

Welcome from Our President



Welcome to our website! We hope to inspire you to join PennTASH and advocate for people with disabilities.

As a longtime self-advocate, and the first with a cognitive disability to be elected president of a TASH chapter, I have witnessed firsthand how far our nation has come in establishing rights for people with disabilities.

But wrongs still exist. Millions of children and adults are still living in institutions, still suffering from abuse, neglect and aversive practices, and still being denied their rightful place in our communities. We must end this.

When the foster care system failed me as a child, I was placed in an institution for seven years and in another for three more, robbing me of ten years of my childhood. It was like jail. School gave little refuge, keeping us special ed kids isolated from the "other" kids. Had there not been a group of courageous parents and advocates who inspired a group of remarkable attorneys, judges and legislators to fight against a horrible place called Pennhurst, I would have remained imprisoned. Judge Raymond P. Broderick's court order to close Pennhurst, where I was destined to be transferred, allowed me to move to the community. There, at age twenty-one, I began a journey toward the freedom and contentment I had never known.

No matter what their stories may be, ALL children with disabilities should be welcome and fully included in our neighborhoods and schools. ALL adults with disabilities should be fully included and respected as citizens of our communities. It's time to put our energy into high gear and make this happen. TASH's mission is our best roadmap!

Enjoy our website – and join [PennTASH!](#)

Jean

Jean M. Searle
President
PennTASH

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