

Side Event at the UN Conference of States Parties

**Strategies to End Violence against Children in Institutions:
The Right to Grow up in a Family and the Dangers of Orphanage Voluntourism**

Sponsored by Disability Rights International

Thursday, June 14, 2018

6:30 – 8:00 PM

United Nations Headquarters, CR B

The panel will discuss strategies to end violence against children in institutions by enforcing their right to grow up in a family. This panel will examine the implications of CRPD General Comment No. 5 on CRPD Article 19, in which the CRPD Committee stated:

“[f]or children, the core of the right to live independently and be included in the community entails a right to grow up in a family.”

The Committee stated that small or family-like residential programs are no substitute for growing up with a family. The panel will also discuss how international donations and “voluntourism” can contribute to further segregation and abuse.

We will hear firsthand from Jean Searle, a woman who grew up in a residential institution in the United States and had her child taken away. She was slated to be transferred to the Pennhurst Institution but was saved by a court order as a result of class-action litigation protecting the right to community integration. Her first “community placement” was a group home with people she did not choose and where she worked in a sheltered workshop for pennies.

We will also hear from a representative of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, which has set up a disability unit to oversee enforcement of disability rights throughout the Americas.

In addition to CART, Spanish-to-English translation will be available.

Eric Rosenthal, chair, Founder and Executive Director, Disability Rights International

Jeane Searle, Disability Rights Pennsylvania

Sue Swenson, President, Inclusion International

Paulo Abrão, Executive Secretary, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

Annette Lyth, Special Assistant to Marta Santos Pais, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children

Martin Perez, Red Latinoamericana y caribeña por la defensa de los derechos de los niños, niñas y adolescentes (Latin American and Caribbean Network for the Defense of the Rights of the child)

Dr. James Conroy, Center for Outcome Analysis