

BACK TO SCHOOL

BRIGHTWAY LIVING & LEARNING NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2026

DDI is now
Brightway Living &
Learning.

Informational Links

[News 12 Long Island](#)
[NYSED](#)

[OPWDD Front Door](#)
[Social Security](#)
[Disability Benefits](#)
[Virtual Backpack](#)



PARENT TRAINING WITH KARRIE LINDERMAN

Topic: Back To School
Schedules & Transitions

[Click here to join
the zoom meeting
on September 24th at 8pm](#)

Meeting ID: 330 049 6591 Meeting Passcode: Sammy

RESOURCES

Check out the enclosed resources
for families from Harbor & Heart
Care Connections.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Review the enclosed flyer from Center For Autism and Related Disabilities for Fall Parenting Series on Thursday September 17th at 6PM.
[Click here to register.](#)
- Review the enclosed flyer for The Annual Suffolk County Conference on Thursday, September 17, 2026 from 9AM-4PM

Dear Family, Friends and Valued Partners,

We're writing to share an exciting update: Developmental Disabilities Institute is now Brightway Living & Learning. This new name reflects the warmth, optimism, and individualized paths that define our work.

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This transformation comes at a milestone moment for us. In May, we proudly celebrated our 65th Anniversary. For six and a half decades, we have evolved to meet the needs of our community, and Brightway represents the next chapter of that enduring commitment.

As you visit our locations in the coming weeks, you will see this change come to life. Our building signage and campus entryways are being updated with the Brightway name and logo, so you can rest assured you are in the right place as we transition our physical spaces to match our new identity.

Over the next several months, you will also see the Brightway brand on all our digital and print communications. What remains the same is the foundation we've built since 1961: your points of contact, our programs, and our high standards of care. We will update shared forms and co-branded materials in phases to ensure a smooth transition.

Please note that all existing contracts and authorizations remain in effect. We will update shared forms and materials in phases to ensure a smooth transition; during this period, paperwork featuring either the Developmental Disabilities Institute d/b/a Brightway Living & Learning, Developmental Disabilities Institute/DDI or Brightway Living & Learning name will be processed as usual.

Kim M. Kubasek
Chief Executive Officer

If you have any questions, please contact communicationsdepartment@brightwayny.org.

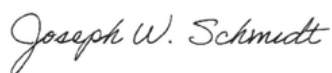
Sophia Samuel
Chief Financial & Admin Officer

Thank you for your collaboration over the years and for the trust you place in our dedicated teams as we move toward this milestone anniversary and beyond.

Erin Davies
Chief HR & Admin Officer

Jozette Prescott
Chief Program & Quality Officer
OPWDD Services

Sincerely,



Joseph W. Schmidt
Board Chairman
Brightway



Kim M. Kubasek
CEO
Brightway

FALL PARENTING SERIES: SAFETY AT HOME AND IN THE COMMUNITY

Challenging behaviors can lead to safety concerns for individuals with autism, their siblings, their parents, and community members. This workshop will focus on proactive strategies to address safety at home, in the car, and in the community. Nicole Simon will also discuss how to develop a safety plan to help manage crisis situations.

Thursday, September 17, 2026

6:00-7:30pm

Livestream



Guest Speaker:

Nicole Simon, EdM, LABA, BCBA

Senior Behavioral Consultant, Lurie Center for Autism

This webinar is offered at no cost to participants living in NYS through a grant from the NYS Education Department.

Select CEUs available
for a \$5 fee

Registration is required, visit our website below:
<https://www.albany.edu/autism/training-and-learning/training-opportunities/family-training-series>

THE ANNUAL SUFFOLK COUNTY CONFERENCE

**Topic: The Birth-21
Collaborative:
Resources for Every Stage**



**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2026
REGISTRATION & RESOURCE FAIR OPENS AT 8 AM
CONFERENCE 9 AM – 4 PM**

**Radisson Hotel
110 Vanderbilt Motor Pkwy, Hauppauge, NY 11788**

Please join the annual conference hosted by the Suffolk County Division of Services for Children with Special Needs.

There is no cost to attend.

Continental breakfast and lunch will be served.

Speakers include **Parent to Parent** (to discuss how to enroll in OPWDD), **Northwell Health Homes** and **The Family and Community Engagement Center (FACE)**.

Vendor tables such as OPWDD, Gigi's House, Winter's center for Autism and many other organizations that have information or provide activities that are for **ALL** abilities

**Parents, Providers,
& Support Staff**

are welcome to register and
join us for this conference!

Register Today!

attend, as space is limited.
Please register only if you can.
Scan the QR code or register at:
<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/g/6qF4FeD4L2>

Suffolk County Conference - The
Birth to 21 Collaborative:
Resources for Every Stage



**SUFFOLK COUNTY DIVISION OF SERVICES
OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

Questions?

Denise.Coyle@suffolkcountyny.gov



DID YOU KNOW?

PART 1

5 FREE PERKS FOR NY SPECIAL-NEEDS FAMILIES

♥ Little-known resources. Big impact. ♥

LONG ISLAND • NYC • NEW YORK STATE

1



FREE NY STATE PARK ACCESS

Qualifying NY residents with disabilities can apply for the NYS Access Pass. Benefits may include:

- ♥ FREE vehicle entry to most NY State Parks & DEC day-use areas
- ♥ FREE State Park swimming pool admission
- ♥ FREE State Park golf greens fees
- ♥ Discounts on camping & cabin rentals



More Info:
parks.ny.gov/visit/passes/access-pass

2



FREE ASSISTIVE EQUIPMENT & TECHNOLOGY

INCLUDING RIGHT HERE ON LONG ISLAND!

Through NY's TRAIID Program, borrow assistive and adaptive equipment FOR FREE. Long Island TRAIID (SILO in Medford) offers durable medical equipment, adaptive devices & FREE 3D-printed assistive devices like communication cards, writing/typing aids, keyguards, bottle openers & more!

TRAID

Technology-Related Assistance
for Individuals with Disabilities



More Info:
www.siloinc.org/traid

3



CAREGIVERS GET IN FREE

Many NYC museums & cultural attractions offer FREE or reduced admission for Personal Care Attendants/caregivers accompanying a visitor with a disability.

Always check the policy for each location before visiting.

- ♥ MoMA
- ♥ Whitney Museum
- ♥ The Frick Collection
- ♥ ...and many more!



More Info:
nyc.gov/site/mopd/resources/cultural-reduced-fare.page

4



FREE LIFETIME NATIONAL PARK PASS

The America the Beautiful Access Pass is available FREE to U.S. citizens or residents with a medically determined permanent disability that severely limits one or more major life activities.

- ♥ Pass provides FREE entrance to participating National Parks & other federal recreation sites that charge entrance or standard amenity fees.



More Info:
www.nps.gov/subjects/accessibility/interagency-access-pass.htm

5



FREE DISABILITY BEACH PASS

TOWN OF HUNTINGTON

Free beach passes for Town of Huntington residents under age 60 who:

- ♥ Have a disability
- ♥ Meet the program's income guidelines

If the person with a disability needs a caregiver to bring them to the beach, there is a separate Caregiver Beach Pass application.



More Info:
www.huntingtonny.gov/disability-beach-pass



AND THIS IS ONLY PART 1!

I'll be sharing more little-known FREE resources, perks, discounts & programs throughout Long Island, NYC & New York State. ♥

Because sometimes the hardest part isn't qualifying for a resource...

It's knowing the resource exists. ♥



SAVE
this post.
You may need it later!



SHARE
it with another family who could benefit!



FOLLOW
Harbor & Heart Care Connections for more!



PART 2 IS COMING!
More freebies, perks & resources you don't want to miss. ♥



Harbor & Heart

CARE CONNECTIONS

Connecting Extraordinary Care with Extraordinary Families. ♥



Information is for educational/resource purposes only. Eligibility, availability, benefits and program requirements vary and may change. Always confirm current information directly with the administering organization. ♥



IF YOUR LOVED ONE WANDERS, *there is a way* TO HELP FIND THEM.

A SAFETY RESOURCE FOR
CHILDREN & ADULTS
AT RISK OF WANDERING.

PROJECT LIFESAVER®

A radio-frequency search-and-rescue program used by trained first responders to help bring loved ones home.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

- 1** The enrolled person wears a small radio-frequency transmitter.



Usually worn on the wrist or ankle.

- 2** If the person wanders or goes missing, the caregiver calls 911.



Provide as much information as possible.

- 3** Trained Project Lifesaver first responders use specialized equipment to search for the individual's signal.



The transmitter sends an individualized radio signal.

- 4** Responders follow the signal to help locate the enrolled person—FAST.



Searches that could take hours or days can be reduced to minutes.



IMPORTANT: This is NOT GPS. Parents/caregivers do not watch a live location on a phone.

Project Lifesaver is a search-and-rescue tool used by trained first responders when an enrolled person goes missing.



AVAILABLE IN THESE NY COMMUNITIES

NASSAU COUNTY



Nassau County
Police Department

1490 Franklin Avenue
Mineola, NY 11501

📞 **516-572-4100**



Call and ask about Project Lifesaver enrollment for a child or adult at risk of wandering.

SUFFOLK COUNTY



Suffolk County
Sheriff's Office
– Project Lifesaver

100 Center Drive
Riverhead, NY 11901

📞 **631-852-3003**



Suffolk County provides enrollment information for BOTH CHILDREN & ADULTS and has a Project Lifesaver Device Interest Form available.

WESTCHESTER COUNTY



Westchester County
Department of
Public Safety

1 Saw Mill River Parkway
Hawthorne, NY 10532

📞 **914-864-7700**



Contact the county about Project Lifesaver and the appropriate enrollment program for your loved one.

WHAT ABOUT NYC?



I could not verify a current NYPD Project Lifesaver enrollment program on the NYS participating-agency list. NYC families can check Project Lifesaver International's agency locator for current participating agencies and enrollment options.



IS IT FREE?

Costs and enrollment arrangements vary by local agency. Some programs may have funding or financial assistance available.

Contact your local participating program directly for current information.



SAVE THIS POST

Wandering can happen quickly. Knowing what resources exist before an emergency can make all the difference.



SHARE THIS

with another NY parent, caregiver, teacher, therapist, social worker or provider.



FAMILIES SHOULDN'T HAVE TO STUMBLE ACROSS RESOURCES LIKE THIS BY ACCIDENT. Share to help keep



FOLLOW

Harbor & Heart Care Connections for more trusted resources.



Harbor & Heart
CARE CONNECTIONS
Connecting Extraordinary Care
with Extraordinary Families.



♥ Project Lifesaver is not a guarantee of recovery. It is a tool that assists trained first responders. ♥



TRANSPORTATION HELP

for Children & Adults with Disabilities

IN NEW YORK

YOU DON'T
NEED MEDICAID
FOR MOST OF
THESE PROGRAMS!



♥ Little-known resources. Big impact. ♥

LONG ISLAND • NYC • NEW YORK STATE

1



NY MEDICAID MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION - MAS



- ♥ Children can use it
- ♥ Adults can use it
- ♥ Medicaid IS required
- ♥ No cost for authorized transportation

New York Medicaid provides Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) to eligible Medicaid-covered healthcare services.



IMPORTANT: Schedule routine rides at least 72 HOURS (3 DAYS) in advance whenever possible.



SCHEDULE ONLINE 24/7
THROUGH MEDICAL
ANSWERING SERVICES (MAS)

www.medanswering.com



More Info:



844-666-6270 (Downstate)

866-932-7740 (Upstate)

2



NASSAU COUNTY ABLE-RIDE



- ♥ Medicaid NOT required
- ♥ Children may qualify
- ♥ Adults may qualify

Able-Ride is Nassau County's ADA paratransit program for individuals whose disabilities prevent them from using NICE's regular fixed-route bus system.



More Info & Apply:

[www.nicebus.com/Able-Ride/
Apply-for-Able-Ride](http://www.nicebus.com/Able-Ride/Apply-for-Able-Ride)



Able-Ride:

516-228-4000, option 3



Program fare: \$4 each way
PCA (if certified) rides at no additional charge.

3



SUFFOLK COUNTY SCAT



- ♥ Medicaid NOT required
- ♥ Children may qualify
- ♥ Adults may qualify

Suffolk County Accessible Transportation (SCAT) is ADA paratransit for individuals with disabilities who are unable to use the regular public bus system because of their disability.



More Info & Apply:

Search: Suffolk County SCAT /
Accessible Transportation

on the official Suffolk County website
for the application and program
information.

4



NYC ACCESS-A-RIDE

- ♥ Medicaid NOT required
- ♥ Children may qualify
- ♥ Adults may qualify

MTA Access-A-Ride provides paratransit transportation within NYC for eligible individuals who, because of a physical or mental disability, cannot use regular NYC buses or subways for some or all trips.



More Info & Apply:

[www.mta.info/accessibility/
access-a-ride](http://www.mta.info/accessibility/access-a-ride)

5



REDUCED-FARE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

- ♥ Some individuals with disabilities may qualify for reduced fares on regular public transportation.
- ♥ Medicaid is generally NOT the eligibility requirement.
- ♥ Eligibility and acceptable documentation vary by transit system.
- ♥ Check with your local transit authority.



More Info:

Check with your local transit authority
for disability reduced-fare programs
and acceptable documentation.



AND THIS IS ONLY PART 1!

I'll be sharing more little-known FREE resources, perks, discounts & programs throughout Long Island, NYC & New York State. ♥

*Because sometimes the hardest
part isn't qualifying for a resource...*

It's knowing the resource exists. ♥



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CARE CONNECTIONS
Connecting Extraordinary Care
with Extraordinary Families.



For more resources and support,
visit: www.harborandheartcc.com



Follow us on Facebook
@HarborandHeartCC





NATIONAL PARKS ACCESS PASS FOR AUTISTIC INDIVIDUALS



The Access Pass provides free entry to National Parks for U.S. residents with a permanent disability, **including autism.**

BENEFITS

- ✓ Free entrance for the pass holder and all passengers in a private vehicle
- ✓ Valid at 2,000+ federal recreation sites
- ✓ Promotes inclusion and equal access to nature



HOW TO GET YOUR PASS



1. APPLY ONLINE

Visit www.recreation.gov/pass to apply.



2. PROVIDE DOCUMENTS

Upload proof of disability from a licensed professional (must include autism).



3. RECEIVE PASS

If approved, you'll receive your Access Pass by mail.



4. ENJOY OUR PARKS

Show your pass and a photo ID at the entrance.



Autism is a different ability, not a limitation.

Nature is for everyone.
ACCESS. INCLUSION. BELONGING.





DID YOU KNOW? NY HAS A FREE PROGRAM

TO HELP FAMILIES FIND
SPECIAL-NEEDS RESOURCES

CYSHCN

CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH SPECIAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS PROGRAM



SUPPORT.
RESOURCES.
HOPE.
ALL IN NY.



Helping NY families
connect to care,
services and support.



NOT CYES



NOT OPWDD



NO CHILDREN'S WAIVER
REQUIRED TO CONTACT
THE PROGRAM.



WHO IS IT FOR?

Children and young adults up to age 21 who have – or may have – a serious or chronic health condition, physical disability, developmental or intellectual disability, or behavioral/emotional condition.

EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

- ♥ Autism
- ♥ Developmental delays
- ♥ ADHD
- ♥ Down syndrome
- ♥ Diabetes
- ♥ Epilepsy
- ♥ Asthma
- ♥ Cerebral palsy
- ♥ Speech/language disorders
- ...and many other conditions



HOW CYSHCN CAN HELP

Depending on where you live, your local CYSHCN program may help your family:



Find health care & specialty providers



Connect with community programs & services



Navigate health insurance & coverage resources



Find family supports & disability resources



Locate evaluations & other needed services



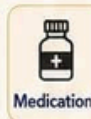
Understand what additional programs may be available

FINANCIAL HELP MAY BE AVAILABLE IN SOME COUNTIES



CYSHCN Support Services (CYSHCNSS) may provide financial assistance for eligible children with severe chronic illnesses and/or physical disabilities.

May help with certain unreimbursed medical services or expenses such as:



Medications



Surgery



Braces



Wheelchairs



Hearing Aids



Medical Equipment



Supplies



IMPORTANT:

Eligibility, covered services and available funding vary by county. Always contact your local program BEFORE receiving or paying for services.



AVAILABLE THROUGHOUT NEW YORK STATE

Programs are available in Long Island, NYC, Westchester and all counties across NYS. Services may differ locally.

When you call, ask:

- ✓ What services are available in my county?
- ✓ Does my county offer CYSHCN Support Services or other financial assistance?
- ✓ What would my child need to qualify?



REACH OUT TO YOUR
COUNTY CYSHCN
PROGRAM TODAY!



Because sometimes the
hardest part isn't qualifying
for a resource...
It's knowing the resource exists. ♥



SAVE

this post.
You may need
it later.



SHARE

with another
family who may
need this.



FOLLOW

Harbor & Heart
Care Connections
for more resources.

CONNECTING
EXTRAORDINARY CARE
WITH EXTRAORDINARY
FAMILIES. ♥

Information is educational and does not guarantee eligibility, services or funding. Program availability and requirements should be confirmed directly with NYS or your local program.



health.ny.gov/community/special_needs

Grants for families-Please contact the agency for specific questions

Embracing the Spectrum Family Grant-

Gives a list of multiple grants you can apply for

Up to \$5,000

Open to all US families

Covers: safety tools (helmets, GPS), devices, therapy, etc.

ACT Today! Autism Care & Treatment Grant

Up to \$5,000

Nationwide

For one item or treatment (ABA, safety gear, AAC devices)

Apply during their open cycles

Autismazing Futures Grant

Up to \$1,000

US, ages 13-30

Supports education, job training or assistive tech

Apply in spring or fall cycles

American Autism Association Support- Gives a list of multiple grants you can apply for

Amounts varies

Nationwide

Offers therapy scholarships, recreational support

Autism Speaks- List of multiple grants

Autism Speaks MyGOAL Family Grant

Need-based Available in US

For children under 18, needing educational, therapeutic, or medical supports

My Gym Foundation Grant

Up to \$500 US Families

Assists with therapies, mobility devices, sensory-friendly gym classes

Ideal for younger children