

Nominee Name: Reva Guimont

Nominator Name: Tiffany A. Potter

Nomination Category: Individual

Nominated for:

- Improving the quality of life for individuals with disabilities
- Advocacy for issues pertaining to individuals with disabilities
- Development of new programs or services impacting individuals with disabilities

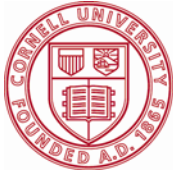
Nomination Statement

It is with pleasure that I nominate Reva Guimont, a Program Manager through the Parent Resource Center at Exceptional Parents Unlimited (EPU) for the Individual award. I met Reva six years and have had the pleasure of working with her in the realm of disability advocacy ever since.

Rooted in her personal experiences with her daughter Reva passionately advocates tirelessly for the children and their loved ones that EPU serves. She also goes above and beyond her traditional work duties to bring Person-Centered Work education through Cornell University's Employment and Disability Institute to the valley; creating workshops for those to experience the theory of PCW, as well as a monthly Community of Practice group for those of us who are dedicated to idea that our work be rooted in the Person-Centered way of life.

I cannot express how honored I am to nominate Reva for this award. I consider her an ally, a warrior, and tireless advocate in the Central Valley; and her courage to challenge ideas and systems that may not serve an individual who cannot speak for themselves is a privilege and honor to witness.

Personally, if I can grow into half of the advocate that Reva is I will consider my life a success. She has set the bar for so many of us in her quiet strength, her fortitude in the face of adversity, and her bravery to speak up and speak out.



Cornell University
ILR School

K. Lisa Yang and Hock E. Tan
Institute on Employment and Disability

Carol J. Blessing, LMSW
Senior Extension Associate
Citizen-Centered Leadership Development
201 Dolgen Hall
Ithaca, New York 14853-3901
t. 518.265.3759
f. 518.283.4408
tty. 607.255.2891
e. cjb39@cornell.edu

September 1, 2016

Shannon M. Mulhall
American with Disabilities Act Coordinator
2600 Fresno Street, Rm 4011
Fresno, CA, 93721

To the City of Fresno Disability Advisory Commission:

Please accept this letter of support for the nomination of Reva Guimont for the Disabilities Advisory Commission 2016 Individual Achievement Award. I met and got to know Reva four years ago when she became an active member of an international learning community called Citizen-Centered Leadership Development, (CCLD). This learning community is dedicated to fostering a world that works for everyone; in building a society in which all of its members –especially those who have historically been marginalized- are welcomed for their positive contributions to ordinary community life.

Reva continues to bring her passion and her experience as a mom of a daughter who has a disability into CCLD community of practice as an international learning guide to participants during the 15 week course (which runs twice a year), inspiring and encouraging direct support staff, family members and professional executives alike to “imagine better” for individuals with disabilities and for the communities who support them. During her initial experience with the CCLD work, Reva took on the task of organizing and facilitating a local community of practice in Fresno through which people from all sectors of Fresno life convene once a month to discuss principles and devise strategies that lead to the full inclusion of people with disabilities, family members and other allies in community life. The Fresno learning community for person-centered practice continues to thrive today and people from around the world learn from Reva how they, too, can foster and grow communities that welcome and support people with disabilities and their families.

In a gentle, unassuming, ever-respectful way, Reva has effectively built alliances among groups and individuals that would typically not find themselves seated at the same table discussing issues of social justice, disability, inclusion and the role every person plays in ensuring equal access to opportunity and for making meaningful contribution. This is leadership. This is Reva Guimont.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Carol Blessing, LMSW
Senior Extension Associate, Faculty
YTI/ILR/Cornell University www.cclds.org

September 1, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to support Tiffany Potter's nomination of Reva Guimont for the 2016 Achievement Award from the City of Fresno Disability Advisory Commission. Without question Ms. Guimont is deserving of this award and exemplifies, both personally and professionally, advocacy for and with individuals with disabilities and their families.

I have known Ms. Guimont since 2009, when I was faculty at Fresno State University. I contacted Ms. Guimont soon after I arrived in Fresno because of her position and work at Exceptional Parents Unlimited. I was faculty in the special education department at Fresno State, and in my position wanted to collaborate with EPU to support pre/early-service teachers in thinking differently about their work with students with disabilities and their families. From the time we met and throughout my three years at Fresno State, Ms. Guimont and I collaborated in my courses, as well as in a number of efforts related to the larger disability community in Fresno. In my class on collaborating with students with disabilities and their families, specifically, Ms. Guimont shared both her professional role at EPU and the role of advocacy in the lives of these students, and also very openly and poignantly shared her experiences as the parent of an adult woman who had lived within the special education system. She spoke about how her daughter was assumed to be incompetent in most special education settings, and also how learning about person-centeredness supported her own transformation, as a parent, and allowed her to support her daughter in creating the life of her choosing and situating her daughter's voice as primary.

During these three years, Ms. Guimont also completed the Citizen-Centered Leadership Community of Practice at Cornell University's Employment and Disability Institute. This CoP is directed by renowned leaders in the practice and philosophy of person-centeredness at Cornell University. As a colleague and a friend, Ms. Guimont and I often engaged in extended conversations about the CoP, our own thinking related to disability and citizenship practices, and how too many disability-related agencies and systems did not utilize a person-centered approach. I was thrilled when she started a local CoP dedicated to thinking through and talking about citizenship and person-centeredness and invited me, along with a group of dynamic individuals to come together on a monthly basis.



Since 2012 I have lived in Colorado and returned to San Francisco, for faculty positions. Throughout this time I have continued to participate in monthly CoP meetings, facilitated by Ms. Guimont, and witnessed and participated in the growth of the CoP and thinking of the individuals participating within it, due to her work, dedication, and the model which she provides for us all. Ms. Guimont is an exceptional model for many of us working within disability systems, agencies, and with individuals with disability and their families. Her own personal journey, how candidly she shares what she views as mistakes she has made, her pursuit of learning, and how she has brought transformative knowledge into Fresno and the Central Valley have changed current opportunities and experiences for disabled individuals, and more importantly have the ability to influence the futures of many more.

Again, without a doubt, Reva Guimont is more than deserving of this award. Through her work at Exceptional Parents Unlimited, her advocacy and support of her daughter (who lives with disability), her personal (and thus professional) transformation via citizenship and person-centeredness for all individuals with disabilities, and her leadership within Fresno and the Central Valley in spreading these perspectives— Ms. Guimont exemplifies a lifetime of achievement.

Thank you,

Emily A. Nusbaum

Emily A. Nusbaum, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, University of San Francisco
eanusbaum@usfca.edu

9/1/16

It is with pleasure that I nominate Reva Guimont, a Program Manager through the Family Resource Center at Exceptional Parents Unlimited (EPU) for the Individual award.

I joined EPU and began working with Reva 1 1/2 years ago. It has been a pleasure working with her. As a new Executive Director I found Reva to be a wealth of support and knowledge to turn to as I stepped in my new role here at EPU. Reva's personal experiences with her daughter have provided her with the perspective of passionately advocates tirelessly for the children and their loved ones that we serve here at EPU. Reva's dedication to both the families and her staff here is unmatched. She is well respected by all for her knowledge, compassion and dedication.

I cannot express how honored I am to nominate Reva for this award. I consider her an ally, a warrior, and tireless advocate in the Central Valley; and her courage to challenge ideas and systems that may not serve an individual who cannot speak for themselves is a privilege and honor to witness.

Sincerely,
Ellen Knapp, Executive Director
EPU Children's Center

To: City of Fresno Disability Advisory Commission

It is a pleasure to nominate Reva Guimont for recognition in serving people with disabilities. Reva is a jewel in our community. As a speech/language pathologist, I have known Reva for over 20 years. She has supported, educated and listened to many of my patients/clients with an open heart and always helpful suggestions. Her role as manager of the family resource center has also taught other professionals how to support families with disabilities. Reva is the real deal...thoughtful in words and actions, directive if needed and always present in each situation.

Reva has always had a passion for people with disabilities. She started first by fostering then adopting and later became the extraordinaire advocate she is today. She has taught internationally on growing a village of support for adults. Her own daughter with disabilities is an active member of the Exceptional Parents Unlimited staff, born out of a circle of support she lead. I was privileged to be part of the circle of support and watched Reva grow a village for her daughter first hand. Reva has a gift with words. She demonstrates that in every conversation. Her gift has supported so many people and empowered parents to reach for the best for their children and adults with disabilities.

Reva is a humble servant. She requires no attention to make her vision of hope a reality. She is the essence of what each of us in the service provider business with people with disabilities, hope to be like. I feel so fortunate to have her on our team and to lead our community into this world by making it a better place for the disabled.

Lastly, I have often told Reva that she is like Madonna, Cher and Beyoncé...her last name isn't needed for people in our community...she has left her mark in the hearts of the people she has educated and supported by just being Reva.

Respectfully,

Kelly Cahill Rathbone MA, CCC SLP

Dear Nomination Committee,

I am writing to you in support of the nomination of Reva Guimont to be this year's recipient of the Fresno City Disability Advisory Committee's Individual Award for 2016.

I have had the honor and privilege of being a friend of Reva's for almost 20 years and for 17 of those years I have worked with Reva at The EPU Children's Center. During those years Reva has been a tireless advocate for all children and adults in the Central Valley that live with special needs. Reva was originally thrown into the world of disability by her daughter Natasha whom she adopted as an infant. Natasha had the unfortunate experience of receiving a brain trauma as an infant. Reva has worked since that time day and night to provide the most inclusive life possible in order for Natasha to reach her full potential as an adult.

Reva and her husband have since become vendorized with Central Valley Regional Center to begin a program for Natasha that is 100% inclusive and 100% based on the principals of Person Centered Planning through a Circle of Support. Person-centered planning is a process-oriented approach to empowering people with disability labels. It focuses on the people and their needs by putting them in charge of defining the direction for their lives, not on the systems that may or may not be available to serve them. This ultimately leads to greater inclusion as valued members of their community and society as a whole. Reva is now recognized nationally for her work in this area and has been taken her message not only throughout our region but internationally at conferences in Australia and Canada. She is a member of the Cornell University Citizen-Centered Leadership Development, an international group of scholars, which empower individuals and professional on changing our mindset on how persons with special needs have been perceived by society. Person-centered planning is a process-oriented approach to empowering people with disability labels. As a result of her work in this area, she has founded and chairs the Community of Practice for Citizen-Centered Leadership in the Fresno area which meets monthly.

If this is not enough Reva has served as the Program Manager for the Family Resource Center at EPU's Children Center for the past 15 years. In her role as manager she has spoken throughout the state on behalf of rights for persons with challenging needs beginning in infancy through adulthood.

I am proud to include my support for Reva Guimont to receive the Outstanding Individual Award from the Disability Advisory Committee for the City of Fresno.

Sincerely,

Vicki Benson

Adult Transition Coordinator-EPU

It is with pleasure that I nominate Reva Guimont, a Program Manager through the Family Resource Center at Exceptional Parents Unlimited (EPU) for the Individual award.

I joined EPU and began working with Reva 3 years ago. It has been a pleasure working with her. Rooted in her personal experiences with her daughter Reva passionately advocates tirelessly for the children and their loved ones that EPU serves. Reva's dedication to both the families and her staff here at EPU is unmatched. She is well respected by all for her knowledge, compassion and dedication.

I cannot express how honored I am to nominate Reva for this award. I consider her an ally, a warrior, and tireless advocate in the Central Valley; and her courage to challenge ideas and systems that may not serve an individual who cannot speak for themselves is a privilege and honor to witness.

Reva immolates the type of person I hope to be someday. Her quiet strength, her fortitude in the face of adversity, and her bravery to speak up and speak out are what I respect most about Reva.

Kimberly I. Majors

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to nominate Reva Guimont as the Individual of the Year for the City of Fresno Disability Advisory Commission.

My relationship with Reva goes way back to when my now mid twenty year old sons who live with disability, were struggling in school. I was feeling very alone in the “battle”, facing a community who didn’t understand my children and who judged me for being a bad parent. As we spoke, for the first time in their lives I realized I was not alone. Reva gave me hope to go forward in my advocacy for my sons, shared her own challenges that were very similar to mine and some advice on how to be effective in getting my children the help they needed. For decades she has done the same for countless families desperate to help their children.

Fast forward a number of years, I approached EPU Children’s Center for a job. My son’s needs were still intense and I wasn’t able to meet the hours required for the position they had to fill, but Reva suggested I attend a parent group at EPU. That was over 10 years ago and my life and my son’s lives have forever been changed. From a place of fear and trauma, I was mentored, empowered by Reva’s knowledge and leadership. I grew with her encouragement. Today my sons now have their own lives, working in the community, being contributing members of our society. With my new skills I now mentor others today and it is all due to the care and knowledge of this most outstanding woman. She has done this for so many in the Central Valley I can’t begin to put a number on it.

To watch Reva work tirelessly with enthusiasm for those living with disabilities is so inspiring. It is her passion, her purpose. She has the uncanny ability to take in the concerns and needs of the entire disability community and envision activities that can advance the movement to help people live as full participants in a society that has marginalized them. She finds the gifts and values in every person and makes their cause a part of her personal mission. Her work has expanded beyond the family and she has touched many many agencies and private entities with her work. We have all benefited beyond description from this visionary, compassionate, and resilient leader.

It is my hope the committee will consider just how many who live with disability have had quality given to their lives, by the sustained efforts of this remarkable lady. I am beyond honored to nominate her for this award.

Krista Rose
Education Specialist
Exceptional Parents Unlimited