



Healing

The

**SKIN**

We're in

TSW  
SUMMIT

**You Deserve Answers!**

*July 24-25, Atlanta, GA*



**ITSAN**

**PROTECT • PROVE • PREVENT**



## Day 1

## Science, Innovation, & Connection

Time	Session details	Speakers
3:00 pm	Registration & Exhibit Space Opens at Maison Event Center	
4:00 pm	General Session	
	Welcome	Kelly Barta
	TSW Today: Progress, Challenges, & Hope for the future	Peter Lio <i>MD, FAAD</i>
	The Future of Skin Disease Research: Precision Medicine, Biomarkers, & Beyond	Anna Mazzucco <i>PhD</i>
	Current Science on TSW and Inflammatory Skin Conditions	Ian Myles <i>MD, MPH</i>
	Late-breaking Itch Research	Sarah Chisholm <i>MD</i>
6:00 pm	Welcome Reception & Art Exhibit	
9:00 pm	Evening Wrap Up	

## Day 2

## Holistic Healing & Practical Recovery

Time	Session details	Speakers
8:30 am	Doors open for breakfast	
9:30 am	General Session	
9:35 am	Looking at TSW Holistically	Melody Hartzler <i>PHARM.D, BCACP, BC-ADM, ABAHP</i>
10:10 am	Your Environment & Your Skin	Ian Myles <i>MD, MPH</i>
10:40 am	The Mind Body Connection & Impacts of Stress	Angela Tiru, <i>Prof. of Psychology</i>
11:00 am	Coffee Break	
11:20 am	General Session: Different Paths to Healing	
11:25 am	Western Approach	Douglas DiRuggeriero <i>PA-C, DMSc</i>
11:40 am	Integrative Approach	Peter Lio <i>MD, FAAD</i>
11:55 am	Eastern/Traditional Chinese Medicine	Olivia Friedman <i>DSCM, Dipl.OM, L.AC</i>

11:55 am	Naturopathic Approach	Laura Wheeler <i>BHSc Naturopathy</i>
12:35 pm	Lunch	
1:45 pm	TSW: Stories of Healing	Kathy Tullos, <i>RN</i> Clare Crawley Rochelle Richter Empress Ayr Griffin Natalie Wright
2:45 pm	Concurrent Workshops	
	Wound Care, Skin Tests & Nutrition	Kathy Tullos, <i>RN</i> Rahki Roy, <i>MS, RDN, LDN</i>
	Behind the Brands: Codex, Soteri, Salvida, Phoilex, Skinesa, Wave, Abby Rose, & more	Stephanie Philpot
	TCM for TSW-associated severe eczema: Research and Practice	Xiu-min Li <i>MD, MS, MPH</i>
	Programa en Español: Entendiendo el TSW, encontrando apoyo y construyendo comunidad	Claudia Verdeza Crystal Perez Kelly Barta
3:30 pm	Coffee Break	
3:45 pm	General Session: Mental Health & TSW Panel  (Caregiver, Teenager, Adult Patient, & Young Adult perspectives)	Destiny Davis <i>MS, LPC, CRC</i> Kathy Tullos, <i>RN</i> Reva Vaddi Chi Villenes Brandon Higgs
4:30 pm	Concurrent Workshops	
	Navigating TSW as a Teen or Young Adult	Haven Barta Reva Vaddi
	Caring for Someone with TSW	Sarat Pothuri Kathy Tullos
	Adult Patient Circle: Sharing and Support	Chi Villenes Brandon Higgs & Destiny Davis <i>MS, LPC, CRC</i>
	Círculo de Apoyo en Español: Preguntas, recursos y comunidad	Claudia Verdeza Crystal Perez
	For HCPs, Industry, Advocates and Friends: "How can you help?"	Kelly Barta
5:30 pm	General Session: Creating the Change We Need	Kelly Barta Michelle Li Mary Kille
6:00 pm	Dinner & Social Time	
7:00 pm	Screening of "Still Preventable"	Briana Banos
9:00 pm	Event Wrap-up	

# Meet the Speakers!



## Leading Practitioners, Researchers, Advocates, and TSW Warriors!



**Briana Banos**

Briana is a filmmaker, performer, and globally recognized TSW advocate whose personal battle with the condition began in 2015. She directed the groundbreaking documentary *Preventable* (2019) – the first feature-length film on the crisis – and circumnavigated the globe to interview leading skin experts and patients. In 2024, she released the sequel *Still Preventable*, exposing continued clinical resistance, prevalence, and crucial prevention strategies. Currently pursuing an advanced film PhD at the University of Edinburgh, she researches how patient-centered filmmaking can directly mitigate the psychological burdens of eczema and TSW.



**Haven Barta**

Haven is a 20-year-old entrepreneur living in Atlanta, who understands how deeply impacting TSW can be on a family, having watched his mother struggle through the condition for over 5 long years. Stemming from his own personal journey, he has a passion to encourage and empower others in his generation, providing a message of hope and strength. When he is not working, building his business, Barta Exteriors, you will find him restoring and modifying motorcycles and practicing as the front man with his band, Ethos.



**Kelly Barta**

Kelly is the President and Executive Director of ITSAN. Her work with the organization began in 2016, as a member of the Board of Directors, while still recovering from TSW – an experience which left her bed-ridden for over 1½ years and healing for several more. The unspeakable suffering, isolation, and lack of medical awareness and support for those going through TSW drove Kelly into the world of advocacy. Her passion to be a voice for the voiceless has led her to bring awareness to the great needs of this underserved community in academic, medical, regulatory and political arenas. Past Advocacy roles include serving with the National Eczema Association, Allergy & Asthma Network and the Coalition of Skin Diseases. In addition to her work leading ITSAN, she currently serves on the Board Directors for Globalskin, and in an advisory role with the FDA's Patient Engagement Collective. Kelly published her book, *To Eczema, with Love*, in 2022 as a memoir, a guide for patients and families dealing with eczema and TSW, and a call to action to the broader community.



**Sarah Chisolm**

Sarah is a board-certified dermatologist, Assistant Professor of Dermatology at Emory University School of Medicine, and Director of Clinical Trials for the Department of Dermatology at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. She also serves as the Managing Director of ITCH-E (Itch Translational and Clinical Home at Emory), where she leads efforts to advance research and improve care for patients living with chronic itch and inflammatory skin diseases. Dr. Chisolm earned her medical degrees from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She completed her dermatology residency at Vidant Medical Center in Greenville, North Carolina, followed by advanced fellowship training in autoimmune dermatology at Stanford University and complex medical dermatology at the University of California, San Francisco. Her clinical and research interests focus on atopic dermatitis, chronic pruritus (itch), prurigo nodularis, allergic contact dermatitis, and other inflammatory skin disorders.



**Rakhi Roy Chowdhury**

Rakhi is a Registered Dietitian and Nutritionist specializing in evidence-based medical nutrition therapy, gut health, food allergies, and chronic skin conditions. After earning a Bachelor's degree in Anthropology, Rakhi experienced firsthand the debilitating physical and emotional toll of severe, chronic eczema and autoimmune flare-ups. Driven by her own transformative healing journey under the guidance of a dietitian, she pivoted her academic and professional focus to earn a Master's degree in Dietetics & Nutrition. Today, she advocates passionately against "one-size-fits-all" restriction and long-term elimination protocols. As a public speaker, writer, and regular contributor to major health outlets like Healthline, Rakhi empowers clients to discover the powerful connection between the gut and skin, helping them reclaim food freedom through personalized, holistic nutrition.



**Clare Crawley**

Known by many from her role as the former Bachelorette on ABC, Clare is most proud of the woman, mother, and TSW warrior she has become through her healing journey. Today, she uses her platform to bring awareness to navigating chronic illness while helping others feel seen, supported, and hopeful through conversations around healing, motherhood, and resilience.



**Destiny Davis**

Destiny is a Licensed Professional Counselor and Certified Rehabilitation Counselor in private practice in Atlanta, Georgia. She specializes in helping people with invisible illnesses and disabilities navigate relationships and build meaningful lives using Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and Somatic Experiencing approaches. Destiny works with individuals who want to strengthen their relationships with themselves, their families, and their communities. She created and facilitates *Welcome to The Waiting Room*, a membership community providing evidence-based, peer support for people with complex medical conditions.



### Douglas DiRuggiero

Douglas is a Certified Physician Assistant who graduated with Honors from the Duke University Physician Assistant Program and received his Masters of Health Sciences. He practiced in Internal Medicine for three years and has specialized in Dermatology since 2000. Focused on diagnosis and treating all skin, hair and nail diseases, he also enjoys the surgical and cosmetic aspects of dermatology. Douglas has published articles in dermatology journals, and lectures frequently at medical conferences throughout the Southeast. He is the founding President of the Georgia Dermatology Physician Assistant Society. Douglas serves patients at the Skin Cancer & Cosmetic Dermatology Centers in Rome and Cartersville, Ga.



### Brandon Hippius

Brandon is a passionate advocate for the eczema and Topical Steroid Withdrawal (TSW) communities. Now six years into his TSW recovery, he has also overcome withdrawals from multiple eczema medications. Through sharing his story, Brandon hopes to raise awareness, remind others they are not alone, and inspire strength, resilience, and connection within the community. When he's not advocating, he enjoys fishing, creating music, and pursuing a variety of creative interests in his home town of Avon Park, Florida.



### Olivia Hsu Friedman

Olivia holds a Doctorate in Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine, completed an additional diploma in Traditional Chinese Medicine Dermatology and is a NCCAOM board licensed Illinois acupuncturist. She is the owner of Amethyst Holistic Skin Solutions and treats dermatology patients in office and via video conference using only herbal medicine. Outside of the office, Olivia serves as a Board Member for the American Society of Acupuncturists and as faculty for the Chicago Eczema Support Center.



### Mary Kille

Mary is a Senior Analyst at American Express and a dedicated advocate for Topical Steroid Withdrawal (TSW). Having personally experienced the profound challenges of TSW, she has channeled her journey into impactful advocacy. Her efforts in Connecticut led to the establishment of a permanent annual TSW Awareness Day, advancing awareness, recognition, and support for those affected by the condition.



### Empress Ayrial Griffin

Empress is the Founder and CEO of Luxurious Peace, a plant-based skincare company inspired by her lifelong battle with chronic eczema and her experience with Topical Steroid Withdrawal (TSW) in 2018. After enduring years of painful flare-ups, skin barrier damage, and the physical and emotional challenges of TSW, she began creating gentle, nourishing products to support sensitive and reactive skin. Today, Empress uses her platform to educate, advocate, and empower others navigating eczema, TSW, and skin health, sharing her story of resilience, self-discovery, and hope with communities across the country. As a speaker, entrepreneur, and mother, she is passionate about helping others feel seen, supported, and confident in their skin.



### Michelle Li

Michelle is an AI/ML Go-to-Market Principal for Canada at Snowflake, former ITSAN Board Member, and Co-Principal Investigator of the TSW Patient Registry. Having experienced Topical Steroid Withdrawal firsthand, she has dedicated her expertise and leadership to advancing patient-centered research, awareness, and advocacy. Based in Toronto, Michelle combines her professional background in technology with her lived experience to help drive progress for the global TSW community.



### Melody Hartzler

Melody is a Board Certified Ambulatory Care Pharmacy Specialist (BCACP), Board Certified in Advanced Diabetes Management (BC-ADM), and is Board Certified through American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine (A4M). She has developed a passion for functional medicine and treating the underlying causes of disease and owns PharmToTable, a company that exists to help change the landscape of healthcare with functional medicine. She is a graduate of Ohio Northern University College of Pharmacy and completed her residency training at Chalmers P. Wylie VA Ambulatory Care Center. She has completed Applying Functional Medicine in Clinical Practice (AFMCP) from Institute of Functional Medicine and has completed the Fellowship of Anti-Aging, Metabolic and Functional Medicine (FAAMFM) with the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine (A4M).



### Xiu-min Li

Xiu-min is a Professor of Pathology, Microbiology and Immunology, Professor of Otolaryngology, and Professor of Dermatology at School of Medicine, New York Medical College. She has chaired prominent committees about integrative medicines for allergic diseases. Her research focuses on Integrative Medicine for food allergy, asthma and eczema, and wellness. As PI or co-PI on the NIH, industry, private organization, and family-funded studies, she has successfully administered multiple projects and produced over 150 publications. She is the US FDA IND holder of 2 ongoing clinical trials and the PI on 3 IRB approved observational clinical studies, including "Traditional Chinese Medicine effect on skin microbiome and skin integrity in patients with topical steroid withdrawal". The School of Medicine of New York Medical College has recognized her with the Outstanding Faculty in Research and Education Award in 2022, the Best Faculty Author Award in 2023, and honored her for medical school student research mentorship from 2023-2025. She and Henry Ehrlich co-authored the book titled "Treating Eczema with Traditional Chinese Medicine".





**Peter Lio**

Peter is a Clinical Assistant Professor of Dermatology & Pediatrics at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine and an adjunct Clinical Professor of Dermatology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. Dr. Lio received his medical degree from Harvard Medical School, completed his internship in Pediatrics at Boston Children’s Hospital, and his Dermatology training at Harvard where he served as Chief Resident in Dermatology. While at Harvard, he received formal training in acupuncture. Dr. Lio is the founding director of the Chicago Integrative Eczema Center and a founding partner of Medical Dermatology Associates of Chicago. He serves as a board member and scientific advisory committee member emeritus for the National Eczema Association. He is a member of the American Academy of Dermatology’s Atopic Dermatitis Expert Resource Group, a Councilor for the International Eczema Council, and is a founding faculty member of the Integrative Dermatology Certificate Program. He has over 400 publications and 4 textbooks.



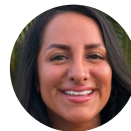
**Ian Myles**

Ian is Principal Investigator of the Epithelial Therapeutics Unit at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID). and Chief Medical Research Officer, U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. He specializes in Allergy, Immunology and Internal Medicine, providing direct clinical care to patients at NIH Clinical Center. In 2011, Dr. Myles became a commissioned officer in the United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. LCDR Myles has supported several USPHS missions, from the Ebola virus vaccine trial in West Africa to congressional Gold Medal Ceremonies at the U.S. Capitol. In 2013, he was awarded a position as an assistant clinical investigator in the NIAID Transition Program in Clinical Research. In 2018, Dr. Myles became the head of the newly formed Epithelial Therapeutics Unit to evaluate the efficacy and safety of a topical, live bacterial treatment for atopic dermatitis (eczema). He is currently a participant in the Lasker Clinical Research Scholars and Distinguished Scholars programs.



**Anna Mazzucco**

Anna serves as Deputy Director of the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Previously, Dr. Mazzucco served as the Strategic Advisor on NIH-Wide Activities within the Immediate Office of the Director, leading a range of activities and as the Deputy Director of the NIH’s Helping End Addiction Long-term Initiative. Prior to joining NIH as an American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Science Policy Fellow in 2015, she was Scientific Advisor at a non-profit organization in Washington D.C., focusing on policy and legislative issues related to biomedical research such as diversity in clinical research and innovation in drug development. Dr. Mazzucco obtained her Ph.D. in Cell and Developmental Biology from Harvard Medical School.



**Crystal Perez**

Crystal is a former Army nurse, CEO, sound healing practitioner, and bilingual TSW survivor whose doctoral program was cut short by TSW, a turning point that led her to explore the science of sound, voice, and music as a symptom management modality for herself and the TSW community, and ignited a mission alongside ITSAN and TSW LATAM to raise global awareness, advance patient education, and advocate in both English and Spanish for everyone navigating this condition.



**Jessica Morrison**

Jessica is a Central Indiana real estate broker and fine artist who blends creativity with connection. A dedicated TSW advocate, she advances awareness through legislative efforts, research support, and provider education, working to strengthen patient protections and improve outcomes for those navigating TSW.



**Stephanie Philpot**

Stephanie is the founder and CEO of The Eczema Sample Store, a first-of-its-kind subscription service that helps individuals with eczema and sensitive skin discover products through curated sample boxes before investing in full-size purchases. Diagnosed with eczema as an infant, Stephanie has spent her life navigating the challenges of chronic skin disease, food allergies, and sensitive skin, experiences that inspired her mission to make skincare more accessible, affordable, and less overwhelming. A passionate advocate for the eczema community, she is dedicated to empowering others through education, connection, and practical solutions that improve quality of life.



**Sarat Pothuri**

Sarat joined the ITSAN Board of Directors in 2025, inspired by her deeply personal experience navigating her daughter’s struggle with Topical Steroid Withdrawal (TSW) Syndrome. During this challenging journey, her daughter faced immense physical and emotional hurdles, spending months in recovery and isolation. Sarat found strength and guidance through ITSAN’s resources and the global TSW community, which became a lifeline of hope and resilience. Now, she is determined to pay it forward by advocating for TSW awareness and empowering others through social media engagement and support, offering a message of hope and healing to those in need. Professionally, Sarat is part of an innovative healthcare platform focused on holistic healing for chronic conditions. She lives in Massachusetts with her husband and twin children, drawing inspiration from her family as she continues her mission to support others in their healing journeys.





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**Rochelle Richter**  
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Rochelle is a TSW healed veteran who went through TSW 17 years ago, pre-ITSAN. She previously served as Treasurer on ITSAN’s board and has been a strong patient advocate who has raised awareness about the disease and supported TSW sufferers. She has a background in accountancy and real estate, currently serving as a Realtor in the greater Atlanta area. She is also a mom of two, film industry wife, and a California transplant that lives in Georgia.



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**Kathryn Tullos**  
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Kathryn is ITSAN’s past president and currently serves as co-PI of the organization’s TSW Registry. She is a Registered Nurse from Houston, Texas with a degree in Communications, and was a bedside nurse in pediatrics for 7 years, before taking a “break” to stay home with her 4 kids. In mid-2013, her son suffered severely from Topical Steroid Withdrawal Syndrome (TSWS) for 18 months, due to steroid creams prescribed for his eczema. Kathryn used the experience with her son and her passion for research to throw herself into patient advocacy and try to help others navigate this often misunderstood iatrogenic disease. She joined the ITSAN board in 2015, helped write and relaunch the ITSAN website, and eventually became President and Executive Director. She stepped down from that role in 2024, but continues to support ITSAN’s work through management of the Patient Registry.



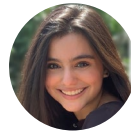
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**Angela Tiru**  
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Angela has over 20 years of experience as a Psychology Professor at Connecticut State College, and has dedicated her career to understanding the profound connection between the mind and body. Her academic work centers on lifestyle medicine, focusing on how daily habits and holistic interventions shape our overall health and long-term well-being. Angela’s professional interests in lifestyle medicine are deeply personal. As a mother of three, she has navigated the complexities of living with and managing chronic conditions, specifically allergy/eczema and Topical Steroid Withdrawal (TSW). This firsthand experience has fueled her commitment to helping other families navigate the emotional toll of these conditions, especially when facing the unique challenges of medical gaslighting. Angela believes that healing is not simply a clinical process but a social one. She values the patient advocate movement and its transformative power in sharing stories. The patient community helps build resilience and ensures no one has to navigate their health journey in isolation.



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**Reva Vaddi**  
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Reva is a 17-year-old junior at Weston High School in Massachusetts. Outside of school, she has a passion for dance and singing, and dedicates her free time to volunteering at local healthcare facilities. Reva is also a dedicated advocate for awareness of Topical Steroid Withdrawal (TSW). Having experienced TSW firsthand, she is committed to sharing her story to support others navigating the same journey and to ensure that patients feel seen and heard.



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**Claudia Verdeza**  
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Claudia serves on ITSAN’s Board of Directors and is a Colombian attorney and advocate with a professional background in law, real estate, and international work, and a personal journey through Topical Steroid Withdrawal (TSW). After living with eczema from early childhood and using topical corticosteroids for over two decades, Claudia experienced TSW firsthand, which reshaped both her personal life and professional purpose. Through her recovery, Claudia became deeply involved in patient education, awareness, and advocacy, with a special focus on Spanish-speaking communities, where information and resources on TSW are often limited or inaccessible. She is passionate about bridging gaps between patients, caregivers, and medical professionals, and about fostering informed, compassionate conversations around TSW.



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**Chiquanna “Chi” Villines**  
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Chi is a brand strategist, wellness advocate, and the founder of Flaunt Your Flare, a platform redefining confidence and beauty standards for individuals navigating severe skin conditions. A former professional dancer, Chi faced a life-altering pivot when severe Topical Steroid Withdrawal forced her to put her passion for movement on pause. Emerging from years of intense, debilitating flares, she transformed her pain into purpose. Today, Chi dedicates her energy to building supportive communities and empowering fellow TSW Creatives and Warriors to reclaim their confidence, embrace their healing journeys, and show up authentically in their skin.



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**Laura Wheeler**  
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Laura is a clinical naturopath and founder of Nurtured by Laura Clinical Naturopathy, specializing in personalized care for individuals with complex, chronic health conditions. Her journey into naturopathy began in 2015 while navigating Topical Steroid Withdrawal (TSW), severe gut dysfunction, and chronic fatigue. Inspired by her own healing experience, Laura earned a Bachelor of Health Science in Naturopathy and was mentored by a leading integrative physician specializing in environmental illness. Her clinical interests include CIRS, mold and biotoxin illness, MCAS, POTS, chronic fatigue, and inflammatory conditions. For the past three years, Laura has worked with the Australian Chronic Infectious and Inflammatory Disease Society (ACIIDS), supporting education and collaboration in integrative medicine, chronic infections, and inflammatory disease. Combining professional expertise with lived experience, Laura is passionate about helping individuals uncover the root causes of chronic illness and supporting them with compassionate, evidence-informed care



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**Natalie Wright**  
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Natalie struggled with TSW for so long she doesn’t remember a time in her life when her skin wasn’t a problem. She learned what she was struggling with was known as TSW in 2017 and vowed to never touch a topical steroid again. Her struggles worsened in the following years, peaking at their WORST in December of 2022-April of 2023, where it became so bad, she was bed bound and required constant care. She learned about CAP therapy and within weeks she was on a plane for Thailand with her husband to pursue treatment. CAP treatment changed her life and she is eager to share her story!