



The Miracle Project

TAKES THE CAKE



May 28th, 2023
2:00 & 4:30 PM

Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts
9390 N Santa Monica Blvd
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Sponsored by:



LOS ANGELES COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF
MENTAL HEALTH
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WHO WE ARE

The Miracle Project is a fully inclusive theater, film and expressive arts program focused on building communication, self-esteem, job and social skills for individuals with autism and all abilities – speaking and non-speaking. Using groundbreaking and evidence-based methods developed by our founder, Elaine Hall, The Miracle Project focuses on the strengths and abilities inherent in each participant while developing a unique neurodiverse community.

Through shared experiences with peers and volunteers, individuals with autism and other disabilities:

- Find their voice
- Develop their talents
- Rehearse for life

OUR MISSION

To create a neurodiverse community where the voices, passions and stories of individuals with and without disabilities are celebrated, elevated, supported and belong.

OUR VISION

We envision a world where every individual – regardless of ability – belongs and is celebrated for who they are.

OUR CORE VALUES

- We believe everyone belongs;
- We believe in listening to everyone's story;
- We celebrate neurodiversity;
- We appreciate and celebrate individuality;
- We believe that to understand others we must first understand ourselves;
- We believe in fostering communities of support.

OUR HISTORY

When our founder, Elaine Hall, applied for her initial grant from The Jewish Community Foundation in 2004, she promised to impact 100 families.

Eighteen years and over thirty original musicals later...

The Miracle Project's doors opened in January 2005, with 18 students, 14 co-actors, and 4 staff, all trained in "reverse inclusion" and Elaine's "Inclusion from Within" Seven Keys to Unlock and Understand Autism methodology. Others did not know if Elaine's idea - to create an original musical in 20 weeks with a fully inclusive cast - would work. Regardless, Elaine greeted every participant and their families with love, acceptance, and appreciation.

Within a few weeks, this diverse group of actors (speaking and non-speaking) grew together as an ensemble - sharing birthdays, holidays, IEPs, sadness, and joys, as well as singing, dancing, and acting together, some for the very first time. The performers ultimately created an original musical performed live at the Odyssey Theater in West LA, aptly titled Everyday Miracles.

The first performance in June of 2005 was met with standing ovations, tears, and cheers. The Miracle Project was soon 'discovered' by filmmakers who documented the creative process and released it as the Emmy award-winning film, Autism: The Musical (2007).

Since then, The Miracle Project and Elaine Hall have received honors from numerous leading autism organizations, such as Autism Society of America, presented at the United Nations, and have been featured on networks such as HBO, CNN, NBC, and the Oprah Winfrey Network. Actors and alumni from TMP have performed at the White House and Carnegie Hall and have appeared in hit shows such as Parenthood, Atypical, Love on the Spectrum, As We See It, Ada Twist, Scientist, and more! As an onset advocate, access coordinator, and writer, Elaine is changing the way the media portrays neurodiversity and disability.



Elaine Hall and her now evidence-based methodology have inspired similar programs in Los Angeles and all over the world. Today, The Miracle Project is proud to have the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts at its artistic home and to be hosting virtual programming for participants nationally and internationally.

RECENT TMP HIGHLIGHTS

- Continued to provide 19 weekly virtual and in-person social skills and expressive arts classes creating a community for over 100 unique individuals with disabilities, ages 5-58.
- Hosted a six-week guest teaching artist residency in the Triple Threat Musical Theater Class.
- Restructured our core team in Fall 2022, adding two new part-time staff members, a grants manager and an administrative assistant, to strengthen our infrastructure and continue to ensure direct timely communication with parents and the TMP community.
- Developed an original 10-minute production featuring participants in the in-person Triple Threat Class which was performed twice at the Very Special Arts Festival (VSAF) in the Jerry Moss Plaza at The Music Center in April 2023.
- Welcomed 20 representatives from Focus Features to TMP's Improv for Interaction and I Can Do That: Professional Acting for Film & TV classes throughout March 2023 to serve as special guests and professional mentors to TMP participants interested in careers in arts and entertainment.
- Performed in three fully-inclusive interfaith events in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Jewish Disability Awareness and Inclusion Month at Temple Aliyah and Nashuva in February and March 2023.
- TMP's original music video, "Let My Typin' Let You See," produced by and starring multimodality communicators in the Express Yourself class, was screened for over 300 attendees at the at the El Dorado Charter School SELPA Annual Conference, as well as for over 500 students and educators at UCLA (Jan 2023), San Diego State University (Feb 2023), and Cal State University San Marcos (May 2023).
- TMP has continued to support its participants in their individual efforts to make their voices heard:
 - Participants of the Express Yourself Program met with Governor Gavin Newsom's staff and representatives of the Department of Developmental Services to discuss the importance of communication access for multimodality communicators in January 2023.
 - TMP participant, Adin Boyer, elevated the conversation around neurodiversity and the arts as a contestant on the current season of American Idol.
 - Several participants have been featured on podcasts, webinars, and panel discussions about neurodiverse representation in the arts and civil rights of individuals with disabilities.



RECENT TMP HIGHLIGHTS

- TMP’s Founder, Elaine Hall, continues to serve as a thought leader in the neurodiversity space and presents frequently about her work as a highly sought-after Access Consultant and Inclusion Specialist for TV/Film.
- TMP students impacted over 3,000 audience members by performing in the following venues:
 - Skirball Cultural Center, Los Angeles, CA - Oct. 2022
 - International Autism Tree Neuroscience Conference, San Diego, CA - Nov. 2022
 - SPELL-X (International salon-style conference, Virtual - Nov. 2022)
 - Autism Speaks Walk, Dodgers Stadium, Los Angeles, CA - Dec. 2022
 - Afro-Classical Composers Concert, Los Angeles, CA - Dec. 2022
- Executive staff hosted an intimate discussion at the Skirball Cultural Center about Neurodiversity and Hollywood with writer/producer Jason Katims, actors Joe Montana and Sue Ann Pien, and TMP founder, Elaine Hall in October 2022.
- TMP participated in the National Dance Day Celebration at the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts in September 2022 with Nigel Lythgoe of the American Dance Movement Foundation.
- TMP hosted the virtual World Premiere of two original music videos starring individuals with disabilities. (The Miracle Project Company—a fully inclusive performance group—shot the majority of the video for their original song, “It All Comes Down to Me,” in the Lovelace Theater and in the GRoW at the Wallis Education Wing at the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts.) The premiere also included a Q&A about neurodiversity and the arts with the multimodality communicators who developed the lyrics and starred in the videos.
- In May 2023, TMP Founder Elaine Hall presented for the Los Angeles City Council about The Miracle Project and about her experience as a mother to a son who uses AAC.
- In celebration of Mental Health Matters Month, TMP Grants Manager, Margaret Mendenhall and Founder, Elaine Hall presented on TMP’s work in the mental health space and its partnership with Take Action for Mental Health LA County at the Beverly Hills Commissioners Meeting in May 2023.



THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

The Miracle Project Takes the Cake is sponsored by the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) and the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) as part of the Take Action for Mental Health LA County campaign. Additional support for The Miracle Project Takes the Cake has also been provided by the California Arts Council (CAC) and the Los Angeles Trial Lawyers' Charities (LATLC).



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MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS MONTH!

Promoting mental well-being among its participants is the heart of all The Miracle Project's programs!

In 2014, researchers from CSUN deemed The Miracle Project an **evidence-based intervention in easing anxiety, increasing confidence, and enhancing self-esteem** for children and teenagers with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

How does TMP do this?

- TMP's programs are fully-inclusive and cultivate a sense of belonging critical to the well-being of its participants and their families
- TMP embraces those with disabilities for who they are and gives them a safe creative community where they can reveal their true selves
- TMP's programming is specifically tailored to build on the strengths of neurodivergent participants and promotes interconnectedness within diverse cultural communities
- TMP's classes directly and indirectly address topics such as:
 - Self-esteem
 - Social anxiety
 - Feelings of isolation and loneliness
 - Dealing with bullying
- TMP's innovative arts curricula builds protective factors through the opportunities it provides for:
 - Creative expression
 - Self-empowerment
 - Leadership development
 - Social-emotional growth
- TMP embraces multimodality communication and provides performance opportunities for individuals who are often excluded from such activities because of their nontraditional ways of expressing themselves.

After entering The Miracle Project community, program participants and their families, many of whom had previously felt isolated and alone, report **having close friends, attending social gatherings, and experiencing increased connection and joy**. Families, once estranged from their communities, report **feeling integrated into a supportive social network**. Parents report **reduced stress levels** due to the new friendships and support, and young adults **find their voice and passion** that leads to **confidence** in the job market and secondary education.

MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS MONTH!

The Miracle Project's programming also contributes to **positive community mental health outcomes**:

- TMP's original content utilizes themes that promote acceptance, dignity, inclusion, and equity for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families
- TMP elevates the voices of neurodivergent individuals to address limiting beliefs and societal misperceptions about disability
- TMP's events destigmatize help-seeking behaviors, including the pursuit of artistic outlets for creative self-expression, and educate the public about the effectiveness of the arts in supporting mental health
- TMP's events offer opportunities for connection between neurodiverse families and the greater Los Angeles County community.
- TMP acts as a model for the Los Angeles County community as to how to promote inclusion within personal and professional interactions

"The Miracle Project Takes the Cake" was selected to be part of the Take Action for Mental Health LA County Campaign because of the role TMP plays as both a **Mental Illness Prevention Program** and a **Stigma and Discrimination Reduction Program**.

About Take Action for Mental Health LA County Campaign

Take Action for Mental Health LA County focuses on helping County residents support their own mental health and the mental health of people they care about. The campaign's call to action encourages people to take action for themselves and others through the **Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH)** 24/7 Help Line and the myriad of resources available from **LACDMH** along each person's unique well-being journey. The campaign aims to prevent and reduce risk factors by decreasing stigma surrounding mental illness and providing people the tools and connections to seek help for themselves or a loved one. As part of the campaign, grant-funded community events will take place throughout May and June 2023 and include free community fairs, art festivals, after school programs, yoga and 5K run/walk activities, professional conferences, mental health trainings, outreach campaigns, and much more. Additionally, **LACDMH** will host free community fairs in each of the eight L.A. County service planning areas. Each event will provide free resources, connections, physical and mental well-being themed giveaway items, free meals in warm, celebratory atmospheres that will foster community and togetherness. More information and a list of events throughout the county can be found at:

<https://www.takeactionlac.com>

Additional resources and mental health toolkits can also be found at: <https://takeaction4mh.com/>

ABOUT THE HONOREE



Elaine Hall

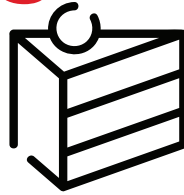
Founder & Board Member

Elaine, also known as “Coach E,” has been referenced by The New York Times as “the child whisperer” and is a pioneer in using theatre and movement practices as a portal for connection among individuals with autism and related disabilities. Elaine was a top Hollywood acting coach when her adopted son was diagnosed with severe autism. When traditional behavioral therapies did not work for him, she developed an innovative methodology combining mindfulness and the expressive arts with what she was learning from autism experts, Dr. Stanley Greenspan, Dr. Ricki Robinson, and Dr. Barry Prizant. These methods are chronicled in her book, *Seven Keys to Unlock Autism: Making Miracles in the Classroom*, which is used as a textbook in several universities, including Brown University. Elaine’s memoir, *Now I See the Moon: A Mother, A Son, a Miracle* was selected by the United Nations for World Autism Awareness Day, where she is a consultant and featured speaker. Elaine has been lauded in The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal, as well as on CNN, CBS, and the Oprah Winfrey Network. The Emmy Award-winning HBO documentary, *AUTISM: The Musical* profiles Elaine’s early work with The Miracle Project, which has since been deemed evidence-based and is now being replicated nationally and internationally.

Elaine is one of Hollywood’s first Access Coordinators ensuring accessibility and authentic representation on Netflix, Hulu, Shondaland, Amazon, Disney, HBO, CBS, NBC including TV shows such as *Atypical*, *FBI: Most Wanted*, and the films *Please Stand By* (with Dakota Fanning) *Wildflower* with Jean Smart. She has also coached on and appeared in the Emmy winning shows, *As We See It*, and *Love on the Spectrum*. She is proud to help provide work for The Miracle Project students in these and other shows. Elaine is committed to changing the way Hollywood represents neurodiversity and disability; as she believes that the media has the ability and responsibility to change the world’s perception of disability.

The Miracle Project

**TAKES
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CAKE**



Directors

Shelley Pack, Sandy Abramson

Music Directors

Noel Katz, Mina Bloom

**Executive Producer/Program Director &
Clinical Supervisor**

Hannah Warren

**Producer/Director of
Operations**

Juliane Hagn

**Associate Producer/
Administrative Assistant**

Sabrina Sonner

Production Assistant

Jesse Tohl

Stage Manager

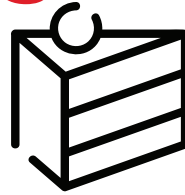
Kaz Osborne

Visionary Consultant

Elaine Hall

The Miracle Project

TAKES THE CAKE



CAST LIST CELEBRATION PART 1 (2:00 PM)

TMP Company Class

Ayan McNab
Bram Goldsmith
David Isaacman
Eva Featherman
Natalie Webber

Express Yourself Class

Antonietta Nelli
Dashiell Chandler
Emma Cladis
Justice Killebrew
Isabella Santoyo
Luke Frede
Neal Katz
Nick Brady
Otto Lana
William Del Rosario

Triple Threat Musical Theater Program

Elena Goldberg
Katy Hoffman
Margaret Muller
Michael Rosenbaum
Oscar Antonio Gomez

I Can Do That: Professional Acting Training for T.V. and Film

Angel Morgan
Ian Sullivan

Social Skills Groups

Aiden Sanchez
Ben Novak
Chandra Alexander
Chyane Jones
Cooper Simonds
Danny Wolf
David Tsukerman
Faith Anderson
Irvin Torres
Jonathan Costello
Kristen Howell
Kyle Montes
Liza Bell
Lukas Martinez
Matt Jones
Max Vaisman
Nicholas Russo
Ranjani Reyes

SCENES & MUSICAL NUMBERS

CELEBRATION PART 1 (2:00 PM)

Hosted by TMP Company Class

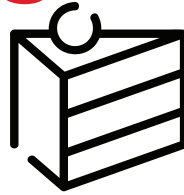
Featuring:

- “Yom Huledet Sameach” (“Happy Birthday” in Hebrew) performed by the Judaica and Torah Together program
- “Together Again, Again” from *Muppets Most Wanted* performed by The Miracle Project Community
- “To Be 18” - An Original Sketch by the 18+ Improv for Interaction Social Skills Class
- Original Music Videos by the Express Yourself Class
 - » “Waves of Change”
 - » “Don’t Fear the Mask”
 - » “Two Lines of Poetry”
 - » “Let My Typin’ Let You See”



The Miracle Project

TAKES THE CAKE



CAST LIST CELEBRATION PART 2 (4:30 PM)

TMP Company Class

Aaron Paulsen
Ayan McNab
Bram Goldsmith
David Isaacman
Eva Featherman
Hunter Trost
Natalie Webber

Express Yourself Class

Emma Cladis
Neal Katz

Triple Threat Musical Theater Program

Elena Goldberg
Katy Hoffman
Michael Rosenbaum
Steven Birnbaum
Oscar Antonio Gomez

I Can Do That: Professional Acting Training for T.V. and Film

Angel Morgan
Ian Sullivan
Sydney Driscoll

Social Skills Groups

Ezra Fields-Meyer
Faith Anderson
Jake Garner
Ethan Bell
Jerome Santiago
Kyle Montes
Matt Jones
Ranjani Reyes
Sasha Saunders

SCENES & MUSICAL NUMBERS

CELEBRATION PART 2 (4:30 PM)

Hosted by TMP Company Class

Original characters and improvised scenes by TMP Company Class

Musical Performances:

- **“When Things Go Right”** – Original Song by TMP Company Class
 - » Composed by Lily Zager
 - » Lyrics by TMP Company Class
- **“Brave”** by Sara Bareilles performed by the Triple Threat Musical Theater Program
- **“Somewhere Over the Rainbow”** from *The Wizard of Oz* performed by Angel Morgan
- **“You Will be Found”** from *Dear Evan Hansen* performed by Ian Sullivan
- **“Hakuna Matata”** from *The Lion King* performed by David Isaacman and Ezra Fields-Meyer
- **“And So it Goes”** by Billy Joel performed by Sasha Saunders
- Special Guest **Adin Boyer** (TMP Alumni and *American Idol*, Season 21 contestant)
- **“The Miracle Project Takes the Cake”** – An improvised song by TMP Company Class

Additional Cast Featured In Videos:

Advaith Vutukuru
Alekszander Yee
Alexander Soto
Amy Hufker
Antonio Storm
Bill Pacheco
Billy Herrera
Citrus Gilbert
Colette Rosario
Elijah Phillips

Emily McIntyre
Gabriel Douglas
Gabrielle Zwi
Gilbert Lambert
Heather Ostrau
Helena Busquets
Henry Marion
Ian Holbert
Jaqueline Cohen
Jenny Heath-Kaplan

Juan Lua
Kim Hing
Kristen Howell
Laura Cooper
Lily Zager
Maribelle Hoffa
Max Cohen
Maya Pavik
Natalie Behrendt
Quinn Lohmann

Rachel Makuve
Sinai Alexander
Tristan Peay
Uriel Hernandez
Vivian Mantia
Wendy Wilson
Zofija Gilbert

CAST HEADSHOTS & BIOGRAPHIES



Aaron Paulsen

Hi my name is Aaron Paulsen and I have been with The Miracle Project since 2019. I have loved being In The Miracle Project has given me an opportunity to express myself in acting. I joined the Company Class last fall and participated in the show last year and am so happy to be back in the Company Class again this year.



Aiden Sanchez

Hi, my name is Aiden Sanchez, I am 18 years old. I was born in Los Angeles, California. I am Hispanic, my parents speak Spanish and I am also learning how to speak Spanish. Some of my hobbies are playing musical instruments like the drums and the guitar. The movie genres I like to watch are anime, action, romance, and slice of life. I also like to read manga during my freetime. I live in Southern California, where the air is nice and it's hot all the time and sometimes it's cold. I also want to learn every language in other countries. Can you teach me some words in your language?



Angel Morgan

Angel Morgan is a fun loving 16-year-old Singer, Actor, Model (also she studies Ballet and Hip-Hop dance with Ballet for all Kids). She loved starting her Musical Theater education with The Miracle Project in their "Triple Threat Class", she enjoys being a part of the "I Can Do That" acting class and the Social Skills classes at the Miracle Project. She is currently represented by The Zuri Talent Agency.



Antonietta "Toni" Nelli.

I am a nonverbal 27-year-old poet. I just launched my website/blog you-dont-know-me.com. I was recently featured in an Easter Seals disability, film challenge, entitled "Love Match 10" watch on YouTube.



Ayan McNab

I became a member of the Miracle Project in 2018 when I joined their Company Class as the first wardrobe stylist for their productions. I am currently an actor with the Company Class as well as an American Sign Language translator for a small piece of the Company Class original songs. I am currently working as a backstage costume dresser at Youth Academy of Dramatic Arts (YADA) and as an usher at the Hollywood Bowl. My hobbies are musical theater and surfing, which I have both done for most of my life.

CAST HEADSHOTS & BIOGRAPHIES



Ben Novak

Ben Novak is a 25 year old artist and environmentalist on the Autism Spectrum. He is enjoying his second season in TMP's "Improv for Interaction." Travel, reading, and working at Shemesh Farms and Camp JCA Shalom are some of his favorite things.



Bram Rodgers

Rocking his iconic green beanie and hoodie, Bram can take on anything that comes his way with his quick witted humor. He also loves Star Wars, singing, gaming, and dogs.



Chandra Lynn Alexander.

Chandra Lynn Alexander, a native of Houston, Texas, is an Actress, former School Teacher and Social Worker who loves volunteering at The Miracle Project where miracles happen everyday.



Chyane Jones

Chyane Jones is 12 years old in the 6th grade. She loves music, singing, and participating in her local girl scout troop. She has been part of the Miracle Project for close to a year. She is very shy and has a hard time making friends. The Miracle project is helping her come out of her shell and become more confident.



Cooper Simonds

Born and raised in Pacific Palisades, Cooper Simonds, 14, has performed in many local productions such as Mamma Mia, The Greatest Showman, Matilda, and Sing 2 all produced by the Adderly School. When she's not singing or dancing, Cooper enjoys spending time with her family, walking her dog, Ajax, swimming and biking along the beach.



Danny Wolf

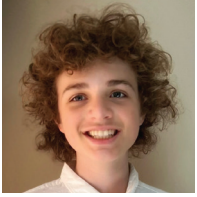
Danny Wolf is a fun-loving 28 year-old who lives in Los Angeles and loves music, dancing and parties. He enjoys entertaining others as DJ Danny, and has been with the Miracle Project from the very beginning and enjoys the Judaica TMP program.



David Issacman

David is very excited to be part of the production of The Missing Cake at the Wallis Theatre. He has enjoyed working with the Miracle Project for the past 5 years. When he's not on stage, you'll find him on Netflix in Love On The Spectrum and Atypical.

CAST HEADSHOTS & BIOGRAPHIES



David Tsukerman

David is in 8th grade and has been with TMP since 2019. He loves music, so his favorite part of the class is learning a new song every week.



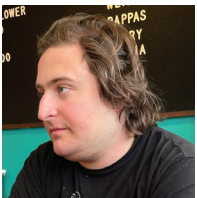
Elena Goldberg

Elena has been with the Miracle Project for many years and loves acting and being part of the Miracle Project community. She also loves dogs, cats and music. Elena is known for her laughs and sense of humor.



Emma Cladis

Emma Cladis is a junior majoring in English at Vanguard University in Costa Mesa, California. She has autism and communicates by typing but is now beginning to use spoken communication. Her passion for film and writing has brought her to a place of working to be a screenwriter.



Ethan Bell

Hello, my name is Ethan bell. I've been at The Miracle Project for a good amount of time now. I like to ride bikes at the beach, go to the gym, and hang out with my friends. I'm interested in acting & music.



Eva Featherman

Hi everyone, my name is Eva Featherman. I have been with the Miracle Project since middle school. As a senior in high school this showcase means a lot to me, since I am going off to college this fall. I love to sing, improvise, dance, and act, ever since I first began to go to acting camp I loved theater. Now, I want to pursue acting as a future career.



Ezra Fields-Meyer

Ezra Fields-Meyer, who performed in The Miracle Project's very first production, enjoys watching and discussing animated movies. He is the co-host of the weekly podcast "Animation and Beyond" and enjoys reading stories to children in several local preschools.



Hunter Trost

Hunter Trost has been a part of The Miracle Project for 7 years. He began as a member of TMP Live! performing at events around Los Angeles such as "Stephanie's Day" and "Autism Rocks" at Universal City Walk. When he isn't rehearsing for The Miracle Project Takes the Cake, he is studying for his finals and preparing to Graduate this June from The University of California Irvine.

CAST HEADSHOTS & BIOGRAPHIES



Ian Sullivan

Ian Sullivan loves both Disney movies and Broadway musicals. He is thankful for the opportunity of the TMP I Can Do That! program to train for an acting career. Ian is also a huge reader, and has quite a large library of his own.



Irvin Torres

Irvin is a 27 year old young adult that has been attending The Miracle Project for 2 years. He loves history, ballet and classic music. Social skills group at TMP has helped him to cope with anxiety and talk more openly about his feelings.



Isabella Santoyo

Hi, Bella here. I am a 21 year old limited speaking student who is working on getting her high school diploma. I love to read poetry and look at abstract art. I am passionate about advocating and making a difference. I have been with The Miracle Project since March 2021.



Jerome Santiago

Jerome Axl is 9 years old and we have been with the Miracle Project for over 2 years. He enjoys singing, dancing, swimming, youtube, he collects rubiks cube and nesting dolls.



Justice Killebrew

Justice is an Actor, Model, Voice Actor, and Public Speaker. He has spoken at the CAMA Conference and the Sheriff's Departments around Los Angeles about how to interact with people with Autism. He also appeared on episodes of Ada Twist, Scientist as Nasaan.



Katy Hoffman

My name is Katy (KitKat) Hoffman, I'm 27 years old, and I've been a performer at Miracle Project for 11 years. My hobbies include listening to music, hanging out with friends, and I love playing games. One thing everyone knows about me: I LOVE One Direction!!!



Kyle Montes

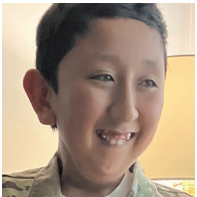
Kyle Montes is an aspiring artist and photographer who is delighted to make his debut performance with TMP. In addition to his passion for the arts, Kyle likes to learn about the solar system and someday hopes to invent a portal that he could use for time travel.

CAST HEADSHOTS & BIOGRAPHIES



Lily Zager

Lily Zager has been a volunteer and a co-actor with The Miracle Project since she was in middle school. The past six years have been very special and TMP has always been a home away from home. During the past couple years she has enjoyed collaborating and writing original songs that the company performs. A true passion of Lily's. Lily will be attending UCLA in the Fall and is happy that she will remain close to TMP. Lily would like to thank everyone involved with The Miracle Project and she feels very lucky to be a part of such a wonderful organization.



Lukas Martinez

Lukas is 13 years old, in 7th grade at Culver City Middle School, and has been with TMP for 5 years. Lukas interests include playing the violin, playing soccer, going to the beach, and he's an old soul, as he knows all the Bee Gees songs! He loves TMP for its fun activities, musical events and making new friends.



Luke Frede

Luke Frede is so happy to be part of this amazing cast. Spelling to Communicate changed my Life!



Margaret Muller

Margaret Muller loves to perform! She would love to tell you about the great time she had as a featured cast member on Glee, General Hospital and an Amazon pilot called "Love You More" with Bridget Everett. But none of that is nearly as much fun as playing with her new nephew, Ezra.



Matt Jones

Matt joined The Miracle Project as a co-actor in the Social Skills classes in early 2022, back when everything was virtual! He is a screenwriter and director, but he's best known for his absolutely perfect chocolate chip cookie recipe. Matt is very excited to share the stage with his many new friends today!



Max Vaisman

Max is 12 years old and starting 6th grade in the Fall. He's been working with Miracle project for over five years and adores the amazing teachers and TMP community. In his down time Max loves to learn about the history of rock, with a current emphasis on artist and bands from the late 90's and early 00's.

CAST HEADSHOTS & BIOGRAPHIES



Michael Rosenbaum

Michael is 26 years old and has been performing with the Miracle Project since high school. He loves to write songs with his support staff and loves all things Disney. His favorite performance with the Miracle Project was last month at the Music Center when he sang “Let It Go.”



Natalie Webber

A thriving, blossoming TMP member for the past 7 years, Natalie is now Artistic Director for her foundation, Stage Lights Forever, offering inclusive script-reading classes on Zoom and in person, at SCIL. Natalie is so grateful to TMP staff for believing in the potential of each and every student, and for amazingly kind and persistent encouragement.



Neal Katz

Neal Katz is one of the founding members of the miracle project. He is 29 years old and loves walking on the beach and chocolate bars.



Nicholas Russo

Nicholas Russo is 10 years old and is excited to explore the performing arts with The Miracle Project! He loves watching movies, building Legos, reading & playing Roblox, is a fan of all things Marvel & Star Wars-related, and loves playing with his dog, Rosie.



Nick Brady

Nick is currently 26 and has been typing to communicate since he was 4. He is the owner of Nick & Nonnie’s Bakery where he bakes a killer gluten free coffee cake and an outrageous banana bread. Nick enjoys playing baseball, riding his tandem ebike and going out to eat.



Oscar Antonio Gomez

At 16 Oscar Antonio is an energetic, enthusiastic and natural performer. He is a freshman at Venice High School and since a very young age has loved performing and being on stage. He is quick with a smile and always ready for a hug. This is his first year with Triple Threat and the program has quickly become his favorite.

CAST HEADSHOTS & BIOGRAPHIES



Otto Lana

Otto Lana is the resident scholar and baller. Not only is he crushing it as a high school senior, he is a motivational speaker, published writer, poet, model, and filmmaker. With his unique brand of wordsmithery he will make you laugh and cry in the same moment. Thanks to The Miracle Project he can add lyricist and actor to his list of talents. Not to brag but as a resident of San Diego, the County Board of Supervisors proclaimed April 12, 2023 as Otto Lana Day. So now and forever, in San Diego County, April 12th will be recognized as such.



Ranjani Reyes

Ranjani Devi Reyes is an actor and creative dance interpreter. She is represented by KMR talent agency. She has been in Politician, Atypical, Speechless as a background actor. Ranji has also been a featured actor in #NotSpecialNeeds-PSA that has been viewed all over the world. She has been a solo dancer at Grand Performances 8/27/2022 and in the Peace and Unity Concert in Santo Domingo DR.



Sasha Saunders

Sasha is a neurodiverse singer and performer who loves musical theatre, rock n' roll, and is passionate about advocating for the special needs community. She's sung at Dodgers Stadium for Autism Speaks and is looking forward to performing this month with her school choir, dance ensemble, with School of Rock at Whiskey A Go-Go, and, most of all, with her friends at the Miracle Project!!! Sasha is a freshman in the Magnet Performing Arts Program at Van Nuys High School.



Steven Birnbaum

Steven is a 26 year old Superman/Spiderman aficionado. He loves acting and doing voiceovers. He loves to hike and play video games. Miracle Project is one of his favorite programs where he is able to shine.



Sydney Driscoll

This is Sydney's first year with TMP. She loves hiking, traveling, live theater, and competing in the Special Olympics. Her favorite part of TMP is learning from the staff.



William Del Rosario

William Del Rosario is a 23-year-old student from Orange County, California who has autism and is a multi-modal communicator. William is a self-advocate who is committed to achieving greater independence, advocacy, and education while striving to improve communication access for himself and others.

STAFF BIOGRAPHIES



Hannah Warren, *Program Director & Clinical Supervisor*

Hannah first fell in love with The Miracle Project when she started as a volunteer in 2012, sharing her expertise of dance and performance. Hannah graduated with honors from UCLA with a degree in Psychology and a minor in Disability Studies and served neurodiverse families in a number of capacities, including as an early intervention specialist, behavior and social skills interventionist, and project coordinator for a research lab studying the psychosocial development of individuals with developmental disabilities. Hannah received her Masters Degree from the Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work at USC while working as a Master Teacher for The Miracle Project and as a Fundraiser/Developer. Hannah then left Los Angeles to work as a Clinical Social Worker at a residential treatment center for teens with developmental disabilities and mental illness in the Bay Area, where she provided individual, group, and family therapy, in addition to case management and advocacy services. Hannah is passionate about cultivating growth and celebrating neurodiversity through the arts and is proud to dedicate her work to the empowerment of neurodivergent artists and activists.



Juliane Hagn, *Director of Operations*

Juliane celebrates her opportunity to serve the families, adults and children of The Miracle Project every day! With a broad history of working with adults and children in the performing arts as a teacher, performer, event coordinator, and operations manager, Juliane possesses an experiential understanding of the power of engagement in supporting human development. She brings her compassion, communication skills, education, and organizational expertise and training to TMP as Director of Operations with the goal of building strong systems to ensure that The Miracle Project consistently delivers quality services and support to the families served. Juliane has worked with The Miracle Project since January, 2019; she earned a B.A. in Psychology and Dance from St. Olaf College, is an alumnus of Second City Improv Conservatory, and holds a certification in Project Management from the Project Management Institute (PMI). Juliane has worked with many arts non-profits across the country, among them Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre in NYC, Ordway Center for the Performing Arts in St. Paul, MN, and Seattle Children's Theatre in Seattle, WA.

STAFF BIOGRAPHIES



Margaret Mendenhall, *Grants Manager*

Margaret is excited to join The Miracle Project team after having been a grant writer at organizations such as the California Science Center, Step Up on Second, and the Joseph Campbell Foundation. She has written, produced, and performed two one-woman shows, *Dancing to the Edge of a Cliff: A Musical Mythological Journey Toward Self-Acceptance* and *Soul Trek: My Sci-Fi Journey Toward Wholeness*. Margaret also produced and hosted the public access television series *Myth Is All Around Us*. She holds a PhD in Mythological Studies with Emphasis in Depth Psychology and is currently at work on her second dissertation, *Healing Science Fiction*, discussing Star Trek's Mr. Spock as a symbol for the process of self-acceptance.



Sabrina Sonner, *Administrative Assistant*

Sabrina Sonner is an arts administrator with a passion for supporting diverse voices in the arts. They have a background in new play development, having worked at companies like the Geffen Playhouse, Hero Theatre, and the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center. Sabrina is also a graduate of USC, where they received their BA in Theatre and MA in Cinema and Media Studies. Throughout their administrative, creative, and academic work, Sabrina has focused on fostering inclusive and safe spaces for all, and they are thrilled that this work has brought them to The Miracle Project.



Shelley Pack, *Lead Teaching Artist*

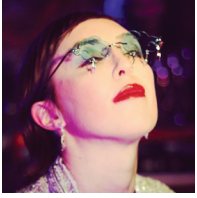
Shelley has had the pleasure of being a part of the Miracle Project since 2007. Shelley is a comedic actress/writer/producer with her roots in improv. She is best known as the "Keep it Green Girl" for Discovery Channel. Shelley is currently working on Feature Films and Shelley performs live improv regularly. Most importantly Shelley is honored to be a part of the Miracle of seeing our kids grow and shine. For more on Shelley go to her production company's website infinitelightproductions.com.



Sandy Abramson, *Lead Teaching Artist & Social Skills Program Specialist*

Sandy is a Registered Drama Therapist that has been using the expressive arts and improvisation to support individuals with disabilities for nearly two decades. Originally from Maryland, Sandy relocated to California in order to be part of The Miracle Project team where she oversees many of our social skills and musical theater courses as well as co-directs many of The Miracle Project productions.

STAFF BIOGRAPHIES



Jemina "Mina" Bloom, *Music Director*

Mina Bloom (UCLA BA in Theatre Class of 2017) is an award-winning pianist, composer, flutist, music director and music teacher based in East LA. Mina first connected with FNAM as a finalist in ShowSearch. She is in her fourth year as the music lead for the PATHWAY. Mina founded Dually Noted Theatre Company which workshops and produces new musicals. She is a Music Director with the Miracle Project. Mina composed the song cycle THREE SISTERS and is currently working on the full-length musical, FORMOSA GIRLS, loosely based on the experiences of her grandmother and great aunts as bride price immigrants to the United States.



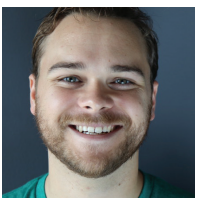
Noel Katz, *Music Director*

Noel's career began over 40 years ago with the Hollywood improv troupe, Off the Wall, where he worked with the then-undiscovered Robin Williams. He returned to his native New York as the youngest member of the BMI Musical Theatre Writing Workshop under Lehman Engel. He's had seventeen musicals produced, including Such Good Friends, which premiered in 2007's New York Musical Theater Festival, winning three NYMF Awards and two Talkin' Broadway Citations, including Best Musical. He wrote a musical comedy in which he actually married casting director Joy Dewing at the Soho Playhouse, with singing bridesmaids, preacher, parents, and four-year-old flower girl. His Gilbert and Sullivan-esque backstage mystery, Murder at the Savoy, sold out at the 50th Edinburgh Festival, got five stars from The Scotsman, and has since been produced four more times in Great Britain. His other musicals include Area 51, On the Brink, The Pirate Captains, The Christmas Bride and five revues for Second City.



Katelyn Slinger, *Teaching Artist*

Kate is delighted to be a part of The Miracle Project! Originally from Minneapolis, Kate grew up in a family of public school teachers, where she developed her own love of teaching that she brings to The Miracle Project's social skills classes. Kate has received her BFA in acting as well as a degree in classical acting in London, and loves the opportunity to weave the expressive arts into the classes she teaches.



Thomas Anawalt, *Teaching Artist*

Thomas Anawalt has been a teaching artist with The Miracle Project since September 2021, and was 1st AD on TMP's 2022 music video, "It All Comes Down to Me." Improv Training: Upright Citizens Brigade, The Groundlings. Education: Columbia University (BA in English), USC School of Dramatic Arts (MFA in Acting).

SPECIAL THANKS

TMP Teaching Artists

Cassandra Grilley, Ellen Doyle, Jack Zager, Jonathan Perl, Katelyn Slinger, Mina Bloom, Noel Katz, Sandy Abramson, Shelley Pack, Thomas Anawalt

Grants Manager

Margaret Mendenhall

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Avery Elleto, Beverly Nero, Jennifer Rose, Matt Jones

Data Collection Volunteers

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Volunteer Videographer

Shyam Reyes

Graphic Designer

Kevin Daniels

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Director of Education: Manuel Prieto

Grand Hall Greeter: Ann McDowell

Lovelace Tech Crew

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