

AHRC New York City's MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Sharing News to Keep Our Membership Informed

June 2024

Special 75th Anniversary Issue

Issue 4



A Message from Ray Ferrigno, President

This year, reflecting on the organization's past 75 year history has been for me, a great reminder of the foundational values that have sustained this organization for three quarters of a century: the resolve of parents to come together with a single purpose. Today, after several difficult years, our programs are on a path of renewed growth. We hope to implement creative initiatives that will help sustain our work while at the same time build the future. We must remember that none of the accomplishments of the past 75 years would have been realized without you, the membership, the families, and communities that we serve.

You are our future. My hope is that in this new year, we will have a renewed focus on you.



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

As we celebrate our 75th Anniversary, we reflect on the remarkable decision Ann Greenberg made that changed countless lives. In the 1940s and 50s, many parents followed doctors' advice to institutionalize their disabled children. Ann chose a different path. She didn't institutionalize her son Jerry. Instead, in July 1948, she placed a brief ad in the New York Post, inviting other moms in the Bronx to start a day nursery for their disabled children.

For Ann, inclusion was paramount. Her simple yet revolutionary act sparked a social movement that continues to thrive at AHRC NYC. Her vision and advocacy have left us a legacy of inclusion and empowerment. They challenge us to create a culture that values and celebrates differences and to always strive for a better future. Our 75th Anniversary is a call to action. Let's honor Ann by continuing to change perceptions, minds, and attitudes, ensuring a brighter world for people with disabilities and their families.



AHRC New York City's 75th Anniversary Gala

Our gala on May 13th at Tribeca 360° was a rousing success! Special thanks to Errol Louis, our Master of Ceremonies for the evening!

The gala was full of joy and a deep sense of history, uniting people who stand with us in our mission of advocating for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to lead full and equitable lives.

With the ongoing backing of our community, we are poised to ensure our future is as powerful as our past. A future where the power of difference is not only embraced but valued and celebrated.

Visit our event page to see photos from our gala
ahrcnyc.org/75th-anniversary



Dinner Co-Chair Patricia A. Murphy, Hall of Honor Award Recipient Assembly Member Rebecca A. Seawright, and Dinner Co-Chair Laura J. Kennedy

"I was so excited to arrive to a room filled with people who have played a role in this extraordinary organization's achievements and purpose. Our guests were greeted by an impressive 83 foot timeline, portraying our rich history and setting the tone of this special celebration." - Laura J. Kennedy

"Seeing guests and honorees mingle and contribute to our cause was gratifying and demonstrated the positive impact of the tremendous collective efforts of our dedicated members, families, staff, volunteers and community supporters on our mission."

– Patricia A. Murphy

There is still time to support AHRC New York City in honor of our 75th Anniversary
Donate: ahrcnyc.org/75th-anniversary/donate





75th Anniversary Hall of Honor

Our Hall of Honor celebrated those whose commitment to people with developmental disabilities has made a lasting impact on our organization, the city, and the field.

Pictured above is Hall of Honor Awardee Maureen O’Brien, CEO of NYSID.

Our other distinguished Hall of Honor inductees included:
Dr. Sheryl White-Scott
Beth Haroules, Esq.
Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright
Mitchell Bloomberg
Our Broadway’s Dale Hensley,
Gavin Creel, and Thayne Jasperson



Anne Kraus Award Recipient Sharyn Van Reepingen

Sharyn, exemplifying exceptional dedication to our mission, was honored with one of our most esteemed awards named in memory of Anne, a dedicated advocate, volunteer, and staff member.

Sharyn, former Board President and active Board Member, holds an impressive resumé of achievements that highlight her commitment to inclusivity and advocacy for people with IDD having successfully negotiated for disabled children’s access to education in Hong Kong, and co-founding the Springboard School for Exceptional Children.



Commissioner Kerri Neifeld, Recipient of AHRC NYC’s Leadership in Government Award
Commissioner Neifeld of OPWDD was recognized at our gala for her leadership and commitment to enhancing services for people with IDD.

Commissioner Neifeld in turn, presented our CEO, Marco Damiani with a Proclamation from Governor Hochul, recognizing our organization’s contributions and the significant impact we have on the lives of countless New Yorkers.

Our Celebrations Continue
Our anniversary is being celebrated across our schools, programs, and residences. This gives staff and people we support an opportunity to learn about our rich history, enjoy great food, and celebrate with each other. We will be hosting events through summer and fall. Stay tuned for activities you can participate in.



The highlight of the Evening - AHRC New York City’s *Our Broadway*!

Guests were treated to two outstanding performances from AHRC NYC’s *Our Broadway*. Amidst the cheers the remarkable talents illuminated the stage, showcasing boundless creativity and unwavering determination. In that moment, barriers dissolved, as the audience witnessed the power of inclusion and the brilliance within every individual, regardless of perceived limitations.

AHRC NYC’s *Our Broadway* would not be the exciting ensemble it has become without Dale Hensley. Dale brought his passion for theater, music, and Broadway and cultivated an inclusive theatrical platform where people we support not only participate but also share the spotlight alongside Broadway stars.

Dale along with Gavin Creel and Thayne Jasperson each received an award as part of our Hall of Honor. The unwavering support of these three individuals has elevated AHRC NYC’s *Our Broadway* to new heights. Dale, Gavin, and Thayne graciously accepted their awards and are committed to contributing their talents and enriching the lives of *Our Broadway* performers. Together, they embody inclusivity and the transformative power of the performing arts.

Interested in contributing to our newsletter? Have feedback? Send us an email: membership@ahrcnyc.org