

SELF ADVOCATES NEWSLETTER

DON'T TALK ABOUT IT, BE ABOUT IT

LOOKING FORWARD TO BEING EMPLOYED AGAIN

BY ROBERT CARDONA

Once again, I'm looking forward to being back on the job market once the pandemic is finallyyyyyy over! For the last year now, it's been tough lookin' for work, a lot of people lost jobs, businesses shut down due to the COVID-19 issue, and it was a terrible struggle, overall, for the country to rebuild itself over this major-league disaster!

When I return to work, I hope it will be something I really enjoy doing...

When I return to work, I hope it will be something I reallyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyy enjoy doing, something that will be worthwhile and compelling to myself, and, above all, something that is what I have been wanting to do all of my life!

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STANDING UP TO BULLIES

BY JANICE MCPHILLIPS

My name is Janice McPhillips. I have Down syndrome. I got picked on because I have a disability. Some people love to pick on me because I am different from them. They picked on me because of my eyes look like they were Chinese. I was born with a lazy eye. This guy went on a computer and printed out pictures of people who have Down syndrome.

No one should ever be picked on because they have disabilities.



They had more severe Down syndrome than me. He decided to print them out and distribute them to my friends. He said does this look like me, they said no. To me, he is a bully. No one should ever be picked on because they have disabilities. I am an advocate. I stand up for them. They are people too!

INTERNATIONAL CRISIS

BY ASHLEY MURRAY AND LORENZON MEYERS

In today's topic we will be discussing a very serious and very sensitive topic that effects the lives of multiple nationalities, races, and generations internationally and world wide Which is commonly known and referred to as racism & prejudice and how we can find and figure out solutions.

In today's society multiple generations are targeted by the color of their skin, race, nationality, ethnic group, and where they originate from. Many people from all over the world face this stereotypical worldwide crisis that has taken multiple tolls and has affected the lives of millions all across the globe. Many people have been treated, attacked, and targeted and victimized because of this worldwide epidemic which has caused multiple crises situations and has created very dangerous and hazardous situations in which people have lost their lives. People have been attacked simply because of the appearance they have and because of their nationality and because of where they hail or originate from. It is very treacherous very fatal and very hazardous and promotes a very unsafe work environment and promotes health risks simply because of how racism and prejudice has impacted and has maimed so many people it really is tragic.

Recently, there has been an international crisis that has fatally and tragically ended the lives of many people. This terrifying international crisis and pandemic is referred to as COVID-19, also known as the Coronavirus. And not only has this international and hazardous crisis and pandemic taken tolls and lives of millions of innocent people but recently in stereotypical events Asian, Chinese, Korean, and multiple descents of people have been attacked and targeted. Millions have taken action because they have thought that the mastermind manipulators behind this deadly virus are descendants of China and their ancestors but truthfully no one knows the spread and the source of what has started this crisis. Medical researchers and doctors who practice the study of internal medicine are trying to find a cure and have created multiple prototypes in the forms of vaccinations such as Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer, Moderna.



Scientist working on a vaccine

They are suggesting and encouraging people to take these vaccinations. Multiple establishments and organizations and fast food chains have taken precautions in the form of wearing face masks and social distancing so far this has been helping and enhancing the lives of millions until the cure is finalized then maybe things will resume back to normal.

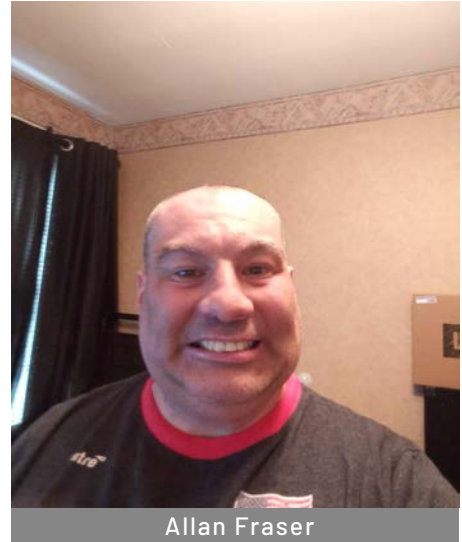
We, as an international family, instead of promoting attacks pointing fingers and being stereotypical, should come and band together and build a bond that cannot be broken. In these tragic times and these situations the best strategy is to stay calm, not be racist or prejudiced in this fight, because we weren't ready for this and truthfully we don't know when this Coronavirus pandemic will end. What we should do is stick together in these tough times and not target any ethnicities, races, nationalities or anyone with different skin complexions or appearances because that will only drive us to worse scenarios and situations which won't do any justice for us. We must unify and join forces to become the strongest union of nations we can possibly be and in doing so we become a force to be reckoned with, a wall that won't be broken, a rock that cannot and will not be tipped or tumbled over. We will rise above the face of adversity we will fight the good fight and we will prevail and conquer this international crisis also known as COVID-19.

ALLAN FRASER, VICE PRESIDENT

BY ALLAN FRASER

I'm very, very happy being the vice president. I'm very glad to be the vice president of the YAI Self Advocates Group. They did the votes. I was at my girlfriend Mary Klarese's birthday, so I didn't have my phone. Then I got a message that said "call me" and then they said "congratulations, you're the new vice president!" That was May 25th. I was so happy. My responsibilities are to be organized, to call people up, to be on time, to respect each other. I did the speech already.

I am thankful to write for the newsletter, self advocacy, training program, ILSP Group and arts studio from YAI. We enjoyed our Thanksgiving dinner.



Allan Fraser

CHUCK SCHUMER

BY MIKE HOWARD

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer publicly got caught saying the "R" word by accident, but he apologized. Here is his quote from when he was an assemblyman: "When I first was assemblyman, they wanted to build a congregate living place for retarded children. The whole neighborhood was against it." Another quote: "These are harmless kids. They just needed some help." A quote from his spokesman: "For decades, Senator Schumer has been an ardent champion for enlightened policy and full funding of services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. He used an

inappropriate and outdated word in his description of an effort he supported that was led by the AHRC to build a group home in his Brooklyn district decades ago to provide housing and services to children with developmental disabilities. He is sincerely sorry for his use of the outdated and hurtful language." He apologized, maybe he didn't mean the R-word. Since then, he's voted 'yay' on two bill that affected me. Bill S. 296 advocated for more accessibility in public transportation like subway stations, which I supported. But bill S. 345 is something about hiring 100,000 police nationwide, which is likely harmful to blacks like myself. Recently I met a black democratic candidate who is running against Sen. Schumer next year by the name of Moses Mugulusi.



Senator Chuck Schumer

HOW I WANNA APPEAR ON WILD-N-OUT

BY ROBERT CARDONA



Nick Cannon

For the last year, I've been trying soooooo desperatelyyyyyyyyyy to appear on Nick Cannon's Wild-n-Out reality show on the VH1 network! I've alwaysssssss been a big-time fan of Nick, I wanna be the 1st individual with a disability to join his show. Believe me, I'll be bringin' more warmth, charm flair and humor to the show. I don't think there has ever been any individual with a disability to be on stage with the cast of the show, but, I've alwaysssssssssss wanted to be in show business since the tender age of 9 years old in 1979.

I already have a large fan base following to join the show. I'm go for minez, and my final thought of advice to you all who wanna break into show business is this: don't everrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr let anyone discourage you from your dreams, keep striving for your goals, and, most importantly, just have enough pride and belief in yourself that you can make it out in the real world!

NEW YORK CITY SUBWAY

BY KENNETH YOUNGBLOOD

We went to a field trip to New York Transit Museum. The New York City Subway started back in 1904. We saw the subway train from P.S. 140 and P.S. 133. My favorite subway train is A, B, C, D, E, F, G, M, J, N, Q, R, W, Z, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 or 9. We looked at the subway map before we got on the train. I saw disabled people from Self Advocacy on the 4 train. I learned travel training by myself and to wear my face mask. I took the 5 train to the stop at 42nd street to come to a self advocacy meeting. Today we used the MetroCard to get on the subway and I put my MetroCard in my wallet. We used to use the token to get on the subway before. The New York City Subway Token started back in 1953.



The E Train in New York City

I have a disability but I ride on the subway train. I saw people with disabilities in wheelchairs at the subway station. I asked my mother and sister, Can we go to the subway train please? My mother and sister said yes! I have a disability but I stay calm, relax and control on the subway. We enjoyed the New York City Subway rest of the day.

INTERVIEWING SENATOR MANNION

BY JANICE MCPHILLIPS



Senator John Mannion

I had an amazing first time Zoom interview with Senator Mannion who is New York Chair of the Committee on Disabilities. He talked about the budget and how people in group homes can go out in the community after the pandemic. Senator Mannion also suggested to reach out to politicians as well. He talked about Medicaid and budget cuts. I invited him to come to the next Central Park Challenge and he said next year he would come.

WE HAVE A VOICE IN ALBANY

BY ISMAEL NUNEZ

One of the joys of being a reporter is the people you meet, especially when you give them respect and they give you respect back. One week before the Central Park Challenge 2021, I was given the honor to interview Assemblyman Thomas J. Abinanti, chairperson of the Committee on People with Disabilities. Wow can he talk, and he gave great information!

On behalf of YAI and all people with disabilities, we welcome you. Thank you for joining us.

Thank you for having me. What you're doing right now is fabulous. It is so important, what you, me are subcommittee for the community, we are here to show we should never forget people with disabilities. We should never put them aside, they have abilities, they come from all aspects of life. They need to be given the opportunity to participate.



Assemblyman Abinanti

Here in NY state they are working with children and people with autism. Can you tell us about it? Yes, I was just named chairperson of the Committee on People with Disabilities. The senate and all other elected officials decided it was time to set up this committee for the sole purpose to serve people with disabilities. I'm so pleased to be elected the first chairperson.

WE HAVE A VOICE IN ALBANY (CONTINUED)

What are your legislative priorities to serve people with disabilities?

The money has been tight. The executive branch seems to want to cut and cut and cutting to the bone. We were successful in preventing the governor from cutting the moneys available to OPWDD. We need to pay attention to this community that wants to participate and is able to participate. We elected officials/people should bond together to push the governors and the president to push more money so spend on providing services to this community.

The police, fire department, paramedics are they trained properly working with people with disabilities?

My opinion this is important. It's not just these people, yet employees in big companies, first responders as well. 1-recognize the situation understand what is happening, identify the person whom you are dealing with. What is going on here does this person have mental/intellectual disability. Or is this person on drugs. 2-figure out the appropriate response, a gun is not an appropriate response, a stun gun is not, and handcuffs are not solutions. All these departments need to trained working closely with agencies. 3-call for backup. Calling the right one, how do you get a crisis team there. How do get person to right place! Both sides are needed to work together.

There is a movement of which Self Advocates are proud of, it's called "Erase the R Word" campaign. What is your opinion on that word?

It's a word that should not be used! It's not a word that should be used to describe a person period! To change that word is what needs to be done in society. It's not a disabled person, it's a person with a disability. They are a person! I prefer to say a person with special needs.

You've been thorough in your in answers. We know we have a friend in upstate NY and in the assembly.

You have a lot of them in the assembly and the senate. It's just that they need to be educated.

Every year we have the Central Park Challenge in June. Is there one thing you would like to tell people with disabilities?

Don't be discouraged. Add hope and let's work together to make things better.

MY 30TH ANNIVERSARY AT YAI

BY ROBERT CARDONA

This year marks my 30th anniversary in YAI! I was only 25 years old in 1995 when I joined the agency, during the time of the OJ Simpson trial [hahaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa]! However, YAI saved me from a life of distress and despair, and now, 30 years later, I'm practically a superstar! I have been involved with all of the Premier HealthCare facilities in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx, as well as the day hab programs in the Bronx and Brooklyn, the self-advocacy Manhattan groups, the YAI international conferences, and, finally, the YAI Zerega Avenue dances in the Bronx, so, to sum it all up, YAI has been a blessing to me for 30 years!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



Seeing beyond disability.

MARCH FOR MEDICARE4ALL

BY MIKE HOWARD

Happy 31st birthday to the Americans with Disabilities Act. This past Saturday, I participated at a March for Medicare4All. I marched from Washington Square Park to City Hall Park and stayed at City Hall Park and met the actress Susan Sarandon. Here's two photos:



Mike Howard with Susan Sarandon



Sarandon at the March for Medicare4All

That's where I was at advocating to have Med4All instead of the current system called the public option for myself and people like me to have to pay unaffordable medical bills for us to be in a \$140 billion medical debt that Big Pharma and the health insurance industry are charging us as an "arm and a leg" mess.

DEMYSTIFYING DISABILITY: CREATIVES AND THE MAKING/MUSINGS OF LATINX

BY ISMAEL NUNEZ

The title says it all. And if one were to go their website “The Latinx Project” it says it all.

A conversation with disabled creatives that challenges internalized ableism in the Latinx community and society at large. Our panelists will question generalized ideas about bodies, productivity, and creativity, moving away from the medical public health conversation around disability. Through art, language and being, panelists explore concepts of culture, bodies, productivity and creativity, interdependency, and social justice.



I attended a conversation on Zoom moderated by Jorge Matos Valdejuli is an Assistant Professor and Reference Librarian at Hostos Community College at The City University of New York (CUNY). Alongside his library work, he also provides support to the Accessibility Resource Center serving students with disabilities on campus. His past experiences with Special Education and mental health issues influenced his interest in disability studies. He’s also an alumni from Hunter College like myself.

The four artists on the panel were:

-**Wilfredo Gomez**, a Ph.D Student in Criticism and Culture at the University of Cambridge, Christ's College. His research interests center disability, hip-hop, cultural, and performance studies to examine questions of identity, politics, race, representation, and self-expression in popular culture. He has lectured in universities on the importance of justice for people with disabilities and the issue of putting disabilities on the political agenda.

-**Jimena Lucero**, a poet, artist, and actor from NYC. She graduated with a B.A. in English from Hunter College. She is a Pink Door writing fellow, and you can find her writing at Colorbloq.org, The Center for Humanities, and more. Jimena has performed at venues like the Brooklyn Museum, Poetry Project, and Flux Factory.

-**Raul B. Pizarro**, a self-taught, queer Latinx visual artist with muscular dystrophy. Born in Mexicali, Mexico, the third of four siblings, Raul and his family migrated to Southern California - the place that reared him and became home after the age of three. He grew up in the City of Pomona, a short stroll to Pomona’s Artist District. Raul’s professional work bridges diverse themes and spans over 25 years; each piece of art emerges from his experience at the intersection of disability, lgbtq identity, race & ethnicity, family & community.

DEMYSTIFYING DISABILITY (CONTINUED)

-Reveca Torres, who was paralyzed in a car accident as a teenager. After completing degrees in Fashion Design and Theatre Arts, Reveca worked as a costume designer and simultaneously worked with various organizations doing disability work in health, advocacy, recreation, and peer support. She started a nonprofit called BACKBONES, after realizing that years of interaction and friendship with others living with spinal injuries (SCI) made a significant impact in her own life.

The moderator Jorge Matos asked “What do you see yourself with the relationship between the Latin American community through your work?”

Gomez responded “I see it as a site of strength/creativity an importance to share your story.”

Torres responded “Sign of showing our strengths!”

Lucero responded “Seeing other disabled people taught me Disability Justice. I see it giving back to the community.”

Pizaro responded “I was at exhibition in California showcasing my work when a young boy rushed up me and stated proudly he wants be an artist.”

Arlene Davila Professor at NYU ended by saying “We will have this on Podcast, and in our archives for everyone to see and we will do this again and again.” Adelante y Palante!

APARTMENT SAFETY

BY KENNETH YOUNGBLOOD

We learned to be safe at my house. I wake up in the morning and make my bed. Later I lock the door before I go to work. I spray my bed in my bedroom everyday so I don't see any bedbugs. We dust my furniture at my house. I give my room a good clean. My mother said for me to clean up the kitchen, sweep the floor and take out the garbage before I go to bed at night. I take care of my family at my house. I learned to tell the truth with my family. If the pots and pans are hot, I use the mitten gloves when I cook. I went to ILSP from YAI. We learned about the apartment safety. The host is Matthew Tsang. My mother mopped the floor at our house. I put my screen in the window before I went to work. When I'm done shaving, I clean the sink before I leave the bathroom. We keep the house safe and clean.



INTERVIEW WITH COMMISSIONER FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

BY ISMAEL NUNEZ

Just before the 2021 Central Park Challenge, I was given the honor to interview the Commissioner for People with Disabilities, Victor Calise. The interview was mainly three questions yet the answers provided by Caliese were 10 minutes long and well informed.

How can we as Self Advocates make our voices heard, should we take over buildings like they did in the 1960's? It's a pleasure talking to you. Our goal is to make New York City the most accessible city in the world. We need advocates, we need advocates to connect with government. Most importantly, all advocates must work together knocking on the doors of local, state, and federal officials in discussing the issues that are effecting and hurting people with disabilities. Our voices should be heard not just in the streets, but right in the faces of these elected officials so they can work on making laws which will benefit people with disabilities.



Victor Calise Commissioner of the New York Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities

There is a movement today Self Advocates are proudly fighting and that is to *Erase the R Word*. What is your opinion of that word?

That word is very old, and today is used very negatively on people with disabilities and it hurts. It should never be used! We advocate people in training to be sure they never use that word." A social media campaign should and can be used to promote that campaign. Use it to socialize, use to educate and organize, fight for worthy cause.

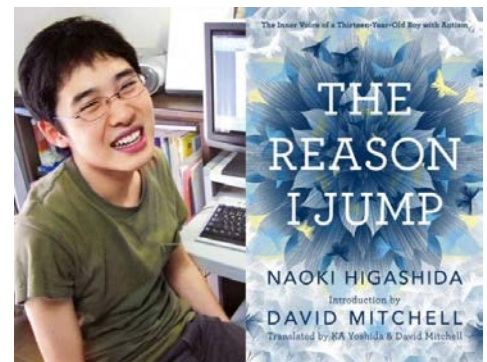
We thank you so much for your time we truly appreciated.

You're welcome Ismael, to you and all your fellow advocates keep on advocating, being proud, and would love to be at Central Park Challenge 2022.

THE REASON I JUMP

BY JANICE MCPHILLIPS

This is a book about a young Japanese boy named Naoki who has autism. His lifestyle is different from other people when he goes out to public places. Going shopping in a grocery market outside where a group of people are at. Sometimes he does not like being touched or sometimes does not talk to anyone. Sometimes when he is talking to someone he says something that he should not have said.



Naoki Higashida, author of *The Reason I Jump*