

# SELF ADVOCATES NEWSLETTER

DON'T TALK ABOUT IT, BE ABOUT IT

## FAIR PAY FOR STAFF MEMBERS WHO WORK FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

BY MICHAEL HOWARD

I was at Union Square Park West back on December 21, 2021, advocating for Fair Pay for workers who are working for senior citizens and people with disabilities like CIDNY, BCID, New York Caring Majority, Downstate NY ADAPT, and a few other organizations. Some of our elected officials were also advocating along with us.

## HOW ISP MEETINGS SHOULD REALLYYYYYYYYYY BE HANDLED

BY ROBERT CARDONA

Whenever an individual with a disability has an ISP (individual support plan) meeting going on, usually, whomever is planning the meetings ahead of time, whether it's the care managers, res-hab staff, parents, etc., they ALWAYSSESSSSSSSSSS seem to want to either stand up or take over as the voice of reason or speak up on the individual's behalf regarding what are the goals for the individual's life plans for the upcoming year ahead. But in my case, I ALWAYSSESSSSSSSSSS HAVE THE FLOORRRRRR about what I want to discuss, in terms of what goals I'm working on, the jobs of my own choice, etc. So low and behold y'alllllllll, if any of you happen to want to have a say in how to prepare for your own ISP/life plan meeting, don't just talk about it, my bruthas and sistas: BE ABOUT ITTT!!!!!!



Fair pay for staff rally

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Keeping your information secure online is important

**INTERNET SAFETY****BY KENNETH YOUNGBLOOD**

I learned to use Internet Safety on my computer and laptop. My sister helps me with my Facebook, Instagram and TikTok on my smartphone. And that's fine. But my mother said "No. You cannot play any gambling games on your phone or computer. Because it is very dangerous and you could end up owing lots of money."

Then I asked her, "What about family and friends from YAI on Facebook and Instagram?" She and my sister were okay with that.

When I asked my mom, "Can I use the Cash App and WhatsApp on my smartphone?" My mother said, "No! For sure."

**There are a lot of safe things to do on the internet.**

I also learned that I will not give anyone, even my friends and family, my address, birthday, social security number, card number, phone number, or email address on Facebook and Instagram. That would be a bad idea.

There are a lot of safe things to do on the internet. My favorites are Google, YouTube, Yahoo, Facebook, TikTok, Snapchat, Jib Jab, Instagram, and Messenger. I have a disability, but I learned to type on my computer, laptop, and my smartphone. I also use my mouse on my computer or laptop. My mother helps me when I check out my email on my smartphone.

No matter what, I use internet safety and I enjoy internet safety.

## HALL OF FAMER ON AND OFF THE FIELD!

BY ISMAEL NUNEZ



Albert Pujols

African-American history was celebrated this February. At the same time there was Valentine's Day, President's Day. Dominican Heritage Month also ran from January 21 to February 27! No person better represents the Dominican Republic and people with disabilities than Baseball Player and future Hall of Famer ALBERT PUJOIS!

Pujols's accomplishments on the field are outstanding! According to Wikipedia here are a list of his many accomplishments.

10× All-Star (2001, 2003–2010, 2015)

2× World Series champion (2006, 2011)

3× NL MVP (2005, 2008, 2009)

NL Rookie of the Year (2001)

NLCS MVP (2004)

2× Gold Glove Award (2006, 2010)

6× Silver Slugger Award (2001, 2003, 2004, 2008–2010)

2× Hank Aaron Award (2003, 2009)

Roberto Clemente Award (2008)

NL batting champion (2003)

2× NL home run leader (2009, 2010)

NL RBI leader (2010)

Yet his biggest accomplishment is his contribution to people with disabilities. For this he created THE PUJOLS FAMILY FOUNDATION.

If you look at the foundation's website you'll see that it is a national not-for-profit agency that exists to honor God and strengthen families through their works, deeds, and examples. Since beginning this foundation in 2005, they've worked to help those living with Down syndrome in the United States. They've also worked to improve the lives of the impoverished in the Dominican Republic.

Albert Pujols says that for him it's a personal mission. His daughter has Down syndrome, and the creation of this organization is a way of giving back to the community, reminding everyone he's not just a fine athlete yet a person who cares about people and his family. As he says on the website: "Since this is so close to their hearts, this Foundation is dedicated to the love, care and development of people with Down syndrome and their families."

**He's not just a fine athlete yet a person who cares about people and his family.**

Pujols says that his work reminds him of his family, friends, and his home country, the Dominican Republic. On the pujolsfamilyfoundation.org website he states proudly, "We obviously care greatly about people and families who live with Down syndrome, as well as those impoverished families I left behind in the Dominican Republic!"

Pujols you are a true BASEBALL HALL OF FAMER! FIRST BALLOT!

## MICHAEL "BOOGALOO SHRIMP" CHAMBERS

BY ROBERT CARDONA

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I have been a bigggggggg-time fan of Michael "Boogaloo Shrimp" Chambers ever since he starred in both Breakin'1 and 2 films in 1984, as well as Chaka Kahn's I Feel for You video in 1984! As of recently, I have become an administrator to his fan club. I have always seen him as an incredible breakdancer, pop-locker, and motivational speaker as well! Just last year, he lost his break dance partner and best friend, Nathan Quinones, otherwise known as Shabba-Doo! He also had been an excellent pop-locker and breakdancer as well! So, to all of my YAI peepz who want to take part in anyyyyyyyy kind of breakdancing or any kind of music video dancing, don't let others tell you you can't. Just go for yours, y'all!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



Michael Chambers

## HOMEMADE SOUP

BY KENNETH YOUNGBLOOD

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Homemade soup, perfect for a cold day

Because it was cold outside last month, I helped my mother, sister, and grandmother make homemade soup at my house.

My favorite soups are Tomato, Chicken Noodle, Beef Barley, Hearty Chicken, Vegetable, Minestrone, Split Pea, Chicken Vegetable, and Lentil from "Progresso."

I have a disability, but I can read the recipe on the soup can. Then I stir the soup and I always make sure I go all the way down to the bottom of the big pot. I take a sip from the pot before I eat my homemade soup.

I also enjoy watching the Cooking Channel and Food Network. And I also enjoy making homemade soup with my family.



# AN INSPIRATION TO ALL BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE MODEL SOFÍA ISABEL JIRAU GONZÁLEZ

BY ISMAEL NUNEZ



Sofía Isabel Jirau González

In Puerto Rico women have played a major role in every area. From the Arts, Abolition of Slavery, fighting for the independence for Puerto Rico, Dance, Music, etc . Such notable PR WOMEN include: Rita Moreno, first Latina to win the Academy Award, Salsa Singer La India, and the poets Mariposa, La Bruja, Sandra Maria Esteves. Before those poets: Julia De Burgos, Lola Rodriguez Del Tio, Marina Bracetti. Now another Hermana (“Sister” in English) is proud to have her name added to the list: Sofía Isabel Jirau González

Sofia Jirau, as reported by Journalist David Begnaud, “... is making history in the world of modeling. The 25 year old woman from Puerto Rico is one of the newest models for Victoria’s Secret” Yet here’s the thing: Sofia Jirau is the first model in Victoria’s Secret history to have Down syndrome! Wow! She’s an inspiration to all! If one goes to her Instagram she proudly states in Spanish, “It’s a dream come true!”

As she states on her website, [sofiajirau.com](http://sofiajirau.com), “Inside and outside there are no limits! She adds proudly “THE WHOLE STORY!”

“On February 10, 2020, I made my debut at New York Fashion Week, for which I am proud as one of the few models with Down syndrome who has managed to participate in the important fashion event. Modeling in the United States was the beginning of conquering the dream I have had since an early age: to model on the most important runways in the world.

For me, the most important thing about fulfilling my dreams is to show people around the world that there are no limits and to inspire them to pursue their own dreams. This is why I always say "Inside and out there are no limits" to motivate people to break through their self-imposed limitations.”

She is also the founder of “Sin Limites” (In English “Stories No Limits”) As described in the website:

“Unlimited is a campaign launched by Sofía Jirau focused on raising awareness about the Down Syndrome community in the world. With this effort, Sofia seeks to demonstrate the ability she and her friends have to achieve their goals, despite the challenges they face daily.”

The site also has myths/realities of the stereotypes that people have with this disability, and the many challenges each one must face.

She is a beauty queen, entrepreneur, an artist who gives back.

SOFIA, YOU ARE A WONDERFUL ROLE MODEL!

ADELANTE Y PALANTE!

# YAI ARTS STUDIO

**BY KENNETH YOUNGBLOOD**

Twelve weeks ago I asked my mother if I could go to the YAI Arts studio. She said YES! So I started going every Tuesday. The studio is on 107 West 33rd Street in Manhattan. My art teachers names are Priscilla Frank, Quimetta Perle, and Mallory Perry. I used watercolor, painting, crayons, colored pencils, paper, pencil, cardboard, marker, and ruler to draw. I made greeting cards, holiday decorations, watercolor, current event, scrapbooking, hand print, and I also pasted leaves. My mother and sister help me when I am home. But when I go to the art studio I put on my face mask.

I told my mother, I wanna be an artist. My mother said ok! I meet my friends at the arts studio at YAI. I even help the little kids with painting, drawing and coloring at school. I have disability, but I participate. I practice behavior control, listening and I always follow directions. We learn to keep our hands and feet to ourselves, be very quiet and share with your friends in the studio. I enjoy the times I am at the YAI art studio.



Original artwork by Kenneth



# MARRYING MY "FLY GAL SWEETHEART"

**BY ROBERT CARDONA**

To alllll of my peepz who have developmental disabilities, you can  
allllllllllllllllll marry the sweetheart of your dreams. You don't have to  
be ashamed of your game to marry, just as I'm about to jump the  
broom and marry my long-time high school sweetheart since 1987,  
Roshanna D.! She's THE BEST thing to evrrrrrrrrr happen in my life.  
She ALWAYS cheers me up when I'm feeling lower than a skunk. I  
loveeeeeeeeee this woman more than any otherrrrrrrrrr I've been  
around. I don't think marriage-penalty laws, or SSI situations should  
affect any individuals with disabilities from marrying their true loves.  
My last word of advice: if you are ready to take that plunge into  
married life: go for itttt!



# THE FORGOTTEN: THE DISABLED AND THE NAZIS

BY ISMAEL NUNEZ

In Nazi Germany 1933-1945 there were extraordinary atrocities and attacks on human rights -- killings, torture, prison, and more. Yet one group of victims rarely talked about in this tragic period is the Nazi treatment of people with disabilities.

The website [theholocaustexplained.org](http://theholocaustexplained.org) reports that “Disabled people were some of the first persecuted under the Nazis. The Nazis believed that disabled people did not, and could not, be a part of the German master race. They believed that they were genetically ‘impure’, and a financial burden on the state. Ultimately, this view led to the murder of thousands of disabled people.”

The United States Holocaust Memorial website states that “On July 14, 1933, the Nazi government instituted the ‘Law for the Prevention of Progeny with Hereditary Diseases.’ This law, one of the first steps taken by the Nazis toward their goal of creating an Aryan ‘master race,’ called for the sterilization of all persons who suffered from diseases considered hereditary, such as mental illness, learning disabilities, physical deformity, epilepsy, blindness, deafness, and severe alcoholism. With the law’s passage the Third Reich also stepped up its propaganda against people with disabilities, regularly labeling them ‘life unworthy of life’ or ‘useless eaters’ and highlighting their burden upon society.”

“People with mental and physical disabilities were among the first targets of the Nazi regime. Several years before the Nazis devised a ‘final solution’ for Europe’s Jews, they had already begun sorting their citizens by ability and claiming the Reich had no place for people who were different. Nazi doctors and psychiatrists led the charge, endeavoring to mold certain ‘autistic’ children into productive citizens while sending others to be murdered at Special Children’s Wards throughout the Reich.”

## ...exposed the story of Hans Asperger, a pioneer of autism and Asperger syndrome who played an active role in the Nazi project

According to the Museum of Jewish Heritage, the prize-winning historian Dr. Edith Sheffer, who wrote the book *Asperger’s Children: The Origins of Autism in Nazi Vienna*, exposed the story of Hans Asperger, a pioneer of autism and Asperger syndrome who played an active role in the Nazi project. Dr. Sheffer stated in her presentation that “The Third Reich wanted to create a national community. Their plan was also the exclusion of people with disabilities!”

Film producer Dr. Timothy Shriver, who served as Chairman of the Special Olympics, adds, “This is a chapter in history hardly anyone talks about and it’s important because these acts against people with disabilities continue to this day.”

One such case is the sad story of Anna Lehnkering, who at age 19 was forcibly sterilized by the Nazis because the Nazis believed that people with mental/physical disabilities were a burden in society. Another woman, Helene Melanie Lebel, had schizophrenia. Schizophrenia can make people’s thinking confusing and frightening. Helene was also taken to Brandenburg in Germany, where she was gassed. It was reported she, along with 9,772 people, was listed as being gassed at the Brandenburg center.

It is estimated that close to 250,000 disabled people were murdered under the Nazi regime. This is terrorism! Not told! Not even mentioned!

# ANIME CON

BY ORLANDO JUAREZ

Anime Con is a very special event for all the cartoons that were made in Japan. People express themselves by dressing up as who they want to be and they use characters, and most of those characters express themselves for who they are. They also dress up as their favorite anime manga comics.

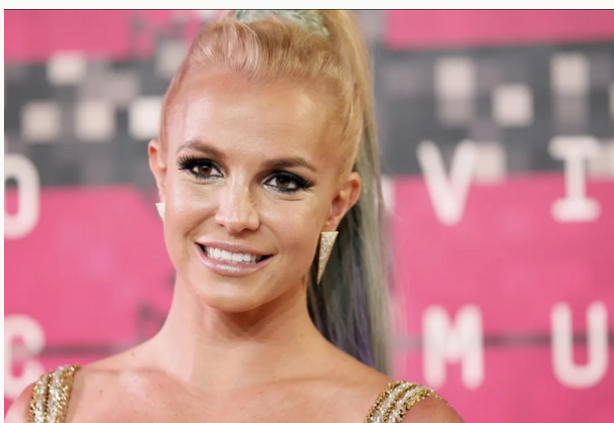
A lot of people were there and one of their costumes was very unique and very talented, basically like Power Rangers in Japan. There were a lot of interesting events coming up but unfortunately, I can't get in without a pass. I like anime because the show I watched was Yu-Gi-Oh as well as Dragon Ball. To those who want to go there, I saw one person dressed like a hero.



Orlando at Anime Con

# BRITNEY SPEARS ADVOCATES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

BY MICHAEL HOWARD



Britney Spears

Britney was a singer but she retired due to mental health issues, she has had for a while now. She was touring with Justin Timberlake and a few other celebs while she was singing in the late 90's to the 2000's. I love it when Britney, and people like her, advocate for people with disabilities like myself. I love praising people like that.