

# Advocacy Matters

A digital newsletter produced by the New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project

## June 2017

The month of June began with a show of **activism**. On June 1st, members of the Statewide Self-Advocacy Network attended Lobby Day in Trenton to support a **wage increase** for Direct Support Professionals. Even those who could not make it there in person participated through the Twitter Thursdays campaign. In addition, The Arc of New Jersey testified in opposition to the Komminos Law.

The month was also full of fun and healthy community-based activities, which are detailed below. Please check out our **Twitter** and **Facebook** pages for additional photos and information about the events.

## Lobby Day at the State House



More than 50 members of the **Coalition for a DSP Living Wage**, dressed in our green Coalition t-shirts, swarmed the halls of the State House on June 1st urging legislators to **increase wages for Direct Support Professionals in the FY18 Budget**.



The group, comprised of families, self-advocates, providers and DSPs, spoke with at least **50 elected officials, including the Senate President, members of both Budget Committees, and Senators and Assembly** people from across the State. Representatives from the Coalition moved throughout the State House, **sought out legislators, provided them with literature on this issue, and impressed upon them the critical need to take action.**

This event was an opportunity to stress the **urgency of this matter** and illustrate for legislators **who is most impacted by the budget.**

We were joined by members of the **Coalition for a DSP Living Wage Steering Committee** as well as **Self-Advocates from the NJ Statewide Self Advocacy Network** and The Arc Morris **Executive Director Bill Testa.**





Simultaneously, we also coordinated a **Twitter Thursday Campaign** to coincide with our advocacy at the State House, for individuals who could not make it to Trenton. This was another way of **reinforcing our message** with the Senate President and the Speaker of the Assembly.

Using the hashtag: **#PayFair4DirectCare**, we are continuously spreading the word on this issue. To view photos from our event, visit the DSP Coalition Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/NJDSPCoalition/>.



Apart from our work as chair of the DSP Coalition, **The Arc of New Jersey testified in opposition to the Komminos Law** which was heard in the Senate Budget Committee. The legislation aims to reduce abuse and neglect, by requiring, among other things, two site visits to every residential and day habilitation by the Department of Human Services. **Executive Director Tom Baffuto** told



Committee members that group homes and supervised apartments are the advocates homes and that state inspections are an invasion of their privacy; the best way to improve the system and the lives of people with I/DD living in the community, is to **increase salaries for our DSPs.**

# HAPPY • FEST

## OBSTACLE COURSE & FESTIVAL

**HappyFest NJ**, an all ages all-abilities event, was held at Vonage Campus in Holmdel NJ on **June 17th.**

The New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project team was there to offer support, information, and resources.



The event included an **Obstacle Course** designed for people of **all fitness levels and ages** that is **wheelchair and autism friendly**. Additionally, HappyFest included free fitness classes, live music, games and **all sorts of family-friendly entertainment.**



## Healthy Lifestyles Project Yoga & Nutrition Event



The NJSAP team hosted a **yoga** and **nutrition** event in Morristown on June 19th.

Advocates participated in a yoga class and "**Eat This, Not That**" nutrition session.





## 26 Fitness: Body Moving!

On June 20th, a fitness class was held at **26 Fitness in Morristown**. Advocates participated in a circuit training session and learned some new **exercises** to get their hearts pumping!



## Look Who's Dancing at Council 2

On June 22nd, Council 2 had a blast participating in a healthy and fun activity hosted by **Look Who's Dancing**.

Look Who's Dancing **brings dance, exercise, fitness and fun** to people of all walks of life with a focus on the groups that are often overlooked in the dance and fitness communities.

Their mission is to preserve, and hopefully improve, the **health and well-being** of folks through dance and exercise, in an atmosphere where **fitness is fun!**







## LET'S BOUNCE!

On June 28th, the NJSAP team hosted a Healthy Lifestyles Project event at **Sky Zone in Lakewood**.

Advocates had the opportunity to **freestyle bounce** (an excellent form of exercise!), **play dodgeball**, and enjoy a healthy post-bounce snack and nutrition workshop.







# FRIDAY, JUNE 30<sup>TH</sup> 2017

## MASKER'S BARN AT WATCHUNG RESERVATION

9 CATARACT HOLLOW ROAD  
BERKELEY HEIGHTS, NJ 07922



The NJSAP team hosted their 3rd Annual **Healthy Lifestyles Project** workshop at Watchung Reservation on June 30th.

The event featured a healthy breakfast and lunch spread, an adaptive yoga session, personal training session, as well as an art therapy tie-



dye activity.

Members of the NJ Statewide Self-Advocacy Network participated in a **super hero-inspired yoga session** at Masker's Barn.

## Celebrate the ADA on Friday, July 14th



Please join the New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project team, along with members from the regional Councils of the Statewide Self-Advocacy Network, at the Point Pleasant Beach Boardwalk to celebrate ADA Awareness Month!

**When: Friday, July 14, 2017**

**Where: Point Pleasant Beach Boardwalk** between Arnold Ave. and Central Ave.

