

# Disability Rights: 2009 Communications Campaign Contest

**SPONSORED BY:** New York Assembly Member District 121 Al Stirpe  
The Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse University  
The S. I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University  
Clear Channel Syracuse

**CONTEST:** We challenge Central New York high school students to create ideas to build understanding of disability rights in high schools. We are inviting the following Central New York High School students to compete against each other to develop an effective communication, marketing, advertising, or other campaign to increase high school students' understanding of disability rights.

**Cicero North High School**  
**East Syracuse-Minoa Central High School**  
**Fayetteville-Manlius High School**  
**Lafayette Junior-senior High School**  
**Liverpool High School**

**OBJECTIVE:** We want to find the best possible way to enlist students to understand the struggles people with disabilities face in everyday life. We don't want fear or pity - we want advocates willing to stand up for disability rights.

Student teams (up to 4 members per team) should select one of the following four groups to focus on for each communication campaign: (1) Mobility Disabilities (people who have difficulty walking, including people who use wheelchairs, scooters, crutches, canes), (2) Mental Illness (including depression, Bipolar disorder, Schizophrenia), (3) Sensory Disabilities (including blindness and vision disabilities and deafness and hearing disabilities), or (4) Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (including Down Syndrome, mental retardation, autism and developmental disabilities).

**MATERIALS:** Your students might create an advertising campaign, a YouTube video, an event, a Facebook application or any type of communications idea. You may submit as many as 10 different submissions. Each submission should include the contest Entry Form and a short (1 page) description of the idea, including why you believe your idea will change attitudes on disability rights.

**JUDGING:** The contest will be judged by faculty members of the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications and Burton Blatt Institute and staff from Clear Channel Syracuse. Winners will be announced December 1, 2009.

**PRIZES:** The winning high school will receive a \$2,500 prize to use for purposes related to Impacting Images of Disability (a report on how the funds were used will need to be submitted by July 1, 2010). The second place school will receive \$1,000 to use for purposes related to Impacting Images of Disability. The winning student teams will be recognized at an event and will receive a non-monetary prize. The winning entries will be featured on the Burton Blatt Institute website (<http://bbi.syr.edu>) and will be disseminated as appropriate in 2010. All the best ideas will be circulated to all the schools, giving plenty of excellent opportunities to build understanding and advocacy for disability rights among today's high school students.

**TIMING:** All submissions should be postmarked by November 13<sup>th</sup> and sent to:

Michel Soffer Ph.D.,  
Burton Blatt Institute  
900 S. Crouse Ave.  
Crouse-Hinds Hall, Suite 300  
Syracuse, NY 13244  
[ImpactingImagesContest@law.syr.edu](mailto:ImpactingImagesContest@law.syr.edu)

### **Background & Support**

Graduate student Vidhu Kalia is available to brief your students and answer any questions they might have about advertising and communication throughout the process. Ms. Kalia can be reached at: [vkalia@syr.edu](mailto:vkalia@syr.edu). Staff from ClearChannel Radio will also be available for consultation. Michal Soffer, Ph.D. and Dr. Katie McDonald are available to brief students and answer questions on disability rights. Ms. Soffer and Dr. McDonald can be reached at [ImpactingImagesContest@law.syr.edu](mailto:ImpactingImagesContest@law.syr.edu) or 315-443-2527.

There are also background materials and resources on disability rights available at <http://bbi.syr.edu/projects/disability-rights-campaign/>.

A “creative brief” is attached to help the students understand the communications challenge.