



Volume 6
April 19, 2024

DD News and Updates

Newsletter

Diversity Month 2024



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BHDDH Technology Training

BHDDH is holding training for anyone who got technology like an iPad or laptop from the Technology Fund. The training is also open to anyone thinking about applying for new technology. See the attachment at the end of this newsletter for more information.



We want to learn from you!

We want to continue to learn from the community. Share your feedback about our newsletter by completing our [online newsletter survey](#). We will keep the survey open to make sure we keep getting your feedback.

DDD Updates

Court Monitor's Report

The State of Rhode Island entered into a Settlement Agreement and [Consent Decree](#) with the United States Department of Justice in 2013 and 2014, respectively. The agreements address findings that the State violated the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) by failing to serve individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in integrated settings, and by placing youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities at serious risk of segregation.

As part of this process, BHDDH receives periodic court reports from our Court appointed Court monitor on our progress. Please visit our website for the latest [Court Monitor's report](#).

Diversity Month April 2024



Diversity is about variety or differences. When it comes to people, diversity is a way to celebrate people's differences. This can be honoring different cultures, beliefs, abilities, ways of thinking, and more.

Diversity is important and adds value to our communities. There are many ways you can celebrate diversity in your community. A couple ideas include trying new cultural food and exploring creative activities. Happy Diversity Month!

BHDDH Your Life, Your Rights Program

The Your Life, Your Rights Program is focusing on antidiscrimination this month. **Antidiscrimination** is treating all people fairly no matter who they are. There are many laws in place to protect your right to fair treatment. Learn what they are and why they matter by reviewing the [BHDDH Your Life, Your Rights Antidiscrimination webpage](#). On this webpage you will find an antidiscrimination fact sheet and guidebook that explains your legal rights.

To share your feedback on this program, including other topics you are interested in learning about, please complete the [Rights Program Online Survey](#).





Your Life, Your Rights

Antidiscrimination

Words to Know



Discrimination:

Treating people differently because of who they are. The different treatment is often bad. Discrimination is against the law.



Antidiscrimination:

Treating all people fairly no matter who they are. This is equal treatment no matter what.

Your Rights to Fair Treatment

It is against the law for people to discriminate against you based on your:



Race:

The color of your skin and your facial features.



Religion:

What you believe in, worship, and practice.



National Origin:

The country you were born in or your accent and looks.



Age:

If you are age 40 or older.



Disability:

Your physical health, mental health, or both.



Sex:

Your gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or if you are pregnant.

To report discrimination, contact the Rhode Island Commission for Human Rights by phone at (401) 222-2661 or by visiting their website at www.richr.ri.gov.

DDD Updates

April 13th State Offices Community Fair



On April 13th Elvys Ruiz, the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals (BHDDH DDD) Business and Community Outreach Administrator, participated in the 1st Rhode Island State Offices Community Fair that took place at the Community College of Rhode Island, Liston Campus from 10 am – 1 pm.

The Community Fair was an opportunity for Rhode Islanders to learn about all the resources and services available through the State of Rhode Island. The attendees had the opportunity to meet representatives from various state offices. Many divisions of state agencies were represented in a unified effort to reintroduce Rhode Island's commitment to community engagement and inclusion.

BHDDH was presented with a Citation from Governor Daniel J. McKee for participating in the Community Fair. DDD's own, Elvys Ruiz, received the citation from Rosa E. DeCastillo, Director of Community Affairs & Outreach, Office of RI Governor, Dan McKee.

Mr. Ruiz also had an opportunity to interact with Congressman Gabe Amo and Boakai (Jimmy) Kamara Sr., Casework Supervisor at the RI Department of Human Service's Office of Healthy Aging.



DDD Updates

Accessibility Tip



Over the past few years our society has moved more and more information online. You can do an online search about any topic to learn more about it. But not everyone can access information found online. One big reason for this is because not all websites are accessible.

Accessible websites are websites that everyone can use and understand. This means people with and without disabilities can get the same use out of the websites.

There are guidelines websites must follow to make sure everyone has equal access. The government is updating the law to protect equal access to online information. The update will be made to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Learn more on the [DisabilityScoop website](#).

Inspiration: We See You!

“

Your goals are the roadmaps
that guide you and show you
what is possible for your life.

LES BROWN



Curated contribution by **Jacqueline Reily**, Programming Services Officer with the RI Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals (BHDDH), Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)

Community News

Supported Decision Making



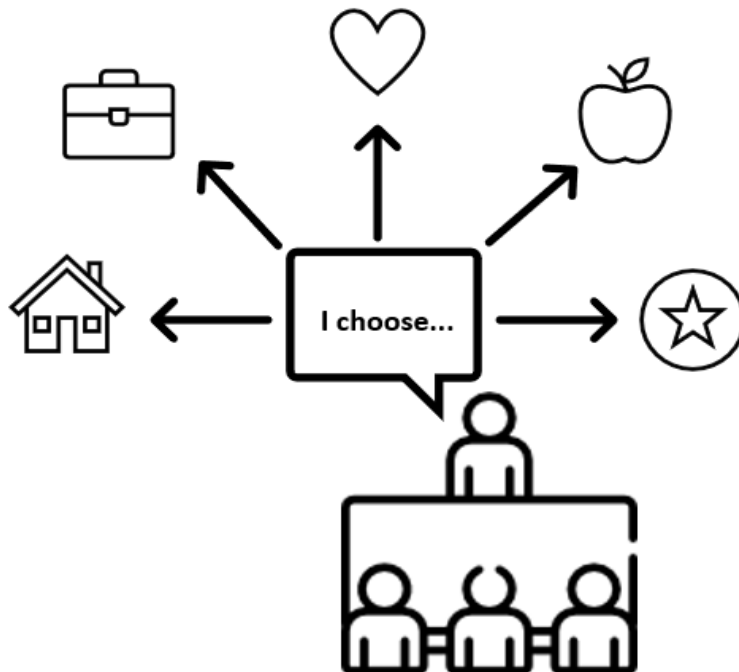
It is important for people with disabilities to make choices about their life and have more control. **Supported Decision Making (SDM)** is one way they can keep making choices for themselves with help and support from people they trust.

With SDM, people with disabilities work with friends, family, and providers they trust. The people they choose to work with will help them make choices, but not make choices for them. The person with disabilities will get help learning what their options are, including the pros and cons of each option. When they feel ready, they will make the final decision.

People with disabilities can protect their right to making decisions even more with a signed agreement. A **signed agreement** is a document that explains how a group of people will work together. Signed agreements are legal documents, which means the law protects them.

For more information about supported decision making visit the [RI Center for Supported Decision-Making website](#).

To learn more about decision-making supports, review the Rhode Island Parent Information Network (RIPIN) Decision-Making Options for Adults with Disabilities Tip Sheet at the end of this newsletter.



Community News

Best Buddies Farewell Fiesta

Best Buddies of Providence College is hosting a Farewell Fiesta!

The event will take place on **Sunday, April 21st from 3:00pm to 5:00pm**. This is an in-person event that is **free** and open to the community. You can go to '64 Hall located in the Slavin Center at Providence College.

If you need accommodations to join this event, call the Central Reservations Manager at (401)-865-1040.



PC BEST BUDDIES
**FAREWELL
FIESTA**

SUNDAY, APRIL 21
3PM-5PM
'64 HALL LOCATED IN THE SLAVIN CENTER,
PROVIDENCE COLLEGE

ALL ARE WELCOME!

IF YOU ARE A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY AND REQUIRE AN ASSISTIVE DEVICE, SERVICE, OR OTHER ACCOMMODATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THESE EVENTS, PLEASE CONTACT THE CENTRAL RESERVATIONS MANAGER AT (401)-865-1040; M-F 8:30 AM-4:30 PM WELL IN ADVANCE OF THE EVENT

Community News

The Rhode Island State Workforce Initiative

[The Rhode Island State Workforce Initiative \(RISWI; website\)](#) is a partnership of government, provider, and community stakeholders working together to advance and sustain the Direct Support Professional (DSP) workforce.

RISWI public comment period is open now through Tuesday, April 23, 2024

A public comment period is open now through Tuesday, April 23, 2024, on a Direct Support Professional (DSP) Training and Onboarding Template. The template and instructions for public comment are provided below:

- [Direct Support Professional Training and Onboarding Template \(PDF\)](#)
- [Instructions for Public Comment \(PDF\)](#)

You can also visit the [RISWI Public Feedback Requested webpage](#) to learn more and to submit feedback.

2024 NADSP Advocacy Symposium: Building A Grassroots Movement

Are you a DSP? Do you want to help make life better for DSPs?

Join the [National Association of Direct Support Professionals \(NADSP\)](#) in its online Advocacy Symposium! The Symposium will last only one afternoon. You'll learn about ways to make the DSP career better. You'll also learn how to voice your concerns and ideas to U.S. government officials.

The day after the Symposium, you will join an online meeting with U.S. Congressional leaders! They need to hear your voice. When the DSP career is better, the lives of the people you serve will be better, too.

Event: Advocacy Symposium

Event: Congressional leaders

Event Date: Tuesday, April 30, 2024

Event Date: Wednesday, May 1, 2024

Event Time: 2:00 – 4:45 pm

Event Time: TBD

Event Location: [Registration form \(website\)](#)

Event Registration: [Registration form \(website\)](#)

Community News

Employment Success Stories Event April 30th



Rhode Island Parent Information Network (RIPIN) is hosting an event on Tuesday, April 30th at 6:00pm. The event title is "Employment Success Stories."

This is a great event to attend if you are interested in learning from people with lived experience. The session will explore:

- How to self-direct your supports to get the most out of your career.
- Tips on overcoming barriers and achieving your goals with self-directed employment supports

This event is free and open to the community. The event will take place online. You can sign up for the event by completing the [online Employment Success Stories registration form](#).

Financial Wellness



Financial wellness is learning how to make and manage money to pay for things you need. Learning more about money is great first step to reaching financial wellness. This includes learning how to create a budget. A **budget** is breakdown of the things you need to pay for each month, like bills and food.

Budgets let you know how much money you can spend on things you want, like gifts for others. They also help you create a savings plan if there is something expensive you want to buy. When someone has a good budget, they often feel less stress each month. This is because the budget gives them a plan to pay for things they need on time.

There are many topics worth learning more about to reach financial wellness. Some of these topics include learning about credit and savings accounts. Having this information can bring you new opportunities. For example, learning about credit can help you buy something you may not be able to pay for with cash, like a new laptop.

If you want to get started learning about financial wellness, visit the [National Disability Institute financial wellness website](#).

Report Suspected Abuse

QA Hotline 401-462-2629

Mandated Reporting

Reporting suspected occurrences of abuse, neglect, and mistreatment of individuals with developmental disabilities

To **report abuse and serious incidents** call the BHDDH Quality Assurance (QA) Unit **hotline at (401) 462-2629**. The hotline is open 24-hour hotline, seven days per week, 365 days per year. Staff respond to reported incidents of abuse, neglect, mistreatment, and financial exploitation.

BH Link is Here for You

BH Link's mission is to ensure all Rhode Islanders experiencing mental health and substance use crises receive the appropriate services they need as quickly as possible in an environment that supports their recovery. Visit the BH Link website at www.bhlink.org.

If under 18 CALL: (855) KID (543)-LINK(5465)

VISIT the 24-HOUR/7-DAY Triage Center at:

975 Waterman Avenue, East Providence, RI

Call 911 if there is a risk of immediate danger.

If you or someone you know needs support now, call or text **988** or chat 988lifeline.org



For More Information on DD Initiatives

Newsletters: sign up and view old newsletters on our [News and Updates webpage](#)

Consent Decree: <https://bhddh.ri.gov/developmental-disabilities/consent-decree>

Conflict Free Case Management (CFCM): [EOHHS CFCM website](#) or [DD Initiatives-CFCM](#)

RI DSP State Workforce Initiative: <https://riswi.org/> or [DD Initiatives-SWI](#)

Hours of Operation

Monday – Friday

8:30 AM - 4:00 PM

Contacting DDD Staff

See the full Division Contact List attached to this newsletter.

Send general questions to BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov.

Please do not email critical issues.

Website: www.bhddh.ri.gov

Email: BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov

Phone: 401.462.3421

ESPAÑOL: 401.462.3014

Division of Developmental Disabilities - All Staff Contacts 2/16/2024

Main Phone #: (401) 462-3421 **TDD:** (401) 462-3226 **Website:** <https://bhddh.ri.gov/>
Fax: (401) 462-2775 **Spanish Line:** (401) 462-3014 **BH Link:** (401) 414-5465
To report abuse/neglect: (401) 462-2629

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Vacant			

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Vacant				
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Laurie	Rossi	Implementation Aide	462-2563	Laurie.Rossi@bhddh.ri.gov

FREE 3 Day Employer Engagement Training

“From Traditional Job Development to Engaging Employers Economically”



Dates: Tuesday, April 23, Wednesday, April 24, & Thursday April 25, 2023
Time: 9:00 am -3:30 pm Location: Red, White & Brew
(1800 Post Road, Warwick, RI 02886 (Unit # 26))

Join us for an interactive and creative 3-day training with Doug Crandell! We will facilitate a community of practice to further develop skills sets related to employer and business engagement. Doug will share information on effective employer engagement initiatives and concrete strategies for developing continuous quality improvement in customized employment services. This training includes knowledge transfer, group work, and purposeful planning for developing more effective employer connections in RI to facilitate job opportunities for people with disabilities.

Major topics Doug will cover include:

- Workforce/Economic Development versus Job Development
- Developing Public-Private Partnerships and Building Ongoing Relationships with Employers
- Informational Interviewing with Employers to Identify Their Workforce Needs
- Visioning for 2024 (Putting it all together and tracking metrics)



Participants will be involved on an interactive team of 3-4 persons to work together to research a local RI business, schedule and participate in an informational interview with an employer, create a presentation on the business and their workforce needs, and share their experience/presentation for feedback on potential follow-up opportunities for job development, internships, business-within-a-business, etc. for job-seekers with disabilities as well as building continued relationships with the employer. We will also talk about next steps for enhancing this work with employers in collaboration with Skills for RI's Future.

Participation is Limited: Contact Sue Babin, RIDDC, at 523-2300 or email at suebabin@riddc.org for more information or to reserve space. Participation is limited!



Doug Crandell, M.F.A. has been Project Director for grants funded through the U.S. DOL, Bureau of Justice Assistance, and the SSA. He directed Georgia's Medicaid Infrastructure Grant, is on the faculty of University of Georgia's Institute on Human Development and Disability and a Senior Consultant with Griffin-Hammis. He provides ongoing training to GA's employment DD/BH providers. He is a Subject Matter Expert with States to restructure employment supports to include evidence-based supported employment, customized employment, and self-employment. He is Project Director, GA's Training & Technical Assistance Center for

Employment. Doug's most recent book published by Cornell University Press is: "[Twenty-Two Cents an Hour: Disability Rights and the Fight to End Subminimum Wages.](http://www.abolish14c.com)" www.abolish14c.com

Training is sponsored by the RI Cross Disability Coalition and the RI Developmental Disabilities Council (RIDDC). This initiative is funded by BHDDH as one of the DD Transformation Grants.

FREE INFORMATIONAL TRAINING

Customized Job Development: *Vocational Themes and Identifying “Ideal Conditions of Employment” for People with Disabilities*



Join us for a session led by **Doug Crandell** dedicated to fully understanding the role *purposeful career planning* has in supporting a wide array of customized job development actions to assist people with disabilities in obtaining employment in jobs they can be successful in. We will focus on using teams, community members, and vocational profiles to demystify the process to ensure each job seeker is receiving individualized job development that matches their interests and skills.



The presentation will also include practical information for job development staff on understanding two important components of customized employment for individuals with developmental disabilities seeking employment: *Self-Awareness and Environmental Awareness* and how to explore these areas to determine “*Ideal Conditions of Employment*” for each person.

Date: Monday, April 22, 2024

Time: 1:00 pm-3:30 pm

Location: Red, White & Brew Coffeehouse

1800 Post Road, Warwick, RI 02886 (Unit # 26)



Registration:



Registration is limited. If you are interested in this training or want to register an employee from your agency please send an email to Suebabin@riddc.org or contact Sue at 401-523-2300.

About The Speaker:

Doug Crandell is a nationally known Customized Employment Subject Matter Expert from Georgia. He provides training/technical assistance to Georgia’s supported employment providers. He is the Project Director for a Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG) at the Institute on Human Development and Disability at the University of Georgia and a Senior Associate for Griffin-Hammis Associates. Doug works in other states through the Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program at the US DOL, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). His area of expertise is using evidence-based supported employment practices to help support people with complex barriers to work.

This training is sponsored by the RI Cross Disability Coalition and the RI Developmental Disabilities Council.



Decision-Making Options for Adults with Disabilities

EXPLORE
YOUR
OPTIONS

TIP
SHEET

While RIPIN does not support families with the guardianship process, here are resources to help you and your young adult make informed decisions about the transition to adulthood.

Transfer of Rights begins when a person turns 18. However, Supported Decision-Making practices can begin much earlier.

- Check out [RI's Supported Decision-Making Guide](#) for more information about this legally recognized option! See pages 14-19 for a sample agreement form.
- Check out [The 5 Myths of Guardianship](#) to understand better why alternatives to guardianship may protect your young adult better!



WEBSITE RESOURCES:

- ① [Power of Attorney](#)
- ① [Representative Payee](#)
- ① [Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care](#)





ON-DEMAND WEBINARS:


Please visit our [Transition to Adulthood Webinars](#) for more.



RIPIN

 ripin.org

 info@ripin.org

 300 Jefferson Blvd.
Suite 300
Warwick, RI 02888

PERSONAL SUPPORT BUILT ON PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Self-Directed Supports Network

A network of individuals and family members using self-directed supports in Rhode Island

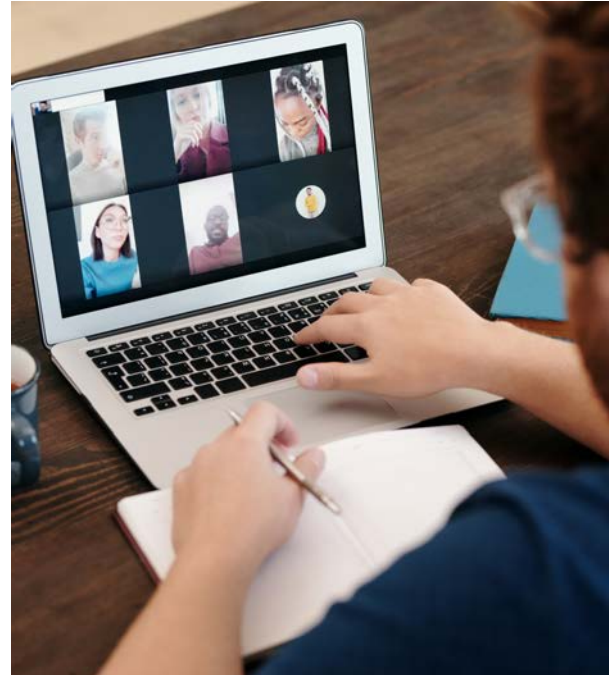
Online meeting

7 – 8:30 p.m.

Wednesday, April 17, 2024

Victoria Ferrara, M.A., coordinator, Access to Integrated Employment, will join us to talk about the Day and Employment Activities Survey.

Kathleen A. Sherlock, Esq., consultant, Sargent Rehabilitation Center's Regional Resource Center, will discuss Supported Decision Making (SDM) and alternatives to guardianship.



*Invite your
Direct Support
Professionals
to join!*

This meeting will take place online using Zoom. When you RSVP, you will receive an email with the directions and a password to join the meeting. You can connect by computer, mobile device or listen using your telephone. You may be prompted to download an app depending on the device you plan to use. This session will be recorded.

The Self-Directed Supports Network is a resource for individuals and families using self-directed supports through the Division of Developmental Disabilities. Meetings provide an opportunity to share experiences and learn from others.

Agenda

- 7 – 7:10 Introductions and updates
- 7:10 – 7:30 Dialogue with Vicki Ferrara
Topic: Day and Employment Activities Survey
- 7:30 – 8:30 Presentation with Kate Sherlock
Topic: Supported Decision Making and alternatives to guardianship

RSVP link

<https://bit.ly/2YUamqz>

If you need a reasonable accommodation (e.g., ASL interpreter, large print) or information in a language other than English, please make your needs known when you RSVP.

presents the first in its 30th anniversary series

Inclusive Communities: The Foundation of a Self-Determined Life

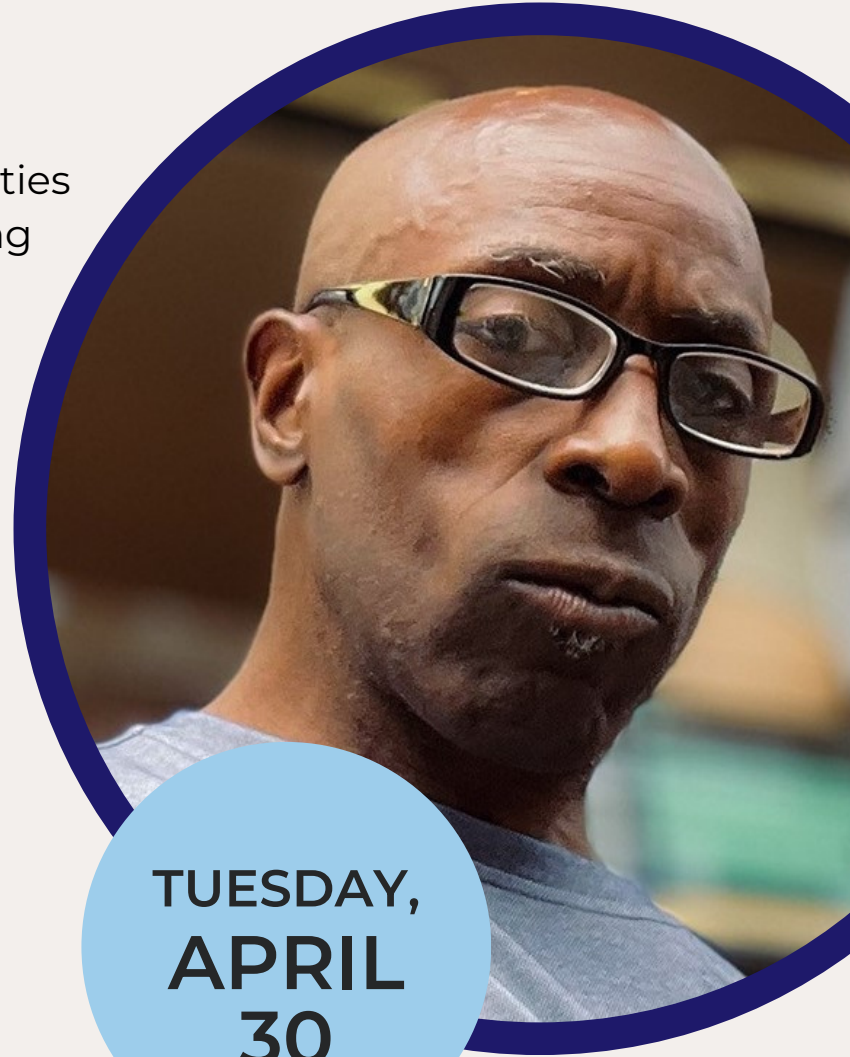
with special guest Keith Jones

In our quest for a truly inclusive community, individuals with disabilities still face significant hurdles, including socioeconomic disparities that limit access to resources and attitudinal barriers that create social exclusion.

This **free** presentation explores how a collaborative approach can empower individuals with disabilities to make decisions about their lives. Keith Jones will explore the pivotal roles families, educators, communities, policymakers, health care providers, social service professionals, community organizations and employers play in creating a support network that fosters self-determination throughout a person's life.

Keith Jones is president and CEO of SoulTouchin' Experiences LLC, an organization aimed at bringing perspective to issues of access inclusion and empowerment that affect him and others who are persons with and without disabilities.

Paralleling with his policy and social justice work, Mr. Jones is a multi-talented artist who, along with Leroy Moore and Rob Temple, founded the Emmy Award-winning Krip Hop Nation, an international collection of artists with disabilities.



**TUESDAY,
APRIL
30**

Gaige Hall Auditorium, Rhode Island College

Check-in and refreshments: 5:30 p.m.

Presentation: 6 to 8 p.m.

A reception will follow.

Registration is required by Tuesday, April 23:

[bit.ly/SC Jones](https://bit.ly/SC_Jones)