



Press Release
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David Maraniss, Cathleen Schine, J. Ryan Stradal, and Deborah Underwood announced as guest authors at Abilities United 28th Annual Authors Luncheon
A benefit that supports children and adults with special needs and developmental disabilities

Palo Alto, CA — Abilities United's highly successful [Authors Luncheon](#) fundraiser returns for its 28th year on Saturday, November 2, 2019 and features another panel of renowned, best-selling authors: David Maraniss, Cathleen Schine, J. Ryan Stradal, and Deborah Underwood.

This popular annual event raises funds for Abilities United's services for children and adults with special needs and developmental disabilities. Funds are raised through sponsorships, ticket sales, the "fund-a-future" auction, and book sales. The highlight of the event is hearing four outstanding authors discuss their latest works and sharing their literary inspiration.

"I'm very excited about this year's Authors Luncheon," said Bryan Neider, CEO of the recently merged Gatepath and Abilities United nonprofit organizations. "Hundreds of book lovers come to this dynamic fundraiser each year to support a great cause and hear amazing authors talk about their books."

Featured Authors

David Maraniss is a two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist from Washington, D.C. His **featured book**, *A Good American Family*, tells the story of the 1950s McCarthy era through the lens of his father's blacklisting. [David Maraniss](#) has chronicled American life through books about sports figures (Vince Lombardi in *When Pride Still Mattered* and *Clemente*), presidents (Bill Clinton in *First in His Class* and *Barack Obama: The Story*), and everyday heroes (*They Marched into Sunlight, Rome 1960*, and *Once in a Great City*).

Cathleen Schine is a best-selling author of 11 novels from Venice, CA. Her **featured book** *The Grammarians* is about word-obsessed twins. [Cathleen Schine](#)'s literary achievements include the international best-sellers *The Love Letter* and *Rameau's Niece*, both of which were made into movies, and *The Three Weissmanns of Westport*, *Fin & Lady*, and *They May Not Mean To, But They Do*. She's also written for *The New Yorker*, *The New York Review of Books*, and *The New York Times Sunday Magazine*.

J. Ryan Stradal is an Indies Choice Award winner for Los Angeles, CA. His **featured book** *The Lager Queen of Minnesota* is a family saga about fate, fairness, and the painstaking pursuit of brewing. [J. Ryan Stradal](#) is an author of two novels that put the Midwest and its food in the foreground. He won a 2016 Indies Choice Award from the American Booksellers Association for his debut novel, *Kitchens of the Great Midwest*.

Deborah Underwood is the prolific best-selling author of children's picture books from San Francisco, CA. Her **featured books** are *Finding Kindness*, a heartfelt celebration of shared joys, and *Reading Beauty*, which is about a book-loving princess who faces the curse of getting a paper cut on her 16th birthday. [Deborah Underwood](#) has written more than 25 nonfiction books for children, including the bestsellers *The Quiet Book* and *The Loud Book*, and a holiday-based series that includes *Here Comes Santa Cat*. Her work has appeared in *National Geographic Kids*, *Ladybug*, and *Highlights for Children*.

Each year, the Abilities United *Authors Luncheon* and book-signing event draws a sold-out audience of more than 600 book lovers from throughout the Bay Area who have been wowed, entertained, and mesmerized by more than 100 authors, including such notable locals as Martin Cruz Smith, Daniel Handler, Jennifer Holm, James D. Houston, Thacher Hurd, Anne Lamott, Yiyun Li, Ann Packer, Richard Rodriguez, Lalita Tademy, David Kennedy, Maria Semple, and Gail Tsukiyama.

The Authors Luncheon has raised more than \$3 million over the years through ticket sales, sponsorship, book sales, the silent auction, and donations. This year's corporate sponsors include [Goldman Sachs Gives](#), [El Camino Health](#), Stanley E. Hanson Foundation, and [Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati Foundation](#), in addition to the 21 benefactors.

Tickets are available online for sponsors, tables, and individual seats until October 21, 2019 at <https://www.abilitiesunited.org/authors-luncheon/>

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ABOUT ABILITIES UNITED:

Founded in 1963 by 12 Palo Alto families whose children had intellectual disabilities, Abilities United serves a diverse group of individuals in the San Francisco Bay Area who have developmental (autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, and intellectual disability) and physical disabilities or are at risk of a developmental delay. Abilities United advances advocacy, inclusion, and independence for children and adults with developmental disabilities. Since its inception, Abilities United has offered people of all ages and abilities educational, therapeutic, recreational, and vocational experiences to help them lead meaningful lives as well as resource connections that make it easier for them to lead the lives they chose. Abilities United sees a world where people of all abilities live, learn, work, and play together. Although Abilities United primarily serves people with developmental disabilities and their families, people without disabilities can benefit from services as well. For more information visit AbilitiesUnited.org

On July 1, 2019, Abilities United and Gatepath joined forces -- making our combined nonprofit the largest provider of services to individuals with developmental disabilities on the Peninsula with 13 locations in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties.

ABOUT GATEPATH:

Gatepath has been a cornerstone of our community for more than 99 years, providing a lifespan of support services to individuals with special needs and developmental disabilities in the greater Bay Area. Our mission is to empower people with special needs to achieve their full potential through innovative, inclusive programs and community partnerships. With educational, therapeutic, vocational and family

support services, we are distinctive in providing support to an individual throughout his or her lifetime. We collaborate with businesses, third party providers, local nonprofits and various organizations to bring the highest quality services to the children, youth and adults in our programs. Together, we are creating a world where people of all abilities are fully accepted, respected and included in all aspects of life – in the classroom, the workplace and in our communities. Learn more at [Gatepath.org](https://www.gatepath.org)