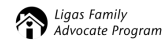


# 12th Annual Informational Seminar

presented by

*The Arc of Illinois, Family Support Network and  
the Ligas Family Advocate Program*



## AGENDA

### March 26, 2024

**9:00 - 9:15 a.m. - Welcome and Overview**

**Presented by Shirley Perez, Program Director  
Ruth Aguilar, Senior Ligas Family Advocate  
Shakari Asbury, Ligas Family Advocate, Annie Bruno, Ligas Family Advocate**

**9:15 - 10:15 a.m. - "As you are planning for the future - What You Need to Know about Guardianship, Alternatives to Guardianship, POA, and an overview of ABLE"**

**Presented by Brian Rubin, JD, and Benji Rubin, JD, Rubin Law**

**10:15 - 10:20 a.m. - Break**

**10:20 - 11:15 a.m. - "Pooled Special Needs Trust and the benefits they offer individuals with disabilities and their families"**

**Presented by Scott Nixon, Life's Plan, Inc.**

**11:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. - "Ligas Consent Decree Update - What's Next!"**

**Presented by Ronnie Cohn, Ligas Court Monitor and Laura Miller, Equip for Equality**

**12:15 - 12:45 p.m. - Lunch Break**

**12:45 - 2:00 p.m. - KEYNOTE SPEAKER - "Update on What's Happening at DHS/DDD, Updated Policies and Accomplishments, Moving Forward, and Paid Leave Act"**

**Presented by Tonya Piephoff, Director, Division of Developmental Disabilities**

**2:00 - 2:15 p.m. - Q & A for Prizes**

**With Ligas Family Advocates Shakari Asbury and Annie Bruno**

**2:15 - 2:30 p.m. - "The Arc of Illinois Update"**

**Presented by Kimberly Johnson, Board President, The Arc of Illinois**

**2:30 - 3:00 p.m. - "A Family's Perspective Regarding Navigating the Developmental Disability System - Pros and Cons of the DDD Waiver versus the DRS Waiver"**

**Presented by Ruth Aguilar, Parent and Senior Ligas Family Advocate and Annita Barraza**

**3:00 - 3:55 p.m. - "Meet your Fiscal Agency, ACES\$"**

**Presented by Tasha Whiteside, Illinois Program Director, ACES\$**

**3:55 - 4:00 p.m. - Wrap-Up and Thank You**

**Presented by Shirley Perez, The Arc of Illinois Ligas/FSN Program Director  
Ruth Aguilar, Senior Ligas Family Advocate**

# About the Presenters

**Ruth Aguilar** has over eighteen years of combined experience advocating for people with disabilities. She holds a B.S. in Psychology from the Illinois Institute of Technology and Professional Graduate Studies in Non-Profit from Harvard University. Ruth's professional experience stems from working previously in an ISC Agency and then as a Self-Directed Assistant serving the community with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Moreover, with her personal expertise as a mother of a teen girl with Rett Syndrome and a Seizure Disorder, Ruth brings a wealth of knowledge to families by assisting them in obtaining services and understanding their options by being assertive, yet professional. Ruth is inspired by her husband and her daughter to be a servant leader who helps those around her without hesitation.

**Anita Barraza**, OTR/L, is a proud parent of two young adults with disabilities, Diana and Danny. Anita is also an occupational therapist by profession. Anita is a strong advocate for her own children as well as for all the students and families she services. Anita has learned to navigate the world of disabilities to be able to support her children in their journey. She believes parents of children with disabilities have to be their children's voices. Anita strongly believes that learning about transition process, resources and benefits for her children is key for them to have a strong support system. Anita loves to share and encourages other families to do the same both in her personal and professional roles.

**Ronnie Cohn** began her career around the time that the first class action lawsuit was initiated on behalf of people with developmental disabilities who were living in a deplorable institutional setting. Ronnie also been consulted on eight other class action suits in six states: evaluating services in both institutional and community settings; assisting in transition planning; developing and implementing protocols for compliance reviews; training service coordinators; working with advocacy groups and quality assurance entities; developing systemic plans; and spending time with individuals who receive services to determine whether or not all of the efforts by consistently well-meaning professionals and others are actually benefiting those for whom we all work.

**Kimberly Johnson** is a disability/legislative advocate, and grassroots community leader, who believes in leadership through systems change, creating, pursuing goals, and achieving a vision of shared values about people living with disabilities. Professionally, Kimberly works as a Regional Coordinator (Cook County), at the Community Residential Services Authority (CRSA). This position provides technical assistance to families, service providers, educators, and other professionals to help plan and implement appropriate, effective services for children with severe emotional disturbances and/or behavior disorders (SED/BD), in Illinois. Most importantly, Kimberly is the devoted mother of an adult son living with Autism, speech, and cognitive delay and gained her lived experience through their journey navigating support services in Chicago and the surrounding suburbs of Illinois.

Since 2007 **Scott Nixon** has been serving as the Executive Director of Life's Plan Incorporated. Life's Plan Inc. is one of the first Non-Profit Associations in the country to establish Pooled Trust services for *People with Disabilities*. Today, Life's Plan Inc. serves over three hundred clients as Corporate Trustee. Scott is an invited speaker for his work on Pooled and individual Special Needs Trusts, Social Security and Medicaid related benefits, guardianship and special needs planning that improves the lives of individuals with Special Needs and their families. He has been working as a Disability Advocate since 2000. First working as a Project Manager at the Marriott Foundation with a School to Work program for young people with disabilities called "Bridges...from School to Work." Scott is a newly appointed Board Member on the National Pooled Trust Alliance.

**Tonya Piephoff** is the Director for the Division of Developmental Disabilities for the State of Illinois. She has a bachelor's degree in social work and a Master's in Mental Health Counseling and has dedicated her career to serving individuals with developmental disabilities and mental illness. The majority of her career has been spent working with individuals with Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities in both the state-run Intermediate Care Facilities (SODC) or in community services through the waiver programs. She has also worked for many years in the Forensic Psychiatric system and with those who have dual diagnosis. Before coming to Illinois Department of Human Services, Tonya served as Director of the Kentucky Division of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, and as the Chief Operating Officer of the Missouri Division of Developmental Disabilities. With over 20 years' experience in assisting individuals and their families to find the best living environment to meet their individual needs and goals.

**Benjamin (Benji) Rubin, JD**, Brian's youngest son, Mitchell's "little/big" brother, has been a member of the Law Firm since 2010. Benji graduated from the University of Illinois College of Law, Magna Cum Laude, received his undergraduate degree from Northwestern University, and his Graduate Law Degree, an LLM (Tax), with honors, also from Northwestern University. Benji is a member of the Academy of Special Needs Planners, a member, by invitation, of the Special Needs Alliance, is Chairman of the American Bar Association Special Needs Planning Committee, serves as the President of SIBS (Supporting Illinois Brothers and Sisters), the Illinois chapter of the national Sibling Leadership Network, and is a director on The Arc of Illinois Board. Having Mitchell as a brother profoundly shaped who Benji is today, and thus the type of law he chose to practice.

Attorney **Brian Rubin** is the founder of Rubin Law, a former IRS Agent, and former IRS Attorney, has been a practicing attorney since 1976, has been married to his wife Linda for the past 45 years, and is the parent of three children, one of whom, Mitchell, 41, has Autism. Brian's law practice, for four decades, since Mitchell was one year old, has been dedicated to serving the legal and future planning needs of his fellow Illinois families of children and adults with intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, and/or mental illness.

**Tasha Whiteside** is Director of Illinois Operations for ACES\$ Financial Management Services with responsibility for the payroll operations, enrollments and client care for over 3,000 consumers in the State of Illinois. Tasha has spent her career working with people with disabilities in a variety of functions and roles. Prior to joining ACES\$ in March of 2014, Tasha spent six years with Ray Graham Association in administration, program enhancement and life skills development. She began her career in direct support and Residential Services and was named Residential Services Director of the Year while at Frances House. One of Tasha's core strengths and beliefs is that community partnership is essential to all non-profits and she continues to improve the connectedness and outreach of ACES\$. Tasha is a National Deans List graduate of Governors State University with a degree in Psychology and she volunteers for KABOOM Project and Special Olympics.

## Cost & Registration

March 26, 2024 - 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

### Registration Fees for Participants are:

#### Member of The Arc/FSN/Ligas :

Self-Advocate/Family Member.....\$ 0.00  
Professional.....\$ 50.00  
Exhibitors.....\$100.00

#### Non Members of The Arc/FSN/Ligas:

Self-Advocate/Family Member.....\$ 0.00  
Professional.....\$ 80.00  
Exhibitors.....\$130.00

Professionals and Exhibitors, please complete the attached registration form, fax it to 815-464-5292, then mail the hard copy along with your check to:

The Arc of Illinois  
9980 190th St., Suite C  
Mokena, IL 60448  
815-464-1832  
or register online at  
[www.thearcofil.org/events](http://www.thearcofil.org/events)

Notice of any special accommodations is required Two Weeks prior to the event. Contact The Arc of Illinois at 815-464-1832.

### FAMILIES AND SELF-ADVOCATES

**THIS IS A FREE EVENT for Families and individuals with disabilities. However, registration is required. Please register online at [www.thearcofil.org/events](http://www.thearcofil.org/events). If you need assistance please contact Shakari at [Shakari@thearcofil.org](mailto:Shakari@thearcofil.org) or call 708-331-7370!**

**CEUs** will be offered for this training. Licensed Social Workers, Licensed Nursing Home Administrators and QIDP's signing in and out on the day of the event are entitled to five (5) credits.

**CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS** Participants canceling their registration 72 hours in advance will be entitled to a credit or refund, less a \$50.00 administrative cost. No refund or credit will be given for cancellation less than 72 hours before the seminar.

### LOCATION

**THIS WILL BE A  
VIRTUAL EVENT USING  
ZOOM WEBINAR!**

## Registration Form

### "12th Annual Informational Seminar"

March 26, 2024

One form per person, please print legibly.  
Your name will appear on your name tag  
as it appears on this form.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency/Vendor: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

AMOUNT PAYABLE: \_\_\_\_\_

### METHOD OF PAYMENT:

\_\_\_\_\_ Fax form and send check to The Arc of Illinois  
(815-464-5292)

\_\_\_\_\_ Check enclosed payable to The Arc of Illinois

\_\_\_\_\_ Charge to my Credit Card

Name as it appears on credit card:

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

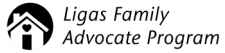
Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CVV Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Billing Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Card holder's signature:

Special Request:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



9980 190th Street, Suite C  
Mokena, IL 60448



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