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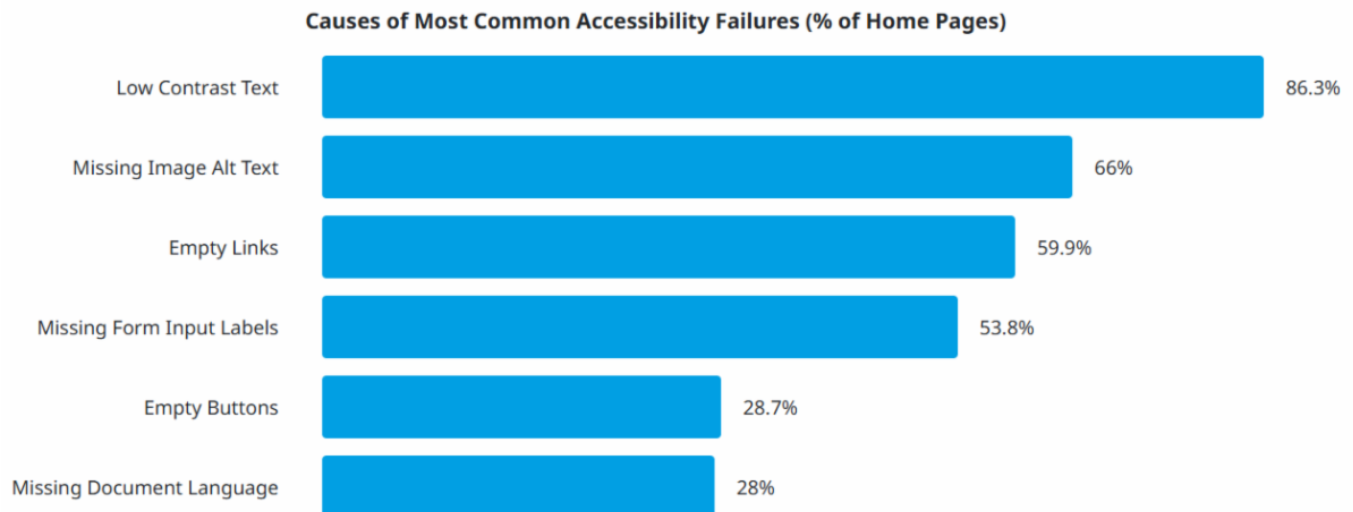
GLOBAL ACCESSIBILITY IS FOR ALL OF US!

Stairs, ramps, and... laptops?

Thursday, May 21, 2026, was Global Accessibility Awareness Day ([GAAD](#)), designed to “get everyone talking, thinking and learning about digital access and inclusion, and the more than One Billion people with disabilities/impairments.”

We think a lot about physical accessibility in this field – and rightly so! – so that people who use wheelchairs, employ white canes, experience sensory sensitivities, and require other accommodations have access to whatever space or place they need or want to go. But, in 2026, it stands to reason that we would have to expand our purview to include the digital space, as well!

That said, we are falling short. According to the official observance's website, a 2020 report by [WebAIM](#) reveals several accessibility failures in technology:



And with our friends and loved ones so dependent on technology nowadays - whether for work/school, socializing, or entertainment - we have to do better.

So, what can we do?

The [GAAD website](#) provides a number of events, activities, and projects for those who want to get involved and make the world a more accessible place for all! There are also tremendous opportunities to make your voice heard, whether with the [New Jersey Self-Advocacy Program](#) (NJSAP), The Arc of NJ's [Youth Advisory Board](#), and joining in legislative action with [Disability Rights New Jersey](#). Because making technology attainable doesn't just benefit people with disabilities, it benefits all of us.

Here's to accessible work,
Jen

Williams Syndrome Awareness Month

If Global Accessibility Awareness Day excites you, how about a whole month of awareness?

Check out this outstanding [NJ Self-Advocacy Program](#) webinar with The Arc of NJ's Gianna ("Gigi"), who expertly explains, illuminates, and inspires with her presentation on Williams Syndrome: the what's, the how's, and the oh-wow's! She will blow you away!

Click on Gigi's image to watch the presentation (presentation begins ten seconds in)



Living in any society, it's important to know your rights. Disability Rights New Jersey has launched its "NAVIGATING YOUR RIGHTS TO SPECIAL EDUCATION IN NEW JERSEY: A SELF-ADVOCACY GUIDE"

Click the image below to learn all about it!

DISABILITY RIGHTS  **NEW JERSEY**
ADVANCING JUSTICE. ADVOCATING INCLUSION.

CENTER FOR ADULT TRANSITION
ACCESS Program
ACCESSIBLE COLLEGE AND CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

PRE-COLLEGE TRANSITION PROGRAM
 The HCCC CAT ACCESS Program is partially funded by "County College-Based Centers for Adult Transition Grant"

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS - Ages 17-24 - Must be diagnosed with an intellectual or developmental disability.	TUITION FEE \$3,500.00 Tuition fee - Includes laptop, all course materials, and supplies	PROGRAM COURSEWORK - Life and Coping Skills - Work Readiness Skills - Digital Literacy - Microsoft Word - Microsoft Excel - Microsoft PowerPoint	CAREER PLANNING 1:1 Person-Centered Planning Sessions - Career Exploration - Community Linkages - Academic and Workforce Pathways
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WHY CHOOSE ACCESS?

- Budget-Friendly Tuition
- Customized Lesson Plans
- Peer Mentor Support
- Group and One-on-One Academic Coaching
- 90-Day Post-Program Support Services
- VR Career Exploration Lab
- Virtual Financial Education
- Community Partner Engagement Events
- ACCESS Alumni and Parent Advocacy Groups **COMING SOON!**

SCAN ME


CONTACT US
 CAT@HCCC.EDU
 201-360-5477

Virtual Information Sessions Available! Learn More!

Hudson County Community College's ACCESS Program is here!

Planning for the fall?
 Have a transition program in mind?
 HCCC is currently recruiting for their fall term!
 Interviews will be scheduled on a first come, first served basis through the end of July. Those who are not enrolled for fall will have priority for interviews for the next cohort or semester term.

[Click here for the ACCESS Program application!](#)



And now a little bit about... Inclusion: It's more than equity, it's planning!

THIS MONTH'S BLOG:

Inclusion: A little planning, a huge payoff

By Jennifer Harrison

Did you ever hear the one about the guy with the raft on the island that had no fruit? Well, there was this island where no fruit grew and no available boats and a population of people becoming riddled with scurvy... or boron deficiency... or withering from a dearth of smoothies, it doesn't really matter. The fact is, they needed fruit. And the closest access was on a nearby island.

Enter, the guy with the raft.

The sun-soaked citizens swarmed the guy one Saturday afternoon and begged, pleaded, and threatened excommunication from the snorkeling club if he didn't transport them to the citrus-covered other island. An inexperienced self-advocate, he had no choice but to comply.

And so he began.

He loaded a large man in floral swim trunks onto the raft and began to row. It wasn't easy on the arms, and he had to run back and forth across the width of the vessel to establish even a moderately direct path toward their destination: scamper, scamper, oar in water, stroke, then scamper, scamper in the other direction, oar in water, stroke, and back again. Over and over, back and forth. By the time they reached the neighboring land mass, the guy was exhausted and the large man had an unsightly burn on his back (he had been relaxing on his stomach during the excursion, you see). The man in the jams disembarked, stuffed a couple of papayas in his pockets, and hopped back onto the raft for the long trip home.

This is how the guy with the raft ushered the islanders to and from the nearby island for the next few days. One by one. Scamper, scamper, stroke. Starboard to port and repeat, the hours ticking by, an endless queue of islanders awaiting their cruise. The grumbling soon grew louder as the guy grew weaker, his knees growing closer to jelly than the ripening papayas in the large man's pants.

The guy with the raft eventually collapsed, a heaving heap with spasming biceps, having transported only fifteen passengers in total and leaving hundreds more frustrated and potassium-depleted. The clan became a mob and lifted the lethargic sailor, locked him in a hut, and threw the key into the crater of a volcano. The abandoned raft was lifted out of the water and torn asunder in effigy. A sad story, indeed.

Epilogue: the citizens took the branches that had comprised the raft and produced a s'mores toolset that they exported to the mainland in exchange for a lifetime supply of vitamin supplements from GNC. They felt great.

But what's the real point of the story?

True inclusion not only requires the drive to make everything accessible to everyone and the willingness to make modifications in order to succeed, but planning. It takes taking the extra time to think, considering everything we create through an inclusive lens: "Can anyone avail themselves of this?" "Is it appropriate to all populations?" "Is this the most efficient way to put it together so everyone can benefit?"

For had the man planned, he would have brought more along multiple people per trip; he would have had everyone take turns with the oars; he would have brought a haul of fruit back instead of a paltry handful. And he would have tasked those remaining in formation on the original island with creating a second - wheelchair-accessible! - raft as they waited.

In short, he would have thought about *everyone*.

So, let's all adopt a more inclusive perspective, whatever we do – when we build, let's build for all; when we plan, let's think about the masses; and when we host, let's do it at a place that everyone can access, at a time all can enjoy, and in a manner that doesn't leave us face down in the sand.

UPCOMING WEBINARS:

PLANNING FOR ADULT LIFE: Wednesday, June 17, 7-8:00pm

"Ruby's Rainbow"

Join Rachel Bhatia from Ruby's Rainbow, a nonprofit which provides college scholarships for students with Down syndrome attending post-secondary programs in the U.S. and shout their worth to the rooftops!!

Planning for Adult Life's MEET US IN THE MIDDLE WEBINAR SERIES

The 3rd Wednesday of every month, 7pm

June 17: "Ruby's Rainbow: Scholarships for students with Down syndrome"

Join Liz Plachta and Rachel Bhatia from **Ruby's Rainbow**, a nonprofit which provides college scholarships for students with Down syndrome attending post-secondary programs in the U.S. and shout their worth to the rooftops!!



**Scan QR code
to register!**



[Click here to register](#)

PLANNING FOR ADULT LIFE: Tuesday, June 23, 6-7:00pm

"Explaining Transition"

Join Jennifer Harrison and Values Into Action to learn about the systems and services - the "nuts and bolts" - of transition planning, including IEP's, SSI, Medicaid, DDD, guardianship and supported decision-making, and housing. It's a wealth of information to help you understand what's to come and how best to get it done!

[Click here to register](#)

HEALTHCARE ADVOCACY: Tuesday, June 2, 1-2:00pm

"Lifelong Gynecology Needs and Hormonal Interactions with Other Common Medical Conditions for Women with IDD"

Dr. John Harris, obstetrician, gynecologist, and the Director of the Magee-Womens Hospital Center for Women with Disabilities, will give a presentation on the gynecologic needs throughout the life course (e.g., periods, pelvic pain, menopause, etc.) for women with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Dr. Harris will discuss how female hormone cycles may affect other conditions important to quality of life (e.g., behavioral health and seizure disorders).

[Click here to register](#)

NJ SELF-ADVOCACY PROGRAM: Tuesday, June 2, 2-3:00pm

"Domestic Violence and People with Disabilities: Building Connections and Q&A Follow Up"

Join us for a 4-part series on Domestic Violence and People with Disabilities. This final webinar will be about Building Connections.

[Click here to register](#)

NJ SELF-ADVOCACY PROGRAM: Tuesday, June 9, 2-3:00pm

"REPLAY: Communication Frustrations: Improving Social Skills & Boundaries"

This is a recording of a previous webinar. Experience it for the first time or rewatch it to gain a better understanding of the topic. The question box will be open and we will respond to any questions 24 hours after the event. In this webinar you will learn how to feel confident in a group of people and learning proper socialization techniques. Participants will also further their understanding of boundaries. This webinar is presented by Erin Smithers, Director of the New Jersey Self-Advocacy Program.

[Click here to register](#)

CRIMINAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY PROGRAM: Tuesday, June 2, 12-1:00pm
"Invisible and Incarcerated: The Overlooked Link Between FASD and the School-to-Prison Pipeline"

Through a disability-informed and justice-focused lens, this session explores how misidentification, exclusionary discipline, systemic inequities, and lack of appropriate supports can push vulnerable youth out of classrooms and into the justice system.

[Click here to register](#)

There's still time to register for an amazing music and mingling event with [Blue Light Music Program!](#)



JOIN US FOR THE MUSIC MIXER.



MT. HOLLY • JUNE 13 BLACKWOOD • JULY 18

The Arc of New Jersey's Planning for Adult Life invites you to **The Music Mixer** — a **free hands-on studio session** for youth and adults of all skill levels and abilities. Hosted in partnership with Blue Light's **professional recording studios** in **Mount Holly** and **Blackwood, NJ**. Play pro instruments, record vocals, write songs, leave with a track of your own... and maybe a new friend or two!



play

Pick up a guitar, get behind the drums, or take a seat at the keys. **Real instruments, real studio.**



record

Lay down vocals in the booth alongside **Blue Light's engineers** who'll help you capture your sound.



connect

Meet other musicians, share your work, and grab a slice. **Pizza & drinks included.**

Reserve Your Seat

Mt. Holly

SATURDAY • JUNE 13

SESSION 1

2 – 4 PM

Ages 14 – 17

12 SEATS

SESSION 2

5 – 7 PM

Ages 18 +

12 SEATS

Blackwood

SATURDAY • JULY 18

SESSION 1

2 – 4 PM

Ages 14 – 17

8 SEATS

SESSION 2

5 – 7 PM

Ages 18 +

8 SEATS

Sign up at signupgenius.com/go/10C044BA8A929A7F4C70-63355172-music

Questions? (609) 310-3997 • bluelightmusicprogram.com • create. express. empower.



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



[Click here to register](#)

Support The Arc of NJ Criminal Justice Advocacy Program by sponsoring the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and

Justice Innovation Summit! And, while the registration is full, the waitlist is active!



REGISTER NOW!



First Annual Statewide IDD & Justice Innovation Summit

Presented by The Arc of New Jersey's Criminal Justice Advocacy Program

**MONDAY, JUNE 15, 2026****NEW JERSEY LAW CENTER**
NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ

Join us for a first-of-its-kind statewide convening focused on advancing disability-informed justice reform across New Jersey. This pivotal summit will bring together leaders from prosecution, public defense, education, behavioral health, disability services, law enforcement, corrections, and public policy to strengthen cross-system collaboration and drive meaningful improvements in outcomes for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The event will be held at the New Jersey Law Center, One Constitution Square, New Brunswick, NJ.

Free To Attend - Registration Required - Lunch Provided



Featuring Keynote Speaker
Jim McGreevey
Former Governor of New Jersey
Chair & Executive Director,
New Jersey Reentry Corporation



Special Remarks By
New Jersey
Attorney General
Jennifer Davenport



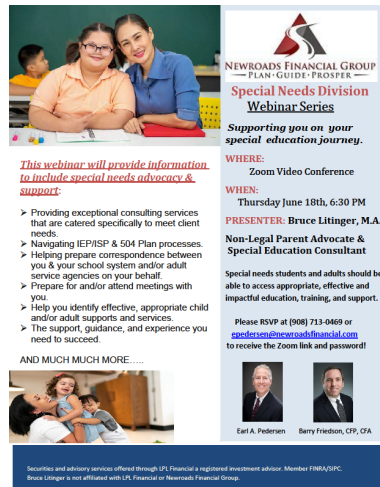
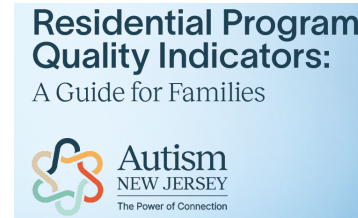
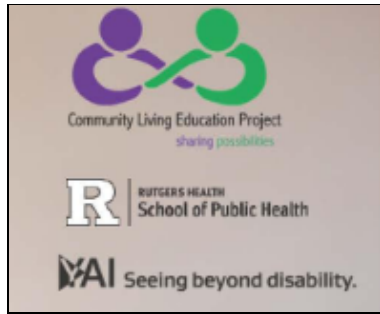
the prassas group
Where bright ideas grow



Dairy Queen of Sayreville

[Click here to learn more](#)

Learning opportunities to explore this month:
(Click the images to learn more!)



The Arc of New Jersey | 985 Livingston Avenue | North Brunswick, NJ 08902 US

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