



Advocacy Matters

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

August 2018

We've reached the end of August and summer is winding up. But that doesn't mean that our advocacy efforts have slowed.

The New Jersey Statewide Self-Advocacy Network (NJSSAN) has created a list of goals to cover for the new financial year.

Council 3 of NJSSAN banded together to write a letter to the governors of both New York and New Jersey regarding the state of public transportation for people with disabilities.

Additionally, we packed in an incredible amount of Healthy Lifestyles Project (HLP) events this month including multiple hike locations, yoga, a water park, an aquarium and paddle boating.

Let's reflect back on this month's events!

NJSSAN Advisory Board FY19 Priorities

The NJSSAN has decided on their priorities for this year, as outlined below:

1. Educate the public about the R word, Person First Language, and bullying issues.
2. Assist people transitioning to community living and advocate for increased funding for supported living, abiding by the Olmstead decision, and preventing abuse and neglect of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. *
3. Advocate for improvements in the public transportation system and Access Link (i.e.: lower fares, accessibility, improved wait times, scheduling). *
4. Advocate for better and more employment opportunities, as well as raising the minimum wage, new training centers, better working conditions, and more competitive jobs. *

5. Educate people with I/DD about healthy lifestyles and address Medicaid and CMS issues as needed. *

6. Advocate for more transparency and including self-advocates in decision making in systems change from the Division (i.e: supports program, fee for service, waiting list, housing and the CCW). *

*** This will be featured as a workshop topic at our Fall Conference. Register now!**

Council 3: Transportation Letter

Transportation is an important topic in the disability community. As stated in the letter below, only 42% of NJ Transit stations between New Jersey and New York are adequately accessible for people with disabilities.

Members of Council 3 of the New Jersey Statewide Self-Advocacy Network (NJSAAN) drafted this letter to Governors Murphy and Cuomo regarding the continued struggles for people with disabilities utilizing public transportation.



New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project

A program of The Arc of New Jersey since 1983

Dear Governors Murphy and Cuomo,

We are writing to you today to hopefully raise your awareness about a major issue which is faced daily by residents of your two states. Everyday, hundreds of thousands of your constituents board NJ Transit, PATH, and MTA Subway trains for business and pleasure. They go to work, school, churches, restaurants, go shopping, and visit family members. These trains take people where they want to go in a safe, affordable, and punctual (most of the time) manner.

However, for a person with a disability, using these trains isn't always so easy. Many of the stations on the NJ Transit, PATH, and MTA lines are not properly equipped to serve riders with disabilities. The lack of elevators, lifts or ramps for people who use mobility devices make traveling sometimes an impossible task. Also, in the stations that are accessible, the elevators and lifts are often broken or in disrepair. These barriers to accessibility can turn what could've been a 15-minute trip, into a day long process.

Currently, only 65 out of 154 NJ Transit stations that provide direct or indirect service between New Jersey and New York are equipped with adequate modifications for accessibility, representing just 42 percent. A particular problem that we have noticed is the lack of accessible PATH stations in New York City on the 33rd St. line. The Christopher St., 9th St., 14th St., and 23rd St. stations are completely inaccessible for people with disabilities. Anyone wishing to travel to these neighborhoods must take the train past their destination to 33rd St., and then pay for another form of transportation to complete their trip. This is an issue that a number of people have brought up to us, and one that needs to be given more attention.

While we are fully aware of the changes that have been made in recent years, we urge you to continue in making transportation more accessible for people with disabilities. The



Supporting the rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities

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passing of The ADA was a monumental victory for people with disabilities across the United States, but the struggle continues and we need your help. We are grateful that the states of New Jersey and New York have been compliant with ADA regulations for transportation, but we need more to be done. Our two states have a reputation of being on the forefront of policy change and public assistance, and we ask you to live up to that reputation. We need **ALL** NJ Transit, PATH, and MTA stations to be accessible for people with disabilities. These changes would be a liberating agent for a population that has been confined for so long. Full accessibility for train stations in our two states would drastically improve the lives of thousands of your constituents with disabilities and their families. We thank you for your support, and for taking the time to read about this important issue.

Sincerely,

Brian O'Malley
Council 3 Chair

Shawn Stevens
Council 3 Vice Chair



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Healthy Lifestyles Project

improving health, improving lives



The Healthy Lifestyles Project (HLP) is made possible through a grant funded by Horizon Foundation for New Jersey.

HLP: Appalachian Trail Boardwalk

Four advocates and two staff members walked 1.5 miles of the scenic Appalachian Trail Boardwalk in Glenwood, NJ and they encountered an adorable deer on their journey!





HLP: Superhero Yoga

Advocates at Abilities of Northwest Jersey, Inc. trained their bodies and minds with an afternoon of superhero yoga. These powerful poses were modeled after

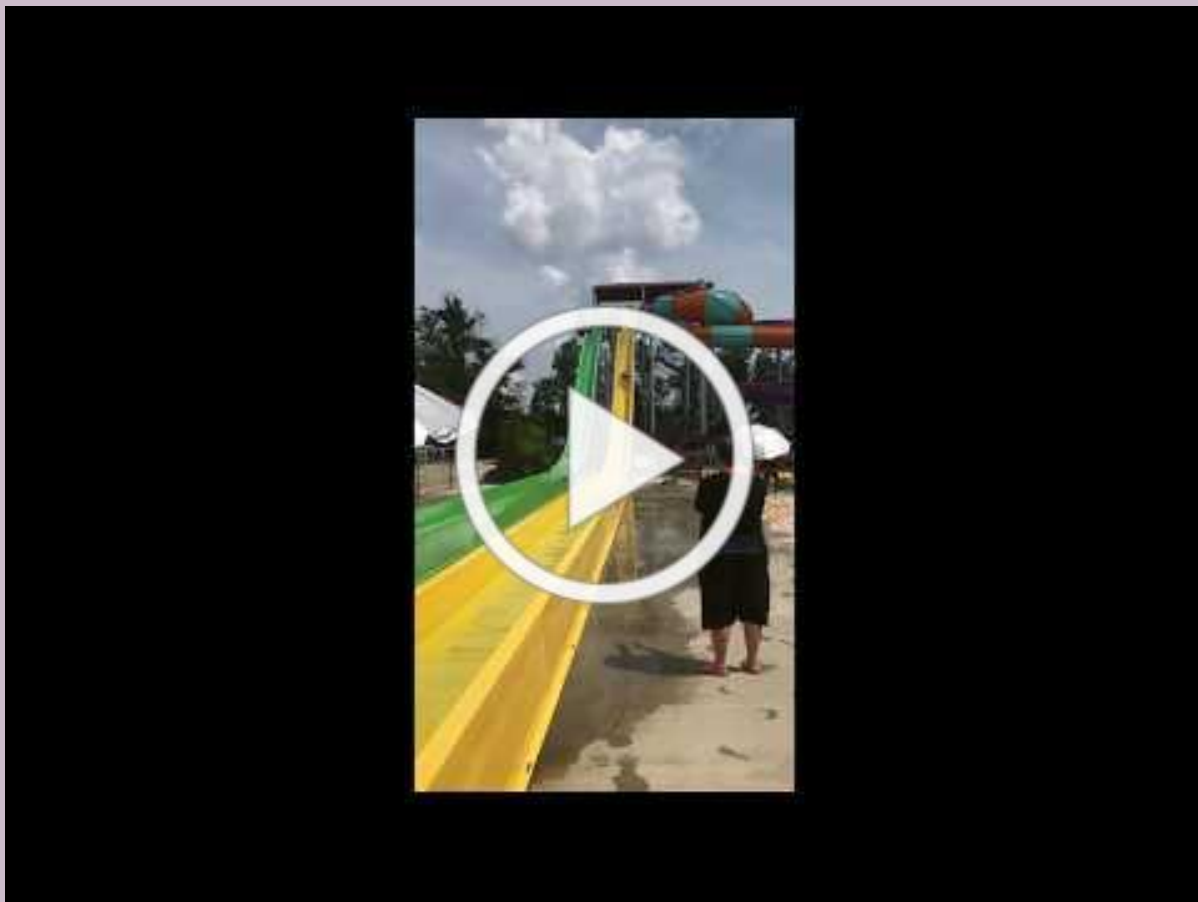
characters such as Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, and Catwoman. Everyone put forth a truly heroic effort!



HLP: Splashplex

The NJSAP team hosted a Healthy Lifestyles Project event at Splashplex in East Hanover. Advocates from The Arc of Union County had the opportunity to experience a hot summer day at the waterpark including speed slides, tube slides, and a ride through the lazy river.





HLP: Adventure Aquarium

Once again, advocates went to Adventure Aquarium in Camden, NJ this month. The aquarium features one-of-a-kind exhibits with more than 8,500 aquatic species throughout two million gallons of water. Attendees were able to see

penguins, hippos, turtles, sharks, a dazzling array of fish and more!





HLP: Paddleboating

Twenty Advocates traveled to West Orange to walk a two mile accessible hiking trail and then stopped for a scenic lunch. Afterwards, they went on a half hour long paddleboat ride in the lovely swan paddle boats.



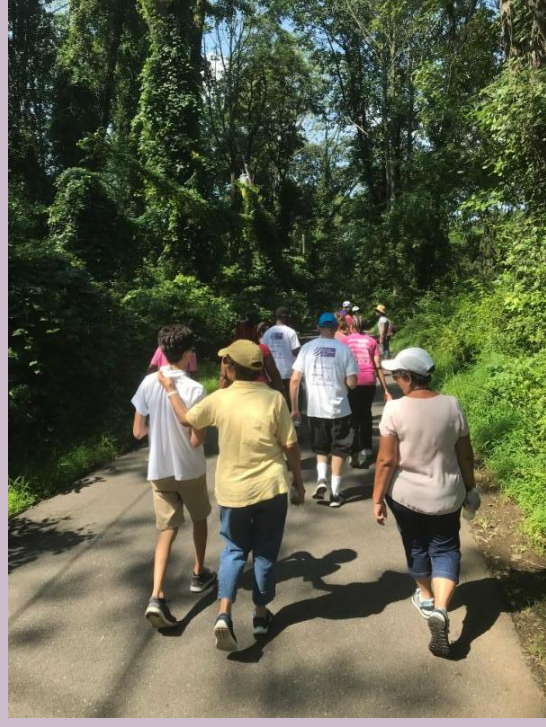
HLP: Watchung Wednesdays

There were two hikes so far this month at the Watchung Reservation as part of our Healthy Lifestyles Project: Watchung Wednesdays.

Advocates and staff continued to impress this month! The groups braved muddy trails and crossed rocky paths like experts. An unusual amount of woodland creatures were seen this month, perhaps brought out by the often rainy weather.

August 29th is our last hike. Thank you for joining us all summer!





Interested in a training or workshop at your location? Hit REPLY and let us know!

A training on our program, NJSAP
Starting a Self-Advocacy Group
Team Building
Human Rights and Responsibilities
Erasing the R-Word & Person First Language
Legislative Advocacy
Governmental Affairs
Advocating for Yourself



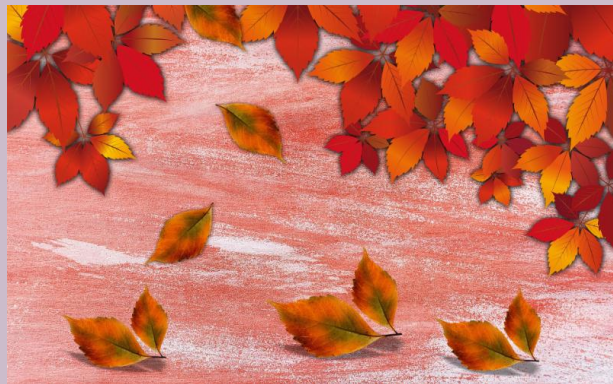
Voting
Boosting Your Self-Confidence
The Americans with Disabilities Act
Employment & Pre-Employment Skills
Healthy Communication
Respectful Behavior
Anger Management

Healthy Relationships
Online Dating
Aromatherapy
First Aid
Get Better Sleep
Outdoor Safety
Illness Prevention
Proper Hygiene

Proper Portion Sizes
Dangers of Sugar
Quick Healthy Snacks
Stress Relief
Yoga & Meditation
Indoor Exercise & Adaptive Fitness



Register Now for the Fall Conference!



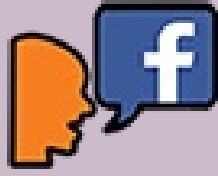
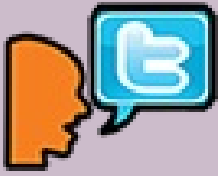
The 35th Annual New Jersey Statewide Self-Advocacy Network Fall Conference will take place on

**Saturday, September 29, 2018
at The Westin Princeton**

Registration is available now!

Hurry, the price increases by \$10 after the registration deadline of September 8th!

For more photos from our events and information about upcoming events, check us out on social media!



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