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NACDD NAMES MICHIGAN AND VERMONT DISABILITY ADVOCATES AS 2022 NATIONAL ADVOCACY AWARDEES

The National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) honors two outstanding self-advocates as national advocacy awardees. **Tameka Citchen-Spruce of Michigan is the winner of the Betty Williams Champions of Equal Opportunity Award, and Hasan Ko of Vermont is the winner of the April Dunn Start Your Journey Award.**

Both awardees were honored during the NACDD Annual Conference Wednesday July 20, 2022, in Washington DC. Awardees will join the 2022 Class of Self-Advocate Leadership Circle.

Donna Meltzer, Executive Director of NACDD, stated, "NACDD is pleased to honor these great advocates who do so much to create real change in their communities and across the country, helping every individual with intellectual or developmental disabilities to live their best life. I am confident that both recipients will carry on the memory of both extraordinary women and advocates."

The **Betty Williams, Champions of Equal Opportunity Award** recognizes a leader and self-advocate who has a long record of accomplishment of advocacy success. Named in honor of Betty Williams who received the Champion of Equal Opportunity Award in 2016, and passed in 2018, this award honors the extraordinary work that Betty had done in her career and her life.

Ms. Citchen-Spruce is a **beauty pageant winner**, a sought-after **speaker, writer, and film maker**. She holds a **Bachelor of Arts in Journalism** degree from Oakland University. Ms. Citchen-Spruce is a determined advocate who has turned her ideas into activism, by taking action on many topics important to Michiganders with disabilities. Tameka is a dedicated **daughter, sister, wife, mother and beloved friend**. She currently resides in **Detroit**, Michigan with her husband and two children. She maintains involvement with many advocacy events and uses her talents to make life better for all.

The **April Dunn Start Your Journey Award** recognizes an up-and-coming advocate who has been making their mark in the state and is now engaging more on the national scene. Ms. April Dunn was the NACDD 2019 Start Your Journey awardee. We sadly lost April in the Spring of 2020 to the COVID-19 pandemic, this award honors her memory and her work.

Hasan has a strong work ethic. He mentors youth preparing for their first job. His message to his mentees is, "I am telling you this because I want to share about a life of never giving up." Hasan represents GMSA on several national projects including Vermont's planning team for promoting supported decision-making and Vermont's community of practice for cultural and linguistic competence.

In addition to awarding these two outstanding self-advocates, NACDD also had the honor of presenting Champions of Equal Opportunity: National Policymaker awards to Senator Roy Blunt from Missouri and Congressman James Langevin of Rhode Island for their decades of advocacy both prior to joining Congress and during their tenures with the Senate and House respectively.



NACDD thanks Senator Blunt for his years of support as Chair and Ranking Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee where he continued the important funding of the DD Councils and even was able to increase this necessary funding in the past few years. NACDD wishes him luck on his retirement from the Senate.

NACDD thanks Congressman Langevin for his tireless advocacy for the well-being of people with disabilities. In addition, we applaud the Congressman's work as the first Co-Chair of the House Bi-Partisan Disability Caucus which exists to educate members of Congress and their staff on the issues affecting Americans with disabilities. NACDD was excited to have Congressman Langevin be in-person to receive his award and receive many well-wishes from Rhode Islanders and others throughout the country.

About NACDD: The National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) is the national association for the 56 Councils on Developmental Disabilities (DD Councils) across the United States and its territories. The DD Councils receive federal funding to support programs that promote self-determination, integration, and inclusion for all people in the United States with developmental disabilities. Learn more about NACDD: <https://www.nacdd.org/>