

“It goes on”

Learning on the job for five years

Howard Weissman

When Ed Tasch retired after a remarkable 35-year run as NCADA’s executive director and I was named his successor, I approached the challenge with a mixture of humility and terror. During my first eighteen months—wherever I went and whomever I spoke with—I was reminded of the big shoes I would be trying to fill...as if I didn’t already know.

In my view, Ed was the consummate executive director. There was no dimension of the job in which I considered my abilities superior, and several areas in which I knew them to be inferior. Upon my hiring, I was also made aware that the biggest reservation the board had about selecting me was my sense of humor and my propensity to say “inappropriate” things for the sake of a laugh. So on top of the challenges around becoming the voice or face of the agency, it seemed as if I’d have to do it while self-consciously trying to censor myself.

“...True leadership stems from individuality that is honestly and sometimes imperfectly expressed...”

Facebook COO, Sheryl Sandberg

I knew that I simply couldn’t try to be another Ed; I had to be myself, even if this meant that, sooner or later, I was going to say something that somebody would find inappropriate. As it turned out, that didn’t happen...until my third or fourth day on the job.



On May 11, Howard Weissman stepped down as executive director of NCADA after five years. During his tenure, NCADA purchased and moved into a new permanent home, was honored (twice) as the #1 workplace in St. Louis—and stepped up to confront the largest health crisis in modern history.

When I took over, NCADA took pride in being “a best kept secret”; a wonderful organization that few had heard of. NCADA was self-described as “vanilla,” and wore this as a badge of honor. We actively tried to avoid controversy and fly under everyone’s radar.

But I became executive director at a time when the opioid epidemic was exploding and the legalization of marijuana was being discussed throughout the country. We wanted to be part of these conversations even if it meant that sometimes (like with our very first Super Bowl ad) we’d have to start them. Raising awareness and participating in the public debate over current drug-related issues would require an array of flavors besides vanilla. We needed to make some noise, and I’m proud to say we did.

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NCADA Golf Tournament – August 6, 2018

Why is this our most important annual fundraiser?

Not only is the golf tournament our biggest fundraiser, but it provides us with flexible funds – it helps us fix the air-conditioning, patch the roof, and buy paper towels.

Most of NCADA’s funding comes with very specific instructions on how it must be used. That makes sense, and every dime is appreciated, but when the parking lot needs to be plowed, it’s good to have funds in general revenue.

If you’re thinking about attending, please tee up. Invite your friends. Spread the word. The St. Albans course is gorgeous. The food is wonderful. And while the fight against the opioid epidemic is vitally important, the speeches will be short.

Register online at ncada-stl.org/golf, or contact Sarah at (314) 962-3456 x372 or sroberts@ncada-stl.org.

(Every time a new foursome signs up, Sarah pumps her fist and says, “Woohoo!”)





Director's Commentary

Handing off the reins

Nichole Dawsey
Executive Director

It's been 90 years since horse-drawn wagons were an ordinary sight on the streets of St. Louis, but the expression "handing off the reins" is still common. The modern equivalent is "your turn to drive," with the crucial difference that the wagon's horsepower was alive, with one or more minds of its own...

has written curricula and managed budgets. She has a deep passion for the mission and a strong sense of our culture. In a nutshell, Leah has all of the competencies (and then some) necessary to step into this role.

I could not be happier and more confident in the future of the prevention education department and, for that matter, the whole agency.

While I prepared to succeed Howard as executive director, the phrase "Big Shoes to Fill" became a punchline around the office. Howard talks about it in his cover story, and even gifted me a flower bouquet in a pair of his old boots. I can't tell Leah that she has big shoes to fill (at least not without laughing), but Leah, here are a couple of horseshoes:



Keep the points up to hold in the luck. And try to learn from everyone—even the neigh-sayers. 🐾

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Leah Schaefer, Director of Prevention Education

mission; and great relief because I will not miss having the responsibility for nearly 60 employees in a funding environment that's only marginally less competitive than the Thunderdome.

Though we did lots of good things and made progress, there is still so much left to do. The number of fatal drug overdoses continues to climb, alcohol kills more people than other drugs, and there will soon be a third addictive drug sold commercially and marketed to kids. So we're a long way from feeling as if we're winning. But I've loved being in the fight, and I know—we all know—that were it not for our efforts, things would be very much worse.

"If your actions create a legacy that inspires others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, then you are an excellent leader."

Famous management guru (and part time singer/songwriter), Dolly Parton*

During the last five years it has been thrilling to see so many of our staff grow and change. Another key to our success has been the way we identified and retained so many talented people by making sure they had jobs that matched their strengths and passions. We did not "empower" people as much as we hired people who were already powerful, creative, and dedicated, and then let them go...

I've been thinking a lot about NCADA, where we've been and how far we've come, and it occurred to me that NCADA didn't start with me, or with Ed, or with the three white guys before Ed. In fact, NCADA's parent organization was founded in 1944 by a woman named Marty Mann; a tireless advocate, advancing an unpopular, misunderstood cause in a culture dominated by men. It was through her leadership that the prevailing attitude of addiction as a moral failing began to shift, and her ongoing efforts helped the country better understand that alcoholism was, in fact, a treatable disease and a public health issue. There is a straight line connecting NCADA's mission today, back to the vision and pioneering efforts of Marty Mann.

Past is prologue, so it is entirely fitting that the future of NCADA will be under the direction, guidance and leadership of another extraordinary woman.

I am thrilled beyond measure that the NCADA board of directors selected Nichole Dawsey to become NCADA's next executive director. Nichole has worked here for more than a decade, most recently as our director of prevention education, and she has excelled at everything she's done. And the word "excelled" is probably inadequate. When Nichole takes on a job, she sets a new standard. If talent were population, Nichole would be China.

Nichole became executive director on May 14th, and for a few more months, she will doubtlessly have to hear talk about filling shoes, just as I did (there's no stopping it; it's just what people say in an effort to be respectful to what came before). But Nichole has a closet full of her own shoes, and I'm certain those reminders about footwear will soon quiet as she inhabits the job in her own way, with her own abundant strengths, and with her own vision for the future of the agency. It is my hope, that in a year or two I will be largely forgotten, and what lives on are NCADA's new achievements and the legacy Nichole builds for herself and her staff...along with just a few

(mostly apocryphal) stories about the unbelievably ridiculous, wildly inappropriate and hilarious things I actually said out loud during my time here.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

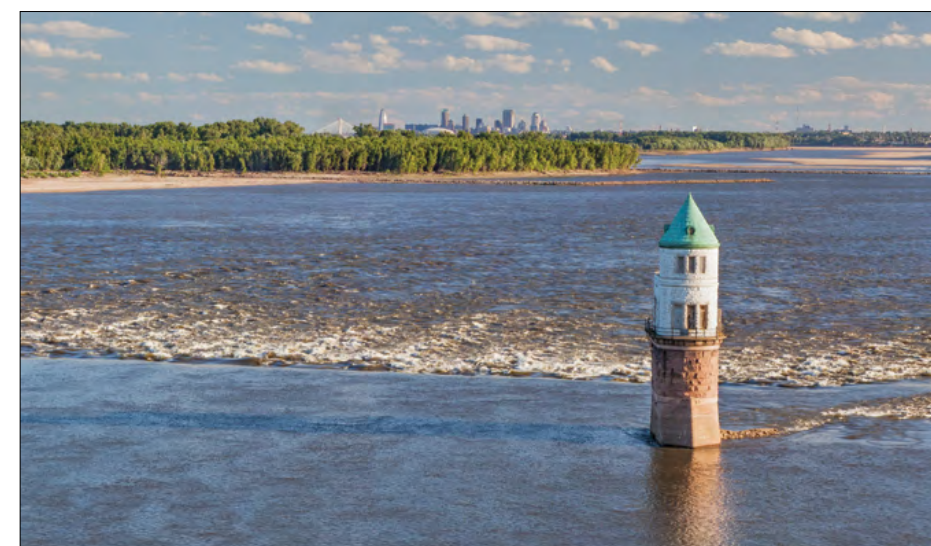
Anthropologist Margaret Mead

One reason morale at NCADA remains high, one reason we're one of the best places to work (as named by the St. Louis Post-Dispatch for the last six consecutive years), is because our small group knows that, if we all do our best, we really can help change the world.

In fact, the best part of leading NCADA is having the opportunity to be part of something grand and noble—something that does aim to change the world—and to do it with a team of amazing, talented and committed individuals. Our success is due to the gestalt. Though the individual parts of our board and staff are each great in their own way, the whole is far greater than the sum of us.

I have never loved a job more than this one, and I will miss it terribly. And I'll miss it both because I grew so deeply fond of the people here, and because of what we did together. Stepping aside now is personally bittersweet, but I haven't lost my perspective on what my leaving means to the agency. The poet Robert Frost once said he could sum up everything he learned about life in just three words:

"It goes on."



I am immeasurably grateful to have had the privilege of leading NCADA, and it's a little easier to say good-bye knowing that I'm leaving the agency in excellent hands, poised for growth, and still ready to change the world.

So say good-bye to me, and say hello to Nichole.

It goes on. 🐾

*Quotation is sometimes attributed to John Quincy Adams a world-class plagiarist who, curiously, also claimed to write, "Workin' 9 to 5, what a way to make a livin', Barely gettin' by, it's all takin' and no givin', They just use your mind and they never give you credit, It's enough to drive you crazy if you let it."

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NCADA underwent dramatic growth during these last five years, with new programs, new services, new policy positions, and new collaborations. And improbably, though we kept growing in leaps and bounds, morale among our incredible staff remained high. The pairing of rapid growth and high morale is rare, but it was made possible because our people set high standards for themselves while remaining tremendously supportive of one another. A demand for excellence, an absence of internal competition, and a desire to see everyone succeed, is a very special combination of characteristics, and it is this unique blend that best defines NCADA's culture.

Of course, change and growth wasn't always easy. There was occasional pushback and there have been passionate disagreements along the way. But this was to be expected, and we were always made stronger because of them. Each change needed to be justified to and embraced by everyone, and in this way, as we grew, we all stayed bought-in.

So, I look back on my five and a half years as executive director with a combination of pride, sadness and relief. Pride because I know I gave it my all; sadness because I will miss the people and the

CALENDAR

For event information and registration visit ncada-stl.org/events, email Jeanne Cordingley at jcordingley@ncada-stl.org, or call (314) 962-3456 x304 (unless otherwise noted in the event listing).

FOR PROFESSIONALS

September 5: Ethics—A Matter of Perspective
8:30 am – 12:00 pm; NCADA, 9355 Olive Blvd., 63132.

FOR STUDENTS

September 11: Red Ribbon Training – Jefferson County
Faith Community Church, 4824 Scottsdale Rd., House Springs, 63051.

Red Ribbon trainings build substance use awareness in 6th, 7th and 8th graders. The trainings are free but require registration. For more information and to register, visit ncada-stl.org/redribbon.

September 21: Red Ribbon Training – St. Louis City
Forest Park Community College, 5600 Oakland Ave., 63110.

September 27: Red Ribbon Training – St. Louis County
United Hebrew Congregation, 3788 Conway Rd., 63141.

FOR EVERYONE

August 6: 2018 NCADA Golf Tournament
9:00 am – 6:00 pm, Country Club of St. Albans, 3165 St. Albans Rd., St. Albans, MO 63073 (See story p. 1).

Youth Mental Health First Aid Trainings
Free, one-day trainings that teach participants how to provide initial help to young people experiencing mental health crises.



July 16: 8:30 am – 5:00 pm, Jefferson County Health Dept., Arnold Branch, 1818 Lonedell, Arnold, 63010.

August 30: 8:30 am – 5:00 pm, NCADA, 9355 Olive Blvd., 63132.

September 19: 8:30 am – 5:00 pm, Warren County Health Dept., 101 Mockingbird Lane, Warrenton, 63383.

September 21: SOS: Signs of Suicide Training
9:00 am – 11:30 am; NCADA, 9355 Olive Blvd., 63132.



ST. LOUIS COALITION ON ADDICTIONS

July 11: Addressing Substance Use Among Survivors of Commercial Sexual Exploitation – Katie Rhoades

Aug. 8: Improving Recovery Support Through Technology Assisted Care Coordination – Behavioral Health Network

Sept. 12: Criminal Justice and Behavioral Health Partnerships – Carl Filler (of Mayor Lyda Krewson's office)

Oct. 10: From Grant to Group: Forming Washington University in St. Louis' Recovery Program
Amanda Holymann

The Coalition on Addictions (COA) meets the second Wednesday of each month from noon – 1:00 at NCADA, 9355 Olive Blvd. in Olivette. **Doors open at 11:30 am.** No RSVP is required. Lunch is provided free of charge, courtesy of Alkermes, Inc. A CEU for one contact hour is \$5.00. COA is a service of NCADA and the Community Academic Partnership on Addictions. (CAPA is an affiliate organization of the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis.)

Talk About It STL Community Day Keeping the Conversation Going

The 2018 Super Bowl provided a platform for NCADA to, once again, communicate with the region about something important. This year, our half-time PSA launched the *Talk About It* campaign.

Talk About It is based on the simple-but-powerful truth that parents who talk with their kids about alcohol and other drugs cut their risk of use synecdoche in half. *Talk About It* aims to give caregivers not just the motivation, but the *tools* to navigate these potentially uncomfortable conversations.

Reaction to the PSA and to *Talk About It* was immediate and positive. In the days following the Super Bowl, hundreds of people visited the *Talk About It* website, and community groups requested *Talk About It* materials.

We knew that airing our PSA once during the Super Bowl was not enough, and that we'd need to reinforce the campaign's momentum. So, NCADA coordinated a *Talk About It STL* "Community Day." Leading up to the community day, twenty large pill bottle replicas were placed throughout the St. Louis region. Then on Saturday, April 14th, the sites were staffed by trained volunteers who handed out literature, provided information about the campaign, and encouraged parents to get free, age-specific talking kits at TalkAboutItSTL.com.

We're still not done – over the next few weeks, watch for *Talk About It* Metro ads, billboards, Hulu ads, and more.



NCADA *Talk About It* pill bottle at Tower Grove Farmers' Market.

Pill bottle locations included:

Carpenters Union Hall
Coffee Cartel
Express Scripts
Forest Park Visitor Center
Gateway Arch
HealthWorks! Kids' Museum St. Louis
Jefferson County Health Department
St. Charles City–County Library (Spencer Rd.)
St. Charles County Courthouse
St. Louis Public Library (Downtown)
Straub's Markets (Webster Groves and Central West End)
Soulard Farmers Market
Tower Grove Farmers' Market
Washington University in St. Louis

We thank our host sites and volunteers for making *Talk About It STL* Community Day a success. We also thank the major sponsors of the *Talk About It* campaign:

DEA 360 and Express Scripts.

HELP US!

If you'd like to purchase a pill bottle for your community or business, you'd be doing a service for your neighbors or employees, and you'd be helping NCADA spread the word. NAP tax credits are available for qualifying donations that support *Talk About It*.

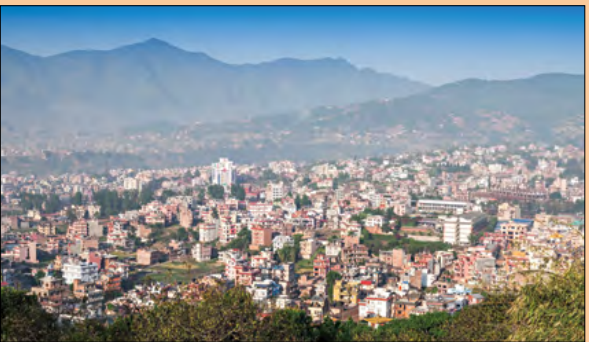
For more information, please contact Stacie Zellin at szellin@ncada-stl.org.

Pam Hughes, a prevention educator at NCADA, serves on the board of the Mitrata Nepal Foundation for Children, which provides education and medical care for more than 100 children in Nepal. Recently, she traveled to Kathmandu, and while there she conducted NCADA-style prevention trainings. The results were fascinating.

Teaching the NCADA curriculum in Nepal

Pam Hughes

As a board member of the Mitrata Nepal Foundation for Children, I traveled to Nepal to do some work on behalf of the organization. Because of my expertise in prevention education, I offered to do a full-day workshop for the children there.



Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal has a regional population over three million. Nepal is one of Asia's poorest nations, with an average annual income under \$3,000.

Since this was my only chance to teach the Mitrata kids (actually, young adults at this point), we packed in a lot of information on the risks of misusing alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana; on addiction; and on strategies for resisting peer pressure. We also talked about the importance of the brain – a point reinforced by the brain-shaped stress balls which I threw to the audience members brave enough to volunteer answers. The NCADA curriculum is really interactive, so we had a lot of discussion, break-out sessions, activities, and plenty of laughter.

Of course I learned a great deal too, about Nepali culture and the challenges the population faces.

In Nepal, hookah bars are becoming quite popular, just like in the United States. Some young people run into problems with mar-



The training was given to 25 young people. Topics included tobacco, marijuana, peer pressure, and brain development.

ijuana, or ganja as it's called in Nepal. It's not legal, but nonetheless it's prevalent. The students and the public at large really don't have much information about how drugs impact the brain – particularly the teenage brain. At the end of the workshop the students lined up to hug and thank me; they were so appreciative of receiving such important information.

I also conducted a workshop with the staff, focusing on risk factors and protective factors. I anticipated that this workshop would last maybe four hours, but, because of their intense interest, we ended up talking for close to six.

I began the workshop with an egg drop. We took two identical-looking eggs enclosed in plastic baggies, held them above our heads and dropped them. One egg completely fell apart while the other only suffered a few cracks. Both eggs were subjected to the same amount of stress, but one survived and the other didn't. Of course one egg was hardboiled and the other was raw. We used that demonstration to talk about how we can help the children in Nepal survive, despite the terribly difficult circumstances they face, which include poverty, neglect, abuse, and a government that does not provide much of a social safety net. While we cannot immediately change those circumstances, we can provide protective factors and developmental assets which help build strength and resilience in the children.

Thinking back on the trainings, I remember a question one of the students wrote on an index card and passed up to me. She wrote that her father was addicted to alcohol and asked, "What do I do?" Everyone, I don't care what country you're from, struggles with issues related to addiction. The better we understand that it's a disease and not a moral failing, the better we'll be able to address the problem.

In Nepal, there is even more shame connected with addiction than in America, so often people are afraid to reveal it to their families. Many people are ostracized from their families and from society, sometimes even dying. It's terribly sad. I felt very privileged to travel to Nepal and share a different perspective, and hopefully increase the understanding that addiction really is a disease, and one that can be treated.

phughes@ncada-stl.org



Pam supervises an egg drop, to illustrate the importance of protective factors.

NCADA Awards Luncheon

Annual Event Honors Exemplary Service in the Field of Substance Use Disorders

On April 27, we celebrated our colleagues at the Spring Awards Luncheon at the beautiful Norwood Hills Country Club. More than 180 attendees recognized the accomplishments and contributions of this year’s award recipients.

Pioneer Award: Dr. Theodore Cicero, in recognition of his groundbreaking research in the field of substance use disorders.

Gateway Award: Mike Sneden and The Arbor Group, for their extraordinary efforts to spread the message that addiction is preventable.

Helen B. Madden Award: Tina Hoester, in recognition of an exceptional career devoted to the treatment of substance use disorders.

And congratulations to Vianca Cuevas Soulette, this year’s recipient of the **Tasch-Kopolow Scholarship** for Addiction Studies.

Also, we want to extend a special thank you to our keynote speaker, Missouri State Senator Jill Schupp. Senator Schupp has been a longtime advocate for substance use and other public health issues, and we were honored to have her be part of this year’s event.

On the Run

In an increasingly competitive funding landscape, NCADA is working to find fun and easy ways for people to support our critically important services.

The GO! St. Louis Marathon selected NCADA as a charity partner organization for the second year in a row. Fifteen people registered to be a part of “Team NCADA,” with participants running in the 5k, 7k, relay, and half-marathon events. In addition to their physical efforts on the race course, Team NCADA members raised additional dollars through sponsorship sign-ups.



Clockwise from top left: Theodore Cicero (Pioneer Award); Mike Sneden (Gateway Award); Lee Haynes, Tina Hoester (Helen Madden Award), and Howard Weissman; Vianca Cuevas Soulette (Tasch-Kopolow Scholarship).

On the Menu

We found support from Panera on Old Olive Street Road and Dewey’s Pizza in University City. Both restaurants donated 20% of food and beverage purchases to NCADA on designated evenings. We look forward to co-hosting more of these events and hope that you’ll be able to join us.

If you know of a restaurant or business that is interested in supporting NCADA through a donation or by hosting a third-party fundraiser, please contact Sarah Roberts at sroberts@ncada-stl.org.



Tributes & Contributions

February 2018 – April 2018

GRANTS AND PROGRAM GIFTS

Prevention First
Saigh Foundation

Teen Institute
Optimist Club of Clayton
Kirkwood Optimist Club

TRIBUTES IN MEMORY OF

Stephen Anderson

Pulos, Blankenship & Jianakoplos, P.C.

Kristine Leber Bergman

Clemco Industries Corp.

Nicky Vigna

Vance and Gee Vigna

Walking for Wellness: Stop Heroin

Nicholas Gore

Daniel Gore

Marsha Karney

Adrienne Eagles

Daniel Eng

Barb Sutton

TRIBUTES IN HONOR OF

Ms. Brydel’s 2nd Grade Class

Code Consultants Inc.
Tracy Elder

Stafford Manion and Cathy Christ

James Dalton and Karen Ruskin

David Weber

Richard and Debra Halpern

Howard Weissman’s Retirement

Leah Brock
Ellis and Patti Fitzwalter

Kathy and Steve Gardner

Thomas and Carmen Heard

Andy Kanefield and Lois Soffer

Jeffrey and Harriet Kopolow

Laborers’ Local 110

Julie Leicht

John and Laura Meyer

Curt and Lori Nerenberg

Steve and Julie Plax

Celeste and Steve Player

Barry Rosenberg

Mark and Jill Schupp

Suzanne Siteman

St. Louis College of Pharmacy

DONATIONS AND EVENT GIVING

Alkermes Inc.
Lynne Allar-Meine

AmazonSmile Foundation

American Addiction Centers

The Aviary Recovery Center

Bank of America Employee Giving Campaign

Nancy Bengtson

Boeing Company Gift Match Program

Carman Trails Elementary School
Alan and Tina Carney
CenterPointe Hospital
COMTREA Inc.
Doug and Chelle Dohrmann
Dovetail
Kathryn Ellis
Thomas and Nancy Erickson
Express Scripts Inc.

Daniel and Eleanor Ferry

Fifth Third Bank

Ellis and Patti Fitzwalter

Frederick Pitzman Fund

Gateway Foundation Inc.

Givable St. Louis

Robert Gulino

Lee Haynes

Christopher Kallaos

Laurie Keller

Patrick and Daina Kinlen

Jeffrey and Harriet Kopolow

Ladue Horton Watkins HS

Parent Assoc.

Lawlor Corporation
Lyann Malter
Jessica Masters

Arlene Miller

Chip Miller And Debbie Broms

Eric Mink

Moondance Foundation

James and Nancy Murphy

Network For Good

Nidec Commercial Motors

Paul Ostlund

David Patterson

Peter and Meredith Perkins

Celeste and Steven Player

Tina Poston

Preferred/Bridgeway Behavioral Health

Queen of Peace Center

Sharon Raske

Steve and Ann Roberts

Sarah Roberts

Barry Rosenberg

The Salvation Army

Schnucks Markets Inc.



The 39th annual Teen Institute for Prevention Leaders was held in Dittmer, Missouri, June 5–8. On the first day, students were divided into teams and given a set of group challenges. The activities introduced attendees to new people, and provided insight into effective styles of cooperation and leadership.

Schwab Charitable Fund

Thomas and Missie Seeger

Julie Sehnert

Phil Slavin

Vianca Soulette

SSM Health System

St. Louis County Department of Public Health

St. Louis County Prosecuting Attorney

Colby and Rebekah Stinebaugh

Michael and Deborah Strobl

Tegna/KSDK

The Merck Foundation

Nick and Jennifer Tompras

U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency

United Way of Greater Atlanta

United Way of the Coastal Empire (CE)

United Way Suncoast

Brett Vanhoogstraet

Carrie Ward

Stephen Warmack

Washington University

David Weber and Valerie Tripi

Howard and Susan Weissman

Kelly Wieser

Malva Yocco

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Avonna Hughes

Brian Jones

Jess Kagan

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Scott Leisler

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Stafford Manion

Morgan McKenny

Connor McLaughlin

Hannah Meyer

Chip Miller

Amanda Purdum

Ann Roberts

Steve Roberts

Phil Roush

Vinnie Schneider

Jeremy Scott

Andy Seeger

Michael Shepley

Val Snyder

Mitch Stern

Matt Stewart

Henry Watkins

Hailey Williams

Jazmine Williams

Shannon Williams



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