



**PRESS RELEASE: NACDD NAMES ALASKA AND NEBRASKA DISABILITY ADVOCATES
AS 2020 NATIONAL ADVOCACY AWARDEES**

The National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) honors two outstanding self-advocates as national advocacy awardees. **Heidi Lieb-Williams of Alaska is the winner of the Betty Williams Champions of Equal Opportunity Award, and Jessica Barrett of Nebraska is the winner of the April Dunn Start Your Journey Award.**

Both awardees will be honored during the NACDD Annual Conference online kickoff Thursday August 6, 2020 at 2pm ET via Zoom. Awardees will join the 2020 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.

Heidi Lieb-Williams is currently the Vice Chair of the Alaska’s Governor’s Council for Disabilities and Special Education and also serves as the Chair of the Autism Ad Hoc Committee. She has been a lifelong advocate for individuals with disabilities, especially working to empower other self-advocates with Autism. Heidi is an artist who owns her own business, she is also an author and was crowned Alaska State Fair Duchess. In addition to being a longstanding advocate and mentor in her community, after being crowned Alaska State Fair Duchess, Heidi worked with State Fair officials to design an entire day dedicated to individuals with disabilities and their families at the state fair.

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.

Jessica Barret is a promising young self-advocate in the Nebraska disability community. When she was in elementary school, Jessica was diagnosed with ADHD and Organic Brain Disorder. Through her self-advocacy, Jessica joined leadership roles on both the Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities and People First of Nebraska’s State Board. People First of Nebraska (PFN) is Nebraska’s only state organization run by and for people with disabilities. When COVID-19 hit Nebraska and the legislature adjourned early, Jessica was able to pivot her advocacy work to provide information to people with disabilities about what the coronavirus was and how to stay healthy.

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/>