

Kin Counts Profile

Kin Counts was born and raised in a beautiful multi-cultural country, Singapore, in Southeast Asia. She is a world traveler and a former concert pianist. In Singapore, Kin was a child psychologist and educator specializing in Early Childhood Education before moving to the United States over 22 years ago to marry her husband. They have an adult child, Kendrick, who was diagnosed with Autism and uses an AAC device to communicate. Kin has been blessed with the ability to speak multiple languages; she is currently learning Spanish. “Hola, mi nombre es Kin,” she says with pride. (English translation: “Hello, my name is Kin.”)

A few years ago, Erica McFadden, the former Executive Director of the Council, invited Kin to join the Council. Despite being involved in many disability networking and advocacy groups, being a member of the Council had not crossed her mind. Given the opportunity, it has since been a blessing, Kin says. She feels very honored to have the chance to serve Council, because all our Council members are very knowledgeable.

Kin reflects on her journey, being a parent of a son with a disability. At first, realizing your child has a disability was beyond imagination, especially in her culture, which “hushed” any “abnormality” from the social norm. To this day, she says, you will still encounter such a perception. Being human, she allowed herself to go through the whole process of grief. “I had questions with no answers. I had then permanently put my career on hold once my child was diagnosed.”

After going through the grieving process, acceptance was next. Once the reality of Kendrick’s disability was acknowledged, Kin had to totally dedicate herself to her son, be his voice, and walk alongside him in his journey. Her strong and independent personality, with no family support, has empowered Kin’s dedication to advocating for her son, as well as for other members at their level of need.

Kin received her postgraduate degree from King’s College London and, thereafter, lived in Japan and Germany to further her study on the impact of culture on education in these countries. She expanded her ability to speak different languages along the way. As a graduate of the 2018 Partners in Policymaking in Arizona, she found her eyes opened to what she can do for individuals with I/DD at all levels. And her role on different Councils and committees, including ADDPC, the DDD District East Independent Oversight Committee, and the Mercy Care Governance Committee, has provided her insight into different aspects of the I/DD service system. Kin says, “Learning from real people and not just books is crucial. Being a child psychologist and a profiler, I need to be with people” (although, being an introvert, she admits it takes more effort).

Kin loves to read, learn a new language, and watch movies in different languages. She also loves to travel, despite all the travels she did in her younger years. On the weekends, it’s family time. “We love to go and explore different kinds of food in different restaurants,” she says, and Kin rates them in her personal food directory. Her family also loves to attend various events when the temperature isn’t too hot.

Kin states, “We cannot educate the public if we do not spread awareness. We cannot spread awareness if our members weren’t given an opportunity to do so, and we did not open the doors for them. Our ulterior objective is always ‘for the best interest of our members’. No system is perfect, however, we need the voices of members, families, and advocates to navigate the system in the right direction.” This

is why she is on the Council: because she believes that educating and spreading the word about individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities is part of the Council's core mission – and her own.