



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Greg Ball

Theresa Pirraglia

GREG BALL May 13, 2013



Women of
DISTINCTION
HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

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Award: HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

Year: 2013

Theresa Pirraglia is a leader in the developmental disability community in New York State. As the parent of a 25-year-old son with autism, she has both developed and pioneered cutting edge programs for people with autism through New York State's Special Education and OPWDD systems.

In 1966, along with her husband Joe and seven other families, she founded the Devereux Millwood Learning Center in Westchester County. The Center was the first school for children with autism in the lower Hudson Valley based on the principles of applied behavioral analysis.

Ms. Pirraglia serves as Chair of Senator Greg Ball's Special Needs Advisory Council. In this role, she has made it her personal mission to share her insight and expertise with families in distress, clinicians and New York State's policy makers. Whether it's leading the charge on legislative issues, or helping a local parent navigate the special education system, Ms. Pirraglia has been a champion for the special needs community and their families.

In 2009, to help meet the overwhelming number of adults with autism in New York State, Ms. Pirraglia designed and co-founded with the Devereux Foundation the first Enhanced Supported Employment and Day Habilitation "Without Walls" program. This program has enabled young adults with autism to obtain and maintain paid employment in their communities in the lower Hudson Valley. In addition, this program provides ongoing voluntary opportunities for all its participants. Devereux's adult day program has enabled young adults with autism to be full contributing members to their state and local communities.

Presently, Ms. Pirraglia is a board member of the Foundation for Educating Children with Autism, Mental Health News Education, Inc. and is a member of Westchester County's Autism Advisory Committee. In addition, she sits on the editorial board of "Autism Spectrum News."

In 2007, in recognition of her many contributions in the field of developmental disabilities, Ms. Pirraglia received the "Martha Fitzpatrick Citizen Advocate Award," from the New York State Rehabilitation Association (NYSRA). In addition, she was the recipient in 2008 of the "Lifetime Achievement Award" from the Foundation for Educating Children with Autism.