



King County

Working Age Adult Policy Task Force Member Bios

CANDACE Airhart has a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and a Bachelor of Science in Psychology and has recently retired from Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities (DSHS/DDD.) She had a 30-year career in the field of employment for people with disabilities. She looks forward to taking what has already happened in the developmental disabilities (DD) employment field and building on it to enhance and expand employment opportunities.

VIRGINIA Burzotta has a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Health Education from Pacific Lutheran University and a desire to see a steady increase in people with disabilities in paid jobs. She is a registered Counselor in the State of Washington and has worked with people with disabilities since junior high school. Virginia has worked for Northwest Center for nine years and currently works as the Director of Community (adult) Services. She worked in residential services for three years prior to that and as an intern at Western State Hospital for over a year. She is most excited about seeing the action plans implemented and seeing the policy work.

CESILEE Coulson has a Masters of Science in Social Psychology of Sport and Exercise and is the Executive Director of the Washington Initiative for Supported Employment. It was her role in providing technical assistance and training services for supported employment that brought her to the task force. She believes that the task force will be able to provide support, direction, energy, and vision for the possibility / opportunity for full employment for all individuals with DD in King County.

LEO Finnegan has several Masters in engineering degrees and is a retired Director of Power Plant Engineering and Construction for Puget Power. He is the father of a 38-year-old son with DD and is a past Chairman of the King County Developmental Disabilities Division's Advisory Board, and served on the Metro Accessible Service Advisory Committee, the Issaquah Park Board, and the Issaquah Special Population Recreation Board. He hopes that this task force can help to expand para-transit services so that people can work and do the other things that make for a quality of life enjoyed by other citizens of King County.

KRISTEN Kavaller has a Bachelor of Science in Psychology with a minor in special education. She is a DSHS/DDD Case Resource Manager and before that worked in a variety of vocational support programs. She feels that resource availability is important to make this policy work.

GINGER Kwan has a Bachelor of Arts in Home Economics and Family Development and a love for families and individuals with DD. She is a private



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consultant and trainer on multicultural disabilities and cultural competency. For seven years, her focus has been on providing linguistically and culturally competent services to families from diverse backgrounds. Ginger serves on many committees including the State Interagency Coordinating Council (for early intervention), the National Center for Cultural Competence, and March of Dimes. She is the mother of a nine-year-old with autism, and hopes to see the County implement all of the goals and action steps the task force recommends.

ELDEN Lamb has a Bachelor in Art in Education / Human Services and 20 years experience coordinating case managers in the effective and efficient delivery of adults with disabilities and 18 years experience in community building by establishing and maintaining relationships with other agencies and organizations. Some of his projects include developing and managing King County's first "Tenant Support," a residential model for individuals with disabilities; assisted in the design and pilot of an Adult Basic Education Program for adults with disabilities; a planner and presenter at Washington State's first annual "Forum on Community Services and Inclusion," and an instructor and leader of professional workshop presenting "The Fundamentals of Community Services." He is also a member of the Support Services Committee for the King County Department of Community and Human Services, Developmental Disabilities Division.

ALISON McCormick has a Masters of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling from San Francisco State University, a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (C.R.C.), and has been the Assistant Director of the Mainstay program at Seattle Central Community College for 16 years. Alison is eager to make a contribution to the policy which will guide us into the next level of attaining full lives for people with DD. She is very interested in working within public schools to facilitate quality transition from high school into employment and hopes to build an infrastructure within school districts, which promotes youth being linked to jobs, supports, and resources which bridge to an independent life and inclusive communities.

DEBBIE Meyers has an Associate in Art in Social Human Services and has worked for SKCAC Industries in Kent, Washington for 24 years in a number of capacities. Currently in the position of Associate Director/Program Services, responsibilities include administrative as well as coordination of employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities. Recent accomplishments at SKCAC Industries include contracting/coordination with Aramark Services at Safeco and Qwest Fields to provide custodial jobs during Mariner and Seahawks home games and development of their Individual Supported Employment program that increases opportunities for people working in sheltered employment to explore jobs in the community.



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RON Ovadenko has a Masters in Social Work and Urban Planning; he currently works as a Social Worker. Ron is involved with the community on the board of both the Washington Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities as well as the Fremont Public Association. As someone with a developmental disability himself, Ron has first hand knowledge of the challenges of finding and retaining employment. Ron was interested in joining the task force with a realization that employment will enhance quality of life.

JUDY Perry has over 28 years experience in the disability field working with public and private sector businesses and organizations to create effective partnerships that benefit and empower people with disabilities, families and communities. Twenty years of her experience is at the senior management level, operating under the Office of Instruction at Highline Community College (HCC). She currently manages and supervises an operational unit that provides career track planning, assessment, educational programs for students with barriers to traditional higher education, vocational training, job placement and job retention services for 200 students with disabilities and the department is working with over sixty employers. Judy has also provided statewide and international consultation and technical assistance in supported employment and other programs serving people with DD. She has collaborated and consulted with school districts in the formation and implementation of educational and vocational placement programs within the Community College which serve as an alternative for transition services currently provided by local school districts for students with special needs ages 18-21. Her international experience includes the presentation of multiple workshops in South Africa and Namibia on the role of the Community College as the training organization in the employment of people with disabilities between 1999 and 2004. Ms. Perry has served as Lead staff for HCC on a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded project entitled "Education and Training for the Disabled: A Model for Workforce Development" with cooperating South African Institution False Bay College.

JODI Reimer is a parent of a teenager with a disability. She works at The Arc of King County as the Parent-to-Parent Coordinator and has a Bachelor of Arts in Recreation Administration. She serves on the Real Choices Committee and has an ability to network people, which comes in handy working with families of school aged students to promote their future employment.

EMILY Rogers has a Bachelor in Science in Community Health, has been actively involved in the self advocacy movement for five years and has worked for The Arc of King County for six years. She is the Chair of the Self-Advocates in Leadership (SAIL) Coalition, which is a coalition that works to shape public policy in regards to people with



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developmental disabilities. Emily states that she “believes this task force is the beginning of a cultural shift that includes the expectation that people with disabilities will and can work and hopes that people with disabilities begin to understand that a disability does not mean that you need to accept life, and cannot change, have goals, get more dreams and make more green.”

LYLE Romer began his career working with people with developmental disabilities as a houseparent in a group home for 12 women in 1973 in Corvallis, Oregon. He went on to graduate school earning a Master of Science Education degree in Multiple Disabilities. As director of an early supported employment program, Lyle and the other staff created employment opportunities for people with more significant disabilities and paid the highest wages in the State of Oregon at the time to people with severe disabilities. Next stop was earning a PhD from the University of Washington in Special Education. This degree resulted in Lyle working for the next 15 years teaching and conducting research in DD at the University of Oregon and the University of Washington. For seven years he acted as the research liaison for the Division of Developmental Disabilities for research contracts granted to the University of Washington’s Center for Disability Policy and Research. He currently serves as the Executive Director of Total Living Concept, a supported living agency in South King County.

KATHY Sellars is retired from Boeing where she worked in the commercial division, and has an abiding interest in how ‘good jobs lead to good lives’ for people with significant disabilities. She has a 37-year-old daughter who is supported in a job that she has had at Puget Consumer Co-op for 13 years. She thinks the task force is a way to convince everybody that a real job is a real possibility for people with disabilities, a way to find supports to make employment a reality.

LISA Turner is the owner and Executive Director of L. Turner Associates, Inc. (LTA, Inc.). She has a Master’s degree in Therapeutic Recreation and graduate certification in Gerontology. For over 20 years LTA, Inc. has provided technical assistance, staff training, and program development in a variety of social service areas. They specialize in the areas of aging, DD, and mental health. Ms. Turner and her associates also write, edit, and publish a variety of booklets, newsletters and flyers for social service programs. In 1983 Lisa started providing retirement services for people with DD for King County Developmental Disabilities Division (KCDDD), when she developed one of the first Community Access programs for seniors with DD in the country. A description of the program was included in the casebook: *Integration Experiences: Program Ideas in Aging and Developmental Disabilities*, Matthew Janicki & Robert Keefer, 1992. Five years ago, LTA, Inc. expanded its Community Access services to provide



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services to younger adults with DD in North King County. Lisa is also an artist, represented by Gallery 110 in Seattle, WA. She is the author of several books in the topic area of recreation and leisure.

THERESE Vafaezadeh is the parent of a 22 year old who has a severe disability. Therese also has a Masters of Science in Nursing. She has worked at Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center for 24 years. She has worked in the neurodevelopmental clinic for the past seven years. As a nurse practitioner, she works with children and teens with disabilities and their families.

KAREN Williams has a Bachelor in Art in Disabilities in Latin America and has been an employment consultant at Trillium for four years. She sees the task force as a way to make employing people with disabilities a common business practice in the near future. She has particularly enjoyed the task force's process of thinking collaboratively and creating action steps and developing follow through for the action steps.

CHRISTOPHER Willis has a Bachelor in Art in Psychology, Master of Science in Education, and a Principal Certificate, and is a Special Education Director for the Federal Way School District. He has a hands on approach to working with families, students and staff that will be beneficial to the task of implementing this policy. He hopes that by participating in the task force, schools can learn to clearly articulate to parents and staff how the system can support students with disabilities and clearly understand the impact of the Working Age Adult Policy on students with disabilities. Chris sees this policy as a way of keeping open communication among stakeholders.