



The 15th Anniversary

Promising Pathways: The Road to Best Practice in Autism Spectrum Disorder

Saturday, April 9th, 2022

“Transition and Autism Spectrum Disorder”

A conference for families, educators, and health care professionals addressing autism spectrum disorder

**Virtually and at the Cohen Student Union at
Florida Gulf Coast University**

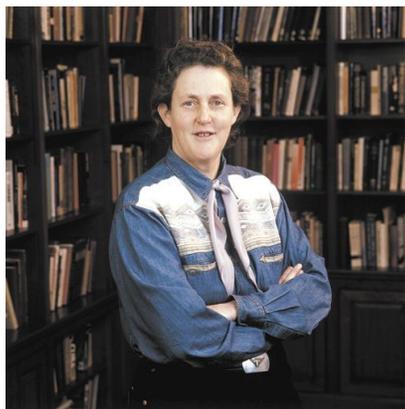
Featuring: Temple Grandin, Ph.D.



Professor of Animal Sciences at Colorado State University

fgcu.edu/cas/communityimpact/promisingpathways/

Welcome to the 15th Annual Promising Pathways Conference!



Our 2022 Keynote will be delivered by Professor Temple Grandin, the internationally renowned scholar, teacher, author and speaker on autism and animal behavior. A professor of Animal Sciences at Colorado State University, Dr. Grandin continues a successful career consulting on livestock handling equipment design and animal welfare. She has been featured on NPR (National Public Radio) and the BBC Special "The Woman Who Thinks Like a Cow". She has appeared on tv shows and online events including Larry King Live, 20/20, and 60 Minutes. Articles about Dr. Grandin have appeared in Time Magazine, the New York Times, Discover, Forbes and USA Today. Prof. Grandin was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2016 and is the author of numerous books and articles including *Thinking in Pictures* and *Navigating Autism*. A designer of livestock handling facilities, Prof. Grandin's designs are located in the United States, Canada, Europe, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, and other regions around the world. She earned a B.A. at Franklin Pierce College and an M.S. in Animal Science from Arizona State University. Dr. Grandin earned a Ph.D. in Animal Science from the University of Illinois in 1989. Today she teaches courses on livestock behavior and facility design at Colorado State University and consults with the livestock industry on facility design, livestock handling, and animal welfare. She is an enthusiastic advocate for young people and the autism community. Prof. Grandin's keynote will focus on transition into adulthood and the strengths of neurodiversity. We are so glad to welcome back Prof. Grandin to the Promising Pathways conference for her second keynote address, the first was during our 5th anniversary event in 2012.

We hope you enjoy this year's 15th anniversary event and wish to thank our community sponsors and supporters, whose generous contributions have enabled us to offer the conference at no charge to attendees. While we do not specifically endorse sponsors, we do encourage you to visit our vendor exhibits and learn more about the programs and services available in our area. If you are interested in supporting next year's conference, please contact us at promisingpathways@fgcu.edu or call 239-590-7358.

On behalf of the entire Planning Committee, we hope that the investment of your time today provides you with new knowledge, insight, and contacts. We welcome your feedback and will be providing a post-event survey via email. Upon completion, you will receive a certificate of attendance.

We hope you enjoy the conference!

Sincerely,

Joanna and Annemarie

Co-Chairs, Promising Pathways Planning Committee

Dr. Joanna Salapska-Gelleri

Associate Professor, Cognitive Psychology
College of Arts and Sciences
Florida Gulf Coast University

Annemarie Connor, Ph.D, OTR/L

Assistant Professor, Director of CAN
Marieb College of Health and Human Services
Florida Gulf Coast University

2022 Conference Planning Committee:

This conference is a community event coordinated by a regional volunteer planning committee. We are thankful for the time and efforts provided by everyone on our committee!

Adrienne Yaryan	FGCU - Occupational Therapy Student
Anjali Van Drie	Family Initiative Inc.
Dr. Ann Tilman	FGCU – Marieb College
Azlund Smutko	Autism Navigator; Golisano Children’s Hospital of SWFL
Christine Maughan	Eventbrite coordinator for Promising Pathways
Claudia Mona	Family Network on Disabilities
Debbi Nicolosi	Vendor Coordinator for Promising Pathways
Iris Diaz	Golisano Children’s Hospital of SWFL
Iris Perez	FGCU-College of Education
Jennifer Mills	Autism Navigator; Golisano Children’s Hospital of SWFL
Kevin Loch	FGCU - Occupational Therapy Student
Kristin Wilhelm	Autism Navigator; Golisano Children’s Hospital of SWFL
Dr. Leslie Meskin	FGCU-Marieb College
Lynn James	Parent and Family Care Council
Dr. Noelle Balsamo	FGCU-College of Education
Dr. Sarah Fabrizi	FGCU-Marieb College
Skyler Moore	FGCU Psychology Major
Tamiki Lumpkin	Eventbrite coordinator for Promising Pathways

2022 Round Table Discussion Panelists

Dr. Noelle Balsamo, Moderator

Dr. Noelle Balsamo, Ed.D., BCBA-D is an Assistant Professor of Special Education, a member of the Community Autism Network (CAN) at Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU), and a board-certified behavior analyst at the doctoral level (BCBA-D). Prior to joining FGCU in 2019, Dr. Balsamo was the Assistant Director at Florida Atlantic University (FAU) Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD) and has over 18 years' experience supporting individuals with autism, their families, and related professionals in a variety of roles and settings. Dr. Balsamo specializes in the areas of autism, applied behavior analysis, parent and teacher education and inclusion.

Dr. Temple Grandin

Temple Grandin, PhD., is a Professor of Animal Sciences in the College of Agricultural Sciences at Colorado State University. She is a renowned scholar, scientist, speaker, animal behaviorist, autism activist and advocate. In 2010, Grandin was named one of Time Magazine's 100 most influential people in the world. She is the author of over 60 scientific articles and 20 books on topics including animal behavior, autism and supporting best practices for successful development and transition of individuals diagnosed with autism. Her most recent published books include *The Outdoor Scientist* (2022) and *Navigating Autism* (2021), among many others. In 2016, she was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Dr. Annemarie Connor

Annemarie Connor, PhD, OTR/L is Assistant Professor of Occupational Therapy in the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences and Director of the Community Autism Network (CAN) at Florida Gulf Coast University. After 15 years of clinical experience as an occupational therapist (OT), Dr. Connor transitioned to academia to research the needs of an underserved segment of the disability community, adolescents and young adults with autism and related neurodevelopmental disorders. While ample funding and attention goes to research related to early identification, biological causes, and potential cures for autism, historically only 1-2% of federal research dollars has gone to understanding lifespan issues, such as employment and independent living. Dr. Connor's research agenda focuses on these complex needs and is informed by her OT clinical background and PhD in Rehabilitation Counseling, which honed her research skills to be team-based, interprofessional, population-specific, and clinically relevant. She has presented her work at the state, national, and international levels; published more than 12 refereed journal articles and book chapters, and is the principal investigator of multiple community-based participatory research projects.

Brad Karpel

Brad Karpel was born in Queens, NYC where he lived until he was 15 years old and then moved to SWFL with his family. He was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome when he was in his late teens. After a couple of challenging years of college, Brad was able to obtain a degree in Health Information Management from Florida SouthWestern State College and is currently working for Veterans Affairs. He found success in improving socializing and dating skills with speech therapy in his adult years. This helped to improve a broad range of communication and conventional skills in day-to-day life. He hopes to eventually move into his own place sometime later this year. Brad has presented at Promising Pathways on a number of prior occasions, sometimes with his family and sometimes alone, but always to a packed audience.

Kristin Wilhelm, BS SLP A

Kristin Wilhelm is an Autism Navigator with the Pediatric Neurology and Developmental Medicine departments at Lee Health. Through this job, Kristin has been able to advocate, empower and help connect families with resources in the community as well as assist families in their transition journey. Kristin knows this journey firsthand as she lived the transition stages with her 22-year-old son, who is a phenomenal music expert and has been diagnosed with Autism. Kristin is actively involved with Project Transition Interagency Council through the Lee County School District and attends the annual Family Café on Disabilities in Orlando to stay current on topics related to Autism and transition.

Misti Pollaro

Misti Pollaro is a parent of three young men. Her 20-year-old son is on the spectrum and has recently left his Extended Transition program to pursue further education in Holistic Healing. Misti is her son's Supported Decision Maker and is helping her son reach his goals of owning his own business, living independently, and having his own family. She currently works for the Parent Support Network Project (PSN) under Family Network on Disabilities (FND), as the Parent Training Coordinator. With almost 3 decades of personal experience in Special Education and over a decade of professional experience, Misti strives to be more relatable to parents and caregivers sharing the knowledge and lived experiences that she has gained.

Dr. Omar Rieche

Dr. Rieche, is a Board-certified child, adolescent and adult psychiatrist diplomat of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, Inc, specializing in anxiety, autism, and obsessive-compulsive disorder. Dr. Rieche serves as the Chief Medical Officer for Elite DNA Therapy Services since 2017. He participates on several non-profit Board of Directors including C.A.R.E.S. Suicide Prevention, and Lee County Drug Free Coalition, Autism Task Force Lee County School Board and CHADD. Dr. Rieche is a passionate Mental Health advocate which is illustrated through his unrelenting support for many not-for-profit charitable organizations by serving on various Boards of Directors, and his long history in serving many marginalized, underserved, and complex populations. He has helped implement and evaluate mental health programs for children and adolescents. In his many roles, Dr. Rieche is leading the way in advancing compassionate, compressive, patient-centered, integrated team-based care, and innovative approaches to Solving (combatting) the Mental Health Crisis in Southwest Florida.

Continuing Education (CE) Credits Available

Promising Pathways 2022 will offer 2 sessions eligible for 3 hours of CE credits to registered occupational therapists, certified occupational therapy assistants, physical therapists, and physical therapy assistants. All continuing education credits are provided through the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences at Florida Gulf Coast University. All registrants who would like credit submitted to CE Broker must sign in and sign out at the onsite CEU table and complete a conference evaluation. Other professionals not listed may be able to self-submit for CE using the certificate of completion. The CEU table will be located on the ground floor of the Cohen Students Union, near the conference registration.

A Very Special Thank You to All the 2022 Promising Pathways Conference Sponsors and Supporters!

Lemieux Family



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Series

