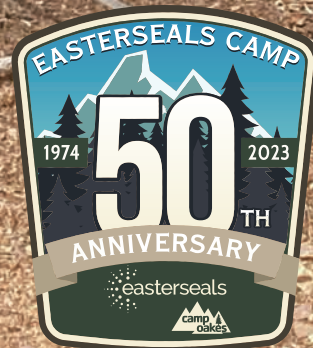


# LEADING the WAY

SUMMER 2023

**Easterseals Camp  
Celebrating 50 Years**







Message from our  
Chief Advancement Officer  
**Nancy Weintraub**

Summertime is in full swing, and we are busier than ever here at Easterseals. With all that is happening, we felt a special summer edition of Leading the Way was in order! With so much excitement, I thought I would pull out some highlights for you:

- The Easterseals Disability Film Challenge just celebrated its 10th year of giving disabled filmmakers the opportunity to collaborate to tell unique stories that showcase disability in its many forms
- A group of Easterseals leaders and board members traveled to Washington, D.C. for productive visits with our elected officials
- We recently opened a brand-new autism therapy center in Ontario
- Easterseals Camp is celebrating 50 years this summer!

I can't wait for you to read more about these and other fun happenings in our shared community. As always, our success is a reflection of our incredible donors and friends, ensuring Easterseals is able to fulfill its mission every day to the best of our abilities. I am forever grateful for your ongoing partnership. I hope you enjoy a wonderful summer season!

Warmest regards,



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# Easterseals Camp Celebrates 50 Years



**2023** marks the 50th year where campers and volunteers from all walks of life come together for one magical week in the San Bernardino mountains. Easterseals Camp is a fully accessible experience held at YMCA Camp Oakes in Big Bear, which is accredited through the American Camp Association and offers people with disabilities the same excitement and activities available at other camps. Activities include crafts, hayrides, talent shows, dances, swimming, canoeing, archery, hiking, concerts, storytelling and a high and low ropes course.

ESSC camp volunteers are unmatched in kindness, patience and commitment to ensure that campers have an exceptional experience. Our volunteers love coming back year after year to build life-long relationships with participants.

**Thank you** to all the donors who make camp possible! For more information on how your generosity will ensure another 50 years of Easterseals Camp, use the QR code to make a secure online gift or contact Rob McNeel at (949) 742-5672 or [Robert.Mcneel@essc.org](mailto:Robert.Mcneel@essc.org).



*"Going to camp opened my eyes and changed the person I was inside and out. I saw how everyone was being treated and I realized that all I wanted all these years was—to be treated like everyone else. This is the best experience I ever had."*

— Lora Glassman





## The Easterseals Disability Film Challenge Celebrates 10 years of Impact

The Easterseals Disability Film Challenge gives filmmakers—with and without disabilities—the opportunity to collaborate and tell unique stories that showcase disability in its many forms. In the past 10 years:

- ▶ More than 600 films have been created
- ▶ More than 1,000 filmmakers with disabilities have taken part
- ▶ Hundreds of screenings/workshops/professional development events have been offered
- ▶ Participation has led to jobs, including parts in *The Good Doctor*, *New Amsterdam*, *Moxie*, *Marry Me*, *Super Store*, *NCIS Hawaii* and more!



Filmmakers who participated in the Easterseals Disability Film Challenge gather prior to the awards presentation at Sony Pictures.



From left: Academy Award winning Filmmakers Phil Lord and Chris Miller present EDFC award with challenge founder Nic Novicki (in front).



*“As the entertainment industry strives to build a more diverse and inclusive workplace, we must keep disability in the conversation—and EDFC is designed to help accelerate change within Hollywood and provide a platform for filmmakers and actors to tell authentic stories highlighting their lived experiences.”*

**Nic Novicki**

Actor, comedian, producer, disability advocate, Easterseals board of director and EDFC founder



(From left to right:) ESSC's Mark Whitley, CEO; Dr. Beverlyn Mendez, COO; Board of Directors member Beatriz Mallory; Chief Advancement Officer Nancy Weintraub; Board Chair Mark Betrand; EDFC founder and board member Nic Novicki and board member Maria Serrao.



# Thank You for Supporting People with Disabilities!

## Albertsons, Vons and Pavilions Fundraiser Supports ESSC Services

In April, The Albertsons Companies Foundation hosted an in-store fundraising campaign to benefit programs and services for individuals with disabilities and their families!

Customers donated to support the 'People With Disabilities' campaign via the PIN pad at checkout. Easterseals Southern California was one of several disability-related organizations receiving a portion of the donations collected. This was the 15th year that Easterseals partnered with The Albertson's Companies Foundation to raise funds for our services.

The foundation recently presented ESSC with a \$100,000 grant that will support our Severe Behavior Services programs.



Staff and participants from ESSC Adult Day Services visit Albertsons to support the in-store fundraising campaign earlier this year.

*"We are excited to continue our longstanding partnership with The Albertsons Companies Foundation. Over the course of our 15-year partnership they, along with their wonderful employees and generous customers, have donated millions of dollars in life-changing support."*

**Nancy Weintraub**  
ESSC Chief Advancement Officer



## RSP Classic Fundraiser

Easterseals recently hosted its 14th annual Retail Supplier Partnership Golf Classic. This golf tournament is supported by our long-standing corporate partner, CVS Pharmacy, and its many generous in-store brands.

Over the past 14 years, this tournament has raised more than \$2 million dollars to support Easterseals programs. Through this tournament, Easterseals has been able to deepen its relationship with in-store brands, such as Banana Boat, Coca-Cola and Pepsi.



*Photo left to right: Hans Getty, Easterseals, Board of Directors Treasurer; Maureen Cormier, Easterseals Board of Directors 2nd Vice Chair; Jo Ann Walker, assistant to Board Member; Doug Chang, Easterseals Board Member; Tony Pagano, former Easterseals Board Member; and Nancy Weintraub, Easterseals Chief Advancement Officer.*

## Easterseals Associate Wins 'Talk To Me' Assistive Technology Device

In celebration of its 16th anniversary, Talk To Me Technologies—which provides assistive technology known as Speech-Generating Devices, allowing people with communication difficulties to “speak” in a synthesized voice—awarded six Wego 10A devices to speech therapists/pathologists around the country.

Natalie Jauregui, MA, CCC/SLP, ATP, an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Coordinator in Autism Services for Easterseals Southern California, submitted an essay on why her participants could benefit from such a tool. Natalie was selected as a winner (from among thousands of entries) for one of the devices, which cost about \$8,000.

Said Natalie, “One of Easterseals’ goals is bridging the gap for accessibility and inclusive practices for everyone. It’s all about being able to provide access to our clients ... who are really struggling with communication. It can be challenging to secure a device through insurance, so having options for our participants is impactful. The functionality of these devices is just amazing. These are most importantly speech-generating devices, but you can also use them to access your social media, send texts and emails, post on Instagram. You can connect to a Bluetooth and use it as a remote.”

“This technology is pretty cool,” she continues. “We provide services to a 61-year-old man who has alcohol



*Bruce Fleming, Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Consultant for Talk to Me, presents Natalie Jauregui, ACC Coordinator for ESSC Autism Services, with a Wego 10A Device for her award winning essay that described how the device can benefit ESSC participants.*

fetal syndrome, autism and an intellectual disability and has been completely non-verbal his entire life. We’re very excited to work with him and this device to give him the opportunity to express himself. This tool is life-changing for people with disabilities.”

Bruce Fleming, an AAC consultant for Talk To Me Technologies, said, “We are in a world of interactions usually conducted by speech. Someone who can’t speak is at a huge disadvantage for connecting, getting their needs met and creating relationships with people. Easterseals programs reach so many people and we are happy to provide them with equipment that so uniquely improves the lives of people with disabilities.”



# EASTERSEALS ADVISES ON NEWLY UNVEILED SENSORY-FRIENDLY ROOM AT ANGELS STADIUM



*From left to right: Jacqueline Urbanus, Manager of Ballpark Operations and Security for the Angels, Alyssa Kavner, ESSC VP of Clinical Training and Quality, Monique Taylor, Director of Clinical Standards, ESSC Occupational Therapy, and Grace Nyenke, Angels Social Media Department.*



Easterseals Southern California and Angels Baseball have once again come together to make disability inclusion a priority for their fans and guests. In addition to joint advertising efforts focused on changing the way people view disability, ESSC has advised on the following elements at Angel Stadium: A newly unveiled sensory-friendly room that can be utilized on game days and sensory-friendly kits that can be checked out by users and training sessions for game-day staff on best practices to interact with people with disabilities.

Sensory sensitivities are often experienced by individuals with autism and other disabilities. A sensory-friendly room offers a calm place to relax away from the noise and over stimulation at the ballpark. Sensory kits include noise-canceling headsets, sunglasses, fidget toys and hand fans to help individuals enjoy the game with their families.

"The Angels have thoughtfully created a safe and inclusive environment with their tranquil quiet room," added ESSC's Alyssa Kavner, MA, BCBA, VP, Clinical Training and Quality, and Monique Taylor, MA, OTR/L, Director of Clinical Standards, Occupational Therapy Autism Therapy Services. "With professional input from Easterseals, the collaboration developed a space that encourages regulation and calm while also offering stimulating activities and access to a variety of sensory input, such as play, coloring, fidgets and engaging visuals and textures. Guests visiting the stadium now have somewhere to support individualized needs as they take time away to decompress and re-engage, while guardians can continue to watch the game via monitor."



# Autism Therapy Center Open House in Ontario



On Saturday, April 22, Easterseals hosted more than 150 guests at the Autism Therapy Open House & Spring Fling in Ontario. Families enjoyed a morning filled with fun crafts, art mural, game truck, DJ, photo booth and an Earth-Day inspired planting station. There were also guided tours of the Autism Therapy Center and Dr. Paula Pompa-Craven, Chief Clinical Officer and VP of Autism Services, gathered leadership staff for a ribbon cutting ceremony and to welcome everyone to the center.

## A Walk On Water

On May 20, Easterseals partnered with A Walk On Water to offer surf lessons to children with autism. The morning was exclusively for Easterseals families to enjoy art, music, games and learning how to surf from professional volunteers at Bolsa Chica State Beach. All the kiddos and family members were treated to breakfast, lunch, giveaways and a commemorative shirt. What a great day of fun in the sun. Thank you to the Angels Baseball Foundation for their sponsorship.







During the 2020 Sundance Film Festival, Nancy Weintraub, ESSC Chief Advancement Officer, visits with Judy Heumann and ESSC supporter David Kahn.

## Remembering Judy Heumann, the “mother” of the Disability Rights Movement

Judy Heumann—widely regarded as “the mother” of the disability rights movement—passed away earlier this year. Judy, who contracted polio at age two, was at the forefront of major disability rights demonstrations throughout her life. She helped spearhead the development and passage of disability rights legislation Section 504, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Rehabilitation Act, and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. She also founded national and international disability advocacy organizations and held senior federal government positions.

Easterseals was honored to have had the opportunity to meet and collaborate with her and Nic Novicki on the Easterseals Disability Film Challenge. They also attended the Sundance Film Festival together to celebrate the premiere of *Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution* and she openly shared her knowledge with Easterseals and our Board of Directors through her book, *Being Heumann*.

Judy was a driving force in helping shape how we approach disability inclusion. She leaves an indelible legacy within the disability community and has paved the way for new generations to continue the work she started. She will be greatly missed.

## Easterseals Southern California Advocacy on Capitol Hill

Six Easterseals leaders and Board of Director members attended a very successful 2023 Capitol Hill experience in April. Along with colleagues from across the Country, our contingent attended 15 meetings with elected officials where the conversations ranged from educating about services provided in their respective districts, to strategic priority projects that are appropriate for government funding.

*Pictured below: (Photo on left from left to right): Rick Gutierrez, ESSC VP, Clinical Strategy and Operations, Maria Serrao, member of the ESSC Board of Directors, Nancy Weintraub, ESSC Chief Advancement Officer, and Mark Whitley, ESSC CEO (Photo on right, left to right): Robert Klein, ESSC Consultant, U.S. Congresswoman Judy Chu, and Dr. Beverlyn Mendez, Chief Operating Officer.*







# Small Actions Create **BIG** Changes

Would you like to be able to make a difference at Easterseals in a small, but meaningful way?

Join our valued **THRIVE ALLIANCE** monthly donors.

Here's a few great reasons to take into consideration:

- ▶ **Your monthly gift provides a steady flow of income that we can count on.** Donations are a huge component of the funding for many of our programs. When you give monthly, you ensure a stable foundation for Easterseals Southern California (ESSC) to comfortably seek out big-picture solutions for disability access and programs that otherwise would not have been possible. Monthly donors give way for longevity, allowing for our programs and services to truly flourish.
- ▶ **You will grow with us.** Whether it's a new music program for seniors, additions to a playground or making sure our facilities are in top shape, each month your generous gift will be utilized for the ESSC programs and services that need it the most.
- ▶ **It's easy & convenient.** By opting to make your gift monthly when donating to ESSC, you will not have to worry about anything as monthly gifts are automatically processed in a timely manner.
- ▶ **You can adjust your contribution at any time.** If you would like to decrease or increase your contribution at any time, you can do so by calling our Advancement office at 714-834-1111 ext. 1001. You can also cancel at any time and start back up the next month. The process is easy and convenient.
- ▶ **It's easy on your bank account.** Instead of donating a larger amount at a single time, you can set the amount as low as just \$7 a month. Signing up to contribute each month can keep you within your budget while also benefiting ESSC in a consistent manner.

Consider joining **THRIVE ALLIANCE** today and help us lead the way to full equity, inclusion and access through life-changing disability and community services. Check the 'Make it Monthly' box on the enclosed envelope or make a secure online gift at <http://socal.easterseals.com/monthlygiving>. For more information, contact our Team at 714-653-5041.

**Can't give now?  
Consider a gift to Easterseals  
in your Will or Trust!**







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[www.easterseals.com/southernca](http://www.easterseals.com/southernca)

RETURN TO SENDER

A large, stylized yellow sun with rays is positioned to the left of the event title.

# **5K Walk/Run – 3K Family Fun Walk**

## **Saturday, October 21, 2023**

Marina Green Park  
386 E Shoreline Drive  
Long Beach, CA

Registration Fee: \$40 – Free for kids 5 and under

**Register today: [Strides.essocal.org](http://Strides.essocal.org)**

