



2025
DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI RECIPIENT

MELISSA FREDERICK DEMAND

Kingwood High School, Class of 2000



Melissa Frederick Demand is a proud Kingwood High School graduate of the Class of 2000. She has achieved extraordinary success in her career field through her relentless dedication, leadership, and impact in the realm of social work and community engagement. With a Master of Science in Social Work from The University of Texas at Austin, specializing in Community and Administrative Leadership, Melissa has built a career dedicated to advocacy, education, and support for marginalized communities.

Melissa's professional journey took a transformative turn in 2014 when her son, Kemett, was diagnosed with Prader-Willi Syndrome (PWS). This life event led her to use her knowledge to raise awareness and provide support for PWS families and research. That same year, she hosted her first One SMALL Step Walk, raising over \$115,000 to fund research initiatives. This success earned her the honor of hosting the Foundation for Prader-Willi Research's (FPWR) annual conference in Austin, Texas, in 2015. Melissa became a full-time staff member for FPWR in the summer of 2016.

Currently serving as the Director of Community Engagement at FPWR, Melissa oversees donor stewardship and coordinates FPWR's annual family conference. This conference has become a cornerstone event that unites families and researchers, fostering collaboration and community building. Melissa's seamless coordination of these events has significantly enhanced FPWR's ability to support families and advance research, reflecting her expertise in bridging community needs with innovative solutions.

Through her unwavering commitment to advocacy, resilience in overcoming challenges, and ability to empower others, Melissa Demand exemplifies leadership and serves as an inspiring role model. As a mother of a child with a disability, Melissa's journey has been one of profound personal growth. She often reflects on how her son, Kemett, has taught her patience, kindness, and the importance of living in the moment. Her candid sharing of these lessons resonates deeply with families facing similar circumstances, offering them guidance and hope.

Melissa's influence extends beyond her professional achievements. Through her tireless efforts to raise awareness and funds for PWS research, she has cultivated a legacy of hope and progress. Her ability to inspire action and foster connection makes her an exemplary leader and role model for her community and beyond.