

The MELISSA RIGGIO HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM at The City University of New York

A NEW FACE ON THE COLLEGE CAMPUS ...

Higher education is an essential component in preparing people to become successful, self-reliant, and engaged members of their communities.

AHRC New York City partnered with The City University of New York and the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities to develop a fully inclusive higher education program for students with intellectual and other developmental disabilities in New York City.

“The Melissa Riggio Higher Education Program helped me on my journey to teaching by believing in me and helping me believe in myself. They helped me become more involved in my community, scout out different preschools and supported me while I interned at a local preschool. Without their support, I don’t think I would have wanted to attend and complete my GED. Now, I am on a new journey of hopefully becoming a teacher’s assistant in the near future. I am a proud graduate of the Melissa Riggio Higher Education Program.”

— Eric Goldberg, Alumnus

The Melissa Riggio Higher Education Program helps students develop skills, learn to self-reflect, make informed decisions, accept challenges, build social networks and make meaningful connections.



ACADEMICS

Students are fully included in college courses. They go to class and are supported by their peer mentors. Peer mentors can help them manage their work load, attend study sessions, make appointments with professors, take notes during classes, and much more.

STUDENT LIFE

College is not just about what you learn, but it is about meeting new people, finding your passions, and getting involved. Students join clubs and are a part of campus life. They begin to find their voice through campus activism, and develop leadership skills. Student life is a combination of support from a peer mentor and support by other students on the college campus. It is another way for students and mentors to experience college life together.



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Students are encouraged to involve themselves beyond the college walls as members of their local communities through exploring, connecting, and volunteering. They learn and become motivated to promote the quality of life in a community, working side by side with their mentors and other members of the community. Students get to know themselves and develop an identity as someone who has the capacity to make a difference.

SELF-ADVOCACY

Self-advocacy empowers students to speak up and learn how to make decisions for themselves. Students learn collectively with their mentors and other students about disability history and social issues that impact people with disabilities.



INTERNSHIPS

Career development is the goal for all students. Students are guided in career explorations and development through internships, both on and off campus. Internships help students establish a vision and develop goals to create a path to employment.