



**Welcome to the Individual and Family Support Program's
May 2025 Coordinated Regional Council Meeting!**

It's Never Too Late: Transition Planning Resources for Adults with Developmental Disabilities (DD)



Featuring a presentation from Kelly Ligon, M.Ed.

If you need closed captioning, please check the chat box for the link!





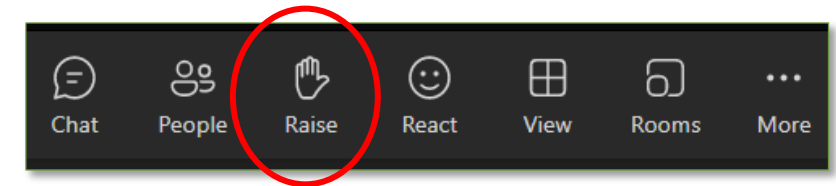
- **Welcome & Ground Rules**
- **What is the IFSP?**
- **It's Never Too Late: Transition Planning Resources for Adults with Developmental Disabilities** – Kelly Ligon, M.Ed., Transition Training Associate, Center on Transition Innovations at VCU
- **Panel** – Mary Miller and Billie Miller, Jesse Monroe, and Norma Draper
- **Q&A**
- **Council Business and Adjourn**

** If you need closed captioning, please check the chat box for the link! **

** If you need technical support, email IFSPCommunity@dbhds.virginia.gov! **



- **Tonight's main session is being recorded and will be posted to YouTube.**
- **Please be respectful of our presenter, panelists, and other attendees.**
- **Please place your questions in the chat!**
 - The chat is not private.
 - Please identify your region when you are asking your question.
 - If you cannot use the chat box, use the "Raise Hand" feature at the top of your Teams panel.
 - If you have a question that is not related to this topic, you can email IFSPSupport@dbhds.virginia.gov.
- **This meeting is hosted by the IFSP's Regional Councils.**
- **Remember that tonight's meeting is public, so please refrain from sharing personal information.**

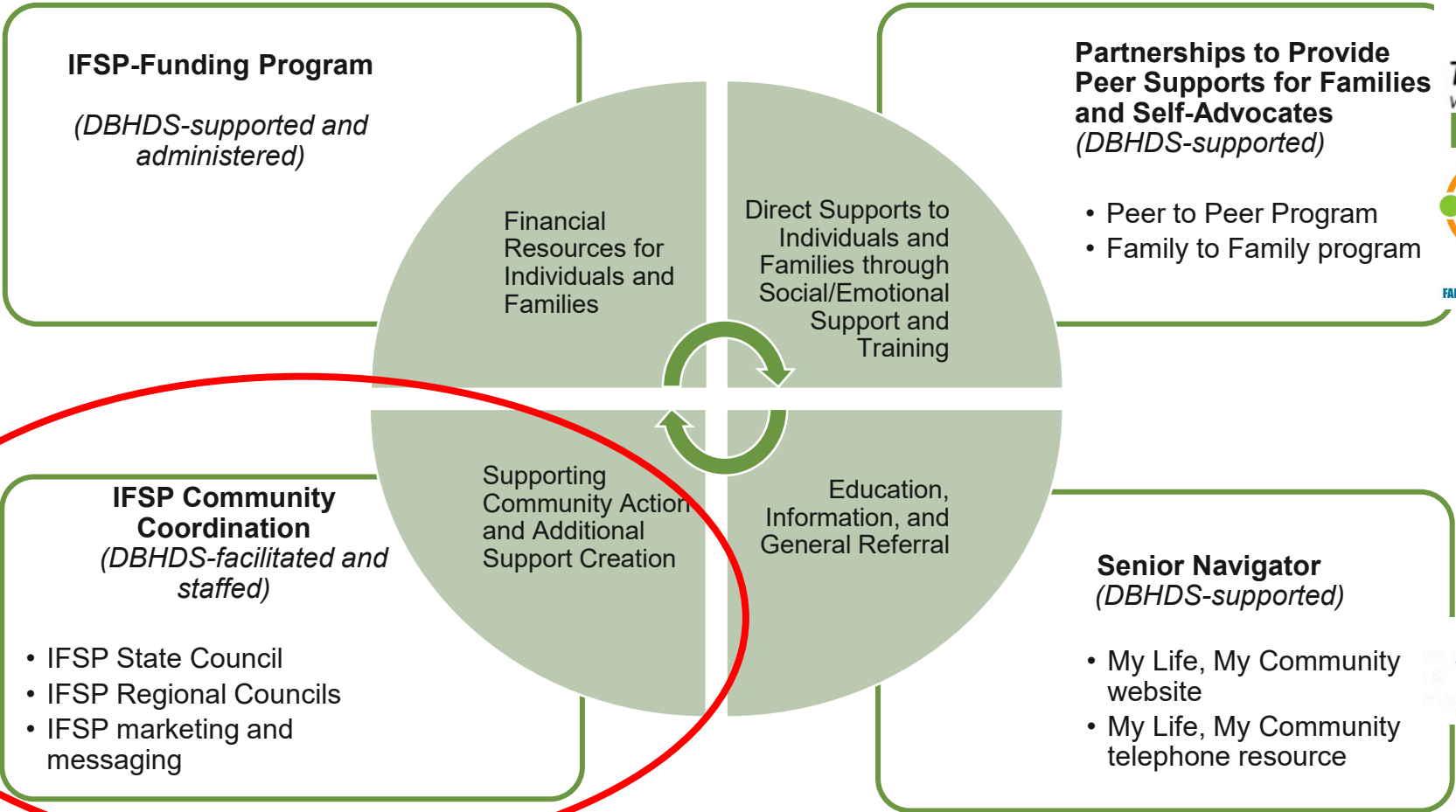
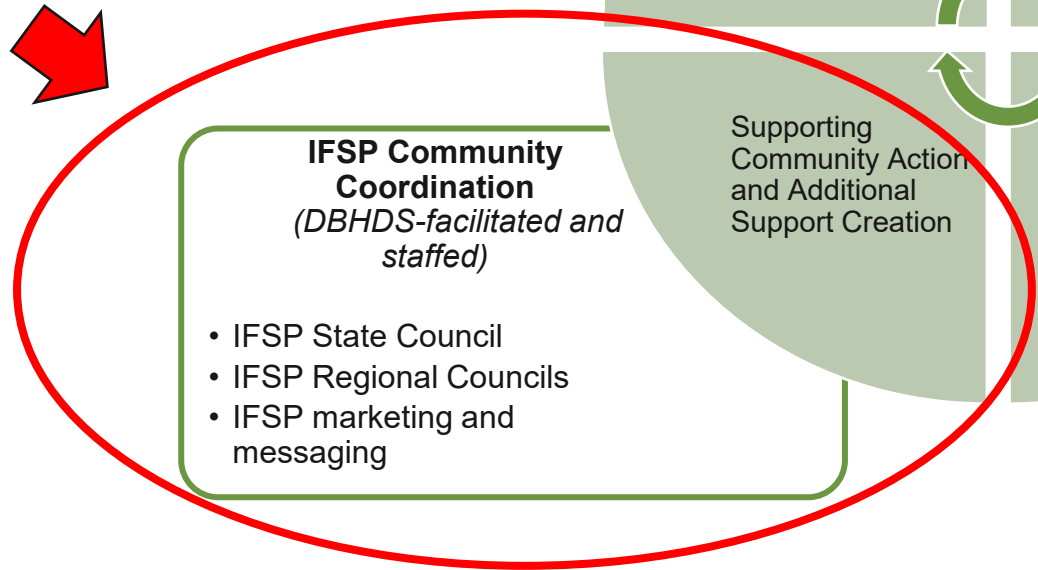


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You are here!



IFSP-Funding Program
(DBHDS-supported and administered)

Partnerships to Provide Peer Supports for Families and Self-Advocates
(DBHDS-supported)

- Peer to Peer Program
- Family to Family program

IFSP Community Coordination
(DBHDS-facilitated and staffed)

- IFSP State Council
- IFSP Regional Councils
- IFSP marketing and messaging

Senior Navigator
(DBHDS-supported)

- My Life, My Community website
- My Life, My Community telephone resource



Tonight's presenter: **Kelly Ligon, M.Ed.**

Kelly Ligon is a Training Associate for the Center on Transition Innovations at Virginia Commonwealth University. She has been in the field of special education for over 30 years. Since 2000, she has provided training and technical assistance to educators across Virginia who support students with disabilities. Her passion is preparing students for life after high school.





Mary Miller

**Self-Advocate and
Laborer, Fort Eustis Child
Development Center
Hampton, VA**



Billie Miller

**Parent Advocate
Hampton, VA**



Jesse Monroe

**Self-Advocate
Norfolk, VA**



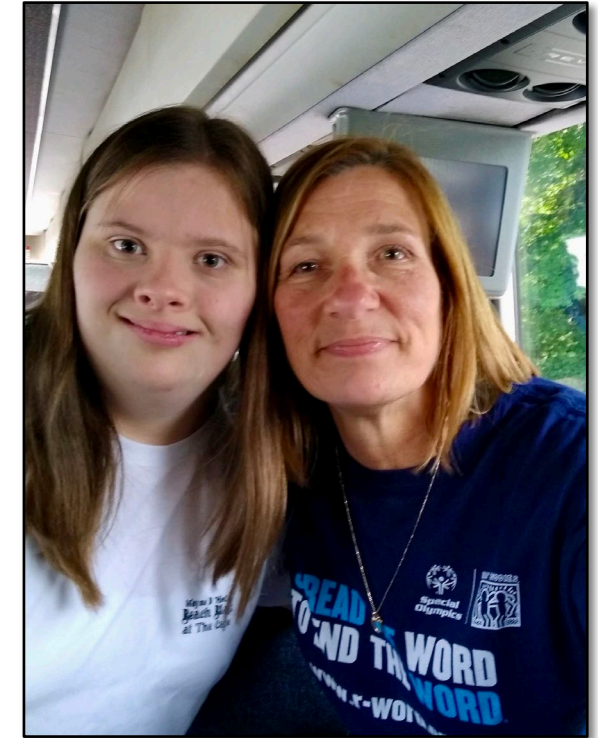
Norma Draper

**Aging Families Specialist
Center for Family Involvement
at VCU**

Meet our moderator: **Donna Robel**

Donna Robel is the Center for Family Involvement's Regional Network Coordinator for Southside Hampton Roads and the Eastern Shore. In addition to supporting families in the Southside Hampton Roads area, she works closely with the IFSP's Eastern Regional Council. In this role, she works with the Council with community outreach and assists in the coordination of Council events. Donna lives in Virginia Beach and is a lifetime resident of the Hampton Roads area. She is a mother to 5 children and known as "Boom" to her two grandchildren.

Donna's youngest daughter Alaina is 21 years old and has Down syndrome. Because of Alaina's diagnosis, Donna began advocating for Alaina and others with developmental disabilities when Alaina was just a toddler. Currently she is educating Alaina and herself on the topic of tonight's meeting, Transition Planning to Adulthood.

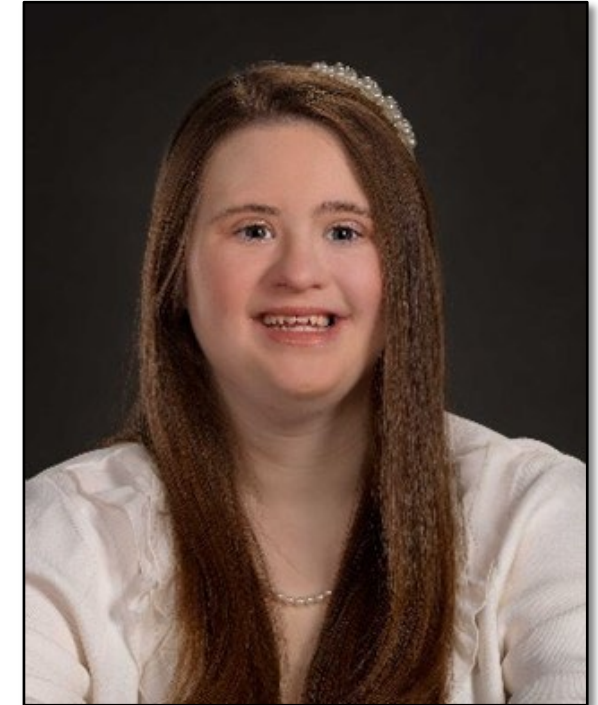


Meet our panelist: **Mary Miller**

Mary is 23 years old. She graduated from Kecoughtan High School in Hampton and is a proud graduate of the Project SEARCH training program at Fort Eustis. For the past three years, she has worked for the U.S. Air Force with her new work family at the Fort Eustis Child Development Center.

She is an active advocate for the disability community. She has participated in five Chesapeake Sheriff Office Dancing with the Athletes Special Olympics fundraisers and is active with the Virginia State Legislature. In Richmond, Mary was recognized for her efforts to raise awareness of the needs of people with disabilities. She is also a member of the Chesapeake Sheriff's Office Elite Unitas as a volunteer law enforcement officer.

Mary loves the performing arts, both off and on stage! Beyond performing her role as Tinkerbell with the Arts Inclusion Company's Peter Pan production, Mary has been taking dance classes since she was eight years old. Mary also loves to sing. She enjoys being part of Vocal Inclusion Company where she is afforded opportunities to perform songs out in the local community with the Virginia Stage Company, Underground Performing Arts Collective and Norfolk Harbor Stadium.



Meet our panelist: **Bernadette “Billie” Miller**

Billie is the proud mother of three children and has been married for 36 years. She is a graduate of Ohio State University with a degree in medical communications and received a commission in the U.S. Army upon graduation.

She traded in her combat boots in order to assume the role of mother. Staying home to take care of her children allowed her to become a volunteer and advocate for many interests, including the American Red Cross, various School PTAs and Hampton City Schools Special Education Advisory Committee, Down Syndrome Association of Hampton Roads, Aid Another.

She was so proud of Mary's acceptance into the Project SEARCH program. It is that opportunity for Mary to continue training onto a path into the world of work. Helping Mary become successful. There was pathway with many ups and downs.

But one day at time, Mary persevered. Giving her choices with decisions about classes, extra curricular interests, wardrobe choices. The choices are limited so as not overwhelm her decision making. I also like to give her ample time to complete tasks in order to avoid shutting down or unwillingness to complete tasks.

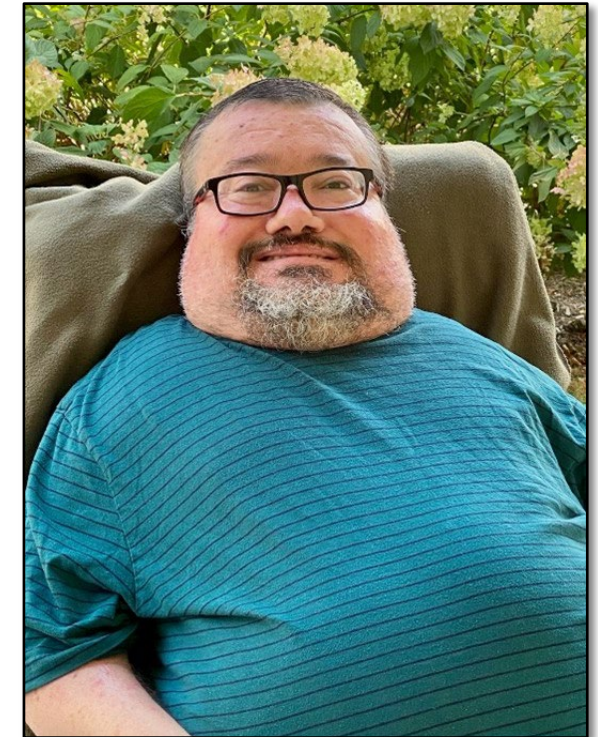
Billie appreciates the opportunity for her and her family to share their experience.



Meet our panelist: **Jesse Monroe**

Jesse was born 46 years ago with a physical disability called arthrogryposis, which severely constricts the movements of my joints and muscles. Although he has full feeling, he has no use of my upper or lower extremities, except for his head and neck. Since 2017, Jesse has lived independently in his own apartment in Norfolk, Virginia and receives services through the DD Medicaid waiver.

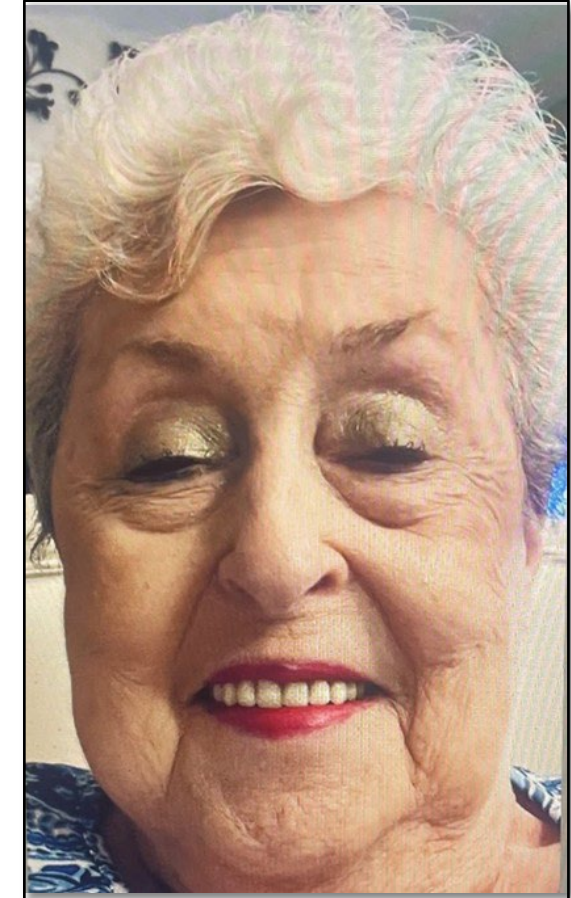
Jesse is a strong advocate both statewide and locally for people with disabilities – he is a self-advocate coach and trainer for The Arc of Virginia, a member of a state self-advocacy alliance called “A Life Like Yours,” and a member of a local advocacy group, Our Voices. Over the years, Jesse has worked alongside fellow self-advocates on many issues, with some important successes. Some of these issues include increasing Medicaid waiver slots for those with developmental disabilities and raising the reimbursement rates for providers of services. Jesse looks forward to continuing to fight for what is right.



Meet our panelist: **Norma Draper**

Norma Draper is the grandmother of a young man with significant disabilities which motivated her to become an advocate for him as well as others with disabilities. Norma is the Aging Families Specialist for the Center for Family Involvement at the Partnership for People with Disabilities at Virginia Commonwealth University.

She is a graduate of Partners in Policymaking and served on the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities. She has served on The Arc of Virginia State Board as well as The Arc South of the James. She worked with Parent to Parent of Virginia for many years and was a Service Facilitator for the DD and CCC+ waivers for 13 years. She has served on numerous committees with the goals of enhancing the lives of people with disabilities and their families. She has attended numerous conferences in order to increase her knowledge and to pass it on to others. She has made many lifelong friends during her years of working with families and individuals and cherishes each and every one.



1. **How do you overcome the fear of failure of making it on your own? We all have that feeling when moving out on our own for the first time, but that fear can become bigger for people with disabilities.**
 - **Jesse:** I was worried about safety issues, whether I would feel safe and secure, and whether it was the right decision for me. At first, it was tough and I almost wanted to move back home. But I pushed through it and told those voices “no.” Eventually it got easier. You can do it, too!

2. **In the past, how did it feel when other people made decisions for you?**
 - **Jesse:** Honestly, I felt as if I wasn’t a real person. I felt like I was living other people’s lives. Like I was a ghost observing my family members’ lives.

3. **Who helped you become a better advocate and a leader in making decisions for your life?**
 - **Jesse:** This question is very personal and there were a lot of people that helped me along the way. My family definitely encouraged me to advocate more and be more independent. I also had a close friend who was also disabled that encouraged me to move out on my own.



4. **In your experience, what is the biggest hurdle for an aging adult with developmental disabilities as their needs change? (For example: living, family, medical, or financial arrangements and considerations)**

- **Norma:** The fear of people they depend on not being around or available as everyone grows older. There is also a fear for parents of what will happen to their adult child after they are gone. People with disabilities do not want to be in a nursing home. If an adult with a disability does not have a waiver to pay for services in the community, there is not much choice for them if they need care.

Medical issues come down to the same thing. If there is not a DD waiver to pay for them to live at home or in the community and receive the necessary medical services, they will most likely be placed in a nursing home or an intermediate care facility.

There is a fear for every parent of an adult child with a disability that there will not be enough money available when they are gone for their adult child to live comfortably and in the way they are used to. A special needs trust should be considered. If the adult child with a disability is employed, they might consider an [ABLE account](#).

If that person has a DD waiver, they could have a choice of living arrangements such as living at home, living in a group home, living in a sponsored residential home, shared living home, their own apartment, and possibly their own home and still receive the necessary services to make their life comfortable.

5. **How do you encourage aging adults with developmental disabilities to plan for upcoming transitions when they may have some fear of the change?**

- **Norma:** I would encourage them to seek out others who have already transitioned and listen to the challenges and successes. Talk with parents who have been through transition with their adult child. Research, research, research! There is a lot of information and a lot of people who can provide information, and you can choose what works best for your situation. Seek out help!





- Charting the LifeCourse: <https://www.lifecoursetools.com/lifecourse-library/lifecourse-framework/>
- Person-Centered Thinking trainings: <https://personcenteredpractices.partnership.vcu.edu/person-centered-thinking/>
- Best Practices for Transitioning Students/Transferring Records: <https://mylifemycommunityvirginia.org/general-information>
- Leadership for Empowerment and Abuse Prevention (LEAP): <https://leap.partnership.vcu.edu/>





Before we wrap up ...

Don't forget to let us know what you think!

- Please scan the QR code to fill out the Satisfaction Survey!
- You can also click the link that is being shared in the chat.

THANK YOU!





- The recording and PowerPoint slides will be shared on the My Life, My Community website and on the IFSPCommunity Facebook page:
 - <https://mylifemycommunityvirginia.org>
 - <https://www.facebook.com/IFSPCommunity>
- Save the date!
 - **The next IFSP State Council meeting:** Friday, June 27th
 - **Our next IFSP Coordinated Regional Council meeting:** Thursday, July 17th on transportation
- To receive the latest updates from the IFSP, please make sure you are subscribed to our email list at <http://tiny.cc/ifsp-email>!





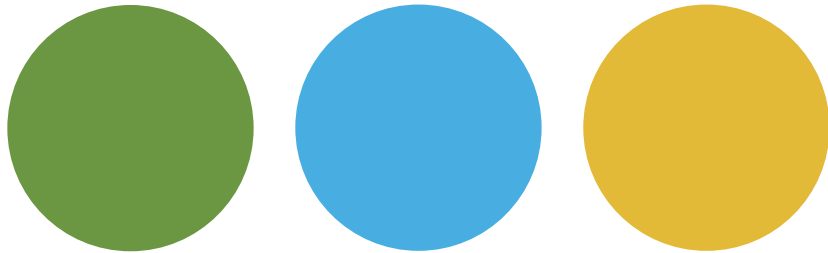
To our IFSP Council cohosts:

Christine DeHaven
Ebonee Atkinson

To our IFSP Eastern
Regional Council

To our Hamilton Relay captioner:

Kelly Schindele



To our main session presenters, panelists,
and Eastern Regional Council RNCs:

Kelly Ligon, M.Ed.

Mary Miller
Billie Miller
Jesse Monroe
Norma Draper

Donna Robel
Joan Brunner



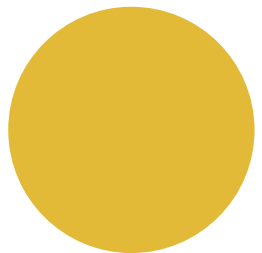
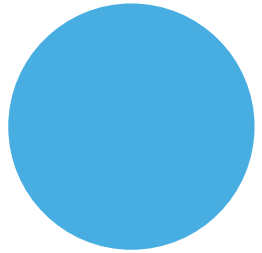
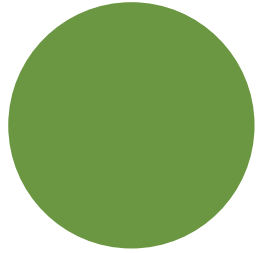


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THANK YOU!





Thank you!

Follow the IFSP on Facebook:
facebook.com/IFSPCommunity

