



PLAN|NJ Board Welcomes New President and Member

Dedicated board member **Elizabeth G. Farishian, RN, MA (Liz)** was named the President of the PLAN|NJ Board of Directors at the June 2023 meeting.

Liz recently retired after more than 40 years as a Registered Nurse and in management and advisory positions at ECLC of New Jersey, John F. Kennedy Medical Center, Garden State Medical Group, MasterCare Companies, Inc., Our House, Inc., and Clark Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. She received a Bachelor of Science from Wagner College in Staten Island, NY, and a Master of Arts, Nursing from New York University. Her husband retired from the public school system in Verona, NJ, where he was director of athletics.

Liz is keenly aware of the challenges families face when planning for their loved one's future. At age 40, her daughter Vicki lives at home, and works as an administrative assistant at a school for children and adults with special needs. She loves cooking and is a much-loved volunteer at the nearby Armenian church.

"Vicki has many skills and some challenges, so we are setting things up in a way that will protect Vicki's health and well-being while ensuring her future independence," said Liz.



Liz feels her greatest education came from growing up in a close-knit Italian family in Brooklyn, which included a cousin with Down syndrome, Joseph. He lived at home with his parents and grandmother, learned life skills, and was always engaged in the community, playing in the street with his cousins and the other neighborhood children. In his 40s, he moved to a group home, where he made many friends and thrived. Every week his mother still made his favorite lasagna, meatballs, or ravioli; she brought food for everyone and became part of his new community.

"Aunt Mary did everything right where Joseph was concerned. Watching her manage Joseph's needs and volunteer for an organization serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities must have instilled a person-centered perspective in me," she reflected. "It taught me to have my daughter Vicki's best interests at heart and to plan for her future."

Ellen Nalven, PLAN|NJ Executive Director, remarked that "Liz's lived experiences and her many years on the PLAN|NJ Board as Chairperson of the Client Services Committee make her the perfect person to take on this leadership role with PLAN|NJ."

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2023 PLAN|NJ BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive Committee:

Elizabeth G. Farishian, RN, MA, *President*
 Joseph B. Young, Esq., *Vice-President*
 Thomas J. Zesk, *Treasurer*
 Ellie Byra, *Secretary*
 Peter A. Phillips, CPA, *Immediate Past President*

Board:

Linda Buch, RN, BSN
 Theodore R. Goyins, Jr.
 F. Gary Knapp, CFA
 Giselle Lassalle
 Beth C. Manes, Esq.
 Michael P. McGarry
 Kristi Phillips, M. Ed.
 Hazeline Pilgrim, MSW, LSW
 Carla Ponn
 William Spiro
 Louise A. Tagliareni, RN, MSN

Goldie Ellis, MPA, *Director Emeritus*

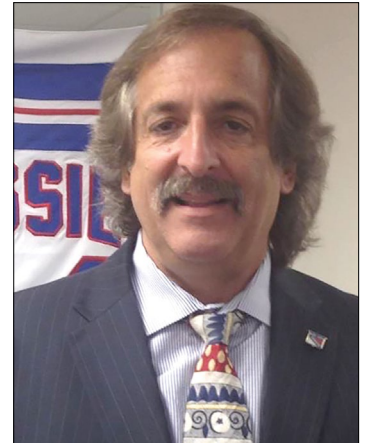
Ellen B. Nalven, M.Ed., *Executive Director*

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Parent advocate **William Spiro (Billy)** joined the PLAN|NJ Board of Directors in spring 2023.

Billy began a career on Wall Street in investment banking after receiving a degree in economics from Brooklyn College, becoming an executive with DLJ Securities Corp. and retiring from Credit Suisse Asset Management in 2015. He has since made it his mission to help families who have loved ones with disabilities receive the support they deserve. His experience as the parent of a child with autism led him to found White Rabbit Partners, which helps other parents navigate the complex adult services and entitlements systems in New Jersey. Billy has testified before the New Jersey legislature on the need for greater housing supports for people with disabilities and previously served on the board of Autism Speaks NJ.



"I am excited to have been invited to join the Board of PLAN|NJ," said Billy. "I look forward to using the knowledge I have gained working my way through the system and now being in a position to help families in NJ."

"PLAN|NJ staff are incredibly grateful to the many new and experienced Board members who so generously contribute their time and expertise to PLAN|NJ's work," said Ellen. "I am so pleased we have been able to grow the board to 16 volunteer members with diverse backgrounds and expertise. We rely on their counsel regularly and are fortunate to have this dynamic leadership in place as we prepare to develop future strategic plans."

PLAN|NJ by-laws include the requirement that more than 51% of the board of directors have a family member with disabilities.

NEW DISABILITIES PODCAST UNPACKS BENEFITS MYTHS

A new PLAN|NJ educational podcast series for individuals and families with disabilities is in active development with co-sponsorship support from the New Jersey State Bar Foundation.

Three podcasts were recorded in August at the New Jersey Law Center, on topics that included unpacking the many myths regarding Special Needs Trusts and ABLE accounts; accessing and keeping public benefits; and accessing mental health support resources.

Expert guests included Shirley



Above L-R: Crystal West Edwards, Esq., Carla Ponn, Ellen Nalven. Right L-R: Mary Jean Barnes, Ellen Nalven.



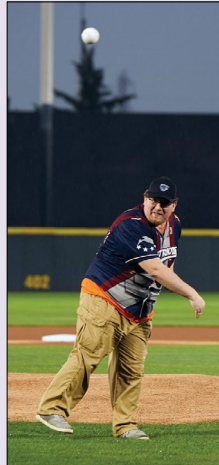
Whitenack, Esq.; Elizabeth Farishian, President, PLAN|NJ Board of Directors; Crystal West Edwards, Esq.; Carla Ponn, PLAN|NJ Board member; Joyce Benz, Executive Director, Intensive Family Support Services Union County; and Michael, an individual who participates in the mental health service system.

PLAN|NJ Executive Director Ellen Nalven, Senior Director of Trust Services Nancy Dilliplane, and Senior Director of Social Services Jason Miller are co-hosting the series, with two more recording dates scheduled in November. The series will roll out in early 2024 and will be promoted widely throughout the disability rights community.

MAKING MEMORIES: A NIGHT OUT WITH PLAN|NJ FAMILIES

The **3rd Annual PLAN|NJ Family Night Out at the Somerset Patriots** took place Thursday, August 24, 2023. More than 500 family, friends and supporters gathered to enjoy this summer pastime together and to raise community awareness of PLAN|NJ and its services for individuals with disabilities and their families.

PLAN|NJ family member Joey Clawson threw out a ceremonial first pitch, and staff member Tim W. was recognized for 15 years' continuous service to PLAN|NJ. Local officials, board members, staff, partners, and ballpark celebrities gathered on the field to recognize PLAN|NJ and its services. Local officials in attendance Douglas Singleterry, Deputy Director, Somerset County Board of Commissioners; Melonie Marano, Somerset County Commissioner; Paul Drake, Somerset County Commissioner; Michael Kirsh, Council President, Bridgewater Township; The Honorable Dennis Sullivan, Mayor, Somerville; and Gina Stravic, Councilwoman, Somerville.



FRANK DIGIOVANNI

"Each summer, we host this event to gather our diverse statewide community," said Kerry Lee, PLAN|NJ Director of Operations. "We like to think of this as the ultimate family event – a chosen family of disability rights advocates, families, friends, professionals, and people with disabilities. Everyone is welcome!"

2023 FOUNDATION SUPPORTERS TO DATE

- Hyde and Watson Foundation
- Karma Foundation
- New Jersey State Bar Foundation
- Fred C. Rummel Foundation
- E.J. Grassmann Trust
- J.G. and A.S. Zimmerman Foundation



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PLAN|NJ has achieved Platinum status with Candid's Guidestar, a nonprofit standard-setting organization. We invite you to look at the assessment for the progress updates you may need to support us with confidence. Visit our Guidestar profile at <https://www.guidestar.org/profile/22-2885785>

Save the Date: 2024 Celebration Commemorates 35 Years



PLAN|NJ will soon celebrate 35 years meeting our mission to help families of people with disabilities answer the question "Who will care for my loved one when I'm gone?" Please join us May 22, 2024, for our Celebration of Abilities, beginning at 6 pm at the Palace at Somerset Park.

The disability rights community of New Jersey comes together every two years at this event to honor those who are championing improved results and higher quality of life for people with disabilities.

Funds raised during the event will be allocated to the PLAN|NJ Pro Bono Family Support Program, which provides advocacy, guardianship and representative payee for Social Security benefits services promoting health, support, and wellbeing for people with disabilities. The program offers supported decision-making in the areas of life planning, health, housing, employment, fiduciary and legal guidance, and social engagement.



Planned Lifetime Assistance Network of New Jersey

P.O. Box 547 Somerville, NJ 08876-0547

(908) 575-8300 | Fax: (908) 927-9010

info@plannj.org | www.plannj.org

Join the
global giving
movement on
GIVING TUESDAY,
November 28, 2023,
with an online
donation to
PLAN|NJ.

YES! I want to help PLAN|NJ support individuals and their families with the legal and financial planning, care coordination, and self-determination assistance they need and deserve. Enclosed is my tax-deductible donation of:

\$150 \$100 \$50 \$35 Other _____

In Honor of or In Memory of (please check one and print name): _____

In addition:

I would like to learn more about establishing a bequest

I have included PLAN|NJ in my estate plans or I would consider including PLAN|NJ in my estate plans

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Please make your donation today!

Visit plannj.org, click on 'Donate,' or, make your check payable to PLAN|NJ and mail it to PLAN|NJ, P.O. Box 547, Somerville, NJ 08876-0547. We reserve the right to publish donor names in the PLAN|NJ Annual Report unless otherwise requested. If you would like your name removed from the donor list, please check here: _____