

## Meet Our Speakers

Disability Advocacy Day brings together people with lived experience, community leaders, professionals, and advocates who are shaping a more inclusive future across South Carolina.

Our speakers represent a wide range of perspectives, from self-advocates and family leaders to educators, service providers, and policy champions. Each brings their own story, expertise, and passion for change.

Together, they remind us that advocacy is not just about policy...it's about people.

Speakers are featured in no particular order. While additional speakers may be added following the publication of this digital magazine, the list included here reflects our confirmed speakers as of the date of publication. Final details and updates, including the speaking schedule, will also be shared on our website and social media.





## **Pamela S. Evette**

### **Speaker**

Lieutenant Governor of South Carolina

Pamela S. Evette was elected as the 93rd Lieutenant Governor of South Carolina in 2018, becoming the first female Republican to hold the office. Before entering public service, she founded and led a successful payroll and human resources firm that grew from a start-up into a nationally recognized company.

As Lt. Governor, Evette focuses on strengthening communities, supporting small businesses, and elevating the work of nonprofits and community organizations across the state.

***Topic: Leading Through Service: Community, Opportunity, and Impact***



**Curtis Loftis**  
**Speaker**

State Treasurer of South Carolina  
Administrator of the Palmetto ABLE Savings Program

Curtis Loftis is the State Treasurer of South Carolina and is currently serving his fourth term. As Treasurer, he manages the state's public funds and oversees key programs, including the Palmetto ABLE Savings Program.

Palmetto ABLE allows eligible individuals with disabilities to save and invest money while maintaining eligibility for important needs-based benefits. Under Treasurer Loftis's leadership, the program has grown significantly and now serves thousands of South Carolinians. A native of Lexington County, Loftis is a graduate of the University of South Carolina and a longtime advocate for financial education and opportunity.

**Topic: Palmetto ABLE: Financial Independence for People with Disabilities**



### *Breaking Barriers with Angel Heaven Lee*

#### **Angel Heaven Lee**

#### **Speaker**

Host & Self-Advocate

Angel Heaven Lee is a self-advocate, speaker, and graduate of Partners in Policymaking® who uses lived experience to drive meaningful change. She believes disability policy and services should always be shaped with disabled voices—not for them.

Through her advocacy, Angel encourages organizations and policymakers to center lived experience, promote dignity, and create systems that truly reflect the needs of the people they serve.

**Topic: *The Power of Lived Experience: Why Self-Advocates Must Be at the Center of Decision-Making***



## Kallyn Long

### **Speaker**

America's Ideal Miss South Carolina Teen 2026

Self-Advocate for Learning and Hearing Disabilities

Kallyn Long is a youth advocate who uses her personal experience with hearing loss to inspire change, build understanding, and promote inclusion. After receiving a cochlear implant and navigating school and standardized testing with single-sided deafness, she became passionate about improving access and accommodations for students like her.

Kallyn works to advance legislation that ensures students who are deaf automatically qualify for SAT and ACT accommodations. Her message centers on kindness, resilience, and recognizing the ability in every disability.

**Topic: *There's Ability in Every Disability: Advocacy, Kindness, and Breaking Barriers***



## **Rachel Nash**

### **Speaker**

Founder & Patient Advocate  
Nash Patient Advocacy & Consulting

Rachel Nash is a dedicated patient advocate who helps individuals and families navigate the often complex healthcare system. Through Nash Patient Advocacy and Consulting, she works one-on-one with people to ensure their voices are heard, their questions are answered, and their care remains truly patient-centered.

She is passionate about empowering people with the information, tools, and confidence they need to make informed healthcare decisions.

Rachel recently shared her advocacy journey on CN2's *Our Community: Past & Present*, highlighting the importance of patient-centered care and the growing role of advocacy in today's healthcare landscape.

**Topic: Patient Advocacy: Navigating the Healthcare System with Confidence**



**Becca Williams**  
**Speaker**  
Magnolia Scholars Consultant

Becca Williams is the founder of Magnolia Scholars and an education advocate with lived experience navigating complex IEPs for her own children. She supports families transitioning to personalized, home-based education by helping them understand their options, access scholarship funding, and build learning plans that meet their child's unique needs.

Becca's work bridges the gap between specialized instruction and individualized learning, empowering families to move forward with confidence.

***Topic: Reimagining Education: Navigating IEPs, Homeschooling, and Student-Centered Learning***



## **Chelsea Mayne**

**Speaker**

Self-Advocate

Independent

Chelsea Mayne is sharing her story publicly for the first time at Disability Advocacy Day. As an autistic adult, she speaks honestly about her experiences navigating employment, including challenges with communication, sensory overload, and finding workplaces that truly understand and support neurodivergent individuals.

Chelsea hopes that by sharing her journey, others will feel less alone and more encouraged to advocate for themselves. This experience marks an important step in her advocacy journey, and she looks forward to exploring future opportunities to continue sharing her story and learning how her voice can help create change.

**Topic: *Challenges in Holding a Job When You Have Autism***



## **W.C. Hoecke & Family Speakers**

### **Family Advocates and Community Leaders**

W.C. Hoecke and his family are passionate advocates for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and the families who support them. Their work is rooted in a deep understanding of the long-term challenges families face—especially when it comes to planning for the future and ensuring loved ones are supported as caregivers age.

They speak about the importance of sustainable, inclusive communities where people with disabilities can live with dignity, independence, and meaningful connection. Their message centers on hope, preparation, and the power of community to create real, lasting change.

Midway through the event, W.C. and his family will lead our march around the State House—bringing participants together in a visible, collective call for inclusion, equity, and respect.

Together, they share a vision of belonging, resilience, and support—reminding us that advocacy starts at home and grows through collective action.



## **Jason Lofton**

### **Speaker**

Self-Advocate

IMPACT SC

Jason Lofton is a self-advocate and member of IMPACT SC who shares his story of living with cerebral palsy and overcoming barriers with determination and confidence. Through his lived experience, Jason reminds others that disability does not define limits—it highlights strength, resilience, and possibility.

Jason's message centers on self-belief, perseverance, and the importance of opportunity. He encourages people to see beyond assumptions and to recognize the potential in every individual.

**Topic: Cerebral Palsy: No Limits**



## **Kyeanna Cobbs**

**Speaker**

**Self-Advocate**

**IMPACT SC**

Kyeanna Cobbs is a self-advocate with IMPACT SC who is passionate about raising awareness around disability rights—especially for individuals who are unable to speak up for themselves. Her advocacy centers on empowerment, education, and making sure people with disabilities understand their rights and how to use them.

Kyeanna believes that everyone deserves to be informed, respected, and included in decisions that affect their lives. Through her voice, she works to create a more just and accessible world for people with disabilities.

**Topic: *Disability Rights***



## **Robert Hinson**

### **Speaker**

Brain Injury Survivor & Self-Advocate

Brain Injury Association of South Carolina

Robert Hinson is a brain injury survivor who shares his personal journey to highlight the power of connection, understanding, and community. Through his lived experience, Robert has seen firsthand how isolating recovery can feel—and how life-changing it can be to find people who truly understand what you're going through.

Robert is a strong advocate for peer support and the role it plays in healing, confidence-building, and long-term recovery. He believes no one should have to navigate their journey alone.

**Topic: *The Power of Support: Why Groups Matter!***



*“Your disability doesn’t define your ability.”*

**Dr. Morelisa Sabb-Cordes**

**Speaker**

Master IEP Coach

Independent

Dr. Sabb-Cordes is an experienced IEP coach who helps families feel more confident, informed, and prepared when navigating special education meetings. She is passionate about breaking down complex processes into clear, manageable steps so parents and caregivers can advocate effectively for their children.

Her work centers on empowering families with the language, tools, and understanding they need to participate fully in the IEP process and ensure students receive the supports they deserve.

**Topic: *Help! I Am Attending an IEP!***



**Margaret Janse van Rensburg, Ph.D., MSW, RSW**  
**Speaker**

Assistant Professor

University of South Carolina College of Social Work

Margaret Janse van Rensburg is an assistant professor and researcher who is passionate about ensuring that autism research reflects the voices and priorities of the people it is meant to serve. Her work focuses on bringing together individuals with lived experience, families, advocates, professionals, and researchers to shape more inclusive and meaningful research agendas.

Through her work, Margaret emphasizes the importance of collaboration, shared learning, and community-driven inquiry. She believes that when people with lived experience are involved from the start, research becomes more relevant, more respectful, and more impactful.

**Topic: "Says You!" Creating a Community of Inquiry to Shape Autism Research Priorities**



## **Joyce Davis**

### **Speaker**

Executive Director

Brain Injury Association of South Carolina

Joyce Davis is the Executive Director of the Brain Injury Association of South Carolina, where she works to ensure that individuals with brain injuries—and the people who support them—are seen, heard, and fully included in systems of care. Her advocacy focuses on helping families navigate complex service systems and making sure no one is unintentionally left behind.

Joyce is especially passionate about how language, naming, and policy decisions affect access to services. She works to bring awareness to gaps in inclusion and to push for clearer, more equitable systems that reflect the needs of all people with disabilities.

**Topic: *What's in a Name? Everything***



## **Miranda Harris**

### **Speaker**

Special Needs Parent & Advocate

J.A.M. – Just a Mom

Miranda Harris is a special needs parent and advocate who is passionate about improving educational systems for neurodivergent and disabled students. Through her work with J.A.M. – Just a Mom, she amplifies the voices of families navigating complex school environments and pushes for meaningful, lasting change.

Miranda speaks openly about the challenges facing today's classrooms, including staffing shortages, inconsistent training, and the growing need for better support for both students and educators. Her advocacy centers on collaboration, accountability, and the belief that every child deserves a safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environment.

**Topic: *Educating on Education***



## **Anastasia Ford & Donovan** **Speakers**

Disability Advocate, Homeschooling Parent & Youth Self-Advocate  
AKOMA Cares

Anastasia Ford is a homeschooling mother of three and a passionate advocate for disability rights, inclusion, and human dignity. She brings a people-first approach to her work, helping families navigate systems, find their voices, and access meaningful support. Anastasia serves as the Disability Advocacy Coordinator for AKOMA Cares, is a 2025 graduate of South Carolina Partners in Policymaking, and participates in multiple advisory councils focused on equity and access.

Donovan will share his personal journey—where he has been, where he is now, and what growth, support, and opportunity have made possible. Through his story, attendees will hear directly from a young self-advocate about resilience, change, and what inclusion truly looks like in everyday life.

Together, Anastasia and Donovan bring both family and lived-experience perspectives to the stage—reminding us why advocacy matters and why it must continue.

**Topic: *Disability Rights, Inclusion, and Why Advocacy Must Continue***



## **Kim Brock**

### **Speaker | Self-Advocate | Advocacy Influencer**

Kim Brock is a disability advocate and speaker living with severe cerebral palsy who is committed to advancing accessibility, inclusion, and active lifestyles for people of all abilities.

Through her advocacy, Kim challenges assumptions about disability and emphasizes the importance of inclusion, independence, and having a voice in decisions that impact daily life. She brings lived experience, resilience, and authenticity to every conversation, reminding us that advocacy is about being seen, heard, and valued.

At Disability Advocacy Day 2026, Kim will share her perspective on what meaningful advocacy looks like in real life and why accessibility and inclusion matter—not just in policy, but in everyday experiences.

**Topic:** *Using Your Voice: Advocacy, Accessibility, and Living Fully*