

THANK YOU FOR JOINING THE



Everyone has the right to be successful in the workplace!

Thursday, July 20, 2023

Hosted online and at the
Harrisburg Hilton
One North Second Street
Harrisburg, PA

Keynote Speaker:
Michael Kiel, author of
"Challenge the Moment"





disABILITY CONFERENCE

We are so thankful for everyone who was a part of making this conference a reality, from our speakers, presenters, and panelists to our vendors and staff volunteers. At PHRC, it is a vital part of our mission to work towards equal opportunity for Pennsylvanians with disabilities, and the ideas and programs that were shared today are a large part of making that a reality. We hope everyone left this event with new ideas, contacts, and vigor for engaging in work towards justice for individuals with disabilities.

We owe special thanks to our ASL interpreters and captioners for making this event accessible, and to our hosts at the Harrisburg Hilton.

We've put together this document to share some thoughts, feedback, and information for further learning that arose from the conference.





disABILITY CONFERENCE

ABOUT THE PHRC

The Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission (PHRC) has been in existence since 1955. It is an independent commission created and directed by the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act and Pennsylvania Equal Education Opportunity Act.

VISION

As Pennsylvania's civil rights leader, it is our vision that all people in Pennsylvania will live, work and learn free from unlawful discrimination.

MISSION

The Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission promotes equal opportunity for all and enforces Pennsylvania's civil rights laws that protect people from unlawful discrimination.

VALUES

- **Equality:** We believe strongly in the equality and dignity of all individuals. We uphold the principles of justice and fairness through our work, conduct and communication.
- **Excellence:** We subscribe to the highest standards of responsiveness, quality, timeliness and professionalism.
- **Integrity:** We uphold the highest standards of honesty and transparency. We are candid, trustworthy, credible and unbiased.
- **Respect:** We value employees' talents and differences and treat them with consideration and importance.
- **Service:** We strive to excel in our work. We endeavor to ensure a highly prepared, diverse, competent and committed workforce.
- **Teamwork:** We build and sustain strong, constructive and collaborative relationships.





disABILITY CONFERENCE

PHRC JURISDICTION

Pennsylvania Law protects you from discrimination in these areas:

- Employment- obtaining a job or working at one.
- Education- attending public or private school, college, trade school or university.
- Housing- renting, buying, selling or getting a loan for a home.
- Public Accommodations- being able to access public places and/or services.
- Commercial Property- having access to, or the purchase, sale or lease of commercial property.

PHRC PROTECTION

In general, Pennsylvania law prohibits discrimination based on:

- Race
- Color
- Religious creed
- Ancestry
- Age (40 and over)
- Sex
- National origin
- Familial status (only in housing)
- Handicap or disability and the use, handling or training of support or guide animals for disability.
- Retaliation for filing a complaint, opposing unlawful behavior or assisting investigations is also illegal.

Complaints in general, must be filed within 180 days of the alleged act of harm.

COMPLAINT INFORMATION

To file a complaint, call 717-787-4410 (717-787-7279 TTY), email phrcepa.gov or contact the regional office nearest you.

- **Harrisburg:** 333 Market Street, 8th Floor Harrisburg, PA 17101
717-787-9780 (717-787-7279 TTY)
- **Philadelphia:** 110 N. 8th Street, Suite 501 Philadelphia, Pa 19107
215-560-2496 (215-560-3599 TTY)
- **Pittsburgh:** 301 5th Avenue, Suite 390, Piat Place Pittsburgh, PA 15222
412-545-5395 (412-565-5711 TTY)

LEARN MORE AT PHRC'S [WEBSITE](#)





dis **ABILITY** CONFERENCE

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

This session featured a panel discussion with a focus on services and reasonable accommodations available for employees with disabilities. Panelists discussed strategies in creating environments in which individuals with disabilities thrive at work.

“Is it about meeting the needs of that person? Absolutely. But the change that can happen in an organization can be profound when we do that. And 95% of accommodations according to the Department of Labor cost zero to \$500 dollars as a 1 time cost...It’s an investment in your bottom line.”

Amy Nieves



Panelists

- Kait Gillis-Hanna, Owner, [Nour Coffee Shop](#)
- Amy Nieves, [Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities, City of Philadelphia](#)
- Dale Verchick, [Disability Rights Pennsylvania](#)
- Tricia Zeltwanger, [Penn-Mar Human Services](#)
- Mike Allison, [Penn-Mar Human Services](#)

AUDIENCE FEEDBACK:
"THERE WERE GREAT EXAMPLES OF HOW ACCOMMODATIONS, WHEN THOUGHT THROUGH THE LENS OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN, BENEFIT EVERYONE!"

If you missed the session, you can catch the recording [here](#).



dis**ABILITY** CONFERENCE

MORNING DEMONSTRATION: SUSQUEHANNA SERVICES DOGS



Demonstration feedback:
“Dogs can be trained to do a lot of things. Some don’t make it to full fledged service animals but are being used in schools, rehabs etc for therapy and support”

Deb Tack, Executive Director of Susquehanna Service Dogs, shared how service dogs can support individuals with disabilities, how service dogs are trained, and how Susquehanna Service Dogs supports individuals with those dogs on an ongoing basis.

If you missed this session, you can view it [here](#). Slides from the presentation are available here.

You can learn more about Susquehanna Service Dogs at their [website](#).





dis**ABILITY** CONFERENCE

AFTERNOON PANEL: GOVERNMENT SERVICES

This session featured panelists who discussed government services available to employees with disabilities. Topics highlighted include services available through Centers for Independent Livings and Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, ways that we can improve access to employment and services, and opportunities the PA legislators have to improve the lives of Pennsylvanians with disabilities.

**"WHEN WE ADVOCATE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES...LIFE GETS BETTER AND MORE ACCESSIBLE FOR EVERYONE."
REP. SMITH WADE-EL**

Missed the discussion? Catch it [here](#).



Session feedback:

"I took away from this discussion the impact of how policies can support or inhibit community access to needed services."



Panelists

- Janetta Green, Chief Executive Officer, [Center for Independent Living of Central PA](#)
- Ryan Hyde, Executive Director, [Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation](#)
- Pennsylvania Rep. Ismail Smith-Wade-EL, [49th District \(Lancaster County\)](#)



dis**ABILITY** CONFERENCE

KEYNOTE: MICHAEL KIEL

"Life throws curveballs...if you challenge the moment... you will never need to settle for less." - Michael Kiel

Michael shared his personal journey in processing and healing from a life-changing injury. He shared how he learned to cope with new realities and accept living with a disability as a young adult. He shared stories and anecdotes to illustrate how he address the challenges that he faced using the tools, support from friends and family, and humor and communication to achieve his goals.

Learn more about Michael's life and book [here](#). You can catch the recording of his keynote address [here](#).

Session Feedback:
"Michael Kiel's speech was sensational! Relevant in giving me tools on how I can respond to challenges in my professional and personal life."





dis**ABILITY** CONFERENCE

AFTERNOON DEMONSTRATION: UCP CENTRAL PA ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Jaqueline Wardle, Assistive Technology Specialist, and Marci Walborn, Director of Childhood and Ancillary Services at United Cerebral Palsy Central PA shared about how assistive technology can help people with disabilities complete tasks and how assistive technology increases convenience in all of our lives. They showed real pieces of tech and lead attendees in brainstorming about how to overcome real barriers to employment.

*"You might...think how are they going to work?
How can we employ them? There are a lot of
modifications that exist...It's really limitless"*
Marci Walborn



You can catch the session [here](#), and view the slides [here](#).

AUDIENCE FEEDBACK:
"THERE ARE SO MANY NEW
THINGS AVAILABLE TO HELP
PEOPLE! IT'S HELPFUL THAT
PEOPLE CAN TRY TECH OUT
BEFORE BUYING IT!"



dis**ABILITY** CONFERENCE

Thank you to our vendors!



We had organizations on site providing information about their programs and services. If you weren't able to connect with them, you can learn more by clicking on each organization below.

[Client Assistance Program](#)

[Guess & Learn LLC](#)

[Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation](#)

[Recovery Space](#)

[The Sierra Group Academy](#)

[UCP Central PA](#)

[Western Pennsylvania Disability History & Action Consortium](#)

An additional resource that came up throughout the day is the [Mid-Atlantic ADA Center](#). They provide information, guidance, and training on the Americans with Disabilities Act.



disABILITY CONFERENCE

2023 TRAINING PROGRAMS



Are you looking for an informed presenter to speak to your community or organization on subjects affecting their ability to live, work, and learn free from discrimination? PHRC trainers are available to present a variety of social justice programs.

Civil Rights and Filing a Complaint

Civil Rights Law and PHRC Jurisdiction
PHRC Overview & How to File a Complaint
Disability & Reasonable Accommodation

Preventing Discrimination in the Workplace and Schools

Cross-cultural Communication
Conflict Resolution
Sexual Discrimination in the Workplace
Sexual Harassment Prevention
Preventing Bullying and Harassment
SPIRIT Training

Bias, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Unconscious Bias
Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI)
Diversity & Cultural Professionalism
Bias and Hate Crimes
Implicit Bias for Law Enforcement

Fair Housing Rights

Fair Housing Fundamentals
Fair Housing for LGBTQ+ Individuals
Fair Housing for Municipal Leaders
Fair Housing & Criminal Backgrounds
Fair Housing & Domestic Violence
Fair Housing & Individuals with Disabilities
Fair Housing & Hoarding
Service & Support Animals
Fair Lending
Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing
Redlining: Yesterday & Today



To learn more, contact bmellinger@pa.gov or classiter@pa.gov, or fill out an online request at <https://www.phrc.pa.gov/EducationandOutreach/>

[PHRC.pa.gov](https://www.phrc.pa.gov)





pennsylvania
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

