

PLANNED EDUCATION HOUR SPEAKERS

Due to the cancellation of our convention, we were not able to hear how our grants, loans, and scholarships have helped them “Reach For The Stars.”



SAMANTHA CODNER PLANNED ELF SPEAKER



Samantha is a New Jersey native, currently living in San Diego, California. Samantha grew up in Westwood, New Jersey and is a member of New Jersey Chapter M. She grew up across the street from Beth Staples, current State President! Beth introduced both Samantha and her mother, Monika to P.E.O. and to Chapter M.

Samantha attended The College of New Jersey and received an ELF loan in 2012. Samantha joined P.E.O. after graduating college in 2013.

Samantha majored in Accounting, and after graduation worked at KPMG for 5.5 years in New Jersey and New York City. In October 2018, Samantha accepted a job and moved to San Diego! She is currently a Senior Internal Auditor at Sharp HealthCare.

While an auditor by trade, Samantha is very personable and spends a lot of her time volunteering and giving back, specifically to high school youth. She is on the planning committee for a large Lutheran gathering for high-schoolers, and each week attends high school youth group as a counselor at her local church in La Mesa, California. P.E.O. has always taught her the importance of giving back to others, and how something seemingly small can have a huge impact on someone's life.

She is grateful to her P.E.O. sisters who are role models, have supported her through many phases of her life, and let love lead each and every day.



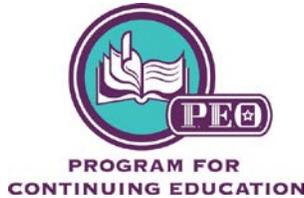
DANIELA ARAYA PLANNED IPS SPEAKER



Daniela Araya is a Costa Rican human rights advocate and journalist. Currently, she studies at Columbia University in the Master's Program in Human Rights, and she will concentrate in Economic and Social Rights.

Daniela was a teenage mother. She lives with her thirteen-year-old son in New York. She has worked for the past eight years in the non-profit sector helping different marginalized groups, from indigenous people, human rights defenders, and journalists to children without family care for several non-governmental organizations.

She also piloted her own non-profit project in the whole Central American region from 2011 to 2017 with a group of friends who seek to contribute to the new generation of young leaders in the area. Her greatest passion is to advocate for those marginalized, oppressed and in need and use her voice to foster positive change.



**DEANNA DAHL RODRIGUEZ
PLANNED PCE SPEAKER**



Deanna Dahl Rodriguez is in her final year as a bachelor degree candidate at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City, majoring in International Trade and Marketing for the Fashion and Textile Industry. She was accepted to FIT in the fall of 2017 after being out of the work force for 20 years. Going back to school and work has long been Deanna's goal both out of desire and necessity, and online programming has now made that goal accessible.

After receiving her associate's degree in Fashion, Buying and Merchandising from FIT in 1985, she worked in fashion advertising in her native New Hampshire, developing skills in graphic design and production. She returned to NYC in 1989, freelancing in this field at a pharmaceutical advertising agency. She was promoted as Vice President, Computer Aided Design, having been recognized for her initiative and leadership skills. Embracing entrepreneurship, she started her own business, Dahl Design in 1996, which she ran until 1998.

In addition to being a college student, Deanna is a full-time single mother to three children ages 20, 16, and 14. Her oldest son was diagnosed with autism at age 2, and her youngest son was diagnosed with ADHD at age 5. She has spent the last decade and a half devoting her life to their education and therapeutic interventions. In the process Deanna has honed many skills as a strong advocate for her children as well as others. She enjoys road cycling and mountain biking for its ability to strengthen the mind, body and spirit. Deanna resides in Hillsborough, New Jersey.



**MICHELE GOLDEN
PLANNED PSA SPEAKER**



As a doctoral fellow, Michele broadly focuses on child bilingualism. She is specifically interested in exploring areas of cross-linguistic influence in semantics, pragmatics, syntax and their interaction among heritage speakers and child L2 learners, and how these areas change over the course of development. As a heritage speaker of Spanish myself, she believes that increasing our understanding of bilingual development has direct implications for successful academic outcomes, language policy and pedagogy, as well as bilingual and immersion education.

In her previous life, she was a flamenco dancer in the U.S. and Spain, and then founded a series of original programs for second language acquisition through movement in Madrid called Hello! English. Nowadays, in addition to being a PhD student at Rutgers University, she works as a dance and movement specialist with children who have special needs, and still perform occasionally with Spanish dance companies around the New York area. Her favorite job, though, is raising her two incredible, strong, and bilingual daughters.



ALEXIS WILLIAMS PLANNED STAR SPEAKER

Alexis Williams was sponsored for the P.E.O. STAR Scholarship by Chapter AC, Chatham for 2019-2020.

Alexis' accomplishments in high school were led by her passionate love for culture and diversity. She developed and coded a site called "Posie" to help illustrate an authentic portrayal of minorities in the media. She has done impressive work in the world of coding, and her ability to merge her tech skills with a talent and flare for design is quite rare. Alexis is now studying at NYU, Tandon School of Engineering with a major in Computer Science and a minor in Spanish creative writing. It will be most interesting to see how Alexis develops her talents and abilities. learning to use skills she will likely develop to bring her love for the diversity of the cultures to higher levels of enlightenment.

