

# SELF ADVOCATES NEWSLETTER

DON'T TALK ABOUT IT, BE ABOUT IT

## IS TRUMP OKAY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES?

BY ISMAEL NUNEZ

In a previous article this reporter wrote, “The Forgotten: The Disabled and The Nazis,” I stated that “...in Nazi German 1933 – 1945 there were many atrocities and attacks on human rights. Yet one group that was not talked about in this tragic/horrible period is the Nazi treatment of people with disabilities.”

Now there is a former president and now presidential candidate, Donald Trump, who has been quoted as saying, “Disabled people should die.” The person who brought this to my attention was Donald Trump’s nephew, Fred C. Trump III, who is the author of the new book, “*All In The Family: The Trumps and How We Got This Way.*”

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Your voice matters. Vote.

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## BLOSSOM

BY BRIAN LOUVIERE

Blossom Fosters,  
To Prosper.

Involve to Evolve.

Courage to Flourish.

Grow to Glow.

Aspire to Inspire.

Process to Progress.

Arrive to Thrive,  
and Wise to Rise



Close up of cherry blossoms

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In his book, Fred Trump also writes, “When my uncle was elected President, I recognized what a highly privileged position I would be in. I would have some access to the White House. And as long as that was true, I wanted to make sure I used that access for something positive. I was eager to champion something my wife, Lisa, and I were deeply passionate about, something we lived every day: the challenges for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.”

On the television show, “The View,” co-host Sara Haines asked Fred Trump about his son, William. Haines said that William was born in 1999 with “a rare genetic disorder causing severe developmental and intellectual disabilities.”

Haines then noted that Fred “spent years advocating for [William’s] care, eventually lobbying Donald to establish a medical fund for William.”

Then Haines added that this request led to a disturbing exchange between the two. Ultimately, Donald Trump declined to help his nephew and his nephew’s son.

As I thought about this, I remembered how Donald Trump mocked a New York Times news reporter with cerebral palsy, when he started his campaign for president back in 2015. I thought this was shocking.

In fact, both these incidents reminded me of what I had learned researching the history of the Nazis with disabled people.

Both these incidents make me consider that Donald Trump may not have a place in his mind or his heart for those of us who are disabled.

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### Editors note:

*Please note that the views expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the official stance of YAI*

**Important Note:** People with disabilities have the right to vote. For more information and resources please visit [thearc.org/vote](https://thearc.org/vote)

Understanding and using your voting rights can ensure your voice is heard.

## KEVIN CONROY THE 1990S BATMAN

BY ORLANDO JUAREZ

He is vengeance, he is the knight, he's Kevin Conroy, the Batman of 1992. Kevin was born on November 30, 1955, in Westbury, New York. In 1973 he moved to New York City after he received a full scholarship to attend Juilliard School's drama division. There he studied under actor and director John Houseman and he was roomed with Robin Williams. He attended that school until he graduated in 1978. In 1980, after he had done his role in the daytime soap opera "Another World," he moved to California to improve himself on television. He even got better as a guest star on some shows such as "Cheers" and "Murphy Brown."

In 1992 he began his voice acting career in "Batman" the animated series as both Bruce Wayne and Batman, and he's been the voice of Batman on tv series, movies, and video games for 30 years. He even worked with some famous

actors such as Mark Hamill, Richard Moll, Michael York, Loren Lester, and Melissa Gilbert. He even worked with the former Batman of the 1960s, Adam West who played Batman's favorite hero, the Gray Ghost, in the episode called "Beware the Gray Ghost." It was cool for those two Batmen to work together on that episode.

In 2016 during his interview in the New York Times he shared that he was gay, but it didn't matter to me because he had good voice acting and skills and the fans supported him on that. He continued his role as Batman until on November 10, 2022 he died at the Mount Sinal Hospital in New York City due to intestinal cancer at age of 66. To honor him, DC gave free online access to a Finding Batman story that he wrote about his life as part of the DC Comics 2022 Pride Anthology. But before he passed away, Kevin performed his final appearance as Batman in a new suicide squad game and a new DC movie that came out this year called "Justice League Crisis on Infinite Earths Part Three" as a cameo.

Although he's gone, he gave enough motivation to the fans to support the Batman franchise. Hopefully this year during the Batman 85th anniversary Warner Bros and DC Comics might do something to honor him alongside Adam West as a token for their roles as Batman throughout the years, like a documentary or making statues of them.



Kevin Conroy speaking at the 2019 San Diego Comic Con International, for "Batman Beyond 20th Anniversary" - Photo by Gage Skidmore

## SUNFLOWER PROGRAM

BY JANICE MCPHILLIPS

Starting Monday July 1, 2024, Nashville Airport will start being part of the Sunflower Program. The program helps people with hidden disabilities better move through the airport. People with hidden disabilities can pick up a lanyard with Sunflowers on it at the Information Center Desk. They do not have to say what their disability is. The airport — with lots of people, sounds, and lights — can be over stimulating for people with autism and other conditions. If a person is wearing the lanyard the airport employees know that they may need more time, patience or assistance getting to the plane.

There are more than 240 airports around the world who are in the Sunflower Program. The lanyard does not guarantee priority security screening or other special treatment, but this should help.



Sunflower lanyard

## ROBERT'S BIRTHDAY PARTY

BY KENNETH YOUNGBLOOD

I went to Robert's 54th Birthday party. It was at his house in Brooklyn, New York from two o'clock to nine on Saturday August 3rd, 2024. Robert Cardona's exact birthday date on July 27th.

On Facebook I saw Robert Cardona celebrate. He did the breakdance and he was singing good. I met Robert Cardona at Self Advocacy, Central Park Challenge, Zerega Party, Job Club, Newsletter, Board Meeting, YAI Headquarters Party 9 years ago. Robert is a DJ Rapper, Hip Hop Dance and Singer. I made videos of Robert on my smartphone. I've also I listened to Robert Cardona at Self Advocacy, in Board Meetings and Newsletter meetings.

Robert Cardona is my best friend. Robert gave me a schedule at the board meeting. So I can know about self advocacy meetings, the Zerega party, newsletter meetings, the birthday party at Robert's house and also Central Park Challenge. I learned from Robert how to to pay attention and take care of myself.

I had a good time at Robert's 54th Birthday party.



Robert dressed up

## 3 YEARS AT SHOWCASE CINEMAS

BY ASHLEY TYRIE

Over the past 3 years, I have been working at Showcase Cinemas in Farmingdale. At the theater, I mostly work at the concession stand, but am also cross-trained to be an usher. I've tried some other jobs at places like Walmart and Burlington, but the movie theater suits me well, due to my interests and how easy it is compared to other jobs.

At the start of my job in July 2021, I found some things difficult to do at the concession stand, like making ice cream cones and assembling the kid boxes. I also didn't know how to apply the Starpass cash back discount at the register at times. But eventually, I got the hang of it, and I have been doing great at my job.

As an usher, I usually just scan people's tickets, which, admittedly, bores me, since I could be doing other things. However, there have been times when I have cleaned the theaters. One of these times was the opening weekend of "Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse" and the second weekend of "The Little Mermaid" remake. Let me tell you, between those two films, it was pretty messy!

I've witnessed the releases of many popular movies over the course of my time at the theater. The first major release I dealt with was "Spider-Man: No Way Home," which also was close to the holiday season. I felt stressed when that came out, but I've learned to handle crowds properly. I have also witnessed crowds for films such as "Top Gun: Maverick," "Minions: The Rise of Gru," "The Super Mario Bros. Movie," "Barbie," "Oppenheimer" (where we were the only theater on Long Island showing it on 70mm film), "Inside Out 2", and "Deadpool & Wolverine."

What's unique about my theater is that we show Indian movies, and are the go-to theater on Long Island for those movies. It's great how Indian people can come to see movies about their culture at my theater, something that isn't offered at a lot of local theaters on Long Island. They even take their kids to see the movies as an example of good representation in the media, which I'm proud of.

I've also seen lots of changes at my theater, not only with how different standees and posters decorate the theater, but with changes to how things work around there. This summer, Showcase removed the ice cream at the theater and replaced it with a space to make pretzels. At the same time, we also got Coke Freestyle machines, so customers could pick whatever soda they want. I wonder what the next few months working at the theater will bring for me, especially with the release of the Wicked movie, our next big release. I'll just have to see for myself!



Ashley Tyrie wearing pink for the release of the Barbie movie at her work theater last year.

## LEVEL THE CURVE 5TH ANNUAL THISABILITY SHOWCASE

BY ISMAEL NUNEZ

As they proudly say on their website, “At Level The Curve, we aim to make everyday life easier for people by creating products that adapt to the customers’ needs and wants, and at a low price. The result is a consumer-oriented approach which caters specifically to, as our name suggests, ‘leveling the curve’ as well as the ‘playing field’ for the disabled community.” On July 20th at ARTSPACE located between 2nd/3rd Avenue a proud showcase of art, poetry, and dance was performed by individuals with disabilities.

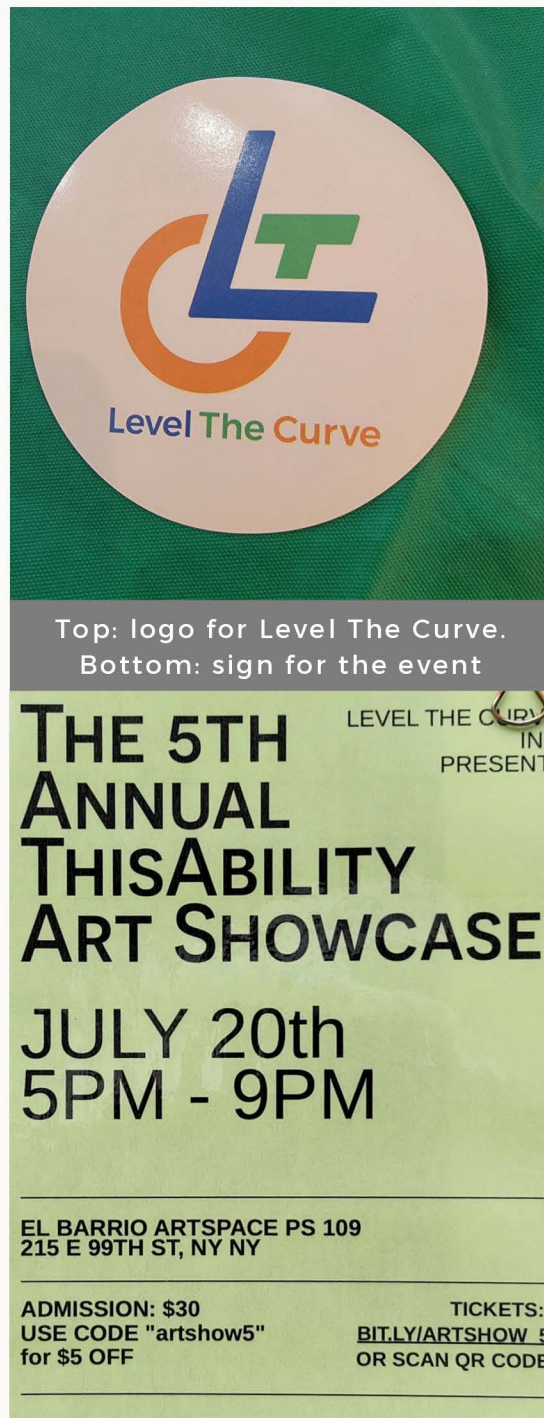
Eli Ramos, an artist with a disability and one of the founders of the organization, stated, “We come here every year. We know the doors are always open, and we always feel welcomed here.” Afterwards, this reporter had the honor of seeing the brilliant work of these artists. All of these artists have a disability! Some are blind, using a wheelchair, or learning disabled. They’re so great! I’m so happy for their accomplishments.

Nelson Santiago is a painter. “The minute art was introduced to me by my family, I fell in love with it and never looked back! It kept me in focus on life, people, and my community of East Harlem, where many gifted artists were born and raised.”

Julia Yopez uses a wheelchair. One looks at her she’s like the proud grandmother next door, yet this woman is also a gifted artist. Her paintings are mostly clouds and the sun. “There’s something about the sky often you don’t get it right or wrong. You look up and say, ‘I can make it to the top of the world.’”

Annalissa Rivera-Frantz is painter/poet. She does paintings of Afro, Latinos, Asians, as Super Heroines like Wonder Woman, Supergirl. “We don’t stop shooting bullets, or smash thru walls, yet what we’ve accomplished it’s almost like we are heroines. Remember this is real, not fiction”

Stefan, another co-founder along with Eli, stated, “I would love to see our work at these museums they talk about and read about. The Americans with Disabilities Act—we people with disabilities fought to get that law passed. That shows we are not only activists, we are also artists who love respect.”



## WILD-N-OUT

BY ROBERT CARDONA

Tonight- on the VH-1 network- my fav reality show - Wild-n-Out - is returning for its 21st season! When the show began in 2004- it was originally seen as a skit- variety show- but- enhanced itself to more comedy sketches and improv skits!

10 years ago- individuals with disabilities were briefly seen on the show- but- in a negative light- at one time- but- Nick and the cast had to tone down that low- humor!

In regards to the disability population coming on the show - I have written on nick's page for the last 5 years- waiting to join his cast- and- now- with God's grace - it will come true!

To my peers and friends- if you want to reach for your own dream in show business- GO FOR ITTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTT!

## SUNSET PARK HEALTH EMPOWERMENT CELEBRATION

BY ORLANDO JUAREZ

August 24, 2024 was a beautiful Saturday with clear skies at Sunset Park. Even though the main entrance was closed for redevelopment, there was a temporary entrance near the basketball courts, and the pool was still open. It was a good day also because the park was full of so many people for the 9th annual Health Empowerment Celebration. The event was hosted and sponsored by the RaisingHealth, a non-profit health service organization. I went to the event too early last year, but that time they were still preparing for the event later in the afternoon. This year I got to see it because it

started at 11 am. During the opening, I got to see a performance from a Chinese drum band. They were very good. While I was there, I also got to see a lot of health organizations, including NYU Langone Health, Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield, the Healthy Families Sunset Park organization, Oak St. Health, Healthcare Choices, The Workers Justice Project, and Foundation for a Drug-Free World, The Americas Chapter. Some of those organizations were giving out free toys and books for the kids. There was a line to register with RaisingHealth, and I got a chance to talk with one of their staff members. I asked if they support individuals with disabilities, and they said yes, and they even have mental health activities, which could be useful for YAI. I told them about our organization and hoped that we could be a part of the celebration next year, or perhaps we can invite RasingHealth to any YAI events including the Central Park Challenge. Whatever the case, I'll be ready for an opportunity that will help both YAI and RasingHealth.



Sunset Park



## DISABILITY RIGHTS GROUP SUES COUNTY OVER MASK BAN

BY JANICE MCPHILLIPS

In mid-August, Nassau County on Long Island banned people from wearing a mask in public. People can be fined up to \$1,000 or a year in jail. There are supposed to be exceptions for health and safety of the wearer and religious or cultural events, but there is no standard for the police to follow to decide.

Disability Rights New York filed a lawsuit saying the mask ban violates the United States Constitution, The NY State Constitution, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Americans with Disabilities Act requires the government to provide disabled people with equal access to public services, programs, and activities.

Some disabled people who wear masks are afraid to go out in public because they aren't sure if they will be arrested or harassed by people in public.



Surgical masks, often used to help prevent spread of viruses

## A SUMMER TRIP TO CONEY ISLAND

BY JENNIFER NAFTLOWITZ

My next article is about Coney Island. On Sunday, July 25, 2024, Rene and Jennifer went to Coney Island to hang out and we had such a very nice time. The weather was perfect. Rene looked so nice in his wonderful hat. Rene took the train to Sheepshead Bay and then he took the B36 bus to my area. So when he finally came down to my house to pick me up, I was already waiting for him. After he came, then we walked down to Nostrand Avenue and waited for the bus that goes down to Coney Island.

When we finally got to our destination then we decided to go and play some games. So he bought himself a card for the games. Then he was getting a little bit hungry, so we walked over to Nathan's for some hot dogs and fries. Rene bought his own food and then I went and bought a vanilla milkshake for Rene because he was so nice to treat me to one. But after I went to get Rene his milkshake at a different store the ice cream didn't taste right, so I asked Rene to taste it and he didn't like it. It was awful. After we got done with lunch then we decided to walk over to the candy store called It's Sugar. So I told Rene he could go in and I would wait for him outside the store. He bought lollipops for his mom and chocolate M&M candy for himself. Then we said goodbye and we went our separate ways home.

## DEAR LOVE

BY MATTHEW ZACHARY STEIN

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Hashem, although I'm just one man, the indications are very real that there are too many people disregarding what love is really supposed to stand for, and if I should not be able to write again I feel the absolute need to tell You Hashem and all those people I've pushed away what has been causing me misery over the last 5 years of my life. I have no misgivings about or a lack of confidence in which I'm engaged and my courage does not halt or falter.

Oh, Hashem, why do I or anyone for that matter now lean on the Romeos and Juliets so much nowadays. Always focused on looks and obsessed with looking "hot". Never really accepting who they are but playing it off, as if they don't really care. The boys wanna flex every muscle and bone to look impressive, so they can prove that they're the alpha Male. But why, isn't it how good someone treats you and makes you feel like you're at home enough? Crying on someone's lap and telling them, "I'm here for you regardless of what it may be," when they themselves run home crying because they truly love the one that's being hurt because they're not being recognized. I have experienced this myself countless times but if not for my mother and my father I don't know if I would have survived. Though I can understand why that is: because without lust there can be no love. We have too many people who rush home nearly in tears or rush home heartbroken in utter disgust of themselves.

But, Oh, Hashem, and all the ancestors that came before us, I cry for all the help upon Mount Sinai's rich presence. I channel every Jew in the cosmos and above the sky. Please let's make this generation better than it was before, and let's lead the best generation of Jews in America. For the heart is the most important part of what makes you, you. Doesn't it? And yet it is the most misunderstood. Sometimes I wonder why people who are cheated on go back to the people who hurt them the most. It just doesn't make any sense, and the one who is good to you is taking a backseat until he nearly perishes, because he can't stand watching you destroy yourself like this. Time after time the opposite gender has stuck by you, gave you tissues when you cried, and has said timelessly "I'll be there for you in your darkest moments" yet never gets HIS or HERS OWN MOMENT.

"To have a good heart is one thing but if your the only one who knows that it's hard to remain the same" I wrote this quote.

From yours truly,  
 Recovering in the fortress of solitude,  
 Matisyahumeier, aka Matthew Zachary Stein

## JAMES EARL JONES: ANOTHER SYMBOL OF DISABLED PRIDE! HE'LL BE REMEMBERED!

BY ISMAEL NUNEZ

This past September 9, 2024 as the website [imdb.com](https://www.imdb.com) stated, "Widely regarded as the one of greatest stage and screen actors both in his native USA and internationally, James Earl Jones passed away." Jones was noted on the movie screen, TV, and stage. Yet many are not aware that this proud artist had a disability. He was stutterer. According to Spectrum News 1, "stuttering has a neurological basis, affecting areas of the brain that control how speech and language are processed. Stuttering can run in families due to a genetic cause."

Despite this obstacle Jones became an award-winning actor in theatre, stage, movies, and a noted Shakespearean Actor. His voice in the Star Wars Trilogy of Darth Vader should've earned him an academy award nomination. His voiceover in the classic cartoon "The Lion King" was also a gifted performance. What Hall of Fame Baseball Broadcaster Vin Scully was to baseball broadcasting, Jones is for voiceovers! In CNN announcements you'll hear "This is CNN" from James Earl Jones.

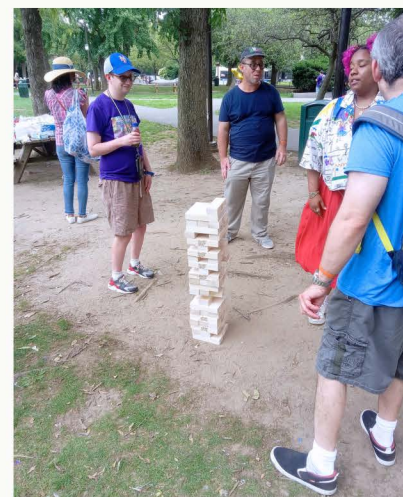
On YouTube you'll see him reciting the famous speech by Abolitionist, Activist, and Editor Frederick Douglass, "The Meaning of July 4th to the Negro," and it's almost like Douglass is still alive and well.

To add, one can see Jones always had a smile for everyone. He'll be missed. A true symbol of pride for the disabled: THIS IS JAMES EARL JONES!

## PICNIC IN THE PARK

BY KENNETH YOUNGBLOOD

I went to the YAI-Family Fun Day Picnic-in-the-Park with the YAI Self Advocates at the Riverbank State Park on 145th Street in Manhattan. The picnic was from 11am to 3pm on Saturday August 17th, 2024. I participated at Picnic in the Park. They had snacks, beverages, music, dance, sports, and games like Jenga, Connect 4, and checkers at Picnic in the Park. I met my friends at the Picnic in the Park. But I brought my own lunch when I went. Timothy Allen had sent me an email about the Picnic in the Park from YAI. I have disability, but I at my job I printed my information about the Picnic in the Park. When I got there, I was able to look all around the Riverbank State Park and saw New Jersey, the George Washington Bridge, also the Garden State Park skating rink, swimming pool, track & field and athletic fields. I took pictures when I was there. I had a good time at the Picnic-in-the Park.



Picnic at Riverbank State Park

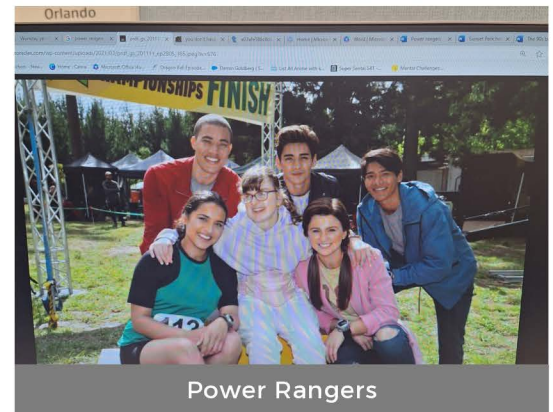
## POWER RANGERS 30TH ANNIVERSARY

BY ORLANDO JUAREZ

August 28, 2023 was the 30th anniversary of the Power Rangers franchise. Power Rangers has also been on television from 1993 to 2023. It was a way to bring education and excitement to children and adults. To celebrate the anniversary they made a special movie called "Mighty Morphin Power Rangers: Once and Always." Also for this 30th season they made "Call Power Rangers Cosmic Fury" on Netflix.

In the 1990s Power Rangers supported the DARE American program which helps people to avoid danger, violence, gangs and drugs. Most of those episodes taught kids the difference between right and wrong. It teaches them about friendship, loyalty, and teamwork as well as love. For example, it shows relationships like the one between Kimberly and Tommy. That couple met in season One. Then they had their first kiss. We watched Kimberly and Tommy's love episodes till the 3rd season. Even adults watch the show. In the Dino Fury episodes, Sarah Dalton, a Special Olympic athlete, was a special guest star. This was the first time I saw a person from the special Olympics join in a Power Rangers show. This was a happy surprise to see the Power Rangers support the special Olympics.

The Power Rangers even have their own convention called the Power Morphincon where they have lots of Power Rangers' merchandise and some interviews with some of the Power Rangers actors of different seasons, but this event is only every two years. However, this year, 2024, it's unfortunate that there won't be any new seasons, but there are rumors that there will be a reboot of the original series in the future. Also, Boom Studios are doing some Power Rangers comic series for the time being. I hope that reboot will be interesting for the fans and helps to maintain the power ranger legacy.



## YELP IMPROVES ACCESSIBILITY

BY JANICE MCPHILLIPS

Yelp, the app that allows people to leave reviews for restaurants, bars, hotels and other businesses has added more accessibility features that people can use in their search. Before, the app only listed if a business had an ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant bathroom and if they had someone working there who knew American Sign Language. As of late June 2024, users can also search by wheelchair accessibility, accessible parking nearby, no stairs or steps, braille menus available, ADA compliant main entrance, closed captioning on the TVs and if QR code menus are available.

Yelp worked with disability groups such as Disability:IN, the American Association of People with Disabilities, Open to All, and the ARC to make it easier for people to find businesses that can accommodate their needs.

## SUMMER THEME PARTY

BY KENNETH YOUNGBLOOD

I went to Summer Theme Party from YAI Headquarters on 220 East 42nd Street on the 7th floor in Manhattan on Friday June 14th, 2024 from five o'clock to eight in the evening. I paid a \$10 fee to attend the Summer Theme Party. My mother once told me that I could never go to the beach party or pool party. Because, it's not my neighborhood and it's too dangerous for me. I have disability. But she also said that I could go to the Summer Theme Party. So I did. That's where I did the bust-a-rhyme, macarena, limbo and breakdance. I wore my summer tee shirt that says "Grand Turk" on it.

Timothy Allen and Mallory Perry told me about the summer theme party last month. I met my friends at the summer theme party from YAI. I took pictures at the summer theme party. At the party they served summer drink, salad, pizza and snacks at the summer party. My favorite summer music is r&b, oldies, hip-hop, rock & roll and '70s. I had a good time at the summer theme party.



Kenneth and friends at the summer theme party

## 29TH ANNIVERSARY

BY ROBERT CARDONA

On August 19 - my long- time lgbt partner of 20 years - Terry Huiett- and myself- had celebrated 29 glorious years together! Terry and I first met at the YAI day habilitation program in the Bronx on East Tremont Avenue when it opened up on August 19th, 1997- which was the same day we met-when I first saw Terry- we had an immediate connection with each other- we both had the same interests and hobbies of music and shows- and- both had this love for each other-Terry constantly had me on his mind- even when he was still living at home with his family- now- for the past 4 years- he has been living under an agency called the block institute- which on his own for the past 4 years since July 13th, 2020- and- has done an excellent job of living by himself!

Terry and myself are currently engaged to be married- but- we haven't set the date yet. To all my peers who want to get married-don't let others on the outside tell you that you can't- there isn't such a word in the English language -YOU CAN!!!!



Robert and Terry at a recent celebration