

SPECIAL EDUCATION SUMMIT 26

Contributors

Cheryl Boehme

Cheryl is a wife, mother, and Mimi to her precious family. She received her undergraduate degree in education from Bob Jones University and her masters of education from Maranatha Baptist University. She have been in education for more than 30 years, and the last 8 years have been with the special needs population. Mrs. Boehme is passionate about taking this group of students and helping them realize they are fearfully and wonderfully made for a purpose.



Sara Bookout



Sara Bookout is privileged to serve as the Director of the Hope Allen Center for Exceptional Children, a Division of Tabernacle Christian School in Hickory, North Carolina. She also works as an adjunct professor of education at Veritas Baptist College. Mrs. Bookout received her Bachelors of Biblical Studies in Elementary Education and her Masters of Christian Education, with a concentration in Educational Administration, from Crown College of the Bible in Powell, Tennessee. She has taught and served in the ministries of Tabernacle Baptist Church and Christian School for the last fifteen years and is thankful to have had the opportunity to be a part of the inaugural years of special education provision and instruction at TCS. She will celebrate her one-year wedding anniversary with her husband, Mark Bookout, this June!

Charity Campbell

Charity Campbell has been blessed to be a part of the Hope Allen Center for Exceptional Children for 4 years now- both as a paraprofessional for 3 years and a lead teacher in the school readiness class for 1 year. The Lord has helped developed in her a passion and love for all students, but especially for those living with disabilities. Her background as a Physical Therapist Assistant in pediatrics has played a vital role in shaping her approach to learning with these young students. The Lord has richly blessed her family. Mrs. Campbell is thankful for her husband of twelve years, and for their two children. She hopes to be a funnel of God's blessings and be used of Him in whatever venue and capacity He chooses.



David & Renee Gamble

David and Renee Gamble have served in ministry for 33 years. They live in Cleveland, Tennessee and serve at the Shenandoah Baptist Church where David is the pastor. God blessed them with three children.

Lauren Hickman

Lauren Hickman is a special education teacher and disability ministry leader based in Hickory, North Carolina. She leads the “Wonderfully Made” disability ministry, equipping churches to welcome and disciple individuals of all abilities through practical systems and sustainable structures. With experience in leadership, church-based disability ministry development, and conference speaking, Lauren is deeply committed to helping churches move from good intentions to meaningful action. Her desire is to see every family feel supported, valued, and ultimately have access to the gospel. She is passionate about helping leaders build ministries rooted in prayer, excellence, and biblical truth.





Meagan Hildebran

Meagan Hildebran was born and raised here in Hickory, North Carolina, and graduated from Tabernacle Christian School. After earning a bachelor's degree in History Education, she returned to TCS and recently completed her seventeenth year of teaching. She and her husband, Josh, have been married for fourteen years and have been blessed with four children. The Hildebran's have two sons that have been diagnosed with autism. Mrs. Hildebran says, "Although raising children with special needs is the most difficult thing we have ever experienced, the Lord has given more love, grace, and joy through this journey than we ever could have imagined!"

Pastor Scott Hooks

Scott Hooks has served as a Pastor a Tabernacle Baptist Church and President of Tabernacle Christian School in Hickory, North Carolina since 2008. Before coming to Tabernacle, he was privileged to serve on the staff of the Temple Baptist Church and Crown College in Powell, Tennessee. Pastor Hooks earned a Masters of Biblical Studies degree from The Crown College and is nearing the completion of a Masters of Divinity degree. He completed his undergraduate degree in Business Administration from the University of Tennessee. He and his wife, Melanie, have five children and four grandchildren.



Mindy Jones

Mindy is the wife of a pastor and a mother of five. While teaching high school, she trained in the Melillo Method of Hemispheric Integration to support students who were struggling and unable to afford the high cost that comes with this type of therapy. She now works with individuals of all ages to strengthen areas of cognitive weakness leading to measurable functional improvements in daily life.

Dr. Lisa Joyner

Dr. Lisa Joyner is Chair of Graduate Education and Director of the Ed.D. Program at Veritas Baptist College, an online institution dedicated to equipping Christians for ministry in churches, schools, and missions. She holds a master's degree in Cross-Categorical Special Education from Regent University and a doctorate in Special Education from Liberty University. Since joining Veritas in 2017, she has helped develop undergraduate and graduate special education programs and contributed to launching the Ed.D. program, while continuing to teach from her home in North Carolina. Previously, she taught middle and high school in a Christian school and founded a Specialized Learning Center in 2007 to serve students with learning disabilities. Dr. Joyner is passionate about helping Christian schools strengthen their special education ministries and better serve students who learn differently. She and her husband, Oscar, have two grown children.



Dr. Seth Kraus



Seth J. Kraus, Esq. is an attorney whose practice focuses primarily on litigation, with a particular emphasis on representing churches, Christian schools, ministries, and individuals facing challenges related to religious liberty. He serves in the Litigation Section of the Christian Law Association, a firm that represents more than 10,000 ministries nationwide. In this role, Seth provides free legal defense to those facing difficulties for their Biblical faith and works proactively with ministries through legal seminars designed to help prevent lawsuits. He also provides free consulting services to local, state, and federal officials and legislators, with the goal of promoting and preserving maximum religious liberty in America. Outside of his legal practice, Seth values time with his family and is actively involved in youth ministry at Faith Baptist Church in Franklin, Ohio, where his father has served as a youth pastor for over four decades. He is married to Sara Kraus, and together they have three children.

Sunshine Meister

Sunshine Meister is a wife, mother of seven, mother of a son with traumatic brain injury, an English teacher, a friend, a laundry expert, a sister, a daughter, and a reader. Each of these titles have their significance only as they are overshadowed and encompassed by the truth that she is a child of God, a lover, disciple, and follower of Jesus Christ, and an image-bearer of the eternal, living God. Through the challenges, sorrows, and joys of life, God reveals Himself to her as her all-sufficient, all-satisfying, faithful, and kind Good Shepherd. Because Jesus has captured her heart, she is a pursuer of Christ and want her life to be a platform upon which God can show His sufficiency, His glory, and His magnificence . . . “that in all things he might have the preeminence.” Colossians 1:18





Brenda Riley

As an educator of 31 years and an ESE specialist, Brenda brings a unique perspective to the classroom. It has been said that her classrooms yield a comfortable environment that facilitates a confidence and willingness to learn. She approaches teaching from the perspective of being mom to Kendall, a now 22 year old differently gifted guy who has transformed her way of looking at life and loving unconditionally. Brenda is a ministry wife and the founder of The Blazer Center for Exceptional Learning at Inverness Christian Academy. She's a mom of four, a church pianist, and her happy place is beside the ocean drinking a good cup of simple breakfast coffee next to her husband of thirty one years, Dr. Daniel Riley.

Dr. Dan Riley

Dr. Riley is a husband, father of four, music director, assistant pastor, Head of School, and graduate education faculty member and EdD program director at Veritas Baptist College. Saved at age five, he attended Christian school from preschool through earning his doctorate in 2020 from Liberty University. He served three years as an elementary teacher and has been a head of school for 26 years. His wife, Brenda, taught elementary for 25 years and now leads the special needs department at their Christian school. Three of their four children are adopted, including an adult son with severe special needs for whom they are full-time caregivers. This has deepened their commitment to helping Christian schools develop special education programs.



Dr. Riley serves as an accreditation evaluator and helps coordinate statewide student competitions for Florida Association of Christian Colleges and Schools. He also leads music ministry at Fort Cooper Baptist Church, where Brenda serves as pianist.

The Rileys have three daughters—one in college and two in high school. In his free time, Dr. Riley enjoys traveling, watching planes and trains, and cheering for the Miami Dolphins, Miami Heat, Miami Hurricanes, and the Liberty Flames.



Amy Robinson

As a mom to an autistic child, Amy has empathy regarding the trials families go through to help their children. Her children were the reason she became a Homeopath and Functional Medicine Practitioner. Over the years she's been able to navigate many of their symptoms naturally. God has blessed her to be able to share this knowledge with many families that have "complex children". Amy is on a mission to bring support to families that resonate into future generations.

Kara Rodgers

Jordan & Kara have been married 15 years and have 5 children. Their oldest son, Wesley, lives with nonspeaking autism. Kara is currently working on a master's degree in Special Education, serves as the Student Services Coordinator for Temple Academy in Powell, Tennessee, and works with her son in the classroom to provide him with an opportunity to access a high-quality education. She is also helping her church by providing training, resources, and encouragement that will equip various areas of ministry to support the needs of individuals living with disabilities. Jordan serves as an assistant to the pastor. The Lord has used her own personal experience to give her a burden to do more for families and individuals living with disabilities both in the local church and in the Christian school.



Wesley Rodgers

“I am 14. I am a nonspeaker, and I am a child of God who is seeking to serve God by teaching neurotypical people about autistic people. I am the oldest of five kids, I have great friends, and I have the greatest parents in the world. I am in the eighth grade and I have been communicating through spelling for 2 years. The best is yet to come!”

Dr. Krista Smith

Dr. Krista Smith serves as Undergraduate Chair of Christian Education at Veritas Baptist College and Director of the Specialized Learning Center at Shenandoah Baptist Academy, where she supports learners from preschool through adulthood. Raised in a family of Christian school educators, she sensed God's call to education early in life and began teaching in 2004 after earning her bachelor's degree, later completing certification in Christian counseling. She earned her graduate degree in Special Education from Veritas Baptist College in 2020, focusing her capstone on ADHD medications with field experience in juvenile detention and public schools, and completed her doctorate in Special Education in 2026. Throughout her career, she has launched two special education programs in Christian schools and speaks and teaches nationally and internationally to equip and encourage Christian educators.



Jessica Valente

Jessica Valente is a wife and mother of four who has been a Christian for the past 14 years. Recently finishing her Master's degree in Christian education with a concentration in special education, she has gained extensive experience working in public, private, and behavioral therapy settings, specializing in special education. Passionate about behavioral interventions and life skills, she believes in fostering strong, loving relationships with students rather than focusing solely on academics. She enjoys analyzing data, identifying trends, and using problem solving strategies to support student growth. As the lead teacher in the cluster classroom at the Hope Allen Center for Exceptional Children, she is committed to creating a nurturing and effective learning environment. Her faith-driven approach to education emphasizes the importance of prayer, observation, and relationship-building to help every child thrive.



Pastor Kenn Winn

Pastor Kenn Winn has been in pastoral ministry for 20 years. Pastor Winn has served as the Connections Pastor at Campus Church in Pensacola, FL for the last 5 years. He and his amazing wife, Joy, have been married for almost 23 years and have 3 wonderful children. As a blessing from God to their home and ministry, two of their children have been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Joy Winn

Joy Winn has served at Campus Church in Pensacola, Florida for the last 6 years. She assists in the Special Needs Department of the Children's Ministry. Joy and her husband, Kenn, have been married for 23 years and are blessed with three children. Two of their children have been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder with one being severe.

