



## Speaker Biographies

**Al Walker** has been sharing his thoughts and his brand of humor with audiences around the world for a long time. He has been inducted into the Speakers Hall of Fame and awarded The Cavett (Ka' vet), which is the Oscar of Professional Speaking. Al is a recipient of The Order of the Palmetto, the highest award given by the State of South Carolina for his service to SC. In addition to his books, Thinking Big & Living Large and The Sheep Thief, Al has written numerous articles on leadership, personal development, humor, and speaking. His most recent book, The Sheep Thief, is based on an inspiring legend that had a huge impact on him and influenced the direction of his life when he was in his mid-20's.

**Alicia Grubel** is the Director of Quality Assurance at Thrive Upstate in Greenville County. She began her career supporting individuals with intellectual disabilities in 1997 as a Direct Support Professional in New York. During that time, she earned a B.A. in Psychology from Stony Brook University. Alicia joined the Thrive Upstate team in 2005 as a QIDP. She continues to be a strong advocate for protecting and promoting the rights of vulnerable adults.

**Ann Dalton** is the Director of Quality Management for SCDDSN. She has over 30 years of experience working with SCDDSN and its network of service providers, including previous work at the Florence County DSN Board, Rich/Lex DSN Board, and York County DSN Board. Her work includes experience in supported employment, case management, and the management of a residential setting for medically complex individuals. Ann is active in her local community and is the proud mom of two Eagle Scouts.

**Barbara Merrill** joined the staff of ANCOR in 2012 as Vice President for Government Relations and since 2014 has served as Chief Executive Officer. During Barbara's tenure as CEO, ANCOR's membership has more than quadrupled in size, solidifying its status as the leading voice in Washington for community-based providers of intellectual and developmental disability services. Today, the association represents more than 2,000 provider organizations and nearly five dozen state provider associations. Barbara has been a leader in the disability field since 1992, working first as an advocate and later as an attorney and state legislator whose diverse background has been united by a commitment to strengthening community providers and the services they deliver to people with I/DD.

**Bonnie Shaw** is passionate about leadership and growing people! She has served as the Children's Services Manager for the world-renowned organization Arts for All Inc / 3rd Street kids. Bonnie was instrumental in the creation of their fully inclusive arts-based

preschool. She has served as a preschool administrator for over 15 years and is now currently one of the Regional Directors of Case Management for Bright Start. She is passionate about helping all she meets discover their fullest potential and rediscover their passion for their work

**Elizabeth Krauss** has been a resident of South Carolina since 1984. She has more than 30 years of experience in the field of Intellectual disabilities, both at the state and local levels. Currently, she is the Executive Director of the Georgetown County Board of Disabilities and Special Needs. Previously, she spent 10 years at the City of Georgetown as Assistant City Administrator learning about local politics, community policing, emergency management and personnel management. She is currently a volunteer Chairperson of the Georgetown County Planning commission and a volunteer and contributor to Hugs for Horses Therapeutic Riding programs serving children and adults with disabilities

**Emily Danciu-Grosso** is the Marketing and Sales Coordinator for SimplyHome. She has a sibling with a developmental disability. This relationship motivates Emily as a tireless advocate. Emily's professional background is in program development and implementation, along with years in the role of direct support. She has been in this field for over ten years and has experience in the areas of wellness, employment, and transitioning into adulthood. She is excited in her role at SimplyHome to share tools and resources with families and providers that show what is possible in terms of independent living through the use of technology.

**Harold Sloves** is an Innovation Consultant for Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities Services, Systems & Networks. This professional chapter of developing technology-driven Transformation projects follows his role as Director of the Division of Program Innovation within Tennessee's Department of Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities. During his tenure as Innovation Director, Harold led a multi-disciplinary team to find, develop, test and offer innovative support solutions for people, their families and providers through the merger of Enabling Technology, Employment Innovation and Community Inclusion, and Workforce Transformation.

**Ishya "Shae" Dotson** is the Assistant Director of Supports, Person Centered Practices for Therap Services. Shae began working for Therap in 2014. In her role as the State Implementation Specialist, Shae provides consultation, implementation strategies, training and project coordination support to state contract employees and all local human services providers. She is the project lead for Puerto Rico, Alabama Division of Mental Health and Department of Developmental Disabilities, Alabama Division of Mental Health and Substance and Arkansas Department of Humans Services. Shae works on several projects within Therap including serving as the trainer and consultant on using data analytics to inform person-centered practices for the University of Georgia Living Well Project and implementing person centered practices globally through Therap's global initiatives. Shae was recently featured as a keynote speaker on person centered planning and practices in Bangladesh, Nepal, Kenya and Zambia. Shae began supporting children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in 2000. Shae is recognized as a national leader in the field of person-centered practices and is a former board member of The Learning Community for Person Centered Practices and the College of Direct Support National Advisory Board. Shae is a certified Person-Centered Thinking Trainer, a certified Person-Centered Coaches Trainer, a Charting the Life Course

Ambassador and Coach. Shae holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a concentration in Management and Leadership, a Master of Business Administration from Capella University and is currently a doctoral candidate in the same field.

**Jane Jenkins Herlong** is a Sirius XM Humorist, member of the Speaker Hall of Fame™, international best-selling/award-winning author, professional singer, recording artist and award-winning professional speaker. Jane has also achieved the distinction of becoming a Certified Speaking Professional by the National Speakers Association. Jane's is the author of five best-selling/award-winning books: "Rhinestones on My Flip-Flops: Choosing Extravagant Joy in the Midst of Everyday Mess-ups," (Hachette Book Group), "Bury Me with My Pearls" (Gold Medal in the Illumination Book Awards and Christian Small Publisher Book of the Year), "Bare Feet to High Heels," and "What Ta-Tas Teach Us," (breast cancer awareness). Jane's fifth book, "Sweet Tea Secrets from the Deep Fried South," is published by Tyndale House Publishing and is a number one best-seller/new release in five Amazon categories.

**Dr. Judy Johnson** has supported individuals with intellectual disabilities for over 50 years in a variety of settings including institutions in the 1970's and 80's, Deputy Director for the SC Department of Disabilities for 8 years, 6 years as a For-Profit provider across 7 states and 16 years as The President of the Babcock Center here in SC. For the past 4 years she served as a Consultant for the SCHSPA. Throughout her career, Dr. Johnson served on many national and regional boards and has written and published several articles. She is currently enjoying being grandmother and great grandmother to 14 children and playing and teaching bridge in her spare time.

**Kaelynn Partlow** is 25 years old and was diagnosed with autism at the age of 10. She lives in Greenville SC and has been employed at Project Hope Foundation as a Registered Behavior Technician for the last 8 years where she works with middle and high-school-aged clients. Kaelynn has published several autism advocacy articles and was a recent participant in the Netflix series Love On The Spectrum. She uses her social media accounts as a platform to share information on autism and related conditions.

**Leslie Haywood** is Co-founder of eBridge, Inc., a web-based document management company based in Tampa, Florida. Since 2002, eBridge has been providing hosted document management solutions to companies of all sizes across the globe. Their mission is to provide simple, affordable, secure and scalable solutions to their many diverse clients, and over the years they have been able to do just that. Using eBridge has allowed their clients to eliminate waste, lower costs, and save labor and time. All while giving them immediate access to their important documents anytime, and from any computer with an internet connection.

**Linda Kunz** is an experienced Early Interventionist, Case Manager, Case Manager Supervisor and Regional Director. Through her time as an EI, she learned to develop her connection and collaboration skills that were more in tune to what people needed. Driven by her passion for connection, Linda developed expertise in leadership. As part of her growth is from her personal experiences with having a sibling with Down syndrome and a child with the same diagnosis. Her journey gives her the unique ability to empower people so they can achieve great success.

**Dr. Maulik M. Trivedi** is a board-certified Emergency Medicine physician in practice for over 20 years. He has served as the chairman or associate chair of several emergency departments. He has also been an integral part of the core leadership of Emergency Medicine provider groups in the region. He is a founding partner of StationMD and has been instrumental in helping the organization achieve its mission of improving the quality of care for the IDD population. He is a recognized national speaker and thought leader on the use of technology and telehealth solutions to positively impact an individual's medical care and foster independence. He continues to practice as an ER doctor in the NYC area.

**Omar Chirinos** is the Director of Innovative Services for The Charles Lea Center. With an associate degree in Cyber and Network Security or Associate of Applied Science, Omar specializes in the creating new innovated ways to use Assistive Technology. He regularly attends the new technology conferences to assure the program stays with the new technology trends. A strong believer of empowering and enriching people with the use of technology. Omar also has a fifteen-year background of Warehouse online experience. He was one of the first individuals to help start up Wal-marts.com shopping experience. There he led the Quality Analyst team to ensure customers received quality products. Omar enjoys football but spends most of his time with his family.

**Rich Frettoloso**, prior to joining Therap Services worked as a Residential Coordinator as well as a Therap/Staff training Administrator with Horry County Disabilities and Special Needs in South Carolina. It was in the role of Therap/Staff Training Administrator that Rich oversaw the implementation of Therap modules, including staff training, monitoring, assistance with creation of Agency Procedures as it related to the use of Therap, and creating Quality Assurance reports, from Therap, for Department Directors and other Administrative staff. Rich has worked in the Human Service field since 1991. His experience has been spent supporting individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities, in North Carolina and South Carolina, working in various capacities. These have included; Direct Support Professional, Recreation Coordinator, QIDP. Facility Administrator, Regional Vocational Director, and Therap/Staff training Administrator. In a career that has spanned many different levels, Rich has developed a passion for providing supports to individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities, as well as, insuring staff have the tools needed to be successful. Rich earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Music and Psychology from Western Carolina University in 1990.

**Shekeeta Davis** is a native of SC with over thirteen years experience in the intellectual and developmental disabilities field. She joined Therap in 2020 and has a wealth of knowledge and experience on best practices in managing agency funding and billing. Prior to working for Therap, Sheketta was employed as an agency director and billing coordinator.

**Dr. Temple Grandin** is a Professor of Animal Science at Colorado State University. Facilities she has designed for handling livestock are used by many companies around the world. She has also been instrumental in implementing animal welfare auditing programs that are used by McDonalds, Wendy's, Whole Foods, and other corporations. Temple has appeared on numerous TV shows such as 20/20, Larry King Live, and Prime Time. Her books include: Thinking in Pictures, Livestock Handling and Transport and The Autistic Brain. Her books Animals in Translation and Visual Thinking have been on the New York Times Bestseller List. Temple was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame in September 2017 and in 2022 was named a Colorado State University Distinguished Professor.

**Vanessa Pressley** is the Sr. Director of Community Supports Services with the Charles Lea Center. In this capacity, she has the opportunity to build relationships with each individual, helping them to identify and realize their work, community and recreational dreams, and provide them with the skills needed to transition into a higher quality of life. She has a Bachelors in Business Administration and is pursuing a Master of Arts from Liberty University. Her passion is to help people find ways to achieve their dreams when they feel that they cannot.

**Wanda Connelly Crotwell** is a government relations professional with more than 30 years of experience in the fields of government, communications, and public relations. Prior to joining The Southern Group, she was a lobbyist and strategic advisor at Mike Daniel and Associates for seven years. Before joining MD&A in 2012, she was assistant to the Commissioner for External Affairs at the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, where she served under four separate commissioners and managed governmental affairs, legislative services, constituent services, annual budget requests, accountability reports, internal communications, and media relations. In this capacity she also served as policy advisor and strategic counsel to the Commissioner. Wanda is a cum laude graduate of Clemson University, and holds a BA in English and communications, with a concentration in political science. She has just completed her 26th year as a registered lobbyist in South Carolina.

**Wynn Godbold** is the founder of the I'm Possible Lifestyle. Her speciality is helping transform what feels IMPOSSIBLE to work and life into our I'M POSSIBLE. Wynn is certified in leadership and success coaching and training by the John Maxwell Team.