



Sesame Workshop Honored in Long Branch for Introducing a “Sesame Street” Character with Autism

Sesame Workshop Earned Honor from the New Jersey Speech-Language-Hearing Association for promoting Autism awareness through “Julia”

LONG BRANCH, NJ – May 3, 2017 – Sesame Workshop made an immense impact in the special needs community on April 10, when it introduced its new character, Julia, a little girl with autism.

The landmark move came after consultations with families and care providers—including speech-language pathologists, similar to members of the New Jersey Speech-Language-Hearing Association (NJSHA).

The creation of Julia has already had a tremendous influence on public awareness and acceptance of all children. It is why the association awarded Sesame Workshop with its “Distinguished Service Award” at its statewide annual convention, which drew more than 800 attendees April 27-28 in Long Branch.

Jeanette Betancourt, Senior Vice President of Community and Family Engagement at Sesame Workshop and a former speech-language pathologist, accepted the award on behalf of the non-profit company. She said “Sesame Street” strives to help children become smarter, stronger and kinder by becoming familiar with characters like Julia.

“We can’t do that, though, without people such as yourselves,” Betancourt told NJSHA members. “We can create wonderful resources, but unless those resources are in the hands of people such as yourselves, who can help us share them, then we are not accomplishing what we need.”

In creating Julia, Sesame Workshop has worked for more than five years in consultation with more than 250 organizations and experts within the autism community to address the increasingly prevalent condition affecting one in 68 children in America.

Sesame Workshop hoped Julia would help people better connect to those with autism and their families.

“We took the approach of understanding—understanding differences and sharing that the fact is that those differences don’t define who you are,” Betancourt said.

NJSHA praised Sesame Workshop for its innovative programming, which has helped build a strong developmental foundation for speech/language, literacy and academic skills, as well as its drive to teach children how to be accepting of all people.

“We honor Sesame Street and Julia, her creators, as well as the writers and puppeteers, who have brought her life into countless living rooms across America and across the globe,” said NJSHA President Gerard L. Caracciolo. “Sesame Street reaches 156 million children in more than 150 countries. Julia teaches acceptance and understanding in a way only Sesame Street can do.”

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Videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M8QQRtA0hVA> – Sunny Days

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wCsVSHT3tpY> – Peek-a-boo (Julia’s Bunny)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RA9FIWK8OUY> – Blowing Bubbles

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bNzEyDfTrYA> – Boing Boing Tag

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rILLpwgjmXA> – Twinkle Twinkle

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wn-a10Ko_38 – Butterfly Flapping