



PARTNERS FOR EMPLOYMENT

Reaching New Heights in Supported Employment Conference 2025



Let's discover what we can do together!

DAY 1 – Thursday, April 10

	8:00-9:00	Conference check-in open; breakfast	
JOINT SESSIONS	9:00-10:00	<i>A year of discovering what we can do together</i> Marcy Hintz, Partners for Employment	Vista Grande Ballroom
	10:00-11:00	<i>Opening Keynote: Beyond Limits: Transforming Challenges into Meaningful Change</i> Kyle Stepp	
	11:00-11:15	Break	
BREAKOUT SESSIONS	11:15-12:15	<i>Whole Systems, Whole People</i> Samuel Emord, Mandy's Farm 2025 New Mexico Training Associate	Sierra Blanca
		<i>DDSD's Action Steps Taken Toward Technology and What's to Come</i> Anysia Fernandez, Katherine Johnson, Aaron Joplin - DDSD	Sacramento West
		<i>How to Make a Successful Transition IEP</i> Michelle Tregembo, Office of Special Education Ombud, NM Dev. Disabilities Council	Sacramento East
	12:15-1:15	Lunch	Vista Grande Ballroom
BREAKOUT SESSIONS	1:15-2:15	<i>New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions/America's Job Center: Resources & Opportunities</i> - Veronica Alonzo, Tammy Gallegos-Burke	Sierra Blanca
		<i>Jemez Vocational Rehabilitation Program and Project HOPE</i> Marlencia Chee, Yolanda Toya, Alana Chinana – Jemez Vocational Rehabilitation	Sacramento West
		<i>Empowering Choice: A panel discussion on Supported Decision Making</i> New Mexico Developmental Disabilities Council	Sacramento East
	2:15-2:30	Break	
JOINT SESSION	2:30-3:30	<i>Day 1 Debrief: What have we learned together?</i> Kathryn Schwaar, Partners for Employment	Vista Grande Ballroom

DAY 2 – Friday, April 11

	8:00-9:00	Conference check-in open; light continental breakfast	
JOINT SESSION	9:00-10:00	<i>NMDVR and NM DDSD: Leveraging Collaborations for Employment</i> Shannon O'Quinn, NMDVR Supported Employment Lead Alix Dean, DDSD Statewide Community Inclusion/Supported Employment Lead	Vista Grande Ballroom
	10:00-10:15	Break	
BREAKOUT SESSIONS	10:15-11:15	<i>Breaking Barriers for a Successful Transition to Adulthood</i> Maxine Cordova, Rio Rancho Public Schools 2025 New Mexico Training Associate	Sierra Blanca
		<i>Let's have a CONVO: Communication Strategies for Interagency Collaboration</i> Amanda Cowan, Partners for Employment	Sacramento West
		<i>Building Meaningful Connections with Individuals with IDD: An Overview of the Friends and Relationships Class</i> Pauline Lucero, Corazon Training & Consulting; Jessa Walker, MA, LPC; Colleen Monaghan; Jesus Jaime; Michael Meyers	Sacramento East
LUNCH	11:15-12:30	Lunch, Artisan Market	Vista Grande Ballroom
BREAKOUT SESSIONS	12:30-1:30	<i>Q & A Session with DDSD and NMDVR</i> Shannon O'Quinn, NMDVR Supported Employment Lead Alix Dean, DDSD Statewide Community Inclusion/Supported Employment Lead Adam Shand, DDSD Advocate Trainer	Vista Grande Ballroom
		<i>Conference workshop: Beyond the Surface: An Interactive Tool for Discovery, Advocacy, and Reflection</i> Shiloh Burton, Alexandria Rios - Partners for Employment	Sacramento West and East
	1:30-1:45	Break – <i>Return to Vista Grande Ballroom at 1:45 for the raffle drawing!</i>	Vista Grande Ballroom
JOINT SESSION	2:00-3:00	<i>Closing Keynote - Empowering Change: Advocacy, Innovation, and the Path to Independence</i> Kaitlin Ellis, LMSW, ADAC, NMPED Office of Special Education	

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Keynote Speakers



Kyle Stepp is an elite para triathlete, an advocate for LGBTQA+ and disability rights, and a champion for equity in healthcare. His journey, marked by resilience and a lifetime commitment to using pain for a bigger purpose, exemplifies the power of transforming personal challenges into meaningful change. In recent years, Kyle has channeled his experience into advocating across multiple systems for the accessibility of outdoor sports and recreation for people of all abilities.



Kaitlin Ellis is a social work administrator and passionate advocate for individuals with disabilities. She describes her career path has one that has been shaped by the support of compassionate educators and her own desire to make a difference. A graduate of WNMU, Kaity has worked as a full-time advocate with Disability Rights New Mexico, and now as the Social and Community Coordinator for New Mexico Public Education, Office of Special Education.

2025 New Mexico Training Associates

Samuel Emord joined the Community Integrated Employment department at Mandy's Farm in 2021 and is currently the Development Liaison Manager supporting individuals with the transition from Job Development to successful job placement. He is born and raised in Albuquerque, NM and is an avid reader and cat dad to two rambunctious kittens. Sam will present *Whole Systems, Whole People* at 11:15 on Thursday.

Maxine Cordova has dedicated her career to supporting individuals with disabilities in finding fulfilling employment and building meaningful lives. She began her journey as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor with the State of New Mexico's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, where she worked for six years. For the past ten years, she has served students and families within Rio Rancho Public Schools and is currently a social worker at the University of New Mexico Hospital (UNMH). Maxine is licensed as both an LMSW (Licensed Master Social Worker) as a Level III Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. Maxine will present *Breaking Barriers for a Successful Transition to Adulthood* on Friday at 10:15