

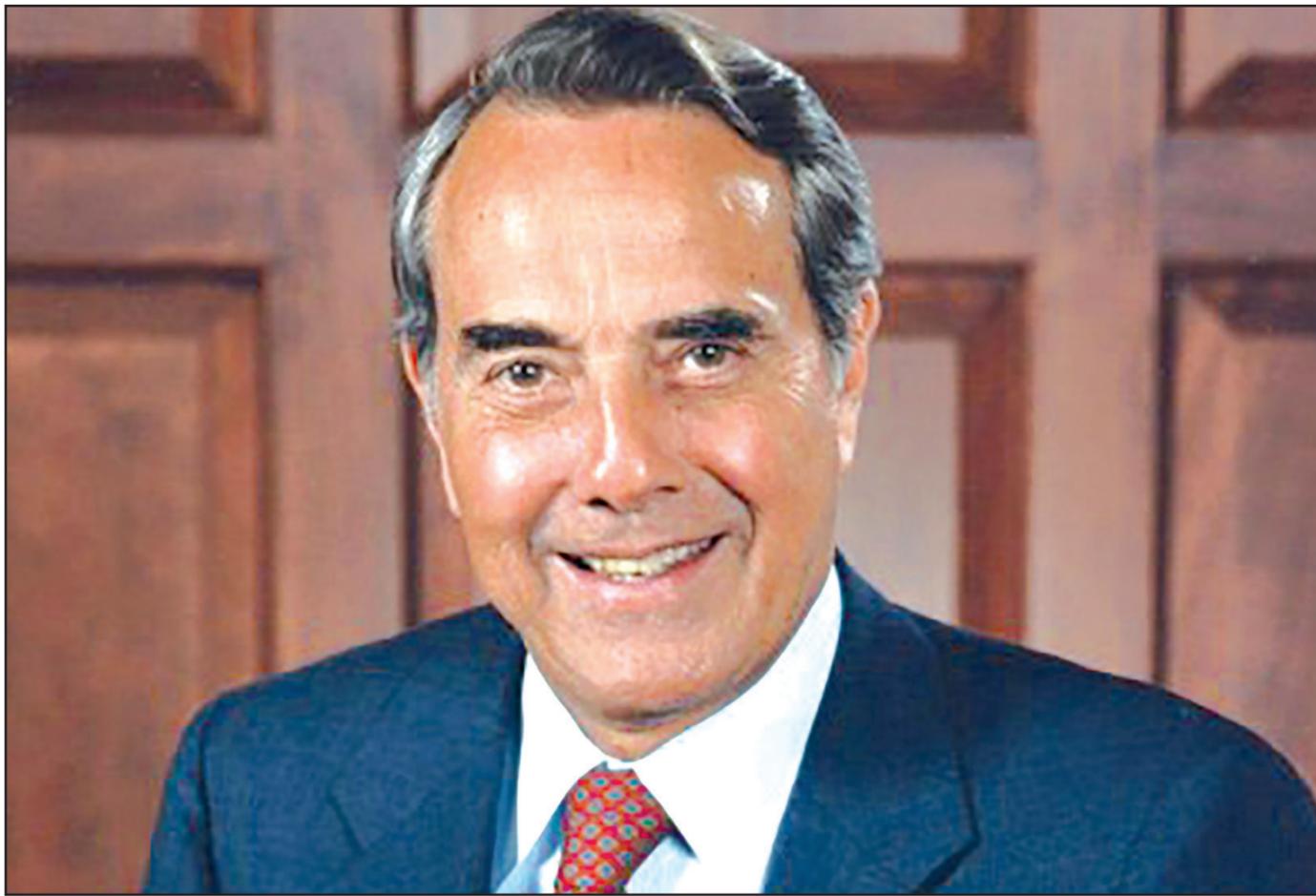
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THE NEWSPAPER *POSITIVELY* FOR BY & ABOUT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

BOB DOLE

War Hero, Public Servant, Advocate Dies



By Allison Howe

Former Sen. Bob Dole, a war hero who spent decades as a public servant and a strong disability advocate, died Dec. 5 at the age of 98.

“The world as we know it today is more accessible and inclusive for people with dis-

abilities because of Sen. Bob Dole,” said Maria Town, president of the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD). “His passing represents an enormous loss for AAPD, the disability community at-large and the nation.” Dole was among those who founded the American Associa-

tion of People with Disabilities (AAPD) in 1995 and in 2020, they honored him with their Lifetime Achievement Award.

Passing the ADA

Dole was instrumental in the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990. According to AAPD, his lead-

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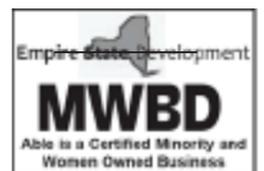
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Grant Provides Subway Funding

The Biden Administration will award \$28.9 million for three projects in the state of New York through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary grants program.

The total FY 21 RAISE investment in American infrastructure was nearly \$1 billion, awarded to 90 projects in 47 states, the District of Columbia and Guam.

We're proud to support these great projects that will improve infrastructure, strengthen supply chains, make us safer, advance equity and combat climate change," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. "As in past years, we received far more applications than we could fund: this cycle saw about a ten-to-one ratio of requests to available dollars. But going forward, with the passage of President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, we will be able to support far more infrastructure projects to support jobs and everyday life in communities across the country."

The program selection criteria

encompassed safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, economic competitiveness, state of good repair, innovation and partnerships with a broad range of stakeholders. Within these criteria, the grants reflect the department's priorities for creating good-paying jobs, improving safety, applying transformative technology and explicitly addressing climate change and advancing racial equity.

The New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority will receive \$15 million to make the Broadway Junction Station Complex in East New York, Brooklyn fully ADA-accessible by installing seven new ADA-compliant elevators and associated elevator machine rooms, adding stairs, ADA-compliant ramps and handrails and completing necessary structural, architectural, communications and electrical work as part of the overall elevator installation.

By eliminating accessibility gaps, improving circulation, and providing direct access between

transit lines at the Broadway Station complex, the project improves access to jobs, healthcare and other essential services.

Fiscal Year 2021 RAISE Transportation discretionary grants are for planning and capital investments in surface transportation infrastructure and were awarded on a competitive basis for projects that will have a significant local or regional impact. RAISE funding supports roads, bridges, transit, rail, ports or intermodal transportation.

Per statute the Department is awarding 50 percent of RAISE Transportation grant funding to projects located in rural areas and 50 percent to urban areas that deliver positive benefits for these communities.

For this round of RAISE Transportation discretionary grants, the maximum grant award is \$25 million, and no more than \$100 million can be awarded to a single state, as specified in the appropriations act.

Caregivers' Financial Needs Unmet

About 29 million people (13 percent of the adult population) are financial caregivers -- those who manage the finances of an aging parent or a family member with a disability or struggling with addiction recovery. With the aging population expected to rise by 100 million people by 2060, the number of people who care for them will increase as well. While caregivers believe that their needs have gone largely unmet by financial institutions a survey reveals how banks can step in to help.

To learn more about this cohort, 5,400 people were surveyed

with striking results. Relative to non-caregivers, financial caregivers are 52 percent more likely to make household spending decisions; 68 percent more likely to have a mortgage; 94 percent more likely to have an investment account; 93 percent more likely to carry life insurance; 27 percent more likely to have a high net worth; and 198 percent more likely to have a small business account.

Unfortunately, the survey shows that these caregivers, who should be attractive customers for banking and financial services industry, generally don't feel cared-

for in their banking relationships. This challenge comes with a great opportunity for financial services providers. Solving the problem--attending specifically to the needs of caregivers--has an outsize impact on loyalty and repeat business. The study showed an 83 percent correlation between how helpful a caregiver found a bank and the impact it had on customer loyalty.

The study also reveals that a bank moving from below-average helpfulness to above-average helpfulness increased the caregiver's likelihood of doing business with that bank again by 75 percent. Indeed, helpfulness has a significantly greater impact on loyalty and other factors -- information American Banker's readership should find quite valuable.

The study states, "Those [banks] willing to engage authentically in this space will have an advantage in attracting and retaining customers in valuable segments - head of household, business owner, life insurance policyholder, mass affluent - that can positively affect all areas of their business."

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House Embraces Insulin Affordability

The American Diabetes Association® (ADA) hailed a major national victory when the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Build Back Better Act, including the most sweeping nationwide measure to date to limit out-of-pocket co-pays for insulin. The national co-pay cap, which ADA has aggressively promoted, would apply to Medicare beneficiaries, individuals on commercial insurance and those covered by other group health plans.

The House-passed legislation creates an out-of-pocket co-pay limit of \$35 per month for insulin. In the days before the House vote, nearly 15,000 ADA advocates contacted their representatives through the ADA's Engagement Platform to urge support for co-pay caps and for allowing the government to negotiate drug prices with manufacturers.

Until now, the diabetes community has felt the impact of the steep rise in the average cost of insulin, the price of

which nearly tripled between 2002 and 2013. As a result of high costs, one in four insulin-dependent Americans reports needing to ration their insulin. "This vote is a victory for millions of Americans facing unaffordable insulin and hope for lowering other drug costs. House leaders have taken a bold and urgent step this week," said Lisa Murdock, chief advocacy officer for the ADA.

In the run-up to House consideration of the insulin co-pay cap, the ADA led efforts around

the country to advocate for co-pay caps that have been enacted in 20 states and the District of Columbia. "These states paved the way for this week's historic action in the House," said Murdock. "We thank those members of the House of Representatives who supported a national insulin co-pay cap, building on the efforts of state leaders before them. Together, these leaders are working to ensure that millions of people with diabetes will be able to af-

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Home-Care Crisis Grips New York

A new report indicates a significant percentage of vulnerable people are fighting to maintain their at-home care workers, with many losing the battle to low wages that persist because of the state's reluctance to increase pay for aides, advocates say.

Approximately 74 percent of seniors and people with disabilities are unable to retain home-care workers, according to a study authored by the Consumer Directed

Personal Assistance Association of New York State.

Upstate, two-thirds of care workers earn \$12.50 an hour. In July, the hourly rate for fast food workers rose to \$15 an hour.

Currently, many people seeking help are using their own money to supplement additional wages for aides, leaving the industry in crisis.

Workers are normally paid through government funding poured into the Medicaid pro-

gram. The report found that consumers are spending between \$200 to \$500 per week to supplement additional wages.

Still, that hasn't done much to stop workers from quitting in droves due to the intense work involved with caring for a vulnerable patient and the inability to thrive financially. More than 40 percent of state home-care workers live in or close to poverty levels due to the low wages.

Suggestions to remedy the program involve raising the minimum wage for aides to around \$20.50 an hour or 150 percent of the minimum wage. Legislation sponsored by state Sen. Rachel May, (D-Syracuse) and Assemblyman Richard Gottfried, (D-Manhattan) seeks to remedy the issue.

In an October news conference, state Sen. Majority Leader Andrea Stew-

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CAP Lauds Minimum Wage Increase

The U.S. Department of Labor announced the final rule raising the minimum wage for federal contractors to \$15, as required by Executive Order 14026, "Increasing the Minimum Wage for Federal Contractors," which was signed by Pres. Joe Biden in April.

Following the announcement, Karla Walter, senior director of employment policy at the Center for American Progress (CAP), released a statement.

"Raising the contractor minimum wage to \$15 per hour would improve the lives of hundreds of thousands of American workers and help close pay disparities for women and Black and Latino workers, who are more likely to be employed in the low-wage industries that the federal government contracts out.

The rule also boosts equity by eliminating the tipped mini-

mum wage for contract workers by 2024, ensuring coverage for disabled workers, and extending contractor minimum wage protections to workers in Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories.

"Corporations receiving billions in government spending must function as model employers. The final rule is a critical step toward delivering on President Biden's commitments to raise wages for workers and support a robust economic recovery. It will help ensure that the investments in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and Build Back Better Act support working Americans from all walks of life."

Mia Ives-Ruble, director of the Disability Justice Initiative at CAP, added, "This is a huge win for the disability community, which has been fighting for years to phase out

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AHRCNYC & Allies Support DSP Pay Hike



AHRC New York City recently joined dozens of allies in City Hall Park to tell New York State lawmakers firsthand accounts of the crisis facing Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) and service providers. "Care, not cuts — that's why we're here today," said Marco Damiani, CEO of AHRC New York City. "You are all part of a social revolution that has put people with I/DD at the center of society and the people that help them get there are DSPs. We need to be sure that value that communities have by having DSPs working with people with I/DD continues."

Jason Smith, a community support professional at Norfolk Day Habilitation, said "When people ask me what I do, I say I build and shape lives. Almost two years ago now, the pandemic hit and we were labeled essential workers. The word essential is very important — I don't get paid like I'm essential, and I don't feel like I'm essential. But I'm going to keep working to build and shape lives, and that is essential."

From the left, Barry Brenner, Soraya Bonostro, a Community Support Professional at the Cyril Weinberg Adult Day Center in Queens, Michael Vias and Christian Cameau.

Comptroller Finds Medicaid Errors

State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli has released three reports that found more than \$100 million in improper payments made by the Department of Health (DOH) for the Medicare buy-in program, maternity care, and drug and therapy claims. Nearly \$400,000 in premiums may have been paid for deceased individuals.

“The Medicaid program pro-

vides critical health care services to millions of New Yorkers but the program is dogged by oversight problems and payment errors,” DiNapoli said. “Over the years, we’ve uncovered billions of dollars of waste and abuse in the system. DOH should act on our recommendations to ensure significant unnecessary expenses and preventable mistakes don’t end up costing taxpayers.”

The New York State Medicaid program is administered by DOH and is a federal, state and local government funded program that provides a wide range of medical services to economically disadvantaged populations, including low-income children and their families, seniors and people with disabilities. As of March 2021, New York’s Medicaid program had approximately 7.3 million

recipients and claim costs totaled more than \$68 billion.

The first audit released looked at Medicaid recipients, who are also enrolled in Medicare. Under the Medicare buy-in program, Medicaid pays Medicare premiums for individuals who meet buy-in program eligibility requirements. Auditors found Medicaid made \$31.7 million in improper Medi-

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LPA Comments On Therapy For Dwarfism

Little People of America (LPA), the world’s oldest and largest support organization for people with dwarfism and their families, has been tracking biotechnical developments for the treatment of individuals with achondroplasia.

LPA President, Mark Povernelli, says, “With the FDA approval of BioMarin’s Voxzogo™ therapy, the dwarfism community has been challenged with the impact of this new treatment on its health, culture and standing within society.

LPA believes that a focus on

growth velocity is a search for a pharmaceutical solution for a societal problem.” LPA wants to reframe priorities in research to the most meaningful ones for LPA members, such as reducing spinal stenosis, sleep apnea and the need for corrective surgeries, as well as supporting other improvements in quality of life.

In LPA’s mission to support people with dwarfism, LPA is working to provide accurate information to help families make these complex, emotionally charged and life-altering choices.

LPA believes it is the organiza-

tion’s responsibility to help LPA’s members better understand patient rights and to advocate for a research focus on healthcare outcomes beyond growth velocity.

LPA respects the personal choices of families or individuals regarding healthcare decisions and welcomes all individuals and families to be part of LPA, regardless of medical decisions and outcomes and recognizes the complexity and sensitivity of this topic for the dwarfism community.

LPA’s role is to provide social

support and advocacy for the organization’s members and the dwarfism community. As part of this role, LPA supports medical research, especially that which holds the potential to improve the quality of life of LPA members by treating symptoms that can range from uncomfortable to lethal.

As medical science moves forward, LPA will continue to inform researchers about the value of dwarf pride and its contributions to human biological, social and cultural diversity.

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Able Reporter Writes Book

Understanding The 613 Mitzvot



David Block, a frequent contributor to *Able Newspaper* and sports writer has written a book “Understanding the 613 Mitzvot.” Published after 10 years in the making, he wrote the book as a service to people with disabilities who want to learn Torah, but who need extra assistance. The book is available on Amazon.

Community to Hochul – Bring Back Advocate

Earlier this year, the New York State Assembly and Senate unanimously passed bills A.3130 (Steck)/S.1836 (Skoufis) to reinstate the Office of the Advocate for People with Disabilities into the New York administrative structure of agencies. The legislation now awaits Gov. Kathy Hochul's signature.

Originally established by Gov. Mario Cuomo through Executive Order, the Office of the Advocate was intended to provide a formal voice within state government for New Yorkers with disabilities. The office helped develop policies to ensure the state met the access needs of people with disabilities.

The office also served as the state's coordinator for the implementation of Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and compliance with the 1999 United States Supreme Court decision in *Olmstead v. L.C.* which concluded that unjustified segregation of persons with disabilities constitutes discrimination in violation of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Under Gov. Andrew Cuomo, the advocacy functions of this office were moved to the Justice Center, then ultimately dissolved altogether. While there are state agencies that address

coordinator for the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act; coordinate state activities to ensure that state programs do not discriminate against and are acces-

sible to persons with disabilities; and ensure that such programs provide services to individuals with disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate.

Additionally, the Office of the Advocate will represent the interests of the disability community in state government by reviewing proposed legislation and regulations to determine their impact on people with disabilities.

This bill passed in 2019, but was vetoed by Gov. Cuomo. The disability community is counting on Gov. Kathy Hochul to reprioritize the needs of the disability community in

New York State government once again. Meghan Parker, director of Advocacy at NYAIL responded to news of the bill's passage saying, "We have been urging the State to re-authorize this office for several years now as a necessary replacement for the advocacy and services that have largely disappeared. "Re-opening and funding the Office of the Advocate has been a top legislative priority for the disability rights community and we are happy the Legislature has recognized how important this office is to New Yorkers with disabilities and their families." "We expect Gov. Hochul will recognize the needs of the disability community has been largely ignored for the past decade and will sign this critical legislation as a first step to righting this wrong," added Lindsay Miller, NYAIL's executive director. "New York State can be a leader in ensuring the rights and access needs of disabled people are fully considered and addressed and signing this critical legislation is an important first step."

'Re-opening and funding the Office of the Advocate has been a top legislative priority...'

-MEGHAN PARKER
Director of Advocacy at NYAIL

individuals with specific diagnoses, there is no state agency charged with meeting the needs of the disability community in general.

According to the New York Association on Independent Living (NYAIL), a statewide membership organization of independent living centers, a large segments of the disability community are left without a state agency addressing their needs and representing their interests in state government.

A.3130/S.1836 addresses that problem. If the bill is passed, the Office of the Advocate will serve as the state's

COVID Amplifies Teen Mental Health Issues

Anxiety and mental health concerns among younger Americans have been a growing concern with experts, one that has significantly increased in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

One of the biggest issues parents of teenagers may face is determining if their child is experiencing a mental health challenge or ordinary growing pains.

A new national survey by GeneSight Mental Health Monitor shows that only half of the parents with children ages 16 to 24 said they are very or completely confident they can tell the difference between normal adolescent challenges and a mental health condition.

Further, nearly one in three parents believe that anxiety and worry are the same thing.

"Anxiety and worry are not the same thing. Worry is situational. Anxiety is persistent

and excessive – and it doesn't go away when the specific cause of stress or distress is gone," said Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Debbie Thomas, based in Louisville, Ky.

"Every day in my practice I see children and young adults and/or their parents who have unintentionally ignored or minimized the symptoms of anxiety until they become a crisis. The best outcomes occur when we don't wait until anxiety becomes all-consuming and life-disrupting."

Communication

The first step in helping your child with mental health challenges is communication. However, more than half of parents think their child would be comfortable talking with them about their mental health struggles. This is echoed by the 16- to 24-year-old surveyed – one in five said they wouldn't tell anyone about

their struggles with mental health.

"As many parents of teens know, your kids may stop confiding in you. Yet, the GeneSight Mental Health Monitor shows how vital mental health conversations are," said Mark Pollack, chief medical officer for Mental Health at Myriad Genetics. "If you suspect your child's mental health is suffering, talk to them and talk to a healthcare professional about your concerns."

Seeking Treatment

Parents may struggle with identifying, and talking about mental health challenges, but the GeneSight Mental Health Monitor found that early intervention and treatment may help. Three in four young adults surveyed who have experienced a mental health challenge indicated at least some of their challenges occurred before age 18, yet half said

their parents never sought treatment for them. Nearly three quarters of these young adults wish that their parents would have.

"Transitioning into adulthood is enough of a struggle – no one should have to battle their mental health at the same time," said Thomas. "Give your child the gift of mental health treatment if they are experiencing anxiety so that they can become successful, caring and well-adjusted adults. This also lets them know it is okay, normal and optimal to seek help at other times in their life if needed, and is another positive step in de-stigmatizing mental healthcare."

For more information on how genetic testing can help inform clinicians on treatment of depression, anxiety, ADHD and other psychiatric conditions, visit www.GeneSight.com.



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UNITED SPINAL^{NOW}

Advocacy, Achievement, Satisfaction and Friends for Life

BY JAMES WEISMAN
GENERAL COUNSEL



“If you build it, they will come,” is the message delivered in the mystical baseball movie, “Field of Dreams.” United Spinal Association is the beneficiary of this philosophy, at least insofar as our advocacy program is concerned.

For generations, first as Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association (EPVA), a regional membership organization, then as United Spinal, a national membership organization, our mission has been to assist people with disabilities to live effectively in the community, and not in healthcare facilities. Since just after World War II, that has been our objective.

I have witnessed the most isolated and depressed people with disabilities respond in remarkable ways to social and professional interactions with peers with disabilities. When I came to EPVA, the post-Vietnam era wheelchair users I dealt with gained as much from participation in wheelchair basketball and other wheelchair sports as they did from counseling and rehab. Wheelchair sports and participation in other team/group activities builds self-esteem and the confidence to experience more new things.

Advocacy, on behalf of people with disabilities, by people with disabilities, not only makes the world a better place, but also yields the important byproduct of the camaraderie and esprit de corps that comes from group effort against a common enemy or to solve a common problem.

Success yields group euphoria and personal satisfaction. Like participation in wheelchair sports, the confidence to take on new challenges elevates the lifestyles of all people with disabilities in the community.

Most of United Spinal Association’s 59,000 members have spinal cord injuries or disorders (SCI/D), but we also invite others who share our mission to join our organization and participate in our advocacy and other programs. The New York chapter is run by Jose Hernandez, a vocal and prolific advocate, who is also employed by the national organization to provide assistance in our resource center and with our national advocacy program. If you want to be a local advocate in New York, contact info@nycspinalcord.org.

The national organization runs an advocacy program as well. You can participate in that, too. The national organization’s program is run by Steve Lieberman, located in our Washington, D.C. office. Steve, a person with a disability, worked for Sen. Robert Menendez (D-N.J.) for ten years before joining our staff.

He runs our district mobilization program, which organizes United Spinal advocates by congressional district and has more than 1,200 registered advocates from 392 of the 435 congressional districts to date, in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, with the goal of having a critical mass of advocates all across the country.

Annie Streit, who is a C5 quadriplegic, runs our grassroots advocacy network. It is less than a year old and already involves 2,000 advocates nationwide. Online gatherings about local and national issues are discussed in a social setting among peers. Advocates tell each other their war stories, inspire each other, moan and groan together and strategize.

You can sign up for our network at <https://unitedspinal.org/grassroots-advocacy-network> or contact Steve directly at slieberman@unitedspinal.org or Annie at astreit@unitedspinal.org.

Help others. Help yourself. Get involved, even if only online. I promise you achievement, satisfaction and friends for life.

Easter Seals Presents Access Awards

Deaf advocate, and actress Millicent Simmonds hosted the Media Access Awards, in partnership with nonprofit disability services provider Easterseals.

The annual ceremony, which aired virtually on ExtraTV.com/MediaAccessAwards and mediaaccessawards.com, was founded by Norman Lear and now under the leadership of Deborah Calla and Allen Rucker since 2010, honors those in film and TV who include characters and actors with disabilities. The event pays tribute to individuals, series and films that have redefined on-screen representation for the disability community, while advancing the portrayal and

employment of people with disabilities in Hollywood.

For the first time ever, IMDbPro, the essential resource for entertainment industry professionals, presented the IMDbPro | Media Access Award for Excellence in Directing, honoring a groundbreaking, creative luminary whose directorial career has left an indelible mark on the entertainment industry and exemplifies their commitment to inclusion for the disability community.

The award, which was presented to “A Quiet Place”’s John Krasinski, builds on IMDbPro’s nearly 20-year history of empowering entertainment professionals to discover and learn more about talent and projects, and on its

ongoing commitment to supporting and collaboratively working with organizations and events that create and celebrate greater diversity, equity and inclusion in the entertainment industry.

Viewers were treated to awe-inspiring performances by Rex & Friends, a group of autistic and blind musicians and singers led by Rex Lewis-Clack, a musical savant who has been profiled on CBS’s “60 minutes”, and by Kinetic Light Company, which creates and performs at the intersections of disability, dance, and race. Other celebrity appearances included Lauren Ridloff, Jimmy Kimmel, Russell Crowe, Keah Brown, Jim Parsons, Zac Efron, Meredith Scott Lynn,

Jacob Tremblay, Wilmer Valderrama, Sian Heder, Shoshannah Stern, Jamie Brewer, Zack Gottsagen, Michael Patrick Thornton and more.

The 2021 Media Access Awards in partnership with Easterseals was sponsored by Platinum Sponsors IMDbPro and “Friends” producer Kevin Bright; Gold Sponsors ViacomCBS, Comcast, and NBCUniversal; and Silver Sponsors Bunim/Murray, Sony Pictures, the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation, Legendary Films, Woman of Her Word, and Disney General Entertainment Services. The 2021 Media Access Awards is a Calla Productions, EP by Deborah Calla and written by Allen Rucker.

Travel Tips For People With Eye Disorders

Glaucoma is one of the leading causes of blindness worldwide, affecting more than 3 million people in the United States alone.

It is often called the silent thief of sight because it robs people of vision slowly and without early symptoms. However, regular eye exams can lead to early diagnosis and help prevent vision loss. January is Glaucoma Awareness Month.

People who already have vision loss due to glaucoma, as well as those with other eye disorders, can face challenges traveling as their vision changes. Problems with reading, bright lights/glare, peripheral vision and walking due to the inability to see curbs, steps, small obstacles and uneven sidewalks may seem insurmountable.

However, there are some guidelines that can help people maintain their independence and move around safely and with confidence in their communities and beyond.

Travelers should gather information about destinations and decide the best method to get there as far in advance as possible. They should ask customer service representatives for help get-

ting around bus and train stations and airports.

It is important to hold on to handrails when exiting and entering buses and to ask bus drivers to announce stops. They should ask fellow passengers if the train pulling into the station is the expected train. One can avoid missing the right stop on the train by being familiar with the names of other stops and allowing enough time to get off the train.

Travelers should call ahead to airports at least 48-hours in advance to arrange assistance with check-in, boarding and baggage claim.

They should also consider receiving training with a white cane. White canes have worked for more than 100 years, and they remain one of the best tools to provide tactile information, as well as identify a person as legally blind.

Technology also offers solutions, including screen readers, voice over for smart phones and apps that can identify money and objects and help with independent travel.

People with vision impairment may feel anxious about crossing streets, navigating

in unfamiliar areas or taking public transportation. Vision rehabilitation and mobility training can provide techniques and skills to

improve safety and travel independence.

Written by the Orientation and Mobility Instructors of Lighthouse Guild

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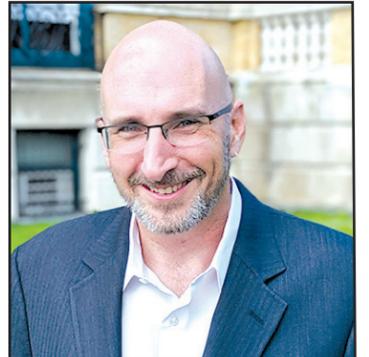
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CDPAA EDITORIAL**Who Is Kathy Hochul?**

BY BRYAN O'MALLEY, EXEC. DIR.
CDPAANYS



On Jan. 5, 2022, Gov. Kathy Hochul will give her first State of the State address. About three weeks later, she will lay out her 2022-2023 budget proposal.

This is the only time she will do this before she runs for a full term as Governor, meaning it will send a large signal as to what, and who, she thinks is important. These presentations lay out the Governor's vision and priorities for the year to come.

As she outlines her policies, the disability community will be watching to see who Gov. Hochul is. Will she continue former Governor Cuomo's hostility to the disability community and home care, or will she look to enact policies that move home- and community-based services forward? The stakes couldn't be higher as Hochul decides what will be included in her address.

What makes the cut for the speech is indicative of what will appear in the state's budget, and it is more important than ever that real investment in community-based long-term care, with wage increases, are included. Fair Pay for Home Care (A.6329 (Gottfried)/S.5374 (May)) is an opportunity for her to show an actionable plan that is ready to be implemented. It would guarantee home-care workers earn at least \$22.50 per hour across the state, and make sure that this wage increases as the minimum wage itself goes up in the future.

Passing Fair Pay would reverse a decade-long trend of divestment in Medicaid home- and community-based services (HCBS) that has caused the worst workforce crisis in the United States; made the problems faced by COVID-19 even worse; and is currently intensifying our hospital and nursing home staffing shortages by eliminating preventive care that can keep people out of these settings to begin with. If it is included in the State of the State, we will be dramatically closer to success. Unfortunately, large, systemic change is rarely that simple.

The state's long-term care system is at a breaking point. A recent CDPAANYS report on the consequences of low wages showed that more than half of the workers who quit gave low pay as the reason and that nearly a quarter of CDPA consumers supplemented their worker's payments out of pocket. People with disabilities and seniors who cannot hire or keep workers are at direct risk of injury or being placed in an institution against their wishes, with one in ten saying it took more than a year to hire new workers.

This is not just an economic issue but also a civil rights issue. The 1999 Supreme Court decision *Olmstead vs L.C.* mandated that states must provide services in the least restrictive settings possible, placing HCBS as the standard of care. New York must ensure the workforce is in place to provide services to comply with the law, and the only way to do so is to significantly raise worker pay.

The need to invest in home care has gained attention at the Federal level, with the support of President Biden and Senate Majority Leader Schumer. Supporting Fair Pay for Home Care is a chance for Gov. Hochul to own the issue in New York and to serve as a national model for other state leaders.

In pledging to invest in care giving and the workers that are its lynchpin, she could reverse the more than decade-long trend of neglect that has led us to the brink. It will be a heavy lift, but taking on these lifts lets her show she can demonstrate the leadership New York needs and deserves.

Who is Governor Hochul? On January 5, we will start to find out.

‘Not Going Quietly’ to Premiere on PBS

Arising star in progressive politics and new father, Ady Barkan’s life was upended when he was diagnosed with ALS at age 32.

But after a chance encounter with a U.S. senator on an airplane catapults him to fame, Barkan and a motley crew of activists barnstorm across the country, igniting a movement for universal healthcare in a journey that transforms his belief in what is possible for his country and his family.

“Not Going Quietly” premieres on the award-winning PBS television series POV 10 to 11:30 p.m. ET on Monday, Jan. 24 (check local listings) on PBS, pbs.org, and the PBS Video app.

An inspiring and sobering story about disability, activism and family – and Barkan’s fight for accessible healthcare – the documentary is directed by Nicholas Bruckman (director of “La American” and producer of “Valley of Saints.”

Recently nominated for three IDA awards including Best Documentary Feature and the winner of the 2021 Audience Award at

the SXSW Film Festival, the film is executive produced by Bradley Whitford, Mark Duplass and Jay Duplass, Sam Bisbee, Jackie Kelman Bisbee, Wendy Kelman Neu, Nina Tassler, Joan Boorstein, and Denise Di Novi. The film also won the Special Jury Recognition for Documentary Feature for Humanity in Social Action, was nominated for two Critics Choice Documentary Awards and screened at the Tribeca Film Festival. RogerEbert.com called it “a shot of pure inspiration.”

“Not Going Quietly” offers a nuanced look behind the scenes of Barkan’s life and work as he navigates the successes and struggles of his fight for universal healthcare while dealing with ALS. Facing the loss of his natural speaking voice, he recognizes the power of his words and personal story to spark change, remaining committed to using his platform to advocate for others. Transformed by an illness that made strikingly clear how healthcare systems need fixing, Barkan’s story is ultimately one of perseverance and hope, reveling in the possibility



Ady Barkan

for change and the joy of solidarity.

“In putting his personal struggle on display as a tool for social change, Ady’s vulnerability, strength, and commitment moved us deeply as filmmakers. Our goal in making this film, through Ady’s example, is to explore how personal storytelling is one of the most powerful tools to take part in our democracy and help build a more just society – a goal we share with the incredible team at POV,” said director Nicholas Bruckman and producer Amanda Roddy.

“Not Going Quietly” connects us with a brave and generous protagonist who, in the hands of these gifted filmmakers, becomes an active participant in the telling of his own story. Ady’s willingness to let us into his life, even in his most challenging moments, is an act of kindness and an invitation to solidarity. His spirit and courage are an inspiration and a reminder of our shared responsibility to care for each other,” said Chris White, executive producer, POV.

Following the airing of “Not Going Quietly,” the short film “Team Meryland” will make its public television broadcast debut as part of POV Shorts’ fourth season. The film, directed by Gabriel Gaurano, takes place in the projects of Watts where Meryland Gonzales, a 12-year-old boxer trains to be crowned the 2019 Junior Olympics champion. Meanwhile, her immigrant parents work tirelessly to give their child a shot at achieving her dreams. “Team Meryland” was an official selection at both the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival and the Palm Springs International Film Festival.

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Sen. Bob Dole Remembered

Continued from page 1

ership is one of the primary reasons the bill garnered such significant bipartisan support.

“Bob Dole, a paralyzed World War II veteran, was an elected official who went the extra mile for people with disabilities,” said James Weisman, general counsel for United Spinal Association. “His support of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990 was key to its passage. He fought his party when Republicans failed to support the U.N. Convention on Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD). He will be sorely missed.”

Although the Senate voted not to ratify the CRPD, Dole continued to advocate for it after he retired from the Senate. In addition to his work on public governmental disability policy, in 1984 he created the Dole Foundation, which provided employment services for those with disabilities.

WWII

He was nearly killed in World War II while trying to

save another soldier, with gunfire causing severe damage to one of his shoulders, arm, collarbone, spinal cord and a kidney. He was temporarily paralyzed from the neck down.

Despite several surgeries and extensive rehabilitation, his injuries left him permanently disabled, earning him two Purple Hearts and two awards of the Bronze Star. He required about three years of rehabilitation and was left without the use of his arm.

He went on to graduate from law school, becoming a county attorney in his home state of Kansas. He decided to get into politics and won a seat for the Kansas state Legislature as a Republican and then had a successful run for the U.S. House of Representatives. He later served in the Senate from 1969 until 1996. He also had three unsuccessful runs for president.

Focused On Veterans

After retiring from the Senate, Dole remained active – devoting his time to political ac-



Sen. Dole joins students at the Viscardi Center.

tivism; speaking engagements on behalf of active-duty service members; philanthropic work; and penning his memoir. He especially focused on causes that benefitted veterans.

Dole became national chairperson for the National Mall's World War II Memorial fundraising campaign, which was completed in 2004.

He was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal in 2018, making him only the eighth senator to receive this honor.

Dole served as co-chair of the Henry Viscardi Achievement Awards since their 2013 inception and attended their 50th Annual Celebrity Sports Night event. He often toured the center and spent time with Viscardi School students.

“While our whole country mourns his loss, let us take a moment to remember and recognize the leadership role he took in the drafting and passage of the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA),” said Chris Rosa, incoming president of the Viscardi Center. “Without his true commitment to bipartisanship, the ADA would not have been possible. People with disabilities have lost a powerful advocate.”

Impactful Servant

“The Arc will remember Sen.

Dole as an impactful public servant on disability rights issues for decades.” said Peter Berns, CEO of The Arc.

“We honor Sen. Dole’s commitment and his many years on the front lines of the movement.” We look to today’s elected officials to carry on Sen. Dole’s legacy of doing what is right to ensure equal treatment and human rights for people with disabilities.”

The first of several services in Dole’s honor took place at the Capitol Rotunda, where approximately 100 invited guests paid their respects.

His funeral, held at the Washington National Cathedral, was attended by Pres. Joe Biden, Vice Pres. Kamala Harris, former Pres. Bill Clinton, three former vice presidents, and other dignitaries.

Biden’s Eulogy

Biden gave a eulogy, in which he stated, “We’re bidding this great American farewell. But we know that as long as we keep his spirit alive, as long as we see each other not as enemies but as neighbors and colleagues, as long as we remember that we’re here not to tear down but to build up; as long as we remember that, then taps will never sound for Bob Dole. For Bob will be with us always – cracking a joke,

Continued on page 14

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Federation Of The Handicapped

By Warren Shaw

Federation for the Crippled and Disabled was a unique entrepreneurial effort by and for people with disabilities. It began in the spring of 1935, during the Great Depression, as a not-for-profit that combined self-help and sociability with job training and employment. Federation has not generally been considered in the context of disability activism, but it really ought to be.

Federation's origins were by chance – a meeting of three unemployed disabled men on the sidewalks of Times Square. They were drawn together by a police officer's encounter with one of them – a double amputee selling pencils and other small goods.

Concerned that an arrest might be imminent, two single amputees came to back up the legless man. After the man proved he was a licensed dealer and not a vagrant, the officer let him go, and the three went to get a cup of coffee.

Disease Caused Disability

The legless man was Michael Bertero, an immigrant from Turin, Italy, who had at one time been securely employed as a foreman in a furniture factory. A skilled craftsman – not a laborer – Bertero owned a home in the Bronx and was providing for his wife and children in the usual way. In 1930, he fell ill with Buerger's Disease, which required amputation of both legs at the hip.

Discharged by his employer and unable to find other work, medical costs and lost wages brought his family to the brink of financial ruin. Bertero's family was forced to rent out rooms. His son left school and found a job, while Bertero began scouring the City's subways on a small wooden platform fitted with roller skate wheels. He begged for change until he got arrested on the Lexington Avenue line.

He got off with a suspended sentence for disorderly conduct, then obtained a license to work as a "sidewalk department store owner" and began the low-paid work that brought the three men together.

Joining Mr. Bertero over coffee was Ralph Rice, who had lost a leg and most of his fingers to frostbite in an Alaskan blizzard and Robert Boster, a Midwesterner whose mangled leg had to be amputated after a railroad accident.

Drawn together by their common impairments and unemployment, they were caught in the same trap. With 25 percent of the nation out of work, the Depression was nearly insurmountable even for nondisabled people. What in the world were they supposed to do?

An organization of people with disabilities might provide a path to

a better future. They all agreed on that, and they pledged to found an organization devoted to improving the situation of adults with disabilities.

Bringing New Members

As they tried to move this idea forward, Bertero, Boster and Rice found other people with disabilities who were looking for a way out and were willing to sign on as members. In keeping with their all-for-one, one-for-all philosophy, they dubbed themselves the Federation for the Crippled and Disabled.

Acting as officers, employees, fundraisers, publicists, social workers and vocational trainers, the founders raised enough money to set up operations in a beat-up building at Broadway and 66 St. With less than fifty members, its first hires were three disabled young women who received a small salary and secretarial training (which mainly consisted of typing up fundraising letters).

Federation was soon providing on-the-job training in watch-making, stenography, printing and other suitable occupations.

It also succeeded in placing unskilled disabled workers in

hospitals and hotels. It was at this stage in Federation's development, with about ninety members, that it first incorporated in 1937.

As described in Federation's certificate of incorporation, the trio's concept was a combination of social club and mutual aid society, intended to improve the circumstances of members through job training and assistance in job placement. The certificate of incorporation specifically stated that the new organization's purposes included preventing vagrancy and covering funeral costs for families too poor to do so on their own.

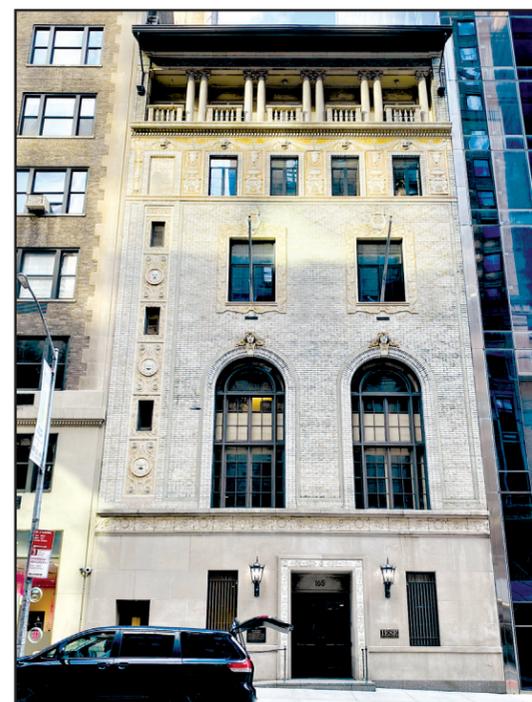
1,100 Members

Federation developed real expertise in screening members for their aptitudes and abilities and developing practical programs and training. It opened an artificial limb and braces manufacturing and repair facility, a print shop and a second-hand furniture and salvage shop, along with social services and job placement departments and a public relations staff. It put together speech classes and an occupational therapy program. Membership soon grew to over 1,100, a remarkable accomplishment that required moving to a larger space.

In 1942 Federation purchased its first headquarters. Instead of a modest second- or third-tier property, Federation picked something conspicuous – a flashy, if not quite palatial former music school, prominently opposite Carnegie Hall. This building is still well known today as Cami Hall – not the sort of place one would think of as the headquarters for a disability self-help group.

The founders saw this acquisition as a sign that their organization had arrived. As Bertero wrote in the *Long Island Star Journal*, "the

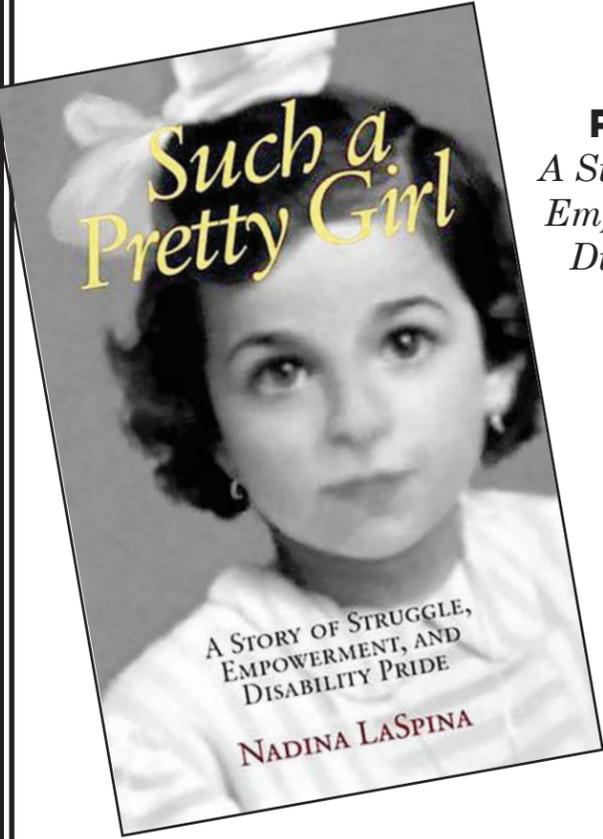
Continued on page 14



Cami Hall



Stamp depicting Federation



"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.

CIDNY SAYS

Goodbye 2021, Hello 2022

Happy New Year from the Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY (CIDNY). 2020 was a year of unexpectedness. 2021 followed the same path. Whatever 2022 brings, we know that together we'll be able to handle it.

COVID-19 was still on our mind through 2021. While we saw variants like Delta and Omicron spread, we also saw the rollout of the vaccine, including vaccine services for people who are unable to leave their homes.

CIDNY was able to expand our services related to the virus with our Community Vaccine Navigators (who are available by calling 646 442-4186). Also, COVID-19 Liaisons through the NY Connects program, can help with a variety of benefits and services (contact a liaison by calling 917 810-2565). If you need help related to COVID-19, CIDNY is here for you.

In 2021 we saw a new President take office and a new Mayor elected in NYC. There are nearly one million people with a disability in the NYC area, with millions more visiting each year.

We'll be here to make sure that these and future administrations are aware of the needs, and in some cases, requirements by law, that make sure the city is accessible to all.

No matter what unexpected turns the future holds, we will adapt. The services that are needed, whether it's ensuring access to food and housing, health care, accessible transportation, voting rights, civil rights, or whatever may come our way in 2022, you can trust that CIDNY will be there to help. You are not, and will not, be alone.

We're looking forward to seeing what 2022 brings. We're ready and we wish you a happy new year. Goodbye to 2021. Here's to 2022!

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BRAILLE AND TALKING BOOK LIBRARY OPENS FULLY

The Andrew Heiskell Braille and Talking Book Library is fully open for in-person one-on-one tech coaching, group workshops, and use of computers, CCTVs, scanners, embossers and tactile graphics tools.

While it continues to offer virtual tech coaching and workshops for those who prefer, library staff encourages those who need or want in-person support to reach out when they're ready. The public may set up one-on-one coaching toward technology goals, visit as a group to explore a particular tech topic or join the Saturday morning Braille study group, by calling 212 206-5400, ext. 3; or by emailing ChanceyFleet@nypl.org.

HRA PRODUCES MEDICARE ENROLLMENT VIDEO

HRA's YouTube channel now features the first Free in NYC video for residents who are 65 and older or who have disabilities.

This video provides important information about free enrollment assistance that helps New Yorkers apply for Medicaid and the Medicare Savings Program. The assistance is provided by the New York City Facilitated Enrollment Program for the Aged, Disabled and Blind and is funded by the New York State Department of Health.

The video, "Free Help to Enroll in Medicaid for Seniors and People with Disabilities" is a first in a series created by HRA's Office of Citywide Health Insurance Access to help NYC seniors and people with disabilities learn more about Medicaid, the Medicare Savings Program and how to access these programs. The video may be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-2GR7DB1SNk.

LUPUS ADVOCACY SUMMIT SET FOR JUNE

For the first time since 2019, lupus advocates will come together in Washington, D.C. for the 2022 National Lupus Advocacy Summit, the nation's largest lupus advocacy event.

From June 26 through 28, attendees will learn from experts in the field about the latest in lupus research, connect with hundreds of their fellow lupus advocates, and turn Capitol Hill purple by advocating for their members of Congress to join the fight against this disease.

Registration begins in March 2022.

Additional information is available by contacting SmithT@lupus.org.

TRANSPORTATION HOTLINE NOW MORE AVAILABLE

Parents who are experiencing problems with busing for their students can reach the Office of Pupil Transportation's hotline at 718 392-8855.

The DOE has added staff to the hotline since the start of this school year, and parents should be able to file complaints by calling.

NYERS' INPUT REQUESTED TO MAKE A BETTER CITY

What's the vision for a better New York City?

Do New Yorkers have any ideas for the city government that can make it more effective, efficient and transparent? Or does anyone have an idea that helps expand opportunity for more New Yorkers? Mayor-elect Eric Adams and his transition team want input and suggestions.

Comments may be posted by visiting www.adamstransition2021.com/en-US/share/.

GUIDE TO NAVIGATING KINDERGARTEN AVAILABLE

For those who need help navigating the kindergarten application and IEP processes, Advocates for Children has created new guides for families of children born in 2017.

The guides are available in English and Spanish, with additional translations coming soon. To browse AFC's early childhood education resources visit www.advocatesforchildren.org/gethelp/guidesandresources/earlychildhood.

'ADVENTURES WITH CHARLIE' SERIES CELEBRATES INCLUSION

Charlie is not like everyone else. But that hasn't stopped him from participating in activities with other kids.

The "Adventures with Charlie" book series from Charles Schoen shares the inspirational tales of a young boy who is disabled, but this is what makes him special, even magical, and he makes friends everywhere he goes. Parents and children can follow Charlie as he learns and grows through new experiences. Charlie goes to school and to the barbershop. He plays baseball and even participates in a half-marathon. "Children need to have stories that illustrate the idea that being different from typical peers can have some special rewards," says Schoen. The "Adventures with Charlie" series emphasizes what children can do in the face of physical or developmental challenges, and along the way, points out that when communities embrace and lift up all children, everyone wins.

MEDICAID ALERT CHANGES UPDATE AVAILABLE

Medicaid Alert, New York State Medicaid Program Modifications COVID-19 Emergency, has been updated and is currently available in the Medicaid Alerts section on the MARC website.

The document is available by visiting <http://a069-marc.nyc.gov/marc/default.aspx>

COMMUNITY ORGANIZER JOB OPENING IN NEW YORK CITY

Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Association of NYS (CDPAANYS) is hiring a community organizer in the New York City region to grow its base of support from seniors, people with disabilities, agencies, family caregivers and other allies.

In the immediate future, this position is expected to focus specifically on The Bronx and Harlem. The community organizer will develop the leadership of our members and support them as they engage in budget and legislative advocacy in Albany, creative actions, storytelling, communications and digital work to elevate the association's narrative around the importance of care work and a caring economy.

This job provides opportunity for leadership, innovation, growth and the chance to work with partners and community leaders from around the state.

More information is available at www.cdpaanys.org/community-organizer-nyc/

AMERICAN DIABETES ASSOCIATION SCIENTIFIC SESSIONS SET

The American Diabetes Association is preparing for its 82nd Scientific Sessions which will be held at Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in New Orleans, La., from June 3 through June 7.

For the last two years, the organization has had a virtual conference due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, however this year the conference will be both in-person and streamed virtually.

Official registration opens in January 2022.

More information will be posted as it becomes available on the site.

Those planning to attend may fill out the survey by visiting their website www.diabetes.org or calling 1-800-232-3472.

ABLE ACCEPTS EVENT AND PROGRAM INFORMATION

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dream conceived seven years ago [became] a realization . . . when the official opening of our new home at 163 West 57 St. took place . . .”

But this real estate overreach turned out to be a bad omen.

Record Keeping Flawed

Bertero, Boster and Rice had set themselves up as officers, board members and staff, both raising the funds and deciding how they should be spent without any of the internal checks or record-keeping required for not-for-profits. This setup was flatly unlawful, and it touched off a crisis when the Attorney General moved to revoke Federation’s corporate charter.

The results were disastrous. Federation’s expansion halted. Fundraising practically collapsed. A partial shutdown followed, and 125 workers were let go.

In the end, the three founders got kicked out, and Cami Hall got sold. The organization even changed its name to Federation of the Handicapped. It managed to survive, but emerged shrunken in

a little building at 211 West 14 St. with a revenue shortfall that never really went away.

Aid Mission Survives

Federation’s mutual aid mission carried on, though. It hired a full-time social worker and developed new programs in toy making, sewing, bookkeeping and building maintenance.

What’s more, for many, many years Federation provided important social outlets for its members and trainees, with both formal and informal weekend, monthly and holiday events that included dances, dinners, card parties, professional entertainers, guest speakers and the like. It even developed innovative, disability-friendly vacation and travel programs that attracted considerable publicity.

But eventually the struggle to generate revenue began to dilute the organization’s self-help purpose. Disabled people’s representation on the board was cut back, and nondisabled professional management was brought in.

Federation increasingly turned

to a sheltered workshop model. This enabled Federation to compete economically, and it began to win contracts to assemble and repair a variety of products. In 1960, for example, Federation began manufacturing cable assemblies for Pershing missiles. By 1964, electronics and industrial work furnished 70 percent of the organization’s annual budget.

However vital such contracting may have been to Federation’s bottom line, the work itself was invariably dull, repetitive and poorly paid – below minimum wage, almost by definition. Even though Federation continued to provide employment for people with disabilities, the dead-end nature of that employment constituted little less than an abandonment of its original self-help mission.

Sheltered Workshops

As rote assembly-line work became all but synonymous with the organization, Federation drew the disdain that the disability community has long felt towards sheltered-workshop employment.

It played almost no part as the modern New York City Disability Rights Movement got underway in the 1960s, and those activists went about their mission with little or no idea that Federation’s origins lay in an earlier iteration of that same cause.

By the end of the 1960s, Federation stopped its efforts to provide sociability and job training. News coverage of Federation had long focused primarily on its social benefit activities, but after 1970 it was almost entirely business-oriented.

More recently, the dilution of Federation’s original purpose reached its conclusion. In 2015 Federation sold its longtime headquarters on West 14 St. and moved to midtown offices.

Merging with a number of other organizations and under a new corporate moniker, Fedcap, it has become just another star in the nonprofit firmament. It no doubt serves a useful purpose but with little or no connection to the mission that brought it into being.

BOB DOLE REMEMBERED

Continued from page 10

moving a bill, finding common ground.”

After the service, Dole’s motorcade stopped at the World War II Memorial for a ceremony to recognize his military service. Actor Tom Hanks spoke.

“Bob Dole came to this plaza often – to remember, to talk with veterans like himself and to their posterity, by greeting them with a shake of his left hand,” Hanks said.

“This memorial stands in this rightful site because Bob

Dole remembered. He remembered the nearly half a million souls who, unlike him, never came home from the second World War. He remembered the years of service the surviving Americans had invested.”

After these events, another memorial service was held at the Kansas Statehouse and finally, he was brought back to Washington and buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

Although a cause of death hasn’t been made known, in

February, Dole revealed that he had been diagnosed with stage-four lung cancer. He is

survived by wife former Sen. Elizabeth Dole and daughter Robin.

INVICTUS GAMES

Continued from page 17

rehabilitation and remarkable sporting triumphs. She answered a range of questions before one member of staff thanked her for her time and honesty, explaining how powerfully her story had resonated.

“I haven’t been here [to Coventry] for a long time. I used to swim at a local pool here when I

was younger, so this is where it all started for me. I wanted to come back and share my story with Coventry University and I hope everyone who came along took away the message that you should always look to find the positive in any negative situation and you should never give up,” she said.

MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

Continued from page 3

14c – a waiver from the U.S. government allowing employers to pay subminimum wages. The current average pay for disabled workers is \$3.34 per hour, trapping many below the poverty line.

“In 2019, 25.9 percent of disabled people lived in poverty compared with 11.4 percent of nondisabled people. Ensuring pay equity for disabled people is an important step toward providing equal rights to the 1 in 4 Americans who are dis-

abled and will also boost the economy.”

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IMPROPER MEDICAID PAYMENTS

Continued from page 4

care premium payments from Jan. 1, 2015, through Dec. 31, 2019, for 42,586 individuals. Medicaid also paid \$372,716 in Medicare premiums for 282 people identified as deceased. Auditors found Medicaid paid \$23.6 million in premiums for 3,439 individuals who were automatically added to the buy-in program with coverage beginning more than two years retroactively, despite limitations on this.

The second audit released examined Medicaid recipients who receive their services through managed care. DOH pays managed care organizations (MCOs) a monthly premium for each enrolled recipient and, in turn, the MCOs pay for services their members require. MCOs can also receive a one-time Supplemental Maternity Capitation Payment (SMCP) for prenatal and postpartum physician care and delivery costs. However, MCOs are not eligible to

receive SMCPs for maternity cases that end in termination or a miscarriage.

Auditors identified approximately \$55 million in improper and questionable SMCPs to MCOs from Aug. 1, 2015, to July 31, 2020. They found \$29.1 million was paid without the required supporting data; \$23.4 million was paid where the data or other evidence indicated the maternity case ended in termination or miscarriage; and \$2.4 million was paid when the SMCP date of service preceded the birth by one to six months.

A report released in October 2019 examined payments made for prescription drugs and therapy services. It found Medicaid paid \$20.1 million for services that should have been paid by Medicare. The payments included \$18.6 million for physical, occupational, and speech therapy services and \$1.5 million for prescription drugs. A follow-up report

just released found DOH made some progress in addressing the prior problems identified; however, since the initial audit, auditors identified another \$17.7 million in payments

that should have been paid by Medicare.

DOH generally agreed with many of the recommendations that DiNapoli's auditors provided in each audit.

INSULIN AFFORDABILITY

Continued from page 3

ford their insulin and will not have to skip doses or ration because they don't have enough money to pay for this life-saving drug."

The bill provides other key benefits for people with diabetes. These include extending increased health insurance premium tax credits, which were created through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and increased through more recent COVID-19 relief legislation, as well as increased funding for states to offset the cost of running Medicaid programs. ACA plans and Medicaid have become especially important to people with diabetes who

have been disproportionately affected, economically and through adverse health impacts, by the COVID-19 pandemic. These gap coverage measures are critical for the diabetes community, who relies on these plans to afford their insulin, devices and supplies.

"We now urge the Senate, as it considers the Build Back Better legislation, to move forward with a measure that also adopts these critical provisions that can make insulin more affordable, and health coverage more accessible, to 34 million people living with diabetes today," Murdock said.



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HOME-CARE CRISIS

Continued from page 3

art-Cousins committed to making funding for aides a priority.

During a recent roundtable, Assemblywoman Karines Reyes, who is a co-sponsor of the Assembly version of the proposed legislation, discussed how as a registered nurse with experience in oncology, she's seen patients go home with just one aide to handle all their needs.

"The work is backbreaking work. It is one of the reasons why we see such a high turnover rate amongst the workforce for home attendance," she said.

Bill Hammond, the Empire Center's director of health policy, emphasized how the situation can be much more nuanced.

For example, workers in some parts of the state are entitled to extra wages. In

Westchester County and Long Island, workers can earn \$3.22 more an hour. In New York City, they're entitled to \$4.09 more.

When asked about the bill, Hammond said, "I would be curious to know whether they have addressed where that money is going to come from. I don't think the state should be making decisions like that without thinking through the consequences."

Bryan O'Malley, executive director of CPAANYS and a co-author of the study, said that the crisis is so great that there is a general consensus among politicians that something should be done about it, even if the solutions differ between parties.

"The question comes to whether there's a political will to come up with the money," he said.

THE ACCESS INDEX

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U.S. Team to Use New Sit-Ski Design In Winter Paralympic Games 2022



With only two months left to go until the Opening Ceremony of the Paralympic Winter Games 2022 in Beijing, GB Snowsport and Williams Advanced Engineering (WAE) unveiled new sit-ski technology that will support the nation's Para Nordic athletes in their quest for Paralympic success at the Games and across the 2021/22 winter season.

The new rigs, which have been tested extensively by the country's leading Para Nordic athletes since the summer, are the result of an advanced engineering innovation process led by WAE's in-house Design Team, GB Snowsport's Sport Sciences department and a multi-disciplinary research team from Coventry University. Athlete involvement in the design process means each sit ski is tailored specifically to the individual athlete's technique, drawing on WAE's impressive track record of supporting British Paralympic efforts since the Summer Games in 2016.

The new sit skis are already being used by the four-man Para Nordic World Cup squad, Steve Arnold, Callum Deboys, Scott Meenagh and Steve Thomas, throughout the 2021/22 season.

Invictus Games Captain Rachel Williamson Speaks to University Staff

The inspirational captain of Team UK's Invictus Games squad Rachel Williamson returned to the city where her sporting journey began to share her story with Coventry University staff.

While serving in the Royal Air Force (RAF) as a senior aircraftman (SAC) and medic, Rachel had an injury, which led to her losing use of one of her arms. She had to step down from her role with the RAF but has gone on to win a swathe of medals for Team UK in both rowing and swimming. Rachel put in an eye-catching performance in Sydney in 2018, bringing home two gold medals, three silvers and a bronze.

The Invictus Games is a sporting competition for wounded, injured and sick serving and veteran military personnel, and gives them the opportunity for rehabilitation as well as competing on an international sporting stage. The idea came about when Prince

Harry watched a similar competition — The Warrior Games — in the USA back in 2013.

After igniting her passion for swimming at a local pool in Coventry, Rachel returned to the city to share her stories and experiences of setbacks and sport to help people understand the importance of resilience and positivity.

"It's not easy when you get injured and you automatically just shut down, you can end up in a bit of a depressive state, but injury doesn't define who you are and there is always light at the end of the tunnel, you just have to be brave and keep moving forward," she said.

"I love sharing my story and if my experiences and advice can help even one person then it's well worth it."

Coventry University staff listened with intent as Rachel gave them the lowdown on her injury,

Continued on page 14

Goalball National H.S. Champs Crowned



The Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired played host to the 2021 Goalball High School National Championships in early November in Austin, Texas. Congratulations to the following Most Valuable Players, All-Americans and team medalists: Tournament MVPs: Jason Lubin, Fla; Dejonae Levers, Fla. Women's Teams: Gold, Florida Cobras; Silver, Texas Wildcats; Bronze, Mississippi Tigers. Men's Teams: Gold, Florida Cobras; Silver, Texas Wildcats; Bronze, Central Texas Avengers.

All-American Team: Jason Lubin, Fla; Keegan Abner, Fla; Darius Matthews, Texas.; Tristan Brennan, Fla; Marc Mendez, Texas; Jacob Peterson, Utah; Miram Larson, Texas; Wealthy Bundage, Texas; Dejonae Levers, Fla.; Heather Dickey, Texas; Alexandria Lopez, Fla.; and Natalie Cruz, Fla.

Breakfast With Champions Caps National Blind Sports Week



As a wrap-up to a fantastic Paralympic year and a busy National Blind Sports Week presented by Healthy Vision Association, USABA hosted the 12th annual Breakfast with Champions presented by Anthem at the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Museum in Colorado Springs. The event was also live streamed on USABA's Facebook and YouTube channels for those who could not attend in person.

This year's Breakfast with Champions featured the on-the-court and off-the-court accomplishments of four USA Goalball athletes who competed for Team USA at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games. Speaking on two separate panels were six-time Paralympian and five-time Paralympic medalist Lisa Czechowski; Tokyo Paralympic silver medalist Mindy Cook; two-time Paralympian and 2016 silver medalist Matt Simpson; and first-time Paralympian and leading scorer for Team USA at the Tokyo Paralympics Calahan Young.

The event concluded with a formal induction into the USABA Hall of Fame for the 2008 gold-medal winning USA Women's Paralympic Goalball Team.