

## Shred The Word!



New Jersey Statewide  
Self-Advocacy Network

It's time to **SHRED THE WORD!** The New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project in conjunction with the New Jersey Statewide Self-Advocacy Network would like for the local chapters of the Arc to join with us in eliminating the offensive word “retarded” from everyday language. This statewide respect campaign can make a tremendous impact if our local chapters can host an event to promote disability awareness. We feel that this campaign can be easily added to the activities that you already have planned for your Walk a Thon fundraising event. We have included in this activation kit several ideas that your members can do in order to take a stand against the dehumanizing use of the words “retard” or “retarded”.

This kit includes:

- Talking Points and key message of the SHRED THE WORD! Campaign.
- Sample Postcards, flyers, stickers, etc.
- Sample emails, press releases, promise posters
- Suggestions and other resources

For more information, please contact The New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project at (732) 246-2525 ext. 30

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### EVENT AND ACTION IDEAS

1. Set up a station along your route where self-advocates can pass out flyers, stickers, buttons, etc.
2. Host a shredding party at the end of the route and have your participants shred the r-word or any other mean word.
3. Place a butcher paper along the route and ask passersby to make a promise on the spot.
4. Notify the press. Call the local radio shows and newspapers using the sample provided
5. Encourage members to use social networking sites such as “Facebook”, “MySpace”, “Linked In”, “Twitter” to post their thoughts about the R-word and the abuse in society
6. Create a video speaking out against the use of the R-Word and post on YouTube. Share the link with others.
7. Set up a laptop to encourage participants can go online and sign the Special Olympics [www.r-word.org](http://www.r-word.org) pledge page.

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### Sample Email

*Send an email with the following message (or use your own words) to friends and family.*

Dear Friend,

Help me Shred the Word. I invite you help me take a stand and join me in a campaign to stop the use of the word “retarded”. On (date and location) we will be hosting a shredding party to SHRED THE WORD! We will be shredding the word to let others know that it is offensive and not ok to say.

Please pass this along to all of your friends and help us get word the word out!

Thanks,  
[NAME]

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### Key Messages and Talking points

It's time to Shred the Word in the state of New Jersey. The New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project and the New Jersey Statewide Self-Advocacy Network have joined together in an effort to have New Jersey get the R-word out of their vocabulary. The harmful word "retard" is used in everyday language and people don't realize the history, pain, and sadness this word carries with it. The truth is millions of people with intellectual disabilities, their families and friends see this word as hate speech. Shred the Word is a campaign by which New Jersey can learn that "It's Not ok to say!"

- People around the state of New Jersey are taking a stand and raising awareness of the hurtful effects of "retard" or "retarded" and helping their fellow New Jerseyans to think before they speak.
- We ask that you help us let others know "It's Not ok to Say" and eliminate the demeaning use of the R-Word. Whether intentional or not the word invokes a painful stereotype for people with intellectual disabilities. Replace it with words that promote diversity and acceptance.
- We believe that people with intellectual disabilities are capable of sharing their life experiences-listening to music, playing video games, watching the latest movies as well as working and making positive contributions to their communities.
- America values equality and fairness for all of its citizens. Using words like the R-word tears at those values and affects us all.