

2020 MYT Keynote Presenters



MICHAEL BEERS

Michael Beers started his relationship with Advocacy since 2001 as a delegate at the Montana Youth Leadership Forum in (MYLF) 2001. He then began a casual courtship with Summit Independent Living as a Peer Advocate in 2003, a match that would eventually develop into Michael becoming a Youth Transitions Coordinator. Both these relationships have allowed him to relate his own experiences as an individual with a disability to students who are new to the world of advocacy and independence and allowed Michael to have a plethora (Many) of other opportunities to *model, model, model* as an advocate.



Another love of Michael's is telling jokes. Going through school, Michael was a shy, soft-spoken kid; he now travels the United States and a bit of Canada telling stories to audiences ranging in size from 1-1,000 people. He also teaches *Communication through Improv* classes to students of all ages and abilities with Missoula's HomeGrown Comedy.

Through Michael's work as a Youth Transitions Coordinator and his work with HomeGrown Comedy, Michael helps youth with disabilities find their voice, and subsequently, find their own course in life. He is a master at helping people understand one another, learn from each other's experiences and be better people as a result of those interactions.



JASON CORNING



As the founder and CEO, Jason established Three Monkeys Communication in mid-2018 with the mission of breaking down communication barriers for people with disabilities. Jason, deaf-blind since birth, resides in Maryland.

Jason attended the Wisconsin School for the Deaf and later transferred to the Wisconsin School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, where he received his high school diploma. Jason was active in a variety of school sports such as wrestling, swimming, track and field, and goal ball. Demonstrating his leadership skills, he served as captain on the wrestling and swimming teams. Moving on from high school, Jason majored in Information Technology receiving a bachelor's degree with honors from the University of Wisconsin. To further achieve his interests and goals, while working for the federal government, Jason pursued an advanced degree graduating from Johns Hopkins University with a master's in Information Systems.

Jason strives to make positive impacts on the Deafblind community, as well as for all individuals with disabilities. Jason works from home managing his own company Three Monkeys Communication and also teaches two undergraduate Deaf Studies courses at Towson University.



DEVIN WILDES

Devin was diagnosed at the age of 3 with severe autism. He didn't talk, he had lots of tantrums and his parents had a hard time taking him anywhere out of the home.

What his mother wanted the most from her son was to hear his voice and to communicate with her and one day be able to go to school with his neighborhood friends. They found Fraser Child and Family Center, where he attended until the age of 6 where he was able to transition to a public school.

Not only did he learn how to speak, Devin found his voice through art - quite literally. As a young autistic artist, this is his story of triumph. Through the power of art, Fraser and family, Devin surpassed all expectations to not only speak; but move the world around him through his art.

Now as a young adult in his twenties, Devin has a fulfilling career attending Interact Visual & Performing Art Center where he creates art every day. Not only does he speak, he professionally talks about his art around the country to large audiences that love him for his talent and perseverance. He sells his art through ArtForce, whom he is a spokesperson for their Wings program.



A.J. PARON-WILDES, MOTHER & DESIGNER

A.J. Paron-Wildes has acquired significant experience working in the design/build industry. She has created and led a multi-million dollar award-winning design/build firm, developed national programs for ASID, developed and funded design research programs for the University of Minnesota and pioneered various charitable programs. She, and her work, is featured in many television segments on HGTV, PBS and Bob Vila.

A.J. has been a design consultant for interiors in healthcare and education, specifically dealing with autism & ADHD. From school settings, therapy environments to her most noted work on the building for the MIND Institute in Sacramento, California; AJ has used her skills as a designer and blended them with her experience of raising a son with autism. She continues to work with government organizations, school districts, and the community at large to help individuals on the Autism Spectrum Disorder.

In 2013, Ms. Paron-Wildes completed a trilogy e-book series on Design for Autism for Wiley publications. She continues to lecture and teach design principles that help others design in a more empathetic way for individuals with autism.

