

Welcome from Our President



Welcome to our website! We hope to inspire you to join TASH and help people with disabilities. As a self-advocate, and the first with a cognitive disability to be elected president of a TASH chapter, I have seen firsthand how our nation has come a long way in establishing rights for people with disabilities. But wrongs still exist. Millions of children and adults still live in institutions, still suffer from abuse, neglect and aversive practices, and are still denied rightful integration in our communities. We must end this. In TASH's vision and mission there is no compromise in these issues. This is why I respect TASH.

When the foster care system failed me as a child, I was put in an institution for seven years and another for three more, robbing me of ten years of my childhood. It was like jail. Every day was frightening, and school gave me little relief. I felt frustrated, isolated in Special Ed, because I wanted to be with the "other kids" and learn what they were learning. Had it not been for the courageous group of parents and advocates who inspired a remarkable group of attorneys, judges and legislators to fight against a horrible place called Pennhurst, I would have remained imprisoned, and only because I was "disabled." But because of Judge Raymond P. Broderick's court order closing Pennhurst, I was finally able to leave Stillmeadow and move into the community. Finally, at age twenty-one, I began a long journey toward freedom and feelings of contentment that I had never known.

It's time to fully include ALL children with disabilities in our neighborhoods and schools. It's time for ALL adults with disabilities to be respected and fully included citizens of our communities. It's time to put our energies into higher gear and fix this!

Enjoy our website. We hope to introduce new sections, so let us know what you think.

Please join us – and join [PennTASH!](#)

Jean

Jean M. Searle
President
PennTASH

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