



Advocacy Matters

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

February 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.](#)

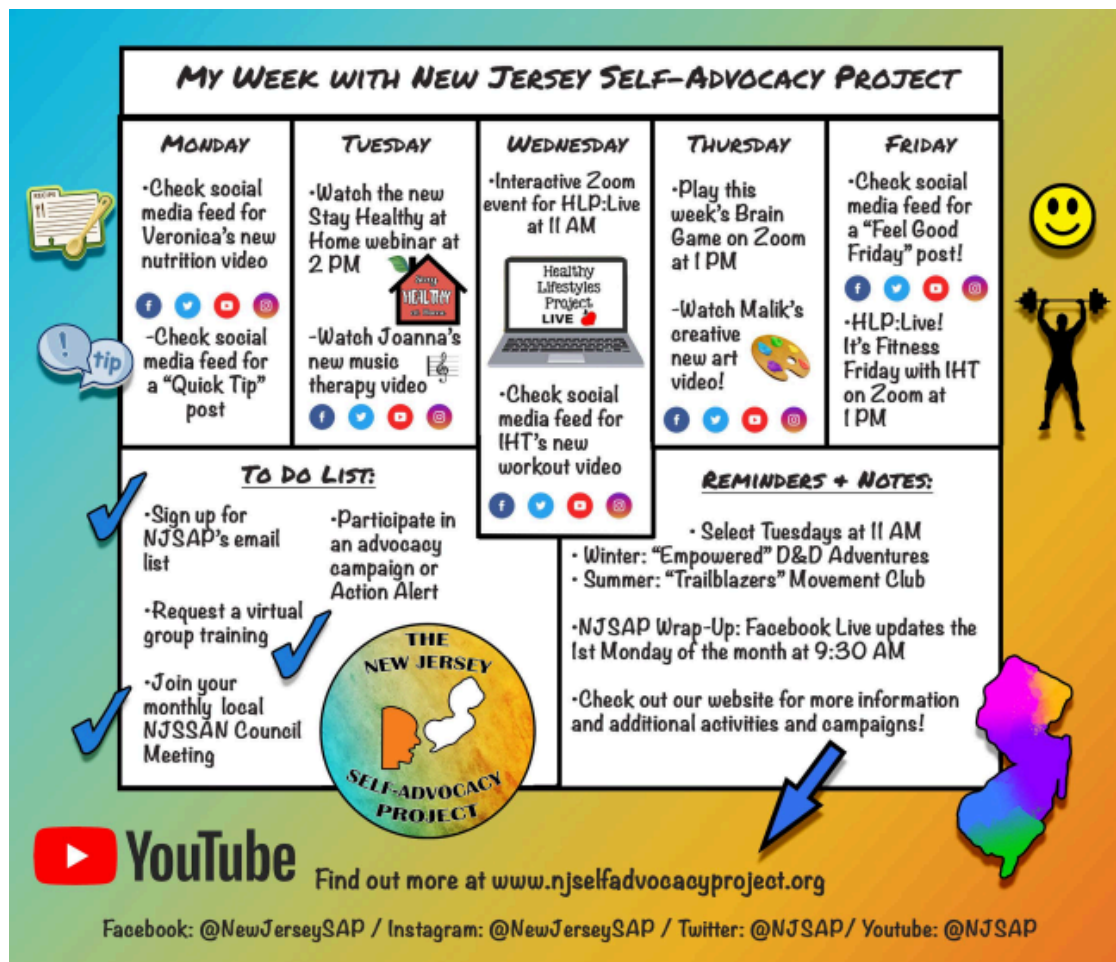
We continue to host our interactive Zoom series, [Healthy Lifestyles Project: Live!](#) You can check out our past events below and [register for upcoming sessions here.](#)

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!



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.

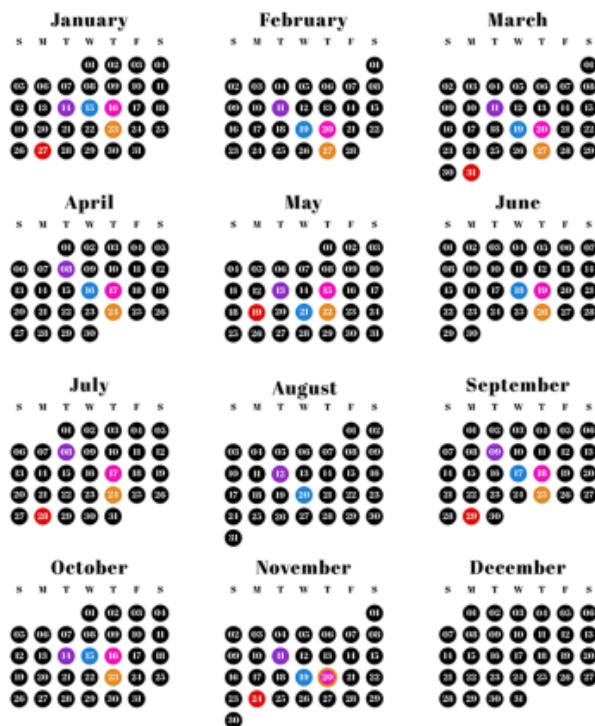
- Struggling with technology? [Maybe one of our tech tutorials can help.](#) You can also [contact us](#) to set up a virtual training.
- Looking for a training for your group? Check out our Training Portal for topics! [We hosted 201 trainings this year for 5,606 self-advocates!](#)

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 (NJSSAP) 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 a 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

NJSSAN POSITION STATEMENTS
www.njselfadvocacyproject.org TEL: 732-749-8514

Developmental Disability Awareness Month Contest

[DD Awareness Month Contest Information](#)

March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, a time to promote respect for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and highlight their abilities.

Each year, NJSAP hosts a contest to encourage advocacy and awareness, and this year's theme is **"Plan for Tomorrow, Act Today."** From February 1st - February 28th, we invite participants to submit a 3-5 minute video showcasing what advocacy means to them and how they take action today for a brighter future. All submissions will be shared on NJSAP's social media platforms, where everyone can vote by liking their favorite videos. The top three videos with the most likes by March 28th will be announced as our winners and celebrated at the NJSSAN Spring Luncheon on April 4th, 2025.

🏆 Prizes:

The top three videos will each receive a \$50 gift card and be honored at our virtual 19th Annual NJSSAN Spring Luncheon.


📅 Key Dates:


- February 1 - 28 → Video submissions
- March 3 - 28 → Voting
- March 31 → Winners notified
- April 4 → Winners announced at the Spring Luncheon


Vote for your favorite video coming soon!

Protect Medicaid Rally

Join the NJ Protect Medicaid Coalition and fellow disability advocates, families, and individuals with disabilities at the Protect Medicaid Rally to stand up for vital services and support.

 When: March 6th, 12 PM - 2 PM

 Where: NJ State House Annex, 145 W. State Street, Trenton, NJ

 Order your Protect Medicaid Shirt and wear it at the Rally. Your purchase helps fund Medicaid advocacy efforts.

Email vromanienko@adacil.org or register at the link below for assistance.

This important event will be held rain or shine. Make your voice heard and help protect Medicaid!

[Register Here](#)

[Protect Medicaid Shirt](#)



Register Now: 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 NJ Self-Advocacy Network Spring 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.

[Register Here](#)



Panel Discussion with NJSSAN Members

On February 28th, 2025 the NJSSAN Members held a panel discussion to talk about council meetings, advocacy, and how to get involved!



APSE Training

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](#)



Revolutionizing the Workforce: Harnessing AI for Customized Employment

Heather Janci,
SETWorks



Erik Nelson,
SETWorks

**Tuesday, March 4, 2025
10:00 AM - 11:30 AM 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-1236134454429?aff=oddtcreator>

This event is made possible with support from our sponsors:

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 **SETWorks**

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FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

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](#)

The Arc of Salem | Respectful Communication



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 Raspberry Banana Bread!





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

Raspberry Banana Bread

Prep Time 10 Minutes Cook Time 60 Minutes Total Time 70 Minutes


Ingredients:

- 2 cups Flour
- 3 Medium-Sized Ripe Bananas
- 1 Cup Soft Butter
- 1/2 Cup Milk
- 1 tsp Citric Acid
- 2 Tbsp Lemon Juice
- 1 tsp Baking Soda
- 2 tsp Baking Powder
- 1/2 tsp Salt
- 1/2 Cup Walnuts
- 1 Cup Raspberries
- 1 Tbsp Chia Seeds
- 1 Tbsp Water

Cooking Instructions:

- Preheat your oven to 350°F and prepare a loaf pan.
- Combine Raspberries, chia seeds, and water for raspberry jam. Mash slightly until they are combined. Set aside.
- Add wet ingredients for the banana bread into a blender and blend until smooth.
- Add dry ingredients to a big bowl and mix with a spoon to combine.
- Pour wet mixture into the dry ingredients and stir until well combined.
- Fold in crushed walnuts with a spoon and pour the batter into the prepared loaf pan.
- Make Raspberry Swirls out of your jam throughout the banana bread using a fork but don't over mix.
- Bake for 60 minutes.
- Let cool for 15-20 minutes before slicing!
- Enjoy!

Recipe Link:
<https://nutritionally.com/wage-free-banana-bread/>



Supporting the rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities
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Phone: 732-743-8343 Fax: 732-749-8314
E-mail: info@thearcnj.org
www.thearcnj.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!

Positive Pulse

Healthy Hearts



[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.

[Heart Health](#)

February is American Heart Month! American Heart Month, a federally designated event, is an ideal time to remind Americans to focus on their hearts and encourage them to get their families, friends and communities involved. Cardiovascular disease, including heart disease and stroke, remains a leading global cause of death each year. But prevention techniques and proper medical care can help change that!

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 Fatal Five](#)

[Food and Mood: The Gut-Brain Connection](#)



[Trying New Things](#)



[Getting and Giving Consent: For People with Disabilities](#)



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!](#)

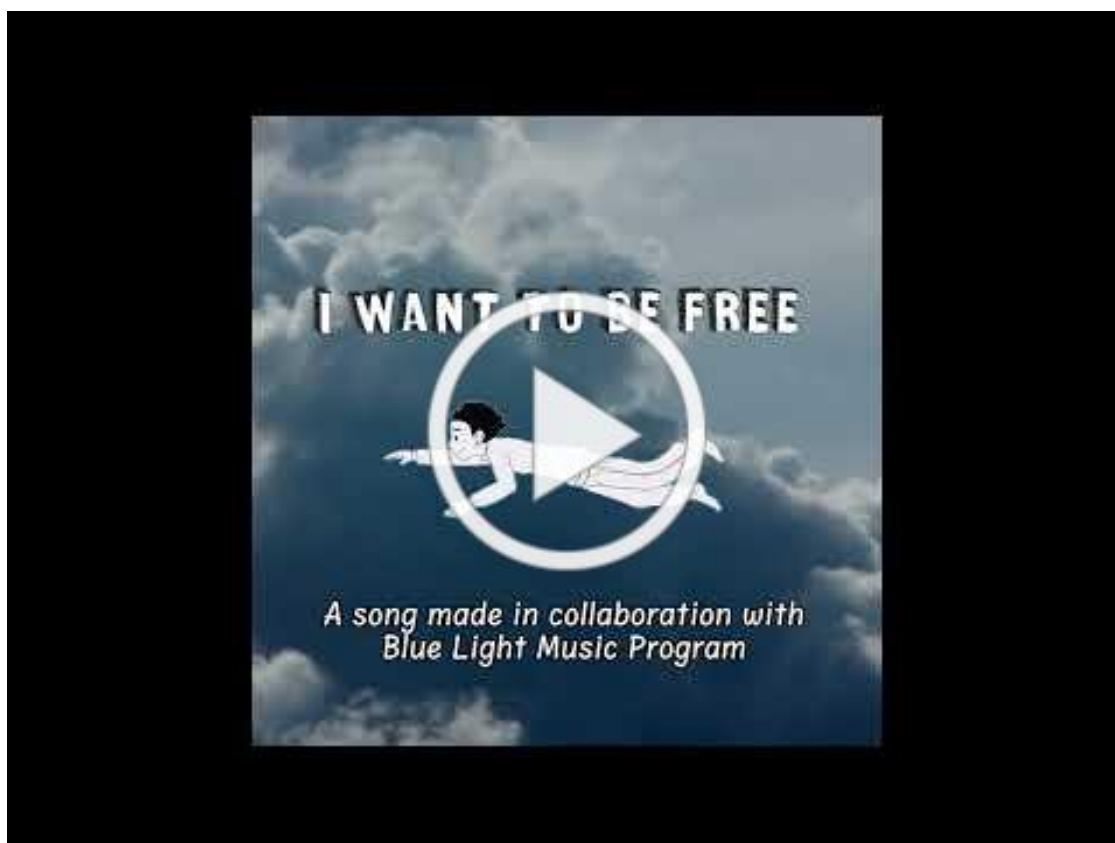
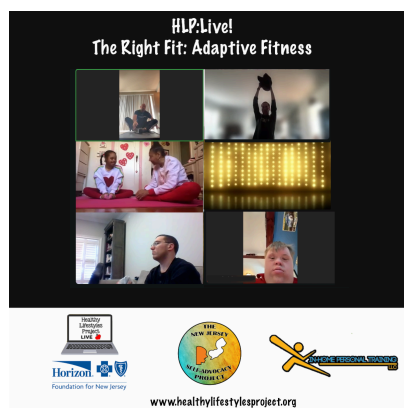
Healthy Lifestyles Project: LIVE!



www.healthy lifestylesproject.org



www.healthy lifestylesproject.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.

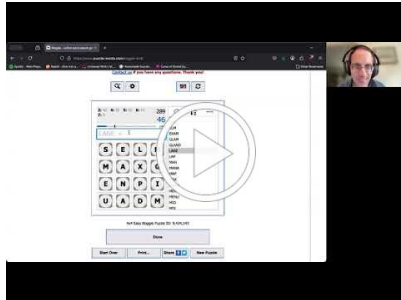
[Register now for next month's events!](#)

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.](#)

Boggle



Who Wants To Be a Millionaire



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!

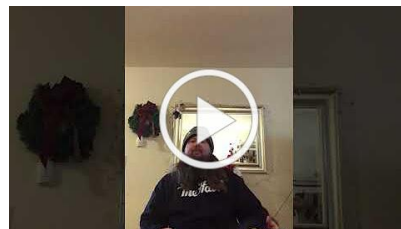
- On Mondays, we post health and nutrition videos from Veronica Ramirez ([Vero Pure Green](#))
- On Tuesdays, we post music therapy videos by Joanna Tan.
- On Wednesdays we post fitness videos from Matt Locascio ([In-Home Personal Training](#))
- On Thursdays, we post art-making videos by [Malik Whitaker](#).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

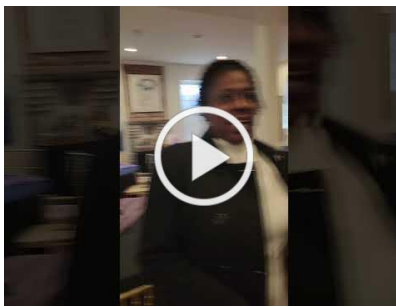
[Mondays with Veronica: Playlist](#)



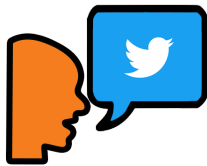
[Wednesdays with Matt: Playlist](#)



[Thursdays with Malik: Playlist](#)



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Twitter



Facebook



Instagram



Youtube

www.njselfadvocacyproject.org

A banner with a blue-to-yellow gradient background. On the left is a logo featuring an orange silhouette of a person's head and a white outline of the state of New Jersey. To the right of the logo, the text reads: "New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project & Statewide Self-Advocacy Network" in large, bold, black font. Below this, in a smaller font, it says "A program of The Arc of New Jersey since 1983". At the bottom, it says "Promoting Advocacy and Independence for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities" in a black serif font.

**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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