



Advocacy Matters

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

January 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](#), [Wednesday](#) and [Friday](#) 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!

MY WEEK WITH NEW JERSEY SELF-ADVOCACY PROJECT

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Check social media feed for Veronica's new nutrition video -Check social media feed for a "Quick Tip" post 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Watch the new Stay Healthy at Home webinar at 2 PM -Watch Joanna's new music therapy video 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Interactive Zoom event for HLP:Live at 11 AM -Check social media feed for IHT's new workout video 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Play this week's Brain Game on Zoom at 1 PM -Watch Malik's creative new art video! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Check social media feed for a "Feel Good Friday" post! -HLP:Live! It's Fitness Friday with IHT on Zoom at 1 PM
<p>TO DO LIST:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sign up for NJSAP's email list -Request a virtual group training -Join your monthly local NJSSAN Council Meeting 		<p>REMINDERS + NOTES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Participate in an advocacy campaign or Action Alert - Select Tuesdays at 11 AM - Winter: "Empowered" D&D Adventures - Summer: "Trailblazers" Movement Club -NJSAP Wrap-Up: Facebook Live updates the 1st Monday of the month at 9:30 AM -Check out our website for more information and additional activities and campaigns! 		

THE NEW JERSEY SELF-ADVOCACY PROJECT

YouTube Find out more at www.njselfadvocacyproject.org

Facebook: @NewJerseySAP / Instagram: @NewJerseySAP / Twitter: @NJSAP / Youtube: @NJSAP

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.

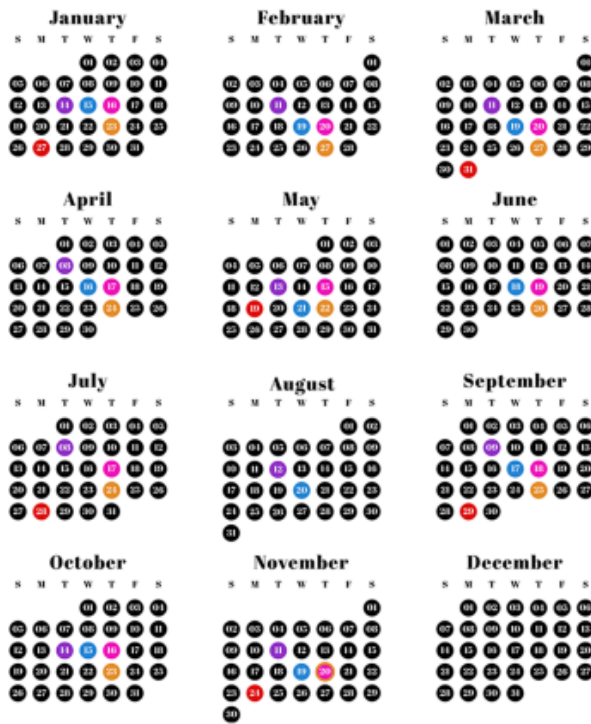
- Struggling with technology? [Maybe one of our tech tutorials can help.](#) You can also [contact us](#) to set up a virtual training.
- Looking for a training for your group? Check out our Training Portal for topics! [We hosted 201 trainings this year for 5,606 self-advocates!](#)

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 New Jersey Statewide Self-Advocacy Network (NJSSAN) is made up of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) throughout the state. The NJSSAN is used as a means of supporting positive change on both a personal and social level. It consists of 5 Councils based on geographic location within the state.

[You can read the current NJSSAN Priorities here.](#)

**NJ Statewide Self-Advocacy
Network
Position Statements**

The New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project (NJSAP) is a program of The Arc of New Jersey established in 1983 to challenge individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to become involved in events, legislative policies, and issues that affect their lives or lives of others with disabilities.

We work together with these individuals to form The New Jersey Statewide Self-Advocacy Network (NJSSAN), which is used as means of supporting positive change on both a personal and social level. The NJSSAN consists of five Councils based on geographic location within the state.

1. [Home & Community-Based Services \(HCBS\)](#)
2. [Housing for People with IDD](#)
3. [Transportation](#)
4. [Supported Decision Making and Alternatives to Guardianship](#)
5. [Raising Awareness of IDD Issues](#)

NJSAP@ArcNJ.org -- NJSSAN POSITION STATEMENTS -- www.njselfadvocacyproject.org -- 732-749-8514

Save The Date: The 19th Annual NJ Self-Advocacy Network Spring Luncheon

Each year, the New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project and the New Jersey Statewide Self-Advocacy Network host the annual Spring Into Action Awards Luncheon. A special event where Self-Advocates and Allies come together to network, discuss advocacy issues, and celebrate the achievements of Self-Advocates over the past year.

Stay tuned for registration details, and check out the Save the Date flyer below for more information.



**FRIDAY,
APRIL 4, 2025**

**THE 19TH ANNUAL
NJ SELF-ADVOCACY NETWORK
SPRING LUNCHEON**

Join us on Zoom! Registration available soon.



**Panel Discussion with NJSSAN
Members**

Join NJSSAN Members of February 28th, 2025 at 3 pm for a special panel discussion on council meetings, advocacy, and how to get involved!

[Register Here](#)

JOIN US FOR A

PANEL DISCUSSION

With New Jersey Statewide
Self-Advocacy Network
Members

Members will discuss

- Council meetings
- Advocacy
- How to get involved with the NJSSAN
- With a Q&A after



Register Now at www.NJSelfAdvocacyProject.org

Revolutionizing the Workforce: Harnessing AI for Customized Employment

NJ APSE is holding a presentation on February 5, 2025, at 10 a.m., on how AI is transforming employment services and creating new opportunities for individuals with diverse abilities. The presentation will include real-world examples of AI-driven solutions. Don't miss this chance to explore the future of inclusive employment!

[Register Here](#)



Revolutionizing the Workforce: Harnessing AI for Customized Employment

Heather Janci,
SETWorks



Erik Nelson,
SETWorks

**Wednesday, February 5, 2025
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM EST**

This thought provoking presentation will delve into the exciting intersection of AI and customized employment, discussing real-world examples of how AI technologies can be harnessed to transform the way employment services are delivered and unlock the full potential of individuals with diverse abilities.

REGISTER HERE:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/revolutionizing-the-workforce-harnessing-ai-for-customized-employment-tickets-1099075718059?aff=oddtcreator>

This event is made possible with support from our sponsors:



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](#)

Take a look at the delicious recipe that we made with SCARC. The recipe can be found below if you'd like to give it a try! This month SCARC made Vegetable Barley Soup!



**New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project
&
Statewide Self-Advocacy Network**
A program of The Arc of New Jersey Since 1953

Vegetable Barley Soup

Prep Time 30 minutes **Cook Time** 3 hours 30 minutes **Total Time** 4 hours

Ingredients:

- 2 Tablespoons butter
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup barley
- 14 1/2 ounce canned diced tomatoes, with juice
- 1 large potato, chopped
- 2 carrots, chopped
- 4 ribs celery, chopped
- 1 canned corn, drained
- 1 bell pepper, chopped
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1-2 bay leaf
- 2 Tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 Tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 4 cups beef broth
- 2 cups baby spinach

Crock Pot Instructions:

- Heat butter in a medium pan and cook onion and celery until it is tender, 2-3 minutes.
- Combine all ingredients in a 6qt. or larger, slow cooker.
- Cook on low for 7-8 hours, or high for 3-4 hours, until barley is tender.
- Discard bay leaves, season with salt and pepper to taste, garnish with parmesan cheese and stir in fresh spinach.

Recipe link:

<https://www.spendwithpennies.com/vegetable-barley-soup/>



Supporting the rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities
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www.njselfadvocacy.org



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

Join us each Tuesday from January through April for beginner-friendly Dungeons & Dragons adventures! Work together as powerful heroes to overcome challenges, outwit foes, and save the day.

When: Tuesdays 11 AM - 12 PM
Max Players: 8 per adventure
Choose a character type with the sheets provided.

All rules will be explained, and our expert Dungeon Masters will guide the game. Registration is required and please commit to attending both sessions.

Ready for adventure?

[Register Here](#)



EMPOWERED

A DUNGEONS & DRAGONS GROUP FOR PEOPLE WITH IDD

Join us each Tuesday, January - April, to play the cooperative tabletop roleplaying game Dungeons & Dragons! Play as a powerful Wizard of the White Tower and use your wits or might, along with teamwork, to save the day. Games will be beginner friendly! Register to play for two hour-long sessions. Players will select a character and receive simplified character sheets to reference during the game. There will be an 8 player maximum per adventure.

ADVENTURE 1:	JANUARY 7, 2025	&	JANUARY 14, 2025
ADVENTURE 2:	JANUARY 21, 2025	&	JANUARY 28, 2025
ADVENTURE 3:	FEBRUARY 04, 2025	&	FEBRUARY 11, 2025
ADVENTURE 4:	FEBRUARY 18, 2025	&	FEBRUARY 25, 2025
INTERLUDE:	MARCH 04, 2025	&	MARCH 11, 2025
ADVENTURE 5:	MARCH 18, 2025	&	MARCH 25, 2025
ADVENTURE 6:	APRIL 1, 2025	&	APRIL 8, 2025
ADVENTURE 7:	APRIL 15, 2025	&	APRIL 22, 2025

[**REGISTER HERE**](#)




Stay Healthy at Home Webinars

[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.

[Braille](#)

This month's topic is braille. Braille is a writing system that uses raised dots to represent letters, numbers, punctuation and even musical, mathematical and scientific symbols. It's a tactile system that allows people who are blind or partially sighted to read and write. Braille was named after its inventor in 19th century France, Louis Braille. It is used to produce the same books and periodicals as those printed in a visual font for those

Braille Literacy



You can do it !

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**.

We will present one new webinar each month followed by replays of previously recorded sessions. Click [here](#) for details.

NEW

[The Arc of the US 988 Hotline](#)

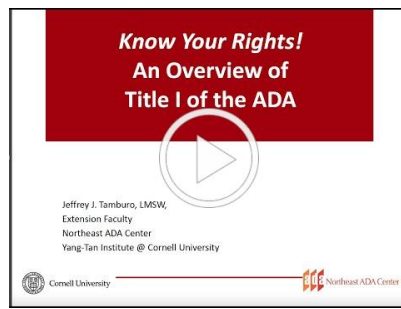


[What Employers Want and Value When Hiring Anyone, Including Individuals with IDD](#)

[Disaster Preparedness: Be Prepared and Ready](#)



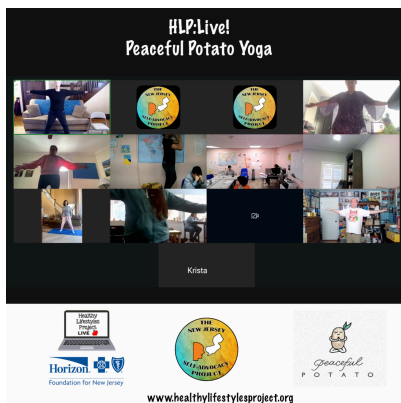
[Know Your Rights! An Overview of Title I of the ADA](#)

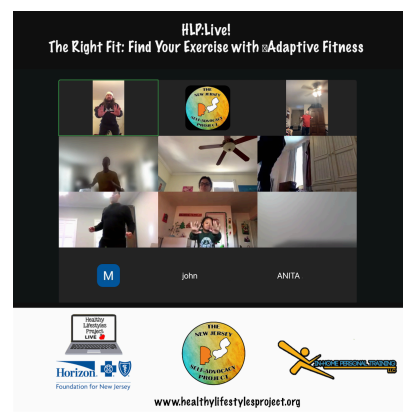


If you've attended one of our *Stay Healthy at Home* webinar sessions, we're very thankful. Please spread the word and register for one of our upcoming sessions!

[Register now for upcoming webinars!](#)

Healthy Lifestyles Project: LIVE!





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.](#)

Fibbage



Finish the Lyrics



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

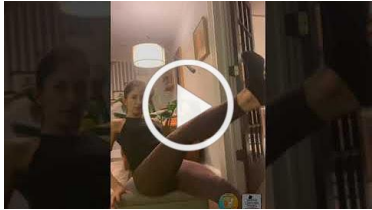
HLP: Video Guides

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 Joanna: Playlist](#)



[Wednesdays with Matt: Playlist](#)



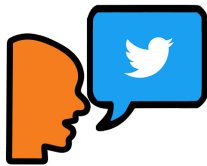
[Thursdays with Malik: Playlist](#)



[Fridays with Erin: 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

The logo features a stylized orange profile silhouette of a person's head next to a white outline of the state of New Jersey.

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

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