By way of introduction I’ll start by saying that I just turned 60 this week and my wife, Paula, and I will have our 37th anniversary this year. We have two daughters, Gena and Adrienne. Both are out of the house but living in the greater Seattle area.

I spent the early part of my career as a corporate trainer in the retail, aerospace and insurance industries in the Los Angeles and Seattle areas. When our daughters were still very young my wife and I switched places. I became a stay at home dad and she has gone on to manage IT departments for several organizations (I can’t tell you how often she saves me on the computer).

 I was a stay at home dad for 13 years but for the last 10 of those I also worked as a special needs paraeducator at Woodmoor Elementary in the Northshore School District. In terms of a job where I felt I made a difference on a daily basis and that exemplified a teamwork concept, this was the best job I ever had. It was also very physical and emotional. But, I really enjoyed working with students and with their parents. The work was something I had to learn on the job but I enjoyed it very much. And, because some of my students were involved, I also volunteered a lot with Special Olympics, helping to coach teams in basketball, soccer, bowling and track.

But, after 10 years I decided to look for something else to do and found a job at United Way of King County. I worked there for a little over 7 ½ years in the Volunteer Center. While there I had 3 main responsibilities. One was managing Project LEAD which is a program to prepare people of color to serve on the boards of non-profit organizations. The others were to help corporations get their employees involved in the community and to support general Volunteer Center activities like Day of Caring where we sent out 11-12,000 volunteers on one day.

In the meantime, while working at United Way, I volunteered at Kindering Center on their Excellence and Trustee Committees. Currently I serve as a board member at Cascadia College and for Leadership Eastside and just stepped away from the capital fundraising campaign for El Centro de la Raza.

What attracted me to this job was the opportunity to work again with the special needs community and to return to a hands on, direct service experience. I’m very excited to be here working with all of you and with an organization that does so much to help fathers of children with special needs. I’m looking forward to taking part in all of the Network activities and learning from you what you enjoy about the Network and your ideas on how the Network can be even more helpful and meaningful to fathers. If you have any impressions or ideas you’d like to share or just want to chat, feel free to email me at louis.mendoza@kindering.org or call me at 425-653-4286. If it works out that we can meet in person that would be even better.

All the best,

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