kids We Lose* and continues to consult to parents, schools, and therapeutic facilities throughout the world.

Kimberly R. Hopkins, LICSW is the Director of Learning Resources and Support at Lives in the Balance and has been a licensed social worker since 2000 and has dedicated her entire career to working with at-risk youth and their families, primarily in residential and public-school settings. She has worked with some of the most challenging, misunderstood youth, with a focus on adolescents. Kim has managed the clinical departments of two organizations serving youth and families, both who have implemented Collaborative & Proactive Solutions (CPS) to improve outcomes/treatment goal attainment and reduce punitive interventions, such as restraints. In 2007, Kim began working with Dr. Greene providing training and consultation to various organizations and schools looking to learn CPS and implement the model in their setting.

Dan Hyson is an Associate Professor and Director, School Psychology Graduate Program at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and a Lives in the Balance CPS Trainer and Provider. For the past 9 ½ years, Dan has been a faculty member within the school psychology graduate program at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. Previously, Dan spent seven years as a Data Management Coordinator for a cooperative of school districts in Minnesota and six years as a school psychologist in a large school district in suburban Minneapolis. While in this latter role, Dan was introduced to Dr. Ross Greene's Collaborative and Proactive Solutions (CPS) alternative model for working with students with concerning behaviors when he was case managing and providing direct services to students with emotional and behavioral needs. In his spare time, he is an avid sports fan and an animal lover, with five cats and a horse.

Maile Munson, LICSW, Director of Advocacy, Outreach & Public Awareness Lives in the Balance and has over 20 years of experience supporting young people with emotional and behavioral challenges in various school settings, including residential homes, therapeutic day schools, and public schools. She is passionate about doing everything possible to heighten awareness, end the use of punitive exclusionary disciplinary practices, and bring people together to participate in the process and make it happen.

Allen R. Tilsley, B.Ed.: Primary; Special Ed. Minor and LITB Trainer & CPS Certified Provider is a Special Education Teacher, employed by Edmonton Public Schools, with 9 years of teaching experience. He is most passionate about working with students who are struggling to meet the expectations being placed upon them by others. In 2019 Allen officially began his CPS journey, which evolved into working with the LITB team to provide training and consultation to teachers within Edmonton Public Schools network. Specializing in Dr. Ross Greene's CPS model, Allen uses that experience to train professionals and paraprofessionals in actualizing CPS within their working environments. In addition to his passion for CPS, Allen is very passionate about the outdoors and conservation. He has embraced this passion by becoming an instructor for [AHEIA](#) which affords him the opportunity to teach students of all ages about conservation and firearms safety.