

CRAAG

Charlottesville Region Autism Action Group

Next CRAAG Meeting See Details Below!



**Next CRAAG Meeting is on
October 26th from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.**

Meeting Agenda

1. **Welcome/Introductions**
2. **Advocacy Update** - A few members of CRAAG's Advocacy Team recently participated in *The Arc of VA DD Coalition Summit* to provide input to the advocacy strategy for the 2023 General Assembly (GA) Session. Although progress was made during the 2022 GA session in the area of rates, there is still much work to be done to address a variety of concerns, including capacity and quality of service issues as well as

systemic concerns associated with the DD Wavier system.

3. **CRAAG Work Group Reports**
4. **Provider/Agency Updates**
5. **Family Concerns**
6. **Open Discussion**

[Zoom Link - Save this Link](#)

Meeting ID: 371 306 7117

Passcode: ysA8Ji



The 2023 General Assembly and the DD System

The Criminal Justice System



From the last CRAAG Meeting

Brian Kelmar, Executive Director and Founder of [Legal Reform for the Intellectually and Developmentally Disabled \(LRIDD\)](#) and Director of Community Engagement of [CA Human Services](#), gave an inspirational talk on how his 19-year old son's arrest and 10-year sentence led to his founding of LRIDD. Mr. Kelmar wrote/advocated for five pieces of legislation passed by the Virginia General Assembly (GA), some of which are at risk of being rescinded. LRIDD offers educational programming and an online support group for families.

Mr. Kelmar stated that encounters of police officers can go wrong from "the first moment" if the officer doesn't recognize the signs of IDD/autism in the individual they are questioning/arresting. His advice to parents: Educate your child to: 1) ask for a lawyer and never answer questions without the lawyer present; and 2) tell the officer "I have autism, I have a disability and I want my parent(s) with me." Under the ADA, they are required to honor this request

even for an advocate (parent or guardian).

Mr. Kelmar and LRIDD will be advocating for at least two pieces of legislation in the 2023 GA session. They are:

1. **Sealing of criminal record for class 4 felonies.** Provides that a defendant with a disorder or disability, as defined in the bill, may file a petition that requests the sealing of the criminal history record information and court records of a Class 4 felony conviction or deferred and dismissed disposition. Why? Under current law, anyone with a class 5 felony can seal their record. This bill would do the same for a defendant with a disorder or disability and a class 4 felony. We are a society that believes in second chances. Give them a second chance!
2. **Diversion from the criminal justice system.** Provides that a defendant with a disorder or disability, as defined in the bill, may be diverted from the criminal justice system for actions during an encounter with the police during a meltdown. Why? This legislation recognizes that in the confusion of the arrival of the police cars, lights and noises can trigger or exacerbate the "fight or flight" reflex in an already agitated person. What starts with a family member asking for police assistance can end with a charge of assault on a police officer and jail time. Assault on (touching) a police officer is an automatic 6 months in jail and a felony regardless of the circumstance.

[Email CRAAG](#) to receive the slides from Mr. Kelmar's talk.

Connect Engage
Learn & Change

December 3, 2022 9am-5pm

hosted by

**Supporting Transformative Autism Research
(STAR)**



**Registration Closes on
November 4th - Don't Miss Out!!**

[Register Now!!](#)



Student Growth Supported through Innovation & Inclusion

Parent Resource Center

Check out the [latest version of the Parent Resource Center Newsletter](#) to find useful information for families with K-12 students. [Sign up here](#) to receive the monthly newsletter in your inbox.

Charlottesville Parks & Recreation Adaptive Recreation

Halloween Fun!!

October 2022



Adaptive Recreation has some great new programming for October. [Read the newsletter here.](#) Find details of all their [in-person programs here.](#)

About CRAAG

CRAAG began in 2010 in collaboration with CA Human Services (formerly Commonwealth Autism). *CRAAG's mission is to raise awareness and enhance the quality of life for people with autism, developmental disabilities, and their families in Charlottesville City, Albemarle, Greene, Fluvanna, Louisa and Nelson counties.* We are a volunteer action group for families, self-advocates, and professionals who are interested in all age groups and levels of need. The daily concerns of CRAAG's active volunteers inform our focus on the needs of students transitioning out of high school, adults throughout the lifespan, and their families. Our advocacy is person-centered aimed at maximizing independent living with supports; meaningful employment; social connectivity; and community engagement. CRAAG's 2021 Housing survey initiated a years-long initiative in our region to expand the number of housing options, supports and services available to meet the needs of adults with developmental disabilities.

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