



BIRMINGHAM
EMPLOYS
NEURODIVERSITY



PARTICIPANT
GUIDEBOOK

CAREER & INTERNSHIP EXPO

NOV 19 2024

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TIP: Scan the QR code below with your phone camera to download the Read Aloud app that will allow you to listen to the following pages' text.



Welcome from Your Hosts

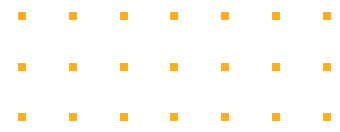
The mission of Spring Valley School (Birmingham, AL) is to provide excellence in education for bright students with Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, and Dysgraphia in grades K-12.



In alignment with the mission of SVS is our commitment to engaging the community at-large and instilling within all neurodiverse learners that they can achieve their career goals when immersed in an environment that supports their unique strengths.

Creating inclusive and accommodating work environments not only benefits the individual, but also leads to increased productivity and innovation in the workplace. SVS has a vision to amplify this message and collaborate with partnering organizations as we equip neurodiverse learners to advance from a position of aspiration to a position of actively pursuing the career of their choice in a day's time.

Event Overview & Program



The purpose of Birmingham Employs Neurodiversity is to pilot innovative career-connected opportunities for neurodiverse learners and equip employers to transform their workspaces by giving ample access to the most sought-after talents that these exceptional individuals possess.

Day 1 of the event will be allocated for participating employers to attend a keynote luncheon that covers the following topics:

- **The importance of neurodiversity in the workplace**
- **Best practices for accommodating neurodivergent talent**



Day 2 will be open to participating learners. We will begin our day with a keynote segment that will transition into a self-guided expo of career paths and internship opportunities (featuring 50+ local employers).

Each learner pursuing an internship will be paired with an advisor to assist with onboarding and serve as a resource throughout their experience.

Complimentary headshots will also be available on site.

DAY 1

Employer Luncheon

9:30 Exhibitor Booth Setup

11:00 Lunch Served

11:15 Introduction

11:30 Employer Keynote



Josh Clark
Landmark School,
Head of School

12:00 Employer Panel

- The Importance of the Neurodivergent Learner
- Hiring and Accommodating Neurodiverse Talent

DAY 2

Career & Internship Expo

8:30 Event Check-in

9:00 Learner's Keynote

9:30 Learner's Panel

Finding Success Through Advocacy -
Sandra Foster and Nicholas Foster



Marissa Luna
Miss Univ. of AL

**10am-
12pm**

Self-Guided Expo
& Meet Your Internship Advisor

Meet up to 50 employers local to the Birmingham area, and explore available career paths and internship opportunities offered by represented industries. There will also be a photographer available for professional headshots complimentary to participants.

Participants interested in pursuing an internship for the upcoming Spring semester will be paired with an advisor to assist with the facilitation of onboarding and to be available as a resource throughout the duration of the internship experience.

Featured Speakers



Leah Bigbee

Hiring Neurodivergent Learners

Employer Panelist



Leah Bigbee is the Dean of Workforce Education at Jefferson State Community College, bringing over a decade of experience in corporate engagement and workforce development. Prior to her current role, she held leadership positions at UAB Career Center, UAB Collat School of Business, and Generation USA. Leah began her career as an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer, focusing on workforce development for senior citizens. An Alabama native, Leah holds a Master of Public Administration and a Bachelor of Arts in English from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, along with a Nonprofit Management Certificate and Leadership Birmingham graduate status. She is dedicated to connecting people with training and employment opportunities, promoting equal access for all.



Marissa Luna

Finding Success Through Advocacy

Learner Keynote Speaker



Marissa Luna is a dyslexic recording artist from Birmingham, Alabama. She has been writing music since she was thirteen. Marissa writes most of her own music and plays the guitar and piano. Marissa is currently a sophomore at the University of Alabama. On October 7, 2023 Marissa was crowned Miss University of Alabama. In June of 2023 she finished in the top 12 in the Miss Alabama contest.

Marissa has been performing and singing in theatre since she was six. Marissa performed at Red Mountain Theatre and Virginia Sanford Theatre. Marissa had made it to Broadway as Covid 19 shut down all performances. She is currently working with some of the top writers in Nashville and Muscle Shoals.

Featured Speakers



Bo Walters

The Importance of Neurodiversity

Employer Panelist



Growing up in South Georgia with a football coach for a father, Bo's sights were set on the NFL early in life and he honed his skills over time until he earned a starting spot as a linebacker for Mississippi State University. No one doubted he was destined for the pros until he sustained a career-ending injury his senior year. Instead of allowing his shattered NFL dream to crush his spirit, Bo re-directed his dyslexic strengths, work ethic, competitive nature, and dedication to excellence toward a career in business.

After earning a bachelor's degree in building science, he took a position as an intern at Dunn Construction. He began climbing the corporate ladder one rung at a time, serving along the way as an estimator, project manager, Vice President of Operations, and ultimately, moving into the office he holds today as President of the company.



**Sandra Foster,
DrPH**

Finding Success Through Advocacy

Learner Panelist



Dr. Sandra Foster is a parent of a current Spring Valley School student, the parent of a SVS alumnus, and a current faculty member on staff at SVS. Sandra first learned about dyslexia 40 years ago when her husband revealed he could not read. She has been learning since that day. Her two sons have dyslexia and ADHD. Sandra served as the Director of Accessibility Services and Resources at Birmingham Southern College until its closing in May. She is currently the college and Career Counselor at Spring Valley School.

Featured Speakers



**Erica Littleton,
PhD**

The Importance of Neurodiversity



Employer Panelist

Dr. Erica Jewel Littleton founded Learning Little People in 2013 to empower learners, educators, and parents/caregivers through tutoring, workshops, and training programs. In 2023, she launched The Edupreneurship Academy to support educators in entrepreneurial endeavors. Dr. Littleton holds a Ph.D. in Educational Studies from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, with extensive experience in urban education spanning teaching, school administration, and educational leadership roles. Her strategic initiatives have included managing significant grants and fostering collaboration between nonprofits, businesses, and schools. Passionate about educational excellence and entrepreneurship, Dr. Littleton continues to drive positive change in the field.



Josh Clark

The Importance of Neurodiversity



Employer Keynote Speaker

Josh is a humanitarian. He champions the cause of neuro-diversity in education and promotes the science of reading as a vehicle for education reform and social good. He is chair of the [International Dyslexia Association](#) and an expert contributor to the global nonprofit [Made By Dyslexia](#) and [Microsoft Education](#). He also co-founded the [Association of LD Schools \(ALDS\)](#) and sits on their board, along with the board of the [National Association of Independent Schools \(NAIS\)](#). Josh has presented about the importance of recognizing and supporting students with language-based learning disabilities (LBLD) all over the world.

Featured Employers

KEMPER

The Kemper family of companies is one of the nation's leading specialized insurers. With approximately \$13 billion in assets, Kemper is improving the world of insurance by providing affordable and easy-to-use personalized solutions to individuals, families and businesses through its Auto and Life brands. Kemper serves over 4.9 million policies, is represented by approximately 23,700 agents and brokers, and has approximately 8,100 associates dedicated to meeting the ever-changing needs of its customers.

GORRIE REGAN

As a technical services company of 60 years, Gorrie-Regan & Associates provides time and labor management solutions and employee payroll and human resource services for businesses throughout the United States. The company also provides a complete range of parking/access and revenue control systems. Its products include mechanical time clocks, time and attendance systems, ID badges, closed circuit television solutions, electronic telephone entry systems, gate operators, card readers and digital imaging systems.

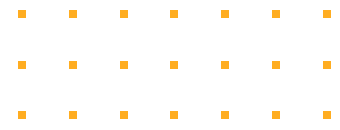
Jot Notes Section for Learners

**Self
Introduction**

**Employer
Questions**

**First
Impressions**

Registration & Contact Information



 205-423-8660

 info@springvalleyschool.org

 Regions Field Event Venue (Floor 2)
1401 1st Ave S, Birmingham, AL 35233

 www.birminghamemploysneurodiversity.org

Businesses may register to serve as an Exhibitor at this same link.



Learner Registration Form must be submitted by a representative from the Learner's current school.

Join our Online Community Group by searching Birmingham Employs Neurodiversity on Facebook and LinkedIn.