

Overview/Abstract:

The inaugural Inclusion Done Right! (IDR!) Annual Conference held at Stony Brook University in October 2023, was born out of the need to address barriers to inclusion for children with disabilities to participate, alongside age-matched peers, in recreation/leisure programs within their communities. The initial conference was well-attended (over 150 participants including those from: the disability community (individuals with disabilities and their caregivers), related service providers from New York City and across Long Island, members of the community seeking to provide informed inclusive opportunities, and Stony Brook University and School of Medicine faculty and staff). Results from the post-conference survey indicated a desire by attendees to have this as an annual event with specific topics that broaden the reach of what “Inclusion Done Right!” means to our communities: advocacy, knowledge of programs (from standpoints of providing inclusive programs and knowing how to access and refer to such programs), transition to adulthood, and continued discussions on promoting inclusive recreation and leisure for all members of the disability community.

Built off the feedback from participants of the first conference, the IDR! committee is planning a second IDR! Conference to be held at Stony Brook University on October 18, 2024. Participant feedback has provided the platform for how we plan future conferences and research. Collaborations formed after the 1st conference led to new research agendas. One such example is an interprofessional collaboration amongst Stony Brook University faculty (Applied Health Informatics, Physical Therapy, and Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering) to create a web-based platform for the disability community and their advocates to access local and inclusive programming- which will be presented and beta-tested at the 2nd conference. A clear desire for community support as individuals with disabilities transition to adulthood has led to a tract for interested participants to explore actionable ways to improve opportunities and access. The intent is to create a 'Community of Practice' with interested participants that provides a platform of collaborative research intended to include participants throughout the research design and implementation. Additionally, Stony Brook University support for community members looking to build inclusive programs 'from the ground up' has led to an interprofessional research opportunity that includes students from two separate, cross campus programs (Physical Therapy and Biomedical Engineering) to collaborate and create solutions to access for wheelchair users interested in adaptive flag football.

We intend to target a larger audience of community members, faculty and staff, and the disability community including their advocates/caregivers to advance the Inclusion Done Right! platform which seeks to provide actionable solutions to ameliorate barriers to meaningful lifelong participation.