



**The Alliance**  
of Private Special Education  
Schools of North Jersey

*presents*



# Telling Our Stories: Family Voices & Perspective

*featuring:*

*Joanne De Simone,  
Iris Mehler, MS. CRC  
Alma Schneider, LCSW  
Niya Wright*

**TUESDAY, April 16 2024  
7:00-8:15 PM**

Increasingly, family members of people with disabilities are sharing authentic stories and perspectives about living with *and loving* a child or sibling with disabilities. By telling their own truth about the challenges, frustrations, joys, and disappointments, they are showing the community around them that their voice and the lives of those they love are important - and their experiences are universal.

Through honest, unvarnished storytelling they help to create connections, deepen the public's understanding of the disability experience, and allow people with disabilities to see themselves in the world and know that their lives matter.

Join us as four family members describe how sharing their lived experiences - through books and articles, podcasts, and script writing - connects people in unexpected ways, and changes the world for the better.

**[Click here to register](#)**

This is a virtual event held on Zoom. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

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### About Our Speakers:

**Joanne De Simone** is a special education advocate for the Alliance of Private Special Education Schools of North Jersey and the mother of two sons with disabilities. She holds a masters degree in Special Education. Creator of Special-EducationMom.com, her writing has appeared in the Washington Post, Exceptional Parent Magazine, and the Rumpus, among other publications. Her memoir, *Fall and Recovery: Raising Children with Disabilities through Lessons Learned in Dance* (She Writes Press, 2024) is due out September 2024.

**[Click here to access Special-Education Mom blog: https://special-educationmom.com/](https://special-educationmom.com/)**



**Niya Wright** is a former production manager and writer for the Emmy Winning children's show, **Ada Twist, Scientist**, on Netflix. Prior to that, she worked at Disney ABC Television, where she was a writers' assistant for the daytime soap opera, **General Hospital**. She holds a BA in Communications from Loyola Marymount University. Niya is also the proud sister of Nassan, a young man with autism. Nassan is the inspiration for the game changing 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded by Niya and Nassan's mother, Nadine Wright-Arbubakrr. Nassan's Place is making a difference in the lives of children and families affected by autism in and around under-served inner city communities by providing educational and recreational programs, social outings, resources and so much more. Nadine's passion to share Nassan and their family's story with autism to help others is a constant example and inspiration to Niya. **[Click here to learn more about Nassan's Place: https://www.nassansplace.org/](https://www.nassansplace.org/)**



**Iris Mehler** holds a Master of Science degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, with a post graduate certification in Assistive Technologies. She has more than two decades of experience working with children and adults with disabilities and supporting communities and organizations in their efforts to become more inclusive to people of all abilities. She is a member of the Midland (MI) Access to Community Committee. Iris is the co-host of the podcast 2 Moms No Fluff where she discusses the uncensored truth about raising children with disabilities. She is the Co-founder of 1in6 Consulting – helping organizations create a more inclusive workplace for employees caring for children with disabilities. Lastly, Iris is the proud mother of two children, one of whom has quadriplegic Cerebral Palsy and is non-verbal. **[Click here to learn about 2Moms No Fluff: https://2momsnofluff.com/](https://2momsnofluff.com/)**



**Alma Schneider** is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with nearly three decades of practice under her belt. She has been facilitating weekly support groups for close to five hundred parents of children with disabilities for the last thirteen years, is the founder of the Montclair Disability Pride Parade, and is an appointed member of the People with Disabilities Committee for the town of Montclair, NJ. Alma is co-founder of the podcast, 2 Moms No Fluff and the consulting company, 1in6 Consulting. Alma has four children, one of whom has Prader-Willi Syndrome, Autism and ADHD. **[Click here to learn about 2Moms No Fluff: https://2momsnofluff.com/](https://2momsnofluff.com/)**



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