

Candidates for Board of Directors

President – Eileen Norman

I still have a faint memory of the road trip to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho for my first National LPA Convention. I was not excited. Growing up in a family with a mom, dad, and sister all having dwarfism, I did not see why we needed to be stuck in a car for days to go see more little people. (I frankly had my own brand of dwarfism entitlement.) Nonetheless, my mom continued to try to convince me that I would meet new people and have fun. She told me how special it was we get to do this.

It turns out she was right, as mothers often are. I made lifelong friendships, expanded my definition of what it meant to be an LP, and was excited to go to LPA events from that week on.

At that time, I never envisioned I would be the President of LPA, but life and career choices have led me to a place where I am proud to be nominated to be the organization's next leader. After graduating from UCLA, I started working in the nonprofit sector. My work always focused on public health and social services, specifically working with marginalized communities. Later I went on to get my Master's in Public Administration focused on nonprofit management. Today, I am the Executive Director of San Francisco's In-Home Supportive Services Public Authority, a nonprofit serving older adults and people with disabilities. Additionally, I co-facilitate SF's Age and Disability Friendly Taskforce, working to make San Francisco accessible and inclusive to all ages and abilities.

In my vision for this next term, I have four major areas of focus:

- **Core Values:** Most nonprofit organizations work to define their core values to help guide policies, programs, and decisions. It goes beyond the mission statement of the organization to define not just "what" the organization does, but "how" it does the work. There are always values past leaders of the organization have relied on, but I want to memorialize the values LPA wants to uphold moving forward into the future.
- **Transparency:** Buy-in, feedback, and honest dialogue are critical when making decisions affecting programs, staff, and membership. Decisions can be hard, and heavily debated, but I aim to make decisions as transparent as possible so members understand not only the outcome, but the rationale in getting there.
- **Inclusion:** One thing that makes LPA an amazing community is its representation of a cross-sectional slice across the entire population. Working to find opportunities to celebrate our diversity, promote inclusion, and foster safe spaces for everyone is something LPA has worked hard to start. I want to see this continue into the future by serving all access needs, expanding outreach to underrepresented communities, and seizing opportunities for intersectional partnerships that recognize our members for who they are as a whole instead of the singular focus of who they are as a person with dwarfism.
- **Advisory Network:** Any organization's strongest resource is its people. Many strong minds and voices stand out within LPA's membership, with expertise, skills, and experience that have been left untapped. Relying on only a few limited voices will get limited results. Pulling in new voices sparks innovation and progress. I want to create

systems that harness the organization's full potential with our many voices coming together.

This summer when I pack up my suitcase to head to Austin, I'll be thinking of the many conferences from years before that lead me to keep coming back to this organization. The conventions that kept giving me a community that I was needing, kept teaching me how to advocate and organize, and kept showing me a world that I both simultaneously knew and yet still had so much to learn from. All of those things are still true today, except now I get to pay it forward and make those things true for all other members of LPA, both new and returning.

I invite you to come and introduce yourself when I see you this summer (or any time after). It's not going to be my one voice as President that will be changing this organization in the years to come. It will be many voices together that I will have the honor to amplify. Together those voices can make change for LPA, and if they can make changes for our organization, they can make changes in our communities we go back to when conference ends. Let's do it together.

See you soon, friends.

Finance Director – Tanya Morato

Hello, my name is Tanya Morato. I would like to introduce myself and tell you why I am running for Finance Director.

Many of the most important things in my life can be traced back to LPA. My parents met through LPA. I met my husband, and many of my closest friends, through it as well. Going to conventions has introduced me to places I might never have visited otherwise. I've quizzed new acquaintances in lobbies about where they shop for clothes and shoes. I've discussed with LP friends online best practices for fitness and work accommodations. It's a resource, a social club, an advocacy group, and so much more to me. Up until now I have enjoyed all of these benefits from the organization, without putting a lot of thought into giving back. Now seems like a great time to change that up.

I have been working in payroll (adjacent to HR and accounting) for the last 10 years. My bachelor's degree is in psychology, which started my career in social work and case management but eventually I was drawn to program compliance and from there to where I am now. I am someone who likes problem solving, research, organization, and supporting my team.

One of the things I love most about my job is the chance it gives me to support so many people at my company who do a variety of interesting and important work. I work with the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy in San Francisco. We are invested in education, community, conservation, and social justice. We have people working in nurseries growing and tending native plants. We have people doing outreach with young people in the community. We have educators and scientists. I value and respect all of their work, and I feel very proud of the supporting role I play helping the organization operate.

This is what also appeals to me about the Finance Director role. It will allow me to play a supporting role to the people doing the advocating, fundraising, and development of our organization.

Thank you for reading up about me. I'm looking forward to getting to know and work with you soon.

Inclusion Director – No Candidate

Membership Director – Rachel Keller

Hi there, my name is Rachel Keller, and I am running for the position of Membership Director. I have been a member of LPA almost all my life, and have been a Lifetime member since I was a teen. The community that LPA has given me is a gift that I treasure. I truly cannot imagine my life without LPA, but it is certain that it would have been much more isolated and lacking in the vibrancy that being a part of this community brings. I feel that having been a part of this community for my whole life means that I bring a very advantageous vantage point to this position, I know what it's like to be a member at every life stage.

I bring a varied resume of skills to this organization, I am a clinical social worker, with a therapy practice, and a trained mediator. I have previous board experience with another organization that provided training on diversity issues. I have served on several committees within LPA, and am currently on the Rainbow committee and the Inclusion committee.

Mental Health is an issue that is very prevalent amongst our population. Our experiences of life can be challenging, and while I wouldn't change a thing about having dwarfism, the world doesn't make it easy. This is not an issue that historically LPA has been able to address sufficiently. With my professional background I would be able to prioritize implementing changes to better assist our membership. The Swat team program that takes place at National has been a great start, but we need a program that supports our members more than just one week a year. I would like to expand mentorship programs to serve more of our members. I would like to put more supports in place to serve our more marginalized members. I would like to conduct research as to why we lose members and develop ways to lessen this. I would like the Board to have a more active relationship in communicating with membership. And perhaps most importantly, I would like to make this organization more accessible to all who want to participate. I feel I have the necessary skills from my work experiences to make these things happen, as well as a strong desire to serve and give back to this organization that has meant so much to me personally.

Thank you for your consideration in giving me your vote for Membership Director in this election!

Membership Director – John Tassone

The connection with the LPA for our family started in the Summer of 2009 when our son Jack was born on the 4th of July. I can remember vividly our Pediatrician coming to the hospital after doing some research and letting us know that there was a local LPA Chapter; sharing with us their contact information. A month later we were at the LPA Finger Lakes Chapter Annual Summer Picnic at a member's home; and it has been a fantastic journey ever since. As I sit here now; 13 and a half years later and reflect on how membership has benefited our family with the relationships we have made, the knowledge and confidence we have gained, the thoughtful conversations and guidance we have received, along with so many lifelong memories and so much fun; I am excited about the opportunity to serve as the Membership Director of the LPA.

We quickly became active in our Chapter after Jack was born; helping with planning and hosting events throughout the year. We found these gatherings so enjoyable and valuable, and would have a real sense of pride and accomplishment following each one of them. I became our Chapter President in 2012, and have been an Officer ever since. In 2013 and in 2021 our chapter hosted District 2 Regional Conferences. While a lot of work; these events really have been a highlight of my time spent as a District Officer. Working with so many other great members and volunteers to put together a weekend's worth of programming for our District membership is so fulfilling. I have volunteered time coaching teams in the DAAA games, and have also spent time as a security volunteer during the past couple national conferences. I have appreciated and enjoyed these opportunities.

Outside of the LPA; I have been heavily involved as a volunteer in our local tourism bureau's Visitor Industry Council as Vice Chair in 2022, and currently serving as the Chair in 2023. This member organization of over 500 area businesses focuses on providing an environment of collaboration, while informing members on topics impacting the hospitality industry in the Rochester and Finger Lakes Regions of New York. Post pandemic the membership of the Organization is at an all-time high and our monthly meetings are seeing record number of attendees.

I feel strongly about the significance of communication, collaboration, and listening to the concerns and needs of the members. As Membership Director I would work towards ensuring that the value of membership is a "no-brainer". What I mean by this is; if someone were to ask "Why are you a member of the LPA?" The answer would be easy. While the answer may be different for different people; their answer being an easy one is the goal. I would also like to focus on ensuring the entire membership community feels welcome and heard as new issues and challenges present themselves to our Organization. I hope to have the opportunity to work at the national level on these goal and others brought forward through the Board of Directors and the membership.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
John Tassone