

Self Advocacy News

MARCH 2018

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Executive Director Retires
- Board Member Recruitment
- Youth as Peer Role Models

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Founder Aaron Shabazz Retires

We would like to take this opportunity to recognize one of the great leaders of the Independent Living movement for persons with disabilities, Mr. Aaron Shabazz, on his retirement as Executive Director of the Joy A Shabazz Center for Disability Rights. Aaron along with his late wife, Joy Shabazz, founded the organization in October of 1992.

Throughout his years of service to the disability community, Aaron always fought for total accessibility within the community and he achieved great success. One can clearly see the success



Aaron Shabazz, Founder

of Aaron's dedication to the removal of architectural barriers throughout the city of Greensboro as well as in the five county area that the Center now serves. This is only

one example of the countless number of improvements in the disability community Aaron has made in his extraordinary career and we thank him for this.

In December, we celebrated the retirement of Aaron Shabazz at West Market Street United Methodist Church in downtown Greensboro. There were members from service organizations, Board members, and staff of the Shabazz Center as well as Aaron's family in attendance. There were tributes, remembering of the past and love shared. Thank you Aaron for all that you have done for the disability community and for our society as a whole.



Joy A. Shabazz Center Staff



Benita Williams,
Executive Director

Board Promotes New Executive Director

We would like to welcome Benita Williams as the new Executive Director of the Joy A. Shabazz Center for Disability Rights. Benita has been working for the Center for approximately twenty years and has demonstrated a remarkable passion for ensuring equal rights for persons with disabilities.

Benita has served as the Deputy Director for the Shabazz Center for the past 15 years. She has been associated with various organizations in the community that support persons with disabilities, including: Greensboro Mayor’s Committee for Persons with Disabilities and the Greensboro Partners Ending Homelessness.

Benita will focus on making sure the community is barrier free and that persons with disabilities continue to be able to access housing and transportation.

She said that she would like to see more youth on the Center’s Board and to work on transitional programs.

Congratulations Benita!

“I realize I could have never adequately expressed my deep appreciation to him for all of the help that he has given me...”

Personal Message to Mr. Shabazz

How do you say thank you to someone that has allowed you to live up to your full potential and has believed in your abilities and has allowed you to follow your lifelong dream of employment while others questioned your ability to contribute to society? As

I ponder on how to say thank you to Aaron Shabazz, I realize that I could never adequately expressed my deep appreciation to him for all of the help that he has given me through the years so therefore I will just say thank you and I hope you will under-

stand what is inside of my heart.

I hope you will enjoy your retirement my friend but stay close by because we still need you.

Dennis Burgess

“Board Members are welcomed. Youth are encouraged to apply.”



Joy A. Shabazz Center for Disability Rights is looking for individuals to serve as Board Members who are interested in ensuring that persons with disabilities have equal access and opportunity.

Board Member Recruitment

Young adults and persons with disabilities are encouraged to apply. If you feel like you can contribute to the Shabazz Center as a Board Member, please let us know asap.

Applicants should submit a resume and a statement explaining why they are interested in serving on the Board of Directors at the Shabazz Center. Resumes should be emailed to:

benita.shabazzcenter@gmail.com

A Lesson on Universal Design



Modified Bathtub

On February 12th Benita Williams, Executive Director for the Joy A. Shabazz Center for Disability Rights and Dennis Burgess, Public Awareness Coordinator gave a presentation on universal design at the Universi-

ty of North Carolina at Greensboro. The presentation was given to an interior design architectural class to provide the students with information about how to modify existing structures for persons with disabilities to make them more accessible.

The students learned about the

Universal Design Institute (UDI) which provides funding to persons with disabilities who meets financial eligibility requirements to modify their homes to allow them to function more independently and to remain living at home. The class also saw an illustration of how modifications at Dennis Burgess's home can significantly improve the quality of life for persons with disabilities.

If you would like the Joy A. Shabazz Center for Disability Rights to give this presentation to your organization, please contact Benita Williams at: benita.shabazzcenter@gmail.com.

“Your knowledge of how to improve a particular situation may help someone who is struggling with the same barriers.”

Youth Peer to Peer Mentoring Program

Joy A. Shabazz Center for Disability Rights needs persons with disabilities who are young and energetic to participate in our youth mentoring program. Participants in the program will share their experiences with others on how they overcame obstacles in their lives that

were preventing them from reaching their goals. Your knowledge of how to improve a particular situation may help someone who is struggling with the same barriers.

If you are interested in becoming a youth peer mentor the Joy A. Shabazz Center would

like to hear from you!

If you are a youth age 14-24 who needs assistance making decisions about what to do after high school and you would like to talk to someone,

Contact Pamela Miller: pam.shabazzcenter@gmail.com

Volunteers Needed for Youth Events

The Joy A. Shabazz Center for Disability Rights is working with Division of Services for the Blind towards a youth transitions program event.

We are in the process of planning youth activities and we would love to hear from youth with disabilities (age 14-24)

who are planning to go to college or looking for work opportunities after high school to offer some ideas and suggestions about what kind of information and assistance would benefit you the most during our youth transitions event.

If you would like to be a part of

the planning committee or if you have ideas, please feel free to contact the Center by phone : (336) 272-0501 or by email:

benita.shabazzcenter@gmail.com

We look forward to serving our youth and young adults, and your input is greatly appreciated.



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Mission Statement

Our mission is to assist persons with significant disabilities with achieving their independent living goals and objectives. This is accomplished by providing multiple independent living and advocacy services designed to maximize self-empowerment, self-esteem, independence and self-sufficiency.



Burgess's Corner

Our great nation has once again experienced the tragedy of the loss of innocence lives through gun violence and we are asking ourselves many questions about how to stop these horrific acts.

This article is not about the debate over gun control but how society looks at certain groups of individuals.

Recently, I read a disturbing article on disabilitycoop.com about how people might believe that persons with disabilities, especially those

who have mental or emotional health issues are more prone to commit gun violence.

Statistics show that approximately only one percent of persons



with disabilities and who have mental or emotional health issues commit violent crimes.

Our society must guard against labeling individuals as criminals simply because they may have a certain type of disability.

Dennis Burgess