



Lives Transformed



In This Issue:

- **SPOTLIGHT: Joni Teague**
- **ABC-7's Spencer Christian to speak at Cradle to College**
- **DCCS on location at Deaf Expo**
- **Senior Division attends ASA Conference**
- **Felton and You**

Spotlight: Joni Teague DCCS Program Manager



Joni Teague, Program Manager for Felton's Deaf Community Counseling Services (DCCS) is a San Francisco Bay Area native whose face lights up when she signs or speaks about her work. The oldest of four children, all born Deaf, Joni attended mainstream programs in Palo Alto for Deaf and hard-of-hearing children, that used only spoken English.

"I learned sign language when I was 18 years old, and that helped so much to make communication easier and more clear. Lipreading is an art, is very hard to do and is only helpful when talking in one-to-one situations and not in group conversations. From our parents, we learned that [it] is important to do your best and be as independent as possible and at the same time be compassionate, kind and considerate to everyone-especially those

who have more obstacles to overcome," Joni explains.

As a teenager, Joni found her vocation. "When I was 14 years old, a Deaf psychologist came to speak at our school. It was the first time I had ever met a Deaf adult who had a successful career and was helping many Deaf people. I decided then and there that was my calling: to work with Deaf individuals in the field of psychology and mental well-being. So I went to San Jose State University for my bachelor's degree in psychology and minored in Deaf education. I also attended UC Berkeley and completed a master's in social welfare (MSW) and have worked as a licensed clinical social worker in the Deaf community since."

She continues: "I have deep compassion for those who struggle, and I like helping others. Very few people understand what it is like growing up as a Deaf person, and so my personal experience is very helpful in assisting Deaf children and adults, as well as parents who have Deaf children."

Before coming to Felton, Joni worked in San Jose providing mental health services to Deaf individuals and children. Then, for several years she was a stay-at-home mom, taking her four kids to soccer, baseball and other activities while making sure that they

focused on their academic studies. During that time, she also served on the board for DeafHope, an agency that serves Deaf survivors of domestic and sexual violence. When she reentered the workforce at Felton Institute, she was able to apply everything learned from nurturing her family and her experiences with DeafHope to working with a team that provides mental health and social services to Felton's Deaf clients.

"The work is rewarding in that we all share the same mission to help those that face extraordinary challenges improve their lives," Joni notes with enthusiasm. "Because of the great need, the biggest challenge is trying to get everything done! What I love about working at Felton is that the Felton team, agency-wide, as well as our DCCS team, is very passionate, skilled and dedicated in their work with clients. Many of our Deaf clients have been told that their deafness will limit their opportunities and choices. It has been extremely rewarding to watch Deaf individuals begin to view themselves in a new way, as empowered and capable, and to begin to go after their hopes and dreams and experience all that life has to offer."

In her time away from work, Joni loves spending time with her children, who are now adults living very full lives. Her three sons each have engineering and computer science degrees. Her daughter works at a children's private school and is taking courses to become a teacher. She adds, "I enjoy spending time with my husband and friends. One of my favorite things to do is to go to the movie theater and watch the latest movies at the theater, using the new technology of closed caption devices. This was not possible until ten years ago."

One of her favorite quotes comes from Anne Sullivan, the teacher of author and political activist Helen Keller, the first Deaf-Blind person to earn a bachelor of arts degree, who wrote, "The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched—they must be felt in the heart." Joni leads with her heart, and those who meet her always remember that feeling.

ABC-7's Spencer Christian to speak at Cradle to College

Felton is very honored that award-winning news reporter, sportscaster, talk show host and weather forecaster Spencer Christian will be the guest speaker at Felton's Pre-School Graduation: Cradle to College on August 3, 2018. Before coming to ABC 7/KGO-TV in 1999, Spencer served as weather forecaster, feature reporter and guest host on ABC's national program *Good Morning America* for 13 years. He hosted *Spencer Christian's Wine Cellar* on HGTV and later on the Food Network from 1995 to 2000.

As the spokesperson for ABC's literacy campaign, Spencer wrote and published a series of children's books, including *Can it Really Rain Frogs? The World's Strangest Weather Events* and *Shake, Rattle, and Roll: The World's Most Amazing Volcanoes, Earthquakes, and Other Forces*.

Spencer enjoys inspiring youth and devotes many hours to participating in community events. We look forward to his words of wisdom and wit at this year's graduation, which will be held on the San Francisco State University campus. Young graduates from Felton's Learning Center, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Center, Sojourner Truth Center and Family Developmental Center will don purple gowns and mortarboards as they celebrate this milestone with family and friends. Last year was the first year that the ceremony known as Cradle to College was held on a university campus.

"We wanted the students to have an experience that will help them hold the vision of attaining higher education, even at this young age," explained Yohana Quiroz, Felton Chief Operating Officer of Children, Youth, and Family and Transitional Age Youth Services.

Despite the storms of life that some of Felton's young clients may experience, we anticipate many days of sunny skies ahead for them for years to come.



Spencer Christian





The 2018 Deaf Bay Area Expo held at the Alameda County Fairgrounds on Saturday, April 14, 2018, was a tremendous success! With staff from the Felton Deaf Community Counseling Services program (DCCS) manning a booth, over 3,000 Expo attendees learned about the special services available to the Deaf and hard of hearing within the Bay Area. The DCCS team is comprised of program manager Joni Teague; clinicians Jolene Mahoney, Mal May, and Anoush Rodriguez; interpreter, intake worker and administrator Cat Riddley; and administrator Zach Cecil. Joni, Anoush, Zach and Jolene are pictured above.

A majority of the attendees were Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals from the Bay Area who came with friends or family members, although some came from as far away as Sacramento, California.

Program manager Joni Teague was excited that the DCCS team had the opportunity to network with other Deaf agency service providers and exchange knowledge and even equipment. Joni stated that "one agency representative will drop off applications so our hard-of-hearing clients can get specialized equipment to help them hear better on cell phones." Felton's purple backpacks, provided so that attendees could organize expo materials, "were a huge hit," Joni added. Felton has Deaf Community Counseling Services in San Francisco, San Leandro and Fremont. For more information about DCCS, please call (415) 474-7310, or visit felton.org.

Senior Division attends ASA Conference



In front: Adrienne Abad-Santos, Tieu Ly, Lynn O'Leary
In back: Benson Nadell, Cathy Spensley, Ed Fowler, Julie Schneider, and Jenifer McAtee



Andy Scharlach and Cathy Spensley

Felton Senior Division Director Cathy Spensley and Director of Older Adult Mental Health Services Ed Fowler presented at the annual national conference of the American Society on Aging held in San Francisco, March 26-29, 2018. The session, "Integrating Mental Health and Aging Services to Create Change" was well attended and sparked a lively discussion.

Adrienne Abad, Administrative Manager; Tieu Ly, Foster Grandparent/Senior Companion Program Manager; Lynn O'Leary, Director of Programs; Benson Nadell, Long Term Care Ombudsman Program Director; Julie Schneider, Ombudsman Field Service Coordinator; Jenifer McAtee, Full Service Partnership Manager; and Amy Yu, Senior Community Service Employment Program Director supported the presentation.

For some of the managers, this was their first time attending a large professional conference. They were very appreciative of being able to glean a better understanding of the depth and breadth of the field of aging. The conference attracted attendees from all over the world.

Cathy also presented with San Francisco colleagues at the session "High-Touch in a Tech City: Regarding People-Place Relationships in Designing a San Francisco for All," during which Cathy shared information about Felton's community building work in Visitacion Valley.

To learn more about the Senior Division's work, [click here](#).

One additional highlight at the conference was Felton's co-sponsorship of a retirement party for Andy Scharlach, PhD, the Eugene and Rose Kleiner Professor of Aging at the School of Social Welfare and Director of the Center for the Advanced Study of Aging Services. Dr. Scharlach's research has examined innovative social and community supports designed to promote healthy aging. He has published nearly 100 articles and authored numerous books, including *Creating Aging-Friendly Communities*. The retirement party was attended by the leaders in the field of aging. Andy has been a dedicated mentor to a large number of professionals in the field, including Cathy Spensley. Dr. Scharlach and everyone agreed that it was a very lively and excellent retirement party!

Felton and You: Gifted and Talented, Acceptance and Inclusion for All



Awareness holidays were scarcely scattered across printed calendars beginning in the 1980's in hopes of bringing attention to newly-discovered maladies. These holidays were a new way for passionate people to organize volunteers, advocate for a cause or a cure and to fund-raise in a powerful and profound way. This newfound method of spreading the message and bringing people together to educate, advocate and finance an important cause rapidly caught on. Today, a quick Online search will produce a few hundred awareness holidays with a duration of one day, one week or an entire month for any number of illnesses, diseases, conditions, disorders and causes. National Autism Awareness Month is among the those designated in April. And the Week of the Young Child was celebrated the week of April 16-20 this year.

National Autism Awareness Month was launched by the Autism Society about 25 years ago to "promote autism awareness, inclusion and self-determination for all, and assure that each person with ASD is provided the opportunity to achieve the highest possible quality of life."

We at Felton Institute, through Felton Early Autism Program (FEAP), promote autism awareness, acceptance and inclusion, self-determination and education every day through our early intervention program for infants and toddlers with autism. FEAP is the first inclusive center-based program in San Francisco with a curriculum designed specifically for children with autism, bringing together an evidence-based intervention model specifically designed for young children on the autism spectrum and the child's natural learning environment.

FEAP is located at [Felton's Family Developmental Center](#) (FDC) which is San Francisco's licensed and largest subsidized early care and education program serving children from birth to six years of age. For more than 45 years, FDC has been exclusively the only program in San Francisco to serve infants and toddlers who have physical or developmental challenges within an inclusive program model.

Families with children who are affected by autism have many challenges, some of which are not obvious to the general population. And it's not always the big things in life which can be difficult or disappointing. For example, the simple act of going to watch a movie at the theater is not an option for some families who have children with autism, because of sensory triggers that are prompted when watching the film. Imagine you want to enjoy a Saturday matinee with your child, but you know her excitement will elicit involuntary squeals of delight and boisterous movements which aren't accepted by others. The one time you tried to take her, you were asked to leave because of other people's complaints. You walk out with your child who is confused and upset because she doesn't understand why you have to go. Can you imagine that?

And what about the ability to have funds for a movie, even it was possible to take your child to a matinee? The [Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC) reported estimates that children and adolescents with autism have, on average, medical expenditures that exceed those without ASD by \$4,110 to \$6,200 per year. That is 4.1-6.2 times greater for children affected by autism than children who are not. Median expenditures range from \$2,240 to \$3,360 per year greater for children with ASD than children without, which is 8.4-9.5 times greater. In addition to medical costs, families spend \$40,000 to \$60,000 per year for intensive behavioral interventions for children with ASD.*

The CDC's 2016 ADDM Autism prevalence report states that about 1 in 68 children have been identified with autism in the United States. Although both girls and boys are diagnosed with autism, ASD is four to five times more common in boys.

While the statistics are staggering and the challenges diverse, touching many areas of life for children and their families, Felton Early Autism Program (FEAP) offers specialized intervention for children and support for parents and families.

Though FEAP, children and families may receive:

- 1:1 individualized instruction
- Home visits
- Speech and language therapy
- Feeding therapy
- Daily nurse monitoring and care
- Mental health consultations
- Referrals to other community-based programs

What makes FEAP unique?

- Access to high-quality intervention program for children with autism
- Targeted and individualized intervention delivered within an inclusive early care and education setting, with typically-developing peers
- Access to community-based resources and supports
- Access to an on-site multidisciplinary Early Intervention team
- Access to staff with formal training in early childhood education and certification in the [Early Start Denver Model](#).

The Early Start Denver Model is the only comprehensive early intervention model that has been validated in a randomized clinical trial for use with children with autism as young as 18 months of age. It's effective for children with autism across a wide range of learning styles and abilities.

Expanding FEAP and autism awareness

We want to expand the work we do at Felton, supporting and advocating for families living with autism. We want to educate those who have not personally been touched by autism to ensure true acceptance and inclusion in schools and communities, celebrating the unique aspects of all people while finding true value in those with autism spectrum disorders for their unique talents and gifts.

Let's expand this work together! Join us in promoting our cause to provide much needed support and services to children and families affected by autism and to educate and motivate the rest of us to understand, accept and appreciate people with ASDs. **Please consider giving a gift to Felton Institute today.**


To give to the cause for which you have passion, text FELTON to 41444 on your mobile device; it's quick and easy.

For more information about Felton Institute call 415-474-7310. For more information about FEAP call 415-282-1090 ext. 104.

*Statistic and information about autism are found on the [CDC website](#).

Your generous donations transform lives. Thank you!



 Like us on Facebook

Follow us on 

View our videos on 

View our photos on 

 Forward to a Friend

© Felton Institute | (415) 474-4730 | communications@felton.org | felton.org

Felton Institute, 1500 Franklin Street, San Francisco, CA 94109