

Resident Council Speak Out 2026

The 2026 Resident Council Speak Out was held on February 11 in Albany New York. It was a cold day to travel but our hardy resident leaders and staff made their way to Albany to educate, advocate and meet with legislators from across New York. In preparation, we held two Policy Committee meetings and speakers were selected to speak out on behalf of residents. The focus this year was on the Governor's budget which completely removed funding for the EQUAL grant, resident rights trainings and funding for CIAD. Our staff worked to contact all of the legislators in the Assembly and Senate to request an in-person meeting. We were able to secure 13 meetings, which meant we would have a very busy day!

Our Executive Director, **Theresa Young**, convened the group and **Gary Levin**, the Vice President of the Board of Directors, a retired Peer Advocate and CIAD organizer, welcomed the residents and our guests. Ms. Young spoke to ongoing issues around the quality of food before our resident speakers shared their talks. **Vashti R. Hawkins** of Sanford Manor addressed the need for better emergency preparedness and safety in homes. **Ivis Lewis** of Brooklyn Boulevard ALP spoke about the EQUAL grant and how it was a great success for their home. **Kathleen McArdle** of Brookdale Enriched Housing Program also spoke about EQUAL, and the many challenges homes can face in the grant process and follow through by home operators. **Deborah Hunter**, Peer Advocate and former resident of Wavecrest spoke about the essential work of CIAD and the importance of sustained funding to support CIAD, and resident rights. Attending as official listeners were: **Victoria Clingan**, New York State Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs; **Karen Walker**, Department of Health, Long Term Care Unit; **Claudette Royal**, NYS Ombudsman, NYS Office for the Aging, along with members of their respective staffs.

Working in teams, we met with the offices of 13 legislators to advocate for residents of Adult Homes. All of the legislative staff we met with were supportive of our asks and appreciated the opportunity to learn about the lives of adult home residents. We are grateful that **Kevin Cremin** from Mobilization for Justice was able to join us, as well as **Kate Breslin and Bridget Walsh** from the Schuyler Center in Albany, with **Harvey Rosenthal** from the Alliance for Rights and Recovery, who also addressed the residents briefly, and coming out of retirement our beloved **Geoff Lieberman** who came to Albany to support the residents and CIAD on this important day.

The Resident Voice

Support Line (866) 503-3332

www.ciadny.org

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Residents from the following homes raised their voices for all Adult Home residents at the Speak Out: Brooklyn Boulevard ALP, Mermaid Manor, Brookdale, Kings Adult Care Center, Bronxwood, Queens Adult Care Center, 129th Street Residence, Madison York, Wavecrest Home for Adults, Surfside Manor, Sanford, Belle Harbor Manor, and New Haven Manor.



Sanford Home Residents



Ivis Lewis speaks about EQUAL grant.



Residents with Assemblyman Steve Raga. Tyrria Higgins, Peer Advocate, steered the team through the legislative hallways.



Opening of the Speak Out.



Vashti Hawkins speaks about emergency preparedness in adult homes.

SAVE THE DATES!!!

Policy Committee Meetings

10:00am – 2:00 pm

- October 7
- November 10

Held at CIAD Offices 205 Hudson Street NY, NY
Lunch provided and MTA/Access-A-Ride reimbursed

Are You Registered to VOTE?

New York State Primaries are on 6/24/26.

Last day to register is 6/14/26.

To check if your voter registration is up to date visit www.vote.nyc or
Call 866-868-3692.