



December 2023—Issue No. 24

# Association Newsletter

Empowering Members To Empower Us All

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## End of Year CELEBRATIONS

*“Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree.”*

— Martin Luther

As we prepare to bid farewell to another year, we can't help but linger in the mix of nostalgia and hope that end-of-year celebrations bring.

This is a special time to slow down and reflect on the journey we've traversed, savor our accomplishments, and embrace the lessons learned.

End-of-year celebrations are more than a note on the calendar. At their best, they mark a collective exhale, a pause to acknowledge the resilience that carried us through personal and communal challenges, and a chance to amplify the camaraderie that fuels our shared successes. Whether it's a holiday vacation, an organizational or community gathering, or an intimate family moment, we hope your celebrations can create spaces for joy and hope, necessary building blocks for our growth as ESD professionals.

This season, we encourage you to go beyond the customary festivities. Dive into the essence of what makes these moments so special. How can we make this time of year richer and more meaningful? What traditions do we choose to uphold, and what new ones can we create together to enrich our connections?

We invite you to share your end-of-year reflections and celebrations with us!

Email: [hello@esdprofessionals.org](mailto:hello@esdprofessionals.org).

# A NOTE FROM SHEILA WATSON

Dear ESD Professionals,

As we near the end of the year, we ask you to join us in celebrating the eight candidates who successfully tested for their ESD Professional Credential in 2023: Bianka Urbanovska, Sally Van Wright, Chana Levy-Weinberger, Deb Mier, Nancy Lanoue, Laura Armstrong, Gretchen Butler, and Tunu Waziri.

Congratulations to all our new ESD Professionals, although the term “new” is a misnomer. The successful candidates have years or decades of experience in the field, and many are leaders who, through their tireless work and dedication, developed the concepts and practices we share today.

It feels worthy of a celebration, not only for the individual successful candidates, but for the entire profession to see growing global awareness of the value of ESD education. As we expand our teaching into public education, universities, non-governmental organizations, the United Nations, workplace environments, and other meaningful and wide-reaching institutions, we work towards ESD becoming viewed worldwide as a necessary life skill. We hope the Association credential becomes a well-recognized assurance of competence and quality which will facilitate communication and agreements between ESD professionals and partner organizations.

We would like to thank all those who have dedicated time and wisdom to the Association and developing these programs. In particular, I would like to recognize those who have taken on the task of grading the exams of their peers. This is an on-going, time-consuming task that requires a commitment to careful judgement and high ethical standards. I am deeply grateful for all those who have been able to participate in this process.

I would also like to personally thank all of you for your continued support and trust. I have had enjoyable and valuable conversations with many of you over this past year. Your input and respectful concerns are the guiding principles for the work that I do in the Association, and I will continue to endeavor to place your needs as my highest priority.

With much hope for an empowered and peaceful world,

Sheila

## ASSOCIATION NEWS

### Congratulations to our New Credentialed Professionals!

As we near the end of the year, we ask you to join us in celebrating the eight candidates who successfully tested for their ESD Professional Credential in 2023:

Bianka Urbanovska  
Sally Van Wright  
Chana Levy-Weinberger  
Deb Mier  
Nancy Lanoue  
Laura Armstrong  
Gretchen Butler  
Tunu Waziri



Learn more about the Credentialing Exam on our [website](#).



ESD Feature, Scaling ESD 11/16/23

**Collective Self-  
Defense & the Power  
of We**

### Collective Self-Defense & The Power of We

*Read our latest blog!*

*"We believe that taking ownership of our narratives is a vital component of the empowerment process."*

RIA LAC Abya Yala has trained over 100 instructors in countries throughout Latin America, reaching over 6,700 people through workshops and trainings.

[Check out our latest blog](#), an inspiring and informative interview with the RIA LAC team!

# ASSOCIATION NEWS

**2024** GROWING ESD, THRIVING TOGETHER  
IN COSTA RICA!  
**FIRST ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**2024** ASSOCIATION OF ESD PROFESSIONALS  
Empowering Members to Empower Us All

April 18-20 at Hilton Doubletree Cariari, San José, Costa Rica

+1 (703) 232-1636  
Hello@ESDProfessionals.org  
www.esdprofessionals.org/first-annual-event-2024

**KEYNOTE SPEAKERS**

Aparna Rajawat, India  
Domtla Chesang, Kenya

**PANELISTS**  
**FACILITATORS**  
**FILMMAKERS**

Stephanie Cyr  
Dyra Fyah  
Lucia Isoardi  
Toby Israel  
Dani Lizano  
Gabriela Lozano  
Jade Rayne  
Amy Schmidt  
Pámela Valdez  
Sheila Watson  
Kate Webster

Love to see you there!  
If you can't make it to Costa Rica, virtual attendees participate with in-person conference goers.

See agenda here.

Tiered International and Empowerment pricing available.

## Discover the Full Program for the Association of ESD Professionals First Annual Conference!

### Growing ESD, Thriving Together—and having fun while we do it!

We have been hard at work curating an unforgettable experience of learning and community building for all ESD professionals and allies, and we can't wait to share it with you. This will be a truly hybrid event where virtual conference-goers can participate alongside in-person attendees. [Click here to see the full program.](#)

**April 19-20, 2024 in Costa Rica**

**Association Annual Member Meeting and Reception April 18**

The Association of ESD Professionals' First Annual Conference will gather ESD practitioners—and those eager to learn about ESD—from around the world in April 2024. We will learn together and deepen our ESD community.

Our theme, "Growing ESD, Thriving Together," is a call to unite in our mission to expand the reach of ESD worldwide. Together, we seek to grow the ESD movement bigger and stronger, united in our commitment to prevent violence through empowerment self-defense. We hope to see you in Costa Rica! [Register here.](#)

*Note: If you are interested in applying for financial assistance or international tiered pricing for the conference, you can find more information and access the applications on our [Events page](#) or simply click one of the following links:*

- Conference International Tiered Pricing Application: [Click Here](#)
- Conference Financial Assistance Application: [Click Here](#)

# ASSOCIATION NEWS

## Check out our Career Center!

### Find Mission-Aligned Work & Workers

Are you looking for work (or new employees) aligned with your mission? We invite you to utilize the [Association's Career Center](#) as you seek your next job or hire. We know that empathy and ethics are key deciding factors for many ESD professionals, so we have sought to create a values-oriented career center where you can connect with your future employer or employee.

Check it out [here](#).



ASSOCIATION OF ESD PROFESSIONALS

## HOW TO

### CRAFT YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH



## How to Craft Your ESD Elevator Pitch

### Check out our latest How-To guide!

"Concisely articulating the importance of empowerment self-defense (ESD) can significantly influence perceptions, ignite interest, and ultimately change lives. Of course, summarizing the complexity of ESD into a brief "elevator pitch" is a challenging endeavor. Distilling the myriad benefits, life-changing stories, and transformational impact of self-defense into a few words is no easy task, but it is absolutely worthwhile to try."

Visit our [resources page](#) to download this and all our How-To Guides.

# ASSOCIATION NEWS

## ESD Pro Tip of the Week

Many foundations are out there giving money to those who have the time to go through the application process.

Is there foundation funding in your future?



[www.ESDProfessionals.org](http://www.ESDProfessionals.org)

## ESD Pro Tips of the Month

- Understand that communication in ESD matters deeply.
- Foundation funding is available for those who have the time to go through the application process.
- “Proof of concept” is an important element of a successful pitch.
- Challenge yourself to speak with 100 people in one week about your ESD work!

[Follow the Association on Instagram](#) for more tools to build your ESD practice with ease!

## Office Hours

[See you next year!](#)

Whether you are hoping to make your ESD practice your full-time job, or you just want to learn more about the nuts and bolts of working in the ESD field, our monthly Office Hours event is for you!

We (and hopefully you!) will be on vacation at the end of this month, but if you're craving some inspiration while you're off, check out our past sessions on [YouTube!](#)

Look out for our new series called Office Hours: Case Study in February..

For questions, contact [Modupe Poku](#).

**OFFICE HOURS**  
LAST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH

This event is for everyone in the ESD community making critical decisions and facing business or management challenges with their ESD practice.

Guest experts will engage participants in conversation, answer questions, impart advice, and share their experiences.

If you have questions about starting or operating an ESD practice or have wisdom to impart to colleagues, please join us!

ASSOCIATION OF ESD PROFESSIONALS  
GROWING EMPOWERMENT SELF-DEFENSE

# ESD WORLDWIDE

Your ESD achievements always inspire us, and we love spreading that inspiration to every corner of the world. Celebrating your work just never gets old! Have someone in mind for our next newsletter or a special ESD story to share? Please share with us, we want to share ESD stories: [hello@esdprofessionals.org](mailto:hello@esdprofessionals.org).



## Empowerment Self-Defense as a College Minor is Approved

San Francisco, CA

San Francisco State University's College of Health & Social Sciences has approved the introduction of a groundbreaking Empowerment Self-Defense (ESD) minor program, set to launch in Fall 2024. Association credentialed member Stephanie Cyr, ESDP, is the pioneering architect of this program and brings over 30 years of martial arts experience with a specialty and focus on self-defense. Stephanie, we are celebrating with you—congratulations!

For more information about the ESD minor program, contact Stephanie by [email](#).

## Abstract Submissions Open

SVRI Forum, South Africa, 2024

Let's get ESD into this conference! "In 350 words or less your abstract should provide abstract reviewers with a clear and concise summary of what you will present on at the conference. Try to make your abstract enticing, using plain language."

Read the guidelines and submit [here](#).



# ESD WORLDWIDE



Photo Credit: [Deborah Hart](#)

## A Life of IMPACT with Lisa Gaeta, ESDP

### A Note from the Founder of IMPACT Personal Safety

This year marks the 40th anniversary of IMPACT Personal Safety. I remember when I turned 46 years old, I was amazed that I had been doing IMPACT for half of my life. But now I've been teaching IMPACT for 40 years!

My whole team has had a hand in the growth and evolution of our programs. I wish I could list each person who has had some sort of input, but that would be impossible. I would like to mention my incredibly talented current team, several of whom have been teaching for over 20 years: Jennifer Bunting, Dani Joy, Dani Lizano, Nicole Snell, Ben Cook, Matt Harris, Don Hart, Michael Peñafiel, Valeria Dohrer, and Amanda Hall.

During the 2020–21 quarantine, my colleagues and I embarked on a project I had always dreamed about: taking IMPACT Personal Safety global. And while I am super proud of the work we do here in SoCal (we have been teaching in local high schools for 30 years!), I am very excited about the work we are doing globally. Since August 2019 we have:

- Held 6 instructor trainings with a total of 85 trainees.
- 16 instructors on the travel team
- 28 current trainees
- Taught 19 Basics Courses at ESDG Level 1 trainings.

Spreading IMPACT Personal Safety around the world is challenging, but it's worth it. I can go to sleep each night, knowing that there are more and more people around the world who are working to end gender-based violence.

Follow the incredible impact of IMPACT Personal Safety on [Instagram!](#)



## ESD WORLDWIDE



### Get Empowered

New & Exciting ESD Reading!

Nadia Telsey and Lauren Taylor recently released “Get Empowered: A Practical Guide to Thrive, Heal, and Embrace Your Confidence in a Sexist World.” This is going on our holiday reading list! How about you?

*“While men—who commit almost all gender-based violence—are the ones who should be responsible for changing, those of us who are targeted shouldn't have to wait for the world to transform and become a better place in order to live safer, fuller, more authentic lives.”*

Visit the [website](#) to connect with the authors.

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### Feminist Leadership Program

February 2024 | Online

This looks interesting! We Are Feminist Leaders is offering a part-time, 12-week online leadership program for emerging leaders. The course aims to increase knowledge and ability to lead using feminist principles.

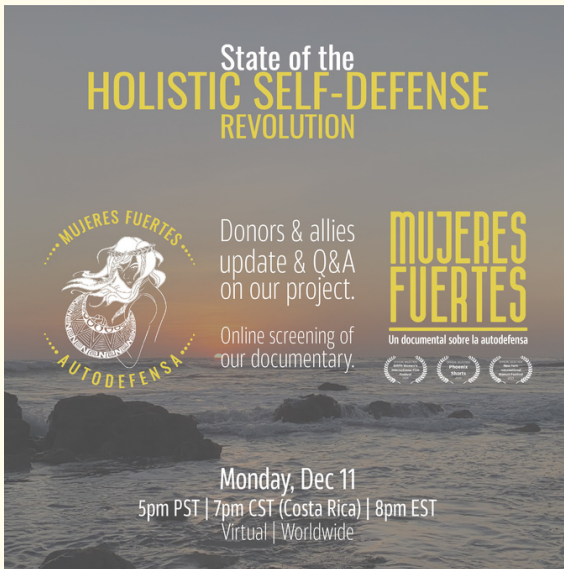
Of course, ESD professionals know a lot about that, but there is always more to learn!

**BUILD.  
COURAGE.**

The 12-week programme

[Learn more here.](#)

# ESD WORLDWIDE



## State of the Holistic Self-Defense Revolution

December 11, 2023 | Virtual

Toby Israel, ESDP, welcomes all ESD professionals to join in for this donor and ally update on Mujeres Fuertes Autodefensa (Women Empowered Self-Defense) and online documentary screening.

Prior to the screening, founder Toby Israel will present a brief introduction to the project and share some updates – for funders, allies, and curious onlookers – on current initiatives, use of funds, and projections for 2024, as well as a brief Q&A about the organization.

Donations optional, but registration required to attend. [Click here](#) and select the big yellow "Tickets & Donate" button to register.

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## 21-Day ESD Challenge!

December 2023 Onward | Online

For those wanting to turn ESD into a way of life (if you haven't already!), Tasha Ina Church, ESDP, of ElleLiveAction has developed a 21-day ESD challenge! Participants are invited to embark on a journey to unveil their inner warrior! This challenge is complete with a workbook and at-home videos that you can revisit at any time.

[Learn more here.](#)



# HOW CAN THE ASSOCIATION SUPPORT YOU?



We are passionate about supporting this movement by uplifting the amazing work you are doing around the world. Curious to know more about how the Association can support you? Reach out to Membership & Operations Lead [Modupe Poku](#) to start a conversation.

## LET'S STAY CONNECTED!

Don't be a stranger! The Association of ESD Professionals is here for you.

Have a comment? Please contact us at [Hello@ESDProfessionals.org](mailto>Hello@ESDProfessionals.org) if you would like to share a celebration about your ESD work, learn more about the Association Credentialing Program, become a member, or explore other opportunities for collaboration. We always love to hear from you!

Be sure to stay in touch with us via social media, too:

