



**NUTRICIA
KETO**
AMBASSADORS

KETO UNIVERSITY FUNDAMENTALS MASTERCLASS



June 26, 2024 | 12:30 – 5 pm ET

FACULTY BIOS



Vanessa Aldaz, MPH, RDN, CDCES
Based in San Diego, California

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 and is working with patients of all ages. 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, Florida

Stacey Bessone received her Bachelor of Science in Dietetics 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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Robyn Blackford, RDN, LDN
Based in Chicago, Illinois

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.



Lindsey Thompson, PhD RD LD
Based in Kansas City, Missouri

Lindsey Thompson is a clinical assistant professor at the University of Kansas in the department of Dietetics and Nutrition. Lindsey has 15 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 managed 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.



Zahava Turner, RD, CSP, LDN
Based in Baltimore, Maryland

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 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.



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Rachel Finn

Based in Kansas City, Missouri

Rachel Finn is a patient Chef/Educator based in Kansas City since 2013. Rachel has a background in hotel/restaurant management and owned a restaurant for 17 years. Since closing her restaurant, Rachel has been working in tandem with clinical providers and families, creating a kid-friendly approach to the ketogenic diet. She develops individual plans, creates recipes and hosts cooking classes for her patients, where recipes are tested and family-approved. In addition to the ketogenic diet, Rachel also works with Genetics, Renal, and Allergy patients. She is passionate about creating foods that normalize a way of life for her patients.

