



AHRC New York City's mission is to empower people who are neurodiverse to live full and equitable lives.

We want to encourage all of you to join us! Membership is very important. Your voice is very important.

We want to hear from you about your needs as you navigate the system of services for yourself, your sons, daughters, and loved ones.

We want to let you hear from us about the parent/family movement that created the services you now benefit from and how important the voices of people supported and families will be in retaining the services that currently exist and in creating new services.

We want to encourage supporters who may not have family members with IDD to join us in our efforts to bring our vision to life. **A more inclusive world benefits everyone.**

As we prepare for our 75th Anniversary in 2024 we need your email address. Do not miss out, send us your email, contact: 212-780-2748 or membership@ahrcnyc.org.

For support, resources, to become a member, or to donate visit [AHRCnyc.org](https://ahrcnyc.org) or call **212-780-2500**

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Raymond Ferrigno, Board President
Marco Damiani, Chief Executive Officer



AHRC New York City's **Membership Matters**

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Our vision is to help create a socially just world where the power of difference is embraced, valued, and celebrated.



A Message From **Ray Ferrigno, President**

As we leave 2022 behind, I am taking this opportunity to reach out to you to thank you for putting your trust in AHRC NYC, and for being a vital part of our “family.”

I am optimistic that we are at the beginning of a new day. New York State has built extraordinary programs and services for people with developmental disabilities – our foundation is strong. It is however in need of essential supports and resources so it can support new innovations, continuously growing needs, and a future that is as visionary as the past reflecting the services necessary through a person’s lifespan.

AHRC NYC is vast with many services in the five boroughs but to me, AHRC NYC is the people we serve, their families, and our committed workforce, all with their own perspectives, experiences and cultural backgrounds. These were foundational principles of the organization and remain so as we refocus in meaningful ways.

Together, let us embrace one of the fundamental forces in the lives of all parents, *hope*. It has sustained and helped AHRC NYC grow for almost 74 years. AHRC NYC thrives on the hope that our children will know a world filled with dignity, equity, and access to opportunity that will transform them.



A Message From **Marco Damiani, Chief Executive Officer**

In 2022, AHRC NYC launched two major initiatives, both intertwined. One is our Strategic Plan. The other is the refreshing of, and recommitment to, our mission, vision, values, and culture.

Our strategic plan has five pillars – Policy and Advocacy, Innovation, Workforce, Data, and Financial Stability. All our work in 2023, and beyond, is tethered to these pillars. How do we get there? We envision a socially just world where the power of difference is embraced, valued, and celebrated. Generosity guides us as we honor our legacy, and continuously grow through a culture of curiosity, creativity, and optimism. When our workforce, our greatest asset, and other key stakeholders, families, people we support and other partners, align around these principles and behaviors, we achieve great things.

So, what’s your role in all of this? I ask you to commit to and support our powerful mission, vision, and values. Become a member of AHRC NYC. Spread the word about our significant role in promoting disability rights and social justice. Join us in our advocacy efforts to ensure that we always have the resources needed to enable people with disabilities to live the life that they choose. Stay in touch with us. Let us know what you need to help a family member or a friend with a disability be as engaged as they can in their community.

Most of all, I ask you to join us, and Stand for Something.

Congratulations to Rayed Mohamad

The Museum of Modern Art (MoMa) purchased Rayed’s piece, “Untitled” to add to their permanent collection
During the height of COVID, when most AHRC NYC programming was done remotely, AHRC NYC and MoMa’s Access Programs entered into a partnership.

AHRC NYC Happenings

Bill Stone Way in the Bronx Named in Honor of AHRC NYC Board Member

I. William Stone (1928-2020) known to many as Bill, sat on AHRC NYC’s Board of Directors for almost five decades. He was a decorated Army officer, an accountant, and an integral part of his Bronx neighborhood for his entire life, including over 40 years serving on Community Board 8.

In his honor, the intersection of Hudson Manor Terrace and West 237th Street in Riverdale is memorialized as Bill Stone Way after a street naming ceremony that took place on May 7th.

AHRC NYC at UN Panel Discussion About Autism

Dr. Mary Donahue, AHRC NYC’s Vice President of Behavior , Support Services, was one of several experts invited to speak

on the panel. Mary explained. *I focused primarily on the limited funding and services available for adults and transitioning teenagers who have high support needs and behavioral challenges. The field is lacking in every service because of these funding challenges - day services, residential services, and clinical services.*



The Advocacy/Legislative Corner

Stories from the Frontline



AHRC NYC hosted legislative advocacy meetings that gave staff, families, and other stakeholders a voice. Nicole Rattless, a sibling and member of AHRC NYC was one of those voices. She shares her feelings on advocacy and being heard below. We hope her words inspire you to advocate too!

My brother’s name is Chad Michael Howard and he is an adult with Autism. Chad is an amazing brother. He is kind, sweet, smart, handsome, playful, funny, and loving. I attended the legislative meeting so people would know Chad and how much he means to me and my family. I wanted the people that make decisions about funding programs available to Chad to know his name, his story, and how important they are to his quality of life and others like him. I wanted to hear from families, caregivers, advocates, and AHRC NYC staff to connect with their experiences. I was moved to tears as I listened to their stories because I share their pain of financial hardships and challenges with access to the critical resources needed to care for their loved ones and beloved clients.

In a time and society where disabled individuals can often be disadvantaged and disregarded, I felt it was my duty to use my voice to speak to the hearts of legislators in the hopes that it would increase their support of this community and the professionals that care for them. I was happy to have the opportunity to thank and recognize the frontline workers and other staff for their efforts to teach, protect, and advocate for my brother.

OPWDD Commissioner Neifeld Visits AHRC NYC

AHRC NYC welcomed OPWDD Commissioner Kerri Neifeld who toured several AHRC NYC programs. *Telling our story is always important, and for the Commissioner to witness it for three hours was extremely powerful.”* commented Marco Damiani, AHRC NYC’s CEO. Building on that visit, the Commissioner addressed 450 managers and supervisors at our recent leadership meeting, filling them in on the new initiatives OPWDD is engaged in that will benefit the people we support and their families.

Election Day Brought with It the Re-election of Legislators that Support People with IDD

Governor Kathy Hochul and NYS Senator John Mannion were re-elected in very close elections. Since funding for services provided by AHRC NYC and other organizations are primarily government dollars, electing people who are disability supporters is very important.

AHRC NYC at the State Capitol

Staff members, people living in AHRC NYC residences, and leadership joined 200 plus colleagues committed to disability justice in Albany to tell legislators and the Governor that #CareCantWait. The time is now to invest in NY’s care economy and fully recognize Direct Support Professionals with the salaries they deserve. Join us in support of these increases, contact your Assembly Member and State Senator today!