



## Remembering Judy Heumann Disability Rights Advocate



December 18, 1947 – March 4, 2023

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

In this edition of our Community Update, we pay tribute to the life of Judy Heumann, one of the pioneers of the disability rights movement. Ms. Heumann, who used a wheelchair since childhood as a result of polio, died on Saturday, March 4, 2023. She played important roles in advocating for passage of the Rehabilitation Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, as well as the adoption of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

March is Women's History Month and we invite community members to nominate a Woman of Distinction in their lives. We are extending the deadline for nominations through March 24 and they can be submitted [here](#).

Please don't hesitate to reach out if we can be of assistance.

**Phone:** 212.288.4607

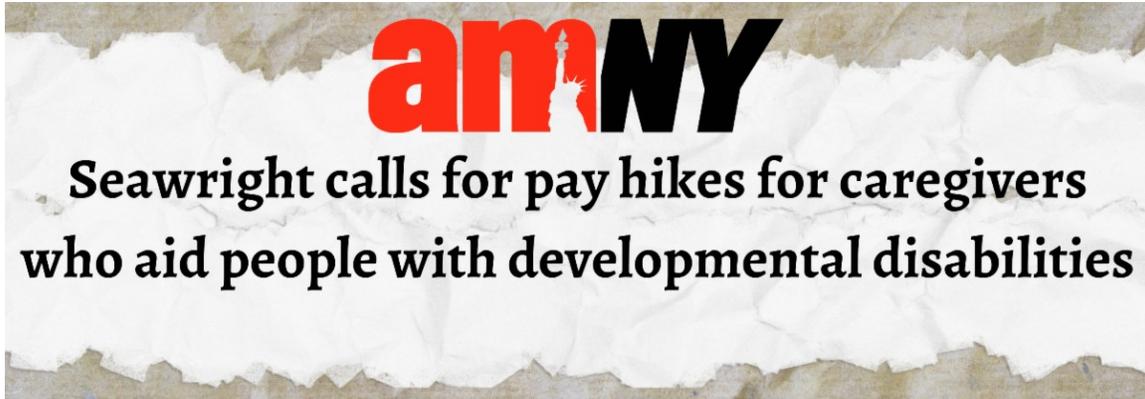
**Email:** [SeawrightR@NYAssembly.gov](mailto:SeawrightR@NYAssembly.gov)

Sincerely,

*Rebecca A. Seawright*

REBECCA A. SEAWRIGHT

As Featured In...



Caregivers who work with people living with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) are not getting paid enough and there are fears that many will exit the industry, according to a state legislator and parents of children with special needs.

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Germaine Scott took care of her son Gregory for decades. He was born with Sotos Syndrome, a rare developmental disorder. He also has mobility issues and a seizure disorder. "I always thought that I would spend my life taking care of him," she said.

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## Statement By Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright On The Suspension Of Roosevelt Island Sportspark Rates

*"I raised the question of Sportspark affordability at a budget hearing so I am pleased to see RIOC made the decision to heed our call suspending the proposed membership and permitting fees until further notice. The fight is not over. We have to stay engaged to ensure that any changes to the pricing structure is met with an open discourse, bringing all stakeholders to the table. Affordability and equitable access to essential services for Roosevelt Island residents is the highest priority. I am closely monitoring this and other matters of governance on Roosevelt Island,"* said Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright.

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## Chair Seawright Holds Assembly People With Disabilities Committee Meeting



## Office Of Assembly Member Seawright Advocates For Coler Hospital At Community Advisory Board



Chief Executive Officer Steven Catullo, Council Member Julie Menin, Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine, Community Advisory Board (CAB) Chairperson Gladys Dixon (front row), CAB Board Members Judy Berdy and Jill Eisner, and Special Assistant to

## Seawright Memorializes Judy Heumann



Judy Heumann, one of the pioneers of the disability rights movement and used a wheelchair since childhood as a result of polio, died on Saturday, March 4, 2023. Her struggle to advance the rights of people with disabilities was pivotal in securing civil rights protections for people with disabilities.

Ms. Heumann was a tireless advocate who refused to accept a life of isolation, segregation and exclusion — the reality faced by many people with disabilities - when she was growing up. Her personal experiences led her to advocate for a different vision of society, where disabled people are treated as equal citizens and afforded full inclusion and participation in society. At the age of five, Ms. Heumann was told that she could not enroll in school because her wheelchair made her a fire hazard. Eventually, she was allowed into a segregated education program for children with disabilities. Later, when she had earned her degree and sought to become a teacher, she was denied a license to teach in New York City because she was unable to walk.

Based on these experiences and many others, Ms. Heumann became a fierce advocate for change. She played important roles in advocating for passage of the Rehabilitation Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, as well as the adoption of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Throughout her career, she worked both inside and outside of government to bring about change, serving in high posts in the Department of Education and Department of State as well as in disability advocacy organizations.

Ms. Heumann led protests, including a 26-day sit-in at the Department of Health Education and Welfare (HEW) headquarters in San Francisco urging the federal government to issue regulations implementing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, which prohibits disability-based discrimination in federally funded programs and activities. The regulations had been awaiting HEW approval for four years. The regulations that were issued following the advocacy of Ms. Heumann and others changed the landscape for people with disabilities and later formed the basis for the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Ms. Heumann remained an active advocate for disability rights throughout her life and worked in collaboration with advocates across all areas of civil and human rights. Perhaps most famously, she worked closely with Brad Lomax, a member of the Black Panthers who used a wheelchair and participated in the Section 504 sit-in, to gain the support of the Black Panthers for the Section 504 protests. Ms. Heumann also mentored countless

young people with disabilities, encouraging them and helping them to become effective advocates.

Assembly Member Rebecca A. Seawright  
is seeking nominations for the

# 2023 WOMEN OF DISTINCTION AWARDS

Together, let's celebrate **Women's History Month** by recognizing  
the extraordinary women who are making our communities stronger.

Accepting  
nominations through  
March 24, 2023

Awards Ceremony  
Date To Be  
Announced



Assembly Member Rebecca A. Seawright

1485 York Avenue, New York, NY 10075  
212-288-4607 • seawright@nyassembly.gov



For a nomination form or more information about this  
or any other community issue, contact Assembly Member  
Rebecca A. Seawright at 212-288-4607 or seawright@nyassembly.gov.

*Nominate a Woman of Distinction here!*

**Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright Presented  
The Our Town Lifetime Achievement Award To  
America's Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney**



Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright, NY1 Anchor Cheryl Wills, former Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, Straus news President and Publisher Jeanne Straus and Editor in Chief Keith J. Kelly.



Cheryl Wills emceed the "Our Town Thanks You" (OTTY) Awards, a community tradition.

*"We know her legacy and are deeply grateful for her service and leadership. She will pass on her vast knowledge, experience and unique lens of politics and policy to future generations of students at Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute at Hunter College and as State President of the National Organization for Women. What a privilege it will be to learn from such an iconic elected official,"* said Assembly Member Seawright presenting the "OTTY" award to former Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney.



Maloney accepts her award from Assembly

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## Seawright Presents The 19th Precinct Community Council With Assembly Proclamation Commemorating Its 50th Anniversary



Founder of the Precinct Council Kathy Jolowicz and Council President Nick Viest.

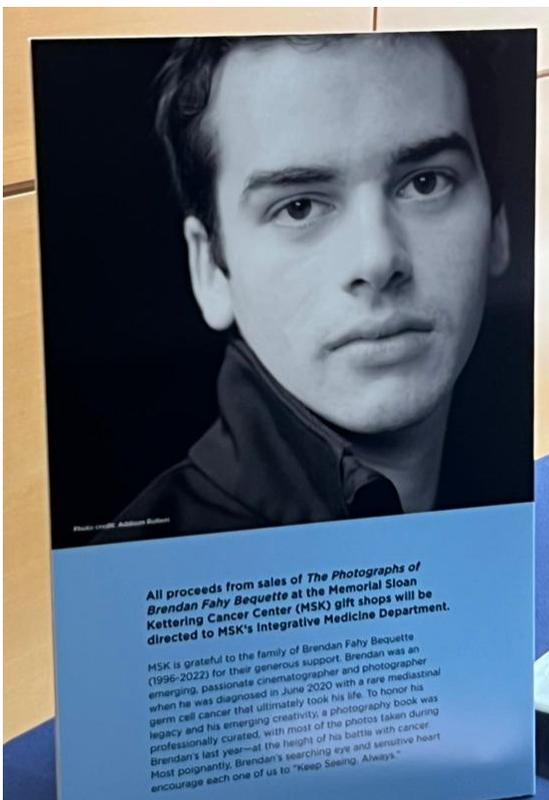
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## Hundreds Of Books Collected At Community Office



Thank you to Lauren for donating books she has enjoyed reading all year to our Project Cicero Book Drive. Now a student in an underserved school will enjoy them.

## Seawright Speaks At Tribute to Brendan Fahy Bequette, Son Of Colleague Assembly Member Pat Fahy Showcasing His Photography



Assembly Member Patricia Fahy.

Brendan Fahy Bequette.

Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright joined Assemblymember Patricia Fahy, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSK) and the Brendan Fahy Bequette Fund to announce the launch of *The Photographs of Brendan Fahy Bequette* and its availability for purchase at select MSK gift shops. Notably, it will be the first time MSK showcases a patients' artwork and the proceeds will directly benefit MSK's Integrative Medicine Service that was so meaningful to Brendan's care.

Brendan Fahy Bequette is the son of Assemblymember Fahy. He passed away in 2022 after an intense 20-month battle with a highly aggressive mediastinal germ cell cancer. *The Photographs of Brendan Fahy Bequette* contains selected pieces of work from Brendan's photography portfolio, as curated by Mark Joseph Kelly, Agnes Zellin, and Paul Tick.

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## Seawright Joins Inaugurations of New Assembly Members Tony Simone and Grace Lee



Assembly Member Tony Simone was sworn-in by Attorney General Letitia James.



At the inauguration of Assembly Member Grace Lee, Assembly colleagues joined her ceremony in support.

(Left to right) Assembly Members: Tony Simone, John Zaccaro, Deborah Glick, Alex Bores, Grace Lee, Speaker Carl Heastie, Rodneyse Bichotte, Harvey Epstein, JoAnne Simon and Rebecca Seawright.



Seawright discusses legislation affecting people with disabilities with the 504 Democratic Club President Michael Schweinsburg (right) and Vice President Ivan Alevante (left) at the community celebration for Assembly Member Grace Lee.

Ivan Alevante, with the assistance of the 504 Dems is designing a disability Village in Ghana along with the Vice President of Ghana, the King of Accra and the head of the Islamic Council for all of Ghana.



Talented performers from Assembly Member Grace Lee's legislative district.

**Consider Our Office A Resource!**



"Bad Bunny" and "Bugs Bunny" visited their community office for a treat!

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Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright | 1485 York Avenue, New York, NY 10075 212-288-4607

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