

From Wayne Sailor, TASH Past President:

Fellow TASH members, welcome to the 50th annual conference of this amazing guild. Fifty years ago, Lou Brown, Norris Haring, Ed Sontag and I corralled a group of fifteen committed researchers and family members and their advocates at the annual conference of what was then called the American Association for Mental Deficiency (AAMD) to address the question whether or not to create a new organization addressed to helping meet the needs of persons requiring extra supports and services to be able to have a reasonable quality of life. This came on the heels of a failed request to CEC to create a new division addressed to the needs of this population which was then described as the Severely and Profoundly Handicapped. After much discussion, the vote was majority yes, and the organization now called TASH, was born. It's stated mission was to create a working partnership of parents and researchers dedicated to ending the forced segregation of our students in education, and our adults in institutions and other service settings. Suffice it to say there would likely be little or no inclusion without the tireless policy efforts of TASH parents and researchers.

Today, TASH and you, members, is needed more than ever. Creeping fascism at the federal government level and its seemingly complete disregard for the needs of people who require supports and services, will make your efforts more difficult but of exceptional importance.

I couldn't be prouder of TASH and all it has accomplished over the past five decades. I only wish I could be there with you to begin to chart a new course through these stormy seas. But I have grown old, and travel has become challenging. I look forward to what you and your colleagues accomplish, and I wish you the best at this fiftieth annual conference!

Wayne Sailor
Past President