

# AHRC New York City's MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

## Sharing News to Keep Our Membership Informed

February 2024

Newsletter

Issue 3



### A Message from Ray Ferrigno, President

As AHRC NYC begins its 75<sup>th</sup> year of service to people with IDD, we reflect on those who gave voice and purpose to our work. Parents, siblings, visionary professionals, and communities of support worked to build a new world order for people with disabilities after World War II. They embraced fundamental rights for groups not seen or heard in the past. They forged partnerships of families, providers, and government to engender hope that our children, brothers, and sisters would have access and opportunity to lead valued lives.

While hope remains strong all these years later, we need to resurrect those voices that echoed through both government and society, as the promises made a generation ago seem to have been forgotten. In this 75<sup>th</sup> year let's commit to re-energizing the power of families so we ensure that the strong foundation of advocacy and human rights laid years ago continues.

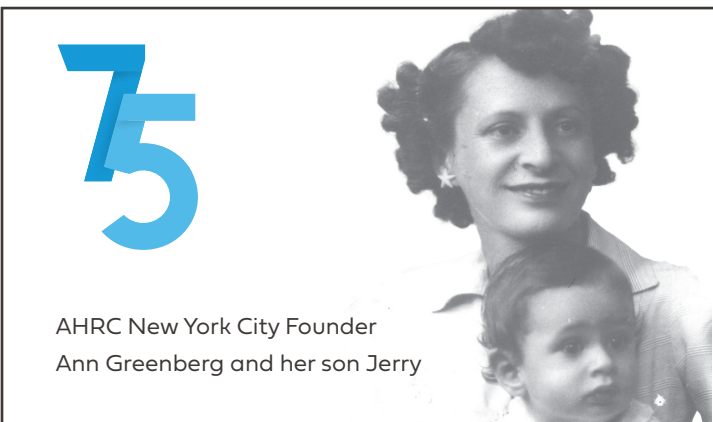


### A Message from Marco Damiani, CEO of AHRC New York City

DSPs stand at the forefront of America's workforce, empowering individuals with disabilities to lead fulfilling lives. With 4.5 million dedicated workers nationwide, DSPs champion inclusivity and opportunity.

Despite their critical contributions, front-line staff often face economic undervaluing of their work, highlighting the need for systemic recognition by legislators and other elected officials. We need officials to strongly support fair compensation, commensurate with the vital role these staff play in society. Beyond traditional caregiving, DSPs serve as advocates, job coaches, and facilitators of independence. Through personalized support and innovation, they enable individuals to thrive in the community.

Yet, a nationwide shortage of DSPs persists, underscoring the urgent need for recognition and support. We must continue efforts to address this shortage, emphasizing competitive compensation and opportunities for advancement. It's New York State Budget season. Together, let's motivate our elected officials to do the right thing.



AHRC New York City Founder  
Ann Greenberg and her son Jerry

### An idea can change the world

Ann Greenberg had an idea...

### Her idea became AHRC New York City

75 years ago, Ann put an ad in the paper seeking play dates for her son Jerry who had a developmental disability. As services did not exist at the time the response was great and AHRC NYC was born.

In honor of our history and looking to our future, AHRC NYC will commemorate our milestone anniversary at Tribeca 360° on May 13<sup>th</sup>. We invite you to join us in celebrating each other, the impactful work we do, and our shared vision of making the world a more equitable place for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. Support us! [ahrcnyc.org/75th-anniversary/giving](https://ahrcnyc.org/75th-anniversary/giving).



### Celebrating 75 years of a powerful idea (continued)

Your support helps us continue to do the work we do, recognize our committed staff, and foster the innovative ideas needed to keep us moving forward in providing opportunities for people with disabilities.

We are excited to announce that Errol Louis, Anchor/Journalist at NY1 will be our Master of Ceremonies for the evening. We will also showcase our Hall of Honor which is comprised of people who have dedicated their careers to ensuring that the world is a better place for people with IDD.

Visit our Event Page for details about our event and to show your support! [ahrcnyc.org/75th-anniversary](https://ahrcnyc.org/75th-anniversary).

Share our membership information with family and friends!  
Ask them to visit our website and join: [ahrcnyc.org/involved/membership](https://ahrcnyc.org/involved/membership)





### Disability Reframed

Judy Woodruff, has a new PBS News Hour Special, *Disability Reframed*. The series explores issues of consequence for people with disabilities and those who care for them.

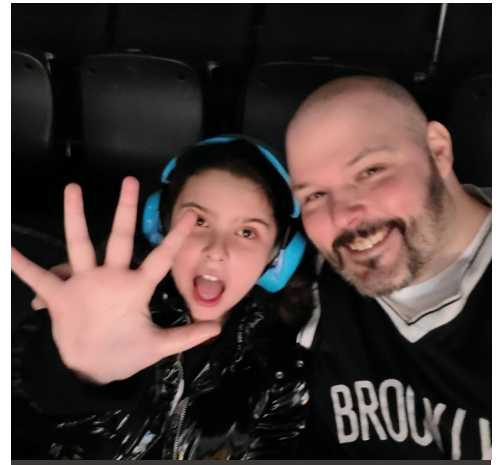
Fatimah Howard, one of AHRC NYC's Direct Support Professionals was featured in a recent episode, *What's Behind the Shortage of Workers who Support People with Disabilities* that focused on the national hiring crisis of front-line workers. We encourage you to visit the PBS NewsHour website to watch it as it underscores the urgent need for continued advocacy efforts from all of us for Direct Support Professionals.



### AHRC NYC's MLK Day

AHRC NYC has a long-standing, commitment of bettering the communities where people we support and our staff members live and work. No event exemplifies this better than the Martin Luther King Day of Service.

Tahj Holligan, pictured above, enjoys volunteering with his program and helping people in need. Tahj, and many others who attend our programs along with staff collected and donated more than 300 lbs. of food to help address food insecurity this year. Additionally, winter clothing and other items were collected and donated to support those in need.



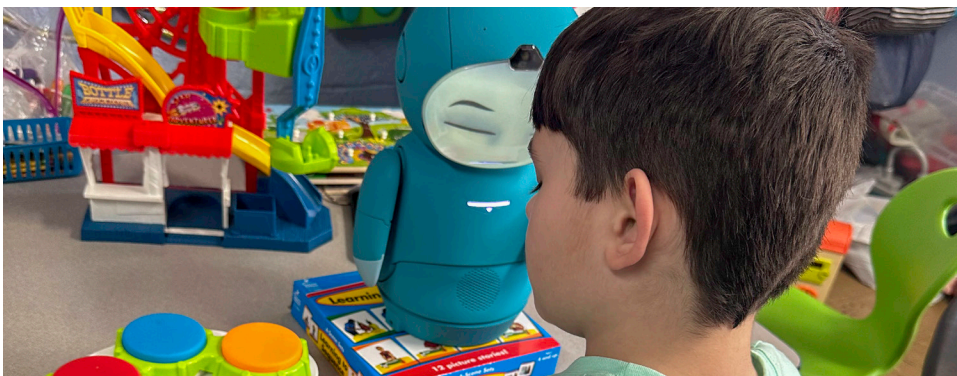
### Nothing But Nets: AHRC NYC Students and Families Enjoy an Evening at Barclays Center

Students from AHRC NYC schools, their families, and Education staff had a fun evening at Barclays Center this summer seeing the Brooklyn Nets take on the surging Oklahoma City Thunder.

Two parents offered their reactions following the game: "We had so much fun. It was good seats and a nice opportunity for Ryan and his sister to go to their first basketball game plus the win was extra nice." - Shelley Chan, mother of student Ryan Ng

"Thanks again for organizing a wonderful event! Jake and I had tons of fun." - Eva Weiss, mother of student Jake Budin

This event is funded by IDEA and aims to promote inclusion and equity through community-based experiences for AHRC NYC students and their families."



### AHRC NYC's James P. Murphy Staten Island Preparatory School meets Moxie, the world's First AI robot that uses play-based conversational learning to support skill development and help kids progress toward key milestones

Over the last few weeks, AHRC NYC's James P. Murphy Staten Island Preparatory School has incorporated Moxie robots into their speech therapy sessions to inspire a new level of engagement and learning. Moxie was introduced to the school to help students enhance their communication skills and their social-pragmatic development. By learning to independently interact with Moxie by waking it up, clarifying conversational exchanges, and navigating through various "missions", students are motivated to take the lead in initiating and directing their own learning experiences.

Moxie's missions guide students through various social skills, fostering abilities that are vital for building and maintaining friendships, expressing empathy, and exploring the world beyond the therapy room! Through a personalized profile, Moxie tailors its interactions to each student's needs. This ensures that Moxie is not only engaging - but also aligned with the individual child's learning style and preferences.

From practicing calming animal breathing techniques and reciting positive affirmations to taking energetic movement breaks with dance and song, Moxie makes learning an enjoyable adventure. The addition of brain teasers, including Moxie twisters, riddles, jokes, and scavenger hunts ensures that our students are expanding their speech and language skills in a playful and supportive environment. Adding to the excitement, many students have shown a lot of enthusiasm for Moxie. Moxie has been a great supplemental tool to making our speech therapy sessions a memorable adventure!

Interested in contributing to our newsletter? Have feedback? Send us an email: [membership@ahrcnyc.org](mailto:membership@ahrcnyc.org)



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