Welcome to the 2019 Little People of America Election.

You will be electing the following four positions, to three-year terms:

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<th>Position</th>
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<td>Elizabeth Campbell</td>
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<td>Development Director</td>
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<td>Programs Director</td>
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<td>Public Relations Director</td>
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Voter Eligibility

This year, LPA will be providing online voting as an option for casting your ballot. Each LPA member listed in our database who is 18yrs or older and has a valid email address will receive an email with instructions on how to cast your vote online. For more information, or to request an online ballot if you have not received one, please visit our webpage: www.lpaonline.org/2019_election

Thank you for your attention to these important matters that will affect the future of Little People of America.
Thank you.

continue making change, bringing awareness, and being the strong, not only “just figure it out” for each other, but that we’ll be able to
My hope is that, by becoming your Advocacy Director, we’ll work to
mom always taught me, “we’d just have to figure it out.”
Growing up, my mother taught my sister and I that yes, we were
found myself passionate in further advocating for.
and legislators is the best I can do. Roughly 6 months after graduation
that I want am not as passionate about. I have, since the threat of
Advocacy and Political Leadership. My undergrad was in Theatre and
connections between all in the LPA community.
Currently, I am half way through grad school, pursuing my Masters in
Advocacy Director
Rebekah Bailey
Hi all!
It is an honor to writing this statement for
the LPA Community, a group through which I’ve found chosen family and made lifelong bonds. For over 60 years LPA has been a space for people with dwarfism and those close to them, to learn about history, justice, and grow strength as a marginalized community. As a second-generation LP, I have always had a strong support system that included other Little People. I know that most others in this community are not in the same boat as myself. There are many who come, whether you are parents of a child with dwarfism or an adult with dwarfism, new to the familiarity of other Little People. Regardless, LPA has always been capable of merging the multiple communities within its own. As your potential future Advocacy Director, I cannot wait to continue growing the bonds, strengths, and connections between all in the LPA community.
Growing up within LPA, I felt a deep sense pride in having dwarfism (and still do). While my “dwarf identity” changed as I grew up, I seldom identified as a “person with a disability” or “disabled”. It wasn’t until fairly recently that I began to feel a sense of pride when referring to myself as a person with a disability, this is because I work at an Independent Living Center (ILC). We are a consumer controlled, cross disability, nonresidential nonprofit and it is staffed and directed by persons with disabilities, who provide resources and services to other persons with disabilities. I work to identify and improve issues affecting the disability community and to eliminate physical and societal barriers to access and independence. Through advocacy, education and community organizing, I often focus on bridging the gap between the disability population and legislators, public officials, and other decision makers. I also chair several local and statewide coalitions about civic participation, education, and voting accessibility.
People with dwarfism have been in the disability rights movement since the very beginning. Most notably to us, Paul Miller -who had Achondroplasia- among a myriad of other disability rights victories, helped craft the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) which is the nation’s first comprehensive civil rights law addressing the needs of people with disabilities- which includes dwarfism. In this position, I hope to help foster further involvement and relationships within the greater disability community and our members.
After reviewing the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan and LPA Bylaws, I confidently believe my prior leadership and administrative experiences within LPA, knowledge, connections, and skills from my job, as a cross disability systems advocate, will effectively support our members as we move into a very exciting time in community’s history. I believe I will be able to fulfill the duties expected of the position and be a contributing board member. I hope to help shape and develop the upcoming generation of LPA members to continue to promote our mission of improving the quality of life for people with dwarfism and their families.
“Nothing About Us, Without Us!”- James Charlton, disability rights activist
Elizabeth Campbell

Advocacy Director
Elizabeth Campbell
After much thought and consideration, I am very excited about the possibility of being involved within LPA at a higher level, as the potential Advocacy Director. As a lifetime and lifelong member of LPA, my parents attended their first event when I was four months old. I have come to recognize the need for further education, awareness, and involvement of our membership with the greater disability rights community and movement. Past board members have helped bring LPA membership into the disability rights community and I hope help continue it. I trust my experience as a longtime member of LPA, chapter Teen Coordinator (2006-2009), national office assistant (2008-2017), and conference volunteer have provided me with knowledge of how LPA operates at an administrative level. Many of you may know of or recognize me as the daughter Joanna Campbell, LPA’s first executive director. After her retirement in December 2017, I realized that I am prepared to take a more active role within LPA’s leadership.
After taking some time to work after finishing my undergraduate degree, I decided to go back to school and I am currently pursuing my Masters Degree in Leadership Development. While I have experience with various leadership roles, I know there will always be room to grow but I know I will be able to truly contribute to LPA at this point in my life.
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“Nothing About Us, Without Us!”- James Charlton, disability rights activist
Elizabeth Campbell
Advocacy Director
Ethan Crough

It's time to speak up. My name is Ethan Crough and I would like you to elect me as Advocacy Director for Little People of America.

I am the best candidate for this position because I have over eight years of experience as a national officer for LPA. I have been very successful with advocacy projects in the past for LPA, and I have a vision for our advocacy work going into the future.

The advocacy projects that I am most proud of with LPA are:

• Writing and successfully getting PhotoEdit, Inc., to change their website so that they correctly identify the individuals in the photos as "dwarfs", instead of "midgets."
• Being the first to personally contact all seven school superintendents that had "midget" as a mascot and continuing to follow-up with them over the years by:
  • Traveling to Freeburg, Illinois with former LPA president Gary Arnold to personally request they change their mascot and then returning with current Advocacy Director Michelle Kraus a group during a national conference to deliver a petition
  • Working with current board members as we successfully supported Hurley, Wisconsin changing their mascot
  • Being the primary contact and facilitator for McLaughlin, South Dakota to change their mascot
• Contacting the Associated Press (AP), through a membership, on behalf of LPA about changing their stylebook to reflect new changes in language regarding listing "midget" as offensive, and then having the AP change their stylebook according to our request.
• Working on the committee to successfully stop a Florida lawmaker who filed a bill to repeal the state ban on dwarf tossing.
• Serving as the catalyst and as a team member of LPA’s Times Square Public Service Announcement for Dwarfism Awareness Month.
• Drafting the Dwarfism Awareness Month proclamation for Indiana and creating a state-wide awareness campaign.
• Creating a “What do you know about dwarfism” presentation that I still give today which raises awareness, educates, and advocates for our inclusion.
• Supporting my wife as she successfully convinced a vice president at Pearson Publishing, the world’s learning company with 35,000 employees across 70 countries worldwide, to get "midget" nationally and permanently removed from all their materials

My hopes of what I want to contribute to the future of LPA are like the accomplishments above. We still have a lot of important work to do.

The work that I envision for the future involves more of the grass-roots efforts led by our members at the local level and supported by us at the national level. We also can partner with other like-minded national organizations on advocacy projects and campaigns that benefit all people with differences. Creating an Advocacy hotline for LPA is also an idea that I would like to explore.

The future of LPA looks promising and I would like you to support my candidacy for Advocacy Director so that I can help fulfill this vision. Please vote for my energy, experience, and enthusiasm to lead advocacy for LPA.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Advocacy Director
Antonio Orriola

I am writing to express my interest in the advocacy director for Little People of America. I believe my years of chairman experience with two organizations of person with disabilities, as well as my communication and skills, make me an ideal fit for the position.

I have several years of advocacy for people with disabilities as well as working with their family members and any professional members.

As a person with disabilities myself, I have a true passion to serving those with the same needs as me as well as the family members that experience the difficulties and challenges that we encounter on a daily basis. I truly believe that as an Advocacy Director I would like to touch base on the many factors we come across and ways to overcome them. I want to be able to help the members of the Little People of America to navigate their ways through issues. Having someone available to advocate for you when you feel like you can’t advocate for yourself is very important and I want to be able to provide these services to our members.

My background and skills make me an excellent candidate for this position as I have had the privilege of doing this in my own community. Thank you for your consideration.

Advocacy Director
Chelsea Rivas

What an exciting and wonderful position you are in; you get to shape the trajectory of not just the LPA, but dwarfism awareness and disability awareness across the entire United States. Just imagine the possibilities! With the simple act of your vote, we could all be one step closer to identifying and eradicating bias and discrimination; to putting accessibility and inclusion at the forefront of the nation’s consciousness. In the year 2020, for example, the Americans with Disabilities Act will reach its 30th year. Working in concert with other disability rights groups, as Advocacy Director, Chelsea Rivas would use that anniversary as a springboard to raise national awareness about the ADA’s flaws and the need for a comprehensive overhaul.

Additionally, although society is hyper aware of racism and sexism and is becoming aware of ableism (discrimination against people
with disabilities), somehow dwarfism discrimination seems to sit squarely in society’s blind spot. Dwarfism is the only minority group that experiences socially-sanctioned discrimination. Sometimes it’s subtle, sometimes it’s blatant, but either way it’s everywhere: movies, television, books, entertainment, and even greeting cards and children’s toys, not to mention rampant in-person discrimination. As Advocacy Director, Chelsea would work to inform and educate both the disability community and society at large about this glaring discrepancy.

Because we are on the cusp of the ADA’s 30th anniversary, now is the perfect time to not just re-open the conversation about equitable access, but about equitable treatment. The LP community was largely left out of the previous disability rights movement; this time we could lead it. In collaboration with other disability rights groups, social justice and an end to discrimination would be one of Chelsea’s top priorities.

National advocacy efforts and big picture ideas aside, the best way Chelsea can think of to address discrimination is to empower and equip you. As Advocacy Director, she would create an online toolbox full of downloadable templates and resources for your personal advocacy and awareness efforts. Maybe you’re a pro; you always know what to say or do when you face discrimination. That’s great! If, however, you sometimes find yourself at a loss for words or are unsure of how to address a situation, wouldn’t it be a relief—instead of spending hours at the keyboard—to simply open a template file, copy and paste it to an email, change a few details to fit your situation, and click ‘send’?

Because of her own advocacy experiences, Chelsea thinks that an online toolbox full of templates is a good idea, but she recognizes that hers is just one perspective out of many and she welcomes the opportunity to listen to you and then go back to the drawing board until you get what you need.

After spending 15 years as a full-time mother, Chelsea returned to college in 2018. Her major is Interdisciplinary Social Sciences with a minor in Accessibility Studies. She is on track to graduate with an academic interest in disability. She is also the regional Disability Specialist for her church, serving 9 congregations in 5 buildings on Seattle’s Eastside. She just finished conducting extensive ADA-compliance audits in all 5 buildings and is working on developing disability-awareness training material for church leadership. She also serves on her city’s Parks & Events Commission, and on a citizen’s committee working to raise funds to build an accessible playground in her community.

Chelsea lives with her husband and four children outside Seattle, Washington with their spunky Wheaten terrier, Ruby. She and her family joined the LPA in 2008 following the birth of her son, who has Diastrophic Dysplasia. She and her family love the LPA, which has provided them with invaluable resources, support, and friendship over the years. It would be an honor and a privilege for her to give back to the LPA by dedicating the next three years of her life to serving both it and you.

Chelsea is ready and excited to fulfill these and any other duties that may be required of her as Advocacy Director. A vote for Chelsea Rivas is a vote for ADA overhaul and expansion awareness, national social justice campaigns to address widespread discrimination, and an online toolbox of advocacy resources to make your life easier and your advocacy efforts more successful.

Development Director
No Candidate

Programs Director
Ray LeCara

My name is Ray LeCara Jr. I was born with spondyloepiphyseal dysplasia. In 2003 I met Andera Miller, an LP with hypochondroplasia, at my first National Conference. A month later, this remarkable young woman left behind all she knew to join me three thousand miles away. This past February we celebrated our fifteenth wedding anniversary. Though I was involved with LPA for some twenty years prior to that week in Massachusetts sixteen years ago, experiencing a week surrounded by two thousand other short statured individuals irrevocably changed my life. This is just one of the many experiences I wish for those who have not yet attended a national conference or have resisted becoming a member of our organization.

Up until 2017 Andera and I lived and worked in Connecticut. We have since transitioned to Seattle, Washington to be closer to Andera’s family. We were also experiencing a growing desire to be, do, have, and give more. Moving to the Pacific Northwest has given us such an opportunity. It is from this place of gratitude that I submit my name for the position of Programs Director.

The decision to become involved in LPA at this level is one not taken lightly. But more than any time in the past, I am in a place to be of greater value to the organization and its community. A teacher of grade levels k-12, I have also spent past summers working with students of special needs—some of whom were short-statured. My years as an educator included fostering meaningful relationships with the community as well as students and their families. Even as young as 22 I was putting myself out there, running a religious program and spearheading the successful integration of two local parish confirmation programs, which included designing their curriculum.

Among other things, I coordinated SAT testing as a test center supervisor, taught AP classes, mentored, took part in multiple

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committees over the years, and was active in the teachers union as steward and vice president negotiating contracts and resolving disputes. I am a national trainer of classroom management and a certified professional development presenter. I even once developed and managed an entire training department for a newly opened 12-classroom training facility in Connecticut, growing them into a million-dollar facility in just five months. This was after training over seven thousand clients from various businesses and organizations.

An author of four books, two of which feature short statted characters, my latest was a student success guide for young people in junior high and high school. It was recognized by the Bristol Board of Education in 2017.

Today, in addition to serving as COO of a book publishing entity, I am a senior partner of a global management services firm and the curriculum coordinator of an online university that teaches business management to current and up-and-coming CEOs.

With a successful background in public education, corporate training, and, most recently, business/leadership building, I can bring my diverse set of experiences, skills, and resources to the position and to the organization. Moreover, I’ve dedicated my life to educating others in areas personal as well as professional, demonstrating that—stature notwithstanding—authenticity and living from a place of gratitude and love will not only impact perception, it can change lives. It is my experience that self-esteem is the secret to success, mindset at any age is key, and language dictates reality.

As I grow older, I recognize and appreciate the value in continued advocacy and awareness, especially as it pertains to changing perceptions across all industries. Regardless of stature, the greatest burden many individuals face is unfulfilled potential. Equally supporting our other age groups, as well as empowering our youth, should be paramount. I also believe in committing to greater outreach. This would include our fellow LPA brothers and sisters in the US and abroad. Those outside of the United States are not always afforded the opportunities, care, benefits, or community support many of us stateside have come to enjoy and rely on. All of this speaks directly to “improving the quality of life for people with dwarfism throughout their lives.” Per LPA’s mission of striving “to bring solutions and global awareness to the prominent issues affecting individuals of short stature and their families,” I would consider it an honor to serve as LPA’s Programs Director and play a greater role developing “further programs deemed necessary and beneficial to the membership and general dwarfism community.”

Thank you.

Public Relations Director
Michelle Kraus

Dear LPA membership,

My name is Michelle Kraus, and I have been honored to be Little People of America’s Director of Advocacy for two terms. It has been a privilege for me to represent this community and to serve with and under the leadership of both Gary Arnold, President, and during this most present term, Mark Povinelli and the respective executive boards. I have worked on many exciting and effective campaigns that continue to be so important for all of us to continue supporting. The work has been very gratifying, and yes sometimes frustrating, but to see any little bit of change is tremendous. Thank you all for your input, your energy and voices that helped us launch our positions on different issues. Without you, none of this is possible.

I am now asking you to elect me for Public Relations Director in this current election. As those who have come before me in this position, I aim to promote the vitality and the work of Little People of America. I want the opportunity to tell our stories in the media and in the mainstream - who we are, what we do, about our families, and the families that we are to tell a complete story; one that is a woven tightly and not one of loose fragments, the obligatory responses to sensationalist headlines about people with dwarfism. We should be talking about what has been and continues to be our community’s impact and influence in everyday issues; the need for equal provision of healthcare, emergence of new medical technologies that enhance quality of life, advocating for the elimination of the dehumanizing marginalized communities, and shifting direction to the right side of history where little people are people.

I look forward to working with a board in thinking strategically about working with the press, and how we can best position ourselves to tell the stories that we want to tell. We would speak from strength to be able to write the headlines about our lives as people with dwarfism. I am excited about working closely with the advocacy director to advance and champion LPA’s advocacy efforts to positively affect our present and futures.

Another exciting aspect of this role is being part of the creation of the legendary LPA Today alongside the excellent leadership of Executive Director Deb Himsel and President Mark Povinelli. I want to uphold our commitment to publishing meaningful and engaging content to broaden awareness about the lives of people with dwarfism with a proud tone of voice. This charge will carry into the social media arena where we will tell our stories to lessen those being told about us.

I hope that I have the chance to serve you, fellow community members, in this new and pivotal role.

Thank you, Michelle Kraus
Greetings everyone, my name is Faith Pedersen. Being a lifetime member of Little People of America for the past 23 years has been the greatest pleasure of mine. Throughout the years, I have learned more about LPA and how this incredible organization best serves its members while also educating the general public. In the following, I will state my future goals in LPA as well as my credentials in why I believe I’m a good candidate for the National Public Relations Director position.

My goals if elected are to continue educating the public about dwarfism, while also representing the LPA community on key issues. Finally, I want to continue to keep an open channel for communication and in doing so I plan on keeping members up to date with current topics while also working with the editor of the LPA Today to enhance more membership involvement. My passion to give back to the organization ignited in the Fall of 2014 when I was appointed as the National Teen Coordinator. Throughout the past 4 years, I have learned more about LPA as well as the teens of the organization. One of my many accomplishments as the National Teen Coordinator include expanding the Teen Mentorship program started by Danielle Frank. After expanding the mentorship program, the goal was to give the teen and young adult members the opportunity to serve the organization while also gaining leadership experience through LPA. Another accomplishment of mine is that I received an LPA Distinguished Service Award in 2018 for my service to the organization. Throughout the past 4 years, I've hosted many teen events at National Conferences and worked closely with the Conference Committee to put these events together. While serving as the National Teen Coordinator also, it has been the greatest blessing to have gained so many mentors on the board throughout the years. After presenting to them the idea of expanding the mentorship program, I realized that I really wanted to expand my leadership in the organization and hopefully join onto the board in the future.

In 2016, I was elected as President of the Little Prairie Chapter 20 in District 6. While in this position, I learned more about leadership at the local chapter level by reaching out to members and providing them information about upcoming events. I am about to graduate from Illinois State University with a Bachelor’s Degree in Communication-Public Relations with a background in Legal Studies. Prior to attending Illinois State University, I obtained an Associate’s Degree in Public Relations at Illinois Central College. With this degree, I’ve learned a lot about crisis management as well as being the spokesperson for several important key issues. While at Illinois Central College, I served as the Student Body President and also as a Public Relations intern speaking mainly on the importance of the Monetary Award Program and the “Unleash Your Potential” Promo. Both of these projects were created for the purpose of getting funding for the school and to help out students financially.

If elected as your next Public Relations Director, I hope to better serve the dwarfism community while also ensuring inclusion and education. I hope that you have faith in LPA and also have faith in me, Faith Pedersen, to serve as the next Public Relations Director and together we can reach new heights.

Thank you!