



**Mayor's Commission on Persons with Disabilities (MCPD)
Commissioner Bios
February 2018**

Frank Sperling joined the MCPD in 2016 and currently serves as Chairperson. He moved to Oakland in 2013. Prior to that, he lived in Moraga where he had taken on a number of community roles. He was elected to the Board of Directors of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District and has served as the Board President. He also was elected to the Moraga Town Council and served as Mayor of Moraga. Additionally, Frank has served as a Board member on the Moraga Education Foundation, Board member and past president of the Moraga Historical Society, Commissioner and past Chair of the Moraga Planning Commission, and Board member to the Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority. Frank has also served on the Board of Directors of the Cal Alumni Association.

Mr. Sperling owns and operates FS3 Group, a management-consulting firm. His professional experience includes roles as Senior Program Manager at California State Automobile Association, Western US Marketing Director at Mercer HR Consulting, Vice President and Middle Market Business Manager at Union Bank of California, and Vice President and Group Product Manager at Security Pacific National Bank. In 2009, Frank's focus shifted to becoming a full-time caregiver for one of his children.

Frank received his Master of Business Administration degree and his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of California, Berkeley. He has also held a PMP (Project Management Professional) certification from the Project Management Institute.

Oaklander **Thomas Gregory** joined the MCPD in 2015 and is immediate past chair. He is a long-time advocate for independent living and the rights and integration of people with disabilities. Thomas joined the Center for Independent Living, Inc.'s (CIL's) staff in 2008 as a Program Coordinator, served as a Program Manager for five years beginning in 2010, and became CIL's Deputy Director in 2015. His areas of responsibility include contract compliance, governmental relations, public policy, and deinstitutionalization (i.e., "Olmstead work"). Before coming to CIL, Thomas administered a Department of Education WorkAbility grant at Via

Center, a non-public school in Berkeley for students with developmental disabilities, and he has nearly 20 years of experience working with and for people with disabilities. Thomas has served as a founding member of California's State-wide LTSS Advisory Committee. He has a BA in philosophy from the University of Southern California and a Juris Doctorate from University of California, Davis. He spends most of his spare time trying to improve his Internet Scrabble Club ranking.

Brian Harrington joined the MCPD in 2015 and is the current Co-vice Chair. He is a city and regional planner who graduated from California Polytechnic University with a Master's degree in Urban Design and Transportation Planning and a Bachelor of Science degree in Architecture from the University of Michigan. As a Planning Specialist at the University of California Office of the President, his work focuses on physical and environmental planning, including system-wide long range planning, sustainability, and accessibility. Brian worked previously as Architecture and Planning Assistant at Mills College, supporting environmental restoration, institutional development and capital construction projects, and coordinating ADA accessibility planning and implementation efforts on campus. He has volunteered as a mentor and cabin leader at Trail's Edge Camp for Ventilator Dependent Children for ten years, and assisted in several planning and construction projects for the camp. Brian is most interested in sustainable development that improves both environmental quality and health.

Jian Hong joined the MCPD in 2015. He is passionate about helping people with disabilities, especially those who are wheel-bound. His experience with public transportation standards in San Francisco that deal with using tied-down equipment properly for wheelchair users has ignited his interest even more in removing physical barriers for people with disabilities. He strives to improve the safety and independence of wheelchair-seated travelers. He is currently a graphic arts-architecture student at Laney College.

Caleb van Docto joined the MCPD in 2015 following more than a dozen years working with government and not-for-profit organizations in the Bay Area. He is currently a Researcher with Social Policy Research Associates in Oakland, where his work focuses on education workforce development, and social equity policy initiatives affecting individuals with

disabilities. Formerly, he served as the Director of Services at Lions Center for the Blind in Oakland. He holds a Master's of Special Education with an emphasis in Visual Impairments and is a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist.

Reverend **Sarah Garner** joined the MCPD in 2016 and is the current Co-vice Chair. She is an Oakland resident and President and Founder of National Evangelist Ministries. An ordained minister, volunteer, mother, and children's book author, Reverend Garner was a computer technician by trade, and now brings her passion for enriching the lives of persons with disabilities to her role on the MCPD.

Brandon Young joined the MCPD in 2016. He was born and raised in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania before becoming an Oakland resident. Brandon was born with a rare genetic disease that affects his corneas, rendering him legally blind.

Brandon has a long history of community organizing. Starting in Philadelphia, he was a founding member of "Emerging Ministries," a youth-led community development group that provided an alternative for young people unable to attend school because of family obligations or neighborhood violence.

After arriving in California in the summer of 2005, he initially worked on a farm in the Central Valley, and eventually assumed duties as the Night Supervisor at the Hatlen Center for the Blind, formally establishing him as a Bay Area resident. Since then, he has networked and connected to many disability groups and organizations, leading him to his current position as the Systems Change Coordinator at the Center for Independent Living.

In his leisure time Brandon is very physically active as well as musical. A former Paralympian in the sport of Goalball, which he still plays regularly today, Brandon also bikes, hikes, sails, climbs rocks, and plays bass guitar in a local garage band. Brandon is a fun loving, easy going, and good natured kind of guy. He has many stories about his various adventures traveling around the country and the world. Ask him to tell you about his time on the farm in the Central Valley.

Alicia Contreras joined the MCPD in 2017. Currently, she is Executive Director of the Spanish Speaking Citizens' Foundation (SSCF) in Oakland.

She is a wheelchair rider and former Executive Director of Women Pushing Forward (Formerly Whirlwind Women). She was also a New Voices Fellow and recipient of the Paul Hearne Award. In San Luis Potosí, Mexico, she negotiated the first city funding for disabled people and founded the first independent living center for women in her native Mexico. In 1995, she served as a Mexican delegate to the United Nations/NGO Forum in Beijing.

Daryl Meshack joined the MCPD in 2017. He is an army Veteran with paraplegia and has lived in Oakland for over forty years. Mr. Meshack is a graduate of College for Recording Arts, College of Alameda, and Golden Gate University. In 1982, he served as one of Mayor Wilson's and the City of Oakland's ambassadors of good will to sister city Fukuoka, Japan. He also served on Mayor Elihu Harris's Share the Vision 2000 Committee to improve and beautify Oakland. Instrumental in getting the curbs cut on the corner of Seventh and Adeline Streets at the West Oakland Medical Center. He also worked on the design of the truck route system in West Oakland for the Port of Oakland with Mayor Ron Dellums and current Mayor Libby Schaaf.

Bettye Lou Wright joined the MCPD in 2017. She is a native of Springfield, Illinois and has resided in Alameda County since 1978. Having completed several leadership seminars, Bettye Lou is an Oakland Housing Authority (OHA) resident leader, sits on the OHA Resident Advisory Board, and volunteers full-time at the West District OHA office. Becoming disabled in 2009 caused Bettye Lou's specific focus to be making life more accessible and convenient for all wheelchair citizens.

Karina Ryan joined the MCPD in 2018. She is the caregiver and legal guardian of her adult brother with autism and enthusiastically coordinates his involvement in adult education, independent living services, and Special Olympics bowling and golf activities. Due to the nature of his developmental disability and communication challenges, Karina views advocacy on his behalf for more inclusive communities as one of her responsibilities.

Karina is a cabinet-level executive assistant at the University of California, Berkeley. Her previous professional experience includes major gifts and special events management at the UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA), coordinating service planning and advocacy for

the HIV community in Staten Island, NY, and managing government and foundation support activities at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. Karina is a member of the UC Alumni Chorus, Sister District Project, a representative for the League of Women Voters' Observer Corps at AC Transit Board of Directors meetings, and a volunteer at the Clausen House for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. She holds a B.A. degree in Environmental Studies from Binghamton University, SUNY.