

Lorraine Gonzales

Abilities Cafe



Education:

1/09 - 5/2013 California State University Monterey Bay – M.A. - Education/ Level I & II Credential - Moderate to Severe Special Education

9/03 - 9/2009 University of La Verne – MS Educational Counseling

1/00 - 5/02 San Jose State University – B.S. Psychology/Sociology

Work Experience:

38/2017 - present **Abilities Community Alliance, Inc aka Abilities Cafe (abilitiescafe.org)**, Founder, CEO

Providing training, work experience and future employment for neurodiverse young adults in Monterey County out of the Schillings Cafe located at the Monterey County Government Center in Salinas. Abilities is working to create more business partnerships like this throughout Monterey County as well as our own stand alone cafe.

/2023- present **Stanford Neurodiversity Project**, DIVERSE community collaborator

Met every other week while developing the DIVERSE curriculum. In the last 6 months, we meet monthly.

6/2022 - 2/25 **Monterey County Commision on Disabilities**, Commissioner

Appointed by Monterey County's 2nd District Board of Supervisor. Meet every other month at the Monterey County Office of Civil Rights. The Commission on Disabilities (COD) advises the Monterey County Board of Supervisors regarding people with disabilities including relating to equal access to employment, public services, communications, and accommodations.

8/2015 – 5/2024 **Pacific Grove Unified School District (PGUSD)**, Special Education Teacher – Transition.

Created the district's first Transition community based program that integrates functional academics, vocational skill development, life and social skills. Students have access to classes with same aged peers at Monterey Peninsula College, volunteer at area non-profit and city agencies to gain valuable job skills/experience and host countywide social events with area peers. Created and maintained a once a month parents support group. PGUSD's Handle with Care Trainer.

8/12 - 7/15 **North Monterey County Unified School District (NMCUSD)**, Special Education Teacher.

Successfully developed and implemented districts moderate to severe High School and Transition classes with community based instruction, work sites and community college support for post-secondary students. Developed protocols, policies, a transition handbook and parent support group. NMCUSD's Handle with Care Trainer.

9/09 – 8/12 **Monterey Peninsula Unified School District (MPUSD)**, Special Education Teacher - Transition.

Successfully bridged the transition of services from MCOE district to MPUSD district. Was instrumental in providing services, safeguards and policies for moderate to severe students for the district. Trained new staff, instituted new policies, expanded program and work sites for community based social vocational transition programs.

9/05-7/09 **Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE)**, Special Education Teacher.

Taught students from various programs including Transition, Emotionally Disturbed, Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Severely Handicapped. In the last year with the district, I worked for the Monterey Transition Program where I instructed, guided, counseled post-secondary moderate-severely handicapped students and their families/caregivers. The program was community based and emphasized functional academics, life skills, job skills and mobility training.