

# IT'S MY LIFE!

Rhode Island's 22nd Annual Statewide Self-Advocacy Conference  
Thursday, October 26th, 2017 at the Crowne Plaza in Warwick

*Self-Advocacy is about being empowered and being included.*

*It means learning about the issues that effect people who have a developmental disability, and speaking-up about the ones that you think are important.*

*It means being responsible and making informed decisions.*

*It means being the person in charge of your own life, and helping others to be in charge of theirs.*

*It means being treated the same as everyone else.*

*Self-Advocacy means working together, because together we can make a difference!*

Welcome to RI's 22nd Annual Statewide Self-Advocacy Conference! We're glad you're here for this day of listening, learning, sharing, and fun. We're also excited to welcome high school students, and those who support them, to our very first Youth Track. While everyone is invited to attend any session they choose, the sessions in Newport and Wickford are geared towards young people. We hope you'll check them out!

Today's schedule is jam packed with a variety of workshops and resource displays, musical key notes and peer to peer connections. We think the variety of presentations will offer something of interest for everyone. In addition, we hope you'll be able to stay for the **Power Hour Plus** at the end of the conference today.

For those of you who are registered for the dinner dance, don't forget to wear your costume for a chance to enter our "Masked Arrival" Raffle. Thanks to our hardworking planning committee and generous sponsors, we will be giving away tons of awesome raffle prizes during both of those times.

If you have any questions during the conference, just ask one of our conference helpers who are wearing the yellow **NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US** hat. If you're a first time attendee, be sure and visit us at the help desk during the day so we can connect you with the RI Self-Advocacy Movement. And while you're at it, we hope you'll find some time to stop by the sales table where you can buy your own conference hat, t-shirts, sweat shirts, and other goodies. And don't forget to make your mark on the story wall and let the world know what "It's My Life" means to you!



**It's My Life!** is hosted by Advocates in Action Rhode Island with support from RI Dept of BHDDH and this year's conference sponsors.

**Thank you!**  
*Together*  
*We're Making a Difference.*



# CONGRATULATIONS TO RHODE ISLAND'S 2017 SELF-ADVOCACY AWARD WINNERS!



**ANDREW PALUMBO**



**LUKE BRISSETTE**



**KATHY GUNMUNDSON**

## >>> Hotel Information <<<



### The Crowne Plaza

801 Greenwich Avenue  
Warwick, RI 02886

Phone: 401-732-6000

Check-In: 3:00pm

Check-Out: 11:00am

### **OVERNIGHT GUESTS:**

You can check your luggage at the Front Desk before 3:00pm if needed

This year's event was made possible with support from the RI Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals, the generosity of our sponsors, our hard-working planning committee, dedicated board of directors and representatives, and an amazing team of volunteers.

Today also wouldn't be possible without each of **YOU**. We appreciate your taking the time away from your busy schedule to spend it here with us. We're glad you're here! To everyone who helped make It's My Life such a success, we would like to say a great big

**THANK YOU!!**



## ADVOCATES IN ACTION

### RHODE ISLAND, INC.

RHODE ISLAND'S STATEWIDE  
SELF-ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION

#### OFFICE:

662 HARTFORD AVE  
PROVIDENCE RI 02909

#### MAIL:

PO BOX 41528  
PROVIDENCE RI 02940

**TOGETHER  
WE'RE MAKING A DIFFERENCE!**

## LET'S CONNECT!

### PHONE:

**877.532.5543**

### EMAIL:

**AINA@ADVOCATESINACTION.ORG**

### ON-LINE:

**WWW.ADVOCATESINACTION.ORG**

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# IT'S MY LIFE CONFERENCE AGENDA

Thursday, October 26th, 2017 at the Crown Plaza, Warwick



->8:15AM-> **DAY REGISTRATION** ->9:15AM->  
 Sign-in before 9:00am to Enter the **Early Bird Raffle!**  
 Enjoy Coffee & Pastry in the Grand Ballroom Foyer  
 Get your conference souvenirs and *Power Hour Plus Raffle Tickets!*



->9:30AM-> **OPENING SESSION** ->10:45AM->  
 Please join Jimmy Isom as he sings **God Bless America**  
**IT'S MY LIFE!** Parade and Self-Advocacy Shout Outs  
*Featuring the Leadership Series Class of 2018*  
**Welcome:**  
 Kerri Zanchi, Director, RI Division of Developmental Disabilities  
 Mark Cutler, *The Same Thing Musical* Keynote Address



->11:00AM-> **PRESENTATIONS** ->12:00PM->  
 Choose from the 6 Sessions Listed on Pages 4-5



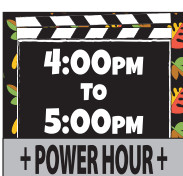
->12:15-> **AWARDS LUNCHEON** ->1:30->  
 Congratulations 2017 Self-Advocacy Award Winners!  
 Special Thanks to Our 2017 Elite Partners  
 Early Bird Raffle Winners: You must be present to win!



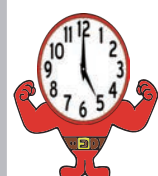
1:45 -> **PRESENTATIONS** -> 2:45  
 Choose from the 6 Sessions Listed on Pages 6-7



3:00 -> **PRESENTATIONS** -> 4:00  
 Choose from the 6 Sessions Listed on Pages 8-9



->4:00PM-> **POWER HOUR PLUS** ->4:00PM-5:00PM ->  
**Stay Until 5:00 ... You Could Win a Prize!**  
 Visit the Foyer for Face Painting, Colors for a Cause,  
 Pet Therapy, Soft Pretzels, Soda, Book Signing & more!



->6:00PM-> **COSTUME DINNER DANCE** ->10:00PM->  
 The dance does not end until 10:00pm.  
 We hope you can stay and enjoy the evening with us.

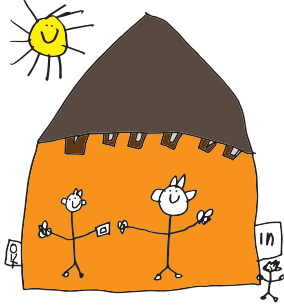


>>> FYI <<<  
 THE CONFERENCE IS SOLD OUT! WE CANNOT ACCEPT ANY ON-SITE REGISTRATIONS.  
 ~~~~  
 LUNCH IS PASTA WITH RED SAUCE AND MEATBALLS.  
 DINNER IS CHICKEN MARSALA.  
 PLEASE TELL YOUR SERVER IF YOU MADE ANY SPECIAL DIETARY REQUESTS ON YOUR REGISTRATION FORM WHEN YOU SIT DOWN TO EAT TODAY.  
 ~~~~  
 WE WILL HAVE A HELP DESK IN THE FOYER FOR CONFERENCE QUESTIONS. YOU CAN ALSO CALL THE AINA LINE:  
**877-532-5543**



# ROTUNDA

11:00PM - 12:00PM



## It's MY

### MY HOME SWEET HOME

There are many different places to live, but which one is right for you?

Learn from a panel of Self-Advocates, as they share their experiences in different living situations.

This session will also include information about a new residential option called *Shared Living Arrangements*.

Panelists who have lived in group homes, apartment programs, and other residential options will talk about life before and after they moved into an SLA.

If you're considering a new place to call home, SLAs are worth looking into.

After all, It's Your Life and It's Your Home, too!

#### Thank You Presenters:

Joanne Malise, Facilitator  
Individual Panelists

# NEWPORT

11:00PM - 12:00PM



## EXCUSE ME?!?

Some people are just plain rude!

This doesn't mean that you need be that way, too.

Presenters in this session will share some of their negative experiences, and how they learned to handle the situation when people were mean to them.

Join us to learn what you can do when faced with a similar situation in your own life.

Presenters will also share ideas for how to stay positive.

#### Thank You Presenters:

Bill Corbett  
Kathy Gunmundson  
Ken Renaud



# WICKFORD

11:00PM - 12:00PM



## MY IEP AND ME

Being a Self-Advocate means getting information, deciding what's important and speaking-up for yourself and others.

YOUTH TRACK ATTENDEES are invited to this Student Panel about the importance of Self-Advocacy at your Individual Education Plan (IEP) Meeting.

Panel members are young adults who are transitioning into adulthood and taking charge of their futures!

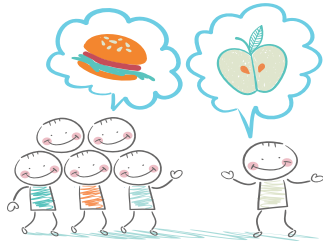
Join them to find out what worked and what didn't, how they found their voice, and what you can do with your IEP team.

#### Thank You Presenters:

Sue Donovan, Facilitator  
Sarah Clougher  
Kelly Donovan  
Bloom Slavin



**BRISTOL A**  
11:00PM - 12:00PM



**It's My HEALTHY LIFESTYLE**

Self-Advocacy means making informed decisions, including what you choose to eat, smoke, drink, and more.

Join us for a conversation about what it means to live a healthy lifestyle.

This is more than just eliminating all your favorite snacks, and replacing them with meals that look and taste like cardboard!

We will talk about how making healthy choices can also help you feel good.

Plus, the more you do it, the easier it becomes!!

So what are you waiting for? Come to our session to grab a free, HEALTHY snack, that actually tastes good, too.

We will also share ideas to help you live healthier day by day.

**Thank You Presenters:**

*Karen Batcheller  
Jean Bowerman  
Jane Rubenstein*

**BRISTOL B**  
11:00PM - 12:00PM



**THE PERSON IN THE CENTER  
Is ME!**

Person Centered Planning is a process that happens over time. It is not a new name, or a replacement for your annual service plan meeting.

This person-centered process can help you set individualized goals that are custom-tailored for you.

This is a change from the traditional support plans that many people who are connected with the RI Developmental Disabilities System may currently have in place.

Presenters will also share tips to help you advocate during your ISP meeting.

Remember:  
It's Your Life, and the Person in the Center is YOU!

**Thank You Presenters:**

*Tanja Blicher-Ucran,  
Crystal Cerullo,  
Allyson Dupont  
& Steve Porcelli*

**TIVERTON**  
11:00PM - 12:00PM



**DECISIONS ABOUT  
MAKING DECISIONS:  
INSTEAD OF GUARDIANSHIP...**

We will talk about what it means to have a guardian, limited guardianship, and some alternatives to guardianship.

One exciting alternative is something called "Supported Decision-Making" (SDM).

A few states are offering SDM to some of residents to see how it works as an alternative to guardianship.

Eventually, SDM may also become an option here in our state.

**Thank You Presenters:**

*Susan Birch,  
Christine Brunt,  
& Kate Sherlock*

**MY VOICE!  
MY CHOICE!**



# ROTUNDA

1:45PM - 2:45PM



## LIFE IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT!

Be inspired by stories of accomplishment, choice, change and hope for the future!

Members of the Our Voices Count Self-Advocacy group are back again to share another amazingly creative and interactive performance.

This year's presentation will feature the OVC players as they share some of their everyday challenges and solutions.

The session will leave you inspired, empowered and ready to take on the world, knowing that attitude is everything, and that YOUR LIFE really is what YOU make it!

### Thank You Presenters:

*Members of the  
Our Voices Count  
Self-Advocacy Group*



# NEWPORT

1:45PM - 2:45PM



## DATING TIPS 101

Are you looking to re-spark the flame with your significant other, or learn a few new dating tips to impress that special someone?

Either way, you're in luck, as veteran presenters (& classic conference couple), Bob Macaux and Katie Lowe are back again this year to share another round of dating tips, romantic notions, and relationship advice!

As in previous years, this interactive and informative session is likely to fill up fast, so plan to arrive on time, and definitely stay for the full session.

Fun, Funny, and not to be missed!

### Thank You Presenters:

*Sara Forte  
Katie Lowe  
Bob Macaux*



# WICKFORD

1:45PM - 2:45PM



## PEER POWER: THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX!

Life is bigger than your Individual Support Plan and the publicly funded services you receive!

Join Self-Advocates from around Rhode Island for this open-mic style group brainstorming session.

Let's share ideas for navigating the DD System, and for reaching our goals without relying 100% on a provider agency or support staff.

### Thank You Presenters:

*Facilitated by:  
Kelly Donovan & Sandra Fournier  
With Self-Advocates:  
Sarah Clougher, Joshua Joyal,  
Bloom Slavin, Andrew Whalen,  
and YOU!*

**BRISTOL A**  
1:45PM - 2:45PM

**GETTING TO WORK!**

**THE IMPACT OF EMPLOYMENT**

Let's have a real conversation about *Employment First*.

Employment First means that all people with disabilities should have the opportunity to work.

Having a disability should never stop you.

>> Yes, this means YOU! <<

Public funding for the Rhode Island DD Service System should be used to pay for the supports people need to be able to work in the community, alongside people with and without disabilities.

You can make a difference by taking action, believing in yourself & speaking-up!

Come share your story and learn as others share theirs.



Thank You Presenters:  
Kim Einloth  
Kiernan O'Donnell

**BRISTOL B**  
1:45PM - 2:45PM



**THE ABLE ACT: ABLE TO SAVE YOUR MONEY AND YOUR BENEFITS**

The ABLE Act is a new law that allows people who have a disability to save up to \$14,000 a year in a tax-free savings account.

**ABLE STANDS FOR ACHIEVING A Better Life Experience**

The money you put into this account to improve your quality of life will not affect your state or federal benefits!

Come to this session to find out more.

Thank You Presenters:  
Kevin Nerney  
Keith Wilcox



**TIVERTON**  
1:45PM - 2:45PM



**EMBRACE YOUR TRUE SELF > I DID! <**

Here's your personal invitation to this awesome session from 2017 Leadership Award Winner Andrew Palumbo:

Come hear my journey of Self-Discovery!

I was born inside a female body that didn't fit who I really was.

Come meet the real me, and be inspired to be the real you!

Everybody can learn to stand up for themselves, no matter what you are dealing with.





# ROTUNDA

3:00PM - 4:00PM



## TOWN HALL Q&A

### ABOUT YOUR DD SERVICES

Here's your opportunity to ask staff from the Division of Developmental Disabilities your service-related questions!

#### > SAMPLE QUESTIONS WE'VE RECEIVED <

Why do I need to have a SIS Interview?

Can I get some extra support to help me find a job?

What kinds of things can I put in my Service Plan?

My staff said we have to leave early for a shift change. What can I do?

Please note: this is not a forum for filing complaints, but a time to ask questions and get a better understanding of how the DD system works.

Information is Power...

Let's Get Charged!



# NEWPORT

3:00PM - 4:00PM



## It's My Life! AND I WROTE A BOOK ABOUT IT

Have you ever thought about writing a book? Imagine how cool it would be if other people read your story, and were so impressed that they asked for your autograph.

That's what happens to authors Mo Gaynor and James Boucher now that they've been published!

Join the conversation, to ask your questions about being an author and share your own ideas!

#### Thank You Presenters:

*James Boucher,  
Maureen Gaynor*



# WICKFORD

3:00PM - 4:00PM



## BOLDRDASHPRESENTS:

### *FIND YOUR BOLD*

*Find Your Bold* is a team of people with and without disabilities.

We run together in the BoldRDash, and we help each other in finding our bold!

We hope you can join our session for some afternoon fun!

We'll share some BoldRDash videos, answer questions may have, and, of course, we'll play a GAME!

>> **BE BOLD!** <<

#### Thank You Presenters:

*Bill Guy,  
& Lynn Hall*

**BRISTOL A**  
3:00PM - 4:00PM



**WHAT DOES COMMUNITY INTEGRATION REALLY MEAN?**

Do you spend your days in the community with other community members, or do you only do things with other people who also have a disability?

We will share our experiences in both kinds of situations, and explain why we believe that being integrated is a much better choice.

If you still spend most of your days in a traditional Day Program type setting, we hope you will come to our session, listen to our stories, and become empowered to speak-up and get out!

**Thank You Presenters:**

*Dawn Burke  
Kerry Clark  
Keith Wilcox*



**BRISTOL B**  
3:00PM - 4:00PM



**LIFE IN THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR: HOW TO BE POPULAR**

Everyone can learn how to become an effective Self-Advocate, but it takes a certain personality and charm to be popular while you're sitting in the director's chair.

Join Singer and Storyteller Jimmy Isom for this fun-filled workshop, with tips on how to make new friends who can help you reach your goals. Jimmy will share stories and ideas from a lifetime of experience, including a childhood at Ladd School, working in the community, and living on his own.

Now that Jimmy is retired, he has extra time to share his story and encourage others, which he is always happy to do with a smile and a song.

It's no wonder that he's Mr. Popularity! What's not to love about this amazing man?

**Thank You Presenters:**

*Jimmy Isom  
Jim Wolpaw*

**TIVERTON**  
3:00PM - 4:00PM



**PRESS "LIKE" FOR INTERNET SAFETY**

Do you use e-mail or visit social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube?

The internet is a great way to get information, make connections, and share your ideas, but it's important to be safe when you do!

Join us for this important conversation as we share tips about how to protect your identity and safeguard your computer when you are on-line.

It's your on-line life, too!

Don't let some nasty internet troll hack into it!

**Thank You Presenters:**

*Jeff Christie  
Bill Corbett  
Kathy Gunmundson  
Kenn Renaud*

GET CONNECTED ★ SHARE IDEAS



>> **SAVE THE DATE** <<

**Rhode Island's 2018 Annual  
Statewide Self-Advocacy Meeting**

THURSDAY, MARCH 29TH 7:00-9:00PM  
at the Crowne Plaza, Warwick

FEATURING:

*The Leadership Series Class of 2018*

STAY TUNED FOR DETAILS:

[www.AdvocatesinAction.org](http://www.AdvocatesinAction.org)

**REMEMBER:  
THINK FIRST!**



**NAMES HURT, TOO!**

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**LIVING INNOVATIONS** IS A PROUD SPONSOR OF THE  
22<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL STATEWIDE SELF-ADVOCACY CONFERENCE.



Living Innovations provides support to people to have a good life at home and in the community. Our services include Shared Living Arrangements (SLA) and community connections.

To learn more visit us at [LivingInnovations.com](http://LivingInnovations.com) or stop by our Warwick office at 535 Centerville Road, Suite P, Warwick, RI





RHODE ISLAND

## Developmental Disabilities Council

*Charting a New Course*

**The RIDDC works within communities to promote change that:**

*encourages, inspires, makes it possible*

**for individuals with disabilities to:**

*create, pursue and achieve*

**lives that are personally satisfying...**

*lives that are Meaningful, Productive, Healthy and Safe.*



## *Cross Disability Coalition*

AN INITIATIVE OF THE RHODE ISLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL

The Rhode Island Cross Disability Coalition is a statewide advocacy organization that began in 2009.

The Coalition is the only one in RI that includes people with various types of disabilities who represent themselves or other organizations.

We meet together monthly to discover the issues we have in common, and to promote/advocate for solutions and quality lives for all people with disabilities.

400 Bald Hill Road, Suite 515, Warwick, Rhode Island, 02888

Phone: **401.737.1238**

**[www.riddc@riddc.org](mailto:www.riddc@riddc.org)**



**Avatar's mission** is to work side by side with people to enrich the quality of their lives. Avatar encourages each person to define and achieve his or her goals. This is accomplished by recognizing the individual's talents and by providing the assistance necessary to enhance competencies in areas which are meaningful to the person.

## AVATAR'S VALUES

- Respect the basic need of all people to cultivate relationships.
- Recognize the value of individuals to one another.
- Promote families as an essential component of an individual's circle of support.
- Encourage people to participate fully in and enjoy the benefits of their communities.
- Provide opportunities for individuals to demonstrate their value as citizens.
- Operate on the principle that choice is a basic right of all humanity.

Our vision is to stand beside one another, respecting the diversity of each other's choices, talents, needs and desires.

ADDRESS

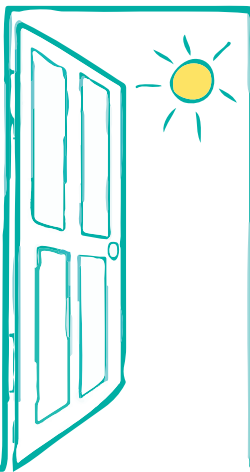
33 COLLEGE HILL RD, BLDG 33  
WARWICK, RHODE ISLAND 02886



WWW.AVATARRESIDENTIAL.COM

PHONE

TEL: 401.826.7500  
FAX: 401.826.7503



## Opportunities Unlimited

*For People With Differing Abilities, Inc.*

### Opening Doors to Possibilities...

**Coming together**  
is a beginning.  
**Keeping together**  
is progress.  
**Working together**  
is a success.

⇒ **CONNECT WITH US** ⇐

phone:  
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on-line:  
www.oppunlimited.com



## AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES IN RHODE ISLAND

Perspectives Corporation offers American Sign Language classes for beginner to advanced learners in a fun, friendly and supportive environment at our locations in Providence, Warwick, and North Kingstown!

[PERSPECTIVESCORPORATION.COM](http://PERSPECTIVESCORPORATION.COM) / ASL



The Arc of Bristol County dba proAbility provides a wide array of supportive services to over 2,000 children and adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities, and their families, helping them to maximize their talents and abilities, develop independent living skills, and participate as contributing citizens of their communities

### OUR SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Residential (24; Non 24; Shared Living)
- Community Supports
- Day and Employment Services
- Children Services (HBTS and PASS)

To learn more contact us at (401) 233-1634  
Or visit us at [www.proAbility.org](http://www.proAbility.org)

25 Thurber Boulevard  
Smithfield, RI 02917



### RIDLC

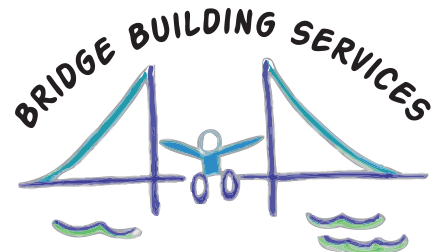
*Rhode Island Disability Law Center*  
Your Protection and Advocacy System  
Legal assistance for individuals with disabilities and their families

Providing free legal assistance to persons with disabilities on disability-related issues including ensuring voting access and promoting community and employment integration.

Please visit our website at [www.ridlc.org](http://www.ridlc.org) for a complete listing of our current systemic and individual case priorities.

**Rhode Island Disability Law Center**  
275 Westminster Street, Suite 401  
Providence, RI 02903-3434

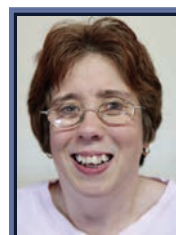
- (401) 831 - 3150 (Voice)
- (401) 274 - 5568 (Facsimile)
- (401) 831 - 5335 (TTY)
- (800) 733 - 5332 (Clients)



### It's YOUR Life - Let's Make Some Plans!

My name is Deanne Gagne, founder and owner of *Bridge Building Services*. I help people who have a disability and their families to set goals and plan for their future.

I can help you understand the service system, and how to work with your own circle of support, so you can start to achieve the goals you want.



**Deanne Gagne**  
Facilitator

PHONE: 401.465.6643

E-MAIL: [bridgebuildingservices@gmail.com](mailto:bridgebuildingservices@gmail.com)

ON-LINE: [www.bridgebuildingservices.com](http://www.bridgebuildingservices.com)

**DON'T JUST DREAM IT - DO IT!**





# Building the Foundation for Person-Centered Choices

Seven Hills Rhode Island offers a continuum of self-directed supports that build confidence, community, friendships, and independence for adults with disabilities who are using their *abilities* to overcome challenges and embrace opportunities. Community living is setting the standard for all of our services, which include:

- My-Choice
- Self-Advocacy
- Adult Day Health
- Day Habilitation
- Residential Programs
- RItE @ Home/Shared Living
- Workforce Readiness & Employment

Our professional staff provides the highest quality of care with innovative programming choices that encourage everyone to SEE the possibilities, BELIEVE in their abilities, and ACHIEVE their dreams. To learn more, call 401.765.3700 or visit [sevenhills.org](http://sevenhills.org).



80 Fabien Street, Woonsocket, RI 02895 • 401.765.3700 • [sevenhills.org](http://sevenhills.org)

# Here For One Another

For every neighborhood and for peace of mind. Someone to lean on. Someone you can trust. We are dedicated to providing all Rhode Islanders access to high quality health care. Here for you, here for your family, here for one another.

*Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island  
is here for our community. We are proud to support  
Advocates in Action.*





# The Moran Ventre Foundation

to benefit people with  
intellectual and developmental disabilities

## Elite Sponsor

Rhode Island's 2017 Statewide  
Self-Advocacy Conference

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E-Mail: [jemoranfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:jemoranfoundation@gmail.com) - [www.johnemoranfoundation.org](http://www.johnemoranfoundation.org)

## Congratulations Self-Advocates!

# LET'S GET THIS PARTY STARTED!



*RHODE ISLAND'S VERY OWN MUSICAL SENSATION*

## **BLIND FAITH**

**4:30-5:30PM IN THE ROTUNDA**