



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
NEW YORK, NY 10007

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** August 5, 2015  
**CONTACT:** [pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov), (212) 788-2958

**CITY OF NEW YORK HOSTS ADA SAPOLIN AWARDS IN HONOR OF 25TH  
ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT**

*De Blasio Administration commends New Yorkers dedicated to helping people with disabilities  
on landmark 25th anniversary of the ADA*

*ADA Sapolin Awards – bestowed in honor of late Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities  
Commissioner Matthew P. Sapolin – presented during reception at Bronx Zoo*

**New York**—Tonight the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities will host a reception at the Bronx Zoo to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the American with Disabilities Act and to recognize the work of disability rights proponents in New York City. This year, the Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities Victor Calise will present awards to David Salcfas of Marriot International, David Leventhal of Dance for Parkinson’s, Jason Sandoval of Kings Theatre, Colin O’Donnell of LinkNYC and CityBridge, and Joan Peters, JD, MPH, of the Brooklyn Center for Independence.

Signed in 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act has fostered independence, empowerment and inclusion for millions of Americans living with disabilities. To honor and celebrate the passage of the ADA, each year the City of New York presents four awards in recognition of individuals who have made significant contributions to increasing accessibility for people with disabilities under the Titles of the American with Disabilities Act, known as the ADA Awards, and one Advocacy Award to an individual or entity that has demonstrated a commitment to advocate on behalf of people with disabilities.

“The Americans with Disabilities Act is one of the most important pieces of civil rights legislation in our country’s history,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “On this important anniversary, we honor all those who have fought for the rights of people with disabilities, and in particular those individuals and organizations who have shown exemplary commitment to inclusion, accessibility and equality – Marriott International, Dance for Parkinson’s, Kings Theatre, LinkNYC and CityBridge, and Joan Peters of the Brooklyn Center for Independence. On the 25th anniversary of the ADA, we recognize how far we have come as a city and a nation to advance the lives of people with disabilities, and chart our path to a brighter, more inclusive and accessible future for all.”

“Once again, I am proud to grant awards to organizations and individuals who share our commitment to improving the quality of life for people with disabilities in the spirit of Matt

Sapolin and Frieda Zames,” said **Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities Victor Calise**. “The recipients are truly worthy of this honor as they have proven themselves dedicated to the protection of civil rights as provided in the American with Disabilities Act.”

The ADA Sapolin Awards are named after the late MOPD Commissioner Matthew Sapolin and the Advocacy Award is named in honor of the late Frieda Zames, a disability rights advocate, historian and author.

**The recipients of the 2015 ADA Sapolin Awards and the Frieda Zames Advocacy Award are as follows:**

**Marriott International: TITLE I ADA Sapolin Employment Award**

Marriott International’s core values are putting people first, pursuing excellence, embracing change, acting with integrity and serving the world, and Marriott searches for employees that embody these core values. Marriott has been active in hiring people with disabilities since 1989, even before the ADA was enacted into law. Locally, Marriott employs over 60 individuals with disabilities in their NYC hotels, in a wide range of positions including management, engineering, guest services, communications, and marketing. For over five years, the Ritz-Carlton/Marriott has partnered with MOPD to provide career exploration through Disability Mentoring Day, providing customer service and etiquette training to people with visual disabilities working in customer service call centers, and has partnered with Queens High School for Opportunity’s Hospitality Program to prepare students for a career in hospitality through mentoring and career shadowing. In addition to corporate efforts, the Marriott Foundation for People with Disabilities’ School to Work Program has offered young people with disabilities opportunities to grow and succeed with many employers.

**Dance for Parkinson’s: TITLE II ADA Sapolin Public Service Award**

Dance for PD is a nonprofit organization based in Brooklyn that offers dance classes for those living with Parkinson’s disease. These classes help each individual and their family deal with the physical changes to their bodies, helping with movement and building self-esteem and networks for each other and caregivers. Participants are empowered to explore movement and music in ways that are refreshing, enjoyable, stimulating and creative. Dance for PD is also affiliated with the Mark Morris Dance Group. Dance for PD receives funding from the Department of Cultural Affairs.

**Kings Theatre: TITLE III ADA Sapolin Public Accommodation Award**

Kings Theatre, an authentic restoration of the original 1929 design, holds a strong commitment to making the performing arts accessible for people with disabilities. Kings Theatre’s accessible features include wheelchair seating locations, aisle transfer seats, an FM assistive listening system, wheelchair accessible concessions, accessible family restrooms, and induction loops at the customer services desk, concession bar, and ticket window.

**LinkNYC/CityBridge: TITLE IV ADA Sapolin Telecommunications Award**

LinkNYC/CityBridge is a first-of-its-kind, fully accessible communications network that will bring the fastest available municipal Wi-Fi to millions of New Yorkers, small businesses, and visitors. The five-borough LinkNYC network, which will be funded through advertising revenues, will be built at no cost to taxpayers and will generate more than \$500 million in

revenue for the City over the first 12 years. By replacing the aging network of public pay telephones with 10,000 state-of-the-art Links, the City aims to transform the physical streetscape – and New Yorkers’ access to information – while also creating 100 to 150 new full-time jobs in manufacturing, technology and advertising, plus an estimated 650 support jobs for the development, servicing and maintenance of the structures. CityBridge, a New York City-based consortium of leading experts in technology, advertising, connectivity and user experience, was formed to bring the fastest free municipal Wi-Fi to New York City. CityBridge members and the extended team include Titan, Control Group, Qualcomm, Comark and Antenna Design.

**Brooklyn Independence Center: Frieda Zames Advocacy Award**

Joan Peters, JD, MPH, and Executive Director of the Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled, has spent over 18 years in the nonprofit sector. Most of her professional career has focused on marginalized populations with disabilities and chronic medical conditions. She has developed innovative programs for women with chronic conditions and people with mental illness and developmental disabilities. Peters was Associate Director at Bronx Independent Living Services, and later served as the Executive Director of the National Aphasia Association. Peters is particularly interested in the social impact of communication disorders, and her presentations on the topic include “If You Don’t Listen, I’ll Kick You in the Shins: The Bottom Rung of the Disability Movement Speaks Out.” She received her JD from the University of Michigan and her MPH from the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University.

This evening’s reception was sponsored by IBM, The Bussani Mobility Team, Independent Care System and Capolino Associates. As guests depart from tonight’s event, they will receive a new calendar created in collaboration with VSA Arts, an international nonprofit organization founded more than 35 years ago by Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith to create a society where people with disabilities learn through, participate in, and enjoy the arts.

###