CP State Annual Conference 80th Anniversary

SPEAKERS

Keynote Speaker:
DERRICK TENNANT

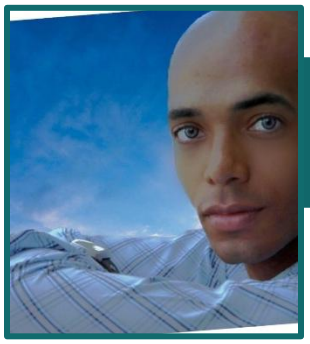
From the floor to the stage — Derrick Tennant's story is one of turning tragedy into triumph as an inspirational speaker who helps others overcome life's toughest challenges.

As a promising multi-sport athlete on the brink of a dream career, Derrick's life changed overnight. The evening before football season began, he lay down on his floor — and didn't wake up for three days. No warning, no injury — just a sudden brain bleed that left him paralyzed and in a coma. Emergency brain surgery saved his life, but took away any movement on his left side.

It took years of therapy to relearn how to talk, walk, and handle even the simplest tasks. Today, Derrick still cannot use his left arm, and walks with a limp, but he stands tall, stronger and wiser for the journey.

After spending a year in a wheelchair and undergoing years of rehabilitation, Derrick reclaimed his life by embracing what truly matters most. He now lives with purpose, owning no house or apartment, and traveling the world full-time with just seven shirts, one suitcase, and a heart overflowing with inspiration.

His message is clear: shift every obstacle into an opportunity. Derrick's story — always looking on the RIGHT side — empowers audiences to do the same, transforming limitations into possibilities in work, business, and everyday life.



BILLY BLANKS, JR.

President & Creative Director
Kibu

Billy Blanks Jr. is the President and Creative Director of Kibu, a technology platform built to empower individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and the organizations that support them. A nationally recognized dancer, choreographer, and fitness personality, Billy has built his career around making movement, wellness, and self-expression accessible and inclusive. At Kibu, he brings his creative background and passion for connection to help create engaging experiences that promote independence, confidence, and joy.

NOAH BLOCK

Federal Relations Manager
American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR)

Noah Block is the Federal Relations Manager at ANCOR, the national association representing providers of services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Based in Washington, DC, Noah leads and supports ANCOR's federal legislative affairs work, serving as a primary liaison to congressional offices and federal agencies on Medicaid, home and community-based services, disability policy, and the direct support workforce. In this role, Noah develops and advances ANCOR's legislative priorities on Capitol Hill, works closely with congressional staff and policymakers, coordinates advocacy strategies with member organizations and contract lobbyists, and builds coalitions with national partners. He translates the experiences of community-based providers into legislative recommendations, congressional briefings, comment letters, Hill materials, and direct engagement with policymakers. Noah also supports ANCOR's political engagement, including the association's PAC activities and compliance.

NICOLAS CARIDI

Head of Business Development
Kibu

Nicolas Caridi is Head of Business Development at Kibu, where he leads sales and partnerships with disability service organizations nationwide. He works closely with providers across day habilitation, employment, and residential programs to bring them Kibu's documentation platform and member content — helping teams spend less time on paperwork and more time with the people they support.

JAMES KAUFMAN

Deputy Commissioner, Division of Policy & Program Development
NYS OPWDD

James Kaufman (Jim) serves as Deputy Commissioner for the Division of Policy and Program Development, a Division which administers a range of ongoing policy development activities related to OPWDD's system of supports and services. As the Division's Deputy Commissioner, Jim provides leadership oversight for the management of OPWDD's $8 billion Home and Community Based Services Medicaid Waiver, which provides a comprehensive person-centered, community-based service array for nearly 100,000 people with developmental disabilities.

Jim began his career in state government in 2005 when he first joined OPWDD as a Senior Budgeting Analyst. After leaving the agency and spending 14 years with the Division of the Budget (DOB) where he worked in a variety of roles and advanced to the position of Assistant Chief Budget Examiner for Health, Jim returned to OPWDD in August 2022 as a Deputy Director of the Division of Policy and Program Development, a post he held until being named Deputy Commissioner in September 2024.

Jim has spent most of his career working on fiscal and policy matters related to Mental Hygiene, Public Health and Medicaid.

Jim holds a Master of Public Administration degree from SUNY Albany's Rockefeller School of Public Affairs and Policy, and Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Hartwick College.

MATTHEW KAUFMAN, MD

CEO
StationMD

Dr. Matthew Kaufman is the CEO of StationMD. Dr. Kaufman was one of StationMD's co-founders in 2015 and has since led the company through its successful transformation of healthcare for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. He currently sits on the Board of CP State in New York State and continues to practice emergency medicine in the NYC area.

Dr. Kaufman was honored to be named one of Modern Healthcare's Top 25 Innovators of 2019 and a 2021 Ernst & Young New Jersey Entrepreneur of the Year®. He was privileged to receive the 2022 Leadership Award by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) and most recently he was awarded the Erik C. Lawrence Award by Collective Partnerships Unlimited in 2025, for innovation in the disability field.

Dr. Kaufman received his MD at SUNY-Downstate and trained in emergency and internal medicine, hematology, and oncology at Northwell Health. Early in his career, Dr. Kaufman focused on leukemia research before pivoting to emergency medicine and innovation in healthcare for people with disabilities. He has served as medical director of emergency departments in the NYC area.

ABIBA KINDO

Deputy Commissioner of Service Delivery
NYS OPWDD

Abiba Kindo serves as the Deputy Commissioner for the Division of Service Access, Program Implementation and Stakeholder Support (Regional Office). The Division is organized into two central office-based Bureaus that direct and oversee major statewide activities (Service Access and Program Implementation) and one Bureau that is regionally based with Central Office oversight and is responsible for day to day operations and implementation of statewide initiatives. Program activities and operations are carried out through a network of five Regional Offices, one Central Office and Thirteen district offices.

The division has a key role and is responsible for assisting individuals and their families with accessing disability services while assuring equity, diversity inclusion, fairness and sustainability, ensuring an adequate provider network, and educating individuals, families, providers, and stakeholders on OPWDD services and initiatives.

Prior to this current role, Abiba served as the Associate Deputy Commissioner for the regional offices at OPWDD. Before joining state services in 2014, Abiba worked in the voluntary sector where she held several executive and leadership positions. Abiba has a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in Forensic Psychology from John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

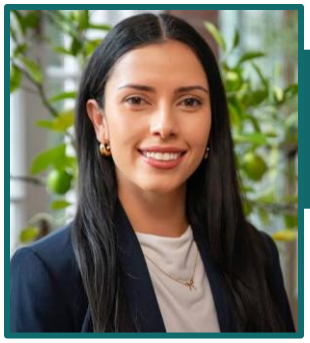
JOHANNA LANATZ, PH.D., BCBA

Chief of Psychology and Research
The Center for Discovery

With more than 25 years of experience, Johanna Lantz, Ph.D., BCBA, has devoted her career to improving the lives of individuals with disabilities through innovative clinical care and research. She began by supporting skill development in young autistic learners using applied behavior analysis and went on to specialize in treating high-risk behaviors during her internship and postdoctoral fellowship at the Kennedy Krieger Institute. She further advanced this work as a clinical faculty member at Columbia University Medical Center's Developmental Neuropsychiatry Program. Dr. Lantz currently holds the position of Chief of Psychology and Research at the Center for Discovery. In this role, she leads a department of over 40 psychology staff who provide assessment and treatment for high-risk behaviors. Her clinical reach has extended beyond the Center for Discovery.

Dr. Lantz served as a lead member of the New York State Center of Excellence tasked with developing common best practices in assessment, intervention, training, and data collection implemented by all New York State Children's Residential Projects and developed resources to help medical providers manage high-risk behaviors as a member of the Healthcare Association of New York State's complex case discharge delay committee.

To advance care for individuals with complex disabilities, Dr. Lantz integrates her clinical expertise with targeted research initiatives. She directs the Discovery Lab School program, which explores the use of innovative wearable and nearable technologies to better understand high-risk behaviors in youth with profound autism. Her overarching goal is to translate research findings into practical strategies that meaningfully improve clinical care. Dr. Lantz has presented at several national conferences including the Profound Autism Alliance Summit, Autism Society of America, Association for Behavior Analysis International, Association for Positive Behavior Support, New York State Association for Behavior Analysis and National Association of School Psychologists. She is an author on several published articles.



MARIA MANRIQUE, AIF®, CPFA®

Retirement Plan Solutions Associate
Focused Wealth Management

Maria is a Retirement Plan Solutions Associate at Focused Wealth Management, where she specializes in supporting retirement plans and educating participants to help them confidently navigate the complexities of retirement saving and investing. She is passionate about making retirement planning accessible, clear, and empowering for individuals at every stage of their financial journey.

Maria holds her Series 7, Series 66, and Life and Health Insurance licenses and remains committed to continuous professional development. In 2025, she earned the Accredited Investment Fiduciary® (AIF®) designation, and in 2026, she earned the Certified Plan Fiduciary Advisor™ (CPFA™) designation, further enhancing her expertise and the value she delivers to the clients she serves. She earned her bachelor's degree in finance from the State University of New York at New Paltz in 2020.

Beyond her professional role, Maria is an active member of the ADAPT Leadership Group, a fundraising and advocacy committee that advances ADAPT Community Network's mission of empowering people with disabilities through innovative programs and services.

As a bilingual dual citizen, Maria is dedicated to making a lasting and meaningful impact through her work. She is also a proud member of the LPGA Amateurs Association, where she combines her passion for golf with personal growth and community involvement.

RONAK PARIKH

Senior Vice President, Community & Business Development
ADAPT Community Network

Ronak Parikh is the Senior Vice President of Community & Business Development at ADAPT Community Network, a large nonprofit organization providing services and supports to adults and children with disabilities and their families. In this role, Ronak focuses on developing new programs and services to better meet the needs of the people supported by ADAPT, as well as exploring and pursuing new ventures and establishing new partnerships to help ensure ADAPT's future as a leader in the field. Prior to joining ADAPT, Ronak provided advisory and policy and management consulting services for over 14 years to nonprofit and for-profit clients in the health and human service industry.

JILL PETTINGER

Deputy Commissioner of Statewide Services
NYS OPWDD

Dr. Jill Pettinger is OPWDD's Deputy Commissioner of Statewide Services. In this position, she is responsible for providing leadership, direction, and oversight to the Division of Statewide Services. Statewide Services is currently comprised of 9 Bureaus encompassing Research and Data Analytics, Health Services, Intensive (Forensic) Treatment Services, Assessment Oversight and Coordination, Behavioral Services, Statewide Clinical Programs, Clinical Project Management, Technical Support, and Service Allocation, Research and Review, as well as the Institute for Basic Research. Dr. Pettinger and her staff facilitate and oversee multiple projects and initiatives that directly impact the mission and vision of OPWDD which has at its core the goal of helping individuals with developmental disabilities lead richer lives.

Before assuming her current position, Dr. Pettinger served as the Deputy Commissioner of State Operations & Statewide Services in the Division of Service Delivery from June 2016 through May 2022, the Assistant Deputy Commissioner of OPWDD's Statewide Services from July 2012 through May 2016, the Assistant Commissioner for OPWDD's Bureau of Behavioral and Clinical Solutions from August 2007 through July 2012 and was the Chief Psychologist for OPWDD from January 2003 through August 2007. Dr. Pettinger worked as a licensed psychologist at the Capital District DDSO, a regional office of OPWDD from 2001 through 2003. She also served as the Clinical Assistant Director of Psychology at the Center for the Disabled and as a licensed psychologist for the Schoharie County ARC, not-for-profit agencies providing services to persons with developmental disabilities in the Capital District area. She has worked in private practice and served as an Adjunct Professor at the University at Albany, Sage College Graduate School, the College of Saint Rose and Hudson Valley Community College.

Dr. Pettinger is a graduate of the University at Albany (Psy.D. 1995, M.S. 1991) and St. John Fisher College (B.A. 1990).

CAT PROULX

Senior Manager of Marketing and Culture
Beekeeper Group

As Senior Manager of Marketing and Culture at Beekeeper Group, Cat is passionate about creating environments for meaningful connection. She develops the company's culture through her organization of Beekeeper's internal and external events, managing the company's external communications and partnerships, and leading Beekeeper's Culture Committee. Before joining Beekeeper Group in 2021, Cat managed digital communications for the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, where they developed their passion for advocacy and community-oriented work. Cat graduated from Ithaca College in 2017 with a bachelors degree in Integrated Marketing Communications and a minor in Politics. After graduating, she scooted on down to DC to earn her master's in Political Management from George Washington University in 2019. If you ever meet Cat in the wild, feel free to ask about astrology, video games, their two cats, or the best spots in DC for soft serve.

CHARLES YARNOLD, AIF®, RSSA®, CPFA®

Managing Director, Retirement Plan Solutions / Director Advisory
Focused Wealth Management

Charles Yarnold is the Managing Director of Retirement Plan Services at Focused Wealth Management, an SEC-Registered Investment Advisor based in Newburgh, NY. He also serves as a Registered Representative with Osaic and is an active member of Focused Wealth Management's Investment Committee.

A graduate of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute with a degree in Business Management, Charles holds his Series 7, 6, 63, and 66 licenses, as well as a life and health insurance license. He has also earned the Accredited Investment Fiduciary (AIF®), Registered Social Security Analyst® (RSSA®) and Certified Plan Fiduciary Advisor (CPFA®) designations. With more than 20 years of experience in wealth management, Charles specializes in building lasting client relationships with individuals, companies, unions, and organizations. He co-manages a wide range of accounts, including individual portfolios and institutional retirement plans such as 401(k), 403(b), deferred compensation, pension, endowment, and trust accounts.

At Focused Wealth Management, Charles oversees the Retirement Plan Division, which is committed to delivering superior service to plan participants while providing cost-effective, high-quality retirement plan solutions. His team leads participant education initiatives, helping employees maximize the value of their 401(k), 403(b), and 457 retirement plans. He and his team also provide fiduciary oversight, ensuring that every plan under their management operates efficiently, remains compliant with current regulations, and meets the highest standards of governance.