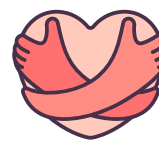




# One Voice Brevard



1 February 2025

## Advocacy 101 Recap

by Nicole Grabner, Director, One Voice Brevard



Our recent series of Zoom webinars, dedicated to advocating for individuals with disabilities, brought together a dynamic group of experts and self-advocates to equip attendees with essential skills for effective advocacy. The series featured insightful guest speakers from leading organizations such as Florida Voices for Health and the grassroots movement For All the People, as well as self-advocate JJ Holmes, whose work during the 2024 Florida Legislative Session on House Bill 1271 (Individuals with Disabilities) has been transformative.

Throughout the webinars, our attendees learned how to navigate the complexities of advocacy with confidence and practical tools. We provided step-by-step guidance on making appointments with legislators, ensuring that participants were prepared to engage with their elected officials effectively. Our experts also covered the importance of crafting a compelling three-minute public comment for hearings, a skill essential for those wishing to voice their concerns and influence policy decisions. Participants were also introduced to the creation of one-pagers—concise, impactful overviews of advocacy topics that serve as an excellent resource when meeting with legislators or sharing information with others.

If you missed this series or are interested in future advocacy opportunities, be sure to follow us on Facebook for updates on upcoming classes and events. Together, we can continue building a more inclusive and supportive world.

### In this newsletter you will find:

Advocacy 101  
Recap

Taking Care of  
Yourself

Volunteerism

Bill Buzz

Advocacy Alert

Monthly Art  
Submission

One Voice  
Legislative  
Platform

Resource and  
Contact Info

Calendar of Events

Flyers

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# Taking Care of Yourself

*by Ken Friedel, Intern*



Happy February, One Voice Brevard readers! Ken Friedel here with a brand-new article for you all, this time focusing on Self Care in the lead-up to our 5K Race with the Doug Flutie Foundation. So, I'm sure you all might be wondering what I do to stay healthy. Well, for starters after getting a good night's rest, I always start my day with a refreshing shower in order to help wake myself up in the morning as well as make sure that I'm clean and fresh for whatever the day may bring. On top of that, I've been working on regulating the size and portion of my three daily meals as well as trying my hardest to cut back on excessive snacking.

But what about exercise? What do I do to exercise? Well, on top of regularly going bowling every two weeks with my friends from Angels Bridging Gaps, I try to arrange some time every day to go for a nature walk around the loop of my neighborhood.

At the end of the day, you might be asking yourself why this is important? Well, when I was younger and long before I moved here to Florida, I was regularly active and involved with a lot of things that required physical activity like being part of the high school marching band and bowling team on top of doing archery. After I had graduated from high school, a lot of those activities I used to do went away which led to me becoming larger in more ways than one. Ever since my parents and I moved to Florida, I've been trying to work on getting back into shape again one day at a time. Even if it doesn't always look like any progress is made, especially when you're someone like me who loves food, any form of progress towards a healthier life is always important to keep track of. To put a spin on the Dos Equis commercials, "Stay healthy, my friends!"



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# Taking Care of Yourself

(Continued)



*by Dalton Higbee, Intern*

What I do to stay healthy: Get enough sleep, eat nourishing foods by having a balanced diet, stay hydrated by drinking water, I eat fruits and vegetables, I don't drink alcohol or smoke, I maintain a good body weight, maintain friendships, manage stress, and most importantly, exercise.

I exercise, to include yoga (which helps me manage stress and sleep better), line dancing (a great way for me to socialize and learn new routines), taekwondo (which helps me develop self-control and self-discipline), and bowling (which improves my fitness and coordination). I especially enjoy these things when I am doing them with my group at Angels Bridging Gaps.

I also play with my dogs (which has the added benefit of improving my dogs' social skills and it teaches them appropriate play behavior), go swimming in my backyard pool (which can help me build balance by strengthening the core muscles that keep me steady on land), and I walk around the neighborhood (which helps me reduce depression and anxiety, boosts my energy, and gets my body moving).

Staying healthy is important because it increases energy levels, helps me feel better about myself and helps me sleep better. It also helps people live longer by lowering risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and some cancers.

Exercise and staying healthy also helps improve my mood. The state of our bodies tends to influence our mental wellness. Healthy brain chemicals directly influence mood, emotions, behavior, cognitive function, and overall mental well-being. Imbalances in these chemicals can lead to issues like depression, anxiety, memory problems, and difficulty concentrating.

Exercising helps keep my mind busy and my body moving. As I mentioned earlier, it helps me reduce stress and anxiety. Regular exercise helps me sleep better, which also increases energy and makes me feel more relaxed. And finally, exercise can help maintain a healthy weight.

Overall, staying healthy and exercised is crucial to everyday people's lives and is a lifelong journey, and even small steps can lead to big changes in physical and mental well-being.

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# Volunteerism Improves Health and Helps Nonprofits Achieve Success



by Joeseeph Werner, OTD, OT/L, Director

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Volunteerism is the life blood of nonprofit organizations. Whether the volunteers are setting up a 5K race walk, handing out flyers for future events, sending out emails, managing electronic communication or helping children at summer camps, nonprofits could not succeed without the time and efforts of volunteers from teenagers to retirees. In many cases the diverse backgrounds of volunteers help to expand the social network and bring new skill sets necessary for the day-to-day operations of nonprofit groups.

It turns out that volunteering is also good medicine for the volunteers. One study from Harvard found that older people who volunteered 100 or more hours a year (approximately 2 hours a week) were 44% more likely to be healthy and alive after a 4-year period. Volunteering has also been shown to increase physical activity and fitness. A Carnegie Mellon study indicated that people who volunteered had a 40% reduction in risk factors for high blood pressure and hypertension. In this research, the specific activities volunteers were doing didn't matter; it was strictly the act of volunteering that made the difference. Volunteering reduces stress and creates relaxed feelings by releasing dopamine, often called the "feel good" neurotransmitter. Also, volunteerism has been proven to give people a strong sense of purpose and mitigate the effects of anxiety and loneliness. The sense of personal accomplishment and social connection are especially meaningful.

It is therefore not surprising that 35% of volunteers say that socialization is a major motivator for their service. Feeling you can have a positive impact on your community and directly seeing how your efforts are helping another person can enrich the life of any individual, and make you feel happier, energetic and engaged with others who have the same interest and sense of caring.

Who can volunteer? Children volunteering can develop a sense of interest and involvement with their community, and have personal experiences that can expand their awareness of diverse perspectives. Teenagers working with nonprofits get a chance to experience future job interests, learn from mentors, and build practice skills necessary for college and the work world. Adults often have busy lives and can have difficulty finding time for themselves, but by connecting with nonprofits serving populations and causes they feel passionate about, they can serve themselves and feel fulfillment helping others in a way that goes beyond their everyday work and home responsibilities. Seniors often provide the backbone of volunteering for nonprofits. Volunteering for seniors provides social contacts, opportunities for physical fitness, a sense of purpose, and feeling the gratitude from both the nonprofit organizations they serve, and the people and communities they are assisting.

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## Volunteerism Improves Health....(continued)

The Brevard Autism Coalition and One Voice Coalition Florida have a wide variety of volunteer opportunities, and we need you. Our upcoming Brevard Autism Awareness 5K race/walk on February 22nd at the Schechter Center in Satellite Beach is one example of a great event we can only produce if we have at least 30 volunteers. We also need people to show up and participate in political events and meeting our local and state representatives so we can provide a loud voice advocating for the needs of the disabled and their families in Brevard County.

Volunteers can make a difference throughout Brevard County. There are various nonprofits out there every day working for environmental causes, children and families, helping the homeless and various religious or community causes. Signing up to be a volunteer in Brevard County makes a difference in the lives of your friends and neighbors and adds to your own health, longevity and well-being.

If you would like to volunteer at the Brevard Autism Coalition 5k race/walk on February 22nd in Satellite Beach or to sponsor an event, or to find out about our non-profit organization and One Voice Brevard please contact us at 321-768-6800, or visit our website: <https://brevardautismcoalition.com/> and Like us on FaceBook: <https://www.facebook.com/BrevardAutismCoalition>

### Word Search

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

CARE  
ADVOCACY  
HEALTH  
BALANCE  
COMPASSION  
VALENTINE  
WINTER  
SPRING  
LEGISLATOR  
CAPITAL

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# Brevard's 2nd Annual Collaborate Panel on Mental Health in our Criminal Justice System

By: Nicole Grabner, Director One Voice Brevard



At the end of January, a collaborative panel convened to discuss “Mental Health in our Criminal Justice System”, in an effort to collaborate on identifying key issues as well as exploring solutions.

This panel featured two judges, defense attorneys, county prosecutors, a social worker, and the head of Circles of Care in Brevard County. The conversation delved into how mental health issues are addressed within the local criminal justice system and the unique challenges faced by individuals with disabilities.

In Brevard County, nearly 20% of incarcerated individuals have reported some form of mental health condition. This statistic underscores the growing need for better mental health services within the criminal justice system. These cases often involve individuals who may not have access to proper mental health care, leading to encounters with law enforcement that could have been avoided with the right support.

The impact on the disabled community is especially profound. Those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, who may have difficulty understanding legal proceedings or communicating effectively, are often at a disadvantage in the justice system. The lack of tailored interventions or resources leads to disproportionate arrests, convictions, and long-term incarceration for these individuals, further marginalizing an already vulnerable group.

The event was well attended and given the high interest in the event, Andrea Fant, the Chairperson for the panel mentioned that scheduling another panel soon would be a high priority. For those interested in this event or contributing to actionable solutions, please email: [BrevardFACDLboard@gmail.com](mailto:BrevardFACDLboard@gmail.com).

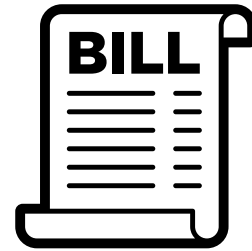
One Voice Brevard will continue to engage with this conference and future events will be announced on our Facebook page.

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## Bill Buzz

By: Nicole Grabner, Director, One Voice  
Brevard



### Upcoming Legislative Events:

The 2025 Legislative Session begins on Tuesday, March 4, 2025. Developmental Disability Awareness Day at the capital is scheduled for 11 March 2025. Currently, these are the bills that have been filed that directly impact our community (this list is subject to change). For more information, please check the Florida House and Senate website.

A	B	C	D	E
Topic Category	Bill Number	Title	Issue	Sponsor/Contact
Education	SB102	Exceptional Student Education	Workforce credentialed program for students with Autism	Senator Gaetz
Medical	SB306	Managed Care Plan Network Access	ACHA require contracts with Medicaid managed care plans, receive care from Medicaid providers not under contract	Senator Sharief
Medical	HB21	Dental Therapy	Authorizes Medicaid to reimburse for dental services provided by mobile dental units	Rep. Chaney
Medical	SB370	Health Screenings for K-12 Students	Authorizing specified screenings to be performed on K-12 students after written parental notification.	Senator Sharief

## Advocacy Alert



A recently leaked document outlining proposed cuts to Medicaid has sparked major concerns among advocacy groups, particularly in Florida. The proposed reductions could amount to \$2.3 trillion over the next decade, which many fear would significantly impact vulnerable populations, including those with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Advocates worry that these cuts would reduce access to essential health services, placing additional strain on individuals and families already facing challenges. The proposal has prompted calls for more transparency and better protection of Medicaid funding to ensure that people with disabilities continue to receive the care they need. Please check back to our Facebook page for updates on any advocacy events and we encourage our community to contact their Congressman to share concerns.



# ONE VOICE BREVARD 2025 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM



## ISSUE: HOUSING

With over 1,000 people moving to Florida a day, and rising costs of living, Brevard County struggles to keep up affordable and accessible housing options. We need more accessible and supported living options, including group homes.

- Create more accessible housing options
- Bring more group home options to Brevard County
- Allow tax exemption status to caregivers of disabled citizens

## ISSUE: HEALTHCARE

An estimated 1.4 million people in the state of Florida lost vital healthcare coverage during the Medicaid Unwinding this past year. Healthcare access in Brevard County is a struggle for many citizens, but especially for those who require specialized care. In addition, many citizens are on the waitlist for crucial home and community-based care. Having home-based care allows our most vulnerable population the option of avoiding institutions.

- Fully fund the APD (Agency for Persons With Disabilities) Wait List
- Bring more specialized doctors to Brevard County
- Support efforts to broaden medical coverage for our already overburdened disabled population

## ISSUE: EDUCATION

Brevard County has over 18,500 students enrolled in the ESE program. With the rising amount of children diagnosed with intellectual and developmental disabilities, we need better support and specialized educators to work with our children to ensure they are prepared to live their fullest life upon graduation. Each year, these students leave the school system with no real outside support for secondary education or employment.

- Create more adult programs to support our disabled students
- Ensure IEP and 504 supports are being met with each student
- Ensure special education teachers receive adequate training to work with I/DD students



## AT A GLANCE

### OVERVIEW:

- Homeowner Program for caregivers
- Fund the waitlist for APD
- VR rate increase and programs
- Transportation Program/Uber Access
- Adult Day Programs and Employment
- Supported housing options



## ONEVOICE BREVARD

Disability Advocacy in Brevard County

One Voice Brevard is the Coalition of Advocacy efforts for our disabled population in Brevard County. Our goal is to bring every advocacy group together to speak with one legislative voice.



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# Monthly Art Submission



This month's art submission was submitted  
by 12-year old Ember Norton and is entitled  
"Rosy Night"

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# Resources and Contact Information

- Brevard Autism Coalition; <https://brevardautismcoalition.com/>
- Angels Bridging Gaps; <https://angelsbridginggaps.org/>
- The Parker Foundation; <http://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; <http://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>

For Newsletter Questions or Submissions:  
[info@ovcfl.org](mailto:info@ovcfl.org)





# February Events

February						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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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	

- **Saturday, February 1st**, from 8:30 to 12:30 at the Viera High School, START Conference. Transition Planning for Life After High School. For more information call Terry Matson (321) 633-1000, ext 11549
- **Every Monday in February, starting with February 2nd**, 6-7 p.m. Barnyard Challenge, Youth Development Program,, UF/IFAS Brevard County Extension Office, 3695 Lake Drive, Cocoa. Cost \$25.00. For more info, see flyer.
- **Thursday, February 6th, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.** Angels Bridging Gaps sponsored visit to the American Space Museum in Titusville.m from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., followed by lunch (bring your own). A tour of the Harriet Moore Museum from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m follows. Cost is \$15.00 per person and covers both museums. For more information call 321-324-1643.
- **Friday, February 7th**, Night To Shine at Lakeside Fellowship Church, 8000 66th Avenue, Vero Beach, Florida.
  - **Saturday, February 1st, from 11-2**, ABG Works Thrift and Consignment Botique at the Malabar Baptist Church will be providing free clothing
- **Saturday, February 22nd**, Doug Flutie 5K run, startiing at 8:00 a.m., at the Schechter Community Center, 1089 S. Patrick Drive, Satellite Beach, Fl. Volunteers still needed to make this a success! See flyer on last page.
- **Saturday, February 22nd**, Soccer Skills Day, 10:45 - 12:45, ages 7 and up, registration required. Location: Lockmarn Elementary School, 525 Peppere St NE, Palm Bay, Fl. . For more information contact Natalie at njackson@fca.org
- **Monday, February 24th**, 7:00 p.m. One Voice Brevard Book Club Meeting. See Zoom info on flyer.
- **Wednesday, February 26th**, Community Play Date, from 9-10:30. The Children's Center, 5650 S. Washington Ave., Titusville, FL. RSVP to Mary, 321-2921-1370



# Volunteers needed

**FLUTIE 51st Anniversary**  
February 22, 2025 - Satellite Beach, FL  
www.flutiesk.com

**Autism Coalition of Brevard**

*Proceeds benefit individuals and families affected by Autism in Brevard County.*

**Join Us for a Cause!**

We're gearing up for the "5K Run for Autism Awareness" on February 22, 2025, and we need YOUR energy and enthusiasm to help us make a difference in the lives of those affected by autism.

Volunteer with us and contribute to a meaningful cause. Whether you're a student looking for service hours or an individual eager to make an impact, your support is crucial.

**Date/Time:** February 22, 2025, 6:45am  
**Location:** David R. Schneider Community Center (1089 S. Patrick Dr., Satellite Beach, FL 32937)




**We need volunteers to:**

- Help with set up in the morning at 6:45am
- Dressing and Cheering for Runners
- Waiting out for traffic
- Hand out water bottles and snacks
- Break down and clean up after race concludes

By joining our volunteer team, not only will you be part of an uplifting event, but you'll also be making a lasting impact on Autism Awareness. Let's run together towards a world of understanding and inclusion!

Sign up now by emailing [brevardautismcoalition@gmail.com](mailto:brevardautismcoalition@gmail.com)

For more details about Brevard Autism Coalition, please scan:

[www.brevardautismcoalition.com](http://www.brevardautismcoalition.com)    [facebook.com/BrevardAutismCoalition/](https://facebook.com/BrevardAutismCoalition/)    [Donate Here](#)

## Special Olympics Brevard

# TENNIS

**Kiwi Racquet and Fitness Club**  
**SATURDAYS 11AM**  
**STARTING IN JANUARY 2025**

Kiwi Racquet and Fitness Club will host 2025 Special Olympics Brevard Tennis January to May.

YAP (Young Athletes Program) ages 4 to 8 years old beginner skills only, no competition.

Over 9 years old to adult opportunity to compete at area, regional and state on their own individual level.

No physical required to participate. YAP registration is limited; we will have a waitlist if over the maximum number of registered participants. All equipment provided to registered athletes. Register through Special Olympics Brevard.

<https://www.specialolympicsflorida.org/areas/sports-registration>

**Kiwi Racquet and Fitness Club**  
30 Tridewinds Drive  
Indian Harbor Beach, FL 32937

In partnership with:

**Free Entry!**

## Free Event

# FCA All-Abilities SOCCER SKILLS DAY

**SATURDAY**  
**FEBRUARY 22, 2025**

- Agers 7 and Up
- Skill Station Rotations
- Snacks & Beverages
- Certificate Awards Ceremony

**Check In:** 10:45 AM  
**Soccer Session:** 11:15 AM - 12:45 PM

**Lockmar Elementary School**  
500 Highway 1A, Titusville, FL 32780

**More Information:** [www.fcaflorida.org](http://www.fcaflorida.org)

## ONE VOICE BREVARD DISABILITY BOOK CLUB

**FEBRUARY BOOK:**

*"If the Scaffold is Shaky, One Good Crisis Could Topple the Whole Complex - SCAFFOLD AND BUILDING TO THE GROUND" - SCAFFOLD PARENTING*

24 FEBRUARY 2025, 7:00 PM ON ZOOM  
MEETING ID: 838 7123 8854  
PASSCODE: 298435

## COMMUNITY PLAY DATE

### Under 5's

**EVERY 4TH WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH**  
**From 9:00am - 10:30am**  
**The Children's Center**  
**5650 S. Washington Ave.,**  
**Titusville 32780**  
**RSVP to Mary: 321-292-1370**  
**SPACES ARE LIMITED!**

## START CONFERENCE

Transition Planning for Life after High School

**Saturday, February 1, 2025**  
**8:30am - 12:30pm**  
**at Viera High**

**What happens after I leave school?**

The Start Conference brings together community agencies and programs that support transition planning so that families can start planning for the future. Everyone is welcome!

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**  
**Jason Kostrzewa**  
Project Search Intern  
Attend to hear how Jason learned how to advocate for himself. Followed by a Q&A.

**FREE Registration!**

**START WITH THE END IN MIND**

What's your path?

For more information please contact:  
**Terry Malson • (321) 633-1000 x11549 • [malson.terry@brevardschools.org](mailto:malson.terry@brevardschools.org)**

## 2025 Bookclub Books














September and December are off months.

Bookclub meets on the last Monday of the month at 7:00 PM on Zoom. See One Voice Brevard Facebook page for Zoom link and event pages for more information.



