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# THE BRIDGE



Your weekly access to SPAN news, events and resources

March 18, 2026 | Issue 223 ([View newsletter as webpage](#)) [Para leer este boletín en Español, haga clic aquí](#)

## Important News



Pictured left to right are AMCHP CEO, Terrance E. Moore, Jordan Pratt, and SPAN's Nicole Pratt (Jordan's Mom)

## SPAN Youth at the AMCHP Conference

## Resources

**EDUCATE | ENGAGE | EMPOWER**

**PARTNERS IN EDUCATION: TRANSITION MINI-CONFERENCE**

**Building A Future Of Possibilities**

This FREE conference is for youth and their parents/caregivers to learn about the transition to adult life, adult services, self-advocacy, assistive technology, and what a center for independent living is and the services it provides.

- Do you understand your youth's Transition Plan?
- Does your youth need to build their self-advocacy skills?
- Are you a youth preparing to transition from school to adult life?

Information and resources provided by SPAN Parent Advocacy Network & DAWN Center for Independent Living.

**Youth Track:** An interactive day of building self-advocacy skills for ages 14-21.  
**Family/Caregiver Track:** Understanding the IEP Transition Plan to adult life.

*Breakfast will be provided.*

**Free parking!**  
**Accessible to public transportation!**

*Register early, space is limited!*

*Raffle prizes!*

## Partners in Education: Transition Mini-Conference

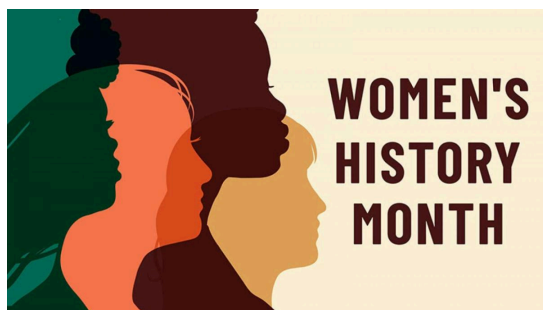
Saturday, April 11, 2026

The AMCHP (Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs) Annual Conference is one of the largest gatherings of maternal and child health (MCH) professionals in the United States. Every year, this conference aims to highlight the impact of MCH programs at all levels on women, children, and families, and to provide participants with tools and resources to develop, enhance, and sustain vital MCH programs and services.

The Theme of the conference was The Power of Connection.

AMCHP had its second annual Youth Day on Saturday, March 8th, where the SPAN Youth/Young Adult Empowering Voices (YEV) members, Jordan Pratt and Harshil Jain, were invited. Harshil, accompanied by his mom, SPAN's Garima Jain, attended the professional development sessions in the morning to develop his skills in policy and legislative procedures in the U.S. government.

Jordan made quite an impression on many conference attendees, including AMCHP CEO, Terrance E. Moore, and was asked to be part of the Youth Day planning committee for the 2027 event.



## March is Women's History Month

The theme for Women's History Month 2026 is "*Leading the Change: Women Shaping a Sustainable Future*," chosen by the National Women's History Alliance (NWA) to

8:00am - 12:00pm  
Essex County College  
Morton A Siegler Lecture Hall  
303 University Ave  
Newark, NJ 07102  
**(In-Person)**

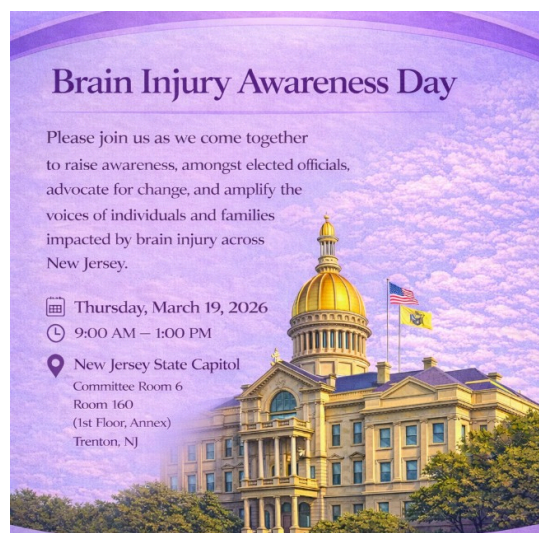
This FREE conference is for youth and their parents/caregivers to learn about the transition to adult life, adult services, self-advocacy, assistive technology, and what a center for independent living is and the services it provides.

Information and resources provided by SPAN Parent Advocacy Network & DAWN Center for Independent Living.

- **Youth Track: An interactive day of building self-advocacy skills for ages 14-21.**
- **Family/Caregiver Track: Understanding the IEP Transition Plan to adult life.**

Register for the conference by [clicking here](#).

Breakfast will be provided! Free parking! Accessible to public transportation!



## Join Us in Trenton for Brain Injury Awareness Day on March 19

highlight women's leadership in creating enduring environmental, economic, educational, and societal change, focusing on resilience, justice, and opportunity for all. This theme recognizes women at the forefront of addressing global challenges by designing systems for holistic transformation, from green tech and financial reform to community building.

To learn more about Women's History Month and the goals and objectives the NWAH has for their theme this year, [click here](#).



## N.J. Dept. of Education Seeking Applicants for the Special Education Transportation Task Force

The New Jersey Department of Education's (NJDOE) Office of Special Education (OSE) is seeking volunteers to serve on the Special Education Transportation Task Force. The purpose of the Task Force is to examine current practices related to the transportation of students who receive special education and related services, including the identification and response to medical and behavioral emergencies on school buses. The Task Force will review practices in New Jersey and other states and will provide the NJDOE with actionable recommendations for improvement.

**Calling all survivors, caregivers, providers, community partners, and anyone interested in advocating for brain injury awareness!**

The Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey invites you to join them at the NJ State House in Trenton to celebrate Brain Injury Awareness Day on Thursday, March 19.

### Day-at-a-Glance

*Please allow time for security and check-in.*

- 9-11 a.m. Arrival, check-in, networking, resource sharing, and legislative engagement.
- 10 a.m. Optional State House Tour. Arrive by 9:30 a.m. and go to the Welcome Center; tour participants join the Committee Room at 11 a.m.
- 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Program including welcome remarks, BIANJ overview, awards, and networking.

For more details and to register, [click here](#).

### National Reading Month



### March is National Reading Month

The Child Mind Institute has several great resources to help you recognize this important month, including tips on why it's important for kids to read and the best ways to teach them how.

To read more, [click here](#).

The NJDOE welcomes applications from individuals who are part of specific membership categories and who bring expertise, lived experience, and a commitment to improving safe and effective transportation for students with disabilities.

To learn more about the process, the specific required membership categories, and to access the Task Force application, [click here](#).

**We're Looking for YOU!**  
**Join our Title I, Part C Advisory Council**

**USE YOUR VOICE. ADVOCATE**  
**MEET OTHER FAMILIES**  
**BE A PART OF COMMUNITY**  
**SHARE STORIES**  
**EXPRESS YOUR NEEDS**

**ELIGIBILITY**

- Is your child under 22 years old?
- Have you or any member of your family worked in agriculture?

**MEETINGS**

- Join us Tuesday 3/24/26 OR Thursday 3/26/26
- Meetings will be virtual

**INTERESTED? SCAN THE QR CODE**

**TO REGISTER FOR 3/24/26**      **TO REGISTER FOR 3/26/26**

[www.spanadvocacy.org](http://www.spanadvocacy.org)

## Join Our Title 1, Part C Advisory Council

SPAN is pleased to announce that we are partnering on our Migrant Education Program with Essex Regional Educational Services Commission (ERESC) to develop a Title 1, Part C Advisory Council. The Advisory Council will work collaboratively to represent the needs of migrant youth and their families. This important council will serve as a resource for migrant families and representatives of local migrant projects as we work together to achieve shared goals. Council members will provide feedback on program services and identify student needs and strategies. Our goal is to

## Upcoming Events

SPAN offers a variety of learning opportunities for families and the professionals who work with them.

### Highlighted Event This Week



## Basic Rights in Special Education

### Multiple Dates and Times

This workshop provides families with an introduction to their rights and responsibilities as parents of children with special needs under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the NJ Code, and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act. Parents learn to identify their dreams and goals for their children, and learn laws and advocacy strategies that will help them help their children reach those goals. Parents of classified children and children who are having difficulty in school, but may not be classified, benefit from this training.

To learn more and register for any of multiple dates, [click here](#).

[See SPAN's NEW, cleaner, simpler, more organized Events Page HERE](#)

ensure student success and meaningful parent engagement.

We are looking for migrant parents and caregivers, community-based organizations, health and social service providers, as well as district and school leaders. This council will include families in Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union and Warren counties.

There are two meetings scheduled that individuals can choose to attend virtually, Tuesday 3/24/26 at 6:00 PM or Thursday 3/26/26 at 6:00 PM to learn more.

To attend the 3/24 meeting, [register here](#).

To attend the 3/26 meeting, [register here](#).

Para recibir la edición en Español de este boletín semanalmente en su correo electrónico

[haga clic aquí para suscribirse](#)



THE SPAN YOUTH HUB

Weekly Blog for Youth and Young Adults!

New Blog Post Every Friday – Stay Tuned!



## Taking Care of Your Mind: How Youth Can Support Their Mental Health

Check out our latest blog post, "Taking Care of Your Mind: How Youth Can Support Their Mental Health", to learn simple and effective strategies for supporting your mental health and well-being.

To read the post, [click here](#).

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