

JUNE 2026

CIRCLE OF STRENGTH NEWSLETTER Q2



Welcome to Circle of Strength's second quarter newsletter! We have a lot of great things coming and we can't wait to share them with you.

WHAT'S NEW!

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Hello
SUMMER

Circle

of Strength

Visit our website for more information

www.njcircleofstrength.com

(908) 290-0227

Follow us on Social Media for any updates!



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BRINGING OUR COMMUNITY TOGETHER

Whether we're attending events or hosting our own through the Circle of Strength Family, we work so hard to go out into the community to make meaningful connections, collaborate with community partners to create opportunities for those in need of assistance, and continue to serve the individuals and families we talk to daily.

It's important to bring our community together and spread awareness about inclusion. Circle of Strength advocates for those who cannot do so for themselves; they are our priority, and we will continue to ensure their voices are heard and that they know their rights.

WHY WE HOST

To celebrate and honor those who make a powerful impact on the lives of the individuals we serve, from the parents to the caregivers, DSPS, our own staff, and community partners. Remember, you play a vital role, and it does not go unnoticed. We thank you for your continued dedication and compassion!

We don't accomplish anything in this world alone... and whatever happens is the result of the whole tapestry of one's life and all the weavings of individual threads from one to another that creates something."
-Sandra Day O'Connor



SAVE THE DATES

Christmas in July Family & Community Celebration BBQ

For Families of Circle of Strength

Date: Saturday, July 11, 2026

Time: 12:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Location: Edison

For Our Families, DSP, & Community Partners, send your RSVP to email: community@njcircleofstrength.com

2nd Annual Unity Ball

Open to the Public & Families of Circle of Strength

Date: Saturday, September 12, 2026

Time: 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Location: Edison

For more information on what's happening with this year's Unity Ball, email:

COSEFamily@njcircleofstrength.com

DSP & FAMILIES

We are proud to share that our team continues to grow! We have recently welcomed several new DSPs who are dedicated to providing exceptional care and support. We remain committed to matching families with the right professionals to meet their unique needs.

We encourage families to stay engaged and communicate openly with their DSPs. Together, we can ensure the best possible outcomes for the individuals we serve.

Asistencia Bilingüe Disponible en Español

We understand that language should never be a barrier to receiving quality support. We are pleased to offer bilingual assistance to families and individuals who need it. Whether you prefer to communicate in English or Spanish, our team is here to help.

Para apoyo bilingue, no dudes en comunicarte directamente con nosotros. Queremos asegurarnos de que cada familia se sienta escuchada, comprendida y apoyada.



**“Alone we can do so little;
together we can do so much.”
-Helen Keller**



Referral Team

Corinne Rivera Assistant Director ecrivera89@njcircleofstrength.com 423-430-6571	Patricia Hughes Director phughes@njcircleofstrength.com 201-874-4049	Jeremy Brown Assistant Director jbrown@njcircleofstrength.com 732-640-8383
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Bi-lingual Team

Bianca Valdeiglesias Community Outreach Specialist biancav@njcircleofstrength.com 732-659-0340	Perla Rodriguez Family Advocate Specialist perla@njcircleofstrength.com 908-822-3903	Gary Pastuna IT / Outreach & Recruitment Specialist gpastuna@njcircleofstrength.com 908-727-1977
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WORKING TOGETHER

NOW HIRING

Direct Support Professionals (DSPs)

We are actively hiring dedicated and compassionate individuals to join our team as Direct Support Professionals! DSPs play a vital role in empowering individuals with disabilities to live fulfilling, independent lives.

Join Our Team!

- Make a meaningful difference in someone’s life every day.
- Competitive pay and benefits.
- Ongoing training and professional development opportunities.
- A supportive and inclusive work environment.

If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a DSP, contact us today to learn more about open positions and how to apply.

For more information on all our positions, contact our HR Team & Recruitment team:

Angelina Rivera, HR Manager
email: angelinar@njcircleofstrength.com

Gary Pastuna, IT / Outreach & Recruitment Specialist email:
gpastuna@njcircleofstrength.com

Gifty Anane, Project Manager email:
ganane@njcircleofstrength.com



COS INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

At Circle of Strength™, our internship program is more than a learning opportunity—it’s a meaningful partnership. We are proud to welcome interns who bring fresh perspectives, energy, and creativity to our mission-driven work supporting individuals with developmental disabilities. While our interns work behind the scenes, their contributions are essential to the strength and growth of our organization.

From supporting IT and technology initiatives to enhancing our website, social media, and marketing efforts, interns play a key role in shaping how we connect with our community. They contribute to event planning, fundraising efforts, and initiatives with our sister organization, Circle of Strength Family™, while also helping us expand our reach and create impactful content that reflects our mission.

In return, we are committed to providing a supportive and enriching environment where interns can grow both personally and professionally. Through hands-on experience, mentorship, and meaningful projects, they gain valuable skills while making a real difference in how our organization operates and evolves.

We believe that investing in emerging talent strengthens not only Circle of Strength but the broader community we serve. Our interns are not just temporary team members; they are an integral part of our journey, helping us build a stronger, more connected future.

Circle of Strength is committed to accessible care for all families by offering bilingual (English & Spanish) support. We provide Spanish-language presentations to guide families through transition processes and offer personalized assistance every step of the way. Through strong community partnerships and active outreach, we advocate for families, connect them with valuable resources, and ensure they feel supported, informed, and empowered. Our goal is to meet families where they are and provide meaningful support both at home and within the community.

Circle of Strength esta comprometido en proveer el cuidado de todas la familias ofreciendo soporte Bilingue (Ingles y Espanol).

Nosotros proveemos presentaciones en Espanol para guiar a las familias atravez del proceso de transicion y ofrecer asistencia personalizada para cada paso del proceso. Atravez de nuestra fuertes relaciones con servicios a la comunidad y activas relaciones , nosotros podemos apoyar a las familias, conectandolos con invarolables recursos a asegurandonos que puedan sentirse servidos, informados y empoderados. Nuestra meta esconocer a las familias y proveer servicios signifcativos en ambos en su hogar en su comunidad.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Las familias pueden comunicarse en inglés o español para recibir apoyo, sentirse escuchadas y recibir la ayuda adecuada. El equipo continúa creciendo con nuevos DSPs comprometidos en brindar cuidado de calidad, y se mantiene el enfoque en conectar a cada familia con el profesional más adecuado, promoviendo siempre la comunicación abierta para mejores resultados.

Actualmente también se están contratando DSPs que ofrecen apoyo a personas con discapacidades para promover una vida más independiente, con beneficios como pago competitivo, capacitación continua y un ambiente inclusivo.

Circle of Strength destaca la importancia del trabajo en equipo y la comunidad, incluyendo su programa de pasantías, donde los internos apoyan en áreas como tecnología, redes sociales, eventos y mercadeo, mientras reciben mentoría y experiencia profesional.

Circle of Strength Family™ continúa fortaleciendo la organización mediante la creación de oportunidades y el acceso a recursos para las familias.

Además, se ofrece apoyo conductual en todos los condados de Nueva Jersey, incluyendo planes personalizados, evaluaciones BCBA y talleres para cuidadores. En un reciente taller sobre manejo de crisis, se enseñaron estrategias como identificar desencadenantes, practicar la escucha activa, usar la redirección positiva y promover la seguridad con planes de emergencia, con el objetivo de mejorar el bienestar y la estabilidad de las personas y sus familias.

¿Por qué organizamos estos eventos?

Para celebrar y reconocer a quienes generan un gran impacto en la vida de las personas a las que servimos, desde los padres y cuidadores hasta los DSPs, nuestro propio personal y los socios comunitarios. Recuerden que ustedes desempeñan un papel muy importante, y su esfuerzo no pasa desapercibido. ¡Les agradecemos por su continua dedicación y compasión!

Guarda las fechas

Celebración Familiar y Comunitaria “Christmas in July” (Barbacoa)
 Fecha: sábado, 11 de julio de 2026
 Hora: 12:00 PM – 5:00 PM
 Lugar: Edison
 Familias, DSPs y socios comunitarios, por favor envíen su confirmación de asistencia (RSVP) a nuestro correo: community@njcircleofstrength.com

2ª Edición del Baile de la Unidad (Unity Ball)
 Fecha: sábado, 12 de septiembre de 2026
 Hora: 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM
 Lugar: Edison
 Para más información sobre lo que ocurrirá en el evento de este año, envíe un correo a: COSEFamily@njcircleofstrength.com

BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT



Circle of Strength offers behavior support in all counties across New Jersey!

We advocate for and educate families and community organizations supporting loved ones whose daily functioning is impacted by challenging behaviors.

Empower your loved one to thrive with our local behavioral services. We offer personalized plans, BCBA assessments, and caregiver workshops, supported by our dedicated DSP and staff.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR RECENT BEHAVIOR CRISIS MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

We recently held a workshop on behavioral crisis management and want to share essential tips for caregivers to de-escalate concerning behavior safely.

For more information contact:

Taiyanna Neal-Smith, Behavioral Health Support Specialist email:

TnealSmith@njcircleofstrength.com

HERE ARE SOME KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Keep track of triggers by writing them down in a notebook or an emotional wellness journal diary. Recording triggers regularly can help you identify patterns over time.
- Active listening is an important part of managing a crisis. Empathetic engagement can help lower emotional intensity and build trust.
- Supportive Redirection is a useful tool. Offering choices can help the individual feel a sense of control. Redirecting attention to a simple, manageable task can shift focus away from distressing triggers.
- Promote safety by removing any objects that could cause harm and putting a safety plan in place with emergency resources readily available.

CIRCLE OF STRENGTH FAMILY

Circle of Strength Family works collaboratively with Circle of Strength to continue building meaningful connections and expand its reach through strategic partnerships, community engagement, and ongoing development efforts.

Our Current Highlights & Initiatives: College & University Partnerships

Circle of Strength Family has been actively connecting with local colleges and universities to create collaborative opportunities, increase student engagement, and expand community awareness. This initiative benefits both the nonprofit & the agency in securing valuable partnerships, while also providing professional and educational experiences for college students.

Community Partnerships:

Circle of Strength Family has been actively building relationships with organizations and local leaders to strengthen our network of support for our families across New Jersey. We hope to showcase our amazing network of community partners at this year's Unity Ball.

Resource Day in Development:

Circle of Strength Family has been diligently planning interactive community resource events that will bring together service providers, families, and community members in one accessible space. These events will be hosted at various locations including, but not limited to, New Jersey colleges & universities, and local FSO | CMO headquarters.

Unity Ball 2026 Preparation:

Early planning is underway for our signature annual event, bringing together families, DSPs, and community partners for a day of celebration and impact! Save the Date: Saturday, September 12th 2026

Growing Our Development Team:

Circle of Strength Family is expanding our internal capacity through grant writing, donor relations, and research initiatives to support long-term sustainability and growth. Through our community partnership initiatives, we are welcoming interns to the team to learn valuable knowledge of the many workings of nonprofit organizations.



FOUNDER'S MESSAGE

EXPANDING IMPACT THROUGH PARTNERSHIP & LEADERSHIP

We are excited to expand our presence across New Jersey by participating in and hosting a variety of community and college-based events. These engagements support our mission to connect individuals and families with vital services, while also strengthening partnerships statewide. As we look ahead, our organization is entering an exciting phase of growth and expanded impact. A key priority for the coming year is strengthening our collaboration with colleges and universities to create meaningful pathways that enhance support services across the state. By aligning with academic institutions, we aim to foster innovation, workforce development, and increased access to quality care for the communities we serve.

Equally important is our commitment to deepening relationships with community partners. Through strategic collaboration with local organizations, service providers, and advocacy groups, we will broaden our reach and ensure a more coordinated, person-centered approach to support services. To sustain this momentum, we are actively focused on building our Board of Directors for Circle of Strength Family by bringing in leaders with varied expertise, perspectives, and community ties. We will strengthen our governance, expand our network, and position our organization for long-term success.

Together, these initiatives reflect our vision of a more connected, responsive, and impactful organization—one that is rooted in partnership, guided by leadership, and dedicated to improving lives statewide, and empowers individuals, supports families, and strengthens communities across New Jersey. We are also expanding our engagement with community partners, including advocacy groups, local organizations, and family networks. Through coordinated efforts, we will enhance access to services, share resources, and ensure individuals are connected to the full range of supports available through the DDD system.

Join Our Board of Directors for Circle of Strength Family: We are currently expanding our Board and welcome individuals with expertise in healthcare, education, finance, compliance, human services, and community advocacy. Board members play a vital role in shaping our strategic direction, ensuring strong governance, and helping us build sustainable, high-quality services for individuals with disabilities across New Jersey.

Partner with Us: Colleges & Universities: We invite colleges and universities to collaborate with us in building the next generation of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs). Through internships, field placements, volunteer opportunities, and workforce development initiatives, we can create meaningful pathways for students while addressing critical workforce needs within the DDD system.

Collaborate as a Community Partner: We also welcome partnerships with local organizations, service providers, and advocacy groups to co-host resource events, expand service awareness, and improve access to supports for individuals and families.

If you are interested in joining our Board, partnering with us as a college, or collaborating on community initiatives, we encourage you to connect with our team. Together, we can build a stronger, more inclusive system of care across New Jersey.



ELISE COUNTS
CEO

Motivated

Let us know how we can help!



[Circle Of Strength Website](http://www.njcircleofstrength.com)

Visit our website for more information

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