

FROM THE OFFICE OF

GOVERNOR
RON DESANTIS

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**Governor Ron DeSantis Appoints the Florida Endowment Foundation for
Vocational Rehabilitation Board of Directors**

Tallahassee, Fla. — Governor Ron DeSantis announced the appointment of Lori Fahey, Allison Flanagan, Edmund Finder, James “Chip” Byers, Alexis Dempsey, Douglas Hilliard, Todd Jennings, Dr. Mavara Mirza-Agrawal, and Laurie Sallarulo to the Florida Endowment Foundation for Vocational Rehabilitation Board of Directors.

James “Chip” Byers

Byers, of Orlando, is the Owner of Rita’s Italian Ice and Frozen Custard in Lake Buena Vista, a business he started almost three years ago. Previously, he was a cast member in merchandise and dining at Walt Disney World Resort. As an autistic man himself, Chip has worked hard to provide job training for individuals with unique abilities and maintains a majority autistic workforce at his business. He earned his bachelor’s degree from Pace University.

Alexis Dempsey

Dempsey, of Wesley Chapel, is the Director of National Accounts at Saddlebrook Resort, a company with a commitment to employing individuals with unique abilities. She volunteers her time with the Rotary Club of Wesley Chapel, Junior League of Tampa and Advent Health Wesley Chapel. Dempsey earned her bachelor’s degree in hospitality management from the University of Central Florida and her master of business administration from Saint Leo University.

Lori Fahey

Fahey, of Tallahassee, is President and CEO of The Family Café, a non-profit focused on connecting Floridians with unique abilities and their families with information, training and resources. As a mother of a child with special needs, she also volunteers her time with the Family Run Executive Director’s Leadership Association

and the National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health. Fahey earned her bachelor's degree in social work and education from Florida State University.

Allison Flanagan

Flanagan, of Tallahassee, is the Director of the Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. She has over 25 years of history and leadership experience with the Federal/State vocational rehabilitation program. She moved to Florida from Kentucky in May 2017 to serve as the Deputy Director of the Florida Division of Blind Services (DBS). At DBS she oversaw the operations and updated policies to include changes regarding the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA), among other responsibilities. Prior to joining DBS, she was the Executive Director for five years of the Kentucky Office for the Blind. In addition to her experience directing a state agency and implementing policy and operational goals, she served as an online instructor for her alma mater, the University of Kentucky, where she holds a master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling.

Edmund Finder

Finder, of Jupiter is a retired money manager with Axiom Capital and Starfinder Financial. Previously, he was a Senior Vice President with Smith Barney. As the father of a son with autism, Finder is passionate about connecting individuals with unique abilities with employment opportunities, having been recognized by the Autism Foundation of New York for this work. He received his degree from Boston University.

Douglas Hilliard

Hilliard, or Orlando, is the Chief Financial Officer of AdventHealth, a company he has been with since 1996. His previous positions with AdventHealth include Financial Analyst and Senior Finance Officer. Hilliard is active in his community, volunteering his time with the Children and Youth Family Services Board of Orange County. He earned his bachelor's degree in business administration from Southern Adventist University.

Todd Jennings

Jennings, of Belleair, is a Partner and Attorney with Macfarlane, Ferguson and McMullen, P.A. Previously, he was an Associate and Attorney with Galloway Johnson. A father of a child with autism, Jennings has volunteered his time with the Suncoast Tiger Bay Club, Rotary Club of Clearwater, University of Tampa Board of Counselors and the LiFT Academy Development Council. He is a United States Navy veteran who received his bachelor's degree in nuclear engineering from the University of Tennessee and his juris doctor from the University of Florida.

Dr. Mavara Mirza-Agrawal

Dr. Mirza-Agrawal, of Weston, is a Medical Doctor and Voluntary Faculty at the Florida International University College of Medicine. Previously, she was Medical Director of the Florida International University College of Medicine's Embrace Program, Clinical Assistant Professor and Voluntary Faculty at Florida International University's College of Medicine and Medical Director and Assistant Professor at the University of Miami School of Medicine's Pediatric Mobile Clinic. Dr. Mirza-Agrawal is also Medical Director of the Agrawal Family Foundation, a national panel expert for ECHO's Autism Transition to Adulthood and a fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics and American College of Physicians. She earned her bachelor's degree in microbiology and immunology and her medical doctorate from the University of Miami before becoming Chief Resident of the Combined Internal Medicine and Pediatrics Residency Program at the University of Miami's Miller School of Medicine and Jackson Memorial Hospital. Dr. Mirza-Agrawal also holds a graduate certificate in applied behavior analysis from the Florida Institute of Technology.

Laurie Sallarulo

Sallarulo, of Fort Lauderdale, is President and CEO of Junior Achievement of South Florida. Previously, she was CEO of Leadership Broward Foundation, Chair of the Early Learning Coalition of Broward County and Chief Development and Strategic Officer for 2-1-1 Broward. Sallarulo has also volunteered her time with the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance and Leadership Florida. She earned her bachelor's degree from the State University of New York at Albany.