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# Able



THE NEWSPAPER POSITIVELY FOR BY & ABOUT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

## NADIA RUNS

### Floral Park Resident Vies For Legislature Seat



**N**adia Holubnyczyj, a resident of Floral Park for 20 years, is running for Nassau County’s 8th Legislative District.

She announced her candidacy on Facebook and is endorsed and supported by both the Democratic and Working Families Parties.

She has been active in the PTA, her local civic association,

various village committees such as the Citizens with Disabilities Committee, the Nassau County Chapter of Frontline Foods which supplies food for frontline workers and food insecure families.

Holubnyczyj is the daughter of Ukrainian immigrants and has been married to her husband Marco for 20 years. They have two sons.

She is a Floral Park resident

and has been active in the community for nearly 20 years. She is an outspoken advocate for people with disabilities and was active in the campaign to put elevators in the Floral Park LIRR train station.

Holubnyczyj has a rare congenital disability called osteogenesis imperfecta. She is small in stature and uses a wheelchair full-time.

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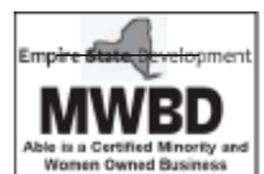
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# Quality Care For Those With IDD Scarce

Recently published data showed how almost 60 percent of physicians feel they cannot provide quality care to people who live with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD). In fact, a new survey reveals details on nurses' difficult experiences with physicians in working to get appropriate healthcare for the people with IDD they support. The study published in EC Nursing and Healthcare in February can be an emotionally difficult read.

"Learning about current attitudes and perceptions about people with IDD that many physicians have is heartbreaking," said Craig Escudé, physician and president of IntellectAbility. "It's commonly known by family members, nurses, direct support professionals and people with disabilities that finding a clinician who understands the unique needs of people with disabilities is challenging. The experiences of the nurses related in this survey explains why."

Some of the quotes provided by these nurses include: "During a consultation with an ER physician, the doctor stated that people like my patient aren't meant to live that long and have no quality of life;" "Physician uncomfortable with treating individuals with IDD. Appeared either scared or annoyed;" and "I've had a number of physicians, instead of treating our individuals, recommend hospice because of a poor quality of life."

These comments further emphasize the need to improve how medical schools educate their students about the fundamentals of providing healthcare for people with disabilities. "It's more than just learning about how to treat medical conditions commonly seen in people with IDD like aspiration pneumonia and bowel obstruction," said Escudé, who conducted the nursing survey, "Physicians should be taught about the support structure for people with IDD, how to facilitate better communication and, most importantly, about the often-missed direct relationship of various adverse behaviors to treatable, underlying medical causes."

A survey of 714 practicing physicians revealed that only about 40 percent of physicians were greatly confident about their ability to provide the same quality of care to patients with a disability and 56 percent strongly agreed that they welcomed people with a disability into their practices. The study published in February also related that 82 percent of physicians believed that people with a significant disability have a worse quality of life

than those without a disability.

Several studies have shown that people with IDD have a greater likelihood of getting COVID-19 and of dying from COVID. The most recent study notes that people with an intellectual disability have a 5.9 times greater risk of dying from COVID the second, only to age, as the greatest risk factor.

The most recently developed program to train clinicians is the Curriculum in IDD Healthcare. It's a six-module, online course that teaches the fundamentals of IDD healthcare to both medical students and practicing clinicians, alike. "Online learning programs make it easy to learn from experts in various fields without having to hire new school teaching staff or attending live lectures," Escudé said.

"When we educate clinicians, we save lives," says Escudé. "The efforts being made to improve IDD healthcare education, while overdue, will undoubtedly have a tremendously positive impact on the lives of millions of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the US."

## May Is Lupus Awareness Month

People are invited to join the nationwide effort to make Lupus visible to raise awareness and funds for lupus research and education programs in the month of May.

May is Lupus Awareness Month.

It's also a time to celebrate the strength, passion and optimism of people with lupus, and those who love them.

For information on the Lupus Foundation of America people are invited to follow them throughout May on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to receive the latest news and resources that impact the lupus community.

Everyone can use the hashtags, #LupusAwarenessMonth or #LAM throughout the month to follow along.

Social media is also a great way to share one's story and see how fellow lupus warriors are making lupus visible.

Their website [www.lupus.org/LAM](http://www.lupus.org/LAM) is a way to find all the tools and tips needed to raise awareness and help bring greater attention to the fight to end lupus.

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# State Budget Mixed Bag For PWD

**G**ov. Andrew Cuomo recently signed a \$212 billion New York state budget for fiscal year 2021-2022, which includes some increases that will fund programs for the disabled, but also excludes or underfunds several other key initiatives that advocates have been pushing for.

## Nursing Homes

The budget will address the need for improved patient care at nursing homes through several reforms, including \$64 million for increased staffing. According to the Governor's

website, minimum thresholds have been established which mandate 70 percent of revenues must be spent on direct resident care and 40 percent be spent on resident-facing staffing, capping profits at five percent.

"It would have been helpful to get even more funding for nursing homes, but this is a step in the right direction," said Richard Molloy, executive director of Long Term Care Community Coalition.

Excess revenue recouped by the state will be deposited into

the existing nursing-home-quality pool for further investments for facilities to meet high quality standards.

## Ombudsman Program

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program received an increase of \$250,000, but according to statements from the Center for Independence for the Disabled New York (CIDNY) and the New York Association of Independent Living (NYAIL), this amount was sharply lower than advocates hoped for in order to sufficiently serve people in long-term-care facilities.

## Fair Pay for Home Care

Despite a strong grass roots effort, Fair Pay for Home Care was not included in the final budget, resulting in no salary increase for personal assistants. The Senate passed the measure, but the assembly did not. Disability advocates have been fighting for a pay hike, claiming that the current rate of \$12.50 per hour for aides has caused consumers great difficulty in finding and holding on to staff.

"There has been a big push

**Continued on page 4**

## The Arc Supports Biden's Jobs Plan

For years, the service system that people with intellectual and development disabilities (IDD) and their families rely on has fallen short of meeting their needs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has magnified this problem and exposed the cracks and gaps in the care infrastructure when it comes to supporting people with disabilities. The Arc is encouraged by the Biden Administration's announcement that the American Jobs Plan includes a \$400 billion investment to support and grow the direct care workforce, expand service delivery and eliminate waiting lists so that people with disabilities and unpaid family caregivers can return to the economy.

Like crumbling roads and

bridges, the administration recognizes, that the home- and community-based service (HCBS) system, a central part of the care infrastructure, needs and deserves the same critical investments. Now, it is in the hands of Congress.

Growing the direct care workforce, expanding access to services, and supporting family caregivers are key to economic recovery. The administration's plan to provide more funding for HCBS, create jobs and increase wages and benefits for direct care workers addresses the rising level of need for these services. It also targets the longstanding inequities experienced by the direct care workforce that were made worse by the pandemic.

## Prosthetic Device Bill Reintroduced

Sens. Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.) and Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.) and Reps. G.K. Butterfield (D-N.C.) and Brett Guthrie (R-Ky.) have reintroduced the Access to Assistive Technology and Devices for Americans Study Act or the Triple A Study Act (S.1089/H.R.2461).

It will identify the best care practices for people living with limb loss or limb difference so they can be replicated across health systems to improve the health of our community.

Legislation needs to pass both chambers of Congress, so having the Triple A Study Act reintroduced in the Senate and House shows strong support for those policy priorities.

Two-thirds of people living

with limb loss and limb difference never receive a prosthetic device, but there is little analysis to explain why.

The Triple A Study Act solves that problem by directing the non-partisan Government Accountability Office to study barriers to care for assistive technologies, including prosthetic devices, and evaluate how those affect patient outcomes by comparing results across Medicare, the VA and private insurers. It examines specific challenges, including the affordability of devices, how often people are assessed or denied coverage and if patients can return to work. The bill sponsors request that citizens ask their Senators and Representatives to cosponsor the bill.

These direct care workers are mostly women of color; they are denied a living wage due to underfunding of the Medicaid HCBS system that pays their wages. A well paid, well trained workforce that can grow with and meet the increasing need is critical to recovery and to providing people with disabilities and their families' quality supports and services they need and want

to receive in their homes and community.

The plan includes a permanent reauthorization of the Money Follows the Person program, a federal program that supports people with disabilities and aging adults to move out of large congregate settings and back to their homes and communities. The Arc has been advocating for these advances for years.

## Norris Celebrates 40th With New Music



Namel "TapWaterz" Norris recently released some new music "Picture Me Rolling" in honor of his 40th birthday. Norris, who was paralyzed due to an accidental shooting, is a member of the Hip Hop Group 4 Wheel City.

Visit <https://distrokid.com/hyperfollow/tapwaterz/piture-me-rolling-2> to learn about the release and <https://distrokid.com/hyperfollow/tapwaterz/picture-me-rolling-2> to download and stream it.

# Rescue Plan Delivers for Disabled

One year after the COVID-19 pandemic began, Congress has passed and the president has signed into law a pandemic relief package with funding that will specifically benefit people with disabilities and help our communities survive.

The American Rescue Plan includes nearly \$13 billion in funding for home- and community-based services (HCBS) as

well as other funding and provisions to help the disability community.

The American Rescue Plan also includes adult dependents in covid relief stimulus payments, which will ensure that people with disabilities are not excluded from this critical financial relief.

Additionally, this COVID-19 relief bill includes other provisions that will support all Americans, including people

with disabilities, surviving the rest of the pandemic.

It includes extensions of tax credits and public assistance increases, which can enable Americans to weather this economic and health crisis.

At a time when access to affordable healthcare could not be more important, the new law also bolsters the Affordable Care Act and improves affordability of the healthcare

marketplace through expanding and extending available subsidies.

It also includes \$4 billion in funding for programs that provide mental health services and supports, including greater support for mobile crisis units and for children's mental health programs.

The plan also provides \$3 billion for programs under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

## NEW YORK STATE BUDGET PASSED

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to pay aides a living wage to make it easier for people to hire and retain qualified staff," said Meghan Parker, director of advocacy at NYAIL. "It was very disappointing that it wasn't passed. It has already caused so many care assistants to leave the field."

"As the pandemic showed, nursing institutions are among the most perilous places on the planet, which makes Albany's decision not to raise the wages for home-care aides, so that people can stay out of

them, angering and confounding," said Joe Rappaport, executive director of the Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled. "But we're pleased that the Senate fought hard for an increase and know that, in the end, we'll convince the assembly and the governor to keep New Yorkers living at home, not in a home."

### Urgent Care Centers

The launch of urgent care centers for mental health and addiction services have been authorized. On average, it

is estimated that more than 100,000 individuals per year will benefit from crisis intervention at these centers. The centers will be open 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. They will accept all admissions without referral, including direct drop-offs by law enforcement and other first responders.

### COLA

Also included is \$46.2 million to provide a one percent cost of living adjustment (COLA) to nonprofits that are licensed, certified or otherwise authorized by the Office of People with Developmental Disabilities, the Office of Mental Health and the Office of Addiction Services and Supports. The budget also provides \$5.6 million for a one percent COLA increase for other human services agencies, including the State Office for the Aging, the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, and the Office of Children and Family Services.

### Pharmacy Benefits

In addition, the budget transitioned the Medicaid pharmacy benefit from managed care to fee-for-service in order to increase transparency, maximize rebates and reduce administrative costs. This will delay the transition by two years, until April 1, 2023.

### Independent Living Centers

The \$500,000 proposed cut to independent living centers (ILC) was restored, with an additional \$500,000 included, giving the network a modest funding increase. In addition, the one percent across-the-board cuts to Medicaid provid-

ers was restored in the final budget.

### Health Care Costs

The budget reduces health care costs for low-income New Yorkers by eliminating essential plan premiums and out-of-pocket expenses, including dental and vision benefits.

### Broadband

It also includes a requirement that every broadband provider offer service with speeds of at least 25mbps, at the discounted rate of \$15, for every household that is eligible for SNAP, reduced-price school lunches, Medicaid benefits, senior citizen rent increase exemptions or affordability benefits from a utility.

### Education

Randi Levine, policy director of Advocates for Children of New York, stated that there will be positive and negative outcomes in regard to education in the new budget.

"We are very pleased that the final New York state budget includes a three-year phase-in of the Foundation Aid funding, long owed to our schools, on top of the full federal COVID-19 relief funding for schools," said Levine. "This much-needed funding will help schools serve all students, including students with disabilities. We also appreciate that the final budget rejects the special education waiver that had been proposed by the governor.

"We are disappointed that the proposal to provide pre-school special education programs with an increase in payment rates on-par with school

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# Law Has Improvements for Deaf, Blind Students

**S**ens. Edward Markey (D-Mass.) and Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.), and Reps. Matt Cartwright (Pa., Dist.8) and David McKinley (W.Va.,Dist.1) have reintroduced bipartisan legislation that would strengthen the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to ensure that visually- and hearing-impaired students receive the best education possible.

The Alice Cogswell and Anne Sullivan Macy Act would improve services and educational opportunities for students who are deaf,

hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired, and deaf-blind.

The legislation would also enhance reporting and evaluation measures for special education in each state, increase training for teachers and other special education professionals and reaffirm the Department of Education's mission and responsibility to ensure an accessible and quality education for all students.

This bill is named after Alice Cogswell, the first deaf student that was formally educated in the United States, and Anne

Sullivan Macy, Helen Keller's famous teacher.

If passed, the Cogswell-Macy Act would require states to identify and evaluate children who are visually- and hearing-impaired so that appropriate services can be delivered to each student, and report instances when they fall short. It would also help parents and educators stay informed and up to date through written policy guidance released regularly from the Department of Education and encourage states to plan for and commit to specialized instruction for all deaf, hard of hearing,

blind, visually impaired, and deaf-blind students, provided by trained personnel.

Finally, it would establish the Anne Sullivan Macy Center of Vision Loss and Educational Excellence within the Department of Education to function as a national resource.

This bill has been introduced to both the U.S. House of Representatives and to the U.S. Senate. The bill sponsors encourage citizens to call or email their elected representatives and ask them to support the Alice Cogswell and Anne Sullivan Macy Act.

# NFB Supports Bill Eliminating Subminimum Wages

The National Federation of the Blind (NFB), the transformative advocacy organization of blind Americans, supports the introduction of the Transformation to Competitive Integrated Employment Act (H.R. 2373) in the United States House of Representatives by Education and Labor Committee Chair Bobby Scott (D-Va.) and Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.).

This legislation gradually eliminates the payment of subminimum wages to people with disabilities over a four-year period and prohibits the issuance of new special wage certificates under Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938. The legislation also incentivizes employers to transition away from a segregated workplace model for people with disabilities and to-

ward competitive integrated employment.

"It is long past time for Congress to phase out the subminimum wage for workers with disabilities and expand access to fulfilling employment and economic self-sufficiency," Scott said. "By fostering collaboration between employers and services providers, this bipartisan legislation makes clear that it is not only possible, but beneficial to invest in fully integrated and competitive jobs for people with disabilities. We must take this next step to ensure that every worker can succeed in the workplace and earn a fair wage."

"Disability employment is the next policy frontier to empower people with disabilities to live full and independent lives," Rodgers said. "A job is so much more than just a paycheck, it's what gives

us dignity, purpose, and the opportunity for a better life. I look forward to continuing to work in a bipartisan fashion to ensure more people - who are ready, willing and able to work- find employment."

"The National Federation of the Blind and our partners, representing the 55 million Americans with disabilities, seek only the kind of meaningful, remunerative work that other Americans take for granted. We applaud

Chairman Scott for rejecting over eighty years of entrenched but false thinking about the capacity of people with disabilities," Mark Riccobono, NFB president, said. "We strongly urge his colleagues in both chambers of the United States Congress to transition from an ineffective employment model to a policy that recognizes the individuality, interests and skills of workers with disabilities and allows them to live the lives they want."

## Impact of Virus on PWD Studied

Brandeis University is doing a study to learn about the experiences of people receiving home- and community-based services and self-directing those services.

Researchers are interested in learning how people with disabilities are staying safe, how they are keeping their personal care attendants safe and how they are accessing critical services and supports. Information from this study will be used to advise government agencies and providers.

Participants will be asked, Are you a person with a disability who receives Medicaid home and community-based services?; Are you above the age of 18?; Do

you self-direct your services and supports?; In other words, do you control who you hire to provide services or control a budget for services?; Do you live in the United States?

Those who answered yes to each of the questions above might be eligible to participate. Participation includes one interview over the telephone or video-conference. The interview will be about one hour.

Participants will receive a small gift card for their time. If interested in participating, contact Miriam Heyman, senior research associate at the Lurie Institute for Disability Policy, by email at miriamheyman@brandeis.edu or call 1-781-736-8415.



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## Gaps in Coverage and Care

**BY JAMES WEISMAN**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



When I started at Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association in 1979 (I had been a disability rights lawyer for two years), the very first client I spoke to was a quadriplegic man from Dutchess County who called and said, "My check didn't come. My home attendant didn't come, and there's hair in my shower drain." I responded that I knew I could do something about the hair, but the other two issues were much tougher.

He told me that since he'd broken his neck, his wife and children had left, he had no income but Social Security Disability Insurance, and he spent down to Medicaid eligibility every month, so that he could receive homecare. When he was employed, he said, he was a safety engineer for an insurance company. He assessed risk. When I asked him why he didn't have long-term care insurance or private disability insurance, he said, ironically, "Because I knew the odds."

Forty-two years later, the situation isn't much better for most people needing long-term care. Of course, in assessing risk, most people worry about disability even less than they do death. We know because far more people buy life insurance to protect their family than buy disability or long-term care insurance. Nevertheless, the people United Spinal Association represents, and many of you reading this now, rely on personal care assistance to live effectively in the community.

Health insurance – even under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), also called Obamacare – leaves a huge gap in coverage for people needing durable medical equipment (DME) or supplies. Obamacare requires insurers to meet minimum coverage requirements, and of course, eliminates pre-existing conditions, exclusions and waiting periods.

The elimination of pre-existing condition hurdles, when viewed as a policy change could, in fact, be an "Emancipation Proclamation" for some people with disabilities. Those unwilling to risk leaving Medicaid and/or Medicare to go to work, because their pre-existing conditions would not be covered, are no longer plagued by this problem.

However, those who use durable medical equipment, like wheelchairs, and those who need medical supplies (diabetic supplies, catheters, bandages, etc.) are still subject to caps in private insurance policies and in the Obamacare plans that are publicly available. If a motorized wheelchair cost is \$30,000, and an employer's health plan caps DME at \$2,500 a year, which is perfectly lawful, the wheelchair user is out of luck.

Medicaid would pick up the cost of the chair, but private insurance will not. The need for coverage for medical supplies and DME to be covered by insurers is acute, but unmet and still keeps people with disabilities out of the labor force.

Consider these two issues together, i.e. the difficulty in obtaining adequate home- and community-based services, coupled with the unaffordability, for some of adequate supplies and equipment and the promise of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Affordable Care Act is somewhat undermined.

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# FCC Proposes Strengthening Alerts

The Federal Communications Commission has proposed rules to improve the way the public receives emergency alerts on their mobile phones, televisions and radios.

The nation's Emergency Alert System and Wireless Emergency Alerts help keep the public safe and informed and are of ever-increasing importance given the emergencies and disasters Americans have faced in recent years. In 2018, however, a false emergency alert in Hawaii mistakenly

warned of an incoming ballistic missile and highlighted the need to improve these systems.

The FCC made several proposals.

One, is to combine the current Presidential Alerts category, which is non-optional on devices that receive Wireless Emergency Alerts, with alerts from FEMA. The new non-optional alert class would be called National Alerts."

Another, is to encourage all states to form State Emergency Communications Committees to help administer alerting on

the state level or to review the composition and governance of existing committees and require these committees to certify that they held a meeting in the past year.

The third, is to provide a checklist of information that should be included in annual submissions of state Emergency Alert System plans and amend the process for FCC review of those plans.

The fourth, is to specify that government agencies may report false emergency alerts to the FCC's 24/7 Operations Center.

Finally, to require and ensure that Emergency Alert System participants can repeat certain alerts over television and radio when the government alert originator requests it.

The commission adopted a Notice of Inquiry to explore the technical feasibility delivering Emergency Alert System alerts through the internet, including streaming services, and whether it is feasible for Emergency Alert System participants to leverage the internet to offer advanced alerting capabilities to the public.

## Emergency Response Users To Get Refunds

Thousands of New Yorkers locked into illegal contracts have a way out, thanks to an agreement with Life Alert Emergency Response Inc., negotiated by New York Attorney General Letitia James.

New York consumers may cancel their current contracts with the company before the end of the 36-month contract they signed. Additionally, James has negotiated for Life Alert to provide refunds to more than 700 New York consumers

who unsuccessfully tried to exercise certain cancellation rights in the past. The agreement resolves an investigation into Life Alert's failure to include mandatory cancellation provisions required by New York law into its contracts.

Best known for its advertising slogan, "Help! I've fallen, and I can't get up!" the company offers personal emergency response systems to consumers, which allow them to notify a response

center, typically through activating a pendant or bracelet worn by the consumer.

Consumers signing up for Life Alert's service are required to sign a 36-month monitoring-service agreement and pay a monthly service monitoring fee, plus upfront programming and installation fees. Depending on the specific service they choose, consumers pay between \$49.95 and \$89.95 per month for 36

months of service, in addition to upfront fees and a shipping charge (typically \$198) for a total payment ranging from \$1,996.20 to \$3,436.20 over the 36-month term.

To protect consumers who want such services from rushing into agreements, New York state adopted a law that specifically deals with these types of contracts. The law requires

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## Law Would Delay Aging Out

In New York State, students have the right to attend high school to work toward a diploma until the end of the school year in which they turn 21 years old.

Students with disabilities also have a legal right to transition services – such as hands-on job training or support learning independent living skills, like using money and traveling on the subway – as part of their education to help them prepare for life after high school.

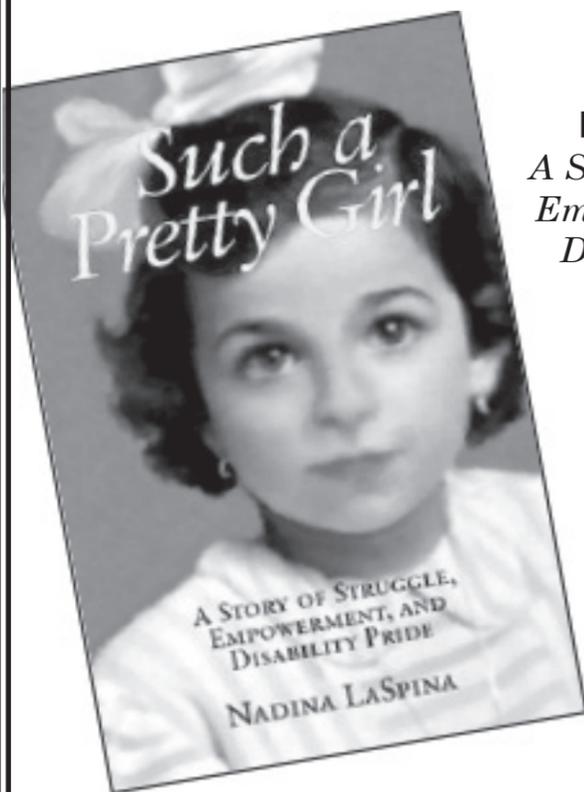
As a result of the pandemic, many older youths with disabilities have been unable to access the special education supports they need to finish their coursework. Many have also missed out on opportunities to participate in vocational and community-based activities that they need to successfully transition to adult life.

Although the New York State Education Department recently issued guidance strongly encouraging districts to allow students aging out this year to re-

turn to high school in 2021-22, it is up to districts whether to follow this guidance and give older students more time.

The State Assembly and Senate have introduced legislation that would require school districts to provide educational and support services to students with disabilities until they turn 23. The bill covers students who would otherwise age out this year or next year, as well as students who turned 21 during the 2019-20 school year, giving students with disabilities more time to earn a high school diploma or meet their transition goals considering COVID-19.

Citizens who support this move should contact their state representatives and other leaders in Albany and ask them to support legislation (A.1201A/S.2994A) extending school eligibility for students with disabilities from age 21 to 23 during the school years disrupted by the pandemic.



**“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.**

# Medicaid Recipients Won't Get Tax Form

IRS Tax Form 1095B will no longer be automatically mailed to Medicaid consumers.

Child Health Plus (CH-Plus), or Essential Plan (EP) IRS Form 1095-B will only be mailed to those who request a copy of the form. IRS Form 1095-B provides proof of an individual's quali-

fying health coverage, which satisfies the individual's shared responsibility provision of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The original ACA legislation required consumers to use Form 1095-B to compute their federal tax liability and file their income tax return.

Prior to tax year 2020, the Department of Health auto-

matically mailed one or more IRS Form 1095-B and an accompanying cover letter to all individuals who are enrolled in Medicaid or with Minimum Essential Plan Coverage (MEC).

Because the individual shared responsibility payment for health coverage was reduced to zero beginning in tax year 2019, an individual no

longer needs the information contained on IRS Form 1095-B to compute federal tax liability or file an income tax return.

To request IRS Form 1095-B one can call 1-800-541-2831, email a request to 1095B@health.ny.gov., or send a request via postal mail to NY State of Health, P.O. Box 11.774, Albany, NY 12211.

# People with Down Syndrome Need Physical & Brain Exercise

BrainHQ, the brain training app from Posit Science, will be used alongside physical exercise in a new study of people with Down syndrome.

The study aims to measure the impact of physical and cognitive exercise on physical and mental abilities. The study is sponsored by the Canadian Down Syndrome Society (CDSS) and is being led by researchers at Anglia Ruskin University.

"I love that this study directly confronts a prevailing prejudice that – as a genetic condition – the abilities of people with Down syndrome are not susceptible to improvement through physical

and brain exercise," said Henry Mahncke, CEO of Posit Science. "It's well-established that physical exercise improves physical abilities, and that brain exercise improves cognitive abilities in most people. There's no reason to think it's different among members of the Down syndrome community."

In a prior small pilot study conducted by researchers at Aristotle University of Greece, researchers announced they found that a 10-week combined protocol of physical exercise and brain training in people with Down syndrome led to a reorganization of the brain

and to improved performance on both cognitive and physical measures.

The brain training used in the study was the Greek version of BrainHQ. The physical training consisted of aerobic, flexibility, strength, and balance exercises.

Numerous other studies have shown that physical exercise can drive not just physical gains, but also gains on some cognitive measures.

Similarly, studies of BrainHQ exercises have shown not just gains on standard cognitive assessments, but also in standard measures of basic physical abilities, including balance, gait, and even heart rate variability.

BrainHQ is offered, without charge, by leading health plans and by hundreds of libraries and communities. Consumers may try BrainHQ for free at [www.brainhq.com](http://www.brainhq.com).

marlene meyersen jcc manhattan

## ReelAbilities

FILM FESTIVAL

NEW YORK



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[REELABILITIES.ORG/NEWYORK](http://REELABILITIES.ORG/NEWYORK)

Film pictured: *Not Going Quietly*

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## Islip Career Center Trains Baristas



Shawn, from Connetquot Central School District, prepares a caramel Frappuccino at the new coffee café at Islip Career Center. Food Prep Teacher Lauren Daquet recently launched it, along with the new barista training, for her second-year students.

Students trained in the use of commercial-grade coffee equipment take phone orders and create and package a large variety of custom and seasonal drink orders. Completed orders are delivered to classrooms and offices. The ICC Carpentry class fabricated the large menu board on the wall and the school's Graphics programs designed the custom drink sleeves, menus, and frequent buyer cards.

Islip Center offers special education programs, providing skills training to students with special education needs.

# AAPD Publishes 'Disability in the Age of Covid-19'

**W**hile COVID-19 has had an impact on the lives of every American, the pandemic has amplified and exacerbated existing disparities faced by people with disabilities, communities of color, women, communities lacking adequate internet and more, often with dire consequences.

The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) has conducted interviews with disability advocates and captured stories of people with disabilities affected by COVID in the book, "Disability in the Time of COVID-19." Interviews with disability advocates revealed many gaps in systems and policies that have left people with disabilities behind and put them at risk during the pandemic and will continue to do so during future disasters unless addressed. Certain key recommendations have emerged.

## **Increase Funding for Home-And Community-Based Services**

HCBS funding is needed to ensure that people with disabilities can access needed care from direct support professionals, at home, rather than in nursing homes. While the recent passage of the

American Rescue Plan by the House and Senate provides critical and overdue funding to support HCBS, this funding is time limited.

## **Long-Term Systemic Solutions are needed**

Sustain and expand the Emergency Broadband Benefit established under the CARES Act. When the world moved online at the start of the pandemic, too many people with disabilities were left behind by inaccessible digital infrastructure and a lack of access to broadband internet and assistive technology.

Reform public benefits to promote financial security and resilience not poverty. The restrictive structure of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) limits recipients to having \$2,000 or less in assets and provides no more than \$794 per month, which only worsened poverty for people with disabilities during the pandemic.

Provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and secure higher wages for direct support professionals who provide critical services and support to people with disabilities. Many receive low wages and were not prioritized for PPE and other protections during

the pandemic, which made it even harder to employ them since last March.

The stories and insights from the storybook "Disability in the

Time of COVID-19" can be read through the interactive webpage or as a pdf document at [www.medium.com/disability-in-the-time-of-covid-19](http://www.medium.com/disability-in-the-time-of-covid-19).

## **MHAW Has COVID Hotline**

The Association for Mental Health and Wellness (MHAW), Suffolk County's largest not-for-profit provider of programs, services, and advocacy for people facing mental health challenges, is offering an emotional support helpline staffed by trained crisis counselors who help callers talk through their emotions and find resources to help them cope with challenges associated with COVID-19.

MHAW is serving as a Suffolk County partner agency in the helpline initiative hosted by NY Project Hope, a program of the New York State Office of Mental Health.

The helpline is at 631 471-7242 ext. 1800. Trained crisis counselors are available Monday through Friday between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. All helpline conversations are free, confidential and anonymous.

"The Emotional Support Helpline will connect you with someone who has been trained to hear what you are saying and give you the kind of support that works best for you during the pandemic," said Tara Fredericks, MHAW's director of special projects who is also overseeing Project Hope for MHAW. "They can offer coping strategies, supportive resources, or simply a chance to talk."

In addition to the emotional support helpline, NY Project Hope helps New Yorkers understand their reactions and emotions during the COVID-19 pandemic through digital educational materials, a supportive social media presence and a website with resources and relevant materials at [www.nyprojecthope.org](http://www.nyprojecthope.org). NY Project Hope can also be followed on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.



## **Able-Ride is Proudly Serving Nassau County**

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# Autonomous Vehicle Talks Are Online

**S**elf-driving or autonomous vehicles (AVs) stand to revolutionize transportation in the U.S. and around the world.

It's important that they're designed to be inclusive of everyone. To promote accessibility for people with disabilities in the design of AVs, the U.S. Access Board is holding "Inclusive Design of Autonomous Ve-

hicles: A Public Dialogue" with the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Community Living and other federal agencies.

This national online dialogue is open to the public. All are invited to share their ideas for designing AVs that are in-

clusive of everyone, including passengers with physical, sensory, or cognitive disabilities. The board is interested in design and development of AVs to ensure accessible entering, exiting, onboard maneuvering and securement for individuals with mobility disabilities; accessible ride hailing, on-board communication and interacting with AVs for passengers

with hearing, visual or cognitive disabilities; and ideas for future research needs and next steps required to ensure accessible design and development of AVs for those with disabilities.

The public may join the dialogue at any time through May 5. Visit [www.transportationInnovation.IdeaScale.com](http://www.transportationInnovation.IdeaScale.com) to participate.

## Games for Visually Impaired Rated

Lenstore has taken an in-depth look at the top rated and most accessible video games and board games to reveal how well the industry supports visually-impaired gamers.

The variety of features available like adjustable font, color deficiency filters and text-to-speech make "The Last of Us 2" one of the most accessible video games of all time.

The global pandemic has meant that many have spent time indoors and at home with not much to do. Nu-

merous people are turning to playing games.

The most popular games of 2020 were also analyzed to find out how equipped they are for disabled players and to highlight the lack of accessibility for those with disabilities in the gaming industry.

A study by DFC found that as of August 2020 more than 3 billion people around the world were playing video games and with the next gaming generation such as the PS5 and Xbox Series X finally here, this number is set to grow.

However, most video games and board games available are designed for those with perfect vision in mind. The small text, flashing images and colors that don't support those with color deficiency are often overlooked in the gaming community.

After the best accessible games were rated, 2020's "The Last of Us Part II" proved the best for people with a visual impairment. The publisher, Naughty Dog, set out to create a game accessible for as many players

as possible and they accomplished this by providing 60 accessibility settings.

The game has accessibility presets that include recommended settings for vision, hearing and motor, however players can modify these so it fits their individual needs.

The game is also one of very few in the industry with native support for text-to-speech and offers several specific gameplay features - skip puzzles, avoid falling, and hide from enemies - that are

**Continued on page 14**

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## Addiction Services Get Grant

Long Island Network, comprising 12 human service and behavioral health organizations from Nassau and Suffolk counties, has been awarded a New York State grant of \$5,745,233 in support of addiction prevention, treatment, and recovery programs.

The Long Island Network is composed of Bridge Back to Life Center, Inc., CSEDNY, Central Nassau (CN) Guidance & Counseling Services, Family & Children's Association (FCA), Family Service League, Inc. (FSL), Hispanic Counseling Center Inc., Mercy Hospital, Northwell Health-Long Island Jewish Medical Center, Outreach Development Corporation, South Shore Child Guidance/EPIC Long Island, and Sun River Health.

"Working together under this unified grant helps our network of Nassau and Suffolk agencies provide a wider selection of services for those most vulnerable," said Karen Boorshstein, president and CEO of FSL, a nonprofit based in Hun-

tington and lead applicant for the Long Island Network.

The Long Island Network is a regional association of Advanced Health Network and Recovery Health Solutions (AHN-RHS), which consists of 50 NYS Office of Mental Health (OMH) and Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) licensed agencies.

Expanding behavioral health services will break down barriers to treatment and connect people seeking services to resources.

New Yorkers struggling with an addiction, or whose loved ones are struggling, can find help by calling the State's toll-free, 24-hour, 7-day-a-week, HOPE line at 1-877-8-HOPENY (1-877-846-7369), or by texting HOPENY (Short Code 467369). Available addiction treatment including crisis/detox, inpatient, community residence, or outpatient care can be found using the NYS OASAS Treatment Availability Dashboard at [www.findaddictiontreatment.ny.gov](http://www.findaddictiontreatment.ny.gov) or through the NYS OASAS website.

# 'Still Judy' Gets Arbus Awareness Grant

**L**isa Denker has won the Loreen Arbus Disability Awareness Grant from the New York Women in Film & Television (NYWIFT) for her documentary feature "Still Judy." Alyscia Cunningham took an honorable mention for her documentary feature "I Am More Than My Hair." The film completion grant, now in its 14th year, is provided by longtime disability rights advocate Loreen Arbus and awards \$7,500 to a woman filmmaker for a film on physical- or developmental-disability issues; the honorable mention winner receives \$1,500.

"Still Judy" is an hour-long documentary about Judy Finelli, who transcends the burden of living with multiple sclerosis by connecting to the circus arts and her family and regains the will to live anew. "I Am More Than My Hair" is a documentary film and photography book that brings awareness to alopecia and dispels the myth of what beauty is supposed to look like, by featuring women who have experienced hair loss and how they empower themselves to see beauty beyond the media's standards.

"Not only is it important to give incentive to people with disability who are pursuing their

## Book for Young Readers Released

"Rolling Warrior: The Incredible, Sometimes Awkward, True Story of a Rebel Girl on Wheels Who Helped Spark a Revolution" by Judith Heumann is the fast-paced story that introduces young readers to the disability rights movement and shows them that they have the power and strength to demand equal access in an unequal world.

Heumann is featured in Netflix's Oscar nominated "Crip Camp," the documentary about the summer camp for teens with disabilities that laid the groundwork for the Disability Rights Movement.

Heumann was named 1977's Woman of the Year by "TIME Magazine." She has also served in the Clinton and Obama administrations, and was the World Bank's first adviser on disability and development.

dream of becoming filmmakers, but this grant in and of itself raises awareness since it's offered through organizations that have a vibrant membership," Loreen Arbus said. "NYWIFT is a preeminent organization in the entertainment industry. My seven grants have visibility throughout the entire country and reach different members of organizations which exponen-

tially increases the number of people who will think about advancing people with disability through their art."

In addition, "Still Judy" received an in-kind post-production grant for audio description for blind and low vision audiences, provided by Michele Spitz, who has provided this support to the NYWIFT Loren Arbus grantees since 2016.

"It's been important to show that beyond Judy's living with M.S. there exists a whole layered complex person," Denker said.

Both films will receive promotional support from ReelAbilities Film Festival, the largest festival in the US dedicated to promoting awareness and appreciation of the lives, stories and artistic expressions of people with different abilities.

## New York State Independent Living Council's Third Disability Rights Hall of Fame Gone Virtual!

Honoring:  
Robert Gumson  
Edith Prentiss  
Susan Scheer  
Melvyn Tanzman  
James Weisman

May 6th, 6-7 pm  
Via Zoom Virtual Webinar

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# SPORTS SCENE

## OBITUARY

# All-Around Athlete 'Paddy D' Dies



Al Youakim coaches Donaghey at third base.



**By Tony Fitzgerald**  
**P**atrick John Donaghey known to his teammates and friends as "Paddy D" died unexpected on March 25. He is known by friends and family for his versatility and achievements in adaptive sports and life.

Donaghey was born and raised in the Bronx in a big Irish family of seven. On Halloween night 1987 at the age of 25 while at work he was paralyzed by a robbers bullet.

Donaghey played wheelchair basketball and was a member of the U.S. National Wheelchair Basketball Team in 1996

that traveled to Italy and the world.

"Paddy was the ultimate competitor and fantastic athlete," said John Hamre, president of the Wheelchair Sports Federation, "He competed at the highest levels in wheelchair basketball, tennis and softball with great success. More importantly, he was a great teacher and introduced adaptive sports to thousands of kids and injured veterans and helped them see what great things one can achieve in life.

He was our friend, mentor and inspiration to start the Wheelchair Sports Federation. He was fun loving, but also fiercely competitive. You didn't want to be up against him."

Eddie Lopez one of his best friends who tried out for Team USA Basketball with him said, "We owned the 1990's. Paddy was the point guard that led the N.J. Nets to 11 conference championships, Paddy made everyone around him better. He could pass, pick and shoot,

and man could he push that chair. He was always about the team."

His domination spread to the tennis courts. In 1997 he and Jose Perez won the national championship in doubles. In August 2020 he won the Cincinnati Ohio Men's Single "A" Wheelchair Tennis Championship. At the beginning of 2020 he was ranked ninth in the country, which was challenging considering he had to fight back from multiple health issues.

He was a tennis instructor at the YMCA of Kanawha Valley for nine years and absolutely loved teaching young and old alike. He loved music and singing and incorporated it into his lessons, telling one student "Don't Go Chasing Waterfalls" referring to a lyric by Hip Hop group TLC, to get her to stop going after a bad toss on her serve.

In 2000 he took up wheel-

chair softball, where he dominated the short fielder position and won numerous awards. He had the game winning hit to propel the EPVA Mets to the 2003 Division II national championship in Minnesota. He was involved in many organizations including the USTA Mid-West Wheelchair Tennis Association, the Wheelchair Sports Federation, and the Wounded Warrior Project in New York. He was also the associate director of the Veterans Association in New York. Donaghey participated in the 1996 Paralympics and founded the YMCA Wheelchair Basketball team.

A celebration of his life is being planned for this summer.

Donaghey is survived by his daughter, Michelle Pulcino (Justin); sisters Maryann Cipollone (Domenic) and Theresa Curry and many grandchildren and nieces and nephew.

### Aviator Softball Starts This Month

Starting Monday, May 3 and every Monday through the end of September players will meet at 5:30 p.m. in parking field 4 at Eisenhower Park in East Meadow.

Call Drew at 917 709-5394 for more details.

**MORE SPORTS PAGE 16**

## CHILDREN'S BOOK ABOUT ALZHEIMER'S AVAILABLE

AFA's children's book "Dancing With Granddad," a teaching tool adults can use to explain Alzheimer's to a young child in an age-appropriate way, is now available in both English and Spanish.

The book takes young readers on the journey of learning in an age-appropriate way that seven-year-old Nia's grandfather/abuelo has Alzheimer's and will need to move to a new home.

They also learn that while Granddad/Abuelito is changing, the love they have between them never will.

The book is \$12.95 and may be ordered online at <https://shop.alzfdn.org>.

## VIRTUAL BOOK CLUB FOR CAREGIVERS BEGINS MAY 3

The Alzheimer's Association will hold a virtual caregiver's book club from 4 to 5 p.m. on Mondays, May 3, 10, 17 and 24, June 7 and 14. The group will be reading and discussing "Elizabeth Is Missing" by Emma Healey, a novel about forgetful Maud, her exasperated daughter and a missing friend, Elizabeth. Maud invites readers into her mind and helps them see the world with new eyes.

Readers will relate her story to their own experiences and feelings in their journey of loving somebody living with Alzheimer's Disease or another dementia.

This is a virtual program presented via webinar and phone. One can register, by calling 800 272-3900.

## CANCER DRUG CAN HELP ALZHEIMER'S PATIENTS

A drug with a 30-year track record as an effective tool for fighting cancer may significantly improve memory and thinking in patients with mild-to-moderate Alzheimer's disease, new research suggests.

Sargramostim (brand name: Leukine) has long been used after cancer treatment to coax a patient's bone marrow to make more disease-fighting white blood cells.

Working with 40 Alzheimer's patients, researchers have now concluded that a three-week regimen of sargramostim can reverse telltale brain damage associated with the disease and markedly improve memory and thinking ability.

As reported in the "New England Journal of Medicine," a monthly shot of donanemab for about 18 months effectively eliminated buildup of amyloid-beta plaques in the brains of roughly 70 percent of Alzheimer's patients studied.

To learn more about Alzheimer's treatments, visit their website [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org).

## MASON HONORED AS WOMAN OF THE YEAR

The Nassau County Legislature honored, Asiah Mason, CEO of Mill Neck Family of Organizations, as the Distinguished Woman of the Year, highlighting her leadership and dedication to enriching the lives of others.

This recognition celebrates outstanding women for their professional accomplishments, service to others, and impact on the community.

Mill Neck Family of Organizations is a woman led, non-profit entity, which seeks to empower deaf and hard of hearing children, adults and their families to achieve their dreams through education, training and employment programs.

## TONY COELHO MEDIA SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINES MAY 20

Applications for the 2021 NBCUniversal Tony Coelho Media Scholarship are now open.

Eight scholarships will be awarded. High school seniors, undergraduate and graduate students with disabilities who are pursuing careers in media, communications or entertainment industries, who will be enrolled in college or a university during Fall 2021, are eligible. Each recipient will receive \$5,625 to help cover the cost of education at their college or university.

Applications must be received by Thursday, May 20 at 5 p.m. Applicants must submit resume, unofficial transcript from current college or university; three 300-word essays; and one letter of recommendation from a professor, academic adviser or mentor via the online form at [www.aapd.com](http://www.aapd.com). They can also be sent directly to AAPD by emailing [scholarship@aapd.com](mailto:scholarship@aapd.com) with the title "First and Last Name - 2021 NBCUniversal Tony Coelho Media Scholarship." An additional portfolio of creative work is optional.

The full application process and information can be viewed at [www.aapd.com](http://www.aapd.com).

Applicants are asked to contact [scholarship@aapd.com](mailto:scholarship@aapd.com) or 202 521-4316 with any questions or concerns.

## HEALING CONNECTIONS SUPPORT GROUP TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED

The Healing Connections Peer Support Group run by the Association for Mental Health and Wellness is temporarily suspended while the group is undergoing restructuring and rescheduling.

In the meantime, for one-to-one telephone mutual support, call the Peer Support Line, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday at 631 471-7242, ext. 1217. If you reach voicemail, leave a message and your call will be returned.

## UCP PUBLISHES ANNUAL CASE FOR INCLUSION REPORT

UCP's 2021 Case for Inclusion report, published annually in partnership with the ANCOR Foundation, keeps making news. In addition to UCP's op-ed in *The Hill*, the publication has been recently featured by Forbes.com, KTAR.com, Healthcare IT News, *Marion Star*, and Open Minds.

As part of a continuing effort to educate policymakers and the public about the challenges facing professional service providers and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, ANCOR and UCP recently held a briefing about the 2021 Case for Inclusion aimed at congressional staffers who advise federal legislators on public policy issues having an impact on the disability community. The 2021 Case for Inclusion report can be read or a recording of the launch event can be viewed by visiting [www.caseforinclusion.org](http://www.caseforinclusion.org).

## SELF-ADVOCACY GROUP MEETS MONTHLY VIA ZOOM

Independent US is a SANYS self-advocacy group started by a small group of people who use self-direction.

The group's mission is to help people with self-direction have a good life.

The group will meet via ZOOM from 4 to 5:30 p.m. on May 18, June 15, Sept. 21, Oct. 19 and Nov. 16. July, August and December dates will be announced.

Email [IndependentUs1@gmail.com](mailto:IndependentUs1@gmail.com) to register prior to each meeting.

## BRAIN INJURY PARENT SUPPORT GROUP FORMED

This is a statewide support group for parents who are raising a child with a brain injury and is under the age of 18.

Virtual meetings are scheduled for the second Tuesday of every month from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. One can join the group online or by calling them. A Zoom account is not needed to participate.

The meeting dates for this year are May 11, June 8, July 13, August 10 and Sept. 14.

For more information and to obtain the Zoom link, contact Danielle Klein at [parentsg23@gmail.com](mailto:parentsg23@gmail.com) or [info@bianys.org](mailto:info@bianys.org).

## OSCAR-NOMINATED FILM ADDRESSES DEMENTIA

In writer-director Florian Zeller's directorial debut, "The Father," Academy Award winners Olivia Colman and Anthony Hopkins play a daughter and her father facing the dynamics of dementia and caregiving.

On the Alzheimer's Association blog, [www.alz.org/blog](http://www.alz.org/blog), Zeller talks about how he challenged viewers to understand the perspective of a man living with dementia.

# PERSONAL PLACE

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

SBW 50's seeking friendship, social companion, bible discuss, healthy, no drugs, non smoker, non drinker, serious, smart, male, female respond. **A401**

WWF 81 wants friendship, male or female, age unimportant, being kind, caring and thoughtful with car is **A402**

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**

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**

Professional man seeks nice lady for long term serious relationship. Please include phone number. Serious replies only.. **A399**

Senior Female, Nassau, looking for senior male to enjoy simple things in life, family, hugs, walking WHLI, Platters. **A395**

### TO PLACE AN AD

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](mailto: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.

### TO ANSWER AN AD

Put your response letter in an envelope with the A# of the person you are writing on the front. Put this envelope in another envelope addressed to *Able personals*, P.O. Box 395, Old Bethpage, N.Y. 11804. Enclose \$2 per response to cover the cost of handling and mailing fees. Do not send cash. Checks or money orders only. Be sure to include your address or phone number. For faster response place a postage stamp on envelope.

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## LIFE ALERT REFUNDS

### Continued from page 7

that consumers be verbally told and be notified in their written agreement at the time they sign the contract or purchase a service that they have seven days after signing to cancel.

Moreover, the seven-day cancellation period does not begin to run until such disclosures are made.

James' investigation found that from at least January 2014 through February 2020, Life Alert did not make these oral

and written disclosures, affecting more than 16,000 New York residents who contracted with the company. When consumers tried to cancel their service, Life Alert refused. The company instead told consumers that they had signed a 36-month agreement and that the best it could do was either lower the consumer's monthly payments or allow them to cancel only if the consumer agreed to keep their service for six additional months.

Because Life Alert never gave the oral and written disclosures explaining the seven-day cancellation right required by New York law, consumers were entitled to cancel their contracts immediately upon request.

Life Alert must now send notices to all its current New York customers who are in the first 36 months of their contracts and who have never requested cancellation, notifying them of their right to cancel their Life Alert contracts immediately if they wish.

Additionally, customers who had unsuccessfully requested cancellation during the 36-month term of their contracts will receive refunds of what they paid to the company 30 days after they made the cancellation request, up to 24 months of payments or the number of payments they made, whichever is less. Life Alert will also pay the state of New York \$750,000 in penalties, costs, and fees for the violations of state law.



### NEW ONLINE COMMUNITY



**Dating4Disabled.com** is a dating service and online community for people with disabilities. Our user-friendly features will help you meet new friends, date, chat, blog and more. Open a **FREE** card at [www.Dating4Disabled.com](http://www.Dating4Disabled.com) and join our community today!!!

## VIDEO GAMES FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED

### Continued from page 10

designed to meet the needs of those who are visually impaired.

The color deficiency support includes filters for Protanopia, Deuteranopia, and Tritanopia, as well as customizable coloration.

"The Last of Us Part II" is only available on PlayStation 4.

The next most accessible game, "World of Warcraft," is only for PC players, but

is one of the longest-standing games on the list, having been released in 2004. 2020's most popular games rank poorly for their support for visually-impaired players with only two out of 10 offering support for color deficient players. Chess, Cribbage and Liar's Dice are some of the best board games for those that have visual impairments.



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## CAREGIVER NEEDED

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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**

## AIDE AVAILABLE

**CNA/ HOME HEALTH AIDE**  
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**.

## FREE

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

## FREE

**FREE PIANO**  
Spinet piano with stool, needs tuning. Must pick up. Call **631 879-7201**.

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**DEADLINE:**  
The 10th day of the month prior to publication

## NEW YORK STATE BUDGET PASSED

**Continued from page 4**  
districts was not included in the final budget.  
Now, we're calling on the governor to increase payment rates for preschool special ed-

ucation programs through the post-budget rate-setting process."  
**Medicaid Global Cap**  
The Medicaid Global Cap

## UNITED SPINAL NOW

**Continued from page 6**  
To live and work effectively in the community, gaps in care and coverage have to be bridged. Requiring poverty to be a requirement for assistance is not very 21st century, nor does it give people with disabilities equal opportunities to live lives of satisfaction and achievement.

United Spinal Association works hard on these and other government policy issues. If you would like to receive our advocacy e-newsletter or join our organization (you don't need to have a spinal cord injury or disorder), and receive New Mobility magazine free-of-charge, sign up at [unitedspinal.org](http://unitedspinal.org).

(A.226) was not repealed, which means that there is a limit on the amount that the State can spend on health care.  
According to a spokesperson from CIDNY, this will result in pressure to cut home-care services and other types of health care as costs rise during the COVID-19 pandemic.  
**CDPA**  
The budget also includes a provision directing the commissioner of health to re-offer contracts to applicants under the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance (CDPA) pro-

gram to Fiscal Intermediaries (FIs) who meet certain criteria. This could lead to more ILCs being awarded contracts to continue as FIs.  
According to Parker, the language in the budget did not specify ILCs as a category, but does leave open the possibility for additional ILCs to be awarded contracts. Since the independent living movement helped create CDPA in New York and are consumer-lead, unlike most all other FIs, maintaining ILCs as FIs is integral to the integrity of CDPA.

# THE ACCESS INDEX

## ATTORNEY

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# SPORTS SCENE

## Champion Prepares for Paralympics

Diveheart is a nonprofit that offers scuba therapy to people with disabilities. Board member Ron Rispoli won a first-place award for the 2021 Indoor State Championship from the Illinois Target Archery Association. It's another milestone for this archer who's preparing to compete in the Paralympic Games.

Jim Elliott, Diveheart's president said Rispoli is one of its most senior board members and is a recreational therapist at the Illinois Center for Rehabilitation and Education. Rispoli, center, uses his teeth to aim for his target because of a disability in his right arm.



**MORE SPORTS  
PAGE 12**

Send Your Sports Stories to [ablenews@aol.com](mailto:ablenews@aol.com)

### Blind Soccer Videos On YouTube



USABA has made a series of 17 instructional videos available on the Paralympic sport of blind soccer, also known as 5-a-side football. The videos are divided into easy-to-understand segments and are perfect teaching tools for coaches and volunteers alike.

Katie (Atkinson) Smith and her team at the Columbus (Ohio) Recreation and Parks Department produced these informative videos. Smith is the head coach and creator of Ohio's first and only blind soccer team.

The series of 17 instructional videos in the USABA Blind Soccer Instructional Video Series playlist is available on the USABA YouTube channel.

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