

KETO UNIVERSITY 2023

SEPTEMBER 15-16, 2023 • SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

FACULTY



Vanessa Aldaz, MPH, RDN, CDCES – BASED IN SAN DIEGO, CA

Vanessa Aldaz is a registered dietitian nutritionist, ketogenic diet therapy dietitian, certified diabetes care and education specialist. Vanessa received her MPH in Nutrition from Loma Linda University in 2004 and has a B.S. in Biochemistry and Cell Biology from University of California San Diego. She has specialized in ketogenic diet therapies for epilepsy and neurological disorders for the past 18 years in the clinical setting at Rady Children's Hospital in San Diego (RCHSD) and is working with patients of all ages including infants and adults. She has participated in several publications and presentation on the ketogenic diet. She has served as a ketogenic ambassador through Nutricia North America and has taught and mentored hundreds of dietitians. She is now also dedicating her passion and expertise in brain health and nutrition by helping women improve their brain health and regain their energy and confidence through nutrition and mindfulness techniques in The Better Brain Way Plan program.



Stacey Bessone, RD, LDN – BASED IN ST. PETERSBURG, FL

Stacey Bessone received her Bachelor of Science, Dietetics and Nutrition at Florida International University, Miami, FL. Stacey has over a decade of experience as a ketogenic dietitian managing patients with intractable epilepsy. She is currently practicing at Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital in St. Petersburg, FL as a clinical dietitian. There, she provides outpatient and inpatient nutritional services to about 80 patients, all of which are initiated on some form of the medical ketogenic diet for intractable epilepsy. Since 2019, she has also been an instructor in Pediatric Neurology at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Stacey has co-authored many peer-reviewed publications, has been involved in multiple research programs and has lectured extensively at both national and international congresses and workshops.



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AMBASSADORS

Robyn Blackford, RDN, LDN – BASED IN CHICAGO, IL

Robyn has worked as the expert ketogenic dietitian at Lurie Children's in Chicago since 2005. She helped initiate, grow and lead their Ketogenic Diet Program where they currently follow over 350 patients on ketogenic therapies. This makes Lurie Children's one of the largest Keto Centers in North America. Robyn has several publications on the Ketogenic Diet, including being an author for the International Ketogenic Diet Consensus Statement. She routinely gives presentations about the ketogenic diet to a variety of audiences. She has a passion for setting up families to be successful with ketogenic diet therapy, as well as supporting and mentoring healthcare professionals who guide patients on medical ketogenic diet therapies.



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Lindsey Thompson, PhD, RD, LD – BASED IN KANSAS CITY, MO

Lindsey Thompson is a clinical assistant professor at the University of Kansas in the department of Dietetics and Nutrition. Lindsey has 13 years of clinical experience working with patients on a ketogenic diet for drug resistant epilepsy in the Comprehensive Epilepsy Center at Children's Mercy Hospital. Lindsey's research focuses on the nutritional status and qualitative outcomes in pediatric patients treated with the ketogenic diet. Lindsey is passionate about the medical ketogenic diet because of the remarkable difference it makes in the lives of patients, families and caregivers affected by epilepsy and other neurological disorders. Lindsey became a registered dietitian in 2007 and completed her doctorate at the University of Kansas Medical Center in 2019.



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AMBASSADORS

Zahava Turner, RD, CSP, LDN – BASED IN BALTIMORE, MD

Zahava Turner received her Bachelor of Science, Dietetics, and Nutrition from Queens College CUNY in New York with an emphasis in clinical nutrition and worked for 2 years as a pediatric dietitian at Schneider's Children's Hospital. Currently Zahava is an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics and Neurology, Board Certified in pediatric nutrition working at the Johns Hopkins Children's Center in Baltimore, Maryland since 2005. Zahava specializes in using the Ketogenic diet for infants and children with epilepsy and has spoken both nationally and internationally at several conferences on the ketogenic and modified Atkins diet for epilepsy. She is a co-author of over 30 publications and the widely referenced book *Ketogenic Diets* 7th edition.

