

New Horizons

Housing That Supports Independence



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Zoom Commits To Improving Accessibility

by Shaun Heasley / Reprinted from Disability Scoop / March 5, 2021

Zoom says it is enhancing its service in order to be more accessible to users with disabilities.

The video conferencing platform that's become ubiquitous as the COVID-19 pandemic has kept people from meeting in person said it will add automatic closed captioning to its free accounts.

The functionality, which will be called "Live Transcription," is expected to be available to all users this fall, according to Jen Hill, product marketing manager at Zoom.



In the interim, Zoom will offer automatic closed captioning to meeting hosts upon request, Hill said in a blog post about the new feature.

The move is part of an effort to "provide a platform that is accessible to all of the diverse communities we serve," Hill indicated.

Project Freedom, Inc. wishes to thank our sponsors and benefactors who have provided valuable support to our organization throughout the year.

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“My Two Cents”

By Tim Doherty, Executive Director



Last month, in the midst of leasing up our new “Freedom Village at Town Center” apartment complex, we welcomed Robbinsville mayor David Fried to our community to celebrate a special achievement. It was to honor and recognize a Robbinsville Freshman, Zoya Jadhav, for winning second place in a Statewide Essay contest. For her achievement, Zoya won a \$ 300 cash prize but donated half of her winnings to Project Freedom, which is really the big part of this story.

As many of you know, Mayor Fried is very proud of his town, Robbinsville, and especially proud when his students from the town, achieve success, and wanted to recognize Zoya for her achievement. Since she wanted to donate half her award to Project Freedom, he reached out to us, to see if we could host a small gathering to recognize her and give her a Town citation. Of course we said yes, and so staff prepared some light refreshment and welcomed the mayor, Zoya and her family to our new Community Center. What also made that day special was that it was Zoya’s 15th birthday.

It was quite evident to me, in talking to Zoya’s family that they are special people and that Mom and Dad are raising their children to very high standards. When I asked Zoya what she would like to do with her life, she said that she wanted to become a doctor. Indeed the story that she wrote, was about a young person who was sick with the Covit 19 virus, and ended up in the hospital. There, she encounters another child, Charlie, who is chatty and annoying at first, but then also comes down with the illness. They are now both struggling to hold on and breathe, and form a bond and friendship as they fight this terrible disease.

Her story is fictional yet has basis in reality for many of those folks who have suffered with this terrible pandemic. The loneliness, the separation from family, the soreness of having an IV in your arm and the sounds of those hospital monitoring machines, all created a vivid picture of her torture. Her story is told, one paragraph at a time, with the headings of “One. Two “ which I think was to mimic the rhythm of those hospital sounds. Yet it is a story of friendship that will ultimately win out.

The title of her story, is “Amity Amidst a Crisis” which means friendship during a crisis, and becomes the ultimate relationship the two sick children forge as they fight to breathe. So although fictional, her point here is that during times of crisis or major life changing conditions, we as human beings put aside our petty differences and come together to survive. We respond to each other and will help each other to overcome those challenges to survive and make a better life. What a mature thing for a 15 year old student to understand and capture in a story. The essay can be found on our website at:

www.projectfreedom.org/2021/03/amity-amidst-a-crisis-by-zoya-jadhav/

Looks to me that Zoya, has a talent and bright future as a writer, if that doctor thing doesn’t work out. I think many of us “Adults” could learn a thing or two from her. Happy Birthday Zoya.

Timothy J Doherty



From Norman's Desk

In every calamity, crisis, or disaster, there are people who rise to the occasion to do good things. Some help others in need despite their own troubled circumstance. We have seen a lot of that these past 12 months. We find these people heroic while they consider themselves to be doing the "right thing."

A small portion of these people find creative inspiration in their giving and helping. They use this inspiration to focus talents to draw, paint, or write pieces about the situation. Many a poem or essay has been penned from the depth of despair or from trying to help others from that those depths.



Zoya Jadhav, a freshman student at Robbinsville High School, entered a statewide essay contest at her younger brother, Shawnak's, suggestion. Zoya's essay came in second, earning a \$300 prize.

The Jadhav family is very community-minded volunteering their time to the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen and shelters for the homeless. Zoya's has the same giving spirit, and she chose to donate half of her prize to Project Freedom. Zoya said that she admires the mission of Project Freedom. So on her 15th birthday, Zoya and her family came to Project Freedom's newest complex in Robbinsville to present Project Freedom a check.



Robbinsville Mayor Dave Fried joined the celebration that day presenting Zoya with an award from Robbinsville Township. Project Freedom prepared a small birthday party for Zoya and family complete with small gifts to encourage her writing and her plans to be a doctor.

Project Freedom is glad that Zoya and family have connected with us, and we wish this remarkable young lady a bright, successful future of helping others.

Below is a sample of the essay that earned Zoya her prize. The entire essay can be found online at: www.projectfreedom.org/2021/03/amity-amidst-a-crisis-by-zoya-jadhav/

Zoya Jadhav
November 26, 2020

Amity Amidst a Crisis

Another sodden morning of the rains. Another day locked up in the same room. Another day seeing the same faces. Another day staring into a device for hours. Another day drowning in recurring events. Another day in quarantine. Another day living the new reality.

One. Two.

The blight had washed over the world altogether. Life at an oblivious state hadn't quite anticipated a detriment of this scale. Many were left at complete losses while others, joyous of the leisurely time left available on their hands. Many like myself, once enjoyed the break from life, however, grew to become lonely and deprived of the socialization that is imperative for human beings to function.

One. Two.

It was once estimated over 70% of the population would become victims of this harrowing coronavirus. This certainly proved true for almost a year. People dropped dead like flies and became prey to the predatory virus. People like me, who coerced themselves that they would be spared, fell and landed the hardest.

One. Two.

With Disabilities ‘Rarely’ Seen, Netflix Commits \$100 Million Toward Inclusion

Reprinted from DisAbility Scoop March 2, 2021 / by Shaun Heasley

Netflix is pledging to do more after a report finds that representation of people with disabilities and other groups is lacking in its original films and television shows.

The report released late last week was conducted by Stacy Smith at the University of Southern California’s Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism who regularly analyzes diversity on screen and was asked by Netflix to assess its work. Smith and her team reviewed 126 films and 180 series released in 2018 and 2019 to measure representation by gender, race/ethnicity, LGBTQ+ and disability.

While the study gave Netflix good marks on gender equality and for making progress in inclusion of those from some underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, it found that the LGBTQ+ community and people with disabilities “rarely” see themselves in content on the streaming service.



Characters with disabilities accounted for just 5.3% of leads and 4.7% of the main cast in film and series on Netflix, the study found. When all speaking characters were factored, only 2.1% had disabilities. This is far short of reflecting the 27.2% of the population who have disabilities, the report noted.

When individuals with disabilities were shown, they were likely to be male and most were white. Slightly more than half of these characters had physical disabilities.

Researchers observed little change in representation of people with disabilities between 2018 and 2019, concluding that “there is room for Netflix to grow in order to depict the full range of how people experience disability.”

Notably, the report found that strong representation behind the camera among certain groups like women led to better representation of those groups on screen.

In response, Netflix said it will establish a fund that will invest \$100 million over the next five years in organizations that help bring underrepresented communities into the television and film industries and in programs to train and hire new talent at the company.

“This study sets a high bar for the wider industry and demonstrates how an internal audit is a critical first step toward inclusive change,” Smith said.

Ted Sarandos, co-CEO and chief content officer at Netflix, said the company is committed to releasing a new version of the inclusion report every two years through 2026.

“By better understanding how we are doing, we hope to stimulate change not just at Netflix but across our industry more broadly,” Sarandos said.

Bipartisan Disability Caucus forms after pandemic exposes flaws in NJ's system of care

By Gene Myers / Reprinted from NorthJersey.com / Dec 15, 2020

Legislators have promised to come together to focus on disability issues at the end of a rough year for New Jerseyans with disabilities.

Senate President Stephen Sweeney will chair a newly formed bipartisan Disability Caucus.

"This bipartisan caucus presents the opportunity to further improve health care, education, transportation, housing and employment for New Jersey citizens with disabilities. I look forward to working with my colleagues and the many advocacy groups across this state who are committed to helping people with disabilities live self-determined, fulfilling lives so we can move New Jersey forward for everyone," Sweeney said in an email.

The formation of the caucus comes not a moment too soon, said advocates who spent the pandemic lobbying for essentials like hospital rights, protective gear and access to food.

"We need to be served as a population," said Javier Robles, chair of the New Jersey Disabilities COVID-19 Action Committee, which published a report condemning the state for failing to protect its most vulnerable residents.

In March, companies that run group homes for people with developmental disabilities said their lobbying for protective gear fell on deaf ears. In August, health care professionals who serve the same population said their clients were isolated too long as they remained in quarantine even as everyone else was emerging from lockdowns. Six months from the start of the pandemic, thousands of residents were still waiting for permission to go back to their jobs, which in some cases were already being done by people without disabilities.

"The Caucus will establish a platform in which legislators and their staff can be educated on key issues and where they have a place to reach out to organizations and self-advocates who have lived these experiences as they are considering issues, said Mercedes Witowsky, executive director of the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities.

Her group had been pushing to establish a caucus for a year, Witowsky said, and if there were such a thing as a silver lining to the pandemic it was that it highlighted flaws in the systems set up to help residents with disabilities, who make up 24.6% of New Jersey's population, according to the CDC. That lit a fire, and lawmakers announced the Caucus in a Dec. 1 live stream.

"This unfortunate pandemic and emergency has exposed many cracks in the systems of care to our disability community," said caucus member Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttie, a Democrat representing the 37th District.

Maybe that's why more than a couple of dozen lawmakers from both sides of the aisle in the House and Senate chose to take part in the Caucus, said Witowsky.

It's slated to meet four times next year, with the first meeting to focus on "COVID and the disability community" in late January. But Witowsky hopes the effects of the caucus will be greater.

"As they go back to their work, they include disability matters in their conversations, in drafting legislation. It's also a way that our community self advocates, advocates and family can identify with leadership in the state," Witowsky said.

"They will know that Senator [Thomas] Kean supports the caucus and is a founding member and when they have an issue they will go to Senator Kean's office. The Senate and Assembly members who signed on signed on knowing that they were making a commitment to disability issues," he said.

Founding legislative Disability Caucus members are Sens. Sweeney, Anthony Bucco, Kristin Corrado, Patrick Diegnan Jr., Thomas H. Kean, Jr., Fred Madden Jr., M. Teresa Ruiz and Troy Singleton; Assembly members Daniel Benson, Annette Chaparro, Nicholas Chiaravalloti, Ronald S. Dancer, Joann Downey, Aura Dunn, Louis Greenwald, Eric Houghtaling, Valerie Vainieri Huttie, Pamela Lampitt, Yvonne Lopez, Nancy Munoz, Carol Murphy, Holly Schepisi, Adam Taliaferro, Britnee N. Timberlake, Anthony Verrelli and Andrew Zwicker.



**Robbinsville
jelly bean winner—
John**

**West Windsor
jelly bean winner—
Kalea**

Slainte (Cheers)

To The Ten "Luck of the Irish" Winners!. Project Freedom Celebrated St. Patrick's Day with Ten Drawings, one for each of our Developments. Each Unit had one Entry in the Drawing.

The Following Tenants won Twenty Five dollars in Gold Coins:

***FV Gibbsboro- Lashawna Ross
PF Hamilton- Danny Dimarco /Dennis Bernhart
FV Hopewell- Donald Lamons
PF Lawrence— Asked not to be named
PF Robbinsville- John Sciarrotta
PF Toms River- Olivia Wilson
FV Towns Center South- Thomasine Ciliberti
FV West Windsor- Morgan Jones
FV Westampton- Alexis Greene
FV Woodstown- Brian Moore***



CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OUR WINNERS!

Project Freedom Inc.
223 Hutchinson Road
Robbinsville, NJ 08691

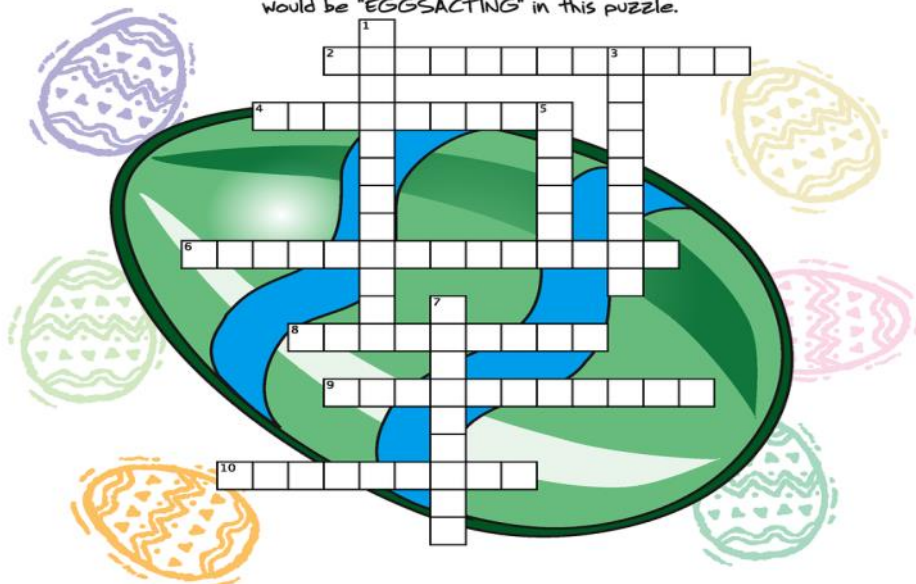
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EGGS-acting Easter Crossword

This "cracking" puzzle will leave you with EGG on your face! Each clue is for a word with a sound like EGGS in it. For "EGGSAMPLE", the word "EXACTING" would be "EGGSACTING" in this puzzle.



Across

2. They found the haunted house EGGS_____ to be very disturbing.
4. Bungee jumping is an EGGS_____ sport.
6. The pain in his tooth was EGGS_____.
8. Guesswork is an _____ EGGS_____ science.
9. There was an EGGS_____ in Pompeii as the volcano erupted.
10. Gravity is a very hard concept to EGGS_____.

Down

1. I've told you a thousand times, do not EGGS_____!
3. Use a magnifying glass to EGGS_____ something more closely.
5. If you want to leave a building, seek the EGGS_____.
7. A juicer can be used to EGGS_____ liquid from a fruit.