Volume 2 Issue 4 | April 2025

NEW YORK STATE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL, INC.

NYSILC

empowering new yorkers with disabilities

NYSILC News, April 2025

Profile in Excellence

NYSILC Council Member

Lisa Gesson

Lisa Gesson is the Director of Operations at the Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled (BCID). Lisa began her career as an advocate at the Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association, later United Spinal Association. She worked brief stints as a fundraiser for the American Cancer Society's Brooklyn office and It's Just Lunch: the Dating Service for Busy Professionals where she served as Customer Service Manager, when she wasn't eagerly matchmaking.

She worked at the Youth Services Opportunities Project for 18 years, initially as a part-time youth worker, leading groups of teens in service projects working with homeless and hungry New Yorkers, and eventually as Associate Executive Director.

Lisa's first pandemic job was in Accounts Receivable at the Realty Advisory Board on Labor Relations, where she collected over 70% of $3 million in receivables during the first six weeks of the billing cycle. Lisa began at BCID in April 2021 as Operations Manager and was promoted in April 2024 to Director of Operations.

Lisa was happily married in October 2014 to Michael, who died in November 2024 after a protracted battle with cancer. Lisa has Master's degrees from Boston University School of Theology with a concentration in Philosophy, Theology and Ethics and Baruch College with a concentration in Nonprofit Management.

She donated stem cells to an unrelated 70 year old leukemia patient who lived to 82 years. She is an enthusiastic knitter, a member of two book clubs, enjoys running slowly, yoga and dance and was a losing competitor in a roller coaster marathon, riding the Coney Island Cyclone 77 successful times before tossing her cookies at ride 78.

New York Association on Independent Living (NYAIL)

2025 Conference - Leading the Way

"Empowering Tomorrow's Leaders Today"

SAVE THE DATE - September 16-17 at Albany Capital Center

The "Leading the Way" theme embodies the principles of achieving diversity, equity, intersectionality, and accessibility that drive the Independent Living community forward. Leading the Way emphasizes the value of focusing on leadership, advocacy, and innovation in the disability rights movement.

Don't miss out on this incredible opportunity to connect with fellow advocates and leaders, learn from the best in the field, and help shape the future of Independent Living in New York. **STAY IN TOUCH** by joining the NYAIL Newsletter for the most up to date information on our upcoming conference!

and the

NYSILC NYS Disability Rights Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony and Dinner

This year, NYSILC is partnering with the New York Association on Independent Living (NYAIL) to host the Hall of Fame induction ceremony and dinner on September 16th, 2025 as a part of NYAIL's Statewide Conference.

Watch this newsletter for more information about this exciting collaboration! Announcement of inductees as well as information about tickets, sponsorship opportunities, and joining the honorary committee are all coming soon.

A Message from National Association on Mental Illness (NAMI) - April is Stress Awareness Month

Everyone experiences stress. Sometimes it can help you focus and get the task at hand done. But when stress is frequent and intense, it can strain your body and make it impossible to function. Finding effective ways to deal is crucial to living well.

Stress affects your entire body, mentally as well as physically. When experiencing long-term stress, your brain is exposed to increased levels of a hormone called cortisol. This exposure weakens your immune system, making it easier for you to get sick.

Stress can contribute to worsening symptoms of your mental illness. For example, in schizophrenia, it can encourage hallucinations and delusions, while in bipolar disorder, it can trigger episodes of both mania and depression. Knowing what situations cause it is the first step in coping with this very common experience.

Everyone has their own threshold. Certain things that may upset you might not even make one of your friends raise an eyebrow. Some people are affected when they experience large crowds and noisy environments, while others react to silence and free time.

Looking to reduce stress? Click here to read more by NAMI National!

If you or a loved one is experiencing a crisis, please call or text 988!

#StressAwarenessMonth | #MentalHealthMatters | #NAMINYS

NYSILC Council Members

Executive Committee

Chair: Yaw Appiadu

Vice Chair: Lindsay Miller

Secretary: Beata Karpinska-Prehn

Treasurer: Stephanie Woodward

Member at Large: John Zick

STAFF

Program Coordinator:
Amy Wink
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Community Building and Media Specialist:
Emily Bianchine-Cummings
emilyb@nysilc.org

Registration Now Open: May 15, 2025 for the 30th Annual Elder Law Forum

DATE: Thursday, May 15
TIME: 8:30AM - 3:00PM
PLACE: Crowne Plaza Albany (The Desmond)
OR Attend the Live Stream

YOU'RE INVITED TO JOIN THE KEY STAKEHOLDERS in a statewide conference that delivers the latest policies, proposals, planning strategies and innovations, including:

• Outcomes and impacts of the State legislative and budget session
• Changes to NYS Medicaid home care and what the future holds
• The future of the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program
• Solutions to the shortage of facility and home care workers
• Long-term care insurance options – market changes, affordability
• Innovations in technology – new delivery models
• Update on New York's Master Plan for Aging

Pierro, Connor & Strauss gathers leaders in the fields of health care, long-term care, government, advocacy, law and finance all in one room, a rare opportunity to learn, network and be part of the conversation.

Free to attend with lunch included. Sign up to receive all the latest updates and news leading up to the Elder Law Forum. **Register Here!**

For more information, visit **www.pierrolaw.com**

Interested in a Pat Figueroa Scholarship for youth/young adults with disabilities in New York?

The scholarship provides funding for young adults with disabilities to attend and participate in independent living related conferences and/or national disability and leadership trainings.

Learn more or apply here!

Upcoming NYSILC events/activities:

- Next NYSILC Full Council Meeting - **Friday, June 6, 2025** from 9:30 am to 1 pm at the Wolf Road Marriott in Albany and remotely via Zoom.

Please visit https://nysilc.org/council/meetings-calendar for details.

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