



One Voice Brevard

1 December 2025

Can You Hear Me?

by JJ Holmes, Guest Author and Award-Winning Self-Advocate

Can you hear me? I'm way up here, yeah, the one in the wheelchair, in the back of the room, at the top of the stairs. Not by choice. At least, not by my choice.

On November 10th, 2025, I went to the Pasco County legislative delegation meeting. You know, the big yearly gathering where Floridians get three minutes to tell lawmakers what's working, what's broken, and what's holding on by a prayer. Disability services definitely fall into that last category.

But before I could deliver my three minutes, I discovered a small problem: the podium and the legislators themselves were located 30 steps down from the entrance to the building. A full staircase. No ramp. No elevator. No "we thought about this ahead of time" energy.

So while everyone else got to speak eye-to-eye with their elected officials, I got assigned the coveted nosebleed seats, looking down at the delegation like they were a tiny council of wizards from a Disney movie. Cool vantage point if you're sightseeing but less ideal when you're advocating for your basic right to exist.

And actually, that setup says everything about disability in Florida. We're not the first thought, the second thought, or usually any thought at all. The exact same issue happened at the exact same meeting last year, which tells you how far up the priority list this concern has climbed.

The staff did jog up the stairs with a microphone so I could still speak and I really appreciate the effort, but the second someone has to run a mic up the staircase, the message has



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Can You Hear Me?

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already been delivered: We didn't plan for people like you. Accessibility was treated like extra credit, nice when it happens, but no big deal if it doesn't. Accessibility was treated like extra credit, nice when it happens, but no big deal if it doesn't.

What's crazy is that we know how to fix this. Ramps aren't new technology. Thoughtfulness isn't expensive and inclusion doesn't need a subcommittee, it just needs someone to make sure everyone can actually get to the podium before the meeting starts.

Some people will shrug and say, "But you still got to talk, right?" Sure, but placement matters. Visibility matters. Every inch between me and that podium says something about how we're seen, because, yes, the podium matters. Not for ego, but for equality. When every speaker is on the same level, physically, it shows every voice carries the same weight.

So, yes, you can hear me from up here. But next year? Maybe make it so none of us have to start our speech by pointing out where we were left sitting.



*Want to see JJ's amazing speech at the Pasco Delegation Meeting? Check out our Partner Organization's YouTube (For All The People) to see!

Facebook Real:

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/857696330136995>

YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/@FORALLTHEPEOPLEFLORIDA>





Brevard Uncorked 2025: An Unforgettable Night of Flavor, Elegance, and Community

By: Heather Morway, Brevard Autism Coalition

On November 7, 2025, The Grand Manor transformed into an evening paradise of shimmering lights, soft elegance, and warm community spirit as guests gathered for the annual Brevard Uncorked Wine Tasting Gala. With its glowing chandeliers, flowing fabric drapery, and enchanting LED ambiance, the venue set the stage for a night that was much more than a fundraiser—it was a celebration of unity, artistry, and purpose.

From the moment guests walked in, they were greeted with the smooth vocals and unforgettable charm of Alfie Silva – Entertainer, whose performance captivated the room. His talent elevated the evening, blending perfectly with the sophisticated yet welcoming atmosphere that has made Brevard Uncorked a signature Brevard County event.

A Community That Shows Up Big

This year's gala was a shining example of the heart and generosity of Brevard County. Attendees browsed an incredible array of raffle baskets, silent auction items, and breathtaking artwork—all generously donated by local artists, businesses, and supporters who believe in making a difference.

Every contribution—from a handcrafted art piece to a themed raffle basket—played a direct role in supporting the programs, resources, individuals, and families served by Brevard Autism Coalition, Angels Bridging Gaps, and One Voice Brevard. These donations help fund social programs, therapeutic supports, sensory resources, education, community events, and essential services that uplift individuals with autism and related exceptionalities throughout our county.





Brevard Uncorked 2025 (continued)

To everyone who donated: your kindness made this evening unforgettable, and your generosity will create real, lasting impact right here at home.

A Toast to Our Sponsors

Brevard Uncorked would not be possible without the unwavering commitment of our sponsors. Their partnership ensures that vital programs continue to grow—programs that empower individuals, support caregivers, and strengthen families across Brevard County.

2025 Sponsors:

Sullivan's Jewelers • Nicholas Zollo and Family • Rad Ink • Unisom Spa • Raw Visuals • JMS Therapy • Nance Cacciatore • Sendala's • WFIT 89.5 • Alfie Silva - Entertainer • Core Connections • In Motion ABA • Brighter Days PPEC • Indian River Networks • The Moyles Family • Child and Family Consultants

These community champions allow Brevard Uncorked to not only be a beautiful event, but a meaningful one—with every sip supporting real services and real families.

Why You Can't Miss Brevard Uncorked 2026

If 2025 captured your heart, 2026 will exceed every expectation. With even more flavor, artistry, entertainment, and community connection in the works, Brevard Uncorked 2026 is shaping up to be the can't-miss event of the year.

Mark your calendars, gather your friends, and prepare for a night where elegance meets purpose—and where every ticket helps make Brevard County a more supportive and inclusive place for all.

Brevard Uncorked 2026

Where every sip supports a brighter future.





One Voice Brevard Scholarship Opportunity

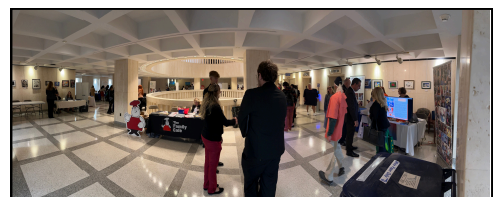


SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS:

Congratulations Paula Knowles and Kai Kumar! You are the winners of our DD Day Scholarship! Please contact us at: info@onevoicebrevard.com to receive your instructions!

We are so excited to join you in Tallahassee in February to raise awareness for disability voices in Brevard County, Florida!

www.onevoicecoalitionflorida.org



The Importance of Community

by Dr. Joseph Werner, OTD, OT/L, Director Brevard Autism Coalition

In 2026 America will celebrate the 200th anniversary of its' Declaration of Independence. There will be a nationwide observance with television specials, parades, parties, and national events.

As 2025 comes to an end, it is time to reflect on the sacred words of the Declaration of Independence, and why Abraham Lincoln viewed it as a moral standard, particularly as an aspirational guide for American ideals like equality and natural rights. It serves as a benchmark against which American practices can be measured.

My favorite phrase from the Declaration is the second paragraph, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life liberty and the pursuit of happiness". These words are inclusive of everyone, regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities.

America has always been a melting pot, the world's greatest experiment: people from different countries, cultures, and experiences come to live together, and under the values of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, we strive for a better life for ourselves and for all Americans. We have all benefitted from diversity, and we have fought for equality under the law. When we feel that we belong, are connected and included we all gain and advance.

As the director of the Brevard Autism Coalition and Co-Director of One Voice Coalition Florida, I am encouraged by how our community comes together to support children, families and individuals with neurodiversity.



The Importance of Community



(continued)

As we work next year to collaborate and communicate with our Representatives, we must advocate and vote for changes in the laws, funding and programs that support mental and physical health for everyone.

While advocating for rights, housing, prevocational training, employment, transportation and accessible health care can feel never-ending, time and time again I feel the Brevard community is meeting the challenge: At the Brevard Autism and Flutie Foundation 5K run/walk for Autism Awareness, Camp-2-Can, prevocational programs from Angels Bridging Gaps, and sports and recreational programs of the Parker foundation and SOAK, and countless other non-profit events, Brevardians stepped up to support each other.

Americans are always at our best when we open our hearts, and American strength of spirit is forged from recognizing how similar we as are as opposed to our differences. That is the importance of community.

Brevardians must rely on each other, and together we can have a 2026 which celebrates and values our diversity of thoughts, feelings and experiences, because we are all equal and we need to include everyone's in these days of stress and uncertainty we cannot and should not leave anyone behind, we need every mind and body.

Over the holidays I hope everyone can find peace, the miracle of the season, and can dip into the well-spring of music, family, walking, and stories for our own health and well-being.

Holiday



B	E	C	B	T	M	O	P	F	F	I	X	X	C
E	H	O	G	L	E	T	T	E	R	S	T	Q	O
L	C	B	U	U	H	S	O	N	G	S	H	P	O
L	O	P	P	R	E	S	E	N	T	S	A	F	K
S	M	S	A	A	U	M	F	N	U	L	N	X	I
U	M	T	N	D	G	A	R	L	Y	C	K	J	E
L	U	A	T	O	X	I	I	D	S	W	F	F	S
B	N	R	G	V	D	L	E	C	H	X	U	N	H
D	I	G	E	E	S	I	N	Q	H	K	L	S	J
A	T	V	I	P	A	T	D	W	P	I	R	E	V
T	Y	H	Q	M	J	P	S	P	W	L	L	J	Z
P	U	Z	T	Z	I	G	H	G	O	I	Z	L	X
C	A	R	T	O	O	N	I	A	E	K	O	S	Y
I	T	U	R	K	E	Y	P	X	Q	T	R	E	E

COMMUNITY
FRIENDSHIP
THANKFUL
TURKEY
DOVE
STAR
TREE
PRESENTS
CARTOON
COOKIES
LETTERS
MAIL
CHILLY
BELLS
SONGS



Music Therapy Threatened

Interview with Courtney Arndt (Florida Music Therapy) by Nicole Grabner

Families across Florida are facing an unexpected and stressful disruption: thousands of children have abruptly lost access to music, art, and animal-assisted therapies that many rely on for emotional, developmental, and behavioral support. The disruption follows a state-mandated audit that uncovered widespread issues with therapist qualifications in a contractor's statewide provider network.

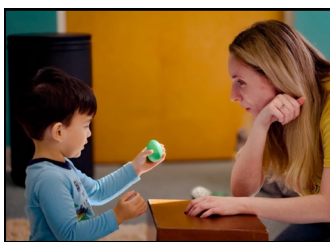
Sunshine Health, a state Medicaid contractor, recently ended its contract with MTM Health—the company that had been responsible for coordinating “expressive therapies” for children on Medicaid. An audit conducted at the beginning of November revealed that many providers in MTM's network lacked required credentials, such as a Medicaid provider ID, field-specific certifications, or background checks. Some were not licensed for the type of care they were offering.

Because of these findings, Sunshine Health halted services and announced it would rebuild the provider network directly, contracting with qualified therapists only.

These services play a crucial role for kids with:

- Autism spectrum disorder
- Down syndrome
- Cerebral palsy
- Emotional and behavioral challenges
- Developmental delays

For some children, their therapists are one of their most consistent and trusted supports—people who help them regulate emotions, communicate, and cope with daily challenges. Courtney Arndt, founder and CEO of Florida Music Therapy, explained in an interview last week how, for their company and the families they serve, this disruption has been devastating.



For much of the public, expressive therapies may look simply like activities—music, art, animals, or recreation. But for the children who rely on them, these sessions are carefully structured interventions delivered by trained professionals. When access is lost, families lose essential routines that keep their children regulated, stable, and progressing.

When the contracts were first halted, Florida Music Therapy was owed over \$160,000 for the over 300 children on Medicaid they serve. While this disruption has been disastrous for families, the loss of income for the provider has been almost ruinous. Courtney explained how her company drained their savings (which they had planned on using to open a new center), to help offer scholarships for their families, to help keep services going. She even created a GoFundMe page to help offset

Music Therapy Threatened

(Continued)

costs for those families the most desperate in need. During this process, Florida Music Therapy was the only practice to continue supporting Medicaid children with music therapy services in our state when Sunshine, CMS, and MTM shut down.

Currently, after Sunshine Health was pulled into the Florida House of Representatives Subcommittee floor for questioning, repayments of the funds have begun rolling in, but Courtney says, "We have enough to make it to January, which will hopefully bridge the gap to the new contract, which is direct with Sunshine Health." And while this sounds like good news, Courtney warns that there are still issues ahead.

The new contract in negotiation has a few flaws. First, it makes services LESS accessible by not allowing telehealth or school/facility services, which limits immunocompromised members and those with mobility, or transportation/socioeconomic challenges. Second, the new contract rate offers 35% less of the reimbursement rate and below Florida Music Therapy's cost of service, which would require the provider to either shut down the studio or lay off therapists. Lastly, the whole reason this issue began is because of the certification of therapists, which is problematic when the state doesn't allow title protections for expressive therapists, such as music therapists. A 2017 Bill sought to fix this issue, but it did not pass and has had no headway since.

So, how can we help? Courtney asks our community to reach out to our state legislators for the following:

1. Ask that music therapists be allowed to practice in locations and through mediums that are accessible and equitable to ALL children in Florida, based on individual need.
2. Request that music therapists receive a sustainable rate of reimbursement comparable to MTM's reimbursement rate we've been working with.
3. Request Florida State grant title protection and state licensure to music therapists for the safety of Florida children.

Lastly, Courtney has asked to share the link for the GoFundMe site to help this company, which is the only of its kind in our entire state and is based in Brevard County, to help recoup their losses.

<https://gofund.me/7fdbf26ad>



I.D.E.A. at 50: Protecting Progress in Florida

by Nicole Grabner

As the 50th anniversary of IDEA passes, its legacy is being measured not only in national terms but also in the thousands of lives shaped across Florida.

According to the Florida Department of Education, in the 2023–24 school year, there were over 440,000 students with disabilities (SWD) enrolled in Florida’s public schools, representing about 15.4% of the total student population. Over the past decade, as more families moved to Florida, this share rose steadily from 13.4% in 2016–17 to today’s level — underscoring the growing demand for consistent, high-quality special-education services.

Over five decades, IDEA has delivered tangible gains: increased graduation rates, better developmental and academic outcomes, and greater inclusion of disabled students in general education settings.

Now, the anniversary comes at a precarious time. The current administration has aggressively reduced staffing at the Department of Education’s special-education offices, decimating the oversight infrastructure that enforces IDEA’s protections. Recent proposals also aim to transfer critical IDEA oversight and administration from ED to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) — a move many fear would reshape special education from an educational and civil-rights program into a health-based service model. Without robust federal oversight and resources, states may struggle to meet rising demand for services, and families could find themselves navigating inconsistent supports or limited resources.

In Florida, where tens of thousands of students rely daily on the protections and services IDEA provides, any weakening of those protections risks turning what should be a celebration of progress into a moment of vulnerability. As we mark 50 years since IDEA’s passage, protecting its legacy means ensuring that all students — particularly those in states seeing surging enrollments — continue to receive the rights and supports the law guarantees.

Paying It Forward “Free Love” Event with Rad Ink

By: Nicole Grabner

Free tattoos? Local live musicians? Food and information booths? All of these were present this past weekend at an amazing event hosted by local small business, Rad Ink, in Melbourne.

The shop owner coordinated with tattoo artists across the country to come for an afternoon and offer free tattoos for as many as possible - the only catch? You have to pay that love forward! Because as the owner, Robbie Ripoll says, “Love saves lives. This day is dedicated entirely to spreading love, hope, and kindness. Our artists tattoo for free, asking for nothing in return except that each person ‘pays it forward’ with an act of compassion and kindness in hopes of saving lives. It’s about more than getting a free tattoo; it’s about connection, healing, and reminding one another that love can truly make a difference.”

The event had multiple vendors such as representatives from 2-1-1, therapy dogs, and ours which offered disability-related resources.

People began arriving around 9:00 AM and while space for tattoos ran out around 4:00 PM, the line continued, around the block, well afterward.



While guests waited in line, they were treated to live music from local musicians, food from food trucks and informational vendors. The entire event was much more successful than anticipated with an estimated 200 to 300 individuals showing up! Congratulations Rad Ink!

End of Year Reflections

by Nicole Grabner, One Voice Brevard Director



“For last year’s words belong to last year’s language and next year’s words await another voice.”
— T. S. Eliot

I have this feeling that as we draw close to the end of 2025, it will be vital to remember that while we need to acknowledge and reflect on what has passed, recognizing where we are now, and finding hope for the future will be what’s most important. The world saw so many changes this year; so many changes that we will be feeling the ripples of for many years to come. It can be suffocating, bearing the weight of all that change. So much so that we forget that we have a chance, an opportunity, to be the change we need. Moving forward, I have hope, so much hope, for our community - for our new voice.

The One Voice Coalition has grown this past year. We have hosted events, helped families in need, traveled, and formed new partnerships. The crazy idea of creating one community, one voice, does not seem so crazy anymore. We decided to bring together the organizations of the Brevard Autism Coalition, Angels Bridging Gaps, and One Voice Brevard under one umbrella. This has been so successful that we are now adding more partners to our Coalition. We began the year with Delegation Meetings, Conferences, and Capitol Advocacy Days, and the rolled into our annual Doug Flutie 5K Race, and our prevocational Camps. We had a Spring and Fall adult program that traveled all over the county and even did a volunteer beach cleanup. We hosted a Disability Conference that drew more than 500 families, and we ended our year with an amazing Wine Gala and even more Delegation Meetings! It’s a lot to celebrate.

So, in an effort to showcase the hard work each volunteer organization has put in this year, we have created an annual calendar of events. (Next pages)

It is one of my greatest wishes that this newsletter continues to serve as a resource and almost like a journal of our journey, as we keep traveling down this road. We began this newsletter to help share information and resources, to give advocacy alerts, and to share family stories. As we knock on the door of 2026, let us keep our community close and lift up our hope for a brighter and prosperous New Year for our disability community.



2025 OVB Events



JANUARY

6 JAN - INDIAN RIVER
DELEGATION MEETING
7 JAN - VOLUSIAN COUNTY
DELEGATION MEETING
23 JAN - MENTAL HEALTH
ROUND TABLE
28-31 JAN - FFLN
CONFERENCE

FEBRUARY

18-20 FEB - ADVOCACY IN
CAPITAL
22 FEB - DOUG FLUTIE RACE

MARCH

9-14 MAR - DD DAY
28 MAR - MENTAL HEALTH
TRAINING

APRIL

1-2 APR - AUTISM PRESS
CONFERENCE (TALLAHASSEE)
10 APR - DISABILITY EFSC
25 APR - OVB INTERN
LUNCHEON

MAY

6-8 MAY - FVH CONFERENCE

JUNE

6 JUN - ORLANDO ASF
GRAND OPENING
13-15 JUN - FAMILY CAFE

JULY

AUGUST

2 AUG - HELPING HANDS
CONFERENCE

SEPTEMBER

30 SEP - BREVARD
DELEGATION MEETING

OCTOBER

2-3 OCT - CONNECTING THE
DOTS CONFERENCE
21 OCT - ORANGE COUNTY
DELEGATION MEETING
22 OCT - INDIAN RIVER
COUNTY DELEGATION
MEETING
29 OCT - ST LUCIE
DELEGATION MEETING

NOVEMBER

3-4 NOV - ADVOCACY IN
CAPITAL
7 NOV - BREVARD UNCORKED
29 NOV - RAD INK "FREE
LOVE" EVENT

DECEMBER

INFO@ONEVOICEBREVARD.COM

(321) 312-0497

2025 BAC Events



JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
GOLF SOCIAL GROUP	GOLF SOCIAL GROUP 22 FEB - DOUG FLUTIE RACE	GOLF SOCIAL GROUP ADVENTURE COFFEE PREVOCATIONAL CAMP 28 MAR - MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING
APRIL	MAY	JUNE
GOLF SOCIAL GROUP SENSORY SENSITIVE EARTH DAY AT BREVARD ZOO EFSC DISABILITY AWARENESS DAYS	GOLF SOCIAL GROUP SENSORY SENSITIVE PLAY	GOLF SOCIAL GROUP CAMP2CAN SUMMER CAMP
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
GOLF SOCIAL GROUP CAMP2CAN SUMMER CAMP	GOLF SOCIAL GROUP 2 AUG - HELPING HANDS CONFERENCE	GOLF SOCIAL GROUP 30 SEP - BREVARD DELEGATION MEETING
OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
GOLF SOCIAL GROUP BOO AT THE ZOO SENSORY TABLE	7 NOV - BREVARD UNCORKED RAD INK FREE LOVE EVENT	

BREVARDAUTISMCOALITION@GMAIL.COM

(321) 768-6800

2025 ABG Events



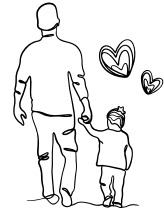
JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
7 JAN - ADULT SPRING SESSION BEGINS	ADULT SPRING SESSION CONTINUES 22 FEB - DOUG FLUTIE RACE	ADULT SPRING SESSION CONTINUES 28 MAR - MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING
APRIL	MAY	JUNE
ADULT SPRING SESSION CONTINUES SENSORY SENSITIVE EARTH DAY AT BREVARD ZOO EFSC DISABILITY AWARENESS DAYS	22 MAY - ADULT SPRING SESSION ENDS MOTHER'S DAY EVENT	FATHER'S DAY EVENT FAMILY CAFE ADULT SUMMER CAMP
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
ADULT SUMMER CAMP	2 AUG - HELPING HANDS CONFERENCE 5 AUG - FALL ADULT SESSION BEGINS	FALL ADULT SESSION CONTINUES 30 SEP - BREVARD DELEGATION MEETING
OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
FALL ADULT SESSION CONTINUES	FALL ADULT SESSION CONTINUES 7 NOV - BREVARD UNCORKED FAMILY FUN NIGHT FAMILY THANKSGIVING MEAL SPONSORSHIP	18 DEC - FALL ADULT SESSION ENDS SANTAS NORTH POLE

ABGWORKS1@GMAIL.COM

(631) 807-2974

Dad's Corner

by Guest Author Christopher Grabner



Welcome back to Dad's Corner! I hope you had a lovely Thanksgiving with friends and family and did not eat too much. This time of year, it can be tremendously stressful from the chaos of Black Friday to last-minute holiday shopping, and we can sometimes see the worst of society and assume people are intentionally targeting us or sticking it to us. Instead of getting angry and letting that person sour your mood, try to reframe your mindset and, as my friend Scott Darius over at Florida Voices for Health likes to say, "let us give each other a bit of grace". Recognize that we do not know what that person is going through, nor do they know what we are going through; so take a breath, count to ten, and remind yourself of this. Lastly, take a beat and try to remember Hanlon's Razor, "never attribute to malice that which is adequately explained by stupidity". It is far more likely that they are lost in their own world, trying to get through their day. Discourteous, yes, but not malicious.

Recently, I took the family to St Augustine for a holiday trip. One evening, we drove over to see the Christmas lights, and traffic was atrocious. As we were driving, another lane was being forced to merge into my lane. I was letting one car in, so they could zipper, but I saw the car behind them trying to squeeze in, and how did I respond? I decided to box them out to teach them a lesson, aka vigilante justice! Guess what happened? I stupidly escalated a situation by exchanging pleasantries with the other driver, scaring the passengers in our vehicles. What was I hoping to achieve? To get 20 feet in front of that guy and continue to move at a snail's pace? What did I actually achieve. I scared my family, sent my adrenaline through the roof, and the result was shame and disappointment in myself. Later, I found myself wishing I could find the guy and apologize for my behavior. I should have given him some grace; I'm sure he was stressed and exhausted from this traffic and just wanting to get his family home.

In my 40-plus years on this Earth, I can think of ZERO times where vigilante justice has resulted in anything good. I am not teaching that person a lesson; I am simply escalating a situation and putting myself and others around me at risk. Driving in Florida would likely be exponentially safer if we could all apply a bit of empathy and grace to those around us. This reminds me of a story I told a friend years ago, where I was complaining about holding the door for someone, and they didn't say 'thank you', which made me mad. I told my friend that people are SO entitled these days! His response... Chris, we don't open the door for someone so they can say thank you; we do it because it's the right thing to do.

As we close out 2025, let us try to up our game a bit, have some empathy, and give those around us some grace. Lastly, this applies to yourself as well. When you inevitably make a mistake, respond sharply, or take a misstep...give yourself some grace. Learn from it, and keep moving yourself towards the person you want to become. From my family to yours, Happy Holidays, and see you in 2026!



Monthly Art Submission



This month's submission is the beautiful and lovely ring designed by Siena (age 16) and is for sale at Sullivan's Jewelers!

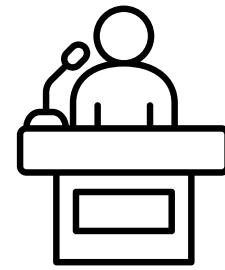


The ring features one gold fish with the neurodivergent symbol (the infinity symbol) on the tail, swimming against the current. The inspiration for this ring came from the idea that our disabled community often feels that they are navigating a world that is not designed for them. With every purchase of this ring, a percentage of the profit is donated to our One Voice Coalition! Please see Sullivan's Jewelers or visit their website (below) to order yours for Christmas!

https://sullivansjewelers.shop/collections/sparkle-for-good/products/untitled-nov3_12-16

Bill Buzz

By: Nicole Grabner, Director, One Voice
Brevard



Florida legislators are carrying forward a growing focus on disability issues — especially autism and communication needs — into the 2026 session. One key bill is **SB 418**, filed in November 2025, which would require the state to establish a program to improve communication between individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and law-enforcement officers, including training for officers and providing an autism-friendly communications envelope.

Another proposal, **HB 533**, would guarantee that individuals with disabilities have the right to use their preferred alternative communication methods. The bill would bar state agencies, schools, and health-care providers from restricting or denying access to those methods.

These follow last session's landmark law, **SB 112**, passed in 2025, which expanded early-intervention screening, extended eligibility for early-intervention services, funded charter and summer-school programs for students with autism, and directed the University of Florida Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment (UF CAN) to act as a statewide hub for autism services and training.

Together, these bills reflect a shift toward broader supports — from early childhood intervention and educational accommodations to communication rights and law-enforcement interactions — for Floridians with disabilities.

As 2026 begins, legislators appear committed to deepening and broadening those supports across education, health, and public safety. With the final bill-filing deadline falling on January 13, the first day of the 2026 Legislative Session, there is still some time for additional bills to be submitted.

Topic Category	Bill Number	Title	Issue	Sponsor/Contact
Healthcare	SB 38/HB 219	Parity for nonnursing Services under MMC	Requiring AHCA to reimburse nonnursing services provided by licensed providers under Medicaid long-term managed care	Rep Dunkley/Sen Sharief
Healthcare	SB40/HB 163	Medicaid Providers	Requires AHCA to include requirements w/Medicaid Managed Care Plans "outside regular business hours"	Senator Sharief
Healthcare	SB68	Health Care Patient Protection	Requires hospitals w/ED's to develop & implement policies and procedures and conduct training	Senator Harrell
Education	SB 72	IEPs	Requiring a school district to complete evaluation for eligible IEP w/in specified timeframe	Senator Harrell
Healthcare	SB 114	Continuity of Care in Health Insurance	Requiring contracts give 60day notice; continue healthcare	Senator Jones
Safety	SB 117/SB 244/SB 61	Residential Swimming Pool Req	Pool safety requirements if property sold or rented; rental property safety requirements	Rep Lopez/Maggard/Sen Rodriguez
Healthcare	SB 152/HB 517	Medicaid Provider Network	Requiring Medicaid Managed Care (MMC) negotiate mutually acceptable rates	Senator Harrell/Rep Tramont
Education	SB 182	School Teacher Training & Mentoring Program	Establishes the School Teacher Training and Mentoring Program within Department of Education	Senator Jones
Education	SB 186	Student Health and Safety	Revising Department of Health responsibilities for education programs concerning epilepsy	Senator Garcia
Education	SB 206	Students with ASD	Requiring State Board of Education to adopt rule requiring certification for teachers with ASD children	Senator Harrell
Safety	HB 85/SB 428	Swimming Voucher ASD	Expand state swim lesson voucher program to meet needs children with ASD	Rep. Kendall
Law	SB 120	Contract Protection for Elderly & Disabled Adults	Creating the "Elderly & Disabled Adult Contract Protection Act" (in primary language and video of signature)	Senator Garcia
Healthcare	SB 222	Cost-sharing Req for Diabetes Management	Prohibiting health insurance policies from imposing a cost-sharing requirement for 30-days supply of insulin	Senator Smith
Healthcare	SB 348	Statewide Health Care Coverage	Establishing Task Force on Universal Health Care	Senator Smith
Healthcare	HB 363	Dental Therapy	Authorizes Medicaid to reimburse for dental services by mobile dental units	Rep Chaney
Healthcare	HB 411	Terminology Associated w/Autism	Revises Autism Definition in APD statute	Rep Maggard
Safety	SB 418/HB 365	Law Enforcement Interactions w/ASD	Requiring Dept of Highway Safety & Motor Vehicles to establish program for officers interacting w/individuals w/ASD	Senator Jones/Rep Valdes
Safety	SB 428/HB 85	Swimming Lesson Voucher Program	Revising age requirements for children receiving a voucher through Swimming Lesson Voucher Program	Senator Yarbrough/Rep Kendall
Law	HB 447	Pub Records Mental Health & Substance Abuse	Specifies hearings relating to mental health & substance abuse are confidential and closed	Rep Maney
Safety	SB 494/HB 423	Student Elopement	Requiring public schools to create a School Staff Assistance for Emergencies (SAFE) Team and school elopement plan	Senator Arrington/Rep Eskamani
Education	SB 512/HB 345	Funding Voluntary PreKindergarten	Revising calculation of the base student allocation for the Voluntary PreK; requiring to annual publish information	Senator Osgood/Rep Edmonds
Healthcare	SB 562/HB 533	Communication Rights of Indiv w/Disabilities	Providing that individuals w/disability have the right to communicate in their preferred manner	Senator Garcia/Rep Woodson
Healthcare	SB 568/HB 531	Managed Care Plans	Revising Medicaid managed care contract requirements to prohibit managed care plans from reviewing certain prior auth	Senator Harrell/Rep Barnaby
Healthcare	SB 574/HB 471	Recruitment & Retention of SLPs	Requiring the Department of Education to develop and maintain statewide strategic plan for recruitment and retention	Senator Jones/Rep Chambliss
Healthcare	SB 580/HB 555	Local Licensing of Home Caregivers	Authorizing counties and municipalities to license home caregivers within their jurisdictions	Senator Harrell/Rep Skidmore
Healthcare	SB 586/HB	Repair of Mobility Devices	Requiring original equipment manufacturers to make available documentation, parts and tools required for maint of devices	Senator Smith/Rep Eskamani
Safety	SB 606/HB 503	Drowning Prevention Education	Requiring Department of Health to develop education material on drowning prevention safety measures & safe bathing	Senator Smith/Rep Eskamani
Safety	SB 608/HB 658	Vacation Rentals	Requiring vacation rental to install a pool safety feature if pool is located on the vacation rental property	Senator Smith/Rep Burgess

*To find who your State Legislators are, please see the Florida House and Florida Senate websites.

OVCFL 2026 Legislative Platform



ONE VOICE COALITION 2026 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM



Health Care

- Protecting and Expanding Medicaid - Ensuring Floridians have access to quality, affordable health care.
- Standardize and update the legal definition of autism in the Florida Statutes.
- KidCare Rollout - ensure effective implementation of this benefit

Protect children with disabilities by ensuring the protection of OSEP (Office of Special Education Programs), OCR (Office of Civil Rights), and protecting IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.



Education



Collaboration

Bring collaboration and transparency to every aspect of policy affecting those with disabilities. It is imperative to ensure that our voices are heard when decisions are being made - Nothing about us without us!



info@onevoicebrevard.com



www.onevoicecoalitionflorida.org

Resources and Contact Information

- Brevard Autism Coalition; <https://brevardautismcoalition.com/>
- Angels Bridging Gaps; <https://angelsbridginggaps.org/>
- The Parker Foundation; <https://www.theparkerfoundation.com/>
- S.O.A.K.; <https://www.soakautism.com/>
- Down Syndrome Association of Brevard; <https://www.dsabrevard.org/>
- UCF CARD; <https://ucf-card.org/>
- Florida Developmental Disabilities Council; <https://www.fddc.org/>
- Project 10; <https://project10.info/>
- Vocational Rehabilitation; <https://www.rehabworks.org/contact/area3.html>
- FLAPSE; <https://apse.org/chapter/florida/>
- The Arc of Space Coast; <https://www.arcofsc.org/>
- Promise in Brevard; <https://promiseinbrevard.com/>
- Brevard Resource Center for Disability Solutions; <https://rcdsfl.org/>
- The Family Cafe; <https://familycafe.net>
- Family Liason Project; <https://familyliasonproject.com>
- Early Steps Space Coast; <https://spacecoastes.org>
- Family Care Council Area 7; <https://fccflorida.org/area-7-fcc.html>
- Bright Feats magazine
- Brevard C.A.R.E.S. Mobil Response Team 24/hour line (321) 213-0315
- Feeding Florida (food bank information) <https://www.feedingflorida.org/>
- Everything Brevard (resource website)
<https://www.everythingbrevard.com/blog/guide-space-coast-food-pantries>



For more information or questions, please see our Facebook page.

Brevard County Delegation

CONTACT US
Brevard County Delegation



Senator Debbie Mayfield
District 19

📞 District Office (321) 409 - 2025
Capital Office (850) 487 - 5019

✉️ debbie.mayfield@flsenate.gov

🌐 <https://www.flsenate.gov/Senators/S19>

📍 900 East Strawbridge Avenue
Room 408
Melbourne, FL 32901



Senator Tom Wright
District 8

📞 District Office (386) 304 - 7630
Capital Office (850) 487 - 5008


✉️ tom.wright@flsenate.gov

🌐 <https://www.flsenate.gov/Senators/S8>

📍 4606 South Clyde Morris Boulevard
Suite 2-J
Port Orange, FL 32129



CONTACT US
Brevard County Delegation



Rep. Chase Tramont
District 30

📞 District Office (386) 278 - 1640
Capital Office (850) 717 - 5030

✉️ chase.tramont@flhouse.gov

🌐 <https://www.flhouse.gov/Sections/Representatives/detail.aspx?MemberId=4867&LegislativeTermId=91>

📍 Suite 201D
5889 South Williamson Boulevard
Port Orange, FL 32128-6110



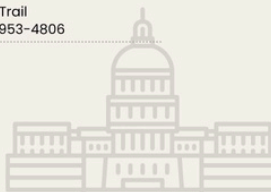

Rep. Tyler Sirois
District 31

📞 District Office (386) 304 - 7630
Capital Office (850) 487 - 5008

✉️ tyler.sirois@flhouse.gov

🌐 <https://www.flhouse.gov/Sections/Representatives/detail.aspx?MemberId=4748&LegislativeTermId=91>

📍 Suite 206
260 North Tropical Trail
Merritt Island, FL 32953-4806



CONTACT US
Brevard County Delegation



Rep. Brian Hodggers
District 32

📞 District Office (321) 497 - 8200
Capital Office (850) 717 - 5032

✉️ brian.hodgers@flhouse.gov

🌐 <https://www.flhouse.gov/Sections/Representatives/detail.aspx?MemberId=5064&LegislativeTermId=91>

📍 Building B #202
2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way
Viera, FL 32940-6605



Rep. Monique Miller
District 33

📞 District Office (321) 497 - 8170
Capital Office (850) 717 - 5033


✉️ monique.miller@flhouse.gov

🌐 <https://www.flhouse.gov/Sections/Representatives/custom/details.aspx?MemberId=4913&LegislativeTermId=91>

📍 Suite 5
2539 Palm Bay Road Northeast
Palm Bay, FL 32905-3534



CONTACT US
Brevard County Delegation




Rep. Robert Brackett
District 34

📞 District Office (772) 365 - 9230
Capital Office (850) 717 - 5034


✉️ robert.brackett@flhouse.gov

🌐 <https://www.flhouse.gov/Sections/Representatives/detail.aspx?MemberId=4870&LegislativeTermId=91>

📍 Suite B2-203
1800 27th Street
Vero Beach, FL 32960-0310



Sign up for my
E-Newsletter!




@RepHaridopolos

**NEED HELP WITH A
FEDERAL AGENCY?**

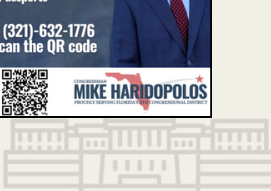

For assistance with:

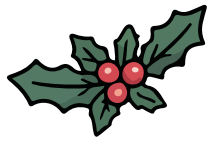
- Social Security
- The IRS
- Veterans Affairs
- Medicare
- Immigration/Passports

Call (321)-632-1776
or scan the QR code



MIKE HARIDOPOLOS
FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES





December Events





ANGEL TREE DONATIONS

Spread joy to a child this holiday season

Who You are Helping
All children on our Angel Tree are part of special needs families nominated by their Early Steps therapists.

How to Participate

- Choose a child (list provided).
- Send us your name, phone number, and email so we can assign the child to you.
- Shop for the items on their list - unwrapped gifts only, please.
- Drop off gifts by Monday, December 13th at one of our Early Steps locations.

Drop Off Locations

Melbourne Office 3000 S. Wickham Road (next to CVS; faces Wickham)	Titusville The Children's Center 1650 S. Washington Ave.	Rockledge Office 1801 S. Fiske Blvd., Suite 101
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Timely drop-offs help us stay organized during this busy season. Thank you for your generosity and for bringing holiday joy to children with special needs. Thank you for showing what it means to be part of our village. Your generosity lifts up our families in ways that matter deeply.

If you cannot drop off in person, please contact:
Mary Cancel: 321-293-1120
mary.cancel@spacecoastvics.org

ONLY 22 KIDDOS LEFT! PLEASE REACH OUT TO MARY CANCEL TO SPONSOR ONE OF OUR SPECIAL NEEDS KIDS THIS CHRISTMAS!



SANTA'S NORTHPOLE OUTLET FOR KIDS and ADULTS

**SATURDAY
DECEMBER 6TH, 2025
10 AM UNTIL 2 PM**

**SPACE COAST FIELD OF DREAMS
Minton & Fell Roads in West Melbourne**

There will be a special kids-only area where they can go shopping for gifts that are all \$5 and under. The children will be escorted throughout the special kids-only area by our Angel Trees, who will help with their decision-making and gift wrapping as well as the Local Cub Scout pack.

Family members and caregivers can browse over 20 home-crafted vendors. There will be live music, as well as of course, "NAIAD".

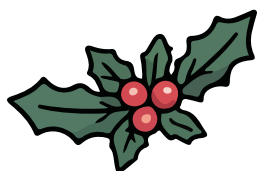
Please contact that forgotten elf, "Uncle Phil", for more information on becoming a vendor, musical act, or to volunteer at: ABGmarketingdirector@gmail.com or (321) 324-1643

DONATIONS OF GROCERY GIFT CARDS AND SMALL TOYS ACCEPTED. PLEASE SPEAK WITH JACKIE YEARBY FOR MORE DETAILS.



THIS #GIVING TUESDAY, PLEASE CONSIDER A SMALL DONATION TO THE ONE VOICE COALITION. YOUR SUPPORT WILL HELP FUND OUR PROGRAMS.





December Events

December 3rd, International Day of Persons With Disabilities

DECEMBER							2025
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
		1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
28	29	30	31				

- Santa's North Pole Outlet for Kids and Adults, **Saturday, December 6th**, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Held at the Space Coast Field of Dreams in West Melbourne. See flyer for more info.
- UCF CARD presents "Caregivers of Adults and Soon-to-Be Adults with ASD", a resource and discussion group, on **Wednesdays** via Zoom from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Registration required. See flyer for additional details.
- Community Playdate for Under 5, **Wednesday, 24 December** from 9-10:30 at the Children's Center Titusville. This play date is held every fourth Wednesday of the month. Check the flyer for additional information.
- "Behavior Isn't Bad", free Webinar, presented by Brianna Cashman, Med, BCBA-LBA (NY), **Thursday, December 4th**, from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m and **Friday, 12 December** from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. See flyer for more information.
- "Carol-Oke" Christmas Party, **Thursday, December 19th**, from 5 p.m. 8 p.m. Sponsored by Salty Sisters Bar & Grill and Surfside Playhouse, 24 N. Brevard Ave, Cocoa Beach. See Flyer for additional details.
- Angels Bridging Gaps Fall Session Adult group, beginning **Tuesday, 5 August** through **Thursday, the 18th of December**. Events are scheduled from 11:00 am to 2 pm. For more information, contact Angels Bridging Gaps.
- Free on-line Advocacy Meeting featuring Joel Leon. Bought to you by the ARC. **Wednesday, December 3rd** at 12 noon. See flyer for registration information.
- Angel Tree Donations: Spread Joy to a Child this Holiday Season. Contact May Cancel for children's names/ages. Three convenient locations for drop off. See flyer for information on how to make a child's Christmas special this year!..
- Merry Christmas! **Thursday, December 25th**.



Event Flyers



Event Flyers

CAREGIVERS OF ADULTS AND SOON-TO-BE ADULTS WITH ASD

Resource and discussion group via Zoom
6:30PM-8:00PM

Free monthly resource and discussion group for parents of adults and late teens (16+) on the autism spectrum. Open forum for parents to discuss concerns, seek resources, and gain support in assisting their adult children.
NOW ON WEDNESDAYS!

TO REGISTER: scan the QR code or copy the link below:
<https://coa4654.eventbrite.com>








Center for Autism and Related Disabilities
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

SAVE THE DATE



ADVOCACY MEETING

Wednesday, December 3 at 12 noon EST —

Revelation Technologies is committed to serving both the special needs and broader communities, blending cutting-edge IT solutions. **Joel Leon**, a young man living with Tourette syndrome and autism, refused to let his challenges define him. His mission was to create innovative products and services that empower the special needs community, the very people who inspired him.

The Arc of Florida

Register today!





SANTA'S NORTH POLE OUTLET

FOR KIDS and ADULTS

**SATURDAY
DECEMBER 6TH, 2025
10 AM UNTIL 2 PM**

SPACE COAST FIELD OF DREAMS

Minton & Fell Roads in West Melbourne

There will be a special kids-only area where they can go shopping for gifts that are all \$5 and under. The children will be escorted throughout the special kids-only area by our Angel Elves, who will help with their decision-making and gift wrapping as well as the Local Cub Scout pack.

Family members and caregivers can browse over 20 home-crafted vendors. There will be live music, as well as of course, "SANTA".

Please contact that forgotten elf, "Uncle Phil", for more information on becoming a vendor, musical act, or to volunteer at: ABG.marketing@director@gmail.com or (321)324-1643



CARD
CENTER FOR AUTISM & RELATED DISABILITIES

 **JANUARY 15-18, 2026**
ORLANDO, FLORIDA

REGISTER NOW



WWW.CARDCONFERENCE.INFO



**ADOS-2
2 day
Workshop**
THURSDAY &
FRIDAY,
JANUARY 15-16,
2026



**EDUCATORS' DAY
For teachers
& family**
FRIDAY,
JANUARY 16,
2026



**HISPA
All Spanish
Sessions**
FRIDAY,
JANUARY 16,
2026



**AUTISM
CONFERENCE**
55+ more
sessions on
autism

SATURDAY &
SUNDAY,
JANUARY 17-18,
2026

Event Flyers



CENTER FOR AUTISM & RELATED DISABILITIES
CONFERENCE
"INSPIRE. LEARN. SUPPORT."

IN PERSON EVENT



EDUCATORS' DAY



HISPA
CONFERENCIA DE AUTISMO



2026 FLORIDA AUTISM CONFERENCE
RELATED DISABILITIES



Friday, January 16, through Sunday, January 18, 2026
www.cardconference.info

Florida Hotel & Conference Center 1500 Sand Lake Road, Orlando, FL 32809



ONE VOICE COALITION
FAMILY MEAL SPONSORSHIP
LET'S FEED THE HUNGRY



\$40 DONATION FEEDS A FAMILY OF 4
OVCFL will be making food DELIVERIES to Brevard disability families in need. Every \$40 donation will feed a family of four this holiday season (November and December)

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT JACKIE YEARBY AT: ABGWORKS1@GMAIL.COM







ANGEL TREE DONATIONS

Spread joy to a child this holiday season

Who You are Helping

All children on our Angel Tree are part of special needs families nominated by their Early Steps therapists.

How to Participate

- Choose a child (list provided).
- Send us your name, phone number, and email so we can assign the child to you.
- Shop for the items on their list – unwrapped gifts only, please.
- Drop off gifts by Monday, December 15th at one of our Early Steps locations.



Drop Off Locations

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Timely drop-offs help us stay organized during this busy season. Thank you for your generosity and for bringing holiday joy to children with special needs. Thank you for showing what it means to be part of our village. Your generosity lifts up our families in ways that matter deeply.

If you cannot drop off in person, please contact:
 Mary Cancel: 321-292-1370
mary.cancel@spacecoastes.org

12TH ANNUAL

Brevard Uncorked SPONSORS




Nicholas Zollo & Family




JMS THERAPY SERVICES

NANCE CACCIATORE PERSONAL INJURY ATTORNEYS

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In Motion ABA Bridging the Mind-Body Connection

INDIAN RIVER networks Your technology team

Child & Family Consultants, Inc.

