

SELF ADVOCATES NEWSLETTER

DON'T TALK ABOUT IT, BE ABOUT IT

TONY WINNER WITH A DISABILITY

BY ALLAN FRASER

She is very, very popular and has a disability in a wheelchair in Oklahoma. Ali Stroker got a Tony award on Sunday, June 9. She got an award and she has a disability.

She can move around, she can talk, she can sing.

She said, "I'm very proud of myself for coming out of the closet with my disability." I was very, very happy. She wanted to thank all the writers and stopped to breathe to not be too emotional. She can move around, she can talk, she can sing. Oh, what a voice. Where are you going to find someone with a disability like that? Nobody. She's very, very happy. It makes me feel happy to see an actress do that.

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Ali Stroker
Photo courtesy Glee Wiki

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MY GRADUATION PARTY

BY TERRY BRYSON

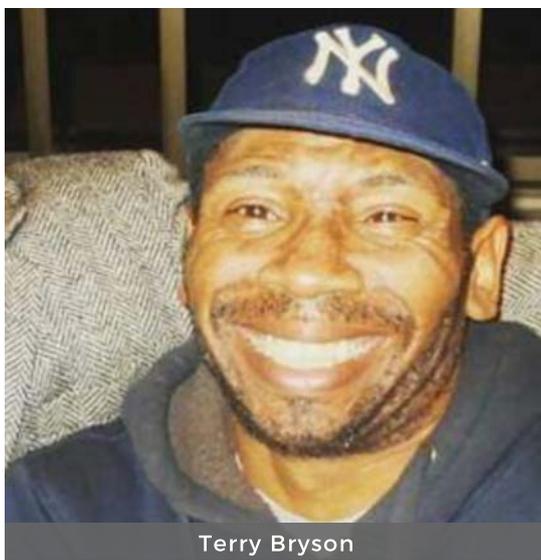
Note: YAI self advocate Terry Bryson, Jr. is a member and originator of the In My Shoes and Self Advocate Newsletter committee. He has been involved in many projects across YAI and is well respected from his peers. During the 2000's, Terry participated in a ton of presentations including YAI's Leadership Summits, YAI Central Park Challenges, colleges, schools, as well as doing the MOTH story on his life. Terry paved the way for self advocacy.

– Car'melo Grau

On June 13 2019, I graduated from Kingsborough Community College (KBCC) with a degree in Child Psychology. I was so happy I got a degree in Child Psychology. I think that everyone should have the authority to go to college. If I can do it, so can you.

I think that everyone should have the authority to go to college.

My whole family was so blessed to see me get my degree. I am glad I got to be part of the KBCC education. All my hard work paid off. I'm very happy to see that I am doing well. Thank you all for your support.



Terry Bryson

CHAT WITH CAR'MELO

INTERVIEW WITH KAREN TUMULTY

What is your role at iHOPE?

I am the Principal and Director at iHOPE.

What is your educational background?

I have a bachelor's degree in Special Education, a master's in Early Childhood Education, and a postgraduate degree in School Administration and Supervision.

What special supports do children with brain injury need?

Our individual student's needs vary. But iHOPE is a comprehensive school that provides an extended school day, 12-month program. We provide special education classroom, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech Therapy, Vision Therapy, Hearing services, Assistive Technology, and Social Work.

What led to the creation of iHOPE?

iHOPE was created because the New York City Department of Education failed to provide a free and appropriate education for students with complex learning needs such as traumatic brain injury, multiple disabilities, medically fragile, and dual sensory impaired.

I am proud to support all students in their right to have a free and appropriate education.

What types of technology do the children at iHOPE use?

Students at iHOPE use technology throughout their day. That includes low and high tech for communication, switches for environmental control, medical equipment that allows for community-based services (portable ventilators, O2,) motorized wheel chairs, sit to stand equipment, gait trainers, and single switch message uses.



Karen Tumulty speaks at a podium

What are you proud the most in being the Principal?

I am proud to provide leadership to a committed group of staff, that allows them to deliver the best level of services. I am proud to support families as they navigate the special education landscape, and I/DD community. I am proud to provide an opportunity to the greater community to see our students as members of the community. I am proud to support all students in their right to have a free and appropriate education.

What do you think about the R word?

I think language is very powerful, and affects perception. It is important that we all use person-centered, positive language. People are people, disability does not define the individual. The "R" word has been associated with pathology. We believe that people with disabilities are capable of incredible things.

Any advice for the families of children with brain injuries?

I encourage families to ask questions, seek solutions, find support, and know that so many people are available to help.

YAI'S CENTRAL PARK CHALLENGE, A GREAT DAY FOR AN EVENT

BY ISMAEL NUNEZ

Every year around the first week in June, it's the annual YAI Central Park Challenge.

Everything went well. Here are my highlights:

1. The weather was beautiful. It wasn't too hot, and the perfect day for a walk and a run.
2. Diversity – It was the perfect place to see people of all races walking side by side, running side by side, and working side by side. Wow!



Ismael, Ricardo, and Car'melo



ZCO DANCE TROOP performing at CPC

3. Entertainment – There was a dance group called “ZCO DANCE TROOP” who performed on wheelchairs. They provided an inspiration to all.

4. Cheers – We saw our favorite group in red, white, and blue. CHEERNY, an volunteer non-profit cheerleading organization by LGBTQ+ communities. A cheerleader proudly stated, “We have a proud relationship with YAI, being here shows our commitment to giving back to the community. When we see children smile, we know we're

doing something right, and most of all we're having fun!” As one can see from the pictures, they always give a fine performance.

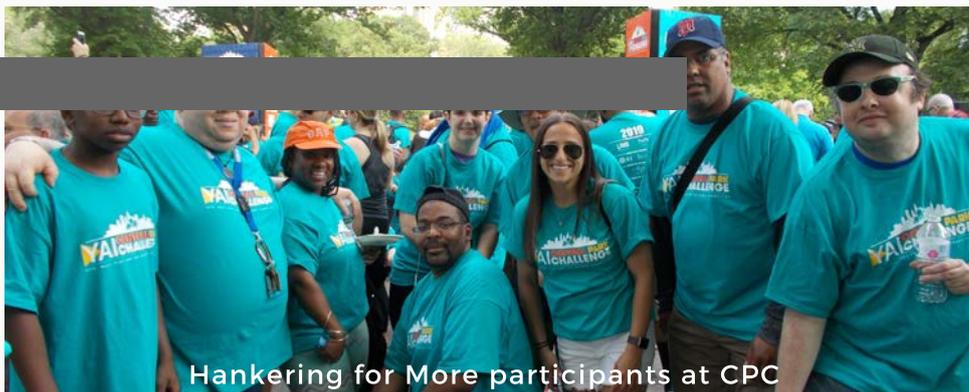
5. YAI's Hankering for More – A group which takes members from YAI on trips and activities for people with disabilities. The pictures show their commitment to the organization and people.

No bad news anywhere. Just fun and happiness every year.

To add to the fun, Channel 7 News Anchor Bill Ritter was there and he stated proudly, “This is one event I know I will be at every year.” Same this year and every year, an event for peace, diversity, and fun.



CHEERNY group



Hankering for More participants at CPC

MY FIRST TWO TRIPS TO ALBANY

BY MICHAEL HOWARD



Michael in Albany

Trip One: I finally went to Albany at the capitol for the first time with Center of Independence for the Disabled, NY(CIDNY) on Wednesday, 5/1. I had a good time by going to different state senators and legislators (assembly members) offices. It took me & CIDNY nearly 3 hours to arrive and depart. They only used 1 bus to take us there and bring us back to/from Albany. I also gave these local politicians my minor testimony on transportation. The next time I be able to go back to Albany with CIDNY for the 2nd time is in 3 weeks on 5/29 for Disability Awareness Lobby Day and I hope I get to see many different people with disability organizations so

people may test out anything people use like automatic wheelchairs, scooters, respirators and hospital beds.

Trip Two: I went to Albany for the 2nd time on Wednesday, 5/29 for the Disability Awareness Lobby Day with CIDNY to hear our legislators speak. When I was there, they had different organization tables, voting machines for people in wheelchairs, canes and crutches, media coverage and more. I had a good time and I hope CIDNY may go again by August or September so I can keep going with them.

NETWORKING ON A SATURDAY

BY JENNIFER NAFTLOWITZ

My mom and I went out for breakfast on Saturday with our friends. Then after that, my friend Ashley and I went to a luncheon for the Ronald McDonald House charity event for kids with disabilities. There were speeches and raffles, plus dinner. The food was delicious. Ashley and I met a young man named Sam. He told us history about how he was diagnosed with ALS by the age of 6.

DISABILITIES GOT TALENT

BY JANICE MCPHILLIPS

One night, I was watching America's Got Talent. There were two different people who had disabilities. One was blind and had a stick to guide him. He sang a song that was hard to sing Simon Cowell put him through with the Golden Buzzer.

The other person was a paraplegic. He was a comedian and funny. One of the other judges put him through with the Golden Buzzer. I wish there were more talents shows that featured people with disabilities.

YAI LATINO CONFERENCE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

BY ISMAEL NUNEZ

Every year, YAI hosts an annual Latino Conference for people with disabilities. This event takes place at the City University Graduate Center located at 34th Street and Fifth Avenue. This year's theme was Si ser Puede. In English, this means yes we can!

For many in the audience, people proudly stated why they attend. One woman I interviewed said "What I love about coming here is that the attendees are Latin Americans and I know whatever they say, I can learn and trust." Another attendee said, "I feel so comfortable here as if it's my own house."



Ismael Nunez & Sofia Lachapelle

Many of the agencies that were present felt the same way. Josephine Reyes, a marketing representative from Partners and Health, stated "This is the right place to promote the work we do and most importantly have a dialogue with the community."

Arlene Cordoves, a Parent and Family Services Coordinator from Include NYC, added, "If we don't look out for the Latin Community, who will? Being at this conference shows we are with you, we have people working with us who have disabilities, and we want you to be part of our family."



Group of attendees and volunteers at the 2019 Latino Conference

The guest speakers included Parent Advocate, Mary Somoza, Keynote Speaker and Reporter, Sofia Lachapelle, Bronx Borough President, Ruben Diaz Jr. Ruben spoke on the importance of family. "As parents, we must believe in ourselves and most importantly believe in our children. That is how we/they can succeed in anything!"

Another proud year as they say in baseball, "Wait till next year." Si ser puede! Yes it will happen again at the next Latino conference in 2020.

GAME NIGHT

BY KENNETH YOUNGBLOOD

I went to the Game Night from YAI's Manhattan Recreation Program on 460 West 34th Street on the 12th floor in Manhattan on Friday June 7th, 2019 from six to nine. I met my new friends at the game night.

They had lots of games, including: Monopoly, Scrabble, Jenga, Yahtzee, Boggles, Card Sharks, The Price is Right, Sorry, Taboo, Pictionary, Dominoes, Uno, Bingo, The Game of Life, Wheel of Fortune, Jeopardy!, Family Feud, Tic Tac Toe, Checkers, Chess, Twister, Hangman, Clue, Perfection, Go Fish, Pay Day and Guesstures.



Wheel of Fortune handmade version

I learned to play Taboo and Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?

I have a disability, but I learned to play Uno, Card Sharks, Wheel of Fortune, Jeopardy, The Price is Right, Scrabble, Family Feud, Monopoly, Bingo, Sorry, Connect Four, Jenga, Upwords, Dominoes and the Game of Life.

I sometimes watch game shows on all the cable networks.

I enjoyed the game night.

FIRST TONY AWARD IN A WHEELCHAIR

BY JANICE MCPHILLIPS



Ali Stroker
Photo courtesy Glee Wiki

On Sunday, June 9, I watched the Tony Awards. A female named Ali Stroker won a Tony for her role in Oklahoma! becoming the first person in a wheelchair to win in history. She won Best Featured Actress. The musical also won an award for Best Revival of a Musical.

Ali is an amazing woman who suffered a tragedy. She overcame many obstacles to be on stage. She won the award over a full musical cast. I think she is a person with a great attitude who will continue to amaze everyone around her.

HANKERING FOR MORE VISITS EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO

BY ISMAEL NUNEZ AND JENNIFER NAFTLOWITZ



This past May, YAI's Hankering for More group visited El Museo Del Barrio. In English, this means the museum for the people.

When we arrived, we were given a proud tour by Valentín Concha-Núñez, a Designer and Museum Educator. He explained the importance of the museum. "For years, Latin American artists in New York City and beyond were not given respect and recognition. Artists and the community bonded together to create this museum to promote not only their artwork also to promote the positive of the Latin American community."

During the tour, he showed the group an exhibition created by artists with disabilities. For many in the group who are also artists, it was a proud moment.

It was a great opportunity to learn about the Puerto Rican community. We heard the Spanish National Anthem and a powerful poem by the Puerto Rican poet Pedro Pietri. We also saw a photograph of the Puerto Ricans taking over the Statue of Liberty back in the 1977.

Jennifer who also reported on this event said, "It was great we all were given a chance to know about history. I have several Latino friends who would love to visit."

Lauren, a YAI staff member, stated proudly "The highlight is that this museum is the start of the Museum Mile. They had to fight to help create this museum, which shows the importance of self advocacy."