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LEADERS

AAPD Names Hearne Award Recipients



Elijah Armstrong



Noor Pervez

Through the AAPD Paul G. Hearne Emerging Leader Awards, the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) recognizes emerging leaders with disabilities who exemplify leadership, advocacy and dedication to the broader cross-disability community.

Two individuals each receive \$2,500 in recognition of their outstanding contributions and \$7,500 to further a new or existing initiative that increases the political and economic power of people with disabilities.

The 2021 awards go to Elijah Armstrong and Noor Pervez.

Elijah Armstrong

Armstrong is an activist from Jacksonville, Florida, who received his bachelor's degree in education and public policy from Penn State in 2011, and his masters of education policy and management from the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 2020.

With the funds from the 2021 Paul G. Hearne Emerging Leader Award, Armstrong is going to start the Judy Heu-

mann Award for Education Activism.

This will give monetary awards to students who have experienced ableism in education, while also driving a conversation around ableism in education that is centered around the experience of students with disabilities.

Armstrong has epilepsy and was denied accommodations in high school he was thus motivated to prevent the same thing from happening to other students. He founded Equal

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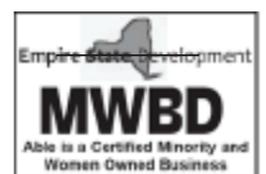
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From The Commissioner's Desk

Hello everyone:

With each passing month we move closer to returning to life as normal. As of Feb. 14, individuals with certain "underlying conditions" as defined by New York State are now eligible to make an appointment for the COVID-19 vaccine.

The Underlying Conditions that are included in the State's current eligibility for the COVID-19 vaccine are:

- Cancer (current or in remission, including 911 related)
- Chronic kidney disease
- Pulmonary disease, including but not limited to COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), asthma (moderate-to-severe), pulmonary fibrosis, cystic fibrosis and 9/11-related pulmonary diseases
- Intellectual and developmental disabilities including Down syndrome
- Heart conditions, including but not limited to heart failure, coronary artery disease, cardiomyopathies or hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system), including but not limited to solid organ transplant or from blood or bone marrow transplant, immune deficiencies, HIV, use of corticosteroids, use of other immune weakening medicines or other causes
- Severe obesity (body mass index of 40 kg/m² or higher), obesity (body mass index of between 30 kg/m² and 40 kg/m²)
- Pregnancy
- Sickle cell disease or thalassemia
- Type 1 or 2 diabetes mellitus
- Cerebrovascular disease (affects blood vessels and blood supply to the brain)
- Neurologic conditions including but not limited to Alzheimer's disease or dementia
- Liver disease

If you qualify for the vaccine based on the above underlying conditions, you can make an

appointment by visiting nyc.gov/covidvaccine or calling 1-877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692). Please be aware that appointments may be limited at this time, but please do keep checking the website and calling if you are eligible.

When you schedule your vaccination appointment, you must certify you have one of the above underlying conditions. Specifically you'll need to sign or agree to an attestation that you are eligible. You will not need a doctor's note or other proof of your condition to get a vaccine in NYC.

You may be required to certify your condition if you are vaccinated by your usual health care provider.

As eligibility has expanded, many questions have been raised by the disability community about accessibility, accommodations and the process of signing up.

To keep all of the answers in one place, MOPD has created a webpage dedicated to COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions by the Disability Community. To view this webpage visit NYC.gov/disability-coronavirus, expand the "Vaccine" category and select the link to the Q&A document.

As many of us are wait-



ing for eligibility for the COVID-19 vaccine, it is more important than ever to follow the core four principles to stop the spread.

- Stay home if you are sick
- Keep physical distancing
- Keep hands clean (wash hands often)
- Wear a mask or face covering if you are able to do so

Thank you for your support and your advocacy during this critical time.

Ciao,
Commissioner
Victor Calise



Games For The Physically Challenged Postponed

The Nassau County Empire State Games for the Physically Challenged will be postponed again this year according to a statement from County Exec. Laura Curran's office.

"Due to the continued prevalence of COVID-19 and with the health and safety of our athletes and volunteers our top priority, Nassau County will be postponing the 2021 Games until June

2022," said the County Executive's statement.

"We thank everyone for their continued support of this great program and we hope that everyone will join us again next year."

The annual event which began in 1985 hosts 1,100 children with disabilities each year for Olympic-style competition including track & field, swimming, table tennis, wheelchair basketball and archery.

The Deadline for the April Issue of Able Newspaper Will Be March 9

ABLE NEWSPAPER

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Advertising Rates
Furnished Upon Request

Postmaster: Send address changes to Able News at P.O. Box 395, Old Bethpage, N.Y. 11804. Periodicals are being paid for at Bethpage, N.Y. post office. ©1994 ABLE NEWSPAPER. Able Newspaper is published monthly by Melmont Printing, 6 Robert Court, Bethpage, N.Y. 11714. Able welcomes manuscripts and suggestions for articles. However, to assure safe return, manuscripts must be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. No responsibility is assured for unsolicited manuscripts or art. Submissions are the author's warranty that the material is not an infringement of the rights of others and that the material may be published without further approval. Editorial material does not necessarily reflect the view of the editor/publisher of Able Newspaper. Advertisers are responsible for the content of advertisements. No part of this publication may be reprinted without the permission of the publisher. Able is not responsible for errors in advertisements beyond the price of the space occupied by the error. The publisher reserves the right to decline advertising for any reason.

Advocates Urge Biden to Take Action

In a letter to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Acting Secretary Norris Cochran, two leading Medicare beneficiary advocacy organizations, the Medicare Rights Center and the Center for Medicare Advocacy, urged the Biden Administration to take action to strengthen Medicare, Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act.

The letter asked for simplifying Medicare transitions during the COVID-19 public health emergency, enhancing Medicare outreach and enrollment strategies and increasing regulatory review efforts. Looming deadlines and unmet needs make these improvements urgent, the letter stated.

To ensure that all Medicare-eligible individuals can access their

earned Medicare benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic, we urge HHS to reinstate and strengthen COVID-19 Medicare Enrollment Flexibilities, like those provided to Affordable Care Act plans in an Executive Order issued Jan. 28; define “hospital inpatient” to counteract the harm caused by hospital “outpatient observation status;” implement Telehealth flexibilities concerning Speech Generation Devices (SGDs), to prevent people who need such devices from having to access in-person care.

With respect to Medicare outreach and enrollment, the advocates requested HHS to launch implementation of the Beneficiary Enrollment Notification and Eligibility Simplification (BENES) Act and guarantee ob-

jectivity in consumer tools that in recent years have inappropriately steered people toward enrollment in Medicare Advantage (MA) plans.

To stop harmful and often last-minute policies issued by the Trump Administration, the advocates called on HHS to include the actions as part of their regulatory review process.

They asked for a pause to the New “Geo” Demonstration Model and the Medicaid Managed Care Organization (MCO)-based Direct Contracting Entity model; revise the Medicare Part D model that weakens the protected drug classes guarantee; suspend expansion of the Medicare Home Health Value-Based Purchasing Model (HHVBP) (which limits access to home

care for those with longer term and chronic conditions).

They also requested rescinding provisions of the final 2021 Medicare Part C & D rule, which, among other things, further complicates the Part D benefit by adding another specialty drug tier, and weakens the distinction between educational and marketing events; and rescind the SUNSET rule, which puts an arbitrary expiration date on almost all regulations issued by HHS.

With respect to policies outside of Medicare, the organizations urge HHS to ensure access to www.healthcare.gov, revoke changes to Medicaid Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requirements and restore Medicaid safeguards.

Wheelchair Users Win Protections From DOH

A string of complaints from people with disabilities whose Medicaid insurance plans would not cover wheelchairs appropriate to their needs has led to new guidelines that took effect last month.

For years, vague and conflicting language in New York State’s Medicaid law has encouraged insurance plans to refuse to pay for wheelchairs needed for use outside a person’s home, leaving many with disabilities stranded.

One man with cerebral palsy who is able to get around his home with a walker but who needs a wheelchair to venture outside his home was told by his insurer that Medicaid does not pay for wheelchairs for use outside the home, a position not supported by current regulations.

While the decision denying the man a wheelchair was reversed at a fair hearing and he eventually got the equipment he needed, that process took seven months after his doctor requested that he be provided a wheelchair.

Sharifa Abu-Hamda, president of the Civics League for Disability Rights, asked state Medicaid Dir. Donna Frescatore and Jean Minkel, an assistive technology expert from Independence Care System (ICS) for a meeting to discuss

the problem. Together, they developed recommendations that led to the new guidelines.

“The updated Medicaid guidelines will help enable New Yorkers with mobility disabilities to lead more independent lives,” Victor Calise, commissioner of the New York City Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities, said. “As a wheel-

chair user myself, I know firsthand how critical they are in everyday life, so these changes will ensure that all New Yorkers have access to the right mobility aids regardless of their level of ambulation inside their home.”

Susan Dooha, executive director of the Center for Independence of the Disabled, New

York, agrees. “This is great news for New Yorkers who use wheelchairs in order to live their lives. The ability to travel outside one’s own home is an essential part of independent living. With this Medicaid update, we’ve taken one more step in ensuring all people can live their lives independently,” she said.

BOCES Students Build Accessibility Website



The students of Rockland BOCES Hudson Valley P-TECH, in association with BRIDGES, have launched a new website called www.UAccessLife.org, which assigns a score to public spaces in and around Rockland County based on accessibility. These scores provide ratings on different accessibility features such as wheelchair access, lighting and noise levels to those with various disabilities.

The website was developed by a group of high school students at Hudson Valley P-TECH for BRIDGES, a community-based, peer-driven, cross-disability, not-for-profit organization dedicated to advocacy and leadership on behalf of people with disabilities. The site supports BRIDGES’ mission to empower individuals with disabilities to make autonomous decisions and lead an independent life.

Imparato Named To Biden Task Force

Andrew Imparato, executive director of Disability Rights California, DRC is one of 12 named as non-federal members of the Biden-Harris COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force, chaired by Marcella Nunez-Smith. The task force will provide recommendations for addressing health inequities caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and for preventing such inequities in the future.

“I’m so honored and humbled to have been selected by President Biden to serve on the Biden-Harris COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force,” Imparato said. He is a disability rights lawyer has spearheaded advocacy on crisis standards of care and vaccine prioritization in the last year at DRC. Imparato joined DRC after a 26-year career in Washington, D.C., where he served as the chief executive of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities and the American Association of People with

Disabilities. From 2010-2013, He served as Tom Harkin’s, D-Iowa) disability policy director on the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. His perspective is informed by his lived experience with bipolar disorder.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to plague the country, it has had a disproportionate impact on some of the most vulnerable communities. Shortly after COVID-19 was first identified in the United States, disparities in testing, cases, hospitalizations and mortality began to emerge. These inequities were quickly evident by race, ethnicity, geography, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and other factors.

The twelve task force members represent a diversity of backgrounds and expertise, a range of racial and ethnic groups, and several important populations, including children and youth; educators and students; health



care providers; immigrants; individuals with disabilities; LGBTQ+ individuals; public health experts; rural communities; state, local, territorial, and Tribal governments; and unions.

Six additional federal agencies will be represented on the task force as federal members.

The task force is charged with issuing a range of recommendations to help inform the COVID-19 response and recovery.

This includes recommendations on equitable allocation of COVID-19 resources and relief funds, effective outreach and communication to underserved and minority populations, and improving cultural proficiency within the federal government. Additional recommendations include efforts to improve data collection and use, as well as a long-term plan to address data shortfalls regarding communities of color and other underserved populations.

Report Shows Medical Bias During Pandemic

A coalition of civil rights groups and legal scholars, have released a new report – Examining How Crisis Standards of Care May Lead to Intersectional Medical Discrimination Against COVID-19 Patients.”

Crisis standards of care are used to decide who should receive priority for treatment when there are not enough resources to serve everyone. The report explores and addresses how crisis standards of care may perpetuate medical discrimination against people with disabilities, older adults, higher weight people, as well as Black, Indigenous and other people of color in hospital care.

Many face pervasive negative biases and inaccurate assumptions about their value, quality of life, capacity to communicate and make decisions and likelihood of survival. During this pandemic, these biases can have deadly consequences when hospitals must make decisions about which critically ill patients should receive treatment.

The report provides an explanation of crisis standards of care policies implemented by states and hospital systems and how they may discriminate against marginalized in-

dividuals and communities; the principles that should apply to prevent discrimination; the relevant civil rights legal framework; and recommended strategies to ensure that crisis standards do not discriminate during the pandemic or in the future. The report highlights the deaths of Michael Hickson, a Black father of five with multiple disabilities, and Sarah McSweeney, a white woman with significant disabilities, who were denied life-sustaining treatment by physicians who expressed clear biases regarding the value of their lives.

“This pandemic has highlighted existing health inequities and deeply entrenched medical biases that threaten the lives of marginalized individuals and communities,” said Peter Berns, CEO of the Arc. “The Arc has worked hard to advocate for individuals with disabilities during this pandemic and we hope that this report will educate a variety of stakeholders on how to prevent bias and stereotypes from seeping into the medical decision-making process.”

“The history of medicine has long discarded the lives of disabled Black, Indigenous and

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Kew Gardens, NY 11415

Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled (BCID)
27 Smith St, #250
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Community Health Action of Staten Island (CHASI)
56 Bay St, 4th Floor
Staten Island, NY 10301

Bronx Independent Living Services (BILS)
4419 Third Ave, #2C
Bronx, NY 10457

Suit Challenges Segregation of S.I. Students

Attorneys have filed a major class-action lawsuit challenging New York City's segregated school system for students with disabilities on Staten Island.

The lawsuit alleges that the borough's separate school district for children with disabilities, known as District 75, denies these students an equal education, forcing them into segregated schools and classrooms without adequate resources and with no meaningful opportunity to be integrated into their community schools.

The plaintiffs (three Staten Island students with disabilities) and the advocacy group Disability Rights New York are not seeking monetary damages. Rather, they seek reforms that will compel the New York City Department of Education to provide the resources necessary so that every Staten Island District 75 student can attend their neighborhood schools if they choose.

Many Staten Island District 75 students attend

schools located outside their communities and spend two hours or more commuting to school every day.

"The law guarantees all students a meaningful opportunity for community integration and this segregated system completely shatters that promise," said Emily Seelenfreund, staff attorney at Disability Rights Advocates (DRA). "Students with disabilities deserve a rigorous education, and they are entitled to choose to receive that education alongside their neighborhood peers with and without disabilities.

The City must immediately invest in providing more supportive services in Staten Island community schools, so all students have the option of an integrated educational placement."

Research has long shown that students with disabilities score higher on academic achievement tests and are more likely to graduate with a diploma as well as maintain employment when they learn

in an integrated learning environment with students without disabilities. However, in many cases, being labeled as having a particular disability or needing certain supportive services has meant an automatic segregated Staten Island District 75 placement.

The plaintiffs' complaint alleges that Staten Island District 75 students have unequal access or no access at all to school facilities, such as playgrounds, cafeterias, libraries, electives like music and art classes, and extracurricular activities like clubs and sports teams. Very few District 75 students graduate with a regular diploma, and Black students with disabilities are overrepresented in segregated District 75 schools. This lawsuit will support students with disabilities and their parents in securing quality, inclusive education in Staten Island community schools with their siblings and neighbors.

New York City has been on

notice with concerns about District 75 since at least 2008, when the Council for Great City Schools issued its City-commissioned report, "Improving Special Education in New York City's District 75."

According to the report, "the isolation of students [is] more pronounced in the New York City school system than in other major urban school systems known to the team... leaving District 75 alone is not acceptable."

New York education and disability advocates have also sought reforms to District 75 but the City has continued to maintain the segregated District 75 system, instead of providing expertise and resources to Staten Island community schools so that they can enroll District 75 students.

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UNITED SPINAL^{NOW}

Civilly Disobedient

BY JAMES WEISMAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



On Sept. 30, 1981, retiring United Spinal board member Denise McQuade made headlines.

The first lift-equipped buses had arrived in New York City. A short-lived rule, implementing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, requiring accessible buses, put out by the Carter administration and promptly repealed by the succeeding Reagan administration, required lifts on half of all new buses.

These buses were ordered pre-repeal and during the pendency of Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association's (EPVA, now called United Spinal Association) lawsuit against the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA).

Incredibly, the MTA Board, which had been resisting access consistently since the 1970s, had lift-equipped buses driving all over New York City, but would not issue keys to the lifts to drivers or train them in their use. The federal government was requiring MTA to buy accessible buses, but the MTA Board, in its wisdom, refused to allow wheelchair users to board using them. Sounds stupid, but this was their policy.

Back to Denise McQuade. Denise, who was then coordinator of services at Independent Living for Handicapped, Inc. in Brooklyn, was on Broadway at 50th St. in Manhattan. A lift-equipped bus pulled in with just its front end at the curb and its rear end blocking traffic on Broadway.

Denise, a post-polio manual wheelchair user, asked the driver to operate the lift so she could board. When he said he didn't have the key, Denise quickly transferred from her chair to the bottom step of the bus. She said she would not move until she could board.

I received a call to come to the scene and when I arrived, the police were trying to talk Denise off the step and back into her chair. I explained to the police that it is the driver and the MTA violating New York law, which prohibited denials of admission to places of public accommodation (including public conveyances) based on disability.

The stand-off lasted 7 1/2 hours, and eventually, she was boarded to applause from a crowd. Arnold Diaz, now famous for his "Shame on You" TV journalism, was a young TV reporter. He took Denise's side in his coverage. EPVA sued MTA in September 1979. Diaz's 1981 coverage was the first positive reporting about disabled access to mass transit, and it was two years into the suit. Until then, all coverage made mass transit access sound like an expensive folly.

The Disabled in Action Singers immortalized her in a song called "Denise and the MTA," and subtitled, "A true story of a woman in a wheelchair who performed a dramatic act of civil disobedience."

This was not my introduction to Denise McQuade, however. In 1978, I received a call from a disability advocate telling me there was a demonstration on First Avenue near the U.N. The police were refusing to arrest Denise McQuade dog story. I didn't think she needed a lawyer to help her get arrested, but I understood her frustration.

Denise left the independent living center for which she worked and took a job at, of all places, New York City Transit (NYCT) in its paratransit division. She worked for years laboring on behalf of our community, opening eyes at transit and educating and assisting those with problems.

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Arroyo Named MTA Chief Accessibility Officer

MTA has named Quemuel Arroyo to the position of chief accessibility officer.

He is responsible for all matters pertaining to accessibility and will report directly to MTA Chairman and CEO Patrick Foye.

In addition to fashioning authority-wide policy and initiatives in the accessibility space, Arroyo will serve as a key point of contact for the region's diverse community of disability rights advocates. He previously served in a similar capacity at the New York City Department of Transportation and most recently was interim president and global head of community for Get Charged Inc, overseeing strategic partnerships and government relations.

"Quemuel is immensely talented and will provide invaluable strategic guidance and leadership on a range of accessibility related endeavors," Foye said. "The MTA has made critical strides on accessibility issues

in recent years, particularly in the realm of expanding the number of accessible subway stations throughout the system and launching innovative pilots that facilitate access to our system for all riders, but we still have much work to be done. Quemuel will help us think more holistically about what accessibility looks like across the system and advance and execute core goals. I look forward to his leadership on this important work."

"I'm eager to begin my work at the MTA. I am a New Yorker and this is an opportunity of a lifetime," Arroyo said. "Over the last few years, New York City Transit has made huge strides in assisting riders with disabilities. I look forward to building on the great work already being done and also to expanding the way we think about accessibility so that we can incorporate the commuter railroads into more of our initiatives as well."

"It is great to see Quemuel Arroyo appointed as the MTA's



Quemuel Arroyo

Chief Accessibility Officer," said Victor Calise, MTA board member and commissioner of the New York City Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities. "I have had the pleasure of seeing Quemuel in action while he was with the New York City Department of Transportation where he helped integrate accessibility into our streetscape and improve disability awareness throughout the agency. I look forward to his leadership at the MTA as we work together to achieve our shared goal of full accessibility for people with vision, hearing,

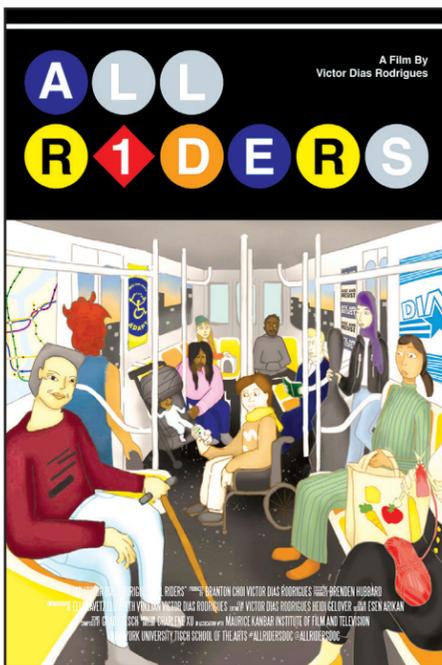
mobility and intellectual/developmental disabilities across the entire MTA system."

In his new role, Arroyo will place a strong emphasis on deploying technology solutions that can be utilized by both New York City Transit and the commuter railroads. He'll also work to expand public awareness around what constitutes a disability and the various ways in which different disabilities can impact transit riders.

The authority has, in recent years, launched the most ambitious set of capital goals in its history with respect to expanding the number of ADA accessible stations and Arroyo will support MTA Construction & Development in advancing and completing these critical projects.

Arroyo also plans to take on initiatives that assist those with cognitive, visual or hearing disabilities and to improve the ways in which the MTA communicates to customers with disabilities. In this role, he will serve as a conduit between the MTA board, its leadership, the disability community and the public.

Documentary 'All Riders' Pays Tribute to Disability Rights Activists



across disabled communities in New York who vowed to bring justice for Goodson.

All Riders is a documentary short that thrusts its viewers on the frontlines of the disability rights movement in New York City. Following one of its leaders Sasha Blair Goldensohn, co-founder of the Elevator Action Group at Rise and Resist NY, viewers can see behind the curtain with those that expose and combat the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (MTA).

Granted unparalleled access to the heart of the battle for accessibility in New York City Transit, key subjects include N.Y. State Assembly Member Harvey Epstein, former head of Accessibility NYC Transit Alex Elegudin and the family of Malaysia Goodson: Tamika Goodson and Dontaysia Turner. All Riders presents a microcosmic view of this long-standing fight for civil rights between the city's largest minority group and the MTA. This is available to be seen on Youtube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=42V-nBqFovhU.

Two years ago, 22-year-old Malaysia Goodson was hauling her one-year-old daughter Rhylee in a stroller down a flight of subway stairs in Midtown Manhattan.

Like 75 percent of the subway stations in New York City, there were no elevators for Goodson to take. Goodson died tumbling down the stairs. Rhylee survived. The shockwaves of this incident rippled

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CIDNY SAYS

Living At Home, Not In A Home

BY SUSAN DOOHA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Each day we call people with disabilities in nursing facilities who have asked for help with planning their move home to the community and to greater safety. Too often when we call someone who is poised to go home, we hear “Jim has died.”

COVID-19 and nursing home conditions swept him away and his family and friends are devastated, we are devastated. In the last year, the death count has been unprecedented among people who hope to make their simple dream – going home – a reality.

The New York State Attorney General, Tish James, released a report exposing the stunning level of underreporting of COVID-19 deaths in nursing homes. The report is stark. It shows the dangerous conditions that nursing facility residents have faced for years.

This is nothing new for our community. We have been fighting these conditions for decades. Fighting to help people leave institutions for their own homes. COVID-19 has made these horrible conditions worse. The rate of death is twice what is reported. Lack of testing, low vaccination rates, missing or reused protective gear, shockingly inadequate infection control and unbelievably low staffing levels have created a crushing wave of deaths.

The time to shift taxpayer resources from sustaining the nursing home industry to supporting people at home is long overdue. Independent Living Centers (ILCs) statewide, including CIDNY, are part of the solution. We are community-based nonprofits run by and for people with disabilities that work with people with disabilities of all ages to ensure we can live like our neighbors and be treated with dignity and respect. We back this up by providing practical education, hands-on navigational help, problem-solving support, and other assistance to help ensure people with disabilities can thrive.

In 2020 alone, we helped 150 people leave nursing facilities for their own homes and many more avoid institutionalization. Because it is very often cheaper to live in the community than in an institution, helping people leave institutions saved state taxpayers nearly \$12 million in state Medicaid dollars.

New York is facing a budget crisis. Savings to the state would mount if the state flipped the switch from propping up the nursing facilities to paying well for high-quality care and support at home and in the community.

New Yorkers want to live at home, not in a home. It's time for the State's budget and policies to catch up. People tell us they don't want to be shut away. They want to live their lives in their own homes.

And, there is a better model of care but we have to make sure that the well paid workforce is there, and get rid of incentives to institutionalize. But lawmakers won't act without a push.

Your voices can help make the change we want to see. We are many. We make sense. We're not going away. Let's make sure that our elected officials hear us and are accountable. Tell them “Our homes, not nursing homes.”

'Getting Out There' When Not Going Out – Networking In A Pandemic

By Jaydan Mitchell

For professionals with disabilities, whether employed, running a business or job-hunting, there is one activity that must be in their daily routine – networking.

When people hear networking, they often immediately shut down, fending off images of awkward small-talk and sterile conference rooms. But that is not real networking. Real networking is about offering value to others – it's staying in touch, making connections, giving time and offering help. Whenever a person is supporting someone else, they are networking.

Why is it essential? A nourished and well-developed network will very often be the gateway to future opportunities. Many people have surely heard the proverb "It's not what you know, it's who you know." In this case, it's not how many jobs a person applies for, it's who will provide a referral to the next opportunity?

But what does networking look like in 2021? How can a professional network strategically, when getting out, socializing, interviewing. Everything is done differently now?

There are a few considerations to help people stay in the game, even from behind a screen.

People should take full advantage of LinkedIn. They should be sure LinkedIn profiles are looking sharp and current. (No photo, no view!) An excellent way to use LinkedIn to support a network is to write recommendations for connections. Thoughtfully written recommendations will strengthen a profile, and the effort may boomerang back into recommendations.

Everyone should get comfortable with the camera. Now is the time to become proficient with video platforms like Zoom. This often requires practice. Learn how to place the camera correctly. Set up the proper lighting. Practice, practice, practice! When that Zoom interview comes along, it's im-

portant to convey strength, professionalism and skill.

People can volunteer virtually. Yes, that's a thing. As a volunteer, a person is not only supporting a cause, but is also building relationships and proving his/her worth. That leads to meaningful connections. There are still many ways to volunteer. Virtual tutoring, calls to elderly neighbors, mentoring, fundraising - the list goes on. Getting on to idealist.org or investigating opportunities at a favorite organization are other examples.

Schedule informational interviews. An informational interview is a conversation with someone in a role or industry of interest. These can often be the springboard into other conversations, including job interviews. Take advantage of the trend of meeting remotely and get onto people's calendars. A Zoom meeting is much easier than a trip to the office, so people in the job market can reach out to someone in a field they want to learn more about. Fifteen or twenty minutes could open many doors.

Side hustles are real hustles. If there's something a person has been wanting to try for a while, now might be the time to start. Many professionals are dabbling in new gigs that can be done from home. Freelance writing, website building, selling handicrafts – you name it. Each new customer or client served is a new member of the network. Similarly, taking an online course or pursuing a certification can also grow the circle. New classmates, new connections.

As much as the pandemic has complicated lives, it has also opened up new opportunities. Networking is still possible, and in some ways, even easier. Seize this time to learn, connect and, most of all, support others. Eventually, the pandemic will decline, but the expert networker will remain a powerful and dynamic professional.

Jaydan Mitchell is Transitions Coordinator, Career and Youth Services, Lighthouse Guild.

RIGHTS & JUSTICE

Three Questions

BY GREGORY MANSFIELD



Why do disabled people only get our civil rights if they are reasonable?

Why do disabled people only get our civil rights if they do not pose a hardship to others?

Why do disabled people only get our civil rights if they come cheaply?

A monthly Able feature with the words of disabled lawyer Gregory Mansfield who has a Twitter following at @GHMansfield .

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GUEST EDITORIAL

N.Y.S. Gets D-(isability) On Vaccine Rollout

BY JOSÉ HERNANDEZ
PRESIDENT, NYC. CHAPTER
UNITED SPINAL ASSOCIATION



New York's vaccination process started typically, with confusion, no clear instructions, a chaotic distribution network and an inadequate supply of vaccine.

However, the important part of the vaccination rollout was that our front-line workers, doctors, nurses, EMS and their supporting staff were scheduled to be the first in line to receive the vaccine. Rightfully so, as they left their homes, traveling in most cases in public transportation to take care of individuals who are sick and exposed with this deadly virus. These are the same workers that we cheered for every day at 7 p.m. sharp to help uplift them during the darkest days of the pandemic.

This was followed by vaccinating seniors 65 and older. Again this makes logical sense because, this was the population that was more susceptible to the devastating effects of COVID-19 and were more likely to die because of it. Then something started to happen and a pattern started to develop in my mind. The city was prioritizing those who come in contact with the general public like mass transit workers, airline and airport employees, police officers, those who protect and take care of individuals like correction officers, nursing home staff and home care workers and consumer directed personal care workers.

Although the state seemed to have been doing a great job at getting the vaccine to the masses there was a population that was being left out. A lot of people take for granted that they have technology available to them to be able to make appointments to get the vaccine or have a support system, to get their family members to and from these appointments. This is not the case for many seniors or people with disabilities and those with language barriers, who have been left out of the conversation.

Seniors and individuals with disabilities are more likely to be susceptible to COVID-19 effects and are more likely to live on fixed incomes. They do not have access to technology like internet, computers or smart devices and don't have the support system to help them navigate what is a very complicated vaccination enrollment process.

We kept waiting for weeks as family members and advocates pleaded with our government agencies to help us with this process. Only to be told that they cannot help and we should do the advocating for ourselves.

If the agencies that we are advocating to, who have the contact information to those whom we need to get in contact with and can easily start a dialogue with them cannot help us, then who can? All of our pleas and begging went unanswered or ignored, or we were told that we were asking the wrong agencies for help.

Where I started to really get upset is when our government made the vaccine available to restaurant workers, restaurant delivery drivers and for-hire vehicle drivers making it clear that it cared more about its economy than those who have already been isolated by society in general and now are even more isolated because of the fear of dying from COVID-19. Or maybe it is just ableism – believing that the able-bodied community are more worthy of the vaccine and can benefit more from being vaccinated.

Continued on page 14

FEMA REGION II

INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS TEAM

Be Prepared

From the COVID-19 pandemic to the most active hurricane season on record and snowfall and freezing temperatures in the southern U.S., recent challenges remind us to be prepared for anything. We should be reviewing our preparedness plans and updating your emergency kit.

For people with access and functional needs who rely on assistance from their caregivers, taking the following steps will help you and your support system develop an effective plan and be ready for any emergency.

Revise your emergency plan. Make sure your information is updated throughout the year, especially after a change. Be sure to record your caretakers' information so they can be reached when needed.

Your plan should include important information like allergies, medications (names, dosages, instructions), information on your medical conditions, dietary preferences and daily routines. Read more at <https://www.ready.gov/plan>.

If you do not drive, discuss with your support system how you will leave the area if authorities tell you to evacuate. You can ask your local Emergency Management Office if transportation services are available for people with your disability during an emergency evacuation.

Sign up for state or local emergency alert system. Some states have specific alert systems for people with access and functional needs.

Store your important documents (i.e. Social Security card, birth certificate) in a safe, secured, waterproof place such as a locked safe with the documents sealed in waterproof bags. If you have any digital documents, you can store them on a secure, password-protected jump drive or in the cloud.

Take preparedness steps such as stocking up on food and household items to last for at least two weeks, storing a few weeks' supply of over-the-counter medications and prescriptions and having batteries for any essential medical equipment.

Learn where and how to use the controls for your water, electricity, gas and sewage system. Contact utility company to tell them your needs especially if you have durable medical equipment.

If you haven't started an emergency fund, start one immediately. It is extremely important to have spare cash on hand in case you find yourself displaced. Learn how to build your financial resilience: at <https://www.ready.gov/financial-preparedness>.

Check your insurance plan to see if it covers all disasters – if not, consider another plan or enrolling in dual coverage. Make sure you have recent pictures of your home and property in case you must file a claim. You can add these to your waterproof document bag or store them in a password protected cloud or Iron Key thumb drive.

Talk to your support system about how they can help you and how you can reach them during an emergency. Show your support system how to use any medical equipment. Add what you discussed into your plan including any communication difficulties you may have.

Take a recent photograph of yourself, your loved ones and your pet(s) in case any of you should become separated during a disaster. Put copies in your important documents waterproof bag. Make sure your pet is included in your plans – find

Continued on page 14

ICS' Johnson Appointed to NYSILC, CDPAANYS Roles

Independence Care System (ICS) Advocacy Specialist Marcus Johnson has been appointed to both the New York State Independent Living Council, Inc's (NYSILC) Executive Committee and the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Association of New York State's (CDPAANYS) Consumer Board.

Johnson, a longtime ICS member and disability rights advocate who is also a leader of the Civics League for Disability Rights (CLDR), will continue his advocacy efforts supporting people with disabilities across New York State in both roles.

NYSILC supports the statewide network of Independent Living Centers and increases resources for the independence of people with disabilities in New York, while CDPAANYS, a grassroots campaign, is focused on preserving the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program, a Medicaid-funded program that allows peo-



ple with chronic illnesses and physical disabilities to hire, train and supervise their own caregivers.

Johnson holds graduate degrees in rehabilitation, counseling and social work.

"With all the changes happening in Medicaid and me being an advocacy specialist I know I can help make a change," Johnson said in an email from ICS. "By being more involved, I can let the CLDR and ICS membership know what's going on with our ever-changing Medicaid program."

NYPL Offers Technical Zoom Workshops

The New York Public Library is offering the following workshops via Zoom during March.

Organizing and Finding Files in Windows 10

Workshop meets at 2 to 3:30 p.m., Tuesday March 2.

This workshop will prepare participants to put files where they want them; organize important files into folders; rename and rearrange files; decide what program will open a particular kind of file; and search the entire computer or a specific location for a file. This workshop is for anyone who has trouble finding downloads or needs to de-clutter the documents folder. To register, visit <https://nypl.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMtdivvqToiEtwzfHWJgXNBeZXF4wriOdzE>.

own works of art. Participants should come to the Zoom meeting prepared with a stylus or pencil, some paper; and a Sensational Blackboard or wooden cutting board. You might also grab some scissors, glue, tactile junk from around the house, puffy paint or hot glue. To register visit their meeting at <https://nypl.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMtdivvqToiEtwzfHWJgXNBeZXF4wriOdzE>.

Book Discussion – What Can A Body Do: How We Meet the Built World By Sara Hendrin, DB100228 or available at Bookshare.org

Workshop meets at 7 to 8:30 p.m., Thursday, March 18.

This workshop looks at the things people use and spaces they inhabit with a chance to reimagine a better-designed world for all. Furniture and tools, kitchens and campuses and city streets, nearly everything human beings make and use is assistive technology, meant to bridge the gap between body and world. Yet unless, or until, a misfit between

DIY Tactile Drawing

Workshop meets at 2 to 3:30 p.m., Saturday, March 13.

This workshop will cover the history, basics and best practices of Do-It-Yourself (DIY) tactile graphics. Participants will use materials found in their homes to make their

Continued on page 15

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Snow in NYC – The Perennial Problem

BY EDITH PRENTISS



This winter has been exceptionally cruel with back-to-back snowstorms. New York City has been long known for its lackadaisical attitude towards snow removal except from streets and highways.

For years selected neighborhoods in the outer boroughs remain snowbound while Manhattan's central business district is swept clean with snow carried away to be melted and the remaining water deposited into sewers.

Many people with mobility disabilities remain snowed in during inclement weather. Snow-laden plows turn corners dropping their load on shoveled crosswalks and pedestrian ramps.

Many shoveled paths to pedestrians ramps fail to meet the ramp. Instead they meet adjacent curbs leaving seniors and mobility equipment users unable to reach the sidewalk.

Accessible transportation is moot as snow plows leave ridges blocking bus stops and poor snow removal leave bus shelters unusable. Accessible taxis that load in the street require a clear area for ramps to open for wheelchair to enter and leave the vehicle.

Multiple articles about flooded crosswalks and news features barely touch upon the blight of seniors and people with disabilities trying to cross the perennial slush lagoons, although news anchors more frequently end with a question wondering how we're surviving.

In addition to spending hours reading the Department of Sanitation's (DSNY) 2020 Snow Action Plan (SAP) I've been watching YouTube's many snow removal videos. Montreal has some truly awesome equipment in a wide range of sizes. Their snow removal is said to cost millions of dollars. DSNY also has a video showcasing its equipment.

I suspect if you polled pedestrians, as well as people with disabilities they would prefer sidewalks be cleared by appropriate sized snow removal equipment on the same time table as it is plowed from streets.

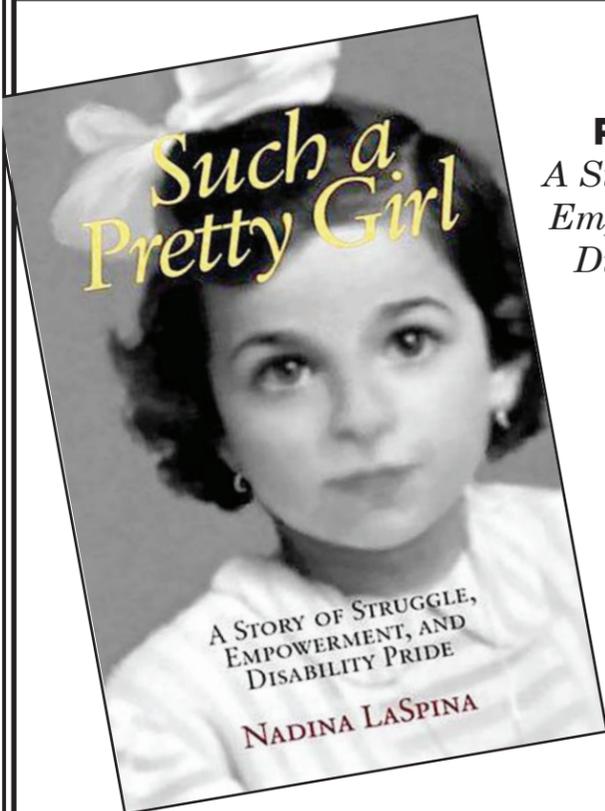
The Parks Department has narrower equipment to clear their paths and sidewalks. Many private buildings have snow removal equipment. Why can't the Sanitation Department purchase appropriate equipment to clear sidewalks and pedestrian ramps?

Depending on adjacent buildings to clean and maintain sidewalks and pedestrian ramps is not equitable especially when the fine for failing to clean and maintain a four feet (48 inch) path begins at \$10 and is capped at \$350.

The major focus of DSNY's SAP is streets and highways. Bus stops, pedestrian ramps, sidewalks and bike lanes barely rate a mention. In fact, property owners and managers are instructed "to TRY" to clear a sidewalk path. MOPD's joint snow document is the only clear posting of the four foot (48 inch) clear path requirement.

Every winter the disability community rails as sidewalk, pedestrian ramps, bus stops and crosswalks remain mired in snow and slush. Isn't it time that New York City considers the transportation needs of people with disabilities and seniors as important as motor vehicles?

Isn't it time for a serious Snow Taskforce with key City Agencies,
Continued on page 15



"Such a Pretty Girl"
A Story of Struggle, Empowerment and Disability Pride

Available at NYU Press, Amazon.com & Local Book Stores

Nadina LaSpina, a disability rights activist tells the story of her liberation from oppressive standards of normalcy, showing that freedom comes not through cure, but through organizing to end exclusion from public and social life.

INFORMATION FORUM

LATEST NYC ACCESSIBILITY GUIDE RELEASED

The new edition of Accessible NYC is now available.

It is an annual report on the state of people with disabilities living in New York City. It covers topics that include transportation, employment, education, financial empowerment, housing, health, technology and access to city services.

For information visit NYC.gov/AccessibleNYC.

NY METRO ABILITIES EXPO SET FOR OCT. 1 – 3

As the vaccine is in full swing and considering everyone's safety and the ability to again have in-person expos, Abilities Expo has secured Fall dates for the New York Metro 2021 Expo.

The New York Metro Abilities Expo will be Oct. 1 through 3 at the New Jersey Convention and Expo Center, 97 Sunfield Ave., in Edison. All safety precautions will be taken. For information visit abilities.com.

BRAILLE STUDY GROUP AVAILABLE ON ZOOM

A Braille study group meets every Saturday at 11:30 a.m. and is led by staff and volunteers at NYPL's Andrew Heiskell Braille and Talking Book Library.

The group is open to anyone, whether a Braille beginner or fully fluent, blind or sighted. Studying Braille at a distance can be a challenge, but the group is supportive.

Those enrolled in these free classes will receive free Braille materials, answers to questions about contractions and reading and writing Braille.

Although the group meets Saturdays participants do not have to attend every session.

To register, visit http://nypl.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZU1de2hqTkoG91r_zJaH-FrQ8YuaIgNhZFEg.

LIBRARY OFFERS ONE-ON-ONE ASSISTANCE FOR PARENTS

The Brooklyn Public Library will offer one-to-one assistance to parents, 10 a.m. through 1 p.m., March 3 in a phone-in program.

Topics can include online school and service; getting devices from your school; IEP process; getting evaluations during the pandemic; early childhood services; transition planning; community resources, transportation and more.

For more information, call 917 751-4890.

EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM HELPS JOB AND INTERNSHIP SEEKERS

NYC ATWORK is a program that recruits and connects New Yorkers with disabilities to job opportunities and internships with established business partners in the public and private sectors. For information visit NYC.gov/NYCatwork.

MOPD INVITES COMMUNITY TO MONTHLY WEBINAR

The New York City Mayor's Office of People with Disabilities (MOPD) is inviting the public to join their monthly phone calls about the disability community.

The calls include the ability to chat in real time. The next call will take place on March 5, at 1 p.m.

To register for this session, visit us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_AimjEM6HToW4YMQn1K8MJw.

JCC HAS ZOOM BOOK CLUB FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

The Marion & Aaron Gural JCC is holding a book club for adults with disabilities on Zoom every Tuesday at 7 p.m.

The meeting ID is 836 8044 4671 and the Passcode is 649356.

For information and to register visit <https://forms.gle/1ne3nZXqoyTJxqsv9>.

REPORT IDENTIFIES CHALLENGES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The New York Institute of Technology, which operates campuses in Old Westbury and New York City, and the Institute for Career Development have released a report identifying challenges and opportunities for people with disabilities to thrive in the technology field.

"Opportunities for Pathways & Collaborations: Creating a Pipeline of Individuals with Disabilities for Employment in the Technology Sector," contains recommendations to help businesses, training organizations and policymakers develop and draw upon the talents of those with disabilities.

For information, visit the site at www.innovateli.com.

'I AM PUFF' IS NEW ONLINE SHOW FOR DEAF KIDS

"I Am Puff" is a new online show for kids by deaf actor Dawn Jani Birley and an all-deaf production team.

The show is a blend of live action and animation that is presented in both ASL and spoken English.

For information visit www.deafchildren.org/2021/01/preview-new-show-for-deaf-kids/.

SNAP FOOD BENEFITS INCREASED THROUGH JUNE

A temporary 15 percent increase in SNAP benefits was recently authorized for New York state residents, and will be in effect until June.

Also, those who were not getting full SNAP benefits for their household will be brought up to the maximum benefit on a month-to-month basis.

For details visit www.otda.ny.gov/news/2021/2021-01-15.asp.

MOPD ADDRESSES SNOW REMOVAL PROBLEMS

The New York City Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) has created a snow removal guide, on their site at www1.nyc.gov/assets/mopd/downloads/pdf/Snow-Removal-2020.pdf, which highlights the responsibilities of each person and agency to remove snow from city streets and sidewalks. Anyone who encounters barriers due to uncleared snow should call 311 or text 311692.

H.S. SENIORS MAY APPLY FOR ALZHEIMER'S SCHOLARSHIP

The 2021 AFA Teens for Alzheimer's Awareness College Scholarship Essay Contest offers up to \$5,000 to high school seniors.

The Alzheimer's Foundation of America invites all high school seniors who have been affected by Alzheimer's to enter.

Applicants must submit a 1,200- to 1,500-word essay describing the impact Alzheimer's disease has had on their lives and what they have learned about themselves, their family and/or their community through that experience.

For more information and to apply, visit www.alzfdn.org/scholarship.

CITY RESIDENTS ENCOURAGED TO GET ID CARDS

There are three permanent sites and several rotating sites where city residents can obtain their IDNYC municipal card.

This identification card helps New Yorkers access a wide variety of services, programs, benefits and discounts offered throughout the five boroughs. For information visit NYC.gov/IDNYC.

ABLE ACCEPTS EVENT AND PROGRAM INFORMATION

Able Newspaper will print event and program information from agencies when space permits. Send items to ablenews@aol.com.

Deadline Extended for Blind Film Reviews

The American Council of the Blind's Audio Description Project (ACB-ADP) and the Described and Captioned Media Program (DCMP) are continuing their co-sponsorship of an opportunity for blind and visually impaired young people, in four categories from ages seven to 21 for the The Benefits of Audio Description in Education (BADIE) contest.

Kids love movies. Movies, videos, and other forms of multimedia are, these days, integral to

public, private and special education curriculum. For a young person who can't see or can't see well, audio description provides access to all the visual images of the movies that sighted young people enjoy.

Students choose an audio described film or video from the thousands of titles available through DCMP via streaming or on DVDs at www.dcmp.org.

Or a young person who is blind can borrow an audio-described video or film from a library, and thousands of audio-described

films and videos are available via streaming services. One can visit the ACB-ADP's website at www.acb.org/adp/dvds.html for lists of DVDs and films with audio description.

Reviews may be submitted in writing, in Braille or via an audio recording. Register for the contest at www.badiecontest.org. Entries may also be submitted via email or postal to jsnyder@acb.org or ACB-DCMP Benefits of Audio Description In Education, 1703 N. Beauregard St., Suite 420, Alexandria, VA

22311. The deadline for entries is Monday, March 15.

Contest winners will be chosen in April and the grand prize winner will receive an iPad Mini. Each first-place winner will receive a \$100 iTunes gift card. Second-place winners will receive a \$50 iTunes gift card, and third-place winners will receive a \$25 iTunes gift card. Each supporting teacher who has a first-place winning student will be awarded a \$100 Amazon gift card.

For information, call 202 467-5083.

Nominations Accepted for ADP Through May 9

The Audio Description Project (ADP) is a wide-ranging and production initiative with goals that include building advocacy on behalf of audio description; offering a range of educational resources and working to establish nationally acknowledged user-focused guidelines for quality description in its various genres as well as a professionally recognized certification program for audio describers.

It encourages growth of audio description with an emphasis on the involvement of AD users/consumers, especially youth.

It also disseminates information and provides general support for regional, state and local forums and encourages studies on audio description, particularly with respect to its efficacy as a technique for conveying visual images and its impact on literacy for all. One part of the project involves the recognition of outstanding contributions to the field of audio description.

This year's ADP Awards include a call for nominations

in nine categories. They are achievement in audio description – media/organizations; media/individuals; performing arts/organizations; performing Arts/individuals; museums/visual art/visitor centers/organizations; museums/visual art/visitor centers/individuals; international; Dr. Margaret

Pfanstiehl Memorial Award in Audio Description-Research and Development; and Barry Levine Memorial Award for Career Achievement in Audio Description

The call for nominations ends on Sunday, May 9, with winners announced during a plenary general session of the

American Council of the Blind Conference and Convention in July (the 2021 Conference and Convention sessions will be held virtually via Zoom and broadcast on ACB Radio).

Nomination material, criteria and more information are available at www.acb.org/adp.

GUEST EDITORIAL – JOSÉ HERNANDEZ

Continued from page 10

Since the beginning of the vaccination rollout nonprofit organizations, hospitals and advocates have been asking, when is it going to be the turn of the most vulnerable – those with pre-existing conditions and those with disabilities? When are we finally going to be taken into consideration?

Maybe it is because we are not dying in large numbers or that our government feels that for-hire vehicle drivers are more important than we are. Or is it that because seniors and individuals with disabilities are already more likely to be isolated that we are already protected from the virus and do not need the vaccine?

I am a person who experienced a spinal cord injury and am classified as a quadriplegic with limited lung capacity and not a very good ability to cough. At the height of the pandemic, I lost one of my personal care attendants and came very close to being infected myself.

We do not realize how serious this virus is until someone near us dies. This is a reality that vulnerable individuals and those with disabilities who require home care face every day.

We are basically playing Russian Roulette. Although we may be isolating, we need help with the most basic of needs from people who are coming in and out of our homes. How do

we protect ourselves when the virus comes to us?

Finally, beginning Feb. 15 the New York State government start handing out vaccination appointments to those in the vulnerable classes. Maybe as a direct response to the outcries for help or maybe realizing that they prioritized ableism and the economy over the vulnerable.

It is unfortunate, that individuals with disabilities and those in the vulnerable class are usually the first targets of governmental cuts and usually the last to be considered for anything beneficial.

Therefore New York State gets a D-(isability) for its vaccine rollout.

FEMA – BE PREPARED

Continued from page 11

pet-friendly shelters, have your contact information listed on your pet's collar, and update your pet's microchip information, if necessary. Learn more about pet preparedness at <https://www.ready.gov/pets>

Write out instructions for items and extra support that you will need during an emer-

gency. This is highly recommended if you will not be able to carry your evacuation kit or if you can't remember everything you will need to do. Make sure to give a copy to your personal support network. You can also take pictures of your prescriptions and medical equipment,

and label all of your medical equipment and supplies with your name.

Make sure to practice your evacuation routes multiple times. It is recommended that you practice with the lights off and with a flashlight. This will help you remember the route during an emergency.

Make preparedness a part of your routine in 2021. The steps above should be repeated throughout the year to ensure your plan is up-to-date and your emergency supplies have not expired. Additional resources are available at <https://www.ready.gov/disability> to learn more.

PERSONAL PLACE

MEET A COMPANION, PHONE FRIEND, PEN PAL, OR EVEN A SPOUSE

Race, color, religion, I'm not prejudice, looking for romantic female in her late 60's or 50's, who wants romantic 73 year old male in her life

A400

SWM 71, looking for a phone friend. Male or Female.

A398

Professional man seeks nice lady for long term serious relationship. Please include phone number. Serious replies only..

A399

SWM, 56, wheelchair user, seeks single female 40-55 for friendship and more. Into baseball, fishing, comedy clubs. I live in Sayville, NY. I do not drive. Send photo and phone number.

A396

Senior Female, Nassau, looking for senior male to enjoy simple things in life, family, hugs, walking WHLI, Platters.

A395

I am a pretty Asian American lady in her 50's. I look Latin. 5ft 5 inches tall, looking for a pen pal or companionship with a man age 47 to 62 yrs., who likes museums, comedy clubs, board games, nature, art, music, talking and golf. I am college educated. Please provide phone number and photo.

A397

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Just write your ad and mail it with payment and coupon below to *Able Personals*, P.O. Box 395, Old Bethpage, N.Y. 11804 or email to ableangela@aol.com. We will assign an *Able* personal number and forward all responses to you. Be sure to include your name and address. Just \$12 for 15 words plus \$1 for each additional word to appear one month.

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OR CALL OR EMAIL OUR OFFICE PLACE YOUR AD
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A • Asian B • Black C • Christian D • Divorced F • Female G • Gay H • Hispanic J • Jewish M • Male N/D • Non drinker N/S • Non Smoker P • Professional S • Single W • White

UNITED SPINAL NOW

Continued from 6

In 2003 United Spinal stopped being EPVA and became a national membership organization. For the first time it was not just a Veterans Service Organization, but was also a spinal cord injury/disorder organization. She became our first female civilian member. It was only right.

She had worked so closely with us on making transportation accessible that we were honored to have her. She has been a board

member of our organization for many years. Denise retired from NYCT and our Board of Directors and lives with her husband Larry in Brooklyn.

Denise has accompanied United Spinal on several of our Rolls on Capitol Hill and had led this organization from her board position for years. Her act of civil disobedience, which embarrassed transit officials and hastened the on-

set of accessible service, remains a significant moment in the N.Y.C. disability rights movement, but her career truly

reflects her commitment to protecting and promoting the rights of people with disabilities.

NYPL WORKSHOPS

Continued from page 11

one's own body and the world is acute enough to be understood as disability, people might never stop to consider or reconsider the hidden assumptions on which the everyday environment is built. To register, visit at <https://nypl.zoom.us/j/6092XDFUps>.

iOS and Android App Swap

Workshop meets at 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 24.

Come share information about your all-time favorite apps and your newest discoveries. This is an interactive, open discussion for patrons and the Heiskell tech team to share knowledge and introduce one another to something new. You do not have to present an app to join, but the group will welcome participants to pres-

ent why they enjoy or use an app, along with any pros and cons, for about three minutes plus time for questions. To register visit their meeting at <https://nypl.zoom.us/j/6092XDFUps>.

Spring Conference Roundup: What's New in Accessible Tech?

Workshop meets at 7 to 8:30 p.m., Monday, March 29.

Instructors will gather the news and announcements from CES, ATIA and CSUN to bring an interactive exploration of this busy season in accessible technology news. To register visit their meeting at <https://nypl.zoom.us/j/6092XDFUps>.

GUEST EDITORIAL – EDITH PRENTISS

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the City Council, private industry and the disability community. Rather than enforcement by the Department of Sanitation, we need a responsible independent body to evaluate snow removal and compliance with the four foot (48 inch) path requirement.

Why doesn't the Department of Transportation have plans to redesign streets, sidewalks and crosswalk so that corner lagoons do not form every storm? We hear about raised crosswalks – would they help? In preparation

for inclement weather, are catch basins inspected and cleaned to minimize water creating lagoons?

At the same time, isn't it time for the fines to be reconsidered? As well, the amount of time before enforcement after a storm needs to be examined and shortened. Enforcement should not be dependent on a decision of the Sanitation Commissioner.

Yes, there are regulations and laws. Isn't it time to update and enforce them? Let's get serious about winter in New York City.



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HAIRCUTTING HOUSE CALLS SERVICE

Call for more information **917 363-6834**.

FREE

FREE PIANO

Spinet piano with stool, needs tuning. Must pick up. Call for more information **631 879-7201**.

2 FREE POWER WHEELCHAIRS

Two Quantum power wheelchairs, 16 inches wide, needs some work. Call **718 327-6321**.

CAREGIVER NEEDED

POSITION AVAILABLE

I am an easy-going and laid back 59 year old quadriplegic woman looking for a responsible compassionate professional. The shift includes light laundry, kitchen tidy, turning and positioning. Must be pet friendly and non-smoker. I am looking for a full time, 40 hours Sunday thru Thursday, 11pm to 7am aide/caregiver. Located in eastern Suffolk. Experience not required. Verifiable references. Starting pay \$15.22 an hour thru agency. Serious inquiries contact me at **Ktdrury1964@gmail.com**

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Trained live-in aide/companion for elderly or a disabled person or as a nanny. Caring and compassionate with many years of experience. Great references are available. Call for more information **347 754-2486**.

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(Use one space per word)

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_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

ZIP _____

PHONE () _____

CHECK ENCLOSED \$ _____

Make Checks payable to Able Newspaper

VISA MASTERCARD

Acct# _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____ Security code _____

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INDIVIDUAL - \$10 PER 5 WORD LINE

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PO Box 395, Old Bethpage,
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DEADLINE:

The 10th day of the month prior to publication

LEADERS

Continued from page 1

Opportunities for Students in 2015 and published pieces in *Education Post* and *Faces of Education*.

He can be heard telling his story through his Ted Talk or his interviews with NPR. Armstrong was an AAPD intern in 2018 in the office of Sen. Bob Casey (D-Pa).

He served on the DREAM (Disability Rights, Education Activism, and Mentoring) National Student Advisory board for three years and branched out into other forms of activism.

While at Penn State, he helped to plan a program

around sexual assault prevention and cofounded “No Hate Penn State” with three other students. Armstrong was president of the Black Student Union at Harvard.

Noor Pervez

Pervez is a queer, Muslim disability activist and community organizer working at the intersection of faith, disability, race, LGBT+ issues, reproductive justice and eating disorders.

His project aims to start the creation of an English-language Easyread translation of the Holy Qu’ran. The goal of this translation is to provide

all Muslims with intellectual disabilities access to the original holy text, nuances and all, and help them participate fully in their community’s discussions about it.

The end product will also be a helpful reference for non-Muslim people with intellectual disabilities who want to better understand the Qu’ran, as well as for English language learners and people with other disabilities that benefit from Easyread.

Pervez is employed as the community engagement coordinator for the Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN).

He is a student organizer turned broader community activist and takes pride in learning much of his original advocacy skills from other trans people raised in the southern U.S.

Pervez has bylines at “Disability Visibility Project” and “Rooted in Rights” and has presented at a variety of conferences and universities on the intersections of the communities he is a part of and works alongside.

The awards will be presented at the April 28 virtual AAPD Leadership Awards Gala.

PANDEMIC BIAS

Continued from page 4

other People of Color and disabled BIPOC who live at the intersection of other marginalized identities,” said Professor Natalie Chin with the City University of New York School of Law and a member of The Arc’s Legal Advocacy Committee. “This report provides medical professionals with a strategic roadmap to confront bias and ultimately improve

healthcare outcomes so that we can firmly say, ‘Yes, all bodies are valued.’”

Many of the advocates who authored this report have been involved in filing complaints with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights challenging medical discrimination by states and hospitals, including discriminatory cri-

sis standard of care plans, no-visitor policies and inaccessible COVID-19 testing sites. Through this work, advocates have reached resolutions with several states and hospitals that make significant progress toward preventing medical discrimination during COVID-19.

However, as outlined in this report, much work remains to be done to ensure every in-

dividual, regardless of their identity, receives equal access to care during this pandemic and in the future.

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