

# Think**DIFFERENTLY.**



By thinking differently, we can change the way we as individuals, businesses, organizations, and communities relate to everyone of every ability.

**THINKDIFFERENTLY.NET**





# THINK AHEAD

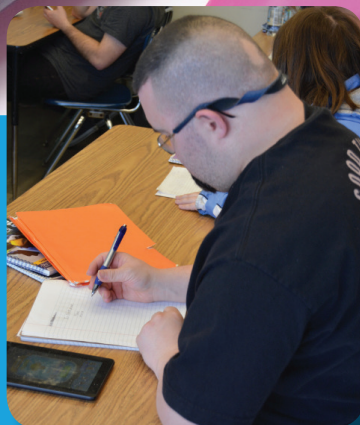
In 2017, in collaboration with Dutchess Community College, Maplebrook School, Abilities First Inc. and The Arc of Dutchess, we began "Think Ahead," a college experience program that focuses on job readiness and skills development for qualified students. In 2018, we have expanded this acclaimed program to include a summer component preparing rising second year students for interviews and internships. This job readiness certificate program has been fully embraced by DCC and local community employers, including Dutchess County Government, which has created internship opportunities for these students to build their skills and resumes.

18  
students

8  
internships

*"Think Ahead is an ambitious, unique and worthwhile program that has made an enormous difference in Andrew's life..."*

- The mother of a Think Ahead student



## OUR CHALLENGE TO THINK DIFFERENTLY

Marcus J. Molinaro  
Dutchess County Executive

Our call to action has been embraced throughout Dutchess County, New York State and across the nation. More and more people from all walks of life are choosing to focus on the inherent potential of every individual, regardless of ability. With our ThinkDIFFERENTLY.net website, residents have a resource like no other, offering simple navigation through the comprehensive array of services available – connecting families to resources, events, information, and each other.

We are inspired when we see the real impact of ThinkDIFFERENTLY. We hear it in the voices of those too often overlooked, and we see it in the growing number of people willing to open their hearts and minds to neighbors of all abilities. Yet there is more that can be done to break down barriers; we each need to challenge ourselves to ThinkDIFFERENTLY and create new opportunities. Join this effort by volunteering to help out at one of the many community events like the Special Olympics New York Summer Games. I challenge business owners and employers to support the Think Jobs initiative and partner with us to create employment opportunities in your business for someone with a different ability.

Let's all find a way to ThinkDIFFERENTLY and in doing so, continue to make Dutchess County and beyond more inclusive and accessible for everyone.

*Molinaro*



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THINKDIFFERENTLY.NET

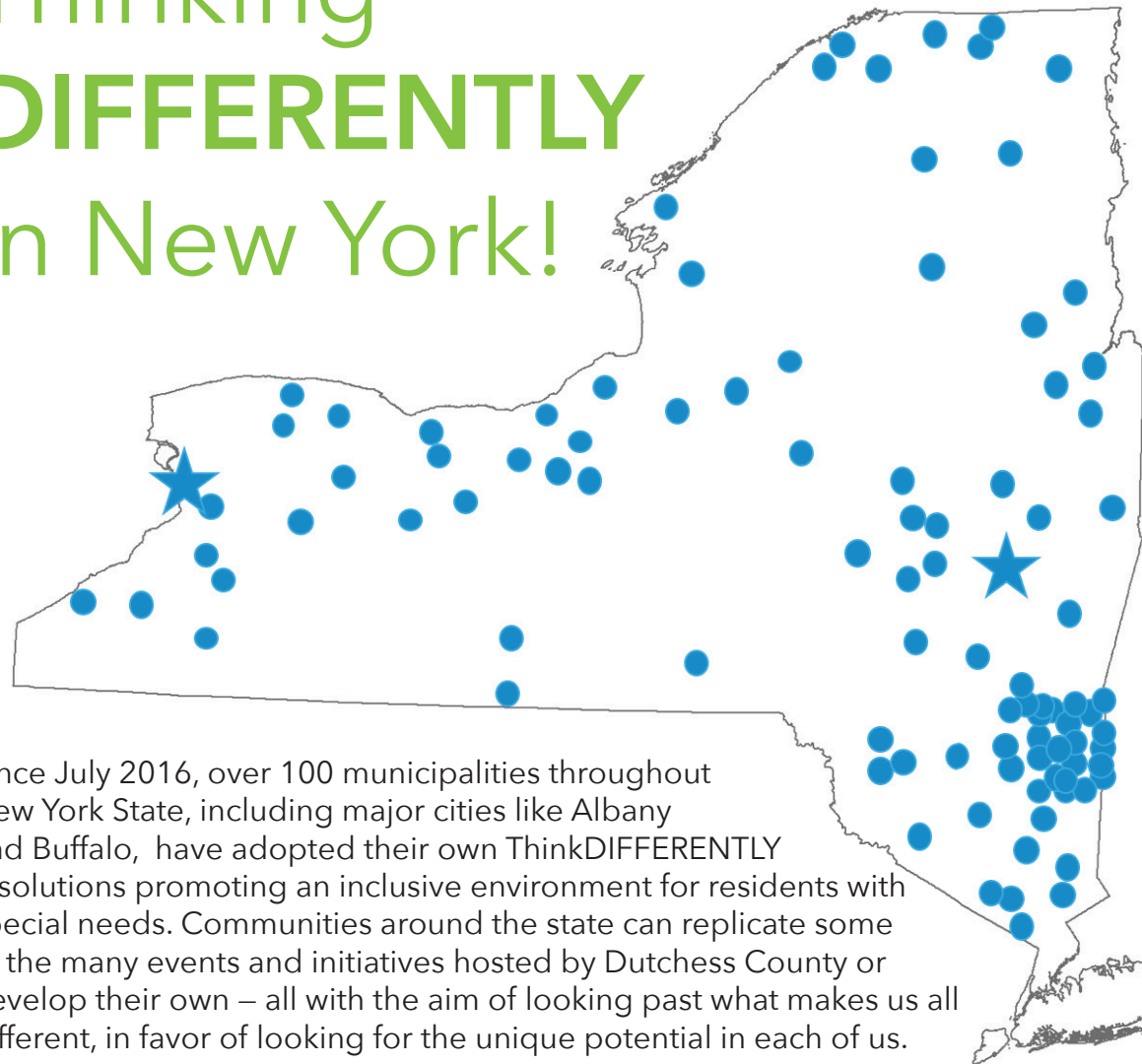
In 2018, we hosted the second annual Think Jobs Round Table in partnership with the Dutchess County Workforce Investment Board and the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library & Museum, bringing together area businesses, educators and leaders in vocational training to discuss how to best prepare people of all abilities for the job market, as well as the importance and benefits of hiring residents of all abilities. By engaging with the local business community, and creating connections through the "Think Ahead" program, many individuals have gained employment at area businesses. Holding a job and earning a paycheck not only instills pride in residents with disabilities; it also teaches teamwork and responsibility and reminds us all we have an equal stake in our community.

## THINK JOBS





# Thinking DIFFERENTLY in New York!



Since July 2016, over 100 municipalities throughout New York State, including major cities like Albany and Buffalo, have adopted their own ThinkDIFFERENTLY resolutions promoting an inclusive environment for residents with special needs. Communities around the state can replicate some of the many events and initiatives hosted by Dutchess County or develop their own – all with the aim of looking past what makes us all different, in favor of looking for the unique potential in each of us.



## LIFE BUTTON

The County Life Button program provides personal tracking technology and communication devices for families who have loved ones who wander. These devices help families locate loved ones, assisting in their safe return home.

## 7 RED CARPET MOVIE DAYS

In collaboration with Roosevelt Cinemas, Lucky Orphans Horse Rescue, and the Bardavon 1869 Opera House, people of all abilities, their families, and care providers can attend sensory-friendly movie days hosted by Dutchess County. Theaters adjust both lighting and sound to make the experience more enjoyable for those living with sensory issues.

## 6<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL THINK DIFFERENTLY PICNIC

County Executive Marc Molinaro launched the ThinkDIFFERENTLY picnic in 2013, inviting those of every ability, their families, and care providers to enjoy an afternoon of food, fun and friendship.

In its third year, the Dutchess County Fair continues to open its gates early to offer an opportunity for people of all abilities to enjoy all the fair has to offer, without the hustle and bustle of crowds. This includes two sensory-sensitive hours of carnival rides and midway activities.  
[dutchessfair.com](http://dutchessfair.com)

## 3<sup>RD</sup>

ANNUAL THINKDIFFERENTLY  
THURSDAY AT THE FAIR

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE HOSTED BY DUTCHESS COUNTY:

.....  
Collaboration of Services and  
Care Across the Life Span for  
People with Special Needs

## 50

LOCAL BUSINESSES

Have recieved Supportive Environment Training through the Anderson Center for Autism. This individualized training enhances customer service and provides creative approaches that can help make businesses more welcoming for those of all abilities.

[andersoncenterforautism.org](http://andersoncenterforautism.org)

## 100 ..... FIRST RESPONDERS TRAINED

Firefighters, Law Enforcement, and Emergency Room staff are trained to identify the characteristics and behavior of a person living on the autism spectrum; how to communicate with and respond to an emergency involving someone on the spectrum; how to build relationships with the autism community; and how to utilize special tactics, rescue techniques and patient care options.

## 1 MILE THINKDIFFERENTLY DASH

Dutchess County hosts a 1-mile run/walk in the City of Poughkeepsie for participants of all abilities. Now in its third year, this event attracts nearly 300 participants, uniting service providers and residents throughout the community for a fun-filled and inclusive event.

## LET'S GET MOVING

### Tackling Transportation Challenges Collaboratively

Reliable and accessible transportation greatly affects a person's ability to access everything our community has to offer, improves the quality of life, and preserves independence. Our Universal Transportation Accessibility Task Force works with residents, community service providers and our Division of Public Transit to address transportation needs and challenges for people of all abilities. Identifying partners who will find new solutions can result in improved customer service and alternatives to help people travel to employment, job training, education, and to activities that will support the quality of life we all enjoy. Through creative solutions and new collaborations, the availability of transportation can enhance community connections for residents to be more involved in, and connected to, their community while reducing barriers to employment and services.

TRANSIT MANAGEMENT  
OF DUTCHESS COUNTY  
OPERATOR



# Creating Accessible Parks

Dutchess County is striving to create universally accessible infrastructure. Through the County's Parks and Recreation Master Plan, we are enhancing accessibility in our parks. We have already added accessibility features to Dutchess Stadium, Bowdoin Park, and the lake at Wilcox. Next, we will move ahead with a universally accessible addition to one of our parks. As part of a public survey, the community will help select the project and the park. As we re-imagine what county parks can and should be in the future, the overall priority is making them more accessible and implementing ThinkDIFFERENTLY principles to ensure all Dutchess County parks are open to everyone of every ability.

We are also working with our municipal partners and have helped identify grant opportunities for projects that improve access to facilities and resources that make Dutchess County a special place to live and raise a family.

Examples of these projects have included, the Wappinger Challenger Field, a baseball field for developmentally or physically disabled children; and Julie's Jungle, an adaptive playground for all ability levels. The ThinkDIFFERENTLY spirit also inspired projects such as Arlington High School students creating universally accessible playground equipment at Tymor Park in LaGrange. Freedom Park in LaGrange is building a sensory garden and seeking to construct an accessible fishing dock for residents to enjoy. East Fishkill's Red Wing and the County's Wilcox Park offers beach mats for easy access to and from the water, a floating beach wheelchair, and aquatic assistant swimming devices.



## BUILDING INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

To assist in making public facilities more accessible, Dutchess County offers small capital grants to communities through our Municipal Innovation Grant Program to fund ADA improvements. Something as simple as adding a ramp or wheelchair lift to a building, ADA accessible restroom facilities, audio loop for public meetings, or accessible parking can break down barriers, making a world of difference.



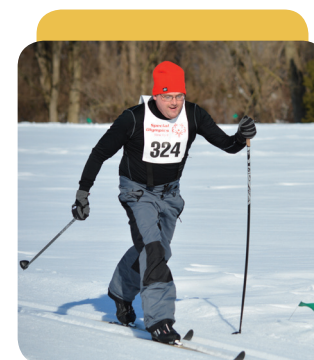
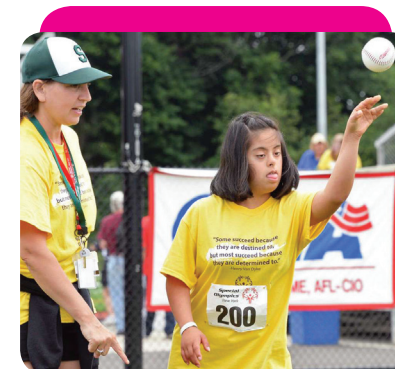
## DISABILITY, DREAM & DO AT DUTCHESS STADIUM

Dutchess County will sponsor and host the second annual Disability, Dream & Do Baseball Weekend at Dutchess Stadium. The camp is a collaboration between Dutchess County, the Hudson Valley Renegades, and the Dave Clark Foundation and is free for local children and young adults of all abilities. Participants learn from professional players and coaches in a great minor-league ballpark and receive a free camp T-shirt and complimentary tickets to a Renegades game at Dutchess Stadium.



## Summer Games Coming to Dutchess

Dutchess County is excited to host the Special Olympics New York State Summer Games in 2019 and 2020, building on the tremendous success of the Winter Games hosted here in 2016 and 2017. These events attract thousands of athletes and coaches from around the State to compete at sports venues throughout our County. The games provide a special opportunity for the community to come together to celebrate, cheer, and be inspired by these athletes and their stories.



**Special  
Olympics  
New York**





# THINKDIFFERENTLY.NET

Your One-Stop Guide to Services, Events & More!

## Who

Who are you seeking services for?

## What

What type of services are you looking for?

## Where

Where are you seeking services?

ThinkDIFFERENTLY.net offers simple navigation through the comprehensive array of local services available to residents of all abilities, their families, and service providers. The site connects people to resources and community events, offering information to assist with planning for the future.



Find local service providers or programs, based on an individual's specific age, diagnosis, and location.



Learn about child development milestones and how to plan for the future and continuity of supports as they move through life.



Easily connect to local, state and national resources for information about developmental and other disability diagnoses.



Learn how communities can "ThinkDIFFERENTLY" - by taking part in an inclusive event, partnering with local organizations or funding accessible infrastructure projects.



### DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOR SPECIAL NEEDS

Toni-Marie Ciarfella, Ph.D. serves as a facilitator and advocate for individuals and families with special needs.

(845) 486-3434

THINKDIFFERENTLY@DUTCHESSNY.GOV