

# DDD Today

A Publication of the Division of Developmental Disabilities

Chris Christie, Governor  
Kim Guadagno, Lt. Governor

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dddnewsletter@dhs.state.nj.us

Jennifer Velez, Commissioner  
Dawn Apgar, Deputy Commissioner

## 23RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON MEDICAL CARE FOR PERSONS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

*DDD'S DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PROVIDES UPDATE ON CURRENT INITIATIVES*



The Arc of New Jersey held its annual Conference on Medical Care for Persons with Developmental Disabilities for advocates and professionals on June 1. The event took place at the Westin Princeton Hotel in Forrestal Village, and the theme was “Promoting Quality Healthcare.”



Dawn Apgar, Deputy Commissioner for the NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), offered introductory remarks. In her statement, she discussed the Olmstead Act and DDD’s efforts in support of community placement. “In this calendar year, we have not had a single DC (developmental center) admission,” she said. Apgar also reminded attendees that it takes a full range of supports to make community living a reality and that the role of advocates and professionals in the process is vital.

Following the keynote address on how missed medical problems can cause psychiatric disorders in some individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities, Apgar gave an update on behalf of NJ Medicaid and DDD. In her address, Apgar noted:

- DDD essentially serves two types of children — high activity individuals and those who get family support. Within the next few weeks, the Division of Children and Families will begin to assume responsibility for children in residential placement and those receiving intensive in-home supports. DCF will also assume responsibility for all funding associated with family supports for children, effective January 1, 2013. The goal is complete integration.



## Message to Stakeholders from Department of Human Services (DHS) Commissioner Jennifer Velez



May was a productive month for the Department, as we recognized Better Speech and Hearing Awareness with a [letter to the editor](#) and a Public Service Announcement [video](#) made during my visit to an Assistive Technology Demonstration Center operated by the Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DDHH) at the Marie Katzenbach School for the Deaf in Ewing Township. We also highlighted Mental Health Awareness with an [Op-Ed](#) from Assistant Commissioner Lynn Kovich and a [proclamation](#) and [letter from the Governor](#) to mental health providers, confirming the state's commitment to diagnosis, community-based treatment and recovery.

In addition, six very talented teenagers [were awarded](#) by our Office of Child Support within the Division of Family Development for their winning entries in the 17th Annual Teen Media Contest, which helps promote parental responsibility in New Jersey's youth; about 250 New Jersey residents [were trained](#) in Disaster Crisis Counseling; and I visited Trinitas Regional Medical Center to [announce the launch](#) of Involuntary Outpatient Commitment (IOC) in five counties.

Deputy Commissioner Lowell Arye and I participated in a wonderful [event](#) with the Department of Health that launched an enhanced service delivery system known as the Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC). The [ADRC](#) serves as a visible and trusted source of information on long term services and supports for persons of all incomes. This initiative created a single point of access in all 21 counties for information on publicly and privately funded services, screening to determine level of service needs, counseling and assistance, and assistance with eligibility processes and applications – an invaluable convenience for people with mobility and transportation challenges.

This month, our focus is the [budget](#). As you know, there are [some reform and realignment plans](#) pending that include: the transfer of aging services from the Department of Health to DHS, and the transition of services to children with developmental disabilities and adolescents with behavioral health needs from DHS to the Department of Children and Families.

At the same time, we continue our efforts to secure federal approval for the Comprehensive Medicaid [Waiver proposal](#) so that we can maximize the State's investment in home and community based services and program options for seniors and individuals with disabilities.

Our meetings with stakeholders on these and other issues continue to provide valuable support and guidance.

Wishing everyone a happy and safe summer!

## **23rd Annual Conference on Medical Care for Persons with Developmental Disabilities**

*DDD's Deputy Commissioner Provides Update on Current Initiatives*

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New Jersey's Comprehensive Waiver will move towards more preventive care, more community-based services, and a better understanding of individual needs. Key features include:

- Managed long-term services and supports
- Manage and integrate behavioral health care
- Pilot programs for people with intellectual/developmental disabilities

With regard to transition services, DDD will continue to provide education and information to individuals and their families in preparation for the receipt of adult services. Direct services will continue to be provided by DCF and local school districts.



DDD also will continue to provide day supports to supplement employment upon the ending of an individual's educational entitlement. Supports, such as respite and adaptive technology, are provided via a self-directed model based upon consumer need. Individuals must meet DDD eligibility criteria, be at least 21 years old and have completed educational entitlement, be Medicaid eligible, and have lived in an unlicensed setting.

- DDD will get a federal dollar match to expand some supports, which will positively impact the Wait List.

DDD provides intensive in-home individual supports or residential services through a Home and Community Based Waiver.



There is a new program for children with dual diagnosis up to age 21; it will be administered by DCF. The goal is to provide a safe, stable, and therapeutically supportive environment in the community for children with behavioral needs. Services include respite; parental supports and training; out-of-home supports; and intensive in-home and out-of-home individual and behavioral supports.

Another new program is being co-administered by DCF and Medicaid HMOs for children with pervasive developmental disorder. It will include 3 levels of need, up to \$9,000, \$18,000, and \$27,000. Under the Medicaid State Plan, they are not currently providing critically-needed therapies.

## DHS COMMISSIONER PROMOTES COMMUNITY LIVING OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES



### *Meets Brothers Reunited in Community Living Setting After 45 Year Separation*

CLOSTER, NJ - After 45 years apart, siblings Jerome and Paul finally are together again. Both men currently are being served by a community-based non-profit organization that provides residential support and programs for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. DHS Commissioner Jennifer Velez recently met with the brothers to see first-hand the progress each is making.

Ann Schmidt knew early on that her sons' disabilities and needs were different. She was able to provide Paul with the supports he needed at home but Jerome required much more assistance, so she chose the only option available for him in 1965, a state-run developmental center. After that, Paul resisted visiting his brother for fear he, too, would be institutionalized.

The separation of "her boys" weighed heavily on Ann. In 1997, Paul moved into a Spectrum for Living group home. Ann advocated strongly for a placement for Jerome too. In 2010, one became available in a different residential program managed by Spectrum. With staff assistance, the brothers now visit each other about twice a month. "It was like a miracle," Ann said about the brothers' first reunion in 45 years. "Now I have peace of mind knowing that both of my children are together and will be taken care of when I'm gone." Governor Christie often has spoken of the State's moral obligation to recognize the individuality and unique needs of New Jerseyans with developmental disabilities. The FY'13 proposed budget reaffirms the Administration's commitment to a fundamental rethinking of how individuals receive support and services and includes nearly \$40 million to further these efforts.

"The Schmidts have an incredible story one that really emphasizes the benefits of community living for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families," Velez said. "This situation is a dream come true for each of them, and it feels good to be a part of the excitement and warmth of them being together. It's these kinds of opportunities Governor Christie is committed to advancing to ensure that New Jerseyans with developmental disabilities lead fuller lives."

Most of the 42,000 people served by DHS' Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) already live in the community with family or loved ones, but about 2,500 are living in one of seven State-run developmental centers. During this current fiscal year, over 700 people received expanded services – through a variety of means, including emergency placements, day supports for people leaving school, the waiting list, or Olmstead. More than half have moved into community residences operated by agencies that contract with DDD.

In 1999, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that individuals with developmental disabilities should live in the least restrictive environment with appropriate services and supports. New Jersey was sued in 2005 by the organization Disability Rights New Jersey for non-compliance. A settlement is pending.

"We know we have a responsibility to honor the civil rights of residents in the developmental centers by offering them community residential opportunities," said Velez. "We're working closely with our community-based provider-partners to build up the service infrastructure and rebalance resources to support individuals with developmental disabilities who desire and are able to live in the community."

## News from North Jersey Developmental Center

On March 16, twenty staff escorted 45 clients to the IZOD Center in Rutherford, NJ where they enjoyed the Ringling Brothers, Barnum & Bailey Circus. Afterward everyone enjoyed lunch at Pizza Hut. Many enjoyed pizza but some preferred spaghetti and meatballs or chicken nuggets. Thanks to everyone for making this event special for our clients.

### Recreation News by Jeanette Ervin

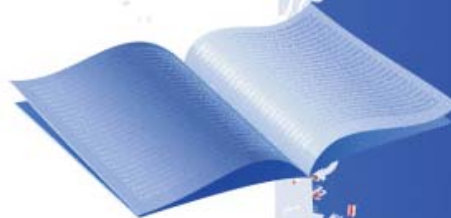


On March 23, clients participated in Motor Activities Training. It was held in the gymnasium where everyone worked hard & had a good time. Thanks to the cottages for making sure everyone was ready to go on time and thanks, also, to our TA's for making sure the clients got to the gym on time.

On April 1, three clients went to the State Championship for Bowling. Mr. D. H. from Cottage #11 brought home 7th place. Ms. S.K. brought home 8th place; and yet again, for the third time, Mr. M.F. brought home the Gold. Hats off to our athletes and their coaching staff.



## STORY IDEAS?



**E-MAIL US AT:**

**[DDDnewsletter@dhs.state.nj.us](mailto:DDDnewsletter@dhs.state.nj.us)**

**We will happily consider your request!**

## Bernard Krakosky: A DDD/Community Options, Inc. Success Story

*Submitted by: Sam Nussbaum, MSW  
Executive Director, Mercer County  
Community Options, Inc.*

Bernard Krakosky is very proud of his achievements. He owns his own beautiful two bedroom condo in a lovely community. He has a full-time job. He manages his finances with minimal assistance. He has many friends. He is well-liked by all who know him. In essence, Krakosky is a true American success story.

To add to that, Krakosky now has an exciting new job that anyone would cherish. In May, he was offered the position of receptionist for Jennifer Velez, Commissioner of the Department of Human Services, in Trenton, New Jersey. Krakosky will take with him his considerable skills in providing a warm welcome to people who visit his workplace. And for sure, he will point them in the right direction—that's what he does and he always does it with a smile!

Although legally blind, Krakosky has a knack for understanding what people are looking for and directing them to the right place. He remembers people who are returning for a visit, and his jovial and compelling nature always wins people over. It is these skills and an engaging personality that has endeared Bernie (as he is affectionately called) to so many people. This was never more evident than at his recent going away party from his previous job.

It was at his bon voyage party at the Central Office of the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) in Hamilton that he recounted how proud he was of his work and his new assignment. "I enjoyed all my time here, but this is an offer I couldn't refuse," Krakosky said, adding, "Thanks to all of you for helping me for so many years. I am proud to have so many special friends."



Bernard Krakosky (on left), Robert Stack, President and CEO of Community Options (center), and NJ Senator Joe Kyrillos (on right) at a spring event hosted by Community Options, Inc. last year.

## Advocate Honored by Morristown Council Declares August 16 as Bill Byrne Day

On May 8, Bill Byrne, 58, was honored by the Morristown Council and Mayor Tim Dougherty for his service to those with developmental disabilities. Byrne often attends council meetings to alert members of local issues or new programming. To recognize his commitment to the town, the Mayor and Council presented Byrne with a proclamation declaring August 16 as “Bill Byrne Day.”

When he was just a baby, Byrne was diagnosed with neonatal phenylketonuria (PKU), which is an amino acid disorder that can cause mental retardation, seizures, hyperactivity, and eczema. However, Byrne hasn't let the disease stop him for advocating for those with disabilities.

According to Dougherty, Byrne was a founding member of “Unity Club,” which launched a campaign to remove the words “retard,” “idiot,” and “insane” from the State Constitution. He also helped changed the name of The Arc from the Association of Retarded Citizens, and he strives to enhance accessibility in Morris County.

## TRANSITIONS - CHANGING ROLES FOR YOUTH

This checklist, which is available in English and Spanish, helps a youth and family assess and discuss their readiness for transition to adult health care. Originally developed by HRTW Center, it is now part of the new National Health Care Transition Center toolkit. To see the checklist, go to:

<http://www.fv-ncfpp.org/files/5913/2810/5839/TransitionReadiness.pdf>

## NEWS FROM NEW LISBON DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER

*Your Mother's Irish Tea*  
Submitted by: Jackie Kulsick

On May 2, members of St. Francis invited the ladies from Pine and Holly Cottages to join them at the Amergael's “Your Mother's Irish Tea.”

The afternoon was spent sipping tea, listening to Irish music, socializing, and enjoying the delicious assortment of desserts. It was a wonderful afternoon out! The ladies received many compliments on the hats they made to wear specifically for this event. Four out of the seven ladies that attended also won door prizes!

We have been invited back next year and the ladies are looking forward it!



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### News from New Lisbon Developmental Center SHARP MEMBERS ATTEND "SPRING INTO ACTION LUNCHEON"

*By: Kimberly A. Chandler, Social Worker Trainee  
Cedar & Teaberry Cottages  
S.H.A.R.P. Advisor*

Seventeen S.H.A.R.P. (Self Help Advocacy for Real Progress) members accompanied by 12 staff attended the 7th Annual New Jersey Self Advocacy "Spring into Action" Network Luncheon on April 14. This was New Lisbon's highest attendance ever.

The luncheon was an opportunity for NLDC Self-Advocates to elect the new Chairperson and Co-Chair for Council 4. Each of the running mates from Councils 1 through 5 gave their election speeches at the luncheon. After the speeches, the polls opened for voting to all 300 Self-Advocate attendees. All NLDC Self-Advocates voted in the election.

After the voting was over, a beautifully catered meal was served to all luncheon attendees. The room was a buzz with staff and Self-Advocates networking and socializing. Awards were announced for Advisor of the Year and Council Group of the Year. The election results were announced. Each Council celebrated their newly elected officials. Council 4 re-elected the previous Chairperson and her Co-Chair. The live band "Run for Cover" played hits from all eras. The dance floor was full from the first song to the last.

As the new S.H.A.R.P. Advisor, I would like to thank everyone for their assistance in making this event a "Success."

A special thank you to:



- ❁ All S.H.A.R.P. members that attended the luncheon from Azalea, Dogwood, Holly, Juniper, Locust, Walnut, and Yucca Cottages
- ❁ John Hughes, Trip Driver
- ❁ Beverly Minney, CTS from Holly & Trip Coordinator
- ❁ All staff in attendance from Azalea, Dogwood, Holly, Juniper, Locust, Walnut, and Yucca cottages
- ❁ Dave Haeffner, Director of Social Services & Laurena Carter, Assistant Director of Social Services
- ❁ Robert Wilder, Supervisor of Recreation
- ❁ Alisha Conard, Patient Accounts



## UCP LAUNCHES NEW ONLINE RESOURCE FOR KIDS & PARENTS

Overhaul of Brave Kids Portal Second Phase of New Public Education & Outreach Efforts



**Washington, DC** – When Kristen Fitzgerald lost two of her children to catastrophic illnesses, she pledged to redirect the anguish of her tragic experiences toward easing the suffering of seriously ill children and helping parents avoid the struggle of finding resources and emotional support for their own children. As a result, she founded “Brave Kids,” an online portal for information and support, and now, almost 12 years later to the day, United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) has molded Fitzgerald’s vision of love into a powerful new resource for kids and parents by adding the perspective of people with disabilities.

Brave Kids was launched in the San Francisco Bay Area during March 2000. The Brave Kids website rolled out nationwide in 2002, in collaboration with the University of California, San Francisco; the Lucile Packard Children's Hospital; and a number of corporate sponsors. Following the launch, Brave Kids donated resource centers to pediatric wards of hospitals located in California and Florida. UCP took ownership of the website in 2011, and is proud to carry on the legacy of Brave Kids by providing the information, resources, and support that visitors and users have come to trust and rely upon.

The new Brave Kids website ([bravekids.org](http://bravekids.org)) is an encyclopedic resource for children, youth, and teens ages 6-17 with chronic/life-threatening illnesses and disabilities, their families and caregivers, providing information and resources on numerous disabilities, medical conditions, and genetic diseases. It includes a secure online community for parents and caregivers to share ideas, gain support, and have conversations about issues relevant to this group. Brave Kids is a part of UCP’s new Public Education & Outreach initiative, which aims to provide vital support and information to people with disabilities and their families during key moments of transition. For more information, visit <http://www.ucp.org/publiced>.

“UCP is proud to couple UCP’s strong tradition of serving people with disabilities and their families with Kristen Fitzgerald’s vision that no parent should feel alone in times of grief and struggle,” said Stephen Bennett, UCP President & CEO. “Brave Kids is a critical piece of UCP’s Public Education & Outreach initiatives, which guide people with disabilities and caregivers through the entire life cycle. UCP is delighted to re-launch Brave Kids and deliver regularly updated news and content through the resource.”

Brave Kids provides the following:

### **1. Information, resources, and a support community.**

In addition to detailed information about health and wellness, family and caregivers can sign up for a monthly newsletter and connect with Brave Kids on social media platforms by following Brave Kids on Twitter and Facebook. Users will also stay up-to-date on current issues. An important part of Brave Kids is the secure support community of individuals whose common experiences help to build connections and share information.



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## UCP LAUNCHES NEW ONLINE RESOURCE FOR KIDS & PARENTS

Overhaul of Brave Kids Portal Second Phase of New Public Education & Outreach Efforts

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### **2. A place for kids, youth, and teenagers 6-17, to get information to lead fuller, richer lives.**

The special Just for Kids section helps young people access information that helps them lead a life without limits, giving tips and tools about growing up in today's world. The website is specifically created to be simple for both children/teens and adults to navigate.

### **3. A vital link in UCP's continuum of transitions initiative that span the entire life cycle.**

UCP's *Public Education & Outreach (PEO)* efforts provide people with disabilities, their families, and caregivers with support, resources, and information throughout all stages of life for a life without limits. This is part of UCP's mission to advance the independence, productivity and full citizenship of people with a spectrum of disabilities.

Brave Kids would not have been possible without generous donations from the Medtronic Foundation and Shionogi Inc. "We could not have brought Brave Kids to a wider audience without the support of these two key partners," Bennett said. "Both understand the importance of quality, objective information to parents and caregivers, and care deeply about the future lives of those we serve."

For more information on how you can support Brave Kids or any of UCP's Public Education & Outreach efforts, please contact Nick Pietras, Manager of Strategic Partnership & Events, at [npietras@ucp.org](mailto:npietras@ucp.org).

### **About United Cerebral Palsy**

United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) educates, advocates, and provides support services to ensure a life without limits for people with a spectrum of disabilities. Together with nearly 100 affiliates, UCP has a mission to advance the independence, productivity, and full citizenship of people with disabilities by supporting more than 176,000 children and adults every day—one person at a time, one family at a time. UCP works to enact real change—to revolutionize care, raise standards of living, and create opportunities—impacting the lives of millions living with disabilities. For more than 60 years UCP has worked to ensure the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in every facet of society. Together, with parents and caregivers, UCP will continue to push for the social, legal, and technological changes that increase accessibility and independence, allowing people with disabilities to dream their own dreams, for the next 60 years, and beyond. For more information, please visit [www.ucp.org](http://www.ucp.org).

### **CONTACT:**

Lauren Cozzi at 202-973-7114 or [LCozzi@ucp.org](mailto:LCozzi@ucp.org)

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE ELIZABETH M. BOGGS CENTER  
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Department of Pediatrics



ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON  
MEDICAL SCHOOL

University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey

### BOGGS CENTER ANNUAL REPORT AVAILABLE

The Boggs Center is pleased to announce that our FY '11 annual report is now available. The report highlights The Boggs Center's projects, publications, and student programs. Download the report at:

<http://rwjms.umdj.edu/boggscenter/products/documents/2011BoggsCenterannualreportfinal.pdf>

To order a hard copy, submit the order form at:

[http://rwjms.umdj.edu/boggscenter/products/order\\_form.php](http://rwjms.umdj.edu/boggscenter/products/order_form.php)

or contact Kathy Roberson at 732-235-9317.

### BOGGS CENTER JULY – SEPTEMBER 2012 TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Training opportunities for July – September 2012 are now posted on The Boggs Center website and open for on-line registration at: <http://rwjms.umdj.edu/boggscenter>. Courses include: Grief and Loss, Faith Based Supports, Employment Specialist, Management Skills, Person Centered Thinking Skills, In Community, Individual Habilitation Plan, Positive Behavior Support, and Mental Health Supports. Most courses are available for continuing education credit. See The Boggs Center website for details.

### KATHY ROBERSON HONORED WITH ELIZABETH BOGGS FAMILY ADVOCATE AWARD BY THE NJ COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Kathy Roberson was recently honored with the Elizabeth Boggs Family Member Advocate Award by the NJ Council on Developmental Disabilities. The award honors a family member of an individual with a developmental disability who has shown outstanding advocacy efforts in the area of developmental disabilities. The award was presented at the NJ Council on Developmental Disabilities Community Building Awards Luncheon on April 18.

Kathy is a Policy and Information Coordinator at The Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities at UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. She has been an active member of numerous committees and task forces throughout New Jersey, including currently serving as president of the Family Support Coalition and chair of the State Special Education Advisory Committee, and she is strongly committed to ensuring that families help shape the policies that most effect their lives.



## PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER - SPECIAL ANGELS RECREATION



Education is our best weapon to fight autism. In response, Tara Banuls and Deborah Wertalik, the mother and grandmother of Tyler, a child with autism, established a support group called Putting the Pieces Together. The group has since educated hundreds of families by covering a wide range of topics and providing free speaker meetings and workshops.

Two months after forming the group, Banuls and Wertalik started Special Angels Recreation. They provide flag football, football cheer, tee ball, basketball, bowling, PTPT Exceptional Dance (ballet tap, and jazz), and soccer. The leagues differ from other special needs leagues by having age appropriate teams and all the bells and whistles of a typical league. The leagues are open to any child with different abilities in any town or county.

Another recreation opportunity is SPARKS, a co-ed special needs cheer dance squad that enters competitions all over New Jersey to show their talent. The group spreads the best kind of positive awareness to thousands of people by showing them that these children have dreams too and, if they follow them, anything is possible. To date, SPARKS has been to the Atlantic City and Six Flags Great Adventure Nationals, and they have been invited to Disney to compete. Yes, dreams really do come true! They have been featured in many newspapers as well, including on the front page of Our Meadowlands Magazine, and you will see them soon in a documentary by Mary Olive Smith, an Emmy award winning producer director. The film will be seen in film festivals and other venues to promote awareness and to educate communities.

### New programs:

**Extreme Prom for teens and young adults** - The cost is \$21 per person. The event takes place on June 28; the theme is A Starry, Starry Night—Dreams Come True! Girls get their hair and make up done. Boys and girls get flowers; they ride in limos and party buses. Two photographers are on-hand and participants get a CD of pictures. There will be a DJ, decorations, dinner, center pieces, and favors. Everyone is prom queen and king, and they get crowns and sashes.

**The Biggest Loser** - This is a weight loss competition and trainers are involved.

**Two-wheel bike riding classes** - The cost is \$60 for 10 weeks.

**Teen Scene Club** - The cost is \$60 for 6 weeks and it lasts through the summer. In the fall, the cost is \$60 for 10 weeks. Participants get to try Wii, board games, martial arts, Rock Out Loud, go to dinner, and they learn social skills and life skills while having fun!

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### Regular programs include:

#### Tuesdays

Rock Out Loud (full drum set, keyboard, guitars, mics, etc. are available)-This involves socializing while jamming out.

#### Wednesdays

Dance and recital; cost is \$40 for one year of dance with recital, and they fundraise for costumes so it doesn't cost the family anything.

#### Thursdays

Readers Theater– Participants read scripts, play reading games, and put on a show at the end of the session. Cost is \$60 for 12 weeks.

#### Fridays

Martial arts-- The cost is \$65 for 12 weeks; participants earn belts and stripes. They break boards, use a balance beam, and other equipment. Teacher is a black belt.

#### Saturdays

Sparks is a State respected Cheer dance squad that performs all over New Jersey. Cost is \$40 for a year of Cheer Dance.

Bowling takes place in the summer; cost is \$25 for July and August.

Flag Football takes place in the fall. It is \$40 and goes from August to end of October.

#### Sundays

Tee ball is \$40 and goes from April to the end of June.

Soccer is \$40 and goes from September to the end of October.

Basketball is \$40 and lasts from December to March; at the season's end, the older group plays against the LPD in a night game with a large audience. The younger children have Mike Simmel from Harlem Wizards come and perform for them.

**There are also movie nights, dances, and trips. Transportation is not provided. Those interested can contact Debbie or Tara at 201-966-8738. For more details, visit: [www.puttingthepiecestogether.org](http://www.puttingthepiecestogether.org)**



# AUTISM SPEAKS

## ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NATIONAL AUTISM ASSOCIATION TO PROVIDE FUNDING FOR “BIG RED SAFETY BOXES” FOR FAMILIES OF INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM AT RISK OF WANDERING



NEW YORK, NY – Autism Speaks, the world’s leading autism science and advocacy organization, recently announced that it has awarded \$30,000 in funding to the National Autism Association (NAA) to provide 1,000 Big Red Safety Boxes to families of individuals with autism.

The Big Red Safety Box is a valuable tool for caregivers as a means to educate, raise awareness, and share simple tools that can assist in preventing, and responding to, wandering-related incidents in the autism community. The Big Red Safety Box contains educational materials, such as a caregiver checklist, a Family Wandering Emergency Plan, a sample IEP letter that can be used to implement prevention and response protocols in school, along with safety products, including two GE Door Alarms, one Who’s Shoe ID, and five laminated adhesive stop sign visual prompts for doors and windows. Big Red Safety Boxes are provided free-of-charge to families with a loved one at-risk of wandering. While supplies last, they can be requested at this link:

<http://www.nationalautismassociation.org/bigredsafetybox.htm>.

The Big Red Safety Box program was designed and launched by NAA last year. The number of requests from families was overwhelming, with NAA distributing its entire inventory of 2,000 kits in just six days. Big Red Safety Boxes are packaged and shipped with care by a company employing adults with autism and other developmental disabilities.

“The National Autism Association has taken on a leadership role in raising awareness about the dangers of wandering and elopement for some individuals with autism,” said Lisa Goring, Autism Speaks vice president of Family Services. “NAA’s Big Red Safety Boxes provide the necessary resources to help prevent potentially dangerous situations, and we are proud to partner with the NAA to fund more of these valuable tools for families across the country.”

“Wandering-related injuries and deaths happen with startling frequency in the Autism community. We are aware of at least 80 incidents in the last six months alone,” said Wendy Fournier, NAA President. “With a multi-layered approach to prevention and coordinated response, the Big Red Safety Box program is designed to save lives. We are extremely grateful to Autism Speaks for partnering with NAA on this vitally important program for families.”

Autism Speaks and the National Autism Association are both involved with the Autism Wandering Awareness Alerts Response and Education ([AWAARE](#)) Collaboration, a working group of six national non-profit autism organizations whose mission is to reduce autism-related wandering incidents and deaths.



# THE ARC OF BERGEN & PASSAIC



## Arc Honors DDD Staff

*DHS Commissioner Jennifer Velez recognized Miracle Drakeford, a Principal Community Program Specialist at the Division of Developmental Disabilities, since she was honored by The Arc of Bergen & Passaic for her work. The award is presented annually to an individual working professionally in the field of disability services who has improved the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.*

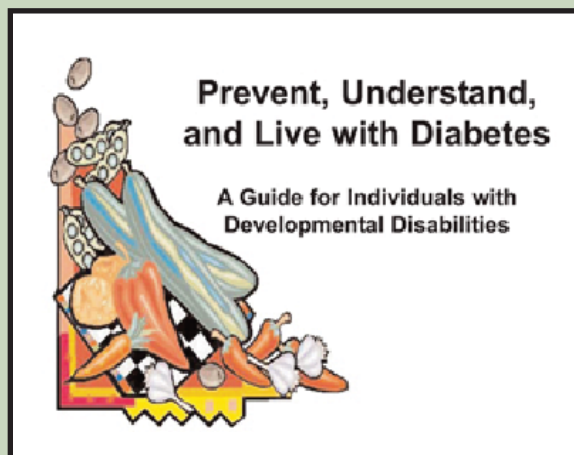
“I am taking this opportunity to acknowledge your recent recognition by The Arc of Bergen & Passaic for being selected as Professional of the Year for 2012. This recognition is quite noteworthy and merits acknowledgement by the Department of Human Services. The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) serves some of the most vulnerable citizens of New Jersey. Your professionalism and advocacy in your representation of services and supports offered by DDD is truly appreciated. Thank you for representing DDD with such a high level of distinction,” Velez said.

Drakeford received the award from The Arc of Bergen & Passaic at their 65th Annual Founder’s Day Meeting and Awards Ceremony at the Hasbrouck Heights Senior Center on June 18.

## Arc of Ocean County

Patrick Gazzara, a contract administrator with the Division of Developmental Disabilities, received the Outstanding Professional of the Year award at the annual Arc of Ocean County awards dinner on June 14 at The Clarion Hotel of Toms River. Gazzara has assisted the Arc of Ocean County for the past three years. In a letter he received from the organization, it stated:

“The award is given to recognize an individual who has demonstrated excellence in: management of direct services to people with developmental disabilities; effective support of The Arc, Ocean County staff, members and board; contributing to the growth and quality of services provided by The Arc; empowerment of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families; and contributing to the overall development of services to individuals with developmental disabilities within both The Arc and the community.”



## DIABETES BOOKLETS REVISED AND AVAILABLE!

A very popular health publication created by The Arc of NJ, Prevent, Understand and Live with Diabetes: A Guide for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities has been updated and now includes English and Spanish text in one easy-to-read booklet. If you'd like a free hard copy of the booklet, download the Diabetes Order Form, or contact Helen Rivera at [hrivera@arcnj.org](mailto:hrivera@arcnj.org) or 732-246-2525, x35. Larger quantities are also available free of charge, but shipping costs must be paid by the recipient.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### NJ DISABILITY PRIDE PARADE

On Friday, October 5, hundreds will gather for the 2012 NEW JERSEY DISABILITY PRIDE PARADE & CELEBRATION in downtown Trenton, New Jersey. The purpose of this parade is to bring people, organizations, and businesses together to celebrate pride with the disability community and to promote the belief that disability is a natural and beautiful part of human diversity while generating national awareness for the disability community. For more information, please contact Carole Tonks at:

[NJDisabilityPrideParade@adacil.org](mailto:NJDisabilityPrideParade@adacil.org)



### CHECK OUT ABLE NEWSPAPER FOR MORE DISABILITY-RELATED NEWS



THE NEWSPAPER *POSITIVELY*  
FOR, BY AND ABOUT THE DISABLED

Able Newspaper is an established, widely known publication in the disability community. The New Jersey edition of Able can be read online for free. Just visit [www.ablenews.com](http://www.ablenews.com) and click on the "Click Here for Free Edition" at the top of the page.

## DDD Today

A Publication of the Division of Developmental Disabilities

#### Contact us at:

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DDD Information and DHS  
Central Registry Hotline:  
1-800-832-9173

The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) was created in response to the need for better and more effective services for state residents with developmental disabilities. Advocates for those services included many parents and other family members who wanted community-based alternatives to the institutional care that had been their only option for many decades.

Today, more than 43,000 individuals are eligible to receive services funded by the division, including a growing number who are under the age of 22. Most DDD-eligible individuals live in the community, either with family or in a community residence such as a group home or supervised apartment or in a Community Care Residence with a family caregiver. Almost 2,600 individuals reside in one of the seven developmental centers now administered by DDD.

Visit us on the Web at: [www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ddd](http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ddd)