

AHRC New York City's MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Sharing News to Keep Our Membership Informed

October 2023

Newsletter

Issue 2



A Message from Ray Ferrigno, President

I write this message to you as we enter our 75th Year! AHRC NYC came to be because of the commitment of parents who would never accept “no” as an answer when advocating for their children. This ethos continues today.

Our organization is committed to delivering services tailored to the unique needs of individuals. As legislators debate budgets, it is our responsibility, in the tradition of those who preceded us, to be a persistent voice reminding government of their obligation. The future holds many challenges. However, as the past 75 years have demonstrated, we will face them with a vision for the future that continues to breakdown the stereotypes and barriers still present in society. I ask each of you to commit to adding your voice to our efforts as we continue the life affirming work we do every day.



A Message from Marco Damiani, CEO of AHRC New York City

From the Oxford Dictionary: /'im,pak(t)/ - the effect or influence of one person, thing, or action, on another.

When I think about it, I use the word “impact” a lot. Maybe too much. It’s difficult to work at AHRC NYC, and not find yourself using the word regularly. The powerful human stories in this edition of *Membership Matters* compel me to suggest another definition of impact: The power of difference, and its effect on others.

Everyone in this edition, Michael Goldfarb, Liz Sargent, David Dephy, Hansel Caraballo, Allan Goldstein, and Rayed Mohammed, found a unique power within themselves to see the world differently, and pass that gift on to us. A world where advocacy changes lives, where compelling poetry, art, story-telling, and film-making opens us up to new possibilities, where open-mindedness propels us towards acceptance, where differences are not divisive, but bind us together as one humanity. That’s what AHRC NYC is about. **Impact.** Be a part of it.



AHRC New York City's 75th Anniversary Kickoff The Michael Goldfarb Memorial Symposium

Kicking off its 75th Anniversary year in July, AHRC NYC held the Symposium, named in memory of AHRC NYC's Executive Director of 37 years, Michael Goldfarb. Held at the CUNY Graduate Center, the event featured a panel of disability law experts who discussed the impact of recent Supreme Court decisions on the disability community. The panel put forth ideas about the actions necessary to counteract recent rollbacks on disability rights and offered consideration on how to approach upcoming cases before the Court.

Visit our website to watch the video on this important topic

<https://www.ahrcnyc.org/goldfarb-symposium-2023/>



AHRC NYC's Sibling Committee Hosts a Screening of **Take Me Home** with Writer/Producer Liz Sargent

The screening was hosted by AHRC NYC's Sibling Committee, Chair Nancy Petrino and Sibling Committee Member Lindsay Hyland at our headquarters this summer.

This short film stars Anna, Liz's adult sibling with a cognitive disability. The narrative focuses on the difficult transitional moments Liz and her siblings shared when their family was faced with having to make decisions about Anna's care when their mother passed away. We encourage you to watch the film and contact us about our Sibling Support Group.

Stay tuned and be on the lookout for opportunities to help us celebrate our 75th Anniversary!





AHRC NYC's David Dephy is Going to the Moon

David, an Employment & Community Service Coordinator for many years with AHRC NYC's Employment and Business Services, is a prolific writer, with eight novels and fifteen published poetry collections.

David wrote the poem *A Sense of Purpose* that he describes as a poem about us, about our experiences, and how we see ourselves in the future and for the future. It has been selected as part of the Lunar Codex Project - a digitized collection of contemporary art, including books, music, and film that will be sent to the Moon later this year in unmanned rockets as a lasting record of human creativity.

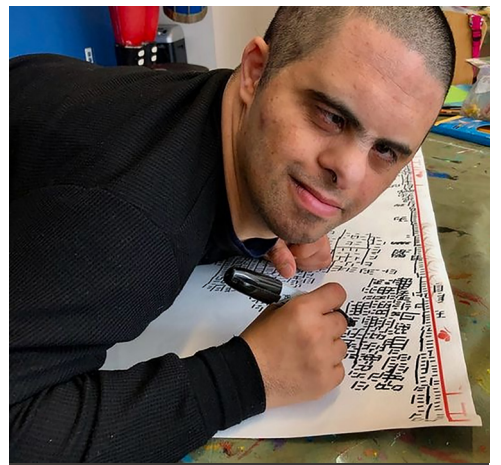


Hansel Caraballo Featured on Fox 5 News

In August, Hansel was featured on Fox 5 News. The piece showcases Hansel's accomplishments while working for a New York City government agency as part of AHRC NYC's Partnership for Inclusive Internships.

AHRC NYC's Partnership for Inclusive Internships is a public-private partnership that fosters diversity and inclusive hiring within New York City government.

We are truly proud of Hansel's recognition and of our incredible staff members who make these opportunities possible!



Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) Purchases Drawing from AHRC NYC Artist Rayed Mohammed

Rayed reached an exciting milestone in his artistic career when MoMA purchased his piece, *Untitled*, and added it to their permanent collection.

During the height of the pandemic, AHRC NYC and MoMA's Access Programs entered into a partnership where artists were invited to discuss their creative processes and develop work inspired by their feelings on the pandemic. Rayed thrived during his time with the MoMA educators and his work caught the eye of the Associate Curator for the Department of Drawings and Prints who believed that his work was a great fit for the museum in representing the principles and promise of inclusive contemporary art. Now, his work is on display for everyone to enjoy!



Everybody Can Learn

by Allan Goldstein
Senior Lecturer; NYU Tandon School of Engineering; Department of Technology, Culture and Society; Disabilities Studies and Author of *Fred and Me, A Willowbrook Survivor's Story*

"Does everybody die?" asked my younger brother Fred, a survivor of sixteen years in the Willowbrook State School. We were sitting on a slatted wooden bench in lower Manhattan watching a pick-up basketball game. "Yes," I said. "Who will die first?" he asked. "I don't know." And I don't.

But I was not surprised by his question, well, not completely, because I had observed that our twenty-year sibling/guardian relationship had released Fred's innate abilities: intellectual development propelled by curiosity and budding confidence. He had demonstrated abstract thought and an interest in understanding gadgets - his multi-buttoned watch; how sound came from my stereo receiver. And with our big brother talks, he knew that if he flirted, he had to mean it. "I like Michele best," was his response, showing it with a subsequent marriage proposal.

Everybody can learn is what Fred taught me. We just learn in different ways. I share Fred's lesson with my students, fueled by traits common among all siblings: passion, patience, and persistence.

"Can I take this," Fred asked about a very large shell we had spied on a Long Island town beach. His first shell. "Yes." We went home with three plastic bags stuffed with shells: "We'll paint them," he said, foreseeing an activity to share with his group home mates.

"I am smart," Fred is documented as saying at his meeting with a Willowbrook Social Worker. That same individual recorded Fred as "Looks smarter than he is." No doubt who was the smart one.



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