



Beyond26

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6/16/25

Board Member Testimonial of Board Member Emily Mann

I am honored to be part of the board of Beyond 26. I am deeply inspired by its mission to empower individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live fulfilling, independent lives. Over the years, I've seen how Beyond 26 goes beyond just providing support. Beyond 26 thrives to provide independence providing opportunities for those who might otherwise face barriers to inclusion.

The work Beyond 26 does touch my heart on a personal level. As a special educator for over 25 years, I have firsthand accounts of the continuum of services provided to those with intellectual and developmental disabilities. I have firsthand accounts with teaching and fostering independence in my students. I also have the firsthand accounts of working alongside parents as they navigate new terrains in their child or young adult's life.

I believe in the power of education, employment, and social connection. I live to be part of something bigger, leading to the change in breaking down barriers. By serving on the Beyond26 board, I can contribute to expanding Beyond 26's reach, ensuring that all individuals feel a sense of belonging and empowerment. My main philosophy in life is "Be the voice for those whose voice is not as loud as our own". Beyond 26 is also that voice. I am thankful to be part of something so incredibly transformative.

Emily Mann
Special Education Transitions Teacher
Grandville Public Schools