



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Senator Young Presented with NYS Rehabilitation Association's Public Official of the Year Award

CATHARINE YOUNG September 23, 2014

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Senator Young was deeply honored to accept this year's "Public Official of the Year Award" from the New York State Rehabilitation Association (NYSRA).

NYSRA represents 90 not-for-profit human service organizations and advocates throughout New York State who dedicate themselves to providing quality services to individuals with disabilities.

After being nominated by The Resource Center of Chautauqua County, one of the 90 member agencies that make up NYSRA, Senator Young was officially recognized with the honor at NYSRA's annual awards luncheon in Saratoga Springs, New York, recently.

"This award is presented to you in recognition of your leadership and commitment to an exceptional system of care that embraces choice and inclusion for New York citizens with disabilities," said NYSRA President and CEO Michael Seereiter.

"We applaud the great work you have done for individuals with disabilities by creating, promoting and sustaining programs and services that support life-enrichment opportunities for all New Yorkers," he said.

During the past year, Senator Young has undertaken a number of initiatives prioritized by NYSRA that positively affect individuals with developmental and other disabilities.

"I thank NYSRA for this tremendous honor and for their fantastic work on behalf of individuals with disabilities. They deserve the recognition for their compassion and commitment," said Senator Young.

Making sure the many organizations throughout the state that serve individuals with disabilities are able to provide people with critical services and care has long been a strong commitment of Senator Young's.

A particularly important priority for Senator Young has been helping individuals with developmental disabilities who are negatively affected by recent changes to federal and state work requirements. Thousands of individuals with developmental disabilities who are employed in special work centers suited to their needs and abilities have been caused significant anxiety and hardship over requirements that would force these work centers to shut down, leaving many of their employees jobless.

Through the efforts of Senator Young, this year's state budget addressed the problem, requiring that more employment opportunities in community-based settings be made available for people with developmental disabilities who desire to work and earn a paycheck, whether they are just finishing school or close to retirement. The

budget also included a tax credit program for businesses that hire workers with disabilities.

Another important priority for Senator Young was passing legislation in the Senate that would ensure robust and efficient transportation systems for people with developmental disabilities. The ability to move between their homes, jobs, day programs, and recreational activities is crucial to empowering people with developmental disabilities to be involved in their communities and achieve their highest potential.

“Over the years, Senator Young has proven herself to be committed to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families, and to the agencies that support them,” said The Resource Center’s Community Relations Director Steve Waterson. “This is not surprising, since before joining the Assembly, Senator Young had worked for The ReHAbilitation Center in Cattaraugus County. We are grateful for her ongoing support.”

Senator Young said, “Individuals with disabilities have always been near and dear to my heart, which is why this recognition is such a touching honor. I humbly accept this award with heartfelt gratitude for those people who continually inspire me. During the 15 years I worked at The ReHAbilitation Center I witnessed compassion every day, in ways great and small. My greatest hope is that in accepting this award greater attention will be directed towards the challenges faced by our hardworking and dedicated family members, friends, and neighbors with disabilities.”

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