



NO BARRIERS



**CHANGING
THE
WORLD
OF
SPECIAL
EDUCATION**

More than 50% of young adults with autism will remain both unemployed and unenrolled in higher education in the two years after aging out of school.

**IT'S TIME WE
STRETCH THE
RUBBER BAND
OF POSSIBILITIES
FOR ALL OF OUR
CHILDREN.**

We must unleash the potential of our students with extraordinary needs.

1 in 59 children in the United States are on the autism spectrum. In New Jersey, the estimated rate increases to 1 in 34. What are we doing to give our children every opportunity to have a successful future?

According to literature reviewed by Autism Speaks, over the next ten years there will be an estimated 500,000 teens entering adulthood and aging out of school based autism services every year. Of those aging out, more than half of these young adults will remain both unemployed and unenrolled in higher education in the two years after high school, and nearly half of 25-year-olds with autism will have never held a paying job (Autism Speaks). Today's adults with autism still require assistance in day-to-day activities and are unable to hold employment or complete schooling (Howlin et al., 2004). Without appropriate intervention, society will only expand a growing population of forgotten ones: the adult with autism.

On top of that, autism-associated mental and physical health problems extend across the life span - from young children to senior citizens. In order to improve the quality of life for individuals with ASD and other intellectual disabilities, it is imperative that they learn how to mitigate their challenges.

Statistics

- 32% of 2 to 5 year olds with autism are overweight and 16 percent are obese. By contrast, less than a quarter (23 percent) of 2 to 5 year olds in the general population are overweight and only 10 percent are medically obese.
- 63% of children on the autism spectrum between the ages of 6 and 15 have been bullied (Zablosky, 2014).
- Nearly 28 percent of 8-year-olds with ASD have self-injurious behaviors. Head banging, arm biting and skin scratching are among the most common.

References

Autism Speaks (2020). Autism Facts and Figures. Retrieved from www.autismspeaks.org.
Howlin P, Goode S, Hutton J, Rutter M. Adult outcome for children with autism. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*. 2004;45(2):212-229.
Zablotsky, B., Bradshaw, C. P., Anderson, C. M., & Law, P. (2014). Risk Factors for Bullying among Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. *Autism: The International Journal of Research and Practice*.

WHAT WE ARE DOING AT THE South Bergen Jointure Commission

As a public special needs district currently serving more than 350 students from Bergen County, it has become our mission at the South Bergen Jointure Commission to unlock the potential of every single one of our students. The SBJC vision centers on establishing a formalized system that ensures the federal mandate of Least Restrictive Environment is being achieved, and our goal as an educational institution is to prepare our students for independent living following their completion of our program.

But we know we cannot do this alone. In order to truly unleash our students' potentials, we need all those who are involved in their lives to understand the importance of preparing students for the future. While many excellent resources focus on day-to-day skills to help students with autism, few focus on the cultivating the right mindset for success. We need our students, families and educators to learn the mindset to break through barriers and unleash their full potential.

[That's why the South Bergen Jointure Commission has partnered with No Barriers.](#)



What's within you is stronger than what's in your way.

No Barriers empowers people of all walks of life and abilities to overcome obstacles, live a life of purpose, and give back to the world.

No Barriers USA is a nonprofit organization that provides experiences, tools, and inspiration that help people embark on a quest to contribute their absolute best to the world. The organization has worked with populations ranging from veterans returning from war, to youth and educators and caregivers, to people with physical and/or invisible disabilities who hope to show the world a new vision of what's possible.

Erik Weihenmayer, No Barriers USA's co-founder, refuses to let blindness interfere with his passion for an exhilarating and fulfilling life. In 2001, Weihenmayer became the first blind climber in history to reach the summit of the world's highest mountain, Mount Everest. By 2008, he completed his quest for climbing the Seven Summits - the highest peaks on each of the seven continents. Now he actively seeks opportunities to help others adopt a similar mindset.



THE GUIDING PHILOSOPHIES OF No Barriers USA

The No Barriers Life Elements form the basis of No Barriers' experiences and curriculum across all programs. From a lifetime of facing and overcoming challenges, Weihenmayer developed these concepts as the culmination of experiences, mindset and action that allows us to harness adversity, break through barriers and create a life of purpose and impact. Through life-changing experiences, participants learn about each element and internalize them during exercises designed to shape mind, body, and spirit.

While many excellent resources focus on day-to-day skills to help students with autism, few focus on cultivating the right MINDSET for success. Through the No Barriers Life curriculum, inspiration and experiential learning, students, educators and families will break through the barriers that hold people back from living their best lives. Each step of the process will further their awareness, trust and confidence as they discover that what's within them is stronger than what's in their way.

No Barriers USA is now teaming up with the South Bergen Jointure Commission to shift the mindsets of students effected by lifelong challenges.

GROWTH THROUGH THE No Barriers Life Model

What we do works. Here is the data to prove it:

47% more participants agreed with the statement:
"I have a vision I am passionate about" after their NB experience than before.

40% more participants agreed with the statement:
"I want to reach for my potential" after their NB experience than before.

49% more participants agreed with the statement:
"I am able to focus on solutions rather than problems" after their NB experience than before.

30% more participants agreed with the statement:
"I want to create a positive impact on the world around me" after their NB experience than before.

**VISION
REACH
PIONEER
ROPE TEAM
ALCHEMY
SUMMIT
ELEVATE**

Our partnership's mission is have all of our students, families and educators learn the mindset to break through barriers and unleash their full potential. SBJC and No Barriers will partner to co-create a national model for bringing this mindset to students with extraordinary needs.



Changing the world of ~~special~~ education.



Here's what a No Barriers + SBJC partnership will accomplish in 2020 as we shift the paradigm of how we think about the future of all of our children.

LIFE-CHANGING PARTNERSHIP

The No Barriers philosophy has become the framework for the South Bergen Jointure Commission as it undergoes the process of its first ever Middle States accreditation that will focus on a strategic plan that will include a goal to return every student to their neighborhood school in 5 years. That work will require comprehensive approach to working with educators, students and parents.

For Educators

The No Barriers leadership philosophy has been integrated across all SBJC educators and leadership teams via a combination of online learning and in-person professional development sessions. Modeled on No Barriers' leadership transformation work for Fortune 500 companies, we use these tools to engage SBJC educators in the co-creation of the 5 year future envisioned by SBJC leadership.

For Students

Students are learning the No Barriers Life through the No Barriers Spark Program, the Global Impact Challenge and an on-site No Barriers Day.

For Parents

Parents are learning the No Barriers Life through Erik Weihenmayer's talk, an optional online course and through the on-site No Barriers Day.

EVENTS

Spark Program featuring Erik Weihenmayer

On September 4th, Erik Weihenmayer sparked the minds of SBJC faculty and staff when he introduced the No Barriers Life at our 2019 New School Year Convocation. Erik told the story of how he used his challenges to his advantage, and inspired SBJC staff to believe in their students' abilities as well as in their own abilities to become change-makers in the field of special education.

Two-Day Leadership Training

A No Barriers two-day Leadership Training helped the SBJC team to craft a more detailed version of the school district's five-year vision. The SBJC leadership team went through the No Barriers Life framework to tackle the challenges that might come in their way while achieving their district vision of having every one of their students in the least restrictive environment.

No Barriers Online Experience

No Barriers is providing the SBJC faculty and staff with an engaging online experience designed through the unique No Barriers Life framework. The eight-week online experience will create a common language and framework for faculty, parents, and students and enable larger numbers of families and community members to learn and integrate the No Barriers Life into their families and schools.

The purpose of the No Barriers online experience is to help participants find inner purpose, learn strategies to move outside of their comfort zones and to break through barriers, and ultimately to create positive impact in the community and world. Participants will strengthen their self identity and develop confidence as they fill their backpacks with learning and tools that can be accessed long into the future as they navigate life. The culmination of the online experience is to take action that has a positive impact in the community.

No Barriers Day

A No Barriers Day experience takes what was learned in classrooms and brings it to life through fun and inclusive activities that help people reach outside their comfort zone, redefining what's possible, and celebrating the future with new found hope and optimism.

Modeled after the No Barriers Summit, this experience will uplift, connect, and inspire your schools, students, and families. Timing is everything, and this year-end celebration will not only deepen the life-changing learning that has been going on all year, but also help everyone move from awareness to behavior through the summer and well beyond.

Learning objectives for this day includes:

- Apply the life elements of No Barriers mindset.
- Explore students' strengths.
- Use strategies to increase student confidence.
- Connect students with mentors/heroes.
- Discover strategies for students to reduce stress.
- Connect social-emotional learning, relationships, and resilience.
- Increase parent knowledge of the life elements of No Barrier mindset.
- Promote social interactions through conquering challenges.

I BREAK BARRIERS. THEY DON'T BREAK ME.



**South Bergen
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