

Debbie Charette



Debbie Charette is married with two sons, ages 26 and 24 years of age. Her passionate professional advocacy ignited with the birth of her second son Anthony who has Down Syndrome. For 24 years her well-versed knowledge of educational advocacy, awareness of broad disability issues, and her ability to provide support and technical assistance has empowered many parents on a statewide level to become effective participants in the development and implementation of programs and services for their children with disabilities. Debbie has extensive experience as a professional educational advocate. Her previous professional experience included a position with the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN) of New Jersey as the Central Regional Associate of the New Jersey Statewide Parent to Parent Program. In her professional capacity with the Parent to Parent Program Debbie was able to provide emotional support for families whose children were newly diagnosed with disabilities, as well as a variety of vital resources through direct contact, presentations other informational forums. She is well-versed in disability and health issues and knowledgeable about providing technical assistance and individualized training to families in order to prepare them to become effective participants in the development and implementation of critical programs and services for their children with disabilities. Debbie is currently employed by Autism New Jersey (formerly COSAC) located in Ewing. Debbie joined COSAC in 2006 as the Central Adult Resource Specialist. As a member of a team of professionals her role as a COSAC staff member was to facilitate strengthening the state's human services system so it can successfully address the needs of adults with autism. As a result this will allow for easy access to resources for adults with autism. Additionally Debbie offered support and technical assistance to adults with autism and their families on a statewide level. As of October 2007, COSAC's Adult Resources and Government Affairs Department united to become the Department of Public Policy & Systems Advocacy. Debbie accepted the position of Coordinator of the Department of Public Policy & Systems Advocacy. Debbie continues in her professional capacity as a member of the team in the Department of Public Policy to endeavor to strengthen the state's human service system so it can successfully address the needs of individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) through initiation and passage of legislative initiatives which will have positive impact on the lives of the autism community, the disability community at large.