



# Advocacy Matters

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

## March 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"> <li>Check social media feed for Veronica's new nutrition video</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Watch the new Stay Healthy at Home webinar at 2pm</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interactive Zoom event for HLP: Live at 11am</li> </ul>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check social media feed for IHT's new workout video</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play this week's Brain Game on Zoom at 1pm</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check social media feed for Erin's new recipe!</li> </ul>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HLP: Live! It's Fitness Friday with IHT on Zoom at 1pm</li> </ul> 
<p><b>TO DO LIST:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sign up for NJSAP's email list</li> <li>Request a virtual group training</li> <li>Make a social media post using this month's hashtag</li> </ul>		<p><b>REMINDEERS + NOTES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in an advocacy campaign or Action Alert</li> <li>Mark my calendar with all upcoming activities</li> <li>Reminder: Each NJSSAN Council meets every month</li> <li>Remember: Self-Advocacy means to <b>SPEAK UP!</b></li> </ul>		





Find out more at [www.njselfadvocacyproject.org](http://www.njselfadvocacyproject.org)

Facebook: [@NewJerseySAP](https://www.facebook.com/NewJerseySAP) / Instagram: [@NewJerseySAP](https://www.instagram.com/NewJerseySAP) / Twitter: [@NJSAP](https://twitter.com/NJSAP)

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

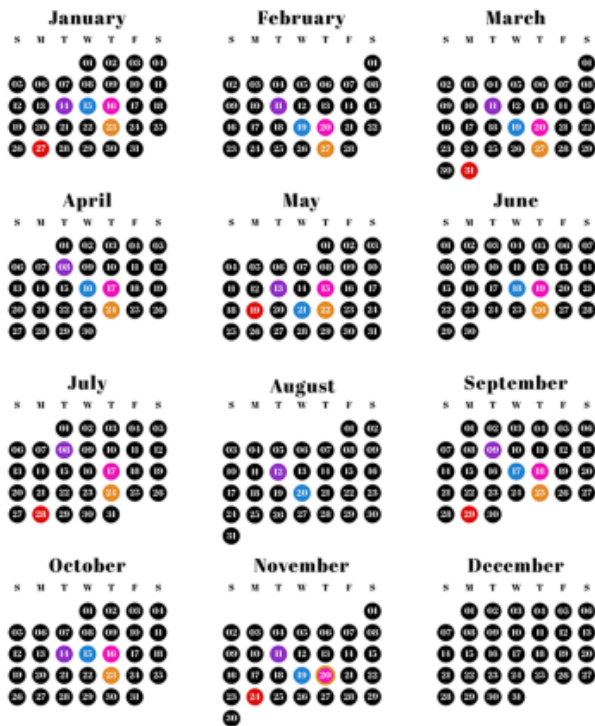
- Struggling with technology? [Maybe one of our tech tutorials can help.](#) You can also [contact us](#) to set up a virtual training.
- Looking for a training for your group? Check out our Training Portal for topics! [We hosted 201 trainings this year for 5,606 self-advocates!](#)

## 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 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

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

# 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](#)



## THE 19TH ANNUAL NJSSAN SPRING LUNCHEON

**APRIL 4, 2025**

**PLAN FOR TOMORROW,  
ACT TODAY!**

# Developmental Disability Awareness Month!

March is Developmental Disabilities Month. We take this time to celebrate individuals with developmental disabilities, how they come together, and to advocate. Take a look at what the NJSAP team did to show their appreciation this month.

Take a look below at a few of the things we did this month to celebrate! **There will be another email going out soon with even more of the events and activities that took place in honor of this important month.**

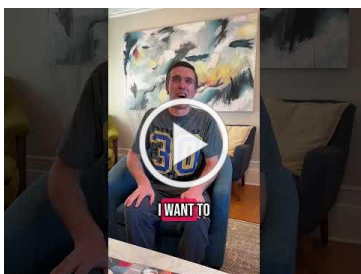
# Developmental Disability Awareness Month Contest

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.

**Take a look at the videos submitted below.**

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





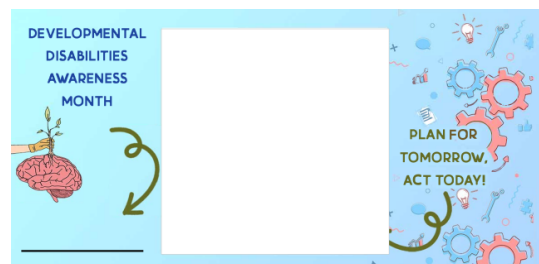
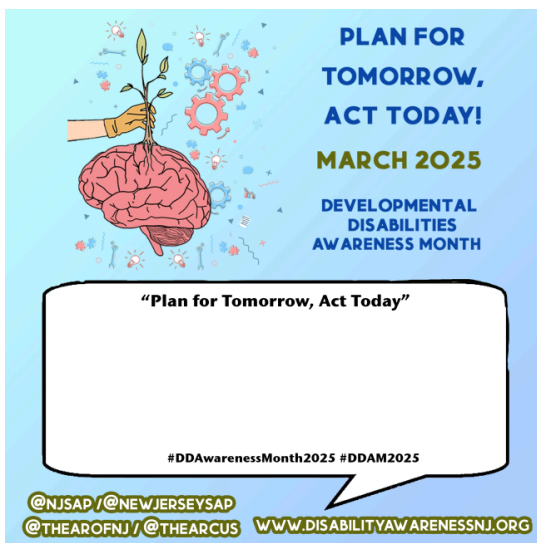
# DD Awareness Month Template

Take a look at the DD Awareness Month Template for 2025. You can fill it out at the links below.



[DD Awareness Template 2025](#)

[Chapter Template](#)



# APSE: Effective Employment Supports from the Participants

# Perspective

Join Carmelys Vincent on Thursday, May 1, 2025 from 10 am to 11:30 am for an engaging and interactive presentation. Drawing from her experience in psychotherapy and counseling, Carmelys will share insights on fostering meaningful support, inspiring hope, and creating lasting change.

Don't miss this opportunity to learn how to enhance employment support by putting participants first!

[Register Here](#)



## Effective Employment Supports from the participant perspective –

### A conversation with Carmelys Vincent

Carmelys Vincent



**Thursday, May 1, 2025  
10:00 AM - 11:30 AM EST**

Join Carmelys Vincent in an interactive presentation about what is key to the most important people in employment direct support work: the participants.

Carmelys Vincent is a graduate of Rutgers University-Newark of 2013 with a dual bachelor's degree in psychology and public Service. Carmelys' working experience includes working at the United Cerebral Palsy of Washington, D.C, doing individual and group psychotherapy for those with cerebral palsy. She served at Lake Nelson Adventist Academy as a volunteer school counselor.

Her mission is to champion those who are failing to thrive. Her commitment is to inspire hope and those changes. To Carmelys love is a verb, an action word. Carmelys believes you cannot give love if you do not have love.

**REGISTER HERE:**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/effective-employment-supports-from-the-participant-perspective-tickets-1270559350219?aff=oddtcreator>

This event is made possible with support from our sponsors:



# ReelAbilities Film Festival at Kean

# University

On April 3-5 Reelabilities: NJ is hosting a Film Festival at Kean University! Reelabilities authentically showcases disability experiences and talent both on screen and behind the camera through award-winning short and feature-length films.

[Tickets](#)

APRIL 3-5 AT KEAN

# REELABILITIES

FILM FESTIVAL NEW JERSEY



[KEANSTAGE.COM/REELABILITIESNJ](https://keanstage.com/reelabilitiesnj)

## Sharing Your Story: A Guide to Medicaid Advocacy

The Boggs Center's released a new guide that offers information on how Medicaid works, common policy threats, and tips for effectively sharing your personal experiences with policymakers.

[Guide](#)

# SHARING YOUR STORY: A GUIDE TO MEDICAID ADVOCACY



Medicaid provides funding for services that help millions of people with disabilities and their families across the country. This guide has information to help you share your lived experience with policymakers so they understand the importance of Medicaid and the services it provides to people with disabilities.



RUTGERS HEALTH

**The Boggs Center  
on Disability and Human Development**

Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

## 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 Spinach Crepes!

**New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project & Statewide Self-Advocacy Network**  
 A program of The Arc of New Jersey since 1993

**Spinach Crepes**  
 Prep Time 15 Minutes Cook Time 10 Minutes Total Time 25 Minutes

**Trail Bar Ingredients:**

- 1/2 Cup Flour
- 1/2 Cup Plus 5 Tbsp Water
- 1 tsp Apple Cider Vinegar
- 1 Handfuls Pinely Chopped Spinach
- 1 Tbsp Olive Oil
- 1/2 tsp Garlic Powder
- Salt and Pepper to taste
- 2 Cups Chopped Mushrooms
- 2 Tbsp Pine Nuts (optional)
- 2 Handfuls of Basil
- 1 Garlic Clove
- Lemon Tahini Dressing

**Cooking Instructions:**

- Add the flour, spinach, spices to a large mixer and stir to combine.
- Add in the water, olive oil, & vinegar, mix to a smooth batter.
- Set aside for 10 minutes.
- Add a little oil to the base of a non stick small frying pan.
- Add 1/4 cup of the batter to the pan and swirl around the bottom so you get an even crepe.
- Cook on a medium hear for approximately 2 minutes until there are bubbles in the crepe and you can lift over to flip easily.
- Flip and cook the other side for 20 seconds to a minute.
- Remove the crepe and place on a clean cloth, cover with another clean cloth to keep it warm.
- Repeat with the rest of the batter.
- Cook the mushrooms with a little olive oil, salt and pepper until soft and browning slightly, set aside.
- Add the pine nuts, basil, and garlic clove to a blender to make the pesto.
- Top a crepe with the mushrooms. Add cheese or spinach or any other topping you might want as well.
- Roll the crepe around the fillings. Enjoy!

**Recipe Link:**  
<https://www.rebelrecipes.com/spinach-crepes-with-mushrooms-basil-pesto-tahini-dressing/>

**Supporting the rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities**  
 981 Longport Avenue, North Brunswick, NJ 08902  
 Phone: 732-743-8343 Fax: (732) 749-8514  
 Email: [info@arcnj.org](mailto:info@arcnj.org)  
[www.thearcnewjersey.org](http://www.thearcnewjersey.org)

**The Arc of New Jersey**



**Healthy Lifestyles Project**  
 improving health, improving lives

**Horizon**  
 The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey

**The Arc of New Jersey**

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!

**Stay Healthy at Home Webinars**

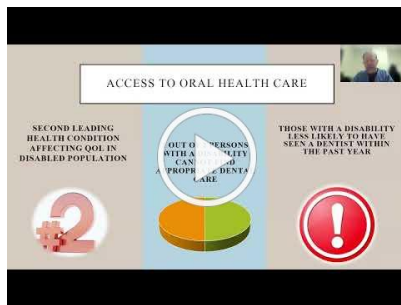


The New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project team is excited to continue our *Stay Healthy at Home* webinar series! They take place every **Tuesday** at **2 PM**.

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

**\*NEW\***

### [Oral Health](#)



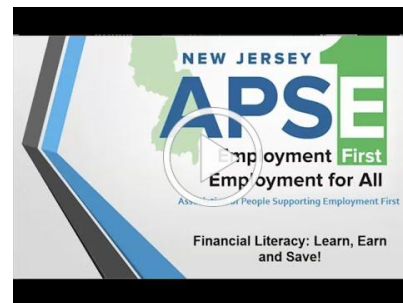
### [Making Mental Healthcare Inclusive](#)



### [Taking Action Against Sexual Violence](#)



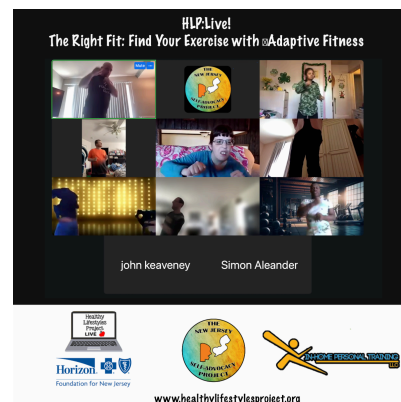
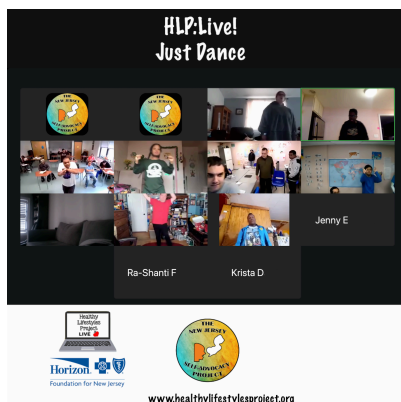
### [Financial Literacy: Learn, Earn, and Save!](#)



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.

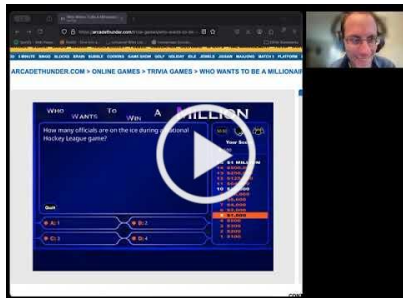
**[Register now for next month's events!](#)**

# HLP: Brain Games

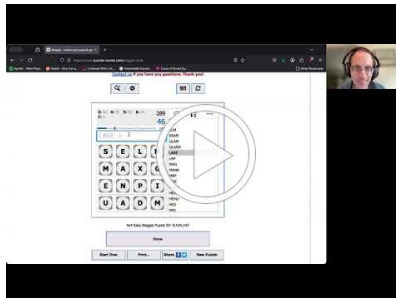
Get your thinking caps on! The NJSAP team presents games to play on Zoom!

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.](#)

## [Who Wants To Be a Millionaire](#)



## [Boggle](#)



We can also schedule Brain Games with your group! Email [NJSAP@Arcnj.org](mailto: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!

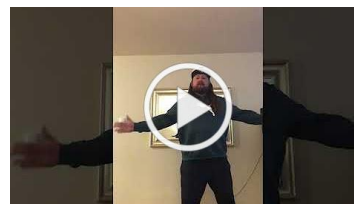
## [Mondays with Veronica: Playlist](#)



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



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



## [Thursdays with Malik: Playlist](#)

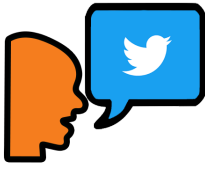


## [Fridays with Erin: Playlist](#)



\*You are encouraged to share this information with others who may also be interested. However, if you are forwarding this email, please delete the "unsubscribe" link at the bottom of this page. If you do not remove the "unsubscribe" option and a person who receives your forwarded email clicks "unsubscribe," it would result in ***your name*** being removed from our distribution list.

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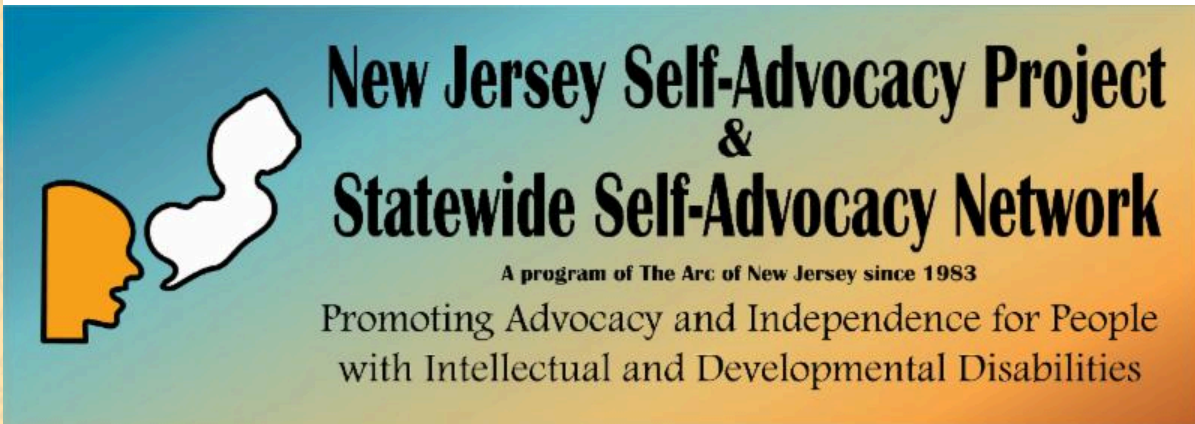


Instagram



Youtube

[www.njselfadvocacyproject.org](http://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 banner features a blue-to-orange gradient background. On the left, there is a graphic of an orange silhouette of a person's head in profile facing right, with a white outline of the state of New Jersey to its right. The text is centered and right-aligned.

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

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