

*FREE Training Program*

TOGETHER



[03/15/17](#) FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Special Needs Network receives \$150,000 from JIB Fund Black Equity Initiative for parent advocacy program to Inland Empire

(Los Angeles, Calif. – [April 2, 2018](#)) - Special Needs Network (SNN), an autism advocacy and health organization based in South LA, has been granted an award of \$150,000 to bring their flagship parent advocacy program (PAM) to the residents of the Inland Empire, which includes the San Bernardino and Riverside counties.

The Autism Society of America defines autism as “a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life and impacts the normal development of the brain in the areas of social interaction and communication skill.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control, autism is the fastest growing childhood disorder in the country and now impacts 1 in 68 kids. It is four times more prevalent in boys than girls and knows no racial, ethnic, or social boundaries.

However, African American and Latino children are diagnosed two to four years later than their non-minority peers. In addition, for autistic children 3 to 6 years old, the California Department of Developmental Services spent an average of \$11,723 per white child compared with \$11,063 on Asians, \$7,634 on Latinos and \$6,593 on African Americans. This is an unacceptable disparity and Special Needs Network through its legislative advocacy and buffet of programs is on a mission to address the problem.

Last month, Areva Martin, SNN’s president and co-founder was in Sacramento to represent thousands of underserved families whose children and adults receive services from California’s regional centers. She joined experts from around the state to testify before the Health and Human Services Committee on the persistent and systemic disparities in regional center funding for African-American and Latinos.

A greater Los Angeles mainstay, PAM is a an 8-week, 25-hour intensive course that trains parents and caretakers with the tools necessary to become more effective advocates for children with special needs and mentors to other parents. The training program focuses on navigating the systems of care, accessing regional center services, developing successful Individual Learning Plans (IEP), public speaking, and coalition building, and grassroots organizing. Parent advocacy is key to addressing this systematic problem.

Martin, a civil and human rights attorney and well-known television personality adds, “We have been aware of the substantial need for our services in the underserved communities of the Inland Empire for some time now, and we are excited and honored that JIB has made this investment in the thousands of people of color affected by developmental disabilities in this region. ”

Community partners include Behavior Autism Therapies of Upland, Inland Regional Center, EPU Children’s Center of San Bernardino County, and the Office of Assembly Member Sabrina Cervantes (CA-60)

PAM is free and open to the public. The program runs [from Saturday, April 29 through Saturday, June 24](#). For registration, visit [www.specialneedsnetwork.org](http://www.specialneedsnetwork.org) or call [323-291-7100](tel:323-291-7100) for more information.