# Oswego County's Stephanie Andrews Appointed to NYS Autism Advisory Board

PATTY RITCHIE    October 30, 2017



Stephanie (Ford) Andrews of Mexico, N.Y., a former aide to State Senator Patty Ritchie, was recently appointed to the New York State Autism Advisory Board. Senator Ritchie nominated Andrews, the mother of a teenager diagnosed with regressive autism.

The board—which just recently held its first meeting—aims to advise the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities, (OPWDD) on the effectiveness of current services for individuals with autism. It will also work with OPWDD to identify legislative and regulatory

changes that could improve services and better coordinate the state agencies responsible for providing the services.  The board consists of 19 people.

"Stephanie Andrews has fought for rural families across Oswego County who are seeking the best possible care for their loved ones who have been diagnosed with autism," said Senator Ritchie. "She now can help state agencies understand what these families go through, the unique needs of upstate and what New York needs to do to help those with autism reach their full potential."

"I would like to thank Senator Patty Ritchie and Governor Cuomo for this appointment on the New York State Autism Advisory Board.  I look forward to supporting the families from the autism community in Oswego County," Andrews said.

When her son was first diagnosed, Andrews joined other parents in her community in helping create the Oswego County Autism Task Force. She was the group's first chairperson. The committee attempts to raise awareness of autism, is involved with fundraising, assistance with diagnostic evaluation, early intervention and Medicaid service coordination.

Meanwhile, Andrews' son has served as a trailblazer in his community.  He was the first person to utilize a smaller assistive communication device (iTouch), and was the first in his school district to receive extensive ABA therapy across classroom settings. He now continues to utilize an iPad as a form of communication.