



One Voice Brevard

1 September 2026



The Hands That Train, The Dogs that Save

by: Nicole Grabner, Director

In honor of National Service Dog Month, we sat down with Rachel Hill, Director of Communications and Marketing, Tier One Service Dog Foundation, to explore the profound, daily impact of these life-changing animals.

1. September is National Service Dog Month. For families who might be new to this, can you share what your organization does and the specific types of service dogs you train?

Tier One Service Dog Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing highly trained service dogs to disabled veterans at no cost to the veteran. Our dogs are individually trained to meet the needs of their handlers and perform tasks that help veterans navigate daily life with greater independence and confidence. Our program is about much more than simply providing a trained dog. We focus on creating successful, long-term partnerships between our veterans and their service dogs through extensive professional training, handler education, and continued support.



2. What is the journey of a service dog like from early puppyhood or rescue to being placed with a family or individual?

The journey can take well over a year and begins long before a dog is matched with a veteran. Our dogs may enter the program as puppies or come to us through rescue and community partnerships. We partner with local rescues, such as Karma's Haven Rescue. They progress through foundational obedience, carefully structured socialization, exposure to different environments, advanced skills, task training, and eventually public access work. Throughout that process, we continually evaluate each dog's temperament, confidence, health, and suitability for service work. Once a dog is matched with a veteran, another important phase begins. The veteran learns how to work with their dog, communicate effectively, maintain their training, and develop the trust that ultimately turns two individuals into a working team.

In this newsletter you will find:

The Hands That Train
Partnering With the
School

Angels Bridging Gaps
Fall Term

Floridians with
Disabilities Wait Years
for Dental Care

Celebrating
Community: 4th Year
of Helping Hands

Family Care Council
Update

Family Corner

Art Submission

Bill Buzz

OVCFL 2026
Legislative Platform

Resources and
Contact Info

Brevard County
Delegation

September Events
Event Flyers





The Hands That Train

(Continued)



3. What is one major myth or misconception about service dogs that you wish the general public understood better?

One misconception we would love to change is the idea that a service dog is "finished" once it has been professionally trained and placed with its handler.

In reality, a service dog is a partnership, and training is an ongoing commitment for both the dog and the veteran. Our dogs receive extensive professional training before and during the matching process, but our veterans also have to learn how to become effective handlers. They continue practicing skills, reinforcing behaviors, maintaining public access standards, and building their relationship with their dog.

You aren't simply handing someone a trained dog. You're helping create a team, and the strength of that team comes from the work they continue to put in together.

4. Can you share a favorite success story or a heartwarming moment where a service dog made a life-changing difference for a child or adult you've worked with?

One of the most meaningful moments in our organization's history was placing our very first service dog, Rooster, with his veteran, Marshall.

Marshall served more than 20 years in the U.S. Army, including multiple deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. When he came to Tier One Service Dog Foundation, he was paired with Rooster, and we had the privilege of watching their relationship develop throughout the training process.

Their partnership represented so much more than completing a training program. Marshall and Rooster became the first veteran and service dog team placed through TISDF, turning the mission our organization was built around into something tangible for the very first time.

Seeing them reach that milestone together is something our team will never forget. It also represents what we hope to continue doing for many more veterans in our community: creating partnerships that provide support, confidence, companionship, and greater independence in everyday life.

<https://tisdf.org/2026/05/12/meet-marshall-and-rooster/>

5. How does a service dog support the whole family unit, not just the primary handler?

Although a service dog is specifically trained for its handler, the impact of that partnership often reaches the entire household. When a veteran feels more confident navigating daily activities, leaving home, attending events, or managing difficult situations, it can open opportunities for the family to experience more of those moments together. We also educate family members on respecting and supporting the working relationship. A successful service dog partnership becomes part of everyday life, so having a household



The Hands That Train

(Continued)



that understands the dog's role can make a tremendous difference in the team's long-term success.

6. What are the most important "service dog etiquette" rules that adults and children should know when they encounter a working dog in public?

One of the best rules to remember is to interact with the person, not their service dog. As tempting as it may be, avoid petting, calling to, whistling at, feeding, or intentionally getting the attention of a working dog. Parents can help by teaching children to give service dog teams space and never approach or pet a working dog without permission. The dog may look like any other dog, but while working, they are responsible for helping their handler navigate the world safely and independently. It is also important to remember that disabilities are not always visible. Someone should never be expected to explain or justify their disability simply because they are accompanied by a service dog.

7. Training a service dog requires significant time and resources. How can community members, families, or volunteers support your mission?

Community support is essential to everything we do. A fully trained service dog partnership represents an investment of \$40,000 or more, yet our veterans receive their service dogs and training at no cost. Community members can support our mission through donations, sponsorships, volunteering at events, donating goods or services, hosting fundraisers, becoming community partners, or simply helping us spread awareness.

Every contribution matters. The support we receive from our community directly helps us continue building and funding these partnerships for veterans.

8. If a family is interested in learning more or applying for a service dog, what is the best first step for them to take?

The best first step is to visit TISDF.org to learn more about our organization, eligibility requirements, and application process. Our program specifically serves disabled veterans, and anyone interested in applying is welcome to contact us with questions about the program and whether they may qualify.



Griffin



Marshall & Rooster



Service Dog In
Training - Saint



Partnering With the School: Making the Most of Your Child's IEP

by: Nicole Grabner, Director

As Florida students kick off another school year, families across the state are settling into new classroom routines, meeting teachers, and setting goals. For parents of children with unique learning needs, this fresh start is also the most critical window to understand, review, and advocate for individual education plans (IEPs) and 504 plans.

While both frameworks ensure equal access to education, they serve distinct purposes. A 504 plan provides accommodations, like extra test time or preferred seating, to remove physical or learning barriers. An IEP goes further, delivering specialized instruction and formal services tailored to a child's specific disability.

Getting familiar with your child's legal rights and plan specifics early in the fall sets the tone for the entire year. By actively collaborating with school teams from day one, you ensure accommodations are implemented smoothly, giving your student the exact support they need to thrive.

According to [Sarah Stocky, IEP Advocate](#) (brightpathedu.org):

"In general, when going into a meeting for your student with an established plan, be sure to take your time.

Ask for the data to be reviewed in each domain, listen to be sure that the data presented by the team correlates to the proposed changes. Does it support the change? Remember that changes to the plan can be good! This can mean that your student is making positive gains, but don't allow the team to rush through. Ask for each domain to be reviewed in its entirety and be sure to ask questions to better understand.

As a general rule of thumb, if the discussion is not captured in writing (within the Plan, PWN, or Conference Notes) it might as well have not happened, always have the team review a summary of what was discussed and ensure all of your concerns and agreed upon actions are captured in the legal file."

To find more information families can look at the following resources:

1. Family Network on Disabilities (FND): The official federally funded Parent Training and Information Center for Florida. They offer free workshops, downloadable parent toolkits, and direct guidance on navigating Florida's IEP and 504 systems (findusa.org).
2. Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resources System (FDLRS): A statewide network supporting Florida public school districts. FDLRS offers free parent webinars, consultative support, and resources on local district Exceptional Student Education (ESE) programs (fdlrs.org).
3. Wrightslaw: A gold-standard national online hub for special education law and advocacy, featuring easy-to-understand articles, letter templates, and rights overviews for parents (wrightslaw.com).
4. Family Liaison Project: Dedicated specifically to supporting parents of children with disabilities, this resource offers hands-on guidance to help families navigate the educational system. It provides free support, educational information, and practical assistance to help parents. (familyliaisonproject.com)



Angels Bridging Gaps Offers Fall Term

by: Nicole Grabner, Director



A familiar and valued community tradition is back in action! Earlier this month, our partner organization, Angels Bridging Gaps, officially launched its Fall Term, continuing its mission to support individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other disabilities.

For years, the organization's bi-annual spring and fall programs have served as a vital cornerstone for adults with disabilities across Brevard County. These structured terms provide accessible, engaging, and practical educational opportunities designed to bridge the gap between learning, independence, and social connection.

What the Fall Term Offers:

- Practical Life Skills: Interactive informational workshops covering essential daily knowledge, wellness, and self-advocacy.

- Community Engagement: Opportunities to stay connected with local Brevard networks and resources throughout the season.

- Enrichment & Social Connection: Supportive group environments that foster lifelong friendships, boost confidence, and encourage teamwork.

With the fall session now underway, it's a wonderful time to celebrate the continued impact of this program in our area. If you have a loved one, friend, or neighbor participating, or if you'd like to support or volunteer with Angels Bridging Gaps during this term, reach out directly to the organization to learn more about upcoming activities and events: angelsbridginggapsinc@gmail.com

Let's help spread the word and cheer on our adult learners as they dive into a great autumn term!

ABGworks September 2026 Activity Guide Building abilities. Creating friendships. Having fun together!		
NO SESSIONS: SEPT 8, 9 & 10 RSVP BY FRIDAY		
TUESDAY ACTIVITIES	WEDNESDAY ACTIVITIES	THURSDAY ACTIVITIES
SEP 1 ART 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM Arts for All Studios 784 N Apollo Blvd, Melbourne, FL 32935 MUSIC JAM 1:15 - 2:00 PM First United Methodist Church (upstairs) 110 E New Haven Ave Melbourne, FL 32901 \$25 Bring lunch or snack	SEP 2 NATURE WALK 11:00 - 11:45 AM Turkey Creek Sanctuary 1518 Port Malabar Blvd NE Palm Bay, FL 32905 ADVOCACY, COMMUNICATION & JOURNALING 12:30 - 2:00 PM Turkey Creek Library 1520 Port Malabar Blvd NE, Palm Bay, FL 32905 \$20 Bring lunch or snack	SEP 3 SKILLS, CRAFTS & GAMES 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM General knowledge, computers, crafts, games & basketball. Church of the Nazarene 2745 S Babcock St Melbourne, FL 32901 \$25 Lunch included
SEP 15 BOWZ POPUP & SENIOR FRIENDS 11:00 AM - 1:15 PM Games & socializing MUSIC JAM 1:15 - 2:00 PM Both activities: Trinity Towers South 615 E New Haven Ave Melbourne, FL 32901 \$25 Bring lunch or snack	SEP 16 INDEPENDENCE SKILLS 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM Crafts, games, yoga & line dancing Mrs Wanda / Spectrum Sparkles Church of the Nazarene 2745 S Babcock St Melbourne, FL 32901 \$25 Lunch included	SEP 17 ROOTS TO WORK 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM Job & gardening skills and tours. Adaptive Recreation Center at Wickham Park 2450 Parkway Drive Melbourne, FL 32935 \$20 Bring lunch or snack
SEP 22 MUKKE BOTANICAL GARDEN TIME TO BE ANNOUNCED Garden trip & lunch. 350 US-1 Vero Beach, FL 32962 Confirm the time with ABGworks. \$25 Lunch included	SEP 23 SPORTS 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM Basketball, soccer & softball. MONEY MANAGEMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP 12:30 - 2:00 PM Both activities: Church of the Nazarene 2745 S Babcock St Melbourne, FL 32901 \$25 Bring lunch or snack	SEP 24 BOWLING 12:00 - 2:00 PM Shore Lanes Bowling Alley 4851 Dairy Rd, Melbourne, FL 32904 \$20: Shoes, 2 games, pizza & drink. \$12: Shoes, 2 games or 2 hours; no lunch. Choose either bowling option NOTES SEPTEMBER REMINDERS No sessions September 8, 9 or 10. September 22 garden trip time is still to be announced. LOOKING AHEAD August guide lists December 17 as the last day before fall break. RSVP by Friday
SEP 29 BASKETBALL & SPORTS GAMES 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM HEALTH, SAFETY & CPR ROCKS 12:30 - 2:00 PM Both activities: Church of the Nazarene 2745 S Babcock St Melbourne, FL 32901 \$25 Bring lunch or snack	SEP 30 COOKING SKILLS 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM Chef Jillian / guest Chef Kamal Church of the Nazarene 2745 S Babcock St Melbourne, FL 32901 \$25 Lunch included	ZELLE PAYMENT Add ABGworks1@gmail.com in Zelle. Email used for all payments.
WHAT TO BRING Water bottle Lunch or snack when noted Comfortable shoes Positive attitude!	PAYMENT REMINDERS Zelle: Due the Wednesday before the activity. Cash: Due on the activity day.	PAYMENT OPTIONS Zelle or cash
CALL / TEXT JACKIE 631-807-2974	EMAIL / ZELLE ABGworks1@gmail.com	



Floridians With Disabilities Wait Years for Dental Care



by Timothy Garvey, D.M.D.

(Reprinted from an iamforkids.org article, with permission from the author)

“A mother from a Florida city about two hours away called me because her adult son with profound intellectual disabilities was waking up at night screaming in pain”, says Dr Timothy Garvey, D.M.D., who lives and works in Gainesville. “She had taken him to the emergency room a few times, but they all do the same thing: they give an antibiotic, assuming an infection and tell them to go find a dentist. They do not treat the root cause of non-traumatic dental pain in emergency rooms.”

Dr. Garvey is one of few dentists in Florida who dedicates a majority of their practice to patients with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Many of the patients treated over his 45-year career cannot talk or express their pain in words. Several have never had dental care at all, largely due to extreme lack of Florida dentists who will treat them.

“After taking a set of x-rays, I extracted all 32 teeth from the patient. They were as bad as you can imagine in your worst nightmares.”

“I followed up a few weeks later. The reaction from his mother was not what I expected—she was so happy that he was finally out of pain. He’ll never have teeth again until the day he dies, but the pain is gone. He’s finally started eating again and putting weight on.”

How Bad is Dental Care for the IDD Community in Florida?

Dr Garvey estimates there are a handful of dentists statewide who prioritize the treatment of the IDD community. Although he is based in Gainesville, his patients are brought to him by desperate relatives, sometimes as far away as Miami.

This severe lack of dental access has devastating consequences. For too many Floridians with intellectual and developmental disabilities, every tooth is pulled not because it’s the best dental option—but because it’s the only one left. That may relieve the pain. But it also removes something more permanent – dignity.

Many patients in the IDD community rely on Medicaid for insurance coverage, which further hampers access to dental care. Few Florida dentists accept Medicaid (under 18%), and even fewer will treat patients they deem ‘non-compliant.’

“Most dentists won’t treat patients with profound disabilities,” Dr. Garvey explains. “Due to their inability to describe their pain, some patients lash out—hitting their heads against walls, biting their fists. There’s virtually nowhere else for them to go.”



Floridians With Disabilities Wait Years for Dental Care

(Continued)

The Need for a Dental Home

Currently, Dr. Garvey has a waiting list of 3 to 4 years. The caregiver of a patient recently told Dr. Garvey that 50 other dental offices had refused them. “That’s not the largest number I’ve heard,” he adds.

Interconnected Solutions are Needed

Dr. Frank Catalanotto, president of Floridians for Dental Access, believes dental therapy is a key part of the solution to Florida’s oral health crisis. Currently, nearly 6 million Floridians live in Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas.

Dr. Garvey agrees that it could be one of the many interconnected solutions needed. Dental therapists in Minnesota are trained to provide care for some patients with intellectual disabilities.

However, there exists no one ‘silver bullet’ solution, both dentists agree.

Roy Miller, president of American Children’s Campaign looks to the roles the legislature and executive branch agencies should play. “We always want to see a comprehensive plan in place to pinpoint the scope of the problem and a plan to address it. In the case of IDD, some broad goals exist but nothing we would call ready for action.”

Medicaid has been in the news lately with many fearing the federal changes. As it stands today, according to Dr. Garvey, Medicaid only reimburses just \$27 for removing a tooth, while the going rate for private insurance is about \$300.

“Pulling teeth is an absolute last resort. I want to save teeth whenever possible. Many of my patients can’t handle implants or dentures. But getting patients out of pain is my number one priority,” says Dr. Garvey. “I wish I didn’t have to resort so often to what should be the worst-case scenario.”

Florida must do better to protect the ability to smile for its most vulnerable residents.

How You Can Help

Share this story—click the links below to share to Facebook, X (Twitter), or Instagram.

Join our coalition to increase dental access for all Floridians:

<https://www.floridiansfordentalaccess.org/join-our-coalition/>



Celebrating Community: 4th Annual Helping Hands Conference

Another year is in the books, and we are overflowing with gratitude for everyone who made this year's Helping Hands Conference so memorable.

Throughout the day, we welcomed over 300 local families to connect with more than 70 community partners, service providers, and resource vendors. From interactive vendor tables to our nine expert-led panel discussions, the energy, shared learning, and sense of community were tangible from start to finish.

Our main stage came alive with remarkable talent from across Brevard County. We were thrilled to feature dynamic performances by groups like the Dancing Ninjas and Melbourne Ballroom, whose energy brought huge smiles to the crowd.

One of the most touching highlights of the day came from Angels Bridging Gaps, an incredible group of adult self-advocates. They delivered a moving rendition of "Stand by Me" for Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) Director Bob Asztalos, followed by an impromptu duet of "Lean on Me" with APD's Central Regional Director, showcasing the power of connection between state leadership and the community.



Palm Bay Mayor Rob Medina joined us to deliver an official city proclamation marking the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), reinforcing our local dedication to breaking down barriers for individuals with disabilities. We also hosted a critical, community-driven conversation on expanding oral healthcare access for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Families, local advocates, healthcare leaders from the Florida Oral Health Alliance and the Florida Department of Health, and visiting legislative candidates gathered in one room to discuss real, actionable solutions for specialized dental care in Brevard County.

Events like this are a powerful reminder of what happens when families, self-advocates, local providers, and state leaders come together with a shared purpose. Thank you to every volunteer, speaker, performer, vendor, and attendee who showed up to support our community. We are already looking forward to building on this momentum in the year ahead!



Family Care Council Updates

by Nicole Grabner



As fall approaches, we encourage local families to stay connected and plug into our upcoming Family Care Council meetings. Even when our monthly agenda is quiet, gathering together allows us to share resources, plan for seasonal activities, and track critical policy updates affecting our community. Looking at our latest waitlist data, Brevard County's numbers rose by two, moving from 516 to 518 individuals waiting for services. Staying active on the local level ensures our community's needs remain visible and voiced. Additionally, mark your calendars for the upcoming 10th Annual Connecting the Dots Conference in Jacksonville, hosted by Family Care Council Area 4—a fantastic regional event packed with expert panels, resource vendors, and advocacy connections for families navigating developmental disabilities.

To register for the next Area 7 meeting, please click here:
<https://meet.goto.com/FCCFlorida/area-7-family-care-council-meeting>

To apply for services, please click the following link (the application is online):

<https://applynow.apd.myflorida.com/>

To see the newly launched "Roadmap to Family Resources," click here:

<https://apd.myflorida.com/resources.htm>

To see APD's newly launched Crisis Review Guide, click here:

<https://apd.myflorida.com/services/crisisguide.htm>



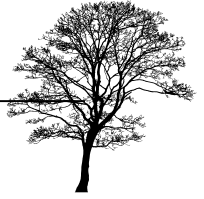
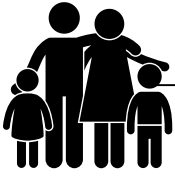
Current pre-enrollment numbers:

Agency for Persons with Disabilities
 Pre-Enrollment Numbers by Priority Category and County
 As of 08/28/2026

County	Category 1: Crisis	Category 2: Transitions from Child Welfare	Category 3: Intensive Needs	Category 4: Caregiver Over Age 60	Category 5: Transition from School	Category 6: Age 21 and Older	Category 7: Under Age 21	Total
ALACHUA	0	0	2	2	0	42	74	120
BAKER	0	0	0	0	0	6	8	14
BAY	0	0	0	3	0	71	42	116
BRADFORD	0	0	0	0	0	10	8	18
BREVARD	0	0	2	16	0	293	207	518
BROWARD	0	0	0	4	0	647	064	1470

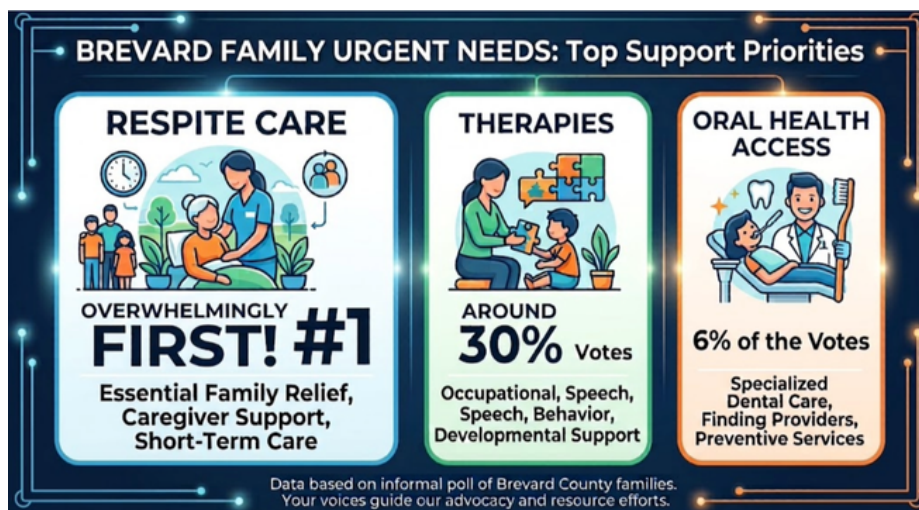
To see the full report published on 28 August:

<https://apd.myflorida.com/publications/reports/docs/Preenrollment%20Website%20Reporting%2020260828.pdf>



Family Corner

In a recent informal poll of our local Brevard County families, we asked what your most urgent support needs are right now—and the results offer a clear picture of where our advocacy must focus. Overwhelmingly, families identified access to respite care as their top priority, highlighting the continuous, critical need for caregiver relief and family support. This was followed closely by therapies at roughly 30%, while oral health access rounded out the top rankings as a major ongoing concern. These survey insights directly guide our local efforts, helping us ensure that lawmakers, state agencies, and community partners address the specific services and funding streams our families need most.



September

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

SEEDPODS
FILTERS
TORNADOS
SPEAKERS
SWIMMING
GOGGLES
PIZZA
SUNFLOWER
TREEKNOTS
PARK
BLANKETS
BUBBLES
SEAUARCHIN
SEAANEMONE
TUNA



Monthly Art Submission



This month's submission is from AJ Grabner. AJ is six years old (celebrating his birthday this month, so almost seven), and made this with cotton balls.

Bill Buzz

By: Nicole Grabner, Director, One Voice Brevard



On September 1st, Disability Rights Florida will formally present a petition to Governor Ron DeSantis and Attorney General James Uthman, urging them to immediately withdraw Florida from the Texas v. Kennedy lawsuit. This critical legal challenge threatens to undermine key provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, specifically the "integration mandate" that safeguards the right of individuals with disabilities to live, learn, and receive care in their own homes and local communities rather than being forced into institutions. Multiple states have already withdrawn, with only three remaining: Texas, Florida and Alaska. Over 1,000 individuals and 60 organizations have signed this petition. If you'd like to send your own letter, a draft example is on the following pages.

Also, the U.S. Department of Labor announced significant policy changes for federal contractors starting September 21, 2026. Under a newly finalized rule, the Department of Labor will eliminate the requirement for federal contractors to invite job applicants and current employees to self-identify as individuals with disabilities, while also rescinding the 7% disability hiring utilization goal. While federal officials point to align with wider disability privacy standards under the ADA, advocates are closely monitoring how the removal of these tracking requirements and hiring goals will impact workforce diversity, workplace accommodations, and overall employment opportunities for job seekers with disabilities.

Lastly, a recently released Florida state grand jury report concluded that high-ranking state "misappropriated" \$10 million from a Medicaid overbilling settlement intended to fund

ADVOCACY ALERT TASK LOG



TASK	PRIORITY	DEAD LINE	OP/SP
Texas vs Kennedy Case Emails Calls Letters Change.org	HIGH	N/A	OP
FLR 8736 - HCB Bill Emails Calls Letters	LOW	N/A	OP
*2/DOJ - HCBS Opinion Letter Emails Calls Letters	HIGH	N/A	OP
HR 8540 - HCBS Access Act *Aviation information	LOW	N/A	SP
HR 8505 - Charlie Act Emails letters calls	MEDIUM	N/A	OP
AIACA Investigations (ABA) Emails Calls Letters	MEDIUM	N/A	INFO
HR 3491 - DeOndra Dixon Act Passes House - to Senate (Calls Emails) Support	MEDIUM	N/A	SP
HR 9401 - Latonya Reeves Act Emails Calls Support	MEDIUM	N/A	SP
S 5037 - Medicaid Act Emails Calls Support	LOW	N/A	UNK
S 5046 - Prohibit DOE Transfer Call Emails Letter	LOW	N/A	SP
ESE Lawsuit withholding funds Info	MEDIUM	N/A	INFO
EEOC Proposed rescinding final rule Info	MEDIUM	N/A	INFO
HR 1389 - Marriage Equality for Disabled Adults	LOW	N/A	SP
US vs Florida (PDN) Case Alert	HIGH	N/A	OP

• As of 25 August 2026

healthcare for low-income residents. The findings revealed a "sophisticated scheme" where public funds were funneled into private political action committees to defeat state ballot initiatives. Although the grand jury explicitly found that taxpayer money was misused for political purposes, no criminal charges were filed because state officials refused to take responsibility for authorizing the original transfer.

*To find who your State Legislators are, please see the [Florida House](#) and [Florida Senate](#) websites.

Bill Buzz, Part 2

By: Nicole Grabner, Director, One Voice
Brevard

We still need help making phone calls, sending emails and sending letters to ask that the State of Florida, withdraw from it's lawsuit, Texas vs. Kennedy.

Governor Ron DeSantis Office of the Governor The Capitol 400 S. Monroe St. Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001	Attorney General James Uthmeier Office of the Attorney General PL-01, The Capitol Tallahassee, FL 32399-1050	
---	---	---

I am writing to you today as a disability advocate to respectfully urge you to withdraw the State of Florida from participation in **Florida vs. Kennedy, Case No. 5:24-CV-00225**, particularly with regard to the claim seeking to set aside the Final Rule that protects the rights of people with disabilities to live and receive services in the least restrictive environment.

As Floridians, many of us rely on policies and protections that support the health, safety, and well-being of our communities, including individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, seniors, and other vulnerable populations. Continued involvement in this litigation raises significant concerns about potential impacts on critical services, supports, and protections that families across Florida depend on. Withdrawing from this lawsuit would reflect a commitment to protecting access to essential supports and ensuring that Floridians can continue to receive the care and services they need to live, work, and participate fully in their communities.

Thank you for your time and service to the people of Florida, and I urge you to stand with Florida families by withdrawing from this lawsuit.

Respectfully,

[Full Name]
[City, Zip]
[Phone Number]



*To sign our Change.org petition, please click here:

<https://www.change.org/p/ask-the-state-of-florida-to-withdraw-from-504-lawsuit>

Bill Buzz, Part 3

By: Nicole Grabner, Director, One Voice
Brevard

We could use some help sending calls and emails to your Congressional Representative as well as our two State Senators, Rick Scott and Ashley Moody, in opposition to H.R. 8736.

Dear **Congressman/woman/Senator [Name]**,

I am writing as a constituent and family member of an individual with a disability to express my opposition to the Restoration of Employment Choice for Adults with Disabilities Act (H.R. 8736).

While the bill is presented as expanding employment choice, I am concerned that it would weaken important protections designed to help young adults with disabilities pursue competitive, integrated employment. Specifically, the legislation would lower the age at which individuals can enter subminimum wage employment from 24 to 18, reducing opportunities for transition services, vocational rehabilitation, career counseling, and other supports intended to help individuals achieve meaningful employment in their communities.

For decades, disability advocates, self-advocates, families, employers, and policymakers have worked to increase access to competitive integrated employment and move away from outdated systems that segregate individuals with disabilities and pay wages below the federal minimum wage. Young adults with disabilities deserve the same opportunities to explore careers, develop skills, and earn fair wages as their peers.

As a family member, I want my loved one and all individuals with disabilities to be valued for their abilities and provided opportunities to reach their full potential.

We should invest in employment supports, job coaching, transportation, and workforce development programs that help individuals succeed in integrated settings, rather than expanding pathways to subminimum-wage employment. Florida has made significant investments in employment initiatives through the Agency for Persons with Disabilities and Vocational Rehabilitation, and I believe federal policy should reinforce these efforts rather than undermine them.

I respectfully urge you to **oppose H.R. 8736** and support policies that promote fair wages, community inclusion, and competitive integrated employment for people with disabilities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[City, State]

Bill Buzz, Part 4

By: Nicole Grabner, Director, One Voice
Brevard

In response to the recent opinion letter published by the Department of Justice regarding home and community-based services, we could use your help making calls (and emails) to your Congressman/woman.

The Honorable [Representative's Name]
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman/Congresswoman [Last Name],

I am writing as the parent, family member, caregiver, or self-advocate of a person with a disability to express my concern regarding the recent U.S. Department of Justice opinion addressing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Olmstead decision, and home- and community-based services (HCBS).

Like many families, our goal is simple: we want our loved one to have the opportunity to live safely, with dignity, and as independently as possible in their community. Home- and community-based services make that possible by providing supports such as personal care, employment services, transportation, respite, therapies, and other assistance that help individuals remain in their homes rather than unnecessary institutional settings. For more than 25 years, the Supreme Court's Olmstead decision has affirmed that people with disabilities should receive services in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs. While the recent DOJ opinion does not change the law, it raises concerns about how these important civil rights protections may be interpreted and enforced in the future.

Community living should never be viewed as an optional benefit that states may choose to provide when convenient. It is the means by which millions of Americans with disabilities exercise the same freedoms that others often take for granted—the freedom to choose where they live, pursue employment, build relationships, and participate fully in community life.

For families like mine, these supports are not a luxury. They help prevent unnecessary institutionalization, reduce caregiver burnout, and allow people with disabilities to contribute to their communities. When families receive the right supports, individuals are more likely to work, volunteer, attend school, and live fulfilling lives. Unfortunately, many states, including Florida, continue to have long waiting lists for home- and community-based services. Families often wait years for assistance while doing everything they can to keep their loved ones safe at home. Weakening the commitment to community integration sends the wrong message at a time when many families are already struggling to access the services they need.

I respectfully ask you to continue supporting the principles established by the ADA and Olmstead by protecting federal funding for home- and community-based services, strengthening community supports, and ensuring that people with disabilities have the opportunity to live, work, and thrive in their communities. Please continue to support policies that recognize community living as a fundamental civil right and protect the dignity, independence, and inclusion of people with disabilities.

Thank you for your service and for considering the concerns of families like mine. I appreciate your leadership and respectfully ask for your continued support of policies that strengthen, not weaken, the rights of people with disabilities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[City, State]

*For more information, please check: <https://dredf.org/we-belong-in-the-community-not-in-institutions/>

OVCFL 2026 Legislative Platform



ONE VOICE COALITION 2026 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM



- 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.



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



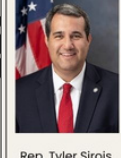
Rep. Chase Tramont
District 30

📞 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



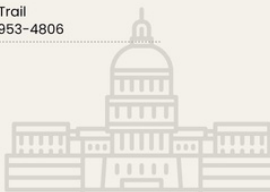
Rep. Tyler Sirois
District 31

📞 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 Hodgers
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?**

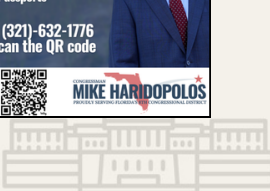
For assistance with:

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

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



MIKE HARIDOPOLOS
FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES





September Events

National Service Dog Month

2026							SEPTEMBER						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT							
				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										

- Early Steps Breakfast Support Group, the first and third Fridays of the month on **4 September** from 10:00 - 11:30 at Cracker Barrel, 1117 Palm Bay Road, Palm Bay and on **18 September** from 9:30 - 11:00 at My Island Smokehouse, 4885 US 1, Cocoa. See flyer.
- Down Syndrome Association of Brevard presents two Music Therapy classes. Class 1 is open to ages 11 and over on **Wednesdays**, from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. (closed group). Class 2 is open to ages 0-10 (open to siblings) on **Thursdays**, from 4:00 to 4:45 p.m. For more information, go to <https://dsabrevard.org/events/>
- UCF CARD presents "Breathe and Be: A Mindfulness Skill Lab" on the 1st Monday of every month from 6:30 - 7:30 via Zoom. September's event will be on **Monday, September 7th**. Registration required via Eventbrite. See Flyer.
- Beginner Keyboard Lessons, 4-week on line class, **Thursdays, 9/7, 9/24, 10/01, and 10/9**. Grades 1-5. See Flyer for info.
- Bright Path Education offers Home Education Co-Op for ages 5-12. Opened in January. See flyer for additional information.
- Art classes and workshops provided by Arts For All Studio, weekdays and evenings. Pre-registration is required. See flyer for additional details.
- Early Steps sponsors a free Community Play Date for children under 5 every fourth Wednesday of the month from 9-10:30 at the Children's Center, 5650 S. Washington Avenue, Titusville. This month's play date will be on **September 23rd**. Spaces are limited. RSVP to Mary: 321-292-1370. See flyer for more info.
- From UCF CARD, "Caregiver of Adults and Soon-To Be Adults". Free monthly resources and discussion group for parents of adults and late teens on the autism spectrum. Wednesdays from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. via Zoom. See QR Code on flyer to register.
- UCF CARD and PALS co-sponsor the monthly Brevard Community Connect, at the Field of Dreams, 3053 Fell Rd West, Melbourne. September's event will be **Friday, September 26th**, from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. RSVP is required. Scan QR code on flyer
- UCF CARD presents Adults With ASD Forum via Zoom on the first Thursday of every month from 3:00 - 4:00 p.m. and the 3rd Thursday of every month from 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. August's events are on **September 3rd**, and **September 17th**. Registration required. See flyer.
- Join the NAMI Neurodivergent Support Group on-line meeting held every 4th Thursday of the month. September's meeting will be held on the **25th of September** at 11:00. Scan QR Code of flyer to register.
- Free Screening of CRIP Camp on **Friday, 18 September**, from 5-9 p.m. at the Premium Theaters, 1800 W. Hibiscus, Melbourne. For information contact info@oncevoicebrevard.com
- Empower U Advocacy Training, provided by University of Florida, **September 28th - November 20th**. Cost is \$95 and registration is required. See flyer for additional information.
- **Save the Date:** Brevard Autism Coalition along with One Voice Coalition Florida presents the 13th Annual Brevard Uncorked Wine Gala on **Friday, November 6th**, from 6-10 p.m. at the Hotel Melby. Watch this space for more information.
- **Save the Date:** Community Partnership for Kids presents the second annual Teddy Bear Picnic in the Park on **Sunday, October 11th** at the Regional Pavilion in Wickham Park. Watch this space for more information.
- **Save the Date:** Disability Candidate Forum, **Friday, 2 October**, at Hotel Melby in Melbourne, FL. Brought to you by Once Voice Coalition, Florida. Watch this space for more information.
- **Save the Date:** CARD's 34th Statwide Autism Conference, January 15 - 17 2027, Florida Hotel and Conference Center, 1500 San Lake Road, Orlando, FL. For more information: www.cardconference.info



Event Flyers



Event Flyers

BREVARD COMMUNITY CONNECT

Private Events for Neurodivergent Adults 18+ • The Last Friday of Every Month

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Social Connection
Engage in various fun and meaningful activities that **build connections** with like minded individuals.

Skill Building Mini-Lessons
Each month comes with a different **theme** and focus for our group. Activities support social skill development.

Groups for Various Needs
We **welcome everyone**. Groups will be thoughtfully organized based on support needs to create the best experience for participants. Separate groups will also be available for parents and caregivers.

*Show up as you are.
Be understood.
Grow & learn together.*

HUGE THANKS TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

Community shouldn't require you to mask who you are.

Join our community!
Scan to fill out the interest form or visit our website for more information.
MindshiftND.com/events

Brevard Community Connect

EVENT SCHEDULE

"SOCIAL GROUP FOR NEURODIVERGENT ADULTS"
⌚ LAST FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH

2/27 Connection & Shared Understanding

3/27 Advocating for yourself

4/24 Autism Awareness Month—Acceptance, Identity & Belonging

5/29 Social Energy & Boundaries

6/26 Showing Up in Your Own Way

7/31 Nurturing Connections

8/28 Community Growth

9/25 Navigating Difficulties Together

10/30 Halloween Bash

11/20 Friendsgiving

12/18 ALL Holiday Celebrations

Sign up to keep updated on monthly event times and locations!

RESERVATIONS NOW OPEN

13TH ANNUAL Brevard Uncorked

WINE GALA

A MASQUERADE EVENING

BENEFITTING BREVARD AUTISM COALITION & ONE VOICE COALITION PARTNERS
UNITING COMMUNITY PARTNERS TO EXPAND ADVOCACY, INCLUSION, RESOURCES, AND SUPPORT FOR LOCAL AUTISM FAMILIES

FINE WINES - EXQUISITE SIT-DOWN DINNER
UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS - LASTING IMPACT
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT FEATURING: ALFIE SILVA

11.06.2026
⌚ 6:00 PM - 10:00 PM

HOTEL MELBY
MELBOURNE, FL

LIMITED SEATING • ONLY 100 SEATS AVAILABLE
\$75 Guest | \$140 Donor
Scan to Reserve Your Seat or Donate
<https://tinyurl.com/BrevardUncorked2026>

You Are Hereby Invited

Nonpartisan DISABILITY POLICY Community Forum

FRIDAY, 2 OCTOBER 2026
10:00 AM TO 3:00 PM
HOTEL MELBY
MELBOURNE, FL

Sponsored by:

Kindly respond by **25 September 2026**

To register for this free event, please click here:
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/one-voice-coalition-florida-disability-policy-and-community-forum-tickets-1998425846503?aff=oddtcreator>

Event Flyers



State of the Science Webinar Series

[TinyURL.com/StateOfScience2026](https://tinyurl.com/StateOfScience2026)

Zoom   

Webinar 1:
Policy Overview and Next Steps
9/16/26 at 1 PM ET

Webinar 2:
Trainings for Professionals and Next Steps
9/23/26 at 1 PM ET

Webinar 3:
Peer Support Interventions for Disabled Parents
9/28/26 at 12 PM ET



National Research Center for Parents with Disabilities
Centro Nacional de Investigaciones para Padres con Discapacidades



Brandeis
THE HELLER SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL POLICY AND MANAGEMENT
Lurie Institute for Disability Policy



BRIGHT PATH EDUCATION IS NOW OFFERING:

A HOME EDUCATION CO-OP

A small group environment for students with disabilities & learning differences

DETAILS:

- Academic & Social supports
- Monday- Thursday 8:00-2:00pm
- Fun Friday option available for those interested
- Accepting Scholarships & Private pay options
- 6:1 ratio
- Led by certified teachers & behavior technicians
- OT & Speech Language services can be contracted through local collaborative agencies

OPENING IN JANUARY

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
(321) 307-8240
1240 Rockledge Blvd, Suite 6
Rockledge, FL
BrightPathEducation2025@gmail.com

AGES 5-12



MUSIC THERAPY

Class 1:
MUSIC MEET UP AGES 11+
WED. 5-6PM (CLOSED GROUP)

Class 2:
LITTLE MELODIES AGES 0-10
THURS. 4-4:45PM (OPEN TO SIBS)




Arts for All STUDIO

ART CLASSES & WORKSHOPS AT THE STUDIO

STARTING in JANUARY

Mondays
Afterschool Art 4:00-4:45pm
Mixed Media Art Class for Kids ages 5 and Up
Advanced After School Art 5:00-6:00pm
Mixed Media Art Class for Kids ages 11 and Up

Tuesdays
Meet the Masters 12:30-1:30pm
Mixed Media Art Class with projects inspired by the masters and contemporary artists.
Mixed Media Arts 1:30-2:30pm
Explore Different Mediums and increase skills to use them as an artist

Wednesdays
Express Yourself (Teen Art Class) 7:00-8:30pm
Teen art class for students to explore and improve art skills in various mediums

Fridays
Able Artists Kids 9:30-10:15
Multimedia exploratory art class for neurodivergent kids
Able Artists Teens 10:15-11:00am
Multimedia exploratory art class for neurodivergent Teens
Graphic Design 11:30am-12noon
Intro to Graphic Design taught by EFSC Professor in the Advanced Technologies Department
Intro To Adobe for Design 12:30-2pm
Software subscription required. Bring your own computer and learn intro level skills for Adobe Photoshop, Indesign and Illustrator. taught by EFSC Professor in the Advanced Technologies Department

More Details Coming Soon on our Website Calendar and Facebook Events
Pre-registration is required * Spaces are limited
If you have any questions, feel free to call or text: Barbara Finneran at Arts for All Studio at 321- 749-9808.
Or email us at atsforallstudio@gmail.com

Come Join the Creative Fun!



Scan the QR below to go to our Calendar, Scroll to Desired Date and Register for Workshop of Choice

Event Flyers

**Center for Autism
and Related Disabilities**
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

ADULTS WITH ASD FORUM

1st Thursday of
Every Month
3:00PM-4:00PM

3rd Thursday of Every
Month 7:00PM-8:00PM

January - June
via ZOOM

This forum is designed as
a safe space for adults
with ASD to practice
social skills.

To register, scan the QR
code or use this link:



Please contact your ASD Specialist for the
registration password for this event



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

**Center for Autism
and Related Disabilities**

Breathe and Be: A Mindfulness Skill Lab

1st Monday of Every
Month: 6:30-7:30PM
via Zoom

To register, scan
the QR code or
use this link:



Monthly meeting to
include a 30-minute
didactic lesson
followed by mindful
practice for the month.



<https://bnb22026.eventbrite.com>

Event Flyers



Event Flyers

