



Advocacy Matters

A digital newsletter produced by
The New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project

April 2023

Let's look back at the advocacy activities that took place this month!

In need of virtual programming? Inquire about our virtual [trainings](#), [webinars](#), and [events](#)!

Take a look at our [New Jersey Statewide Self-Advocacy Network](#) Council pages and the current NJSSAN Priorities. Council 5 met with U.S. Congressman Jeff Van Drew. Rob Kimmel discussed his survey with each of the Councils this month.

Welcome our newest NJSAP Team member, Bianca!

Take a look back at our 17th Annual NJSSAN Spring Luncheon.

We celebrated April as Autism Acceptance Month.

We held a self-advocacy panel with HEAL of Tri-County and a recipe training with SCARC.

Self-Advocates Evelyn and Pam delivered their testimony before the Assembly and Senate Budget Committees regarding the FY24 Budget.

Be sure to take a look at our promoted items for April!

We host one brand new webinar each month and present replays of past content [Register for our weekly webinars each Tuesday and watch the recorded versions of our past webinars here.](#)

We continue to host our interactive Zoom series [Healthy Lifestyles Project: Live!](#) You can check out our past events below and [register for upcoming sessions here.](#)














Our weekly Brain Games session is held each Thursday at 1 PM! [Watch archived videos here](#) and [join in LIVE every week on Zoom.](#)

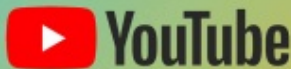
We continue to post all across our social media pages! You can find new videos every [Monday](#), [Wednesday](#) and [Friday](#) about Health, Fitness and Nutrition!

We have a lot to say, so make sure to click
"View entire message" if it appears at the bottom of this
newsletter. [If you have been forwarded this message, you](#)
[can subscribe here.](#)

Virtual Programming every day of the week!

MY WEEK WITH NEW JERSEY SELF-ADVOCACY PROJECT

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
 •Check social media feed for Veronica's new nutrition video  	•Watch the new Stay Healthy at Home webinar at 2pm 	•Interactive Zoom event for HLP:Live at 11am  •Check social media feed for IHT's new workout video 	•Play this week's Brain Game on Zoom at 1pm 	•Check social media feed for Erin's new recipe!   •HLP:Live!It's Fitness Friday with IHT on Zoom at 1pm 
TO DO LIST: •Sign up for NJSAP's email list •Request a virtual group training •Make a social media post using this month's hashtag 		•Participate in an advocacy campaign or Action Alert 	REMINDERS + NOTES: •Mark my calendar with all upcoming activities •Reminder: Each NJSSAN Council meets every month •Remember: <u>Self-Advocacy means to SPEAK UP!</u> 	



Find out more at www.njselfadvocacyproject.org

Facebook: [@NewJerseySAP](https://www.facebook.com/NewJerseySAP) / Instagram: [@NewJerseySAP](https://www.instagram.com/NewJerseySAP) / Twitter: [@NJSAP](https://twitter.com/NJSAP)

Click the image above to download the planner, complete with live links to all of our programming! Email NJSAP@ArcNJ.org if you have any questions.

- Struggling with technology? [Maybe one of our tech tutorials can help.](#) You can also [contact us](#) to set up a virtual training.
- Looking for a training for your group? Check out our Training Portal for topics [We hosted 201 trainings this year for 5,606 self-advocates!](#)

NJSAP & NJSSAN Update

We are holding monthly NJSSAN Council meetings *virtually!*
[For information regarding your Council area, please click here.](#)



[Visit your council page](#) to download calendars for 2023.

2023

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NEW JERSEY STATEWIDE SELF-ADVOCACY NETWORK

COUNCIL 1

3rd Thursday of each month*, 5:30-6:45pm
Hunterdon, Morris, Sussex & Warren
Advisor: Frankie Bayak
Fbayak@ArcNJ.org/732-749-8514

COUNCIL 2

4th Thursday of each month*, 4-5:30pm
Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Passaic, and Union
Advisor: Erin Smithers
ESmithers@ArcNJ.org/732-246-2525, ext. 26

COUNCIL 3

2nd Tuesday of each month*, 5:30-7pm
Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth,
Ocean & Somerset
Advisor: Erin Smithers
ESmithers@ArcNJ.org/732-246-2525, ext. 26

COUNCILS 4 & 5

3rd Wednesday of each month*, 3-4pm
Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, Salem
Atlantic, Cape May, & Cumberland Counties
Contact Erin or Frankie as seen above

NJSAN ADVISORY BOARD

Last Monday, every other month*
Only Open to Advisory Board Members

*Check the calendar image for exact dates

For more information, contact: Frankie Bayak
NJSAP@ArcNJ.org / 732-749-8514
www.njselfadvocacyproject.org

Panel with Professor Puig's Class

We had another chance to meet with Professor Puig and her class of graduate students at Montclair State University. This open-minded exchange of knowledge and experience between her incredible students and our seasoned self-advocates is always an incredible opportunity for Council 1 advocates. Thank you Gianmarie, Kevin, and Victor for participating and a big thanks to Ashley Ritchey for facilitating the discussion in her new role at the New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities.

Meeting with U.S. Congressman Jeff Van Drew

Council 5 members, Chairman Shondel Greenwood and Vice Chair Ellen Moskowitz, along with COO Pat Jones and Director Mary Moyer of Development & Community Outreach from The Arc of Atlantic County, had the honor to meet with U.S. Congressman Jeff Van Drew

(district 2) and members of his staff on April 13th, in the Congressman's Northfield office. They sat down to discuss the barriers that many people with intellectual and developmental disabilities continue to face, including access to safe and reliable transportation across Atlantic County.



Rob Kimmel came out to talk to the Councils about his new study

Please see the flyer below from Rob Kimmel, Training and Consultation Specialist at The Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities. As part of his doctoral research exploring self-advocacy experiences of adults with disabilities, he is seeking participants with disabilities between the ages of 22 and 37 to share their experiences over the course of two interviews. The research goal is to investigate the self-advocacy stories of adults with disabilities after leaving high school and understand if and how these individuals felt prepared for what they now face as adults. The larger goal is to center the voices of individuals with disabilities as a critical source of information to improve and restructure self-advocacy instruction in Special Education Transition programs based on the findings from this research. Make your voice heard and help transform self-advocacy in schools and beyond!

[Survey](#)

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!
An interview study exploring self-advocacy

Searching for: Adults with disabilities, ages 22 to 37, willing to share their **self-advocacy stories** experienced after graduating from high school.

If interested, please fill out the survey by scanning the QR code above or visit: go.rutgers.edu/selfadvocacy. The lead researcher, Rob Kimmel, will contact you shortly to schedule your interviews.

RUTGERS
Graduate School of Education

Sharing your stories can change how educators and school transition programs prepare students to self-advocate in adulthood!



Welcome to our new team member, Bianca!

Bianca is the new Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator. She will be providing trainings going forward. She is currently working toward her Psychology degree at Montclair State University. She is very excited to start working with the organization.

Network (NJSSAN) is made up of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) throughout the state. The NJSSAN is used as a means of supporting positive change on both a personal and social level. It consists of 5 Councils based on geographic location within the state.

[You can read the current NJSSAN Priorities here.](#)

**NJ Statewide Self-Advocacy Network
Position Statements**

The New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project (NESAP) is a program of The Arc of New Jersey established in 1983 to challenge individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to become involved in events, legislative policies, and issues that affect their lives or lives of others with disabilities.

We work together with these individuals to form The New Jersey Statewide Self-Advocacy Network (NESAN), which is used as a means of supporting positive change on both a personal and social level. The NESAN consists of five Councils based on geographic location within the state.

1. Home & Community-Based Services (HCBS)
2. Housing for People with IDD
3. Transportation
4. Supported Decision Making and Alternatives to Guardianship
5. Raising Awareness of IDD Issues

NESAN POSITION STATEMENTS
www.njselfadvocacyproject.org 732-949-8314

Events

17th Annual Spring Luncheon

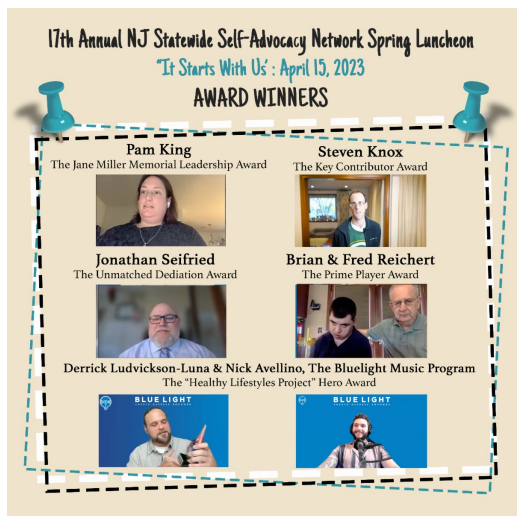
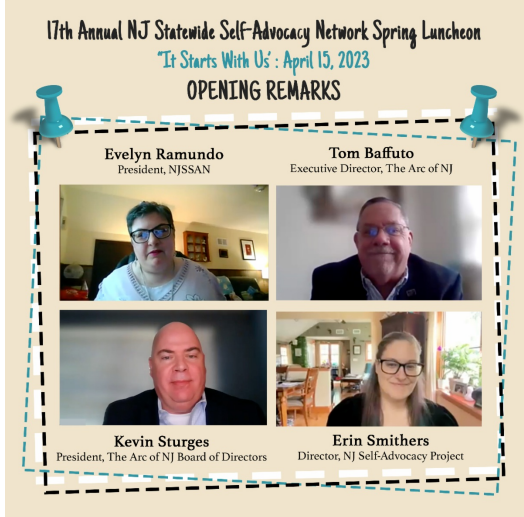
On Saturday, April 15, 2023 we held our annual 17th Annual Spring Luncheon. We wanted to give a big thank you to all 137 attendees who made it an amazing event! We would also like to say thank you to all of the sponsors who supported the event.

The event is an opportunity for Self-Advocates and Allies to network, learn about current advocacy issues, and celebrate the accomplishments of Self-Advocates over the past year.

Below you can see our Ad Journal and a picture of the group who attended.



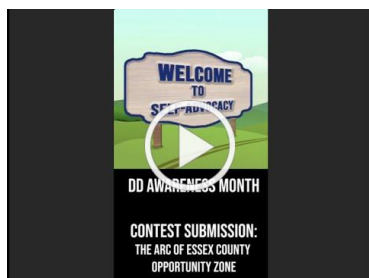
[Ad Journal](#)



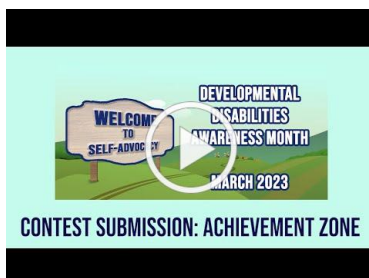
Congratulations again to our award winners: Pamela King, Steven Knox, Jonathan Seifried, Brian & Fred Reichert, and The Blue Light Music Program.

In addition to our award winners this year we also would like to acknowledge the winners of our Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month contest!

Last month was DD Awareness Month and to celebrate, NJSAP hosted a video contest for anyone to submit videos using the theme of "Welcome to Self-Advocacy." Six videos were submitted and the top 3 submissions with the most 'likes' across all social media platforms were each awarded a \$50 gift card. The gift cards were generously donated by the Blue Light Music Program.



1st: 105 likes
Opportunity Zone with
The Arc of Essex



2nd: 60 likes
The Achievement Zone
with The Arc of
Monmouth



3rd place: 13 likes
The Avenues Team

Autism Awareness Month Proclamation

We would like to say thank you to Governor Murphy and the Department of Human Services for declaring April 2023 as Autism Acceptance Month. This is an important time to focus on inclusion and the ways in which local New Jersey communities can support people with autism!



Panels/Trainings

HEAL of Tri-County Panel

Self-advocates Ray, Julia, and Lizzy did a fantastic job during the webinar for HEAL of Tri-County. They talked about their experiences when seeking services, including some of the barriers they faced and how they wish to be treated by service providers. Thank you, Maria, for reaching out to organize the panel! We would love to organize more events like this where self-advocates can share their lived experiences and advice.



New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project & Statewide Self-Advocacy Network

A program of The Arc of New Jersey since 1983
Promoting Advocacy and Independence for People
with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities



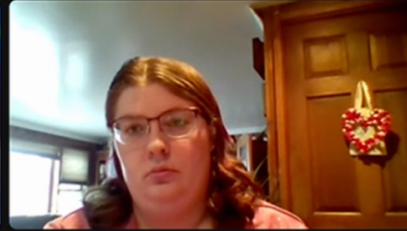
Maria Armstrong
Project Director, HEAL of Tri-County



Erin Smithers
Director, NJ Self-Advocacy Project



Ray Vercruysse, Julia Simko
Self-Advocates, Council 3 of the NJSSAN



Lizzy Acker
Self-Advocate, Council 1 of the NJSSAN

Self- Advocacy Panel for HEAL of Tri-County 4/5/23

SCARC Greek Yogurt Brownies

Take a look at the delicious brownies that we made with The Arc of Sussex County. The recipe can be found below if you'd like to give it a try!





**New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project
&
Statewide Self-Advocacy Network**
A program of The Arc of New Jersey since 1983

Greek Yogurt Brownies

Prep Time 20 Minutes Cook Time 30 Minutes Total Time 50 Minutes

Ingredients:

- 1/2 Cup Chocolate, Chopped
- 1 Cup Vanilla Greek Yogurt
- 1/2 Cup of Sugar of Choice
- 3/4 Cup Flour, All Purpose or Gluten Free
- 1/2 Cup Cocoa Powder
- 1/2 teaspoon Baking Soda
- 1/2 Cup Milk of Choice
- 1 Cup Chocolate Chips of Choice (optional)

Cooking Instructions:

- Preheat oven to 350F.
- Line an 8x8 inch pan baking sheet with parchment paper, set aside.
- In a microwave safe bowl ass your chopped chocolate. In 15 second increments melt your chocolate. Let it sit for 1-2 minutes.
- Add in the yogurt and sugar.
- Whisk until smooth and transfer to a large mixing bowl.
- Add the flour, cocoa powder, and baking soda. Mix until just combined.
- Add your milk and mix until fully incorporated.
- Fold in the chocolate chips, if you are using them.
- Transfer the mixture to your lined pan and bake for 25-30 minutes.
- Remove from the oven and let cool in the pan for 10 minutes.
- Transfer to a wire cooling rack to cool completely.
- Enjoy!

Recipe link:

<https://thebigmansworld.com/greek-yogurt-chocolate-brownies/>



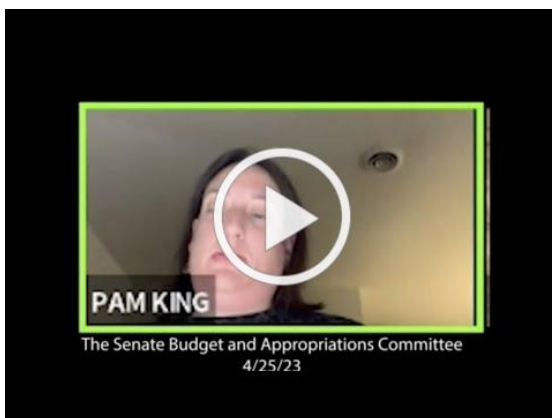
Supporting the rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities
985 Livingston Avenue, North Brunswick, NJ 08902
Phone: 732-743-8343 Fax: (732) 749-8514
Email: NJSAF@thearcnj.org
www.njselfadvocacyproject.org

Legislative Advocacy

Evelyn Ramundo spoke to the Assembly Budget Committee to advocate for raising Direct Support Professional wages and fee-for-service rates. She also addressed the need for supports for people with a dual diagnosis and the need for marriage equality.



Testimony



Testimony

Pam King spoke to the Senate Budget Committee to advocate for more effective system of support for people with disabilities living on their own to be successful financially, have a greater sense of independence, and live more fully integrated in their community. She addressed helping move people out of nursing homes and institutional settings and obtain reasonable housing, expanding Supportive Housing Connection (SHC) Housing Vouchers, and adding further options for people with disabilities seeking low income apartments.

Take A Look



[Medicaid Unwinding videos](#)

Beverly Roberts, Director of The Arc of NJ's Mainstreaming Medical Care program, answers all of your important questions about the Medicaid Unwinding process, which requires a "redetermination" application to continue Medicaid & DDD services.

More info here:

<https://www.arcnj.org/programs/mainstreaming-medical-care/medicaid-unwinding.html>

The Division of Developmental Disabilities (Division), in collaboration with The Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities at Rutgers RWJMS, has launched the Money Follows Person (MFP) Support Coordinator Competency and Capacity Building Steering Committee. The Committee's charge is to make recommendations in the development of a certification program for Support Coordinators.

The Committee is seeking input from the New Jersey disability community to learn about the competency and skill needs of NJ's Support Coordinators. The information obtained will be used to inform the Committee's recommendations.



The Healthy Lifestyles Project (HLP) is a program of **The Arc of New Jersey** and receives funding through a grant awarded by **The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey**. The program aims to provide people with I/DD with functional education about the importance of healthy choices related to diet, exercise and stress management.



Let's give a big THANK YOU to The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey for making this programming possible!

We are now on our 9th grant cycle for the Healthy Lifestyles Project and we are greatly looking forward to continuing to help people with IDD live healthier lives!

Stay Healthy at Home Webinars

The New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project team is excited to continue our *Stay Healthy at Home* webinar series! They take place every **Tuesday at 2**



PM.

Beginning in September 2021, we will present one new webinar each month followed by replays of previously recorded sessions. Click [here](#) for details.

NEW

Taking Action Against Sexual Violence



Making Mental Healthcare Inclusive



Getting and Giving Consent: For People with Disabilities



Trying New Things



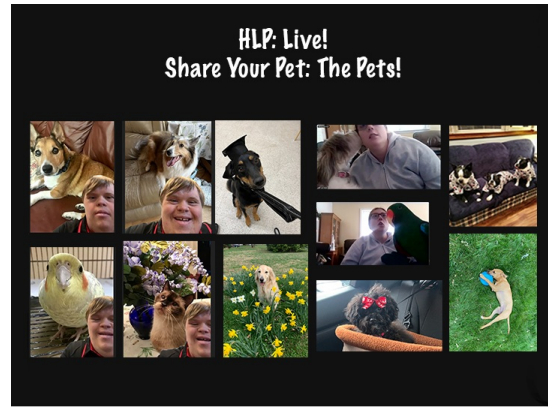
If you've attended one of our *Stay Healthy at Home* webinar sessions, we're very thankful. Please spread the word and register for one of our upcoming sessions!

[**Register now for upcoming webinars!**](#)

Healthy Lifestyles Project: LIVE!



www.healthylifestylesproject.org



www.healthylifestylesproject.org

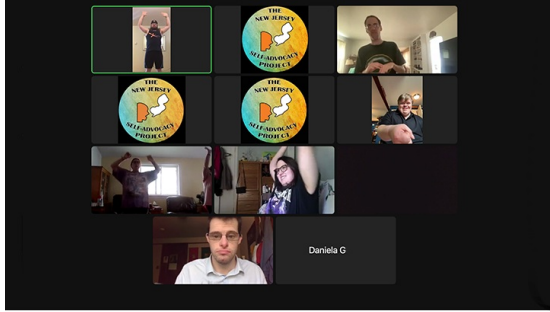


www.healthylifestylesproject.org



www.healthylifestylesproject.org

HLP: Live! The Right Fit: Find Your Exercise with Adaptive Fitness



www.healthylifestylesproject.org

HLP: Live! Peace of Mind: Maintaining a Healthy Mindset



www.healthylifestylesproject.org

The New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project team continues to host bi-weekly sessions of Healthy Lifestyles Project: LIVE! These are live, interactive events on Zoom to promote healthy living for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. They take place every Wednesday at 11 AM and Friday at 1 PM.

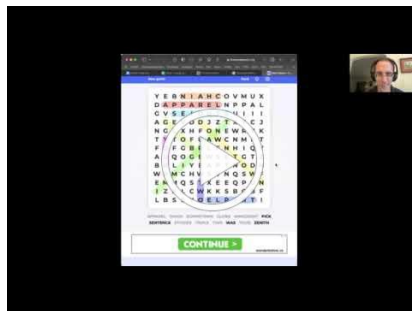
[Register now for next month's events!](#)

HLP: Brain Games

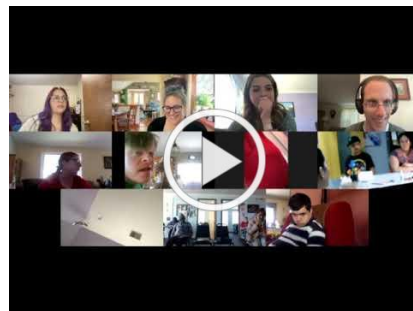
Get your thinking caps on! The NJSAP team presents games to play on Zoom!

Watch our previous videos below of Word Search and Pictionary to get an idea of all the fun that goes on! Be sure to join us at 1 PM every Thursday! [Click here to learn more.](#)

Word Search



Pictionary



We can also schedule Brain Games with your group! Email NJSAP@Arcnj.org if you are interested.

HLP: Video Guides

Our Healthy Lifestyles Project: LIVE! events are held twice a week, but if you can't make it to a live session, try watching our videos on social media!

- On Mondays, we post health and nutrition videos from Veronica Ramirez ([Vero Pure Green](#))
- On Tuesdays, we post music therapy videos by Joanna Tan.
- On Wednesdays we post fitness videos from Matt Locascio ([In-Home Personal Training](#))

- On Thursdays, we post art-making videos by [Malik Whitaker](#).
- On Fridays, we post recipe videos/tips from Erin Smithers ([NJSAP](#)).

You can follow along easily and comfortably in your own home. We add videos on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [Youtube](#) every weekday for you to follow along!

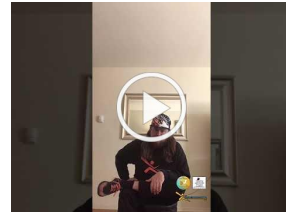
[Mondays with Veronica: Playlist](#)



[Tuesdays with Joanna: Playlist](#)



[Wednesdays with Matt: Playlist](#)



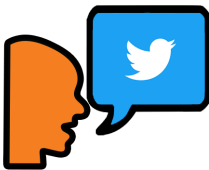
[Thursdays with Malik: Playlist](#)



[Fridays with Erin: Playlist](#)



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New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project & Statewide Self-Advocacy Network

A program of The Arc of New Jersey since 1983

Promoting Advocacy and Independence for People
with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

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