



NEWS RELEASE

COARC
Administrative Offices
P.O. Box 2, 630 Route 217
Mellenville, NY 12544
Ph: 518/672-4451
Fax: 518/672-0187
Email: email@coarc.org
www.COARC.org

CONTACT: DONNA BARRETT
COARC Coordinator of Public Relations
518-672-4451 ext. 3403
donnab@coarc.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

4 OURSELVES RAISES FUNDS FOR FALL CONFERENCE

Mellenville, New York (July 21, 2008) Inspired by their recent award as Outstanding Self-Advocacy Group of the Year for the Hudson Valley Region, representatives of Columbia County's 4 Ourselves plan to attend October's Self-Advocacy Association of New York State Conference in Albany. 4 Ourselves is part of this state association, sharing its goal to develop independence for individuals who are experiencing disabilities.

4 Ourselves President Desireé Elliott of Craryville, who was honored in May as the Hudson Valley Region's Outstanding Self-Advocate of the Year, quotes the mission of the organization as "Speaking up for yourself. It is making your own choices in life, big and small. It is learning about your rights and responsibilities. It is living the way you want to, and respecting the right of others to do the same." She adds, "4 Ourselves increases awareness about individuals with disabilities within Columbia County. We work for civil rights such as voting and making choices as equal citizens."

4 Ourselves includes volunteer advisors who are also COARC employees trained in expanding abilities so individuals experiencing disabilities can achieve their individual goals. Advisor Amy Sheak was awarded Outstanding Direct Care Staff of the Year for the Hudson Valley Region in May.

Elliott states, "We are grateful for the use of COARC facilities for our meetings and for our advisors, who are there to give us a hand if we need it to achieve the goals we set."

Elliott and about 30 fellow Columbia County self-advocates who belong to 4 Ourselves will be raising funds over the next three months to attend the Albany conference, where workshops are taught by self-advocates who have achieved independence and success in their jobs, social relationships and integration within their communities. 4 Ourselves will also submit Columbia County nominations to the October conference for statewide recognition awards.

Individuals or organizations can assist 4 Ourselves with their fundraising goal by contacting the group through Donna Coons at 518-672-4451 x3348 or Tina Gaylord at 518-672-4451 x3318. 4 Ourselves welcomes new members, and individuals who are interested in joining can contact Coons or Gaylord.

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