

Independent Perspective 9.30.25

Parent to Parent Network with Heather Emory

## Transcript

00:00:00 Speaker 1

Welcome to Independent Perspective, a public affairs presentation of Western New York independent living.

00:00:06 Speaker 1

Our guest today is Heather Emory, the new executive director of Parent to Parent of New York State, and I'm your host, Ernie Churchwell.

00:00:14 Speaker 1

Welcome back to the program, Heather.

00:00:16 Speaker 2

Hi, Ernie.

00:00:17 Speaker 2

Thank you for asking me to join you today to talk about our amazing organization.

00:00:22 Speaker 1

It's our pleasure.

00:00:23 Speaker 1

I bet there are probably some people listening that, although they may have heard the name Parent to Parent, don't know exactly what it does.

00:00:30 Speaker 1

Could you tell us, please?

00:00:32 Speaker 2

Absolutely.

00:00:33 Speaker 2

Parent to Parent of New York State has been around since 1994 and was established to support and connect families of people with special needs.

00:00:43 Speaker 2

Our mission is to build a supportive network of families to reduce isolation and to empower those who care for people with developmental disabilities or special health care needs to navigate and influence service systems to make informed decisions.

00:00:59 Speaker 1

Oh, like the vast majority of guests that we have on this show are from the Western New York area.

00:01:04 Speaker 1

But since your name is Parent to Parent of New York State, I'm guessing your mandate extends a bit beyond that area.

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Where all do you cover?

00:01:13 Speaker 2

Yeah, Ernie, it sure does.

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We serve the entire state of New York, from the Atlantic coast to the border of Canada, down to the Big Apple and all the way back out to Niagara Falls.

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We are here for you.

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We have offices located throughout New York State and they are staffed by regional coordinators who are parents or close relatives of people with special needs.

00:01:39 Speaker 1

But you're the one in charge, I gather.

00:01:41 Speaker 3

Yes, I am.

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Well, in other words, of all the different offices around the state.

00:01:47 Speaker 1

So, you've got the big picture.

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What kinds of programs specifically do you offer that will help people?

00:01:53 Speaker 3

Sure.

00:01:54 Speaker 2

We offer, we're very proud to offer multiple programs.

00:01:59 Speaker 2

First and foremost, support.

00:02:01 Speaker 2

We offer families and caregivers the opportunity to connect one-to-one with a parent or caregiver of an individual with the same or similar disability or special healthcare need, thinking of someone who's walked in their shoes.

00:02:14 Speaker 2

We also offer multiple supportive groups online where parents can connect with other parents.

00:02:20 Speaker 2

share experiences and provide encouragement to one another in a supportive environment.

00:02:26 Speaker 2

Information and referral.

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We help families and professionals locate information and services they need.

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And training and informational sessions.

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We're proud to offer a very lengthy catalog of trainings and workshops on various topics, both to family and

00:02:45 Speaker 2

professional audiences.

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Think about topics such as getting started with the residential process, school-related topics, preventing parent burnout, healthcare notebook overviews, the list goes on.

00:03:00 Speaker 1

Since you're the new executive director, I imagine people will be curious

00:03:04 Speaker 1

about where you come from.

00:03:06 Speaker 1

What are some aspects of your background?

00:03:08 Speaker 2

I've been very fortunate to have spent my career working in the field of supporting people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities and have done so for over 20 years.

00:03:21 Speaker 2

My background is in human resources, program development, project management, and quality improvement roles.

00:03:29 Speaker 2

I am passionate about serving this community.

00:03:33 Speaker 2

I've been active in board work, PTA work, and volunteering for adaptive sports.

00:03:40 Speaker 2

And most importantly, I have a deep personal connection to the mission of Parent to Parent of New York State.

00:03:47 Speaker 2

And I have served as a support parent volunteer for the organization since 2018.

00:03:55 Speaker 1

Since you do board work, I guess you probably get into cornhole tournaments, eh?

00:04:00 Speaker 2

Oh my gosh.

00:04:03 Speaker 1

A little joke there.

00:04:05 Speaker 1

Well, we've got only a half minute left.

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Could you tell us how people who have questions can get more information?

00:04:13 Speaker 2

Yeah, absolutely.

00:04:14 Speaker 2

For starters, you can visit our website for additional information.

00:04:19 Speaker 2

You can also connect with us by phone.

00:04:22 Speaker 2

There's phone numbers listed for each region, or you can use the contact us tab to send an e-mail.

00:04:28 Speaker 2

We have a passionate workforce that is here for you and excited to hear from you.

00:04:34 Speaker 2

So please don't ever hesitate to reach out.

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Our website is [p2pnys.org](http://p2pnys.org).

00:04:42 Speaker 1

Thanks so much.

00:04:43 Speaker 1

Thanks for being with us, Heather.

00:04:44 Speaker 2

Thanks for having us, for having me.

00:04:47 Speaker 1

You've been listening to Independent Perspective, a public affairs presentation of Western New York independent living.

00:04:52 Speaker 1

Our guest today has been Heather Emory, new executive director of Parent to Parent of New York State, and I've been your host, Ernie Churchwell.