

PASC NEWSLETTER

INTRODUCING KRISTY MADDEN

PASC BOARD MEMBER AND IHSS ADVOCATE

Kristy Madden's life has been shaped by resilience, hardship, and an unwavering commitment to advocacy. Born in Glendale, California, as the eldest of six children, Kristy grew up in a family where financial struggles were a daily reality. Her parents worked long hours in plastics factories to support their children, three of whom—including Kristy—were born with a rare form of muscular dystrophy. The family often struggled to make ends meet, and medical resources were scarce.

As a child, Kristy's physical limitations became evident early on. She did not begin walking until the age of four and, even then, faced serious challenges with mobility.



The Madden Family (from left to right): Neil, William, Laurie, Kristy, Dale, Carrie and Shirley with Paul. - 1969

Despite these obstacles, Kristy's love for learning helped her excel academically. After an unsuccessful attempt at mainstream education, she transferred to a school for children with disabilities, where she thrived.

I was super eager to read because that was my mother's hobby, and I loved stories. Seeing this, they fast-tracked me into reading ahead of my class and my abilities skyrocketed.



Kristy Madden meeting with United States Secretary of Health and Human Services, Xavier Beccera. 2024

A long-awaited medical diagnosis confirmed her rare form of muscular dystrophy.

By sixth grade, Kristy was mainstreamed into regular schools, where she faced physical and social barriers.

"Me and my disabled classmates didn't receive all the advantages that our able-bodied classmates had. We had no career guidance and no college placement help."

Determined to pursue an education, Kristy enrolled at Glendale Community College. However, without financial support and with the added responsibility of helping care for her siblings, balancing schoolwork became impossible, forcing her to leave college to begin working as a sheet metal worker.

After spending some time working in Minnesota she returned to California. She resumed her studies, earning a history degree at Cal State Los Angeles. Just as she was beginning to find stability, a devastating setback changed everything—two severe falls left her bedridden for years.

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FROM PERSONAL STRUGGLES

TO IHSS ADVOCACY

A Personal Journey with IHSS

During this time, Kristy found solace in writing, with some of her work published. She also built an online community to support others with sulfite sensitivity, a condition she developed due to a medication reaction. Despite her struggles, she remained engaged in advocacy, participating in online activism.

Meanwhile, her sister, Carrie, found herself in need of a caregiver and hired their mother through IHSS. Later, as their mother's health deteriorated, Kristy and Carrie, both disabled themselves, took on the responsibility of caring for her. The sisters eventually sold their childhood home and moved to an accessible townhome in Chatsworth, where they continued providing care.



Kristy Madden and Carrie Madden at the Hollywood Bowl. 2016

They found compassionate IHSS caregivers, Felix and Gigi, who became part of the family, making their mother's final years as peaceful as possible.



Gigi and Kristy's mom 2019

"Gigi's laughter and love helped smooth over the rough patches and my mom just couldn't stay mad at her. Our house became a place filled with joy, love and laughter."

However, when her mother entered hospice, the gaps in the IHSS system became clear. The stress of navigating a broken system during such an emotional time reinforced Kristy's commitment to change.

"I decided to devote my time to helping create a stronger IHSS program so that people wouldn't have to go through the stress of not getting their needs met during end-of-life care."

Determined to ensure others would not face the same struggles, Kristy became an advocate. She began volunteering for Hand in Hand Domestic Employers Network, which led to her work with CICA (California In-Home Supportive Services Consumer Alliance). Her dedication to improving IHSS soon became a full-time mission.

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ADVOCACY IN ACTION:

STRENGTHENING IHSS FOR THE FUTURE

In May 2024, Kristy was named Systems Change at CALIF Independent Living Center. Through her advocacy at CALIF, CICA, and PASC, Kristy now works to ensure that IHSS recipients and providers receive the services and support they deserve.



CALIF and CA4SSI demonstration in front of the State Bldg in Downtown Los Angeles to raise the COLA. Kristy Madden, 3rd from the left. 2019

In May 2024, Kristy co-organized a rally against the Governor’s proposed IHSS budget cuts, partnering with Kayla Shore from Hand-in-Hand. The event began at CALIF with a poster-making party before marching to the State Building, where Kristy, and fellow PASC Board member Dulce Garcia delivered speeches. Covered by Telemundo, Kristy used her interview to expose the threat to the IHSS Registry, raising awareness on an overlooked issue. Her advocacy ensures IHSS recipients and providers have a strong voice in policy decisions.



Cynde Soto, Natalie Sparrow, Jan Garrett, and Kristy Madden making statements at the US Access Board hearings. 2024



Kristy Madden Janet Burt, Senator Menjivar, Luis Bravo. 2025

Meeting with Senator Menjivar: Advocating for IHSS and Consumer Needs

Kristy’s dedication to IHSS advocacy continued recently as she met with Senator Caroline Menjivar to discuss the urgent needs of IHSS consumers and providers. She spoke about the challenges consumers face in securing reliable care, the need for better training and oversight of workers, and the impact of funding gaps on families who depend on IHSS.

Kristy’s personal experiences fuel her advocacy, ensuring that others do not have to struggle the way she and her family did. Her work with PASC, CALIF, and CICA reflects her commitment to making IHSS stronger and ensuring that individuals with disabilities receive the care and support they need.

Kristy Madden’s journey—shaped by adversity, perseverance, and a deep desire for change—has made her a tireless advocate for IHSS consumers and providers. She continues to fight for a future where every individual who needs in-home care can access it without barriers, delays, or uncertainty.