

AWARD WINNING

# Able



THE NEWSPAPER POSITIVELY FOR BY & ABOUT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

## VISCARDI ACQUIRES

### Two Iconic Brands Come Together



The Viscardi Center's (TVC) President and CEO, and EVP/CFO of the Center Sheryl Buchel sign the agreement transferring ownership of the publication to TVC. Dr. Chris Rosa, middle, looks on as Able Newspaper's founding publisher Angela Miele Melledy, left,

The Viscardi Center, a network of non-profit organizations that educate, employ and empower children, adults and veterans with disabilities based on Long Island, announced the mission-based strategic acquisition on October 10, 2023.

Aligning with The Viscardi Center's "3Es" (educate, employ, empower), the acquisition of Able offers an opportunity to enhance

and expand upon the Center's programs, services and advocacy. From an education standpoint, it presents experiential learning opportunities for students and program participants. Career exploration, internships, work-readiness activities, as well as paid employment and a platform for employers to post job openings are among the ways in which Able positions Viscardi to deliver on its

commitment to increase pre- and tangible employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

A means for broadening the organization's advocacy efforts and impact and a medium to amplify disability lifestyle, culture and resources, ties to the Center's empowerment pillar. Founded in 1991, Able will be rebranded under The Viscardi Center umbrella and relaunch in early 2024.

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# From The Founder

It's hard to believe that 33 years have passed since we published the first issue of *Able Newspaper*. As I sit at my computer gathering my thoughts for this final message to *Able's* readers, I wipe away some nostalgic tears as I think back on all the incredible experiences I have had; all the amazing people I've met; and so many things I've learned.

I've had the honor of meeting U.S. Presidents, sports figures, actors and all type of celebrities, but not a single one as impressive as the many people with disabilities I've known through the years – many I now call friends. You are people who fight, every day, for your rights, while working so hard to overcome challenges of daily life. You have taught me so much.

There is also a class of people who frequent the world of the disabled who are neither disabled nor celebrities. They are the able-bodied, who work with and for people with disabilities, who have been role models for me - Jim Weisman, Marvin Wasserman and Kleo King come to mind. They happened into the world of the disabled and somehow, like me, they knew they belonged there.

As I've grown to know Chris Rosa during the last year, I realize I'm leaving *Able's* readers in good hands with him and The Viscardi Center. I find him to be a man of great intelligence, knowledge and integrity. I see he is leading the Center down a great path and it is a pleasure to know him.

I'm also happy to leave my life's work in the hands of Kim Brussell who will be overseeing its future.



She is a bright, hard-working woman, who I know will do a good job.

So, I thank my amazing staff for their hard work and loyalty and the disability community for this wonderful time in my life, as I move on to my next adventure.



## The Viscardi View

folded at worksites, public spaces, and privately-owned places of “public accommodation” in neighborhoods in New York City and on Long Island.

In the early 1990's, these historic developments were typically not covered by mainstream media. It would be a few years before the creation of the worldwide web. There was a revolution underway, but for the most part, “the revolution would not be televised!”

Instead, we all looked to the pages of an emerging periodical, *Able Newspaper*, for information about how the ADA was playing out in our communities. In its pages, we also read about disability history, lifestyle, and culture. The paper was unique. It featured photos of people we knew; people just like us; and it spoke to our experiences in an unflinching, authentic voice. It was news by, for and about us!

This remarkable, first-of-its-kind publication was created and sustained by one visionary and intrepid journalist and leader –

Angela Miele Melledy. Not only did she craft and cultivate this remarkable news source with a small but mighty team, she was out there, on the streets, among us, in the places where we gathered, communicated, debated, laughed, cried and shouted – sometimes angrily, sometimes triumphantly. When it comes to New York's disability community, Angela is one of our true heroes.

We're grateful to Angela for this great gift to our community; humbled that she considered The Viscardi Center a worthy home for this historic publication; and over-the-moon excited for the opportunity that this presents to Viscardi. We look forward to being strong stewards of this cherished news source and leveraging Viscardi's strengths to take *Able* to new and exciting places!

While we're thrilled that *Able* has found a new home at Viscardi, we know that *Able* actually “belongs” to all of us in New York's disability community. We're excited to work together with our readers and advertisers to ensure that *Able* remains a vibrant and dynamic news source.

Dr. Chris Rosa, Pres.& CEO,  
The Viscardi Center

### ABLE NEWSPAPER

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It has been said that “Timing is everything.” When I reflect on the development of my identity as a disability rights advocate and my career as a Disability Studies scholar, my timing couldn't have been better!

With an interest in studying a distinctive, emerging American disability culture, I entered grad school in 1989, and honed my scholarship while the grassroots movement of people with disabilities to enact the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990, and then to implement the ADA, was unfolding in real-time. While the ADA was certainly a national civil rights law, its implementation and impact were local, un-

#### Watch for Our New Look!

The next issue of *Able*, in print & online, is coming February 2024

Updates will be posted to [AbleNews.com](http://AbleNews.com) along the way.

Submit news items to [AbleNews@viscardicenter.org](mailto:AbleNews@viscardicenter.org).

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The deadline for the February 2024 issue is Jan. 9.

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# Access Board & Rehabilitation Act Are 50

The U.S. Access Board is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs conducted by federal agencies, programs receiving federal financial assistance, federal employment and the employment practices of federal contractors.

It was a milestone for individuals with disabilities across the nation, and it serves as the foundation for many other disability-related legislation. Section 502 of the law also created the U.S. Access Board (originally named the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board) to ensure access to federal buildings and facilities under the Architec-

tural Barriers Act (ABA) of 1968.

“Our first duty as an agency was to ensure that the federal government is a model of accessibility, and we continue to carry out this important work,” said Sachin Pavithran, the board’s executive director. “But the Rehabilitation Act and the Architectural Barriers Act also blazed the trail for accessibili-

ty beyond the federal sector, as well as expand our mission and further establish us as a leading source of information on accessible design. We continue to work hard to achieve our vision of a nation that is fully accessible to and inclusive of all people with disabilities, and we look forward to dedicating the next fifty years and more to serving the American public.”

## Ballot Marking Devices - An Accessible Vote Of Confidence

By Jeremy Morak

As Election Day approaches, millions of New Yorkers have already cast their ballot or are planning to vote on Nov. 7. If you’ve ever felt frustrated or discouraged trying to vote on a paper ballot that is too difficult to read, you are not alone.

However, you can ease this stressful situation by using a device that has been at your polling center for years. Ballot Marking Devices (BMDs) are accessible machines that can enlarge your ballot’s font size or audibly read out every word you can listen to through headphones.

### Air Travelers Must Know Rights

In preparation for the busy holiday travel season, and in celebration of the 37th anniversary of the Air Carrier Access Act the U.S. Department of Transportation has launched a campaign, #AccessibleAirTravel, to raise awareness about the right of air travelers with disabilities to safe, dignified and accessible air travel.

An estimated 5.5 million Americans use a wheelchair, and many encounter barriers when it comes to air travel.

“Airline passengers with disabilities deserve to travel safely and with dignity,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. “DOT is proud to partner with the aviation industry and members of the disability community to ensure that all travelers with disabilities know their rights.”

The #AccessibleAirTravel campaign will promote DOT’s Airline Passengers with Disabilities Bill of Rights through a quick and informative video that empowers individuals with disabilities to understand and assert their right

These machines are touch screens with optional buttons on the side, helping users vote for their candidates in every race on a particular ballot. The machines are easy to use and offer a secure and independent voting experience for anyone who is blind, visually impaired or unable to read and mark a paper ballot on their own.

Dorothy Delayo, a poll worker for the New York City Board of Elections with more than thirty years of experience, has been working diligently to inform NYC voters about many resources avail-

able to ensure their right to vote is never infringed. This past September, Delayo helped coordinate a special hands-on demonstration of BMDs at Lighthouse Guild, a nonprofit organization that offers services, programs and a safe community for people who are blind and visually impaired.

This unique opportunity allowed participants to learn about ballot marking devices and try them out with mock ballots, simulating the experience on Election Day. Delayo, a volunteer with Lighthouse Guild for the past two years, worked closely with Lighthouse Guild staff and Ariel Merkel, a coordinator in the Americans with Disabilities Act Executive Office at the NYC Board of Elections, to provide information about accessible resources and answer questions from NYC voters living with vision loss. Delayo is a staunch advocate for voters with disabilities and has essential tips to help individuals who need assistance when they vote. Delayo suggests voters with disabilities ask to use a BMD as soon as they arrive. There is at least one functioning BMD at every NYC polling site, and everyone has the right to ask to use it for any reason. As soon as the voter signs in, they should let the poll worker know that they would like vote using a BMD. Each voter has the right to get assistance and must be aided by two poll workers – one from each party – one Democrat and one Republican. If a voter is told that the BMDs are not working, they should ask to speak with the Poll Site Coordinator.

The Bill of Rights was developed using feedback from the Air Carrier Access Act Advisory Committee, which includes representatives of passengers with disabilities, national disability organizations, U.S. and foreign air carriers, airport operators, contractor service providers, aircraft manufacturers, wheelchair manufacturers, and national organizations representing veterans with disabilities. It was developed to empower air travelers with disabilities to understand their rights, and to help ensure airline personnel and their contractors uphold those rights. The ACAA, which was enacted on Oct. 2, 1986, prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in commercial air trans-

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### LICIL Greets Public For ADA Event



Exec. Dir. Susan McCormack of the The Long Island Center for Independent Living (LICIL), seated right, along with her staff, recently welcomed members of the community to an open house in celebration of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). People streamed into the LICIL offices to meet with staff, hang out, learn about LICIL’s programs and enjoy conversation and refreshments.

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# Care For Elderly & PWD More Affordable

In its continued efforts to improve access to healthcare and lower costs for millions of Americans, the Department of Health and Human Services, through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, has finalized a rule to streamline enrollment in the Medicare Savings Programs, making coverage more affordable for an estimated 860,000 people.

CMS estimates these improvements will save older adults and people with disabilities nearly 19 million hours in paperwork each year and reduce state administrative burden by more than 2 million hours annually.

This action, together with the historic progress made under the president's prescription drug law will help an estimated 1.2 million older adults and people with disabilities with limited income afford their Medicare coverage and health care costs.

The MSPs, run by state Medicaid programs, currently cover Medicare premiums and, in most cases, cost-sharing for more than 10 million older adults and people with disabilities who have limited incomes. The final rule makes it easier for millions of people to

enroll in, retain and afford health coverage and care through Medicare.

"Throughout my career, I have dedicated myself to ensuring that Americans have access to health insurance, so that they can survive and thrive," said HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra.

"Building on Pres. Biden's executive orders to expand affordable, quality health coverage, CMS' new rule will further protect and strengthen health care coverage for older adults and people with disabilities," said CMS administrator Chiquita Brooks-LaSure.

Only about half of eligible people are enrolled in the MSPs, in part due to cumbersome appli-

cation and verification processes now simplified by this rule. For example, all Medicare-eligible individuals who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) are financially eligible for MSPs, but many are not enrolled because of burdensome and duplicative paperwork.

Under the new final rule, many SSI recipients will now be enrolled automatically into the most comprehensive form of MSP coverage - the Qualified Medicare Beneficiary eligibility group, which covers Medicare premiums and cost-sharing. Under the rule, states will also make better use of data from the Medicare Part D Low Income Subsidy or Extra Help

program, which helps many older adults and people with disabilities pay for prescription drugs and prescription drug coverage when they live on a limited income.

An estimated 300,000 people will have lower drug costs starting Jan. 1. Overall, these and other changes will improve access to health care and limit the need for people to apply separately for largely similar programs, like MSPs and LIS.

This marks the latest of ongoing updates from the Biden-Harris Administration to streamline eligibility and enrollment in Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program and the Basic Health Program.

## Hochul Signs Respectful Language Law

Two pieces of legislation that mandate respectful language be used to refer to members of the disabled community, both in government statutes and on a prominent state planning council have been signed into law by Gov. Kathy Hochul.

The planning council is now called the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (rather

than Developmental Disabilities Planning Council) to comply with "person-first" federal disabilities law. People with disabilities will now also have increased representation on the council, which has 31 seats that are appointed by the governor. The council is an important waypoint for advocacy and peer training for the disabled community.

"It is important to myself and the State of New York that we remain up to date and respectful of individuals at all times. This legislative package will allow changes to outdated language in our state laws and continues our efforts to help strengthen the rights

of all New Yorkers," Hochul said.

District 76 NYS Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright, who represents a swath of the Upper East Side, was the lead sponsor for the bills. She chairs the People with Disabilities Committee.

The bills are heavily inspired by Rosa's Law, a federal law signed by then-President Barack Obama in 2010 that replaced the term "mental retardation" with "intellectual disability" in federal policy. That law was named after Rosa Marcellino, a nine-year-old girl with Down syndrome who advocated for language changes in her home state of Maryland.

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## Caregivers Picket Over Temps & Equipment



1199SEIU nursing home workers including registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, certified nursing assistants, housekeeping, dietary staff, laundry aides and maintenance employees recently picketed at the Massapequa Center Rehabilitation & Nursing in Amityville, N.Y.

According to an 1199SEIU spokesperson, management's refusal to address employee concerns about medical equipment and the use of temporary agency staffers is at issue. "It is well documented that continuity of care and resident/caregiver relationships are the cornerstones of quality care in skilled nursing facilities, but many of the workers at the 320-bed nursing home are temporary agency staffers," said the 1199SEIU representative.

# Immigrating With Disabilities

By Christopher Alvarez

New York City Mayor, Eric Adams announced last month that disabled migrants will be able to skirt new policies meant to stop the overflow of immigrants.

The Adams' administration said they will be providing 60 days notice to families with children seeking asylum to find alternative housing. The announcement came after the city topped 64,000 asylum seekers in its care.

But during an off-topic press conference, Adams told *Able Newspaper*, "You have my commitment, to the people of this city, there will be a waiver for anyone that's disabled. We're not going to put a person that's disabled in a condition that would further impact them. And so no one that is disabled would be part of the notice process."

During his "decompression strategy tour" through Latin America last month, Adams visited Colombia's Darien

Gap, the "world's most dangerous migrant route," according to CNN. Because of its danger, the Adams' administration was not counting on any disabled migrants making the trek due to mobility issues.

Little did they know, they were wrong.

In an email to *Able Newspaper*, a spokesperson for the mayor's office said the city has "more than 300 asylum seekers at New York City's Health and Hospitals Corporation run humanitarian centers, who have indicated that they have an accessibility need that has been accommodated."

Josh Goldfein, staff attorney for Legal Aid Society of New York City, who has been helping migrants get situated, said that number was too low. "The city should take seriously its obligation to identify and accommodate new arrivals with disabilities."

Johana Prada and her family are one of the families who left it all behind to take the

risky and uncertain long haul to the United States. Three months ago, Prada sold all of her belongings including her house because "I wanted a better quality of life for my daughter."

The family's one month mission from Venezuela was spurred by their quadriplegic daughter who had two tonic clonic seizures on the same day, a week before coming. "It was horrible," Prada said. "She shook, she bit her lip."

Prada, 32, also has a breast tumor herself. For the first six years of her daughter's life, Prada used to take her to therapy but as she got bigger and heavier, and Prada's tumor and arm started to hurt, she could no longer lift her child. Her husband had to carry their daughter all the way through. "Carrying her across his back like a sack of potatoes, my husband fell twice," Prada said in Spanish, remembering the dangers of the jungle. "He never let her go but she had bruises all over her arms and legs."

Prada looks to continue her daughter's therapy in New York City, but a paperwork snafu and backlogs at doctor's offices, have made the vital and tedious process even more difficult.

This has been the case for all families, especially for Colombian, Johanna Jimenez and her three-year-old daughter. At six months, Jimenez's daughter developed esotropia, a condition causing one eye to deviate inward toward the nose. The cause is unknown but Colombian doctors said she needs immediate surgery. Already in New York City for half a year, Jimenez is still waiting for her daughter's full evaluation from a doctor to see if the insurance will cover the surgery. Her appointment is in February.

City Hall also said "all asylum seekers who come through the arrival center receive a series of standard disability screening questions that identify any immediate disabilities."

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## Self-Advocacy Topic of SILO Conference



Michael Ring presents the "Traveling with a Disability" workshop with attendees asking questions about transportation at the Suffolk Independent Living Organization's (SILO) 6th Annual Self-Advocacy Conference.

Other workshops included Awareness & Advocacy for people with Developmental Disabilities; Digital Accessibility; a Mental Health; and Crafting Financial Security. There was also a voting machine demonstration.

In inset photo, SILO Pres. and CEO Joe Delgado congratulates Chris Rosa, president and CEO of The Viscardi Center after his closing Keynote Speech. Rosa was the last speaker of the day which included an opening Keynote Speech before the morning sessions by Gov. Kathy Hochul's Chief Disability Officer Kimberly Hill. Approximately 200 guests attended.



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## Able, Viscardi And Me

BY JAMES WEISMAN  
GENERAL COUNSEL



The news did not surprise me because it seemed so appropriate – *Able's* publisher, Angela Melledy, was retiring, and The Viscardi Center, led by Dr. Christopher Rosa, would take over the paper.

I've been writing for *Able* since just about when it began, 33 years ago. United Spinal Association (formerly Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association) and I have used *Able* to speak to the New York metro disability community for decades. *Able* has been both the conscience of, and a window into, the community. It's primarily the voice of the community, but I have used it as an assessment tool, as well. What are the issues of the day, and have we made any progress? If you read *Able*, you know.

In the beginning – at least, my beginning – was The Viscardi Center. 56 years after I first biked over to what was called Abilities and the Human Resources Center/School as a counselor/lifeguard/volunteer in the day camp, Viscardi and *Able* are one.

When I was 16, I spent the summer hanging out after the last camp bus was loaded with my fellow counselors who had disabilities (I didn't), knew how to have fun (I did too), and had driver's licenses (I didn't).

Paul Hearne – President of the first Human Resources graduating class, homebound until he was 13 due to osteogenesis imperfecta and the amateur radio counselor at the camp – and I became lifelong friends, although tragically, he passed away at age 48. Paul and I both went to law school, opened a Legal Services Corporation poverty law office in Manhattan for people with disabilities and were welcomed by the New York metro disability rights community.

I developed my rights consciousness at Viscardi. It wasn't intentional. We would enter a bar or restaurant and the host would say to me, "Don't put him there," about Paul or someone else in a wheelchair. I never thought there "ought to be a law." I just thought, "What a jerk," and I'd say, "He speaks; talk to him," in as condescending a manner as I could.

However, right after law school, ten years after I walked into Viscardi, I had a heart-to-heart with Paul about the state of the disability community in America and what could be done about it. We dreamed of using the law to change architecture and attitudes. Once we got our grant, Paul said, "You do transportation – I'll do employment." We really thought we could do something, and we did. I'm proud of that.

Henry Viscardi and I were very close. For many years, he was my father-in-law. His story is legend, but here's what I remember most. After my first summer, I was putting away equipment, and "Hank" said, "Jimmy, come here, I want to talk to you." I didn't think he knew my name.

He asked, "What did we do right this summer, and what did we do wrong?" This man, who had an amazing poverty-to-success-to-helping others story, born without the lower half of his legs, advisor to many presidential administrations, friend of Eleanor Roosevelt and courageous solo sailor, wanted the opinion of a 16-year-old volunteer.

And now Chris Rosa leads Viscardi. I have known him since he was slightly older than the students at Viscardi High. He has always been a leader and a visionary. I am confident in *Able's* future.

I began my career and found my passion at Viscardi. I've been able to express my passion for years in *Able*. Thank you, Angela Melledy and Chris Rosa, for your passion.

Long Island ★

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# Able - Through The Years

The first issue of *Able Newspaper* was published in June 1991. The newspaper that is distributed throughout the New York Metro area is the product of Angela Miele Melledy.

"I really didn't have a plan to be a publisher but for some reason circumstances led me on an amazing journey that has lasted 33 years," said Melledy. "I also had no long-term connection to the disability community at the time, but there I was putting out my first issue."

"In fact, I had only heard of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) in passing and was completely unaware that the bill that had been signed by Pres. George H.W. Bush a year earlier was about to become such a large part of my life."

At the time, she had been working as a production manager for the Weekly Newspaper Group in Rockville Centre, N.Y., a company headed up by Barry Manning that published 10 local weekly newspapers. While typesetting one evening, a press release came across her desk announcing that Nassau County would be hosting the International Games for the Disabled (Paralympics).

**Finding The Paralympics**

"I had never heard of the Paralympics but realized that volunteering for this event would allow me to meet people from all over the world. I volunteered and became a host for the Dutch team for the duration of the Games," said Melledy. "What an exciting time it turned out to be. World class athletes, Olympic-style competition, President Reagan at opening ceremonies, celebrations every night, new friendships and an instant in-

roduction to disabilities that I couldn't have gotten anywhere else."

After the two and one half week event ended, Melledy, like many others who had worked at the Games, continued to volunteer with local disabled sports organiza-

a newspaper for people with disabilities started, and when it went out of print, Melledy decided to give it a try. She brought together her newfound knowledge of the disability community and her limited publishing experience to become a publisher.

**A Family Affair**

Melledy's Mom, Fannie Miele, who had a background in mailed distribution applied the labels to those first editions and prepared the paperwork for the post office along with Melledy's sons James and Louis. She also took on the office manager role. Louis, who was studying photography at the School of Visual Arts in Manhattan, became the photographer and is still listed as photo and technical consultant. This volunteer help (as in no pay) was exactly what she needed to get it off the ground.

Another helper was friend John Dunn who set up distribution routes throughout Long Island and New York City. Dunn shortly became an employee of *Able* and took over the distribution each month.

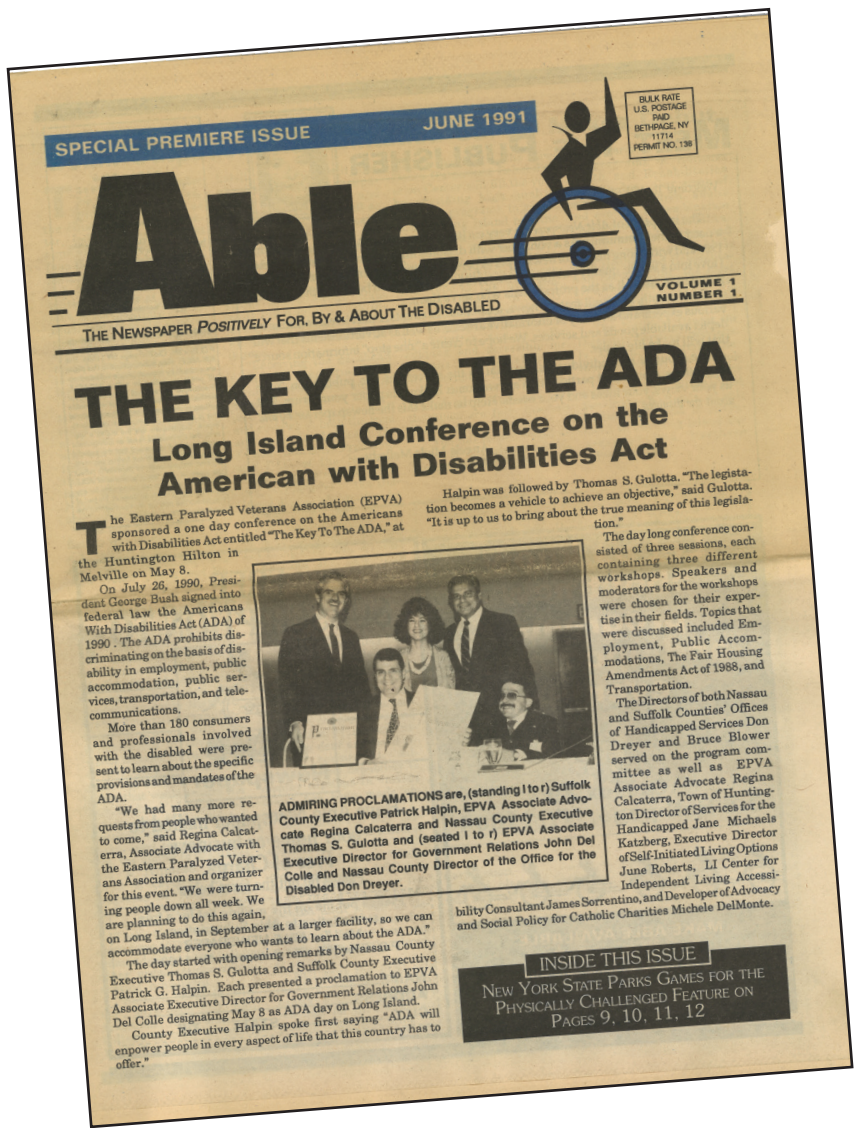
Employees were soon hired and the core group is still in place. Peg Wenzel has been a loyal and efficient employee of *Able* for 30 years. Deb Simko has been a devoted and creative production director for more than 22 years and Ann Imbrogno, for 20 years, has headed up the office and proof-reading tasks with dedication and dependability. Among those who edited *Able* over the years, Allison Howe, Karin Falcone and Susanne Cristy stand out as most memorable. Howe came to *Able* with first-hand experience as the mother of twin daughters with autism.

"I am very proud of this team that has been part of the family at *Able* for so long," said Melledy. *Able* wouldn't be here without them."

**Columnists**

*Able* was also fortunate to have a fine array of columnists join the team. The very distin-

**Continued on page 8**



tions. She worked at public relations and fundraising with the Eastern Amputee Athletic Association and in 1985, then New York Gov. Mario Cuomo recruited Susan Gordon Ryan to start the New York State Games for the Physically Challenged for children with disabilities. Now there was an annual event on Long Island for her to continue with her new passion.

During that time there was

"It was like a path was put in front of me and I followed it one step at a time – one foot in front of the other, and it seemed the help I needed was all around me."

The first to offer a hand was, the man she refers to as her mentor, Barry Manning. Production of the paper was done at his facility at reasonable cost, while he encouraged and advised.

**WE ARE ABLE • WE ARE ABLE • WE ARE ABLE • WE ARE ABLE • WE ARE ABLE • WE ARE ABLE • WE ARE ABLE**



Anthony Trocchia   Chris Rosa   Allison Howe   Justin Dart Jr.   Bruce Blower   Chris Noel   Andy Imperato   Ann Imbrogno   Anne Emerman   David Maxwell   Clinton Brown   Fannie Miele   Christina Curry

# Able - Through The Years

Continued from page 7

guished Jim Weisman, Terry Moakley and Mel Tanzman were among the monthly writers for the "EPVA Today" column (currently "United Spinal Now"); County Disability Leaders Don Dreyer and Bruce Blower wrote "County Comments"; a rotating list of notables reported in "DIA Speaks" including Ann Emerman, Frieda Zames and Nadina LaSpina; Donald Hecht reported on "Legal Matters;" Director of the NYC Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities Mark Leeds and Commissioner Victor Calise provided columns; the sadly missed Peter Zarba penned a column called Auto Report and *Able's* very first columnist Robert Mauro wrote under the title "Computer Talk."

Melledy soon learned that disability touched every aspect of life and there was no shortage of news and information that would be of interest to people with disabilities.

### Covering The News



When Pres. Bill Clinton presented the Medal of Freedom to Justin Dart in 1998, Clinton said at the ceremony that Dart had "opened the doors of opportunities to millions of our citizens by securing passage of one of the nation's landmark civil rights laws." [the ADA]. Dart in turn honored "patriots" in the disability rights movement with certificates sharing the honor with them. *Able's* publisher Angela Miele Melledy was "humbled" to receive one of these certificates.

The newspaper grew over the years and became a fixture in many homes and offices across the New York metro and Long Island areas. *Able* was designed to be a full-service newspaper including world, national, state and local



news. Its columns are written by experts in their fields and the paper incorporates news about legislation, candidates running for office, people, events, programs, arts, recreation and sports all geared to people with disabilities. It

provides advertisements of product and services, classified ads and even a personals page that boasts at least two marriages.

"We've covered the news for people with disabilities and made many friends along the



Within the first year of publication *Able* won a national 1992 E.D.I award presented by the March of Dimes for a series of articles written by Valerie Kellogg about the new ADA law. Accepting their awards from, left to right, a March of Dimes representative and television news anchor Ernie Anastos are Angela Melledy and Valerie Kellogg.



Angela Melledy was invited to attend the 4th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1994, hosted by Pres. Bill Clinton at the White House. On the dais using wheelchairs are, left to right, Justin Dart Jr., Judith Heumann, Becky Ogle and Marca Bristo. "What an honor to be in the presence of these heroes," said Melledy.

## WE ARE ABLE • WE ARE ABLE • WE ARE ABLE • WE ARE ABLE • WE ARE ABLE • WE ARE ABLE • WE ARE ABLE



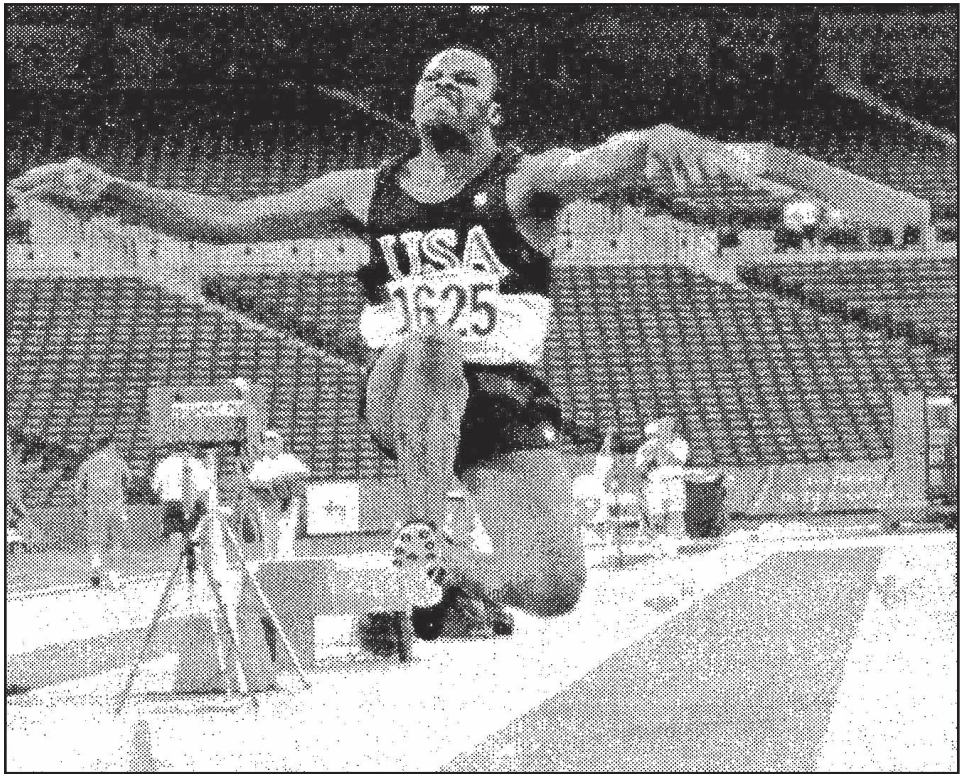
Frank Bowe    Danny Robert    Frank Krotchinsky    Debbie Simko    Frieda Zames    Don Dreyer    James Melledy    Donald Hecht    Jennifer Johnson    Ed Roberts    Jim Weisman    Gary Marcus    Joe Delgado



# Able - Through The Years



The Taxis For All Campaign Was a frequent topic covered in *Able's* pages.



Reporter Christine Blake accompanied Angela Melledy to Atlanta to cover the 1996 Paralympic Games. Finishing up their work in the press room at Centennial Olympic Stadium (Turner Field) after working diligently to identify N.Y. metro area athletes to cover and photograph in the next week, Blake and Melledy realized they were the only ones left in the building and were locked in. After searching for an exit they squeezed between a space of a locked gate and then reluctantly accepted a ride back to their hotel from a stranger who offered help, since they had no other option. Unlike New York, all public transport had shut down.



*Able* covered marches and protests everywhere from N.Y.C. to D.C.

way," said Melledy. "I've had so many interesting and memorable times during these years and met so many notable people."

In keeping with family tradition, Melledy's granddaughter Sofie Melledy, a sophomore at the University of Buffalo, has in recent years written for the newspaper, facilitated social media posts and compiled copies of *Able* for the Library of Congress.

**Always Learning**

"I've learned from the best.

Bruce Blower and Terry Moakley taught me that the three most important issues of people with disabilities are transportation, housing and employment. Jim Weisman and many other advocates taught me about transportation issues. DIA members made their needs known and taught me about life in the disability community.

I have been honored to cover this incredible and diverse community and have learned so much, not only about dis-

**Continued on page 10**



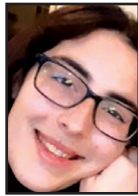
Honored by the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) and the New York Yankees *Able* was honored at home plate in Angela Melledy's home town of The Bronx. At home plate, left to right are Commissioner of MOPD Victor Calise, General Counsel of MOPD Kleo King, Angela Melledy, Yankee Manager Joe Gerardi, United Spinal's Jim Weisman, and *Able* staff members Debbie Simko and Ann Imbrogno.

**WE ARE ABLE • WE ARE ABLE • WE ARE ABLE • WE ARE ABLE • WE ARE ABLE • WE ARE ABLE • WE ARE ABLE**



John Kemp Harry Wieder Judith Goldberg Henry Viscardi June Roberts Jim Peters Kleo King John Dunn Louis Melledy Judy Heumann Marilyn Saviola Kipp Watson Mel Tanzman

# Able - Through The Years



Sofie Melledy



Phil Bennett



Susan McCormack



Susan Ryan



Therese Brzezinski



Suzanne Christy



Tom DiNapoli



Terry Moakley



Victor Calise



T.K. Small



Warren Shaw



Beth Guarino



Chris Alvarez



Able attended many ADA events during the years including the 2022 Awards Ceremony hosted by Mayor Eric Adams.

Continued from page 9

ability but about life in general.”

“I’ve been very lucky. And, now that I am beyond retirement age it’s time for Able to move to a place where it can continue to grow and continue to bring vital information to the community of people with disabilities. And, as my path has developed throughout the Able journey, The Viscardi Center presented itself as the next step in my journey and showed me the best possible place for Able to be.

**WE ARE ABLE • WE ARE ABLE • WE ARE ABLE • WE ARE ABLE • WE ARE ABLE • WE ARE ABLE • WE ARE ABLE**



Mark Leeds



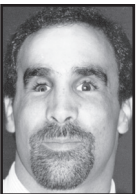
Nadina LaSpina



Marvin Wasserman



Paul Hearne



Matt Sapolin



Peg Wenzel



Naomi Bodo



Peter Hawkins



Pam Bates



Regina Estela



Pete Zarba



Robert Mauro



Phil Beder



## Able-Ride is Proudly Serving Nassau County

Providing quality transportation for the disabled community.

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Able-Ride is a service of NICE, which is owned by Nassau County and operated by Veolia Transportation

**OBITUARY**

# Ted Fass, Entertainment Agent & Visionary Dies

**T**ed Fass, a long-time resident of Rockville Centre, died on September 11 at the age of 71. He was a pioneering entrepreneur and blind athlete who was determined to give back to his community.

At the age of 7, Fass moved from Forest Hills to Rockville Centre and played baseball with Little League. At 11, a tumor severed his optic nerve, leaving him blind.

Fass attended the University of Miami, where he met his wife, Gail Fass. They invested their wedding funds into what would become Ted's Disco on Wheels. The first mobile DJ, he was featured on numerous TV, radio shows and in magazines.

He also began a helium balloon company, Party Particulars, and Be My Guest and Ted Fass Productions with storefronts in Rockville Centre and Cedarhurst. Fass's balloon creations were seen at grocery stores, parties and events.

In 1989, he created a talking invitation, featuring a computer chip with a 1-800 number RSVP, earning him a Gala award. He produced radio commercials and a documentary movie that won a Tully. Fass acquired Entertainment Unlimited, a company that supplies entertainment to a diverse array of venues such as theaters, corporate and private events, country clubs and gated communities.



He co-founded and served as executive director of the Long Island Bombers, a blind beep baseball team. He dedicated himself to mentoring, fundrais-

ing, and organizing exhibition games with the New York Yankees and Long Island Ducks.

In 2004, he was honored as the Differently Abled Athlete of the Year in Nassau County. As his knees began to falter, he found new expression in golf. Fass also participated in ski competitions and enjoyed water skiing and bowling with his family.

A member of the Rockville Centre Lions, he shared his unique perspective through initiatives like Dinner in the Dark, where sighted people have dinner blindfolded. He visited local schools and Cub Scout groups, teaching children about the power of overcoming adversity.

## Survey Reveals More Support Needed For PWD

**Workplace Inclusion** for **People with Disabilities**

For **9 in 10,**

it's important that their employer values diversity and inclusion, specifically including people with disabilities.

**70%**

believe more emphasis should be placed on people with disabilities in workplace DEIA initiatives.

**93%**

Almost all believe the government and private/public sectors should actively support employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

**57%**

of Americans with disabilities believe their disability has limited their career opportunities.

**37%**

More than a third believe that the government should promote more job opportunities for people with disabilities by setting targets, quotas or goals for disability representation within their workforce.

**SourceAmerica**

Data from a survey conducted by OnePoll on behalf of SourceAmerica from July 14 to July 21, 2023, with a panel of 1,000 employed Americans and 1,000 employed Americans with disabilities.

A poll of 1,000 employed Americans and 1,000 employed Americans with disabilities found that nine in 10 respondents said it was important for their employers to value diversity and inclusion, specifically including individuals with disabilities.

"The survey results strengthen our resolve to help create access to jobs for people with disabilities. Our goal is to create a level playing field where anyone with a disability who wants to work has the opportunity to do so," said Richard Belden, president and CEO of SourceAmerica. "... We want to encourage public

and private sector employers to join us in connecting people with disabilities to competitive jobs with good wages and advancement potential to build careers."

SourceAmerica commissioned this survey which was independently conducted by market research company OnePoll between July 14 and July 21. The findings highlight the crucial need for more public and private sector help in creating additional job opportunities for people with disabilities.

The survey found that disabilities have had a significant impact on job interviews

and careers. The majority (57 percent) of Americans with disabilities believe their disability has limited their career opportunities. Forty-three percent believe that people with disabilities are not given equal opportunities for employment and advancement percent in the workplace.

Survey data also revealed that more than half of Americans with disabilities (58 percent) experienced discrimination during job interviews, compared to only 26 percent of Americans without disabilities.

A majority (59 percent) of those with disabilities said

they've left their job due to discriminatory acts, while only 26 percent of people without disabilities have made the same decision based on discrimination.

About 68 percent of those with disabilities said they've witnessed discrimination against someone with a disability in their workplace; twice as many (32 percent) as respondents without disabilities.

The survey revealed a national lack of awareness of DEIA initiatives, with only four in 10 of the respondents knowing that the "A" stood for

**Continued on page 15**

# Hawaii & New Zealand Are Most Inclusive

Hawaii kept its streak going by placing first for the sixth consecutive year as most inclusive state in the country, according to the latest Inclusiveness Index produced annually by the Othering & Belonging Institute.

Maryland and Vermont rounded out the podium by taking second and third, respectively, in the latest study. OBI began publishing the Inclusiveness Index in 2016 to rank US states and countries by their levels of inclusion using a number of indicators.

The results of this year's U.S. state rankings are similar to past years, where some states may gain or drop a couple of positions, but for the most part have remained in the same category since OBI launched this project.

Louisiana is at the bottom of the rankings for the third consecutive year in the latest index, followed by Mississippi and Alabama, two other consistently poor performers.

The Index examines inclusivity in terms of race, religion, gender (sex), sexual

orientation, disability, and the general population using several measures. Those measures include outgroup violence; political representation; income inequality; anti-discrimination laws; rates of incarceration; and immigration/asylum policies.

For the first time since OBI launched the index, it now also includes an indicator for a country's response to the climate crisis by considering its change in greenhouse gas emissions, including land use, land-use change, and forestry. This measure applies only to the global rankings.

The global rankings also include refugee and immigration policies. The more

welcoming the country is in terms of openness to refugees and immigrants, the better its ranking is.

Globally, the 2023 rankings are also comparable to past years, with New Zealand coming in first place for the second consecutive year. Portugal recorded its best showing yet by coming in second place (up from fifth place in 2022), followed by the Netherlands in third place.

The Netherlands had dominated the global rankings list since its launch until Sweden took over the top spot in 2020. Sweden ranked 7th in this year's index.

New Zealand and Northern European countries known for their strong social safety

net programs regularly rank high in the Index.

This year's rankings placed Iran at the bottom of the global list. Yemen, which has been devastated by the Saudi-led invasion which began in 2015, followed by the Comoros Islands, a former French colony located off the southeastern coast of Africa.

The United States, as with all past rankings, placed mid pack, but several positions worse than in the past two studies (77th place this year, versus 72nd place in 2022 and 2021).

The U.S. typically performs well on inclusion in terms of disability, LGBTQ, and religion, but ranks poorly on race, gender and incarceration rates.

## Transgender Law Center Launches Survey

The Transgender Law Center's Disability Project has launched the Disabled & Deaf Trans People's Survey. It is a survey created by and for disabled and deaf trans people to gather and share knowledge about disabled and deaf trans people's needs, experiences and priorities.

Particularly centering Black disabled and deaf trans people and trans people of color who are disabled and deaf, the survey seeks to fill longstanding gaps in research on the perspectives of disabled and deaf trans community members.

The DTSPS has three main components: a set of online surveys, story collection, and in-depth interviews with community leaders.

The survey is designed to account for different cognitive processes and memory

access needs and is available in written and audio English, Spanish and interpreted into ASL.

Videos, audio recordings, and interpretations are available throughout. This survey allows people to share in-depth their specific lived experiences in open-ended responses with options to type or record answers.

The survey is available at <https://dtpspsurvey.org/> for public participation through November.

## New Medicaid Transportation Coverage Guide Issued

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has published the Medicaid Transportation Coverage Guide.

This guidance serves as a consolidated and comprehensive compilation of Medicaid transportation policy, providing a one-stop transportation resource for states on federal requirements and state flexibilities.

The guide highlights existing policies but also includes new policies to address scenarios for extended wait times and long-distance trips, and scenarios where non-Medicaid-eligible parents, family members, or oth-

er caregivers may require transportation to participate in a Medicaid-eligible child's care. Medicaid transportation is a critical service that assists beneficiaries with accessing Medicaid services and has a direct impact on health outcomes.

CMS is encouraging states to use this guide as an aid when developing and updating appropriate policies and procedures that facilitate robust transportation programs. To view the guide and for information one may visit [www.medicaid.gov/sites/default/files/2023-09/smd23006.pdf](http://www.medicaid.gov/sites/default/files/2023-09/smd23006.pdf).

### VIRTUAL TRANSITION PLANNING WORKSHOP

*For families of children with special needs*

ACCESSING, UNDERSTANDING, & PROTECTING YOUR CHILD'S BENEFITS LEGALLY & FINANCIALLY WITH ESTATE PLANNING

Presented by:

**REGINA BRANDOW**  
SPECIAL NEEDS ATTORNEY,  
BRANDOW LAW

**BRIAN MCILVAIN**  
ASSISTANT TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,  
SUFFOLK INDEPENDENT LIVING ORGANIZATION  
(SILO)

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- GUARDIANSHIP & ALTERNATIVES
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**6:00PM - 8:00PM**

**ZOOM WEBINAR**

**REGISTRATION**

**REQUIRED**

**Register by visiting:**

**[www.brandowlaw.com/transition-reg](http://www.brandowlaw.com/transition-reg)**

Unable to attend this session? View a previously recorded transition planning workshop by visiting [www.brandowlaw.com/freevideos](http://www.brandowlaw.com/freevideos)

*Para ver una grabación de la presentación apodada en español, por favor visite nuestra página web: [www.brandowlaw.com/spanish](http://www.brandowlaw.com/spanish)*

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## FREE VIRTUAL ACTIVITIES FOR BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Future in Sight has a fall lineup of free, fun and beneficial activities held virtually on Zoom for those who are blind and visually impaired.

Activities include fitness workouts; technology workshops; games, trivia and more; interviews with those in different careers as blind and visually impaired employees; crafts; mindfulness meditation; a light discussion group for socializing; book discussions and cooking. And there are other activities as well.

Those interested may sign up by visiting [www.futureinsight.org/signupforactivities/](http://www.futureinsight.org/signupforactivities/).

## DRA CELEBRATES 30 YEARS WITH COAST-TO-COAST GALAS

Disability Rights Advocates is celebrating 30 years on Nov. 9 by welcoming guests from across the country to join in a coast-to-coast celebration, virtually and in person.

DRA will host simultaneous in-person galas in New York and San Francisco with food and beverages, live speakers and performers. Guests from around the country are invited to virtually join so all may celebrate DRA together and participate in the live program.

For information or to register, one may visit [www.dralegal.org/30th-anniversary-gala/](http://www.dralegal.org/30th-anniversary-gala/).

## REGISTRATION OPEN FOR NAD ANNUAL CONFERENCE

NADD will hold its 40th annual conference Dec. 13 to 15 in Nashville, Tenn. Keynote speakers are Matt Holder of the Lee Specialty Clinic and Lou Radja, an award-winning inspirational speaker.

The conference will include a welcome reception, dozens of presenters, a 40th-anniversary celebration, an awards luncheon, networking opportunities and continuing education units.

For information and to register, one should visit <https://web.cvent.com/event/686a02cb-da19-4b32-bf19-d9f2c2ab5ea2/regProcessStep1>.

## NASSAU CP 5K WALK, RUN, ROLL OR STROLL SET FOR NOV. 19

Team Theresa Russo will be participating again in the annual CP Nassau 5K Walk, Run, Roll, Stroll at 8:30 a.m., Sunday, Nov. 19 at Eisenhower Park, Field #2, East Meadow.

Funds raised by Team Russo will be earmarked specifically for Theresa's Fun Place; the playground and park at the Children's Learning Center on the campus of CP Nassau in Roosevelt. More than 250 students at the center enjoy this fully adapted playground in summer, fall and spring.

Information and registration is available by visiting <https://events.elitefeats.com/23cp>.

## DATE SET FOR 'BUILDING A WORLD WORTH LIVING IN' SYMPOSIUM

The Association for Mental Health and Response Crisis Center will present Building a World Worth Living In: Working with Suicidal Youth and Families in Educational and Community Settings on Dec. 13.

The full-day symposium will take place at Stony Brook University's Student Activity Center. Those interested may learn more about this event and receive the registration link when it becomes available, by visiting <https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=ZfFMM7f9Uki7iLjsH4sXo5JoBnwk2ZBJpxZ2jKfyKV-ZUOVFMU1M1S0hSS1NGR0YxOVdYRU-RHUU1DVS4u> and filling out the form.

## U.S. ACCESS BOARD AND OTHERS HOST ACCESSIBILITY FORUM

The 10th annual Interagency Accessibility Forum (IAAF) will be held both virtually and in-person from Nov. 7 to 9 at the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) L. William Seidman Center.

Co-hosted by the U.S. Access Board, General Services Administration (GSA), Department of Veterans Affairs, and FDIC, the forum is themed "Beyond Compliance: Building a Culture of Digital Accessibility" and will include workshops, presentations, breakout sessions, and a vendor exhibit of accessibility products and services.

Federal accessibility professionals, developers, designers, project managers, leadership, and many others are encouraged to attend to learn more about best practices in managing and implementing digital accessibility efforts, including those under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. The forum is free, but virtual attendee registration is required by Nov. 6.

Registration is available by visiting <https://web.cvent.com/event/8bee52ee-a698-4c27-bfbb-38e4f3304c86/summary?rt=CIdl4H1qNk6ktXIRfeWy-A>.

## 'KEEP THE MOMENTUM GOING' AT DEC. 13 SRC TRAINING SESSION

The Suffolk County Rehabilitation Council was formed to gain a better understanding of the functions of various agencies providing rehabilitation services, to coordinate these efforts and facilitate solutions of presenting problems.

In celebration of 60 years serving the rehab community and people with disabilities SRC will hold "Keeping the Momentum Going," a training event on Wednesday, Dec. 13 at Long Island Cares, The Center for Community Engagement, 75 David's Drive, Hauppauge.

Information is available by contacting Joani Madarash at 631 360-2753 or [Jmadarash@accesslinx.com](mailto:Jmadarash@accesslinx.com).

## 'LIVE YOUR BEST LIFE' AT SBRN EMPOWERMENT RETREAT

Spina Bifida Resource Network will present its annual empowerment retreat for adults with disabilities, Nov. 10 to 12.

"Live Your Best Life," is designed to foster radical self-acceptance and community building in adults with spina bifida and other disabilities.

This year's event will be hybrid. The in-person workshops and festivities will be at the Delta Hotels Woodbridge, N.J. from Friday to Sunday.

Participants can choose to attend one, two or all three days. SBRN will sponsor a luncheon on Saturday. The retreat will also be accessible online through Zoom.

Registration is required and there is a sliding scale fee. Anyone interested in more information or to register should visit [www.thesbrn.org/news-and-events/retreat/](http://www.thesbrn.org/news-and-events/retreat/).

## CARE CONNECTION WEBINAR OFFERS COPING STRATEGIES

Flying by the Seat of Our Pants & Other Helpful Coping Strategies, Care Connection webinar will take place from 1 to 2 p.m., Nov. 9.

In this session, Danuta Lipinska, an aging and dementia specialist, psychotherapist and author will offer creative and person-centered solutions to successful caregiving as well as tips for self-care and wellbeing.

Registration is available by visiting [https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_sD2OyvNFRi6Em6AOPXgNEw#/registration](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_sD2OyvNFRi6Em6AOPXgNEw#/registration).

## UNITED SPINAL ASSOCIATION EMPOWERS PARENTAL CAREGIVERS

Calling all parents/guardians of children, adolescents, or young adults with spinal cord injuries or mobility disorders who are looking for a community that understands what they are going through.

This group aims to be a virtual safe haven for parents and guardians who are caregivers of children, adolescents, or young adults with spinal cord injuries/disorders or other mobility or developmental disorders.

Meetings are facilitated by an occupational therapy doctoral student with support from leaders at United Spinal. Guided discussions will focus on parent-chosen topics which may include home exercise programs, skin integrity education, resources for adaptive recreation and assistive technology, adaptive dressing, and more.

Meetings are held from 7 to 8 p.m., on the third Tuesday of each month.

Emails should be directed to [emartino@unitedspinal.org](mailto:emartino@unitedspinal.org) or [lelliott@unitedspinal.org](mailto:lelliott@unitedspinal.org) with any questions or to learn more.

# GETTING PERSONAL

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

### GENTLEMAN INTERESTED IN LADY FOR MARRIAGE

Do you have a physical challenge? In tradition we call you a mitzuyan, "one who excels." Because G-d in his infinite wisdom gives you some compensation--in your case 2 pluses, one is your lovely smile. Jewish man seeks very caring woman, 55 and up. Company president and have great personality. "Wheel of Fortune" thought so, as I was a contestant and did very well. I am very caring. Last winter I made sure my dates had warm hat and gloves and an extra sweater. I made sure the car was warm. As a result of being so caring, a recent survey showed women who dated me, got 50 percent less colds than women who dated brand x. I believe every woman is beautiful, no exceptions. Keep smiling. My mantra is if at first you don't succeed, do not go skydiving. I would like to hear from Maxine F (pianist).

A406

Your Ad Can Be here Call 516 939-2253

### WIDOWED 67

seeks simple, playful lady friend. Send phone number. Age, race unimportant.

A407

### SWM 57, WHEELCHAIR USER

seeks single female for friendship and dating, into fishing, nascar, baseball, murder mystery dinners, and comedy clubs, I live in Suffolk County NY and I do not drive. Send photo, letter and phone number.

A405

### WOULD LIKE TO MEET HIGH FUNCTIONING MEN

for friendship and serious relationship 50-55. Send phone number and picture.

A404

### MIKE 62, FROM FARMINDALE

Stroke victim, looking for female friend.

A 408

### 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.

### TO PAY BY CREDIT CARD CALL THE ABLE OFFICE, 516 939-2253

**GUIDELINES:** Able assumes no liability for the contents of or replies to any personal advertisements, or the actions of any individuals. Any such liability rests exclusively with the advertiser, or a respondent to such advertisements. Able may, in its sole discretion, reject or delete any personal advertisements which it deems inappropriate. This

service is intended solely for personal advertisements of singles. No ads will be accepted from couples, groups or organizations. Advertisers and respondents must be 18 years of age or older. No ads will be published seeking persons under the age of 18.

## BALLOT MARKING DEVICE

Continued from page 3

Every poll center should have two BMDs available and one must always be functional.

The voter should be sure to speak with the Poll Site Coordinator and let them know if the machine is not working properly. They are required to reach out to the Board of Elections and have a replace-

ment device delivered as soon as possible.

Voters should not be intimidated if their polling center appears crowded or hectic. They are the voters' best advocate and tools are available to ensure everyone can cast their ballot, but it's the voters' responsibility to ask.

For information about voting and to learn more about accessible resources available, check out the following links.

Find your poll site - Find My Poll Site/View Sample Ballot ([vote.nyc](http://vote.nyc));

Information about accessibility voting - Accessibility |

NYC Board of Elections ([vote.nyc](http://vote.nyc));

Information about Ballot Marking Devices - Ballot Marking Device | NYC Board of Elections ([vote.nyc](http://vote.nyc)); and Presentation by Board of Elections ADA Coordinator Ariel Merkel: Accessible Voting: Know Your Rights! - Lighthouse Guild.

# THE ACCESS INDEX

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### DEADLINE:

The 10th day of the month prior to publication

## AIR TRAVELERS' RIGHTS

Continued from page 3

portation. Its passage represented a watershed moment for non-discrimination in air transportation. Since the passage of the ACAA, the department has issued many regulations to remove barriers to accessible travel by air.

DOT has awarded billions of dollars through Pres. Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to modernize airport terminals and ensure they serve all passengers and workers, including adding wheelchair ramps, accessible restrooms, and more. The infrastructure law also includes the first-ever federal program to retrofit old rail and subway stations, adding elevators, ramps and other improvements.

Airline personnel will receive hands-on training to assist passengers using wheelchairs.

United Airlines is implementing actions that go beyond federal requirements to improve the air travel experience for passengers who use wheelchairs.

In July, DOT finalized a rule requiring airlines to make lavatories on new, single-aisle aircraft more accessible. Airlines are required to take various steps to improve the accessibility of these lavatories short of increasing their size in the short term.

In the long term, airlines are required to provide an accessible lavatory that is large enough to permit a passenger with a disability and attendant, both equivalent in size to a 95th percentile male, to approach, enter and maneuver within as necessary to use the aircraft's lavatory.

## EMPLOYMENT SURVEY

Continued from page 11

Accessibility in DEIA. Six in 10 respondents indicated that they had not heard of DEIA.

Of those familiar with DEIA initiatives, 58 percent believe that their employer is not doing enough to promote diversity and inclusivity. Seven in 10 believe more emphasis should be placed on people with disabilities in workplace DEIA initiatives.

Additionally, 67 percent viewed DEIA initiatives as essential for helping individu-

als facing barriers to employment, which includes people with disabilities.

More than one in three think that targets, quotas and goals for disability representation are important to encourage more employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Full survey results are available by visiting [www.sourceamerica.org/who-we-are/employment-inclusion-survey](http://www.sourceamerica.org/who-we-are/employment-inclusion-survey).

## IMMIGRATING WITH DISABILITIES

Continued from page 5

ity-related needs and allow staff to determine which type of housing placement would be most appropriate." This is in addition to their reasonable accommodation requests form for any "alternative accommodations needed to meet the requesting guest's needs."

However according to Goldfein, disabled migrants are also not being told about the Reasonable Accommodation Requests form.

Diane Enobabor, founder and lead organizer of Black and Arab Migrant Solidarity Alliance who also has anecdotal experience with disabled migrants said "if there weren't alternative smaller nonprofits helping them fill out forms to get access to state benefits

including NY state insurance which is available for anyone regardless of immigration status, it wouldn't happen."

"Asylum seekers deserve access to essential support and services – especially asylum seekers with disabilities," said Assembly member Jo Anne Simon (N.Y.-Dist. 52).

"I am concerned about reports from organizations assisting asylum seekers that they are not getting adequate help or the reasonable accommodations to which they are entitled. I urge the Mayor's office to monitor the situation closely, to increase communication with advocates, and to promptly provide accommodations to those who seek assistance."

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SPORTS SCENE

## Access Expanded Ahead Of Paralympics



Evan Correll, 100 meter wheelchair race, April 2023

The University of Michigan Adaptive Sports and Fitness program has created the Adaptive Student Athlete Program through a multi-year grant from the Guardian Life Insurance Company of America.

This national program expands access to competitive opportunities in Para track and field, wheelchair tennis, and wheelchair basketball for

collegiate student athletes with disabilities, paving the way for them to increase their participation and receive equitable recognition alongside their able-bodied peers.

University of Michigan ASF is working with the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee and the United States Tennis Association to create opportunities for Para athlete participation at compet-

itive events. The university's relationship with Guardian includes a grant that will fund some of those opportunities. The first major event will take place April 27 to 29 as part of the Drake Relays, during which an inaugural collegiate national champion in Para track and field will be crowned. The funding covers the costs of the wheelchair racing portion of the event as well as Para athlete travel, lodging, and other costs.

"As a leading disability insurer and financial services provider, Guardian is proud to fund this effort," said Jonathan Mayhew, Guardian's head of group benefits. "Our purpose is to inspire well-being for the partners, customers, members, and communities that we serve. With this grant, we hope to help people with disabilities thrive and move beyond limits."

"The Drake Relays has innovated in the sport of track and field for more than 11 decades and we are proud to work with the USOPC, the

University of Michigan, and Guardian to lead in this new way," said Blake Boldon, Franklin Johnson director of the Drake Relays. "Since 2015, Drake Relays fans have applauded world-class performances from Paralympic athletes, so crowning the first-ever collegiate wheelchair national champion is an exciting next page in the history of an event long regarded as America's Athletic Classic."

The full list of major 2023 events made possible by the grant includes-April 27 to 29: Collegiate Para Track and Field National Championships (Held at Drake Relays) in Des Moines, Iowa; May 19 to 20: Wheelchair Tennis National Championship Finals (Held alongside NCAA DI-DIII Collegiate Tennis National Championships) in Orlando, Fla.; and Sept. 28 to Oct. 1: University of Michigan wheelchair basketball tournament at Saint Clair County Community College in Port Huron, Mich.

## Amputee Climbs New Heights Empowering Others

Stevie Crawford embodies resilience, determination and human potential as he prepares to set out on a charitable mission that will touch readers and inspire action, creating positive change for people in need.

An ambassador for Xtremity, a prosthetic developer, Crawford is a transtibial amputee who is active in a variety of extreme sports and within the limb loss community as a whole.

Far beyond simply being an extreme sports enthusiast and brand ambassador, he is a beacon of hope for anyone facing physical challenges, believing that a person's disability does not define or limit them. He plans to undertake a 19,000-foot

volcano climb next month to help transform lives and create opportunities.

This climb is not about personal achievement but about raising funds for children and adults in Ecuador who desperately need access to prosthetic devices.

In partnership with ROMP Global, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing prosthetic care to underserved communities, Crawford was selected to join the climb team as part of ROMP's mission to help Ecuadorians in need of prosthetic services. The goal is to give the gift of mobility to those in need.

Information is available by visiting <https://give.rompglobal.org/fund-raiser/4585973>.

