

Climb Every Mountain

Living Beyond the Label

Date: August 2, 2024

Time: 9:00 AM-3:30 PM

Location: TN Library and Archives

1001 Rep. John Lewis Way N

Nashville, TN 37219



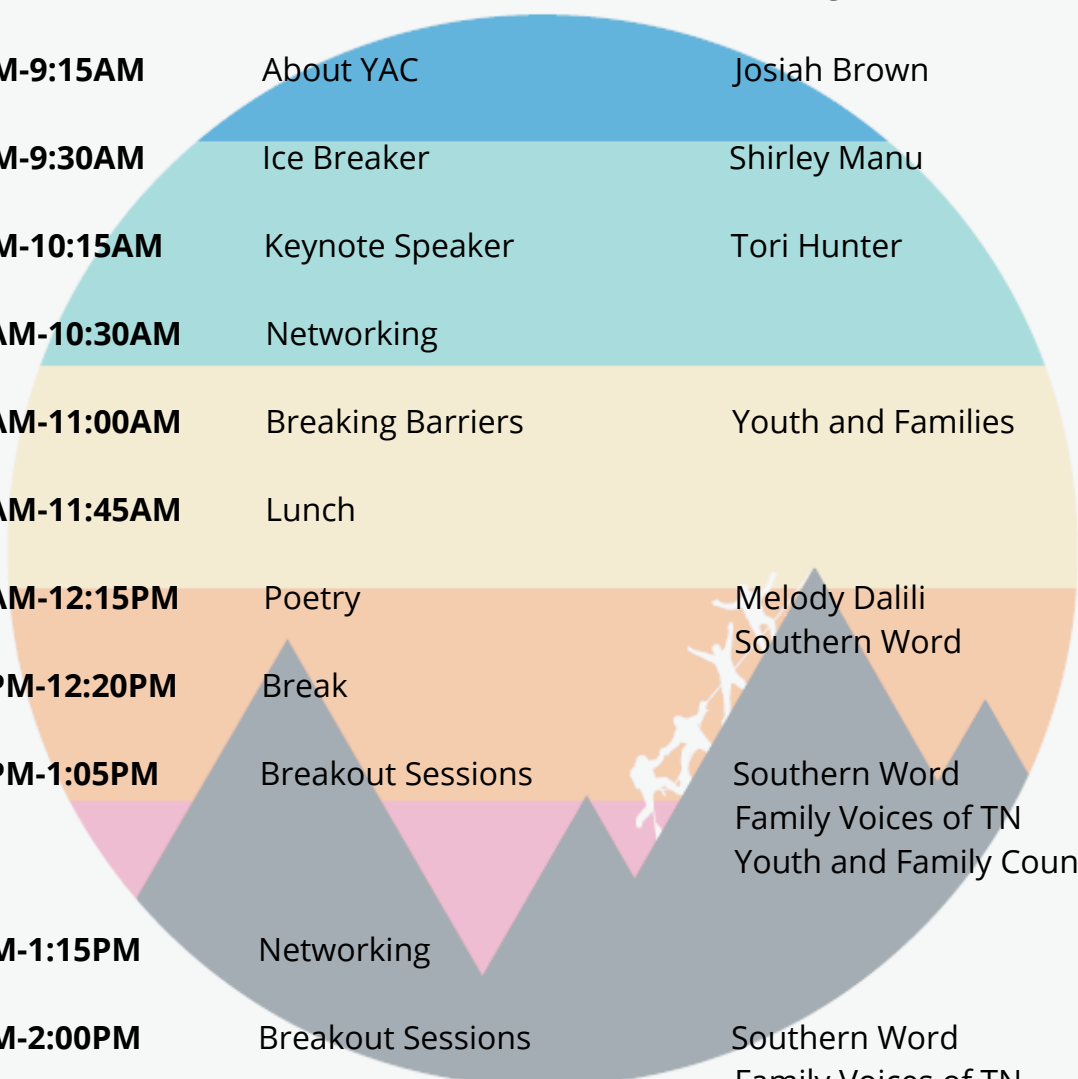
Department of
Health

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a disability is any condition of the body or mind that makes it more difficult to do certain activities. Members of the Youth Advisory Council (YAC) stated that the term “disability” is a label that leads to discrimination, increased barriers, confusion and frustration. Positive self-esteem and self-awareness is increased when youth and young adults understand and value their unique abilities.

Join the members of YAC and the Youth Engagement Workgroup for the 5th annual youth conference. The conference will include keynote speakers, a youth-led panel, topic-related youth poets and breakout sessions to help youth and families navigate the barrier of “labeling.”



AGENDA



8:30AM-9:00AM	Registration	Aubrie Black
9:00AM-9:05AM	Welcome	Dr. Angela Miller
9:05AM-9:15AM	About YAC	Josiah Brown
9:15AM-9:30AM	Ice Breaker	Shirley Manu
9:30AM-10:15AM	Keynote Speaker	Tori Hunter
10:15AM-10:30AM	Networking	
10:30AM-11:00AM	Breaking Barriers	Youth and Families
11:00AM-11:45AM	Lunch	
11:45AM-12:15PM	Poetry	Melody Dalili Southern Word
12:15PM-12:20PM	Break	
12:20PM-1:05PM	Breakout Sessions	Southern Word Family Voices of TN Youth and Family Council
1:05PM-1:15PM	Networking	
1:15PM-2:00PM	Breakout Sessions	Southern Word Family Voices of TN Youth and Family Council
2:00PM-2:10PM	Break	
2:10PM-2:55PM	Breakout Sessions	Southern Word Family Voices of TN Youth and Family Council
2:55PM-3:05PM	Break	
3:05PM-3:30PM	Recognition & Closing Remarks	Jacqueline Johnson & Kendra Stewart

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

BREAKOUT SESSION OVERVIEW

You will have the opportunity to explore each breakout session in the order of your choosing. Each session will last for 45 minutes with a break in between each.

Southern Word:

The Southern Word breakout session will be led by Benjamin Smith, Executive Director. Southern Word works to give the gift of writing and speaking poetry to young people as a tool for processing and navigating mental health challenges. In this session, improve the language that you use to understand and represent the joys and the challenges in your life. Reframe your narrative so you are telling your story, and other people aren't telling your story for you. Whether you have already fallen in love with writing or you want to open a new door and new opportunity for yourself, you are welcome to join us in this session. Learn more at www.southernword.org.

Living Beyond the Label:

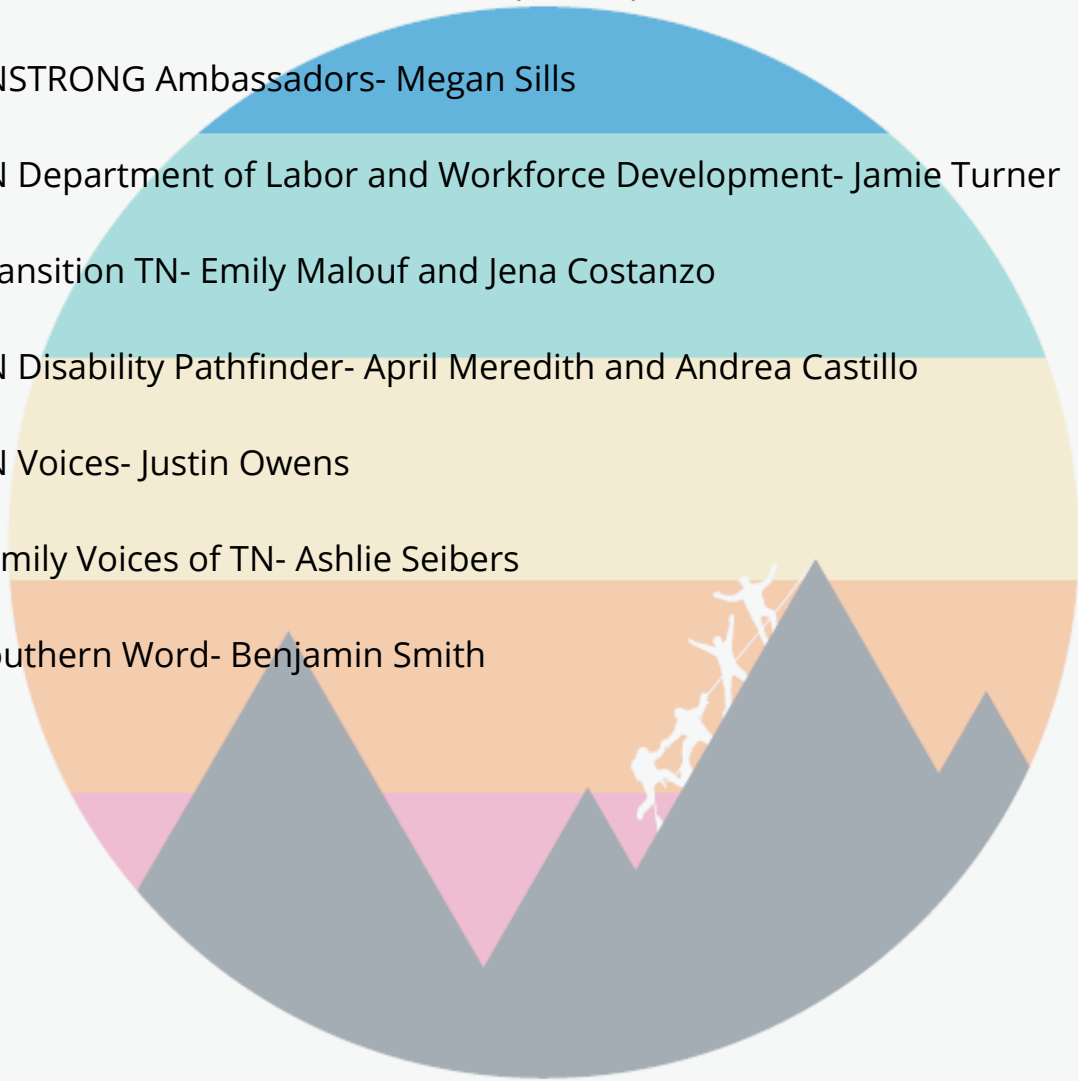
The Living Beyond the Label breakout session will be led by Amanda Black, CYSHCN Family Delegate and Josiah Brown, Youth Advisory Council Chair. The dynamic duo will share lived experiences, victories, and barriers associated with labeling. They will also discuss ways to make the community a more inclusive and accessible place. "All of us will reap the benefits of either personally making a difference in our communities with our skills and gifts or we can champion and encourage others who struggle to find theirs. " -Amanda

Advocacy 101:

Advocacy 101 will be presented by Ashlie Seibers, Family Voices of TN Director and Molly Anderson, Director of Peer Support. This presentation will provide a brief introduction to advocacy work, including definitions, tips/strategies, and practical examples to empower participants to get involved. The goal is to help participants learn how to tell their story and understand how public policy advocacy works in Tennessee. This presentation is designed for all audiences, including youth with disabilities, parents, and community members.

RESOURCE TABLES

- System of Care Across Tennessee (SOCAT)- Laritha Fentress
- TNSTRONG Ambassadors- Megan Sills
- TN Department of Labor and Workforce Development- Jamie Turner
- Transition TN- Emily Malouf and Jena Costanzo
- TN Disability Pathfinder- April Meredith and Andrea Castillo
- TN Voices- Justin Owens
- Family Voices of TN- Ashlie Seibers
- Southern Word- Benjamin Smith





Dr. Angela Miller

Angela M. Miller, PhD, MSPH is the Deputy Director for Child Health and Injury Prevention at the Tennessee Department of Health (TDH). In this role, Dr. Miller oversees the Injury Prevention and Detection Section, the Early Childhood Initiatives section, and the Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) section. The CYSHCN section includes the Community Health Access and Navigation in Tennessee Care

Coordination Program, Children's Special Services, the State's Title V program that addresses special healthcare needs, the Tennessee Birth Defects Surveillance System, and the Youth Advisory Council. Dr. Miller has been with TDH for 11 years, with 7 of those years in the Division of Family Health and Wellness. Dr. Miller received her MSPH from the University of Miami, and her PhD in epidemiology from the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies at Emory University, where she was a Reproductive, Perinatal and Pediatric Epidemiology Fellow.



Jacqueline Johnson

Jacqueline Johnson, MPA, BS is the State Title V Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) Section Chief at the Tennessee Department of Health. In this section, Jacqueline oversees Community Health Access and Navigation in Tennessee (CHANT), Children's Special Services (CSS), Tennessee Birth Defects Surveillance System (TNBDSS), Youth and Family Engagement, and Emergency Preparedness for CYSHCN.

With over 20 years of service in public health, she has a variety of experiences that include planning, implementation and evaluation of public health programs. Jacqueline currently serves on several national committees and boards that create policies for children and youth with special health care needs. She has served as a mentor for new state CYSHCN directors and board member of the National MCH Workforce Advisory Committee. She was recently elected to serve as the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP) Region IV Director representing Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina and South Carolina.



Tori Hunter

Tori Hunter is a travel blogger, content creator, and disability advocate/consultant who lives with Spinal Muscular Atrophy type 2. She works with Kello Inclusive — Canada's first agency exclusively representing disabled talent — and her writing appears in various online publications, including her personal blog (torihunter.blog) that documents her travels as a power wheelchair user. Tori's dedication to advancing disability

representation in the media drives her work, pushing for inclusiveness and diversity through her writing and advocacy efforts. Her contributions reflect a commitment to shaping a more inclusive narrative for disabled individuals.



Melody Dalili

Melody Dalili is a poet, motivational speaker, sister, and student. After years of devoting her time to writing, she was named the Inaugural Youth Poet Laureate of Knoxville in 2022. During her term, she advocated for civic issues such as homelessness, racial injustice, child abuse, and suicide prevention. She also initiated the “Poet-trees” project in 9 Knoxville libraries, hoping

to make poetry more accessible (and less intimidating!)

for children. Dalili is currently attending the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and is planning on majoring in Biology and double minoring in Poetry and Painting. She is also a Carolina Covenant Scholar and part of the North Carolina Fellows Program at The University of North Carolina. Towards the latter portion of her freshman year, she was named the Youth Poet Laureate of Tennessee. When Dalili is off the stage, she can be found offering cool shark facts or “whippin’ up” a tasty bowl of chow mein.



Amanda Black

Amanda Black has the privilege to advocate for children with special healthcare needs. She is a wife and mother to two beautiful daughters, Aubrie and Allison. Her youngest daughter, Allison, was born with Dandy Walker Syndrome which is a congenital brain malformation involving the cerebellum. Her family truly feels that they were specially selected to take part in the awesome journey of Allison's life. What may seem small to others

have a monumental effect on Allison. Advocating and being Allison's voice has ultimately turned out to be Amanda's passion. Being Allison's mom has made Amanda's chosen profession as a social worker so much easier. After earning her master's degree in social work, she had the skills and tools needed to advocate more effectively. This led Amanda to her first position as a life skills specialist with Youth Villages from 2020-2022. Amanda currently serves as a school-based therapist with Mental Health Cooperative.



Alexis King

Alexis King has a son, Flynt, who is in an individual with Autism. Alexis is an educator, educational consultant & advocate for the special needs community. She loves empowering parents and members of her community. She likes to make things easier for parents with special needs navigating the educational system in Montgomery County, TN. Alexis and her family have lived in Clarksville for 5 years.

Since they have been there, she has tirelessly researched resources to improve quality of living for her son. At times, it has been an arduous and painful process.



Josiah Brown

Josiah Brown is immensely proud to represent the Youth Advisory Council, of which he has served as chairperson since 2021 . He is a recent graduate of Holloway High School, and he plans to attend Middle Tennessee State University in the fall, where he will study film production. In his free time, he enjoys reading, watching movies obsessively, making the world a better place, and watching his beloved Tennessee sports teams

break his heart over and over again.



Ashlie Seibers

Ashlie Bell-Seibers is the Director of Family Voices of Tennessee (FVTN) at the Tennessee Disability Coalition (TDC). Seibers leads a team of fellow Lived Experts who work to improve public policy, long-term services and supports, and health equity for children and youth with special healthcare needs (CYSHCN) and disabilities. Seibers also serves as a Lived Expert on the Children's Interagency Coordinating Council with the

U.S Department of Health and Human Services and co-leads the Family First Prevention Plan Leaders (FPPL) peer group through the Capacity Building Center for States. She is a first-generation college student and grew up in informal kinship care. Seibers is the proud chosen parent of a son with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) who grew up in the foster care system. She also identifies as a person with multiple disabilities, including being a cancer survivor.



Benjamin Smith

Benjamin is the Executive Director of Southern Word and a writer mentor. Through the literary and performing arts, Southern Word offers creative solutions for youth to build literacy and presentation skills, reconnect to their education and lives, and act as leaders in the improvement of their communities. We are committed to providing youth, especially in under-served communities, with as many opportunities as possible

to develop and publicly present their voices both live and in print, video, audio and digital media.



Molly Anderson

Molly Anderson is the Director of Peer Support and joined in August 2023. Molly has a nonverbal disability, called Apraxia, and utilizes American Sign Language and assistive technologies for communication. She also serves as a governor appointed member of the Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities. Molly is an Alabama native and moved to Tennessee to get her Bachelor's degree from Maryville College. She is married

with two beautiful daughters named Lucy and Lela. Molly also holds a master's degree in Political Management from George Washington University. Molly is known to many in the community for her passion and tenacity!



I would like to give a special thanks to everyone who made this amazing conference possible. Thank you Tori for travelling all the way from Canada to be our keynote speaker. Thank you Melody for traveling from North Carolina to share your skills with the audience. Thank you Benjamin, Ashlie, Molly, Amanda, Alexis, and Josiah for leading the breakout sessions. Special thank you Ben Yarnell and Brittany Barker for making our virtual space possible. Thank you to all of our PHENOMENAL vendors who took time to educate us about your programs. Thank you Josiah, for sharing your experience on labeling and leading the youth council to success. Thank you Shirley and Penny for your help and positivity every step of the way. Thank you to all attendees for your enthusiasm and participation. Lastly, thank you to my fearless leaders Dr. Angela Miller and Jacqueline Johnson for constant guidance, involvement, and mentorship.

Sincerely,
Kendra Stewart, MPH
Director of Family and Youth Engagement



Department of Health Authorization No. 343705.
This Electronic publication was promulgated at zero cost.
August 2024