End the Word

Starbridge participated in the annual “Spread the Word to End the Word” day, March 2. The campaign is one of the many national events marking March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.

Nationwide, activists are working to eliminate the use of the “r words” (retard or retarded) from common usages that are insulting, exclusionary, and disrespectful to people who have intellectual disabilities. The campaign encourages all of us to use language that promotes respect for all people.

Starbridge partnered with the following local organizations for a variety of activities: University of Rochester Medical Center, Golisano Foundation, Special Olympics, Nazareth College, Roberts Wesleyan College, SUNY Brockport and Penfield’s Bay Trail Middle School.

See our website News page and our Facebook page for more highlights of this special event.
**Functional Behavior Assessments and Positive Behavior Plans**

**Saturday, April 9, 2016**
**10:00am-12:00pm**
Happiness House
731 Pre-Emption Rd, Geneva, NY

This workshop will explore the nature of a child’s behavior, what types of supports and services might be needed, and when a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) should be requested. FBA is the process of determining why a student engages in behaviors that impede learning. We will share tools and strategies to support student success.

**Registration is required.** This workshop is FREE to family members. To register, please contact Jill Mundy at (315) 789-6828, ext. 7160.

**Presented in collaboration with Happiness House.**

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**School Avoidance Issues**

Is your child struggling with anxiety at school? Anxiety is a natural part of childhood, but when anxiety impedes on a child’s ability to learn, families may need support and services through the Committee on Special Education. Learn how to collaborate with your child’s school and what supports and services may be available through school for a child who has anxiety.

**Registration is required.** This workshop is FREE to family members.

Please choose one of the dates listed below. Note different locations.

- **Wednesday, April 13, 2016 • 6:30-8:30pm**
  **Starbridge**, 1650 South Avenue, Suite 200, Rochester, NY 14620
  [Register here](#) or call Registration at 585-224-7399.
- **Wednesday, April 20, 2016 • 10:00am-12:00pm**
  **Wayne County Public Health**, 1519 Nye Rd., Suite 200, Lyons, NY 14486
  To register, please call Wayne County Public Health at 315-946-5749 or 1-800-724-1170.

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**Supporting Behavioral Needs of Children with Neurological Differences**

An event for parents of and professionals working with students who have neurological differences, including Tourette, Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD, and other challenging concerns

**Wednesday, April 20, 2016, 6:00-8:00pm**
**Corning Painted Post High School**
School Auditorium, 201 Cantigney St., Corning, NY 14830
**Note: Use Aisne St. main entrance.**

This FREE workshop will explore the nature of a child’s behavior and help to determine when a positive behavior plan is appropriate. Participants will watch the Emmy Award winning HBO documentary “I Have Tourette’s, But Tourette’s Doesn’t Have Me.” Presenters will discuss the essential elements of a positive behavior plan.

Following the presentation, Starbridge presenters will facilitate a discussion to address questions from participants. **Questions on positive behavior supports can also be submitted ahead of time to kallen7@stny.rr.com by April 15.**

Participants will receive a free copy of the documentary and other resource materials.

**Registration is required by 4/18/16.** This workshop is FREE to family members. To register, please go to the event calendar on our website at [www.starbridgeinc.org](http://www.starbridgeinc.org) or call Registration at (585) 224-7399.

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**Friends Helping Friends**

**Monthly Meetings**

**Wednesdays, April 20, May 18, June 15, 2016**
5:00–7:00pm
Starbridge, 1650 South Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620

Friends Helping Friends is a group for self-advocates and their supporters. Friends believe all individuals have value, talents, and gifts. We will not be defined by a label or the limitations of disability. We believe that with determination, we can achieve anything we put our minds to.

Join us on Facebook by liking the **Friends Helping Friends** page.

For more information, call us at (585) 224-7212.
Family, school personnel, and community members: join us for a conference to help students who have disabilities and their families plan for life after high school. Topics include: Transition Planning, Creating a Vision for the Future, Transition in the IEP, and Pathways to Graduation. A panel discussion will include ACCES-VR, OPWDD, and Future Cares. 

*MOVE builds on the legacy of our previous series PATH (Parents As Transition Helpers).

Registration is required. This conference is FREE and open to all family members. To register, please go to the event calendar on our website at www.starbridgeinc.org or call Registration at 585-224-7399.
Accessible Travel ... Let's Go!

Books to introduce children to air travel

The Noisy Airplane Ride
Paperback, 2005 by Mike Downs (Author), David Gordon (Illustrator)

My Plane Trip (Dover Coloring Books), Paperback, 2005 by Cathy Beylon (Illustrator)


A Simple Guide to Booking Hotels for Wheelchair Users
By Cory Lee

Booking hotels is always one of the most difficult parts of vacationing. Among other factors, you must consider location, price, amenities – and you have to find all of this information online, because chances are you’ve never been to where you’re headed before. As a wheelchair user, it’s important to put extra time and consideration into this process, because we have different and unique needs when it comes to finding accommodation.

When I travel, it’s not enough to simply do research and book a hotel based off of what I see online, because the word “accessible” can be interpreted in too many different ways. So, what should a wheelchair user do when booking a hotel? Here’s a simple guide:

Step 1: Browse Options Online
I know, I know – I just said that it’s not enough to simply research a hotel online... but this is still the best way to begin the process. Sites like Trivago, Expedia, TripAdvisor, and more are excellent sources to find hotels in your desired location, compare prices and look up amenities. They often have great deals, too!

During this step, you can create a list of possible options, but before you get clicker-happy and hit that “Book” button, it’s quite likely that you’ll need more details... which brings us to Step 2.

Step 2: Call the Hotel
If you’re unsure about anything you see online, or just to confirm what you do see, it’s imperative to actually call the hotel and speak to a representative. One time, for example, I called a hotel in Germany to make sure that they were wheelchair accessible. They told me that they were, but when I asked more questions, it became apparent that their only real accessible feature was an elevator!

This is the perfect example of how the word “accessible” can mean so many different things to different people. So, to discover what “accessible” means to the hotel you're interested in, as well as to confirm the presence of any features you see online, it’s always a good idea to call... which brings us to Step 3.

Booking an accessible hotel room

Writer and activist Emily Ladau reminds travelers of their ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) rights in ensuring they get a properly accessible hotel room. See Emily’s excellent blog, WordsIWheelBy.com.

“Regardless of how you book the hotel, ensure you request a fully accessible, ADA-compliant room, and confirm your request before you complete the booking. If you arrive at a hotel and find the room is not suitably accessible or that it’s inaccessible, remember you have a right to go to the front desk and request a room change or anything needed for reasonable accommodations.”
Step 3: Ask Specific Questions About Accessibility

While each wheelchair user has different requirements and preferences, below are some questions to possibly ask when you’re on the phone with a hotel:

1. **What accessible features does your hotel have?**

   If it doesn’t specify online, it’s always good to find out what a hotel means when they say that they’re “accessible.” You’ll probably want to ask more specific questions about some of these features (we’ll cover more of those below), but first you should get a general lay of the land – ramps, elevators, handicapped parking, and any other features they mention are good to know about.

2. **What accessible features do rooms have?**

   Again, this may be specified online, but it’s a good idea to tally up and confirm the features each hotel offers. If you’re not satisfied with the answers you receive, or seek additional information, consider some of the specific questions below.

3. **Does the room have a roll-in shower?**

   Remember my example above? Not all hotels that say they’re “accessible” will actually have features that many wheelchair users need in order to be able to function properly. This is why it’s essential to ask specifically if the shower is a roll-in one or a bath tub.

4. **Are there grab bars located around the toilet and shower?**

   While grab bars are usually included in the definition of an “accessible room,” you can never be too sure, especially if you’re traveling to another country and you don’t know much about their accessibility rules and regulations. Thus, it’s always good to check about grab bars, and make sure that you ask if they’re provided near both the toilet and the shower.

5. **Is a shower chair provided? If so, what type?**

   Even hotels that boast roll-in showers don’t always have shower chairs... and even hotels with shower chairs won’t always have the type you need or prefer. This is probably one of the most important questions on the list, because what good is a roll-in shower with grab bars if you’re still not actually able to sit in a shower chair and use it?

6. **How much space is under the bed?**

   In this case, it’s good to ask for a specific measurement in inches or centimeters. I usually bring a hoeyer lift with me when I travel – a device that helps me get out of my wheelchair and into bed, and vice-versa. It must be able to slide under the bed, so I always make a point of asking for a precise measurement before booking a room.

7. **Are the accessible rooms located on the first floor?**

   It’s best to be prepared for any situation. Elevators are obviously fantastic, but if the accessible room is a penthouse – or even just a couple floors from the ground – that won’t help wheelchair users in the case of a fire. Because of this, you always want to make sure that the accessible rooms are located on the ground floor.

Step 4: Ask for Photos of the Room

If you’re worried about the setup or how spacious the room is, it’s a good idea to ask for photos of the hotel’s accessible room. After double-checking that it’s right for you, you’ll feel even more confident when you decide to make a reservation!

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**A note from Cory on his summer travel plans** - I’ll be heading to the Mall of America in May for the TBEX North America conference, where I’ll be giving a speech about accessible travel. I’m really excited to speak and check out the mall, which has over 500 stores! Wow! After that, I’m not 100% sure what else the summer has in store, but at some point I’ll have to go to a beach. :)

TBEX (Travel Blog Exchange) is the largest conference and networking event for travel bloggers, online travel journalists, and other travel industry professionals.

Join Cory in his travel adventures on his blog, Curb Free with Cory Lee.
New York campgrounds, educational centers and other facilities offer many recreational opportunities for people who have disabilities, including camping, picnicking, fishing and nature viewing.

This [website](#) includes a comprehensive list of facilities, complete with maps, for the areas of New York City and Long Island, Catskills and Hudson Valley, Adirondacks and North Country, and Finger Lakes and Western New York.

**Accessible features** for the different areas include:
- Picnic pads: firm stable surface suitable for mobility devices, with accessible picnic tables, some with barbecue grills or fire rings, and water spigots at wheelchair level when located at a DEC campground.
- Camping pads: firm stable surface suitable for mobility devices of various sizes depending on location, some with picnic accessories - some pads have dirt centers for easier tent staking.
- Fishing areas: shoreline access sites or piers with safety rails.
- Nature viewing: wood or hard surface walkways, ramps and observation platforms.
- Water access: wood or hard surface walkways to the water’s edge.

**Access Pass – Explore NYS**

The Access Pass permits residents of New York State with disabilities free or discounted use of state parks, historic sites, and recreational facilities operated by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The pass holder may have free or discounted use of facilities operated by these offices, for which there is normally a charge.

Please click [here](#) for further information.

**The Access Pass – Explore America the Beautiful**

The Access Pass is a free lifetime pass to over 2000 federally owned parks in the USA. For parks that charge admission per vehicle, **everyone who is in the vehicle with the Access Pass holder is admitted for free** (for individual tours and campsites, there may be discounts, but fees still have to be paid). This includes sites operated by:

- The National Park Service (includes all National Parks, National Monuments, National Historic Sites and more)
- USDA Forest Service
- Fish and Wildlife Service
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Bureau of Land Management

[Access Pass application](#)
Amtrak Accessible Travel Services

Amtrak provides a number of accommodations for customers with disabilities. They include:

Making Reservations for Passengers with a Disability
Reservations for accessible space are often required. Learn who may reserve accessible space and the many different available methods by which to book.

Station Accessibility
Amtrak is committed to providing accessible facilities to our passengers with disabilities. Find out here how to tell if a particular station is accessible and get some tips for getting assistance at the station.

Traveling with a Companion/Attendant
Several factors come under consideration for passengers requiring assistance onboard. Learn more about traveling with an attendant as well as the discounted companion fare.

Wheeled Mobility Device Services
Check the guidelines for the types of manual and powered wheeled mobility devices that can be accommodated onboard and get more information about boarding and detraining procedures.

Use of Oxygen Equipment
A variety of oxygen equipment is allowed onboard Amtrak trains. See what restrictions apply and learn how to provide advance notice for passengers traveling with oxygen equipment.

Accessible Thruway Bus Service
Some routes include Thruway bus service providing connections to additional destinations. All coaches are accessible and lift-equipped, so if part of your trip includes Thruway bus service, get details here about how to complete your reservation.

Service Animals and Pet Policy
Pets are only permitted onboard select trains. Service animals are permitted in all areas where passengers are allowed - learn more about how to include them in your reservation.

Meal Services & Special Dietary Requirements
Get more information about the additional options available to customers with disabilities on trips that include onboard meal service. Also see how we may be able to accommodate passengers with special dietary requirement

Accessible Travel Requests and Feedback
Get information about how to request a reasonable policy modification that may be needed due to a disability. Or find out how to provide feedback regarding accessibility.

For further information on any one of the sections listed, please visit the website.

Motorized Access Program for People with Disabilities
MAPPWD permit is a temporary revocable permit (TRP) that provides motor vehicle access to certain state lands administered by DEC (Department of Environmental Conservation). MAPPWD permit holders are permitted uncommon access to activities such as hunting, fishing, camping and wildlife observation. The permit is only issued to qualified people with disabilities, who must complete and submit an application.

Permit holders can use a permitted vehicle to travel beyond the reach of public roads, to areas where others must hike or bike. The permit provides access for those who seek solitude, connection to nature, undisturbed wildlife habitat, and inclusion with fellow sportspeople.

For further information on MAPPWD, please click here.
Wellness G.I.F.T.S.
Giving Inspiration for the Soul
7531 Country Rt 13, Bath, NY 14810

2016 Retreat Dates
June 17 - 19
July 22 - 24
August 26 - 28

Wellness G.I.F.T.S. Inc. is a nonprofit organization that focuses on families who have individuals with developmental disabilities, of any age, living at home with their parents or caregivers. Retreats provide Respite, Recreation, and Rejuvenation, as well as Education and Social Networking for the entire family.

Retreats with Wellness G.I.F.T.S. provide parents the opportunity to find support, networking opportunities, and education related to accessing services in their communities, and to help build a strong network of peer support.

Educational workshops and events are offered to the families, health care providers and professionals on a variety of issues relating to disabilities. Topics may include current medical approaches, complementary treatment strategies, legal and financial issues and relationship and confidence building.

Recreational activities are held at Hickory Hill Family Camping Resort, integrating campers and retreat participants. Planned activities include arts & crafts, wagon rides, bingo, sports games, talent shows and more. Recreational facilities include two swimming pools, mini-golf course, kids fishing, playground, basketball court, volleyball, horseshoes, Frisbee golf, badminton and hiking trails.

Camping families usually choose to rent a unit at Hickory Hill Family Camping Resort, but some do use tents or bring their own campers. All that campers have to bring when renting a unit is linens, personal items, and any snacks or special foods they might want during the retreat.

For further information, please visit the Wellness G.I.F.T.S. website or call (607) 684-3243.

Therapeutic Services are available for family members, including individuals with special needs at the Finger Lakes Wellness Center and Health Spa. Treatment appointments can be made for therapeutic massage and a variety of other services. For more information regarding the types of services and costs, please visit the Finger Lakes Wellness Center and Health Spa website. Call ahead to book appointments: (607) 776-3737 ext. 1 OR 800-760-0947.
Autism Friendly Vacation - Surfside Beach, South Carolina

In January 2016, the town of Surfside Beach, South Carolina, declared itself an autism-friendly travel destination. A local woman whose son has autism led the charge in getting her town to declare itself autism-friendly. Surfside plans to offer accommodating restaurants to families with special needs and fun sensory-friendly events at the local aquarium and movie theater.

The kick-off to the Surfside Beach Autism Friendly Travel Destination initiative coincides with Autism Awareness Month in April with three long weekends of safe, supportive family events.

For further information, please visit their website.

Magical Storybook Travels offers families assistance in vacation planning that accommodates a family’s particular needs. Nicole Thibault combines her professional travel knowledge with her experience parenting two children with disabilities.

Nicole’s services include an interview to determine a family’s needs, creation of social stories and picture schedules to prepare for vacation, creation and booking of a vacation package, recommendations of activities based on sensory issues, assistance with daily itinerary planning, restaurant recommendations based on special diets, and a review of travel documents prior to departure.

Contact Nicole by phone at (585) 880-6951, email Nicole@magicalstorybooktravels.com or visit the website.

Autism on the Seas, a national organization, has been in collaboration with Royal Caribbean International since 2007 in developing cruise vacation services to accommodate adults and families living with children with special needs, including, but not limited to, Autism, Asperger syndrome, Down syndrome, Tourette Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy and all cognitive, intellectual and developmental disabilities. These services quickly expanded to other cruise lines.

The organization provides cruises with staff (selected from regular cruises throughout the year) that assist adults and families in accommodating the typical cruise services, as well as providing specialized respite and private activities/sessions that allow guests the use of the ship’s entertainment venues in an accommodated and assisted manner. Professional staff (educated, experienced, background checked and sanctioned by the cruise lines) accompanies participants on the cruise to provide these vacation and travel experiences onboard Royal Caribbean, Celebrity, Disney and Carnival Cruise Lines. It provides a “Cruise Assistance Package” (Cruises without Staff) on all of the major cruise lines to help accommodate guests who wish to cruise on their own.

The foundation is designed to financially assist families wishing to vacation on an Autism on the Seas’ staff supported cruise.

Autism on the Seas (AoS) launched the company’s non - profit arm, Autism on the Seas Foundation (AoSf) in 2015.
The Guided Tour Travel Experiences

The focus of The Guided Tour is to provide a growth-producing experience for our travelers, in which they are able to travel and socialize independent of their families. To be able, many for the first time, to share their own vacation experiences with their families, their supervisors, co-workers and friends. The Guided Tour staff make sure our travelers not only have their independence, but they also make sure our travelers have assistance with money, medication, and of course, a fantastic memorable vacation!

- Supervised vacations for adults with developmental challenges
- Over 40 years of special needs travel experience and expertise!
- Experienced staff who are paid professionals
- Staff to traveler ratio of 1:3 and trip coordinators with many years of experience leading special needs travel groups
- “On-Wheels” trips with 1:1 staffing for individuals who use a wheelchair or are slow pacers
- A nurse on the majority of trips to oversee any additional medical needs
- A variety of local, national and international trips to choose from with exciting itineraries exploring new horizons. We meet new people and places and make memories that will last a lifetime.
- Summer vacations at the Seashore in New Jersey with a beautiful beach house just one block from the beach
- Adult Resort camp experiences available 4 times a year in the beautiful Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania
- Our special vacations provide social groups for adults with special needs and expand their friendship circle
- Each year our travelers send us new trip ideas and we work hard to hammer travel plans out to create exceptional vacations.

Are you Ready?

Make your experience count as you learn to make an even bigger impact in the lives of people with diverse needs.

The Warner School of Education will prepare you to work with students and clients in school, community and counseling settings. Consider these exciting options:

- Special and Inclusive Education Teacher Certification
- Annotation to Teach Students with Severe and/or Multiple Disabilities
- Specialization in Applied Behavior Analysis
- Master’s Degree in Human Development with a Specialization in Developmental Differences

Generous grants and scholarships are available to qualified applicants.

www.warner.rochester.edu • admissions@warner.rochester.edu • 585.275.3950
From the Editor:

I just returned from my NYS Partners in Policymaking® orientation in Albany! Partners in Policymaking is a national training program for self-advocates, parents, and family members of people who have disabilities. In New York State, it is implemented by Starbridge and Cornell University.

It was a terrific opportunity to meet a diverse group of people from all over the state who share a common bond in advocating for themselves or for family members with disabilities. Among some of our occupations in the spring 2016 class are pastor, educator, lawyer, medical practice director, urban planner, board member, newsletter editor, and occupational therapist. We represent a variety of ethnicities and cultural backgrounds, but we are all New Yorkers who share a common interest in learning, advocating and leading in the area of disability policymaking.

We will continue our class through an interactive distance learning format in the coming weeks - through weekly group webinars and through individual access to learning modules that we can complete independently. We will be exploring the topics of Disability History and Policy, Creating Community, Inclusion, Individualized Services, State and Federal Issues, and then participating in Systemic Advocacy through Field Testimony and Leadership opportunities.

I am looking forward to connecting to my fellow Partners in the coming weeks and months. I'll let you know what I learn.

Maria Schaertel