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New York City to Hold Virtual Events in Honor of the 30th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act

Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities and disability community organizations commemorate historic milestone with month-long programming throughout July

New York—The New York City Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) is facilitating a month of fully online programming in celebration of the 30th anniversary of the passage and signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Events include a disability history exhibit, digital accessibility workshops, and panels on a variety of topics such as advocacy, tourism, employment, and transportation. On July 26th, the anniversary of the signing, MOPD and members of the disability community are hosting [Disability Unite](#), a four-hour live-streamed event full of music, dance, discussion, live gaming, and more. A full calendar of City-run and community events can be found at NYC.gov/ADA30.

"In order for us to become the fairest big city in America, we must provide equal access and opportunity for all New Yorkers and visitors with disabilities," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. "As we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, we know how much more there is to be done to ensure accessibility for all."

"Disability rights are civil and human rights," said **Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives J. Phillip Thompson**. "The passage and signing of the ADA was truly a watershed moment for so many Americans and the de Blasio Administration continues to build on the foundations to improve access to programs and services to all New Yorkers with disabilities."

"Over the last 30 years since the passage and signing of the ADA, we have seen tremendous strides in disability rights across all facets of life," said **Victor Calise, Commissioner of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities**. "While we have much to celebrate this July, we know that advocacy efforts must continue and we look forward to using these events as yet another platform to further advance equity and inclusion for everyone."

Here in New York City, we know that the ADA is a floor rather than a ceiling. The de Blasio Administration is firmly committed to building on the legacy of the ADA to expand the rights and opportunities available to New Yorkers and visitors with disabilities. With a [City Human Rights Law](#) and [Building Code](#) that go above and beyond the ADA requirements as well as accessible programs and services such as targeted financial counseling via [EmpoweredNYC](#), a first-of-its-kind [NYC:ATWORK](#) employment initiative and expanded transportation options through [citywide Accessible Dispatch](#) and groundbreaking [wheelchair accessibility mandates in the for-hire vehicle industry](#), New York is leading the way in disability equity and inclusion. MOPD's annual [AccessibleNYC report](#) documents this progress as well as the work that still needs to be done to move the needle even further. During this month-long ADA celebration and beyond, the City and our partners will be sharing resources and continually working in the spirit of the ADA to enhance accessibility for all.

"I appreciate the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities for providing virtual programming to honor and recognize the 30th Anniversary of the Americans with

Disabilities Act. New Yorkers with disabilities have been at the forefront of the movement for justice and equal opportunity, and it is critical that we follow their lead in our continued work to make New York City accessible for all," said **State Senator Alessandra Biaggi (D-Bronx/Westchester)**.

"The Americans with Disabilities Act improved the quality of life for millions of Americans and proved that building a better nation means building one that everyone may fully participate in," said **State Senator Leroy Comrie**. "But the ADA was not the final step to achieving this goal. I thank Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Calise for acknowledging this milestone anniversary and continuing the work of making our city fairer and more accessible for all."

"Every New Yorker must have equal access to all that New York City has to offer. Thirty years after the landmark passage of the ADA, much progress has been made, but many fundamental public goods remain inaccessible - including the public transit system that powers our city. We cannot stop fighting for a fully accessible MTA and a city that works for all of us," said **State Senator Gounardes**.

"I applaud the City of New York's month long celebratory recognition of the 30th Anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act," said **Senator Roxanne Persaud**; "as Chair of the New York State Senate's Committee on Social Services, I am responsible for working on behalf of vulnerable New Yorkers to ensure they can access services they are entitled to. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the resilience of people with disabilities, but has also shed light on how much more we need to do. Among other things, I am thankful that some progress is being made in addressing the challenges of ADA compliant public transportation across Senate District 19. Our duty is to ensure that New Yorkers with disabilities continue to be given the dignity and respect they deserve by strengthening the protections set forth in the ADA."

"I'm glad the City is marking the 30-year anniversary of the passage and signing of this game-changing legislation," said **State Senator Robert Jackson**. "Complying with the ADA has presented enormous challenges to our built environment, which remains fundamentally inaccessible despite some important progress. As we are seeing in the ongoing protests against systemic racism, we have a long way to go to address systemic ableism, too. Especially during this pandemic, we must redouble our efforts at all levels of government to respond to the issues and concerns of disability advocates and people with disabilities."

State Senator James Sanders Jr. said: "The passage of the ADA was a milestone in ensuring that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. However, even now, 30 years later, more can be done to guarantee both equality and protection from discrimination for people with disabilities including improvements in employment, public accommodations, transportation and telecommunications. I look forward to working with the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities to bring more programs and opportunities to this important population."

"The passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act was a watershed moment in the fight for equal rights for all. Unfortunately, thirty years later, that fight continues for many disenfranchised and minority communities. We must continue to strive to make sure every New Yorker has the same access to opportunity and the same pathways for growth," said **State Senator Toby Ann Stavisky**.

"On this historic month celebrating the 30th anniversary of the ADA, we should applaud how far we have come to advance the economic and racial justice issues for people

with disabilities. However, we must also acknowledge how much more work needs to do improve housing and employment opportunities for the disability community," said **Assembly Member Harvey Epstein**.

"As we commemorate the 30th anniversary of the passage of the American with Disabilities Act and celebrate the progress that has been made, we must also recognize how much more needs to be done to ensure that equal accessibility for all exists in our city, state and country as a whole," said **Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi**.

"I commend the 30th anniversary of the American Disabilities Act being signed into law, and the historic progress it represents for so many. However, there is still so much work to be done. We must continue to make great strides in creating a fairer, more accessible, and just New York for all New Yorkers," said **Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright**.

"As we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the ADA, I am glad that MOPD has announced a month of online programming to celebrate this important legislation's passage," said **Assembly Member Jo Anne Simon**. "For too long New Yorkers with disabilities have struggled with our largely inaccessible urban environment, and I am pleased to see progress being made, especially in the digital sphere as we continue to socially distance during the current pandemic. On-line access has fast become essential to meeting the needs of society and we must ensure that people with disabilities are not left behind as we build out our digital infrastructure. Thirty years after its passage, the ADA's vision is not fully realized, new challenges abound while old challenges have reemerged. I am glad that New York City is working to meet these challenges and give life to the purpose of the ADA, 'to assure equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency' for individuals with disabilities."

"As we celebrate the passage of ADA much remains to be done, however, over the past 30 years, we have seen advancements towards accessibility and disability rights," said **Council Member Diana Ayala, Chair of the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities, and Addictions**. "We must continue to build upon the successes we have made to improve conditions for all New Yorkers and streamline services and programs." "This milestone is a good time to reflect on strides that we have made in promoting equality for people with disabilities," said **Council Member Adrienne Adams**. "It has been 30 years since the passage of ADA which opened doors for people with disabilities and we recognize how much more needs to be done."

"As we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the progress that has been made in expanding rights and opportunities for people living with disabilities, we know the work of building a more inclusive City is ongoing. I'm grateful for the unwavering commitment of the Administration, MOPD, and advocates who have fought tirelessly for accessibility, dignity, and freedom from discrimination for all New Yorkers and applaud their efforts to bring this dedicated programming to honor a historic milestone and build on its legacy," said **Council Member Andrew Cohen**.

Council Member Robert E. Cornegy, Jr. said, "The Americans with Disabilities Act helps us focus on forethought and the needs of people with disabilities. The ADA builds a culture of greater inclusion and greater accessibility that contributes to the well-being of countless New Yorkers. As we commemorate 30 years of the ADA, let this month of programming mark a rededication to the inclusive values that guide us towards a yet more inclusive society."

"This month we celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)," said **Council Member Daniel Dromm**. "I am pleased to join MOPD in

highlighting disability history and the important advocacy that led to the passage and signing of this historic legislation. This is also a time to focus on what NYC's leadership is doing to make the City more accessible, and a time to hear from notable activists and other leaders with disabilities. Historians often say that in order to know where we are going, we need to know where we have been. This unique opportunity to learn disability history and the events that brought about the ADA will help make NYC a more just and equitable place."

"Nothing is more important than treating every person with dignity and respect," said **Council Member Barry S. Grodenchik**. "I look forward to our city's commemoration of the anniversary of this landmark legislation."

"The 30th anniversary of the American with Disabilities Act marks decades of effort our country and City have put into creating accessibility for hundreds of thousands of fellow Americans," said **Council Member Ben Kallos**. "Celebrating and commemorating this anniversary with programming such as history exhibits, digital accessibility workshops, is not only a positive for historical and educational purposes but also to encourage more New Yorkers to be cognizant of the needs of those with disabilities. Thank you to the New York City Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities and to Mayor de Blasio for getting this program underway."

"NYC has come a long way in ensuring equal access for all, and this 30th anniversary of the passage of the ADA is an important milestone in recognizing how far we've come and still have to go. I look forward to sharing this month's events with my constituents, and thank the Administration for their work to raise awareness and promote accessibility for all," said **Council Member I. Daneek Miller**.

"The Americans with Disabilities Act has provided individuals with disabilities with the fairness and inclusivity they deserve. Our goal must now be to ensure that we continue expanding the accessibility of our transit system to ensure all New Yorkers have equal access. Additionally, we need to make all train stations fully accessible for New Yorkers," said **Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez, Chairman of the Transportation Committee**. "I will continue working alongside City Hall, Speaker Corey Johnson, colleagues, and advocates to ensure that every New Yorker with disabilities has the same access to resources we all have."

"The Americans with Disabilities Act was a civil rights package that recognized the dignity of all people, regardless of disability. We must continue to promote this landmark package and educate stakeholders across every industry to ensure truly equal access to services, housing, education, and transportation," said **Councilwoman Carlina Rivera**.

Council Member Deborah Rose said, "The Americans with Disabilities Act was a landmark law that paved the way for equal access for people with disabilities throughout our nation. As New Yorkers, it is important that we not only meet the standards set by this law, but exceed them to ensure that all residents have access to public and private spaces and programs. I encourage my constituents to check out the digital exhibits and events celebrating this anniversary and recommit ourselves to welcoming full inclusion for people with disabilities."

"The MTA remains committed to dramatically increasing the number of fully accessible stations throughout the subway system, with four station accessibility upgrades scheduled to be completed this summer alone," said **Interim President of MTA New York City Transit, Sarah Feinberg**. "Our system was built many decades before the ADA's passage and we owe a real debt of gratitude to the advocates who

have fought relentlessly for improvements throughout the system over the last three decades. Their work has made us a better and more responsive agency. We look forward to working alongside them in our latest fight for federal funding so that we can add 66 new accessible stations to the system as part of the historic 2020-2024 Capital Plan."

"Disability Pride Month is a time to reflect, but also to activate, said **Elisabeth Axel, President and CEO, Art Beyond Sight and Co-chair Project Access for All**. "One in four Americans have a disability - that's your friend, your family, perhaps yourself. The truest form of celebrating Disability Pride is through advocating for our rights. It's up to us to work together and build on the tremendous progress made since the signing of the ADA 30 years ago."

"As we come upon the 30th anniversary of the landmark ADA bill, we not only celebrate our achievements but also continue to move forward to ensure equality and accessibility for all," said **Susan Dooha, Executive Director of Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York**. "We thank the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities for this well-curated list of events."

"There is a time to celebrate and a time to advocate, and this year's 30th anniversary comes at a time when we must do both," said **Joe Rappaport, Executive Director of the Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled**. "We celebrate the advances our community and city have made and note that, whether it's access to affordable housing, our city's subways, more sensible policing and so much more, there are huge strides to make."

"As we approach the 30th Anniversary of the ADA it is a great time to reflect on what we have accomplished together and all the work that is still left to do," said **Brett Eisenberg, Executive Director of Bronx Independent Living Services (BILS)**. "BILS looks forward to continuing its partnership with MOPD and other organizations dedicated to improving the lives of all people with disabilities. Through continued collaboration and hard work, in the next 30 years we will have even more to celebrate."

"After 30 years of legislation change for people with disabilities, ReelAbilities Film Festival: New York is proud to continue its support for cultural change for America's largest minority group," said **Isaac Zablocki, Director and Founder of ReelAbilities: New York**. "If we do not see progressive portrayals of people with disabilities in media, it will be hard to recognize them in our community. In the last couple of years we have been witnessing a revolution in the inclusion and portrayal of people with disabilities. We are proud to collaborate with MOPD to [highlight some of our programs](#) from ReelAbilities Film Festival in this year's celebration of the 30th anniversary of the ADA."

"At Lighthouse Guild, we are committed to improving the lives of people with vision loss and other disabilities," said **Dr. Calvin W. Roberts, President and CEO of the Lighthouse Guild**. "We stand with the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) and partnering agencies in recognizing the importance of the ADA over the past 30 years, and the impact it continues to have on the lives of millions of New Yorkers and their families."

"As we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the ADA, we can see that much has been accomplished but there is still much work to be done. People with disabilities are as diverse as the total population and we particularly give attention to Black, Latinx, Asian and LGBTQ persons with disabilities and the existing discrimination and racism that occurs. We will continue to fight the battle for full inclusion, respect, work and

independence at home and in the community,” said **Nancy D. Miller, Executive Director/CEO, VISIONS/Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired.**

“As we come together as a community to celebrate 30 years of ADA, it’s important to acknowledge the strides still left to make, especially for the intellectual and developmental disabilities community,” said **George Contos, CEO of YAI.** “We look forward to working with the Mayor’s Office to ensure that New York’s I/DD community’s interests are represented effectively.”

“Disabled In Action (DIA) is delighted to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the ADA in 2020 which is also the 50th anniversary of our founding by Judy Heumann and others,” said **Jean Ryan, President of Disabled in Action.** “We are continuing to partner with other groups to achieve disability justice. We are 50 and going strong and we are here to stay! Nothing about us without us!”

“As we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act, let’s also celebrate the efforts of generations of disability advocate, said **James Weisman, President and CEO of United Spinal Association.** “Buses, subways, taxis, Access-A-Ride, curb ramps, polling places, and thousands of places of public accommodation have become accessible. The ADA has heightened awareness and raised expectations.”

“The passage of the ADA 30 years ago is truly an achievement to celebrate and we are proud to live in a city that is committed to making equal opportunity and accessibility for all a part of every aspect of life, said **Jose Hernandez, President of the NYC Chapter of United Spinal Association.**”

"This year, we are reminded that disability justice is racial justice. We look forward to the month-long celebration of the ADA anniversary and opportunities for New Yorkers to learn more about how to create inclusive schools, workplaces, and communities for young people with disabilities," said **Barbara Glassman, Executive Director of INCLUDEnyc** a nonprofit advocating for young people with disabilities and their families for nearly four decades.

“On this, the 30th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, It is time for People with Disabilities, to come forward to bring our issues and make clear to society the issues we believe are necessary to ensure accessibility, equality and parity. Many of our issues are left behind on the curb trailing other populations. As businesses push for outdoor and indoor dining during the re-opening, people with disabilities cannot be forgotten in the process. As we celebrate 30 years of progress this month, we must acknowledge that there is more work to be done,” said **Edith M Prentiss, Disability Advocate.**

“New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI) intends to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities with a promise of thirty more years of advocacy on behalf of the disability community,” said **Ruth Lowenkron, Director of NYLPI’s Disability Justice Program.** “NYLPI brought the first complaint under the ADA to make the observation deck of the Empire State Building accessible, and we are proud of all of the disability community’s accomplishments in using the ADA to achieve equity, equality, and inclusion.”

“Passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act was a pivotal moment in history, requiring accessibility for all and allowing people with disabilities to live fully and independently. We celebrate those achievements on this anniversary. But 30 years later we are still fighting to break down remaining barriers. With the help of Commissioner Calise and his staff, we’ll continue to fight for equal access to all,” said **Jonathan Taylor**

and Katherine Bouton, President and Vice President of Hearing Loss Association of America, New York City Chapter.

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