



Advocacy Matters

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

April 2025

Let's look back at the advocacy activities that took place this month!

In need of virtual programming? Inquire about our virtual [trainings](#), [webinars](#), and [events](#)!

Take a look at our [New Jersey Statewide Self-Advocacy Network](#) Council pages and the current NJSSAN Priorities.

We host one brand new webinar each month and present replays of past content. [Register for our weekly webinars each Tuesday and watch the recorded versions of our past webinars here.](#)

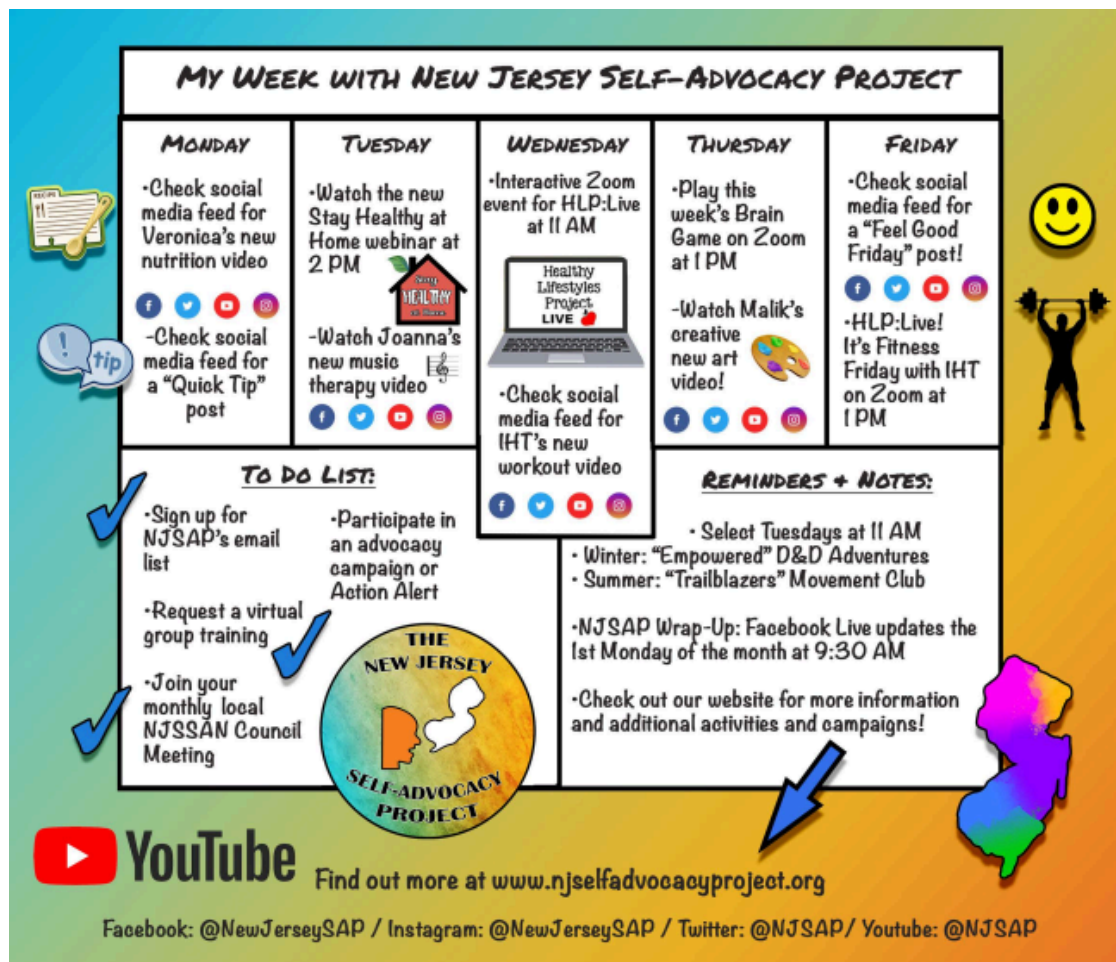
We continue to host our interactive Zoom series, [Healthy Lifestyles Project: Live!](#) You can check out our past events below and [register for upcoming sessions here.](#)

Our weekly Brain Games session is held each Thursday at 1 PM! [Watch archived videos here](#) and [join in LIVE every week on Zoom.](#)

We continue to post all across our social media pages! You can find new videos every [Monday](#), [Tuesday](#), [Wednesday](#) and [Thursday](#) about Health, Fitness and Nutrition!

We have a lot to say, so make sure to click
"View entire message" if it appears at the bottom of this newsletter. [If you have been forwarded this message, you can subscribe here.](#)

Virtual Programming every day of the week!



Click the image above to download the planner, complete with live links to all of our programming! Email NJSAP@ArcNJ.org if you have any questions.

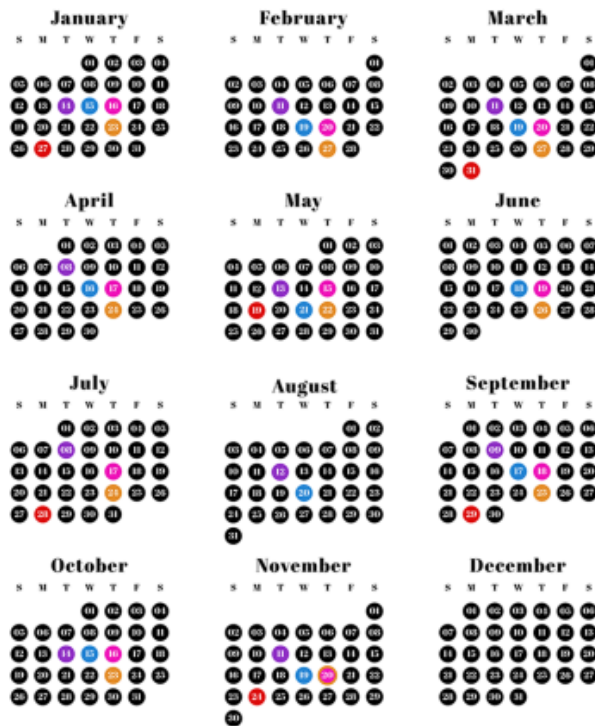
- Struggling with technology? [Maybe one of our tech tutorials can help.](#) You can also [contact us](#) to set up a virtual training.
- Looking for a training for your group? Check out our Training Portal for topics! [We hosted 201 trainings this year for 5,606 self-advocates!](#)

NJSAP & NJSSAN Update



We are holding monthly NJSSAN Council meetings *virtually*!
[For information regarding your Council area, please click here.](#)

[Visit your council page](#) to download calendars for 2025.



2025

**NEW JERSEY STATEWIDE
SELF-ADVOCACY NETWORK**

COUNCIL 1

3rd Thursday of each month*, 5:30-6:45pm
Hunterdon, Morris, Sussex & Warren
Advisor: Frankie Bayak
Fbayak@ArcNJ.org / 732-749-8514

COUNCIL 2

4th Thursday of each month*, 4-5:30pm
Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Passaic, and Union
Advisor: Erin Smithers
ESmithers@ArcNJ.org / 732-246-2525, ext. 26

COUNCIL 3

2nd Tuesday of each month*, 5:30-7pm
Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth,
Ocean & Somerset
Advisor: Blanca Najera
BNajera@ArcNJ.org

COUNCILS 4 & 5

3rd Wednesday of each month*, 3-4pm
Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, Salem
Atlantic, Cape May, & Cumberland Counties
Contact Erin or Frankie as seen above

NJSSAN ADVISORY BOARD

Last Monday, every other month*, 3-4pm
Only Open to Advisory Board Members

*Check the calendar image for exact dates

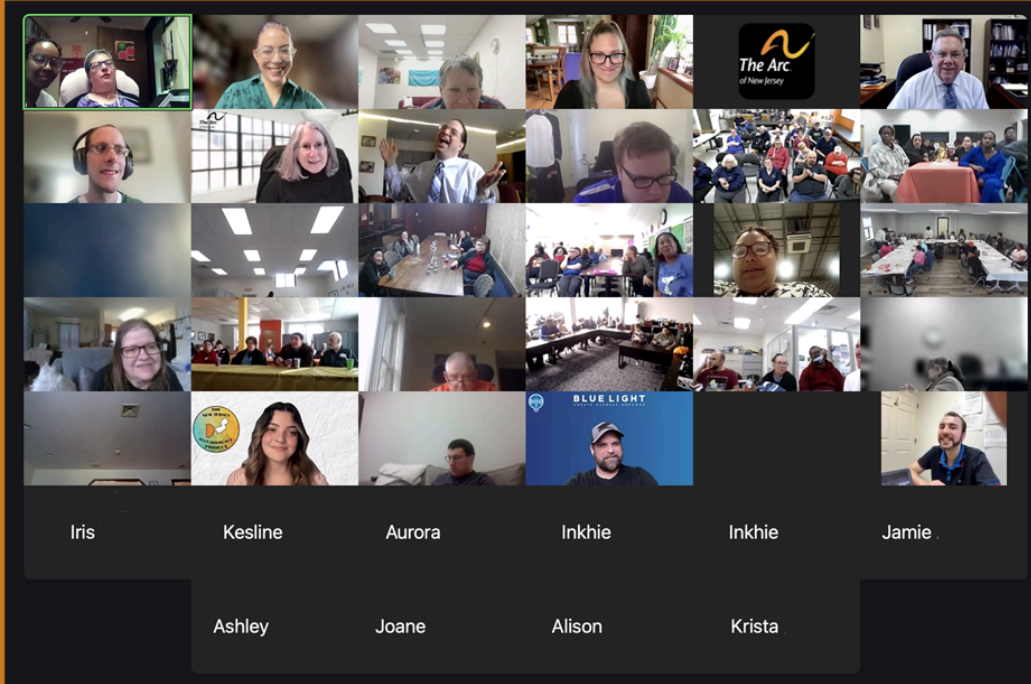
For more information, contact: Frankie Bayak
NJSAP@ArcNJ.org / 732-749-8514
www.njselfadvocacyproject.org

The 19th Annual NJ Self-Advocacy Network Spring Luncheon

On Friday, April 4, 2025, we hosted our 19th Annual Spring Luncheon. We wanted to give a big thank you to the 270 attendees who made it an amazing event! We would also like to say thank you our sponsors and our speakers for their generous support.

The Luncheon serves as an opportunity for Self-Advocates and Allies to network, learn about current advocacy issues, and celebrate the achievements of Self-Advocates over the past year.

THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING THE 19TH ANNUAL NJSSAN SPRING LUNCHEON



April 04, 2025

WWW.NJSELFADVOCACYPROJECT.ORG



Award Winners and Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month Contest

Congratulations again to our award winners: Veronica Ramirez, William Aronow, Mark McKay, Evan Thompson, and Kathleen Halligan.

In addition to our award winners we also acknowledged the winners of our Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month contest!

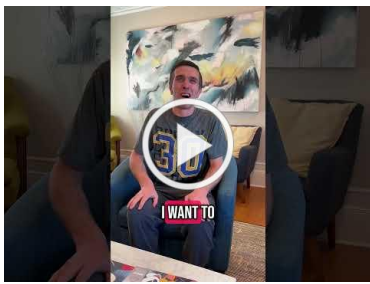
Last month was DD Awareness Month and to celebrate, NJSAP hosted a video contest for anyone to submit videos using the theme of "Plan for Tomorrow, Act Today!" The top 3 submissions with the most 'likes' across different platforms were each awarded a \$50 gift card.

[Playlist: DD Awareness Contest: Plan For Tomorrow, Act Today!](#)


[Cohome](#)

[Diana](#)

[The Arc of Essex](#)




How to Organize a Successful State House Visit

 [Home](#) [Events & Awareness](#) [Industry Insights](#) [Case Studies](#) [Login](#) [Request A Demo](#)

How To Organize a Successful State House Visit [Expert Insights]

Advice on how to organize a state house visit from Erin Smithers at The New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project.

📅 April 22, 2025 💡 Advocacy



[Check out this article](#) from Setworks and NJSAP Director Erin Smithers about how to prepare for a meeting with your legislators, which is one of the most valuable opportunities for disability advocates to influence policy and funding decisions.

State Rehabilitation Council Public Forums

[Register Here](#)



State Rehabilitation Council

Public Forums

2025

The SRC & DVR want to hear your feedback/thoughts!

- Share your experience with accessing &/or receiving DVRS services.
- Suggestions for improving awareness of & access to DVRS, and how services are delivered.
- Thoughts on Pre-ETS &/or transition services.

Dates, times & link to register:

April 30 - 12pm-1pm, May 20 - 6pm-7:30pm, June 5 - 3pm-4:30pm


REGISTER HERE

[SRC public forum 2025](#)

Trainings

If you are interested in hosting a training for your group, take a look at our available trainings list and send us a request through the form below.

[Training Topics and Request Form](#)



**New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project
&
Statewide Self-Advocacy Network**
A program of The Arc of New Jersey since 1983

Creamy Ramen Soup


Prep Time 30 Minutes Cook Time 30 Minutes Total Time 60 Minutes

Ingredients:

- Ramen Noodles (or Ramen substitute like Immi Noodles or Shirataki Noodles)
- 3 Cups Milk
- 2 Cups Broth (Chicken or Veggie)
- Dash of Soy Sauce
- Dash of cream
- 1/2 Cup Miso Paste
- 1/2 Cup Mirin or Rice Vinegar
- 1/2 Cup White Wine
- 2 Tbsp Chili Bean Paste
- 2 Tbsp Sesame Oil
- 1 Tbsp Ginger powder
- 1.5 Tbsp Gochugaru (or red chili flakes)(Add less for less spice)
- Chopped or Sliced Veggies (I love Spinach, Mushrooms, Carrots, and/or Cabbage)
- Green Onion and Sesame Seeds for Garnish

Cooking Instructions:

- In a large pot add all the ingredients except for the noodles and the veggies.
- Bring to a boil.
- Once the broth is boiling add in your veggies and lower the heat to a simmer.
- In a separate pot cook your ramen noodles according to the package (we do not need the seasoning packet)
- Once the noodles are cooked add them into a bowl with the broth and veggies.
- Top with green onions and sesame seeds.
- Enjoy!



Supporting the rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities
983 Livingston Avenue, North Brunswick, NJ 08902
Phone: 732-743-8345 Fax: 732-749-8314
E-mail: info@njselfadvocacy.org
www.njselfadvocacy.org



SCARC had a cooking class with NJSAP this month. Together we made a Creamy Ramen Noodle Soup loaded with veggies! Reach out to us if you would like to have your own virtual cooking classes.



The Healthy Lifestyles Project (HLP) is a program of The Arc of New Jersey and receives funding through a grant awarded by The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey. The program aims to provide people with I/DD with functional education about the importance of healthy choices related to diet, exercise and stress management.

Let's give a big THANK YOU to The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey for making this programming possible!

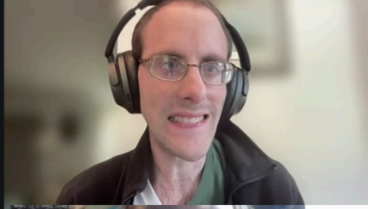
We are now on our 11th grant cycle for the Healthy Lifestyles Project and we are greatly looking forward to continuing to help people with IDD live healthier lives!

Empowered

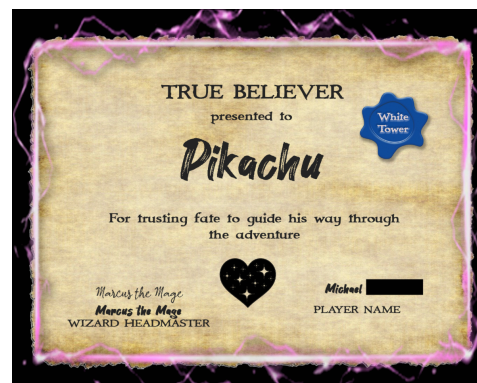
We wrapped up our "Empowered" Dungeons and Dragons sessions this month! Thank you to everyone who joined our adventures from January through April each Tuesday. The brave party of wizards saved the town of Applehaven and beyond from the terrible Demon Lord Axorath, building new skills and making friends along the way.

Stay tuned for our summer Tuesday scheduling with Trailblazers!





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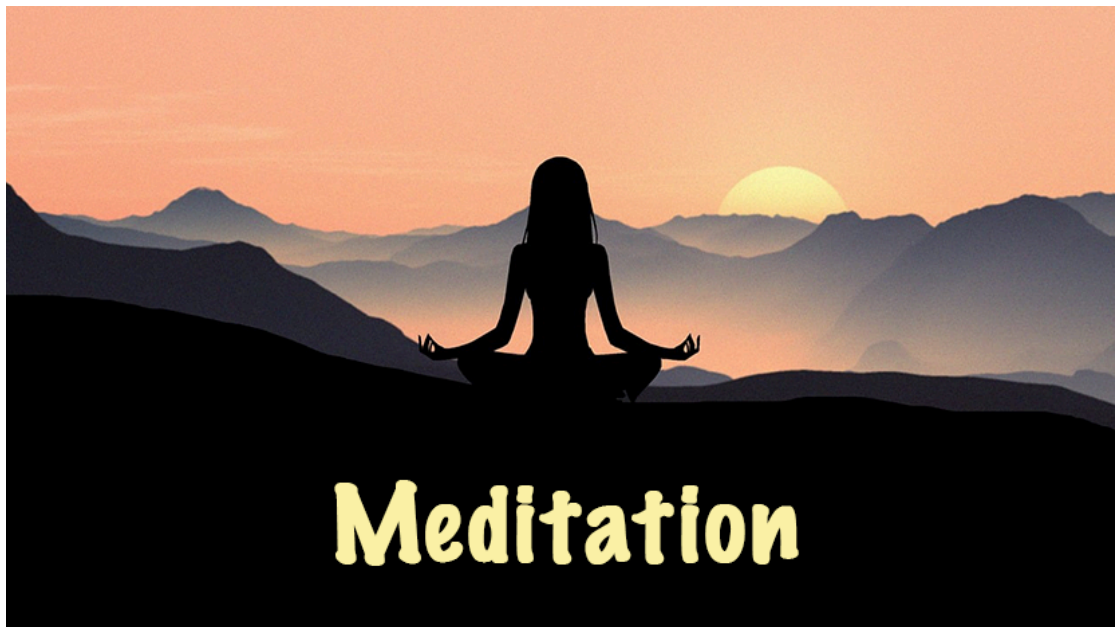


Positive Pulse

[Positive Pulse is a monthly blog on our website](#) with advice and resources on living a healthier life. You can find this month's post in full by clicking the image or post title below.

Positive Pulse: Meditation

April is Stress Awareness Month. It's a good time to take a breather, relax, and remove yourself from the stress of your everyday life. Set aside some time to practice meditation and you may find your days becoming more peaceful.



Stay Healthy at Home Webinars

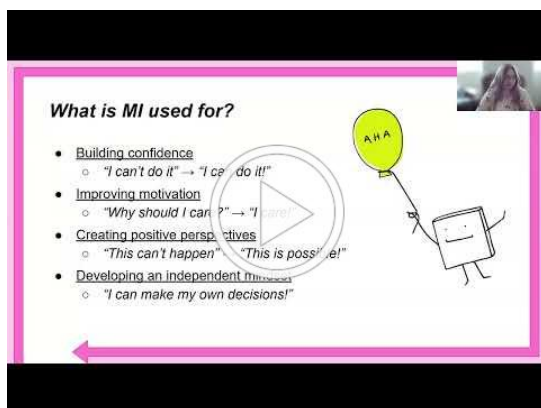


The New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project team is excited to continue our *Stay Healthy at Home* webinar series! They take place every **Tuesday** at **2 PM**.

Beginning in September 2021, we will present one new webinar each month followed by replays of previously recorded sessions. Click [here](#) for details.

NEW

Motivational Interviewing



Mystic Aquarium Seals and Sea Lions



Art Therapy: Yarn Painting



NJ ABLE Accounts



It's All About Consent



If you've attended one of our *Stay Healthy at Home* webinar sessions, we're very thankful. Please spread the word and register for one of our upcoming sessions!

[Register now for upcoming webinars!](#)

Healthy Lifestyles Project: LIVE!



www.healthylifestylesproject.org



#WheresWhitaker

www.healthylifestylesproject.org



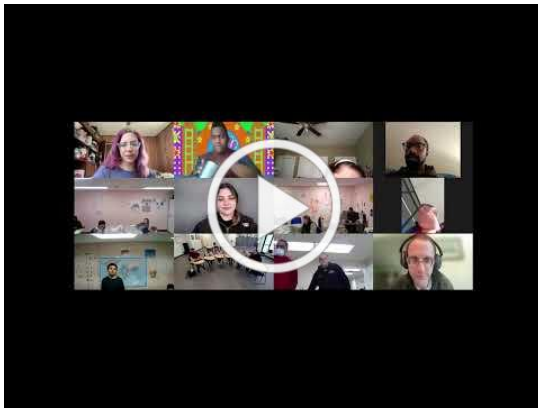
The New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project team continues to host bi-weekly sessions of Healthy Lifestyles Project: LIVE! These are live, interactive events on Zoom to promote healthy living for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. They take place every Wednesday at 11 AM and Friday at 1 PM.

[Register now for next month's events!](#)

HLP: Brain Games

Get your thinking caps on! The NJSAP team presents games to play on Zoom!

Watch our previous videos below of Snippets and Pictionary to get an idea of all the fun that goes on! Be sure to join us at 1 PM every Thursday! [Click here to learn more.](#)



We can also schedule Brain Games with your group! Email NJSAP@Arcnj.org if you are interested.

HLP: Video Guides

Our Healthy Lifestyles Project: LIVE! events are held twice a week, but if you can't make it to a live session, try watching our videos on social media!

- On Mondays, we post health and nutrition videos from Veronica Ramirez ([Vero Pure Green](#))
- On Tuesdays, we post music therapy videos by Joanna Tan.
- On Wednesdays we post fitness videos from Matt Locascio ([In-Home Personal Training](#))
- On Thursdays, we post art-making videos by [Malik Whitaker](#).
- On Fridays, we post recipe videos/tips from Erin Smithers ([NJSAP](#)).

You can follow along easily and comfortably in your own home. We add videos on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [Youtube](#) every weekday for you to follow along!

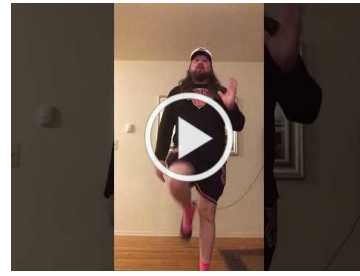
[Mondays with Veronica:](#)
[Playlist](#)



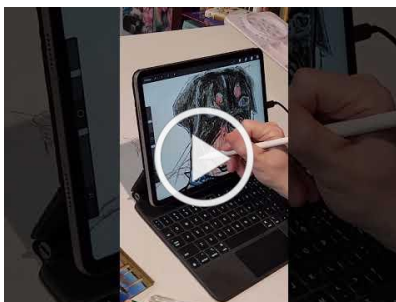
[Tuesdays with Kristen:](#)
[Playlist](#)



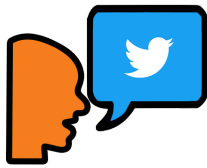
[Wednesdays with Matt:](#)
[Playlist](#)



[Thursdays with Malik: Playlist](#)



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www.njselfadvocacyproject.org



New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project & Statewide Self-Advocacy Network

A program of The Arc of New Jersey since 1983

Promoting Advocacy and Independence for People
with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project | 985 Livingston Avenue | North Brunswick, NJ 08902 US

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