PROXY PARENT FOUNDATION
NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2025 ISSUE 32

Who Will Care When You're Not There?

Inside This Issue

- **Meet Our New Executive Director:** *Carmen Bowen*
- **Welcome Our New Director of Personal Support Services:** *Lisa Lam*
- **Shining Light on Brain Health: How Technology is Transforming Care for Neurodevelopmental Disorders:** Rebekah Walker
- **Rekindling the Joy in Your Marriage When Caring for a Special Needs Child:** *Lurinda Sumpter Jones*
- **Why Support Proxy Parent Foundation?**
- **Going Long on PLAN:** *Baron Miller*
- Closing **Message from the Executive Director**



Carmen Bowen, MBA

Meet our new Executive Director

Carmen brings over 20 years of extensive experience in higher education leadership, having held pivotal roles such as Assistant Vice President of Alumni and Community Relations, AVP of Institutional Advancement, Campus President, and Academic Dean. Her multifaceted career includes enriching experiences at various Fortune 500 companies, such as Delta Air Lines and Verizon, as well as a strong entrepreneurial spirit demonstrated through her work as the founder and owner of SkyUnlimited Consulting, a Black woman-owned business offering programs in notary, real estate, business consulting, and more. Carmen has also owned a restaurant and co-owned a home health company, showcasing her versatility and business acumen. She is excited to be selected to serve as Executive Director with Proxy Parent Foundation.

Carmen is deeply involved in fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion as the Co-Chair of the DEI Committee at The Valley Economic Alliance, where she previously served as Board Vice Chair. She has also served as the Past President of the Universal City North Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, and on the Board of Directors for esteemed organizations like the Valley Industry and Commerce Association.

Her commitment to community engagement and advocacy extends to her volunteer work as Vice President of Events and Special Projects at African Focus, as a board member at OMG W.O.W., and as a contributor to the Proxy Parent Foundation. Additionally, she finds joy in teaching master business classes during her travels.

Carmen's professional accomplishments have not gone unnoticed; in 2018, she was named one of the Valley 200 Most Influential Leaders by the San Fernando Business Journal. In 2023, she was honored as an inductee into African Focus, a recognition she holds with pride. As a member of the Igbo family Nworgu, Carmen was bestowed with the name "Udodirum," symbolizing Divine Peace—a sentiment she strives to embody in both her personal and professional life.

While Carmen's professional endeavors are remarkable, her most cherished roles are those of a mother to two children, a doting grandmother to two grandchildren, and a caretaker for her two beloved cats.

Welcome our new Director of Personal Support Services (PSS)



Lisa Lam, MSW

Lisa is thrilled to join Proxy Parent Foundation as the Director of Personal Support Services. Lisa has an extensive background in healthcare and geriatric care management, bringing expertise and compassion to every client interaction. Her experience spans adult day healthcare program development, inpatient psychiatry, conporate counseling, and hospice care. Currently, she works with adults facing complex diagnoses, including major neurocognitive disorder, cerebral palsy, substance use disorder, schizophrenia, and other mental health conditions.

Lisa is a dedicated advocate for her clients, working closely with their loved ones to ensure they receive the care and support needed to enhance their quality of life. She earned both her Bachelor of Arts in Social Welfare and Master of Social Welfare in Gerontology from the University of California, Berkeley.

Outside of her professional work, Lisa begins most days before sunrise, training a team of individuals experiencing homelessness to run half marathons. Through this work, she aims to inspire confidence and help participants overcome addiction, rebuild relationships, and pursue meaningful, fulfilling lives.

iMediSync

Rebekah Walker

iMediSync Sales & Marketing Specialist



PROXY PARENT FOUNDATION

Shining Light on Brain Health: How Technology is Transforming Care for Neurodevelopmental Disorders

At iMediSync, we're at the forefront of brain health innovation—combining cutting-edge technology with compassionate care. Our latest advancements include quick, non-invasive EEG brain scans (electroencephalograms) and personalized Near-Infrared (NIR) red light therapy to support individuals with cognitive and emotional challenges.

Take a look at a recent case study that highlights the power of this approach. A young individual with intellectual disability, autism, and OCD presented with the following behavioral challenges:

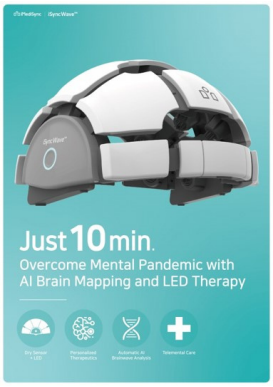
- Extreme compulsions and emotional outbursts
- Poor auditory processing and hearing perception
- Irritability and difficulty self-regulating

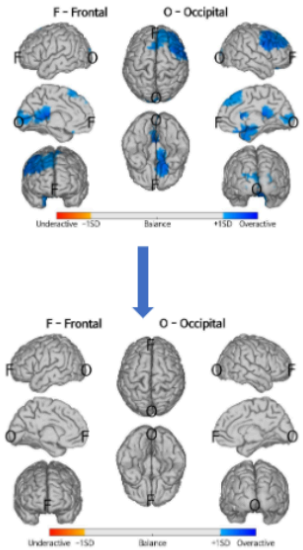
After just a short course of red light therapy using our iSyncME device, which provides both EEG assessment and targeted NIR therapy, the changes were remarkable. According to the caregiver:

- Compulsions and sound sensitivity greatly decreased
- Self-regulation improved noticeably
- Language and communication steadily increased
- Daily life at home became easier and more manageable

This is just one of many powerful examples showing how individualized brain care can lead to real, life-changing results.

Curious to learn more? Reach out to rebekah@imedisync.com at iMediSync.







PROXY PARENT FOUNDATION

As the Trustee of the PLAN of California Master Pooled Trust, we are open to serving any disabled person in California.

We offer Personal Support Services for our beneficiaries with mental illness or other brain disorder who have joined our Master Pooled Trust.

We coordinate public and private social services as well as provide access to healthcare. Working directly with beneficiaries is how we create a family-like atmosphere that maintains a better quality of life for them.

Proxy Parent Foundation is a dba of Planned Lifetime Assistance Network (PLAN) of California, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation.

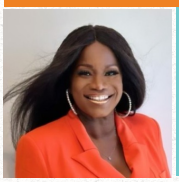
Learn More on Our We

Retirement Announcement

Written by: Karen Clark , MBA, Director of Administration

After many years with the organization, Bruce Lewitt, our Managing Director, has retired. We thank Bruce for his time and contributions. We appreciate his leadership and dedication during his tenure. As we move forward, we remain committed to our mission and dedicated to serving our beneficiaries.

We appreciate your continued support during this transition.



Written by
Lurinda Sumpter Jones
Founder of COINPM
MA – Clinical Mental Health Counseling, PhD-Psychology

Rekindling the Joy in Your Marriage When Caring for a Special Needs Child

Living with an adult child or child with special needs can have profound effects on the entire family—parents, siblings, and extended family members. It is a unique shared experience for families and can affect all aspects of family functioning. On the positive side, it can broaden horizons, increase family members' awareness of their inner strength, enhance family cohesion, and encourage connections to community groups or religious institutions. On the negative side, the time and financial costs, physical and emotional demands, and logistical complexities associated with raising a disabled child can have far-reaching effects, as we describe below. The impacts will likely depend on the type of condition and severity, the family's physical, emotional, and financial wherewithal, and the resources available to them.

For parents who are married or living in the same home with their special needs child, it's crucial to establish healthy, safe, and brave communication. Professional support from a counselor, therapist, or group is also beneficial. Shared responsibilities that enable ongoing nurturing for the child and strengthen the marital/partnership bond are key. Engaging in scheduled couple and individual self-care is equally vital in reducing stress and resentments, making the journey more manageable.

As a parent, you know the strain, stress, and sometimes overwhelming feelings of a child with a disability or special needs. Conditions such as autism, apraxia, cognitive delays, and genetic disorders not only impact a child's ability to communicate but also influence their family life. Studies show that finding moments of "uplift" is one of the most valuable antidotes for couples and their special needs children, and it brings joy and balance to daily life. What are the moments of "**uplift**"?

Uplift is a small, positive experience. Joy in the simple moments is powerful. These small moments remind you that happiness is still part of your journey, even if it looks different from what you expected. By perceiving your situation in a favorable light, stress becomes more manageable and mitigated. The journey can be tough, but with the right strategies, you can keep your marriage strong while caring for your child.

Learn More about the Center of InPowermeant Inc.

Here are five tips to help you find and cherish these moments:

- It's important to acknowledge the learning curve. Sometimes, one parent catches on more quickly than the other, which can be frustrating. Accept what is different, be kind and patient with each other, knowing you're both doing your best. This acknowledgment can bring reassurance and a sense of togetherness, helping you navigate the journey more effectively. Manage difficult emotions – Anger, guilt, resentment, or regret is a regular part of the journey when dealing with a tough diagnosis or challenging behaviors. Avoiding these stressors straining your marriage by not blaming each other and remembering you are on the same team for each other and your child.

- Expand your support system – Feelings of being alone and not understood can be overwhelming. The key here is to expand your support system to include others outside your immediate circle of family and friends: Professionals, groups, care centers, and activities that introduce you to other couples and families facing the same challenges and working through them.

- Make time for each other – As a caregiver, it is easy to let your relationship become secondary. However, spending quality time together will be important in maintaining and building a healthy relationship with your partner. Have creative, prioritized fun together, try new things, board games, cook a new recipe, conversing about things besides parenting duties and other stressful responsibilities, date nights and late dinners with candles and music.

- Staying involved in your child's therapy – It is a good practice for both parents to be involved in a child's treatment, whether speech, occupational, physical, or behavioral. It helps you both stay on the same page and reinforces teamwork in supporting your child's development.

- Don't forget self-care, which includes spiritual practice for grounding yourself. It is exhausting to care for a child without additional care. For parents of children with special needs, establishing a routine for spiritual, emotional, and physical self-care is crucial. You get to choose what that looks like to you. Establishing a self-care routine for your health, marriage, and family is vital.

For more information on support groups and counseling services, contact
Center of inPOWERmeant inc. 501 (c) 3 at 818-584-2513 or www.COINPM.org

Imagine Navigating Life Alone—No Advocate, No Support, No One!



Why Support Proxy Parent Foundation?

We Operate Without Government Funding—Your Support Sustains Our Mission

We do not accept public funding. Our operations rely solely on trust fees and the generosity of donors like you. Your donation directly supports our ability to provide these essential services to those who need them most.

We Invest in Expertise to Provide the Support Needed

Behind every visit, phone call, care plan, and trust management decision is a dedicated team of qualified professionals. Your support helps us recruit and retain knowledgeable, compassionate staff who understand the complex needs of individuals with mental illness and disabilities.

Our expertise ensures that resources are used wisely. Trust funds enhance quality of life, and every beneficiary receives the individualized care and advocacy they deserve, without compromising essential public benefits.

Your donation provides more than services—it brings peace of mind, stability, and hope to those who often go without.

Give by Credit Card

DONATE NOW

www.proxyparentfoundation.org/donate

By Check, payable to:

Proxy Parent Foundation
15243 La Cruz Drive, #889
Pacific Palisades, CA 90272



Going Long on PLAN

Baron Miller, Esq

Baron Miller is a Board Member of PLAN of California. He has an adult child with schizophrenia. He has been a practicing lawyer since 1973 and his practice is focused on assisting families of persons with mental illness. He has written a book, LAWS WE NEED TO KNOW: UNDERSTANDING RULES AND PROGRAMS FOR PERSONS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS, which is available from online booksellers in print and digital formats, or at www.baronmillerlaw.com.

I've been involved with PLAN for about 30 years, and have served on its Board of Directors for about the last 25. Clients of mine frequently ask my opinion of the organization and whether they should designate PLAN as the trustee of their child's special needs trust.

Given my position vis a vis PLAN one might think the response would be consistently glowing, encouraging people to sign up at their earliest opportunity. But I have not had that unconditional approach, and likely never will.

Over the years, I have extolled the virtues of PLAN and recommended PLAN to my clients as an excellent and, quite often, the best option as the future trustee of their child's trust, but this is not always done, nor is it done unreservedly. I tell my clients exactly what they need to know, which is 1) my opinion of the present state of affairs at PLAN, and 2) what we might expect PLAN to look like in the future. Of course, we can never know for sure about the future, but certainly it can be inferred from existing circumstances.

PLAN's structure, with its financial arm and support services arm, is state-of-the-art, but what makes that structure work are the people conducting operations. I am pleased to say that at this time, the quality of those persons has likely become as good as it gets. 1st V.P. Tom Stevens, with a clear-headed and positive vision, still concentrates his time and energy on business planning, trying to ensure that PLAN will have the financial resources needed for its existence. Karen Clark continues to calmly, succinctly, and expertly direct the administration of the operations. Gary Chang remains a consistent voice of knowledge and reason for Board decisions, a Board that is filled with competent and energetic people who are smart, experienced, and most importantly, caring. And the treasure, Carla Jacobs, is still offering her wisdom to all matters that can benefit from it.

What has recently changed, and what fills all of us with optimism, is the hiring of a Director of Personal Support Services and an Executive Director. The former Managing Director, Bruce Lewitt, resigned earlier this year, providing PLAN with a perfect opportunity to shore up its future and its present, and that is what has been done. We thank Bruce for the work he did with us and wish him well. Now, we focus on both a bright present and a bright future.



Message from the Executive Director

Dear Friends of Proxy Parent Foundation,

It is an honor to be part of this remarkable and mission-driven organization. During my onboarding, I've had the joy of meeting our dedicated leaders, compassionate staff, and the courageous families and individuals we serve. Each conversation has deepened my appreciation for the vital work we do and the heart behind it.

Thank you for taking the time to read our Spring Newsletter. This season is one of growth, joy, and renewal, and Proxy Parent Foundation is blooming with purpose. We hope the stories and updates you've read today leave you both informed and inspired.

Looking ahead to our Fall 2025 issue, we're excited to share even more of our progress, our successes, and the lives we've touched by standing in the "Gap" where family and support are needed most.

Your support makes our work possible, and I encourage you to support us through a meaningful gift. Your generosity directly fuels the care, advocacy, and trust management we provide, making you an essential part of every impact story we share. I believe in Proxy Parent Foundation deeply, and I'm proud to not only lead but also give as a donor.

Please follow us on Facebook and LinkedIn to stay connected in real time. I'll share updates, upcoming events, and the many ways your support makes a difference.

Thank you for welcoming me into the Proxy Parent family. I'm loving every minute—and I look forward to growing together.

Warmest regards,
Carmen Bowen, MBA

Thank You
FOR SUPPORTING US

After earning a Masters degree in Social Work from U.C. Berkeley, and Certifications both as a Care Manager and as a Dementia Practitioner, new Director of Personal Support Services Lisa Lam has worked for many years as a social worker and care manager, overseeing her clients' medical, emotional and social needs, including advocating for clients and supervising other caregivers. She had already been serving as a PLAN Personal Support Specialist, and thus able to hit the ground running in managing others. One of her more impressive and fascinating activities has been training homeless people to run half marathons(!), which she believes has helped them to build discipline, endurance and confidence, and make commitments to lifestyle changes. She is expected to do similarly wonderful things at PLAN.

New Executive Director Carmen Bowen combines an MBA with many years of experience in the Education sector as well as extensive involvement in improving the functioning of various groups, including, importantly, women and minority groups. She is expected to provide leadership, ideas, energy, and overall value to PLAN. One of her interesting and impressive features is her penchant for garnering prestigious awards for her work – a Certificate of Recognition from Los Angeles Councilmember Paul Krekorian, a Certificate of Recognition from Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition by U.S. Congressperson Tony Cárdenas, and a Certificate of Exemplary Service by California Assemblyperson Adrin Nazarian. We're anticipating more awards for her work with PLAN.

Carmen and Lisa are already developing strategies aimed to make the organization function at a higher level. A hearty welcome to both of you; we are pleased and privileged to have you on our side. PLAN can only be as good as the quality of its operators. With its current crew of talented individuals to shape its present and future, I feel I can safely tell my clients that at this point it's all looking good.



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A DBA of Planned Lifetime Assistance Network of California

Enclosed is my Tax-deductible donation of

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☐ Please use this donation as our Proxy Parent Foundation enrollment donation.

(Enrollment donations must be $1000 or more and can be made in payments.)

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