

NEWSLETTER



Destigmatize * Educate * Empower

Spring 2026
Vol 6, Issue 13

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MEET AND GREET

Meet our newest team member, Sevada!



Sevada Mirzaian, Instructional Support Clerk

It's a true honor to represent DSPS, a department that reflects everything I believe in: service, compassion, and human resilience. My path to this role has been unconventional but profoundly meaningful. Before joining GCC, I built a career in the medical field, working closely with patients and professionals to support physical and emotional healing. That experience taught me that real impact comes from connection not just helping people recover, but helping them rediscover their confidence and dignity. But my story started long before that. I was a professional kickboxer for over a decade, competing nationally and internationally. The discipline, mental toughness, and focus that fighting demanded shaped every part of who I am. When a devastating accident nearly ended my physical ability, I faced the hardest fight of my life not in a ring, but within myself. The recovery process was long, humbling, and transformative. It forced me to rebuild from the ground up not just my body, but my mindset and my sense of purpose.

That's why I joined DSPS first as a student and now as an employee. Because I know firsthand that strength isn't about perfection; it's about persistence. I take pride in serving students who are pushing through barriers of their own, making sure they receive not just accommodations, but encouragement, understanding, and the belief that they can achieve greatness on their own terms. Fluent in five languages English, Armenian, Farsi, Turkish, and Russian, I bring cultural awareness and communication versatility to every interaction. I've learned that language can bridge not only cultures but also emotions. It allows me to connect with students and families from all walks of life, ensuring no one feels misunderstood or unseen.

Every day at DSPS reminds me why I do what I do. I'm here to help students realize that obstacles are not endpoints they're invitations to rise higher. That's the same lesson I learned through every fight, every setback, and every comeback. And it's the mindset I bring to this department and every student we serve.

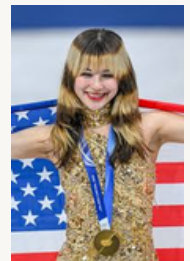
DISABILITIES IN THE NEWS

- Apple's [Accessibility: I'm Not Remarkable commercial](#), which features college students with different disabilities, has been viewed over 22 million times on Apple's YouTube channel alone.
- [Bad Bunny's Super Bowl half time performance](#) featured Puerto Rican Sign Language (PRSL) interpreting by [interpreter Celimar Rivera Cosme](#). This promoted conversations about language accessibility. Forbes magazine guest writer Keely Cat-Wells [addresses what the halftime show reveals about deaf inclusion](#).
- In February, Congress [stopped the defunding of disability programs](#), pushing back against the federal government's "efforts to alter the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and do away with some disability programs."
- The federal government [removed the accessible font Calibri from federal websites](#). Use of sans-serif (without curls) fonts like Calibri is a basic accessibility feature.
- [President Trump faces backlash regarding his negative comments about Governor Newsom's dyslexia](#). Among other disability rights and advocacy organizations, the [National Center for Learning Disabilities](#) and the [Learning Disabilities Association of America](#) released statements condemning the comments. NCLD wrote in part, "Learning disabilities, including dyslexia, affect how the brain processes information. They do not reflect a person's intelligence, judgment, or ability to lead. Every day, people with learning disabilities serve their communities as teachers, entrepreneurs, scientists, members of the military, and public servants."

It's Awards Season!

- Actor [Taylor Dearden](#) from the Emmy, Golden Globes, and Critics Choice awards-winning show, *The Pitt*, addresses her neurodivergence and how ND is portrayed on the show. The show has portrayed Deaf and Autistic patients, as well as those with mental health needs.
- [If I Had Legs I'd Kick You](#) stars Rose Byrne, who was nominated for Oscar Best Actress, features chronic feeding disorder.
- [Aidan Delbis, an actor with Autism](#), talks about playing an ND role in the Oscar-nominated film, *Bugonia*.
- The prestigious [Sundance Film Festival featured several films and shorts with disability as a main theme](#).

- Diane Warren, who is Autistic, [has been nominated for an incredible 17 Oscars](#) for Best Original Song. Her hits include *If I Could Turn Back Time*, *Because You Loved Me*, and many more. The documentary, [Relentless](#), explores her journey to becoming one of the most successful song writers of all time.



Winter 26 Paralympics in Milano Cortina

Approximately 600 athletes competed in 79 medal events across six sports – Para alpine skiing, Para biathlon, Para cross-country skiing, Para ice hockey, Para snowboard and wheelchair curling. The Games will mark the 50th anniversary of the Paralympic Winter Games. Wheelchair curling mixed doubles was featured for the first time at these Games. [Team USA won 24 medals, including 13 gold](#), coming in second after China for the most number of medals. [Alysia Liu, who has ADHD](#), won gold in women's figure skating and team skating event.

THE PASSING OF ALICE WONG



We are sharing an abridged version of the [the NPR article on the passing of Alice Wong](#), disability author and activist, who passed in November 2025. Her books [Year of the Tiger: an activist's life](#) and [Disability Visibility: first-person stories from the twenty-first century](#) are available at the GCC [Library](#). A poster of Alice is in the CSD office.

Alice Wong, an author, activist, and MacArthur "Genius" Award-winner, who fought for disability rights and justice, has died. "Alice Wong was a hysterical friend, writer, activist and disability justice

luminary whose influence was outsized," wrote Sandy Ho, her friend and fellow activist. "Her media empire, the Disability Visibility Project, left an indelible mark on the cultural landscape of our country. The legacy of her work will carry on."

Wong was best known as the founder of the Disability Visibility Project (DVP). The group highlights disabled people and disability culture through storytelling projects, social media and other channels. DVP launched in 2014 with an oral history project encouraging those with disabilities to share their stories in partnership with StoryCorps, a nonprofit that collects, preserves and shares the personal stories of everyday Americans. StoryCorps narratives are regularly broadcast on NPR.

Wong was born to immigrant parents from Hong Kong in the Indianapolis suburbs in 1974. She was diagnosed at birth with muscular dystrophy, a progressive neuromuscular disease that slowly weakened her muscles and doctors told her parents that she wouldn't live to the age of 18. "I struggled a lot as a child," Wong said in a segment recorded. "I felt so alone and angry. I was mainstreamed in public schools and was usually the only disabled student in a classroom and or one of a handful of Asian American students." She continued, "I had to grow up very fast advocating for myself with adults such as teachers and doctors, even though I didn't have the language for what I was experiencing."

Wong earned a bachelor's degree from Indiana University–Purdue University followed by a master's degree from the University of California, San Francisco. After graduating, she worked at her San Francisco alma mater as a staff research associate for more than a decade. Meanwhile, her career in disability advocacy flourished. Following a series of medical emergencies in 2022, Wong began communicating through digital text-to-speech technology. In her 2022 memoir *Year of the Tiger: An Activist's Life*, the author describes herself as a "disabled cyborg" – a person "tethered to equipment, technology and electricity to keep alive."

In addition to raising the profile of disabled people, Wong strove to dismantle systemic ableism in the U.S. She wrote about her opposition to the ban on drinking straws and the need to enforce the wearing of masks in health care settings. A social media power-user, Wong co-founded [#CripTheVote](#) in 2016, a nonpartisan online movement facilitates discussions about disability issues between voters and politicians.

Wong attended a White House reception for the 25th anniversary of the Americans With Disabilities Act in 2015 through a telepresence robot. She was the first person to visit the White House and a U.S. President – Barack Obama – via a robot "surrogate," according to Popular Science. Wong served, at Obama's behest, on the National Council on Disability from 2013 to 2015.

Speaking with her digital voice on KQED in Feb. 2025, Wong said, "Being able to use my privilege to pass on opportunities to other disabled people and support projects I believe in brings me so much joy," Wong said. "We live in such bleak times and what keeps me going is living to the maximum without apology." 3

SHOUT OUTS!

A huge thank you to the GCC Foundation for its continued support of DSPS! Many of our fidget tools, color overlays, and DSPS student items are funded through the generosity of the GCC Foundation. We greatly appreciate the support!

DSPS would like to recognize [ASGCC](#) for their collaboration with DSPS in producing the ASGCC event [accessibility form](#) and hosting the Fall 25 Disability is Not Inability event. We give special thanks to Eric Tsaturyan, Vice President of Administration, and David Zakaryan, Vice President of Relations, for their advocacy of disability inclusion and their outreach!

We appreciate the classified staff, faculty, and administrators who attended DSPS events and trainings, such as DSPS 101, What Do I Do and When?, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) 101, Coffee Klatches, End The Stigma collaboration with Rising Scholars, ASL social hangouts, disability-themed documentary viewings, DSPS Student Panel, and so much more! Special thanks to our friends in EOPS, Health Center, Library, Professional Development, Rising Scholars, and Veterans for their continued collaboration with DSPS!



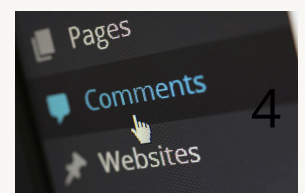
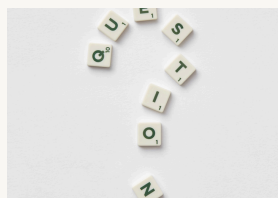
RESOURCES

Do you know there's a lengthy **list of disability related resources** on the DSPS webpage? We have resources on advocacy, education, employment and internships, scholarships, state and federal programs, transportation, and more!

Go to www.glendale.edu/dsps and click on **[RESOURCES from DSPS.](#)**

NEWSLETTER IDEAS, QUESTIONS, COMMENTS?

Email Rita at rzobayan@glendale.edu



CONTACT INFORMATION

Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) located in SG 128

Dafna, Dani, Diana, Janelle, Jericho, Karmen, Rita, Shauna, and Tracey
csd@glendale.edu, 818-240-1000 ext. 5905

Spring office hours: MON to THURS, 8:00AM to 4:30PM and FRI, 8:00AM to 3:00PM*
Counselors' days and hours vary.

Accommodations Resource Center (ARC) located in SG 108/112

David, Laura, Maryam, Mauricio, Rogelio, Rozik, and Talin
ARC@glendale.edu, 818-240-1000 ext. 5530 and 5402

Spring office hours: MON to THURS 8:00AM to 4:30PM and FRI, 8:00AM to 3:00PM*
Specialists' and tutors' days and hours vary.

*except the first Friday of the month when the offices close at 2:30pm.

Alternate Media

Scott, sziegler@glendale.edu, 818-240-1000 ext. 3366
MON to FRI 8:00AM to 4:30PM



Lead Interpreter and Coordinator for ASL and CC/RTC Services

Kim, kweissman@glendale.edu
MON to FRI 9:00AM to 3:00PM

Adapted Physical Education

Coach Laura Matsumoto: lauram@glendale.edu
Dr. Lee Parks: lparks@glendale.edu



Garfield DSPS

Dani and Jesse
Counselors' days and hours vary.



Join the DSPS Canvas Shell

Receive official announcements, reminders, and more! Students registered with DSPS can contact Rogelio Ramirez at rramirez@glendale.edu to check if they are on the list or if they wish to join.

Follow our IG

Check it out to learn about workshops, scholarships, employment opportunities, fundraisers, conferences, webinars, deadlines, and more.



Follow us at [dsps_gcc](https://www.instagram.com/dsps_gcc).