



TURNER SYNDROME SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

As of June 23, 2023

## 2023 Keynote Speaker



### Ana Calvo

Ana attended the University of Houston-Downtown, where she became president of the disabled student organization. As president of the organization Ana discovered her love for advocating for people with disabilities. Ana received her Bachelor of Arts in Social Science in 2002 from the University of Houston Downtown. Ana got her Master's in Social Work from the University of Houston College Of Social Work in 2007. Ana works at Houston Community College, Vocational Advancement and Social Skill Training (V.A.S.T.) Department as program director, where she prepares young adults with cognitive and physical disabilities to lead healthy and productive independent lives. Before joining Houston Community College VAST, Ana worked at the Shriners Hospital for Children-Galveston/Houston as the transition coordinator for seven years and developed their transition program. Ana is active in the community and served as Chair for the City of Houston's Commission for People with Disability. Ana was recognized as one of the 100 Houston Latina Women in Leadership in Houston. Ana hosted "No Barriers," televised on H.C.C.T.V. for 4 seasons. As Ms. Wheelchair Texas 2009, Ana promoted her platform of helping the youth embrace their disabilities and achieve their dreams through education, employment, and community involvement. Currently, Ana is pursuing her doctorate in educational leadership.

## Speakers & Presenters



### Melissa Aldrich, PhD

Biography coming soon.



### Asha Bhalwal, MD

Asha Bhalwal, MD was born in India and earned her medical degree in Mumbai at K.J. Somaiya Medical College and Research Centre in 2003. She trained as an OB/GYN in London and obtained her membership from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. She sees patients at UT Physicians Women's Centers. Bhalwal has over 15 years of experience in the field of OB/GYN, with a special interest in advanced minimally invasive gynecologic surgery for endometriosis, fibroids, and abdominal cerclage for cervical incompetence. She is the Division Director of the Minimally Invasive Gynecology Surgery division, Co-director of the AMIGS Fellowship Program, and a Fellow of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.



### David F. Rodriguez-Buritica, MD

David Rodriguez-Buritica, MD is a geneticist in the Department of Pediatrics at McGovern Medical School. He received his degree from the National University of Colombia, Bogota, Colombia. His certifications include The American Board of Pediatrics, American Board of Genetics and Genomics, and the American Board of Pediatrics, Pediatric Endocrinology.



## Speakers & Presenters (continued)



### Amanda Child, PhD

Amanda Child, PhD is a child neurologist at the Department of Pediatrics at the McGovern Medical School in Houston. Her clinical interests include cognitive and academic correlates of various neurological conditions (brain tumor, spina bifida myelomeningocele, epilepsy). She is a graduate of the University of Houston, did her clinical internship at the University of Chicago and Fellowship at Kennedy Krieger Institute/Johns Hopkins School of Medicine (2021).



### Mira Dessy

Mira Dessy: The Ingredient Guru. She is the author of the book *The Pantry Principle: How to Read the Label and Understand What's Really in your Food*. A holistic nutritionist and a popular public speaker, she knows it's not just what you eat, but what's in what you eat. Mira is a board-certified holistic health practitioner who is in clinical practice with a functional medicine pediatrician and supports clients in reaching their health goals through holistic nutrition, lifestyle modifications, and chemical cleanup. She is also the author of the book *Beyond Meditation: making mindfulness accessible for everyone*. A former meditation dropout, she's learned that just like with diets, there is no one-size-fits-all plan for everyone's meditation practice. She's on a mission to encourage others that if she can meditate so can you.



### Lubna Fawad, DDS

Lubna Fawad, DDS is an associate professor at the University of Houston School of Dentistry. She performs general and pediatric dentistry.



### Mara Gittess

Mara Gittess, LPC is a psychotherapist in private practice who works with children, adolescents, and families (including clients with TS). As a woman with TS, she enjoys supporting TSSUS with her professional skills at the conference, as well as visiting with her TS family.



### Carolina Gutierrez

Biography coming soon.



### Teddy Jones, MD

Dr. Edward "Teddy" Jones is currently the Advanced Cardiovascular Genetics Fellow at Texas Children's Hospital / Baylor College of Medicine. He graduated from Tulane University School of Medicine and completed his training in Pediatrics and Pediatric Cardiology at Texas Children's Hospital.



## Speakers & Presenters (continued)



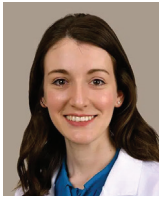
### Dean Mooney

Dean Mooney, PhD, LCP: Dr. Mooney, the founder of the Maple Leaf Clinic, is a licensed clinical psychologist and licensed school psychologist in the state of Vermont, and is a nationally certified school psychologist. He is co-author of several books, including: *Nonverbal Learning Disabilities: A Guide to School Success* (May 2006), *Nonverbal Learning Disabilities: A Guide to School Success – The Teacher's Manual* (September 2007), *A Train Ride to Grandma's (With NO Chocolate Donut!)* (September 2009), and *A Snapshot of Me – A Student with NLD* (2016). Maple Leaf Clinic provides neuropsychological, educational, psychological, speech and language, and social thinking assessments of children, adolescents and adults, as well as development, educational, and clinical consultations by phone, in-person, or through video chat.



### Supriya Nagir, MD

Supriya Nagir, MD is a pediatric gastroenterologist at UT Health in Houston. She graduated from the Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine and is certified by the American Board of Pediatrics.



### Catron O'Dell

Catron O'Dell, AuD is a general otolaryngologist in the audiology department at UT Health in Houston. She graduated from Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center



### Sarah Page

Sarah Page lives in Boston with her wife, Sydney. She works in public health, has a master's degree in public health, and is a fashionista who has learned how to dress well as a woman with TS.



### Siddharth Prakash

Since 2011, Dr. Prakash has worked in the John Ritter Research Program in Aortic and Vascular Diseases at McGovern Medical School in the University of Texas at Houston. At UT-Houston, his basic research focuses on the contribution of rare genomic copy number variants (CNVs) to bicuspid aortic valve (BAV), the most common adult congenital heart defect. Dr. Prakash uses an innovative strategy to identify new candidate genes for BAV, based in part on the hypothesis that reduced dosage of genes on the X chromosome is responsible for the increased prevalence of BAV in males and in women with Turner syndrome. He identified recurrent CNVs in diverse clinical cohorts with BAV, and demonstrated that specific rare CNVs are an important contributing cause of thoracic aortic aneurysms



### Kate Richardson

Kate Richardson is a genetic counselor and clinical instructor in the Department of Pediatrics, Division of Medical Genetics at McGovern Medical School at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. Kate graduated from The University of Texas at Austin in 2014 with a BS in Human Biology, concentration in Genetics and Biotechnology and received her MS in Genetic Counseling from Genetic Counseling, the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston in May 2018. As faculty, Kate assists in the LoneStar Leadership Education in Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND) Program, the UT Tuberous Sclerosis Center of Excellence, teaches genetic counseling students, and runs a weekly camp for children with a metabolic disorder. Clinically, Kate provides genetic counseling to pediatric patient families in general genetics as well as neurology clinics. Lastly, Kate conducts research in multiple realms, publishing in rare genetic conditions, and is passionate about conducting research that improves the quality of life of individuals with genetic conditions.

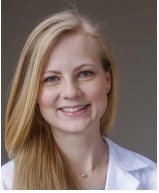


## Speakers & Presenters (continued)



### **Michelle Rivera, MD**

Michelle Rivera, MD is a pediatric endocrinologist at UT Health Houston. She specializes in Turner syndrome care, leads the TS pediatric clinic in Houston, and works closely with the TS adult clinic. She received her medical degree from Ponce School of Medicine. Dr. Rivera is a member of the TSSUS Scientific Advisory Board.



### **Megan Rogge, MD**

Megan Rogge, MD is a dermatologist at UT Health Houston. She received her degree from the St. Louis University School of Medicine and is board certified in dermatology. Her clinical interests are acne, allergic contact dermatitis, alopecia, atopic dermatitis/eczema, cosmetic dermatology, hidradenitis suppurativa, psoriasis and skin cancer.



### **Cindy Scurlock, LPC**

Cindy Scurlock, LPC is the President and CEO of the Turner Syndrome Society of the United States and native Houstonian. She has a master's degree in community counseling and is a licensed professional counselor in Texas. Cindy's daughter, Brooke Kaczynski, has Turner syndrome and is a first-grade teacher. Cindy began advocating through TSSUS in 2001 and is an expert in TS support and healthcare. She has co-authored numerous journal articles alongside amazing TS healthcare providers and researchers and most enjoys working directly with people with TS and their families.



### **Ferial Shihadeh, MD**

Ferial Shihadeh, MD is a research fellow at UT Health under Michelle Rivera in the endocrinology department. Her hometown is Bahrain and medical school: Jordan University of Science and Technology.



### **Michael Silberbach**

Michael Silberbach, MD – Dr. Silberbach is a Professor of Pediatric Cardiology and Radiology at Oregon Health and Science University. He has a busy clinical practice. His research interests focus on children with genetically triggered heart disease and cardiovascular disease in Turner syndrome (TS) in particular. Since 2003, he has directed the TSSUS Turner Syndrome Healthy Heart Project. This longitudinal study aims to understand the normal growth of the aorta in TS and to document the natural history of aortic disease in Turner syndrome. Dr. Silberbach is a member and past chair of the TSSUS Professional Advisory Board and the TSSUS Scientific Advisory Board. His ultimate goal is to identify pathways related to the deficient second sex chromosome that results in cardiovascular disease. Hopefully, this will bring to light why people with TS have an inordinate risk for congenital heart disease (bicuspid aortic valve in particular), systemic hypertension, and coronary vascular disease, and may provide important insights into the cardiovascular protective effects of the x chromosome in the general population.



### **Blair Stevens**

Blair Stevens is a prenatal genetic counselor with 15 years experience in direct patient care and serves as the Director of Prenatal Genetic Counseling services at McGovern Medical School at UTHealth Houston, Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology & Reproductive Sciences. She sees patients at the Fetal Center at Children's Memorial Hermann and has served in various leadership positions within the National Society of Genetic Counselors.





## Speakers & Presenters (continued)



### **Emediong Udo, MD**

Emediong Udo, MD is a pediatric endocrinology fellow physician at UT Health in Houston. She has a special focus in Turner Syndrome, Disorders of Sexual Development, Puberty, Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia, Adrenal insufficiency, Obesity/ Weight Management, Diabetes and Metabolism, Thyroid dysfunction, GH deficiency, Bone metabolism, and Genetic/metabolic endocrine.



### **Kelly Wirfel, MD**

Kelly Wirfel, MD is an endocrinologist at UT Physicians in Houston. She received her degree from University of New Mexico Medical School and is certified through the American Board of Internal Medicine- Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism. She has a 4.9 star rating out of 5 stars with 497 ratings.

## Activities Support



### **Mira Blumen**

Mira Blumen is a young adult with Turner syndrome and a Master of Social Work student at the University of Connecticut. Her clinical research focuses on the wellbeing of neurodiverse tweens, teens, and young adults with TS. Mira helps TSSUS with programming and website content and supports neurodiverse adolescents with TS through Be Your Best Butterfly, a strengths-based coaching program. She is also a certified yoga and mindfulness instructor.



### **AJ Jones, BA**

AJ Jones, BA (emory.edu) works in the Department of Anthropology at Emory University. She received her degree from Princeton University. Her research focuses on Turner syndrome and the forces of gender construction, performativity, and biopower. She explores the narrative and subjectivity formations, self-advocacy efforts, and feminist thoughts and actions of those with TS and incorporates various media — such as art, theater, and film — into presentations of her research.



## Child Program Staff



### **Megan Banfield**

Megan Banfield - Megan joins the youth group leadership this year and is an elementary school teacher in the Houston area. One of her besties has TS, and she has the skills and fun personality to support the team.



### **Jennifer Cawlfeld**

Jennifer Cawlfeld - Jennifer joins the youth team this year and has 20 years of teaching experience. She has attended many conferences and looks forward to connecting with her friends as she has TS herself.



### **Danielle Cignarella**

Danielle was diagnosed with TS at 6 years old, and has worked with children and teens much of her life. As a teacher, she has led service clubs such as Autism Speaks, and has worked with Big Brothers Big Sisters. This will be Danielle's 6th year serving as youth leader, and she loves being a positive role model for the children and showing them they can do anything they put their minds to.



### **Ryan Cignarella**

Ryan Cignarella is a Senior Manager at GlaxoSmithKline working on key medicines for patients in research. Ryan finds appropriate solutions to meet their resourcing needs, including determining and defining the scope of contract services required, suitability of suppliers, sourcing execution, contract management, purchase to pay and continuous supplier management to drive improvements in clinical trials. Everyday is a new day of finding solutions and bringing novel medicines to patients.



### **Maria Duprez**

Maria Duprez- Maria rejoins the youth team with 8+ years of experience as a youth group leader. As a woman with TS, she spent years teaching at an academy in China and recently moved to Delaware and teaches at community college.



### **Christina Gonzalez-Guglielmo**

Christine is thrilled to be returning for her 7th conference and her 6th year as a youth leader. Diagnosed at the age of 10, she has always been an adamant crusader for the spread of knowledge in the medical community to show that those with TS can do anything and everything. She is a huge lover of Broadway, and is currently employed in the theater industry in New York City.



### **Stephanie Guy**

Stephanie is a 42-year-old mother and wife diagnosed at birth. She lives in Niceville, Florida with her family. Her husband, Steven, and their son, Nathan, are the lights of her life. Stephanie works as a three-year-old preschool assistant and she loves it. She is looking forward to spending her 4th year as a youth leader with your child.



## Child Program Staff (continued)



### Brooke Kaczynski

Brooke is a 25-year-old woman with TS who lives in Nacogdoches, TX. When she's not working, she enjoys decorating her apartment, walking the local trails, spending time outdoors, and playing with her cat. She has been a volunteer with the TSSUS youth program for more than 10 years.



### Chris Portway

Chris Portway - Chris has participated in the youth program for 4 years. He is married to the youth group organizer, Natalie. As a husband of someone with TS, and dad, he loves to interact with the kids and has a positive attitude.



### Natalie Portway

Natalie is a 7th grade math teacher from Signal Hill, California, with a personal training certificate. She was diagnosed as preteen, and has been a youth leader at the conference off and on for more than a decade. Watching the girls grow up and make amazing lives for themselves thrills her, and she is honored to help them realize that a TS diagnosis does not have to limit them.



### Gia Ruggiano

Gia is a 32 year old woman with TS who lives in Tampa, Florida. Diagnosed at birth, she enjoys attending the conference over the years. Gia loves being a youth leader, and especially enjoys hearing the children's stories and experiences with TS.



### Samantha Smiley

Originally from Philadelphia, Samantha is 32 years old and now lives in New Jersey. She was diagnosed with TS at birth, and has been attending the TSSUS conference for more than a decade. She became a youth leader at the 2017 conference in Denver. She enjoys getting to know the children and hearing their stories.



### Andrew Stephens

Andrew is 24 years old, and has a 22 year old sister with TS. This is his second year as a youth leader. Andrew loves working with kids. Because his mother works in a special education classroom, he has been around children with special needs most of his life. When he is not working full time, he enjoys helping and spending time with his mother, youth leader Terra Williams, and his sister.



### Terra Williams

Terra is a mom to three, including a 22 year old daughter with Turner syndrome. This will be the 12th conference she and her daughter have attended, and her 5th serving as a youth leader. Terra has worked for years with students with special needs. As a TSSUS conference youth leader, she has worked with all ages.

