

# Advocacy Matters

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

## September 2017

**UNITED IN**



**SELF-ADVOCACY**

This **September** marked our **34th Annual New Jersey Statewide Self-Advocacy Network Fall Conference!**

**More than 300 self-advocates** from all over the state of New Jersey attended the conference this year at the **DoubleTree Hotel** in Somerset.

Let's take a look at what happened at the big event!

## Opening Remarks

After registration and breakfast, the morning kicked off with some opening remarks from a few speakers including **Todd Emmons**, Chair of NJSSAN Council 4, **Thomas Baffuto**, Executive Director at The Arc of New Jersey (both pictured below), **Joanne Bergin**, President of The Arc of NJ Board of Directors and **Ashley Ritchey**, Director of the NJ Self-Advocacy Project.



## Exhibition Hall



**Barbara Coppens** ran the **Disability Rights New Jersey** table. She provided information on how to advocate for and advance the human, civil and



Self-advocate **Josephine Messina** and **Kyle Shupp**, a MPA candidate at Rutgers School of Public Health and intern at The Arc of New Jersey, worked the booth selling "United in Self-Advocacy" t-shirts to raise funds for the **Advisory Board of the New Jersey Statewide Self-Advocacy Network**.



The **New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project** booth displayed information on the NJSAP as well as information about other programs at The Arc of New Jersey.



An additional booth was set up with the 2017 **"Get Out the Vote Guide"**.

Every year, The Arc of New Jersey publishes a Get Out the Vote (GOTV) Guide in advance of **Election Day** so that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families have a better understanding when it's time to cast their ballots. This year, New Jersey residents will choose a new Governor and will elect 120 members to the State Legislature. This includes 40 State Senators and 80 Assembly members. Our GOTV Guide will include **important information about finding your polling location, registering to vote, and accessibility accommodations** for those who need it. In addition, you will find submissions from Self-Advocates and a Family Member about why voting is such an important right and one you should be sure to exercise on **November 7, 2017**.

[Click here to download the 2017 GOTV Guide!](#)

## Workshops

Workshops were held on **eight different topics** at the conference and each person was able to attend two workshops.

The topics were **Transportation: Getting Around In Your Community, Stamping Out Bullying, Are You Prepared For an Emergency, Legislative Affairs and Advocacy Tactics, Express Yourself: Building Communication Skills, Healthy Adult Relationships, and Speaking Up**

## at Medical Appointments: It's Your Right, and Stress Management: Techniques to Reduce Anxiety.



Doug Gilbert, Training Coordinator, NJTIP during the Transportation Workshop, pictured here explaining what to do when standing at a bus stop.



Kelly Boyd, the Access and Functional Needs Planner at the NJ Office of Emergency Management discussed how to prepare for an emergency, using examples such as Hurricane Katrina.



Frank Latham, the Grants Manager at New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities, explained what is categorized as "bullying behavior".

## General Session

After a delicious lunch, **Barbara Coppens** gave a **NCSA Report**. The National Council of Self-Advocates or NCSA is a leading organization for self-advocates in The Arc and its chapter network. NCSA influences The Arc's advocacy efforts, informs The Arc's programming and ensure people with intellectual and developmental disabilities across the country have the same civil and human rights that every citizen enjoys. Barbara spoke about her travels and work as a member of the NCSA.

Following the NCSA report, Region 7 Representative **Gary Rubin** delivered a **SABE Report**. Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered ensures that people with disabilities are treated as equals and that they

are given the same decisions, choices, rights, responsibilities, and chances to speak up to empower themselves. SABE's mission also focuses on providing opportunities to make new friends, and to learn from mistakes.



## Socializing

Finally, all attendees were encouraged to **socialize**, **network**, and hit the **dance floor**!









## Thank you to our Sponsors!

Members of the New Jersey Statewide Self-Advocacy Network and New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project team would like to extend a tremendous **THANK YOU** to our generous sponsors:

**New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities**  
**Disability Rights New Jersey**  
**Advancing Opportunities**  
**Horizon NJ Health**  
**Neighbors Inc.**

# THANK YOU!

**Thank you for attending our 34th Annual New Jersey  
Statewide Self-Advocacy Network Fall Conference!**

**We hope to see you next year!**

To view all the photos from this event and others or to get updates on NJSAP, please follow us on social media!

