



Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

Leslie Feinberg

Leslie Feinberg is the driving force of the grass-roots network, Supporting Our Young Adults Network (SOYAN). Her mantra is "If not now, when? If not me, who?"

In 2011, Office for People with Disabilities (OPWDD), launched her youngest child's Self-Direction Plan. Uncertain about her son's future, she began searching her community for helpful information. She completed the Long Island Advocacy Center's lay advocacy training, Wright's Law Training related to Autism & Dyslexia, and earned the credential of Family Peer Advocate. Partners in Policymaking provided the framework for Ms. Feinberg and her self-advocate partner to collaborate video interviews, with elected officials explaining the legislative process.

Conscious of the positive impact one person can make, she is devoted to local and statewide organizations sharing concerns for the developmentally disabled. Her contributions earned recognition from SANYS as Self-Advocate Advisor of the Year and from Literacy Nassau as Next Chapter Book Club Co-facilitator of the Year.

Ms. Feinberg's skills as a mindful leader with boundless energy, compassionate determination and a clear vision, are evident in the success of SOYAN. Her ability to collaborate and embrace other family volunteers has steered SOYAN's connections across Long Island and now virtually.

Recognizing the challenges of staying connected during a pandemic, Ms. Feinberg ensures SOYAN members are informed with weekly emails of resources, community events and commentary on policy actions addressing the immediate and long term needs of the disability community.

It takes a village to secure the rightful place in the community for our families with developmental disabilities. Through SOYAN, Ms. Feinberg has created a village by engaging with community leaders to ensure New York State is a place where people live a self-determined life supported by their community, with dignity and acceptance.

***Leslie Feinberg was selected as a
2020 Woman of Distinction honoree by Senator John E. Brooks.***

