

**NEW JERSEY CHAPTER  
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION ON  
MENTAL RETARDATION**

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**August 2004**



**New Jersey AAMR Calls for  
General Membership Meeting**

**News Letter**

The NJ AAMR Chapter will hold its next meeting on Thursday, September 14, 2004 beginning at 3:00 PM. The location is at Community Access Unlimited, 80 West Grand Street, Elizabeth (908)354-3040. Call for directions or go to <http://www.caunj.org/directions.html>.

**Agenda:**

Planning for 2004—2005

The election results for the NJAAMR Chapter are as follows:

President:	Sid Blanchard
President Elect:	Laura Williams
Vice President:	Nancy Cadigan
Secretary:	Karolina Scutari
Members at Large:	Sid Katz,
The Treasurer and two Members-at-Large are vacant	

The following Committees and Chairpersons were established:

Membership:	Laura Williams
Communication & Publicity:	Karolina Scutari
Education:	Vacant
Nominations:	Nancy Cadigan

If you wish to become active, there is a spot for you.  
Contact Nancy Cadigan at (908) 354 – 3040 or email  
[ncadigan@caunj.org](mailto:ncadigan@caunj.org).

## AAMR IN ACTION

### THE AAMR 128TH ANNUAL MEETING IN PHILADELPHIA



#### Advocates React

Experiencing the AAMR conference from an advocate's point of view. "I thought it was exciting and interesting" state Ira Geller, advocate. "I felt that the workshops were interesting and pertained to my everyday life. It was a different experience because the workshops were presented by advocates for advocates. The workshops educated me on how to make my own choices" said Vailene Fields, advocate. "To me the presentations were more than just words; there were real life experiences and feelings about different situations that advocates encounter everyday," said Samuel Jenkins, advocate.

Advocacy is the act of pleading or arguing in favor of something, such as a cause, idea, or policy; active support. According to Steve Agolia, advocate, "During the AAMR conference, I learned how to be a true advocate. Teaching, listening, being independent, and assertive are some of the skills that I discovered I had during the workshops." "I felt that advocates should be able to present other workshops," stated Mark Straka, advocate. Why? "To teach people that even though we have a disability, we can educate others. Members are proud of ourselves when we present the workshops in our own words. Everyone can understand what we are talking about," said Mark Straka, advocate. Lee Bongiovi agrees, "I thought the workshops were informative and interesting for my first time presenting. I liked the workshops better because they were done by advocates not professionals."

"Overall the AAMR conference was fabulous," said Eddie Eiser, advocate. "I was proud of the advocates that did their workshops and showed that New Jersey is represented by both professionals and advocates," said Sid Katz, advocate. The AAMR represented different learning perspectives for advocates. "Allowing us to present the workshops gave us a personal interest in the workshops," said Larry Marcus, advocate. "I got to talk, network, and learned about different aspects of advocacy. Understanding how to start *Jump Start Self-Advocacy* and allow people to understand what we are accomplishing is important to me. I felt that our workshops were educational, enjoyable, and crowded which made me proud of what all of us have accomplished," said Sid Katz, advocate. "Overall the conference was great, I would however like to see more advocates at the next conference," said Larry Marcus, advocate.

### CAU RECEIVES NATIONAL AAMR AWARD

The American Association on Mental Retardation (AAMR) has selected Community Access Unlimited to be the recipient of the **2004 Full Community Inclusion Award**. The Award was presented to CAU Executive Director Sidney Blanchard and CAU Board member Adelaide Daskam at the AAMR International Awards Ceremony during the 128th Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, PA, June 2004. The annual award is given to a culturally responsive organization that has succeeded in fully including people with disabilities in commu-



nity life. Community Access was incorporated in 1979 with a grant to help 20 people with disabilities become integrated into the community. To date, CAU has helped over 3,000 people with disabilities with their quest for independence.

### NEW, 10TH EDITION OF MENTAL RETARDATION: DEFINITION, CLASSIFICATION, AND SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT RELEASED

AAMR launched the new and updated definition of mental retardation in the 10th edition of *Mental Retardation: Definition, Classification, and Systems of Support*. The 10th edition proposes new and creative ways to define, classify, and support an individual with mental retardation. The 2002 classification system goes beyond the AAMR 1992 definition of mental retardation to provide expanded criteria for diagnosis and classification of mental retardation, while still retaining an emphasis on intelligence assessment, functional orientation, and supports. The 2002 Manual is a timely and important resource to the states as they review their mental retardation criteria in view of the U.S. Supreme Court decision outlawing the execution of people with mental retardation.

Visit the AAMR bookstore at <http://www.aamr.org/bookstore> to purchase the 10th edition.

## A GLIMPSE OF NATIONAL/REGIONAL AAMR PRESENTATIONS BY NJAAMR MEMBERS/ADVOCATES

### Sam Jenkins: “People First - Label Second”

After working several years with Community Access Unlimited, Sam now works full-time as a Field Coordinator for the New Jersey Self Advocacy Project, State ARC. Sam Jenkins and Sid Katz, also a National AAMR Legislative and Social Issues Committee member, co-facilitated the workshop *People First - Label Second*.

The workshop consisted of a video and PowerPoint presentation “People First - Label Second” regarding labels and names that some use to refer to individuals with developmental disabilities. Sam and Sid then shared their own experiences with some of the label others have called them. The audience became involved as Sam and Sid opened the floor to sharing. “What I wanted to get across is that we are people, not labels,” said Sam. “We are people and need to be treated like people. This is a continuing issue and we must continue to stand tall.”

### Vailene Fields: “Couples and Relationships”

Vailene Fields is a single parent of a 15 year old son. She is soft spoken but her words are very powerful and meaningful. Vailene co-facilitated a workshop with Leslie Hirsch-Walker and *Couples and Relationships*.

Vailene started a couples group that meets twice a month. The couples group is a place where people who are in relationships or looking to be in relationships can socialize and discuss any issues they may be having. “I am not there to solve their problems but to help them figure out how to deal with things better,” says Vailene. “You can be looking for someone to date or be in a relationship - you need to know what the basics are about: love, communication, honesty, trust and respect. I call it my ‘Happy Home’. If you do not have these elements, then you don’t have anything. Your home is your home and it is up to you to keep your home happy and healthy.”

## NEW JERSEY AAMR HOSTS REGION IX ANNUAL CONFERENCE



The NJAAMR Chapter hosted the 2003 Annual AAMR Region IX Annual Conference December 8, 9, and 10 in Atlantic City, NJ. In attendance were advocates, staff, and people with disabilities from New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia. Over 285 people participated.

There were 55 workshops over the three-day period including *Inclusive Congregations, Spiritual Supports and Church Coaching: Strategies for Connecting Consumers to Congregations; Quality Assurance in a Changing World; Romance, Sexuality and Disabilities; End of Life Decision Making; My Voice, My Choice* and much more.

Advocates did an outstanding job of presenting 11 workshops during the conference. Sidney Katz and Samuel Jenkins facilitated the workshop on *People First - Label Second*. Sam also co-facilitated *The Role of Staff in Self-Directed Supports*. Vailene Fields co-lead the workshop *Couples and Relationships* with nationally renowned speaker Leslie Walker-Hirsch. *Don't Let Your Disability Control You* co-facilitators included Adelaide Daskam, Sam Jenkins and Sandy Feldman. Steve Agolia, Ed Kurnos, Lucious Cox and Vailene Fields co-lead with Reverend Aleyah Lacey and Cheryl Hardy the workshop *Spiritual Integration for People with Limited Abilities*. Ed Eiser, Steve Agolia, Sam Jenkins and Mark Straka, with others, led the workshop *Advocacy in Action*. Penny Cockwell helped lead a panel of advocates in the workshop *Free Our Brothers & Sisters*.

Sponsors included Community Access Institute, Developmental Disabilities Council, Liberty Healthcare, The Elizabeth Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities, ResCare Inc., NJ Chapter AAMR, and Region IX AAMR.



- ❑ National Alliance for Full Participation Conference: **Many Voices: One Vision**, September 21 - 24, 2005, Washington, DC
- ❑ Future meetings and details: go to [www.aamr.org](http://www.aamr.org) or call toll free, 800-424-3688
- ❑ Unveiling an exciting new planning tool: The Supports Intensity Scale
- ❑ 2005 Governmental Affairs Services, Washington, DC
- ❑ Work with the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities to enact important legislation
- ❑ Hold specialized training sessions on the 10th Edition of the new classification manual
- ❑ 2006 International Alliance for Social Inclusion, Montreal, Canada

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Log on to [www.aamr.org](http://www.aamr.org) and click on **“I want to join!”**

**Or complete the application on the next page and send it back via fax: (785) 843-1274 or mail it to:**

**AAMR  
PO Box 7057  
Lawrence, KS 66044**



80 West Grand Street  
Elizabeth, New Jersey  
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**AAMR Membership Application**

**1 Complete the application below OR Join online at www.aamr.org/join**

- Mr.    Ms.    Dr.    Rev.    Sr.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Nickname \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street Address \_\_\_\_\_  Office  Home  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip+4 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Day Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fax(\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Employer \_\_\_\_\_  
 Job Title \_\_\_\_\_  
 Highest Degree \_\_\_\_\_

**2 AAMR Membership Categories & Annual Dues** (check one and enter the amount in section 4)

- Active Member—\$135**  
Includes annual subscriptions to *Mental Retardation* (\$30) and *The American Journal on Mental Retardation* (\$37) and *AAMR F.Y.I.* (\$20).
- Associate Member—\$60**  
Special membership for young professionals and others making less than \$25,000. Includes general benefits of Active Membership, and select your choice of either  *Mental Retardation* OR  *The American Journal on Mental Retardation* OR  *Frontline Initiatives* (quarterly newsletter of the National Alliance for Direct Support Staff). I certify that my adjusted gross income was less than \$25,000 last year.
- Student Member—\$49**  
Reduced price membership for full time students preparing for a disability-related career. Requires confirmation of student standing from a faculty advisor. Active member benefits, except can vote and hold office in College Chapters ONLY.

I hereby verify that the person making this application is a full-time student (graduate or undergraduate) preparing for a career related to mental retardation or developmental disabilities.

College/Univ. \_\_\_\_\_ Grad. date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature, Faculty Advisor \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**3 Conference of Professional Interests**

Each division and special interest group is only \$10 each. By joining these professional groups, you can tailor your membership to your needs. Check as many as you like.

- Administration
- Communication Disorders
- Community Service
- Creative Arts Therapy
- Direct Support Professionals
- Down Syndrome
- Education
- Families
- General
- Genetics
- Gerontology
- Health Issues
- Legal Processes & Advocacy
- Leisure & Recreation
- Medicine
- Mental Health Services
- Multicultural Concerns
- Nursing
- Nutrition & Dietetics
- OT & PT
- Psychology
- Religion & Spirituality
- Sexual/Social Concerns
- Social Work
- Technology
- Vocational Rehabilitation

**4 AAMR Membership Dues**

Conference of Professional Interests group @ \$10 each      \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dues (from Section 2 above)      \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
**TOTAL DUES Enclosed, Payable to AAMR**      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**5 Payment Method (U.S. dollars only)**

Check enclosed (payable to AAMR)  
 VISA     MasterCard  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name on Account \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
 Exp. Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_



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