

HILIBRAND AUTISM SYMPOSIUM

ELEVENTH ANNUAL UJA-FEDERATION OF NEW YORK HILIBRAND AUTISM SYMPOSIUM

Fostering Independence and Enhancing Well Being for Adults with ASD: Managing Anxiety, Exploring Housing Models and Participating in Sports

SPEAKER BIOS

LINDA BIALICK is the founder of Jewish Housing and Programming (J-HAP). Shortly after her child was born with Down syndrome 30 years ago, Linda began actively advocating for people with special needs. She founded J-HAP in 2010, and has served as its board president. In that role, she has overseen every phase of co-development of Cornerstone Creek as well as development of J-HAP's progressive amenities. Today, as president of the board emeritus, she continues to watch over and contribute to J-HAP's growth. She is an active member of ARC, National Association for Down Syndrome, Reach for Resources, Sabes JCC, and Beth El Synagogue, and has been involved in numerous committees for inclusion of people with disabilities.

ELLIOT FRANK founded the Autism Housing Development Corporation of Pittsburgh in 2011. Its mission is to provide affordable housing in a community with supportive services for both adults on the autism spectrum and those without disabilities. The corporation's first project, a 42-unit apartment building in Heidelberg, PA, is the first low-income housing tax credit project that successfully integrates those on the autism spectrum with the neurotypical community at large. It was completed in 2016 and immediately fully rented. Elliot is the father of three adult sons. His son on the autism spectrum graduated from college magna cum laude and is leading an independent life, successfully working as a safety professional for a leading multi-national construction company.

PAUL KOTLER is an autism advocate who was previously educated at the TALK Institute and School in Newtown Square, PA, and is currently attending Widener University, pursuing behavioral sciences psychology. He blogs at diverseautism.net where he offers his experience of communicating through typing. In addition to his work for autism, Paul is a member of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. He has presented on numerous occasions at New York University, as well as at Holy Family University and JFK Rehab. His writing has been published in *OT Practice* and *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*. In his spare time he likes to listen to music and play ice hockey.

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From 2012 to 2016, **GAIL LEVINSON, M.A.**, was the executive director of the Supportive Housing Association of NJ, a statewide trade organization of housing developers and supportive services providers, corporate vendors, and statewide advocates. The organization also includes the participation of families and consumers dedicated to creating permanent community housing for people with disabilities, including those living with developmental disabilities, people with serious mental illnesses and addictions, and the homeless. Activities include educational events, offerings, and advocacy initiatives to highlight and strengthen affordable housing with supportive services in NJ. She has had a long career working with people with disabilities.

MARY CHRIS SEMROW is the consultant to families at Specialized Housing, Inc. (SHI). She is a parent of a 29-year-old daughter with autism. She began working for SHI in November of 2012 after settling her daughter into the first program supported by SHI in Maine. Mary Chris brings her parenting experience and her business experience in marketing a commercial interior design to Specialized Housing. Through her own leap of faith forming her daughter's house in Maine, she helps families envision and realize a rich life for their adult children. She lives in Falmouth, Maine.

LARA STOLMAN is an award-winning television news and documentary producer whose work has appeared on NBC, MSNBC, TLC, AMC, VH-1, and *The New York Times* website. For *Swim Team*, her first feature documentary film, she was named an IFP Documentary Lab Fellow, awarded the New York Women in Film and Television Loreen Arbus Disability Awareness Grant, and was provided funding from the Aetna Foundation, Easterseals, and the Karma Foundation. *Swim Team* has screened at more than 30 international film festivals, won more than 10 awards, was released theatrically in July 2017, and debuted on PBS' POV on October 2, 2017.

DR. ROMA VASA is a child psychiatrist and associate professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. For the past 20 years, she has worked with children, adolescents, and young adults with a variety of neurodevelopmental disorders. Her research focuses on studying psychiatric comorbidities in individuals with autism spectrum disorder, notably anxiety. Dr. Vasa is also the director of education and training for the two-year child and adolescent psychiatry fellowship at the Johns Hopkins Hospital.