











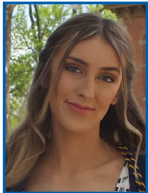
This edition of Voices of Excellence focuses on disabilities in the workplace. The first article provides statistics on Americans with disabilities in the workplace and a brief background on the Americans With Disabilities Act. The second article dives deeper into one specific disability—sickle cell disease—and provides facts about the disease and how it impacts the individuals who have it.

**QUOTE OF THE QUARTER**  
“Just because a man lacks the use of his eyes doesn’t mean he lacks vision.”  
— Stevie Wonder

### 2024 DIVERSITY PARTNER COMMITTEE MEMBERS

 <b>Sharon Brown, Chair</b> New York City	 <b>Jerry Mackey, Emeritus Member</b> Rochester
 <b>Zach Forward</b> Syracuse	 <b>Penny Mason</b> Major Markets
 <b>Bob Heary</b> Buffalo	 <b>Danielle Mettler-LaFeir, at Large</b> Rochester
 <b>Naresh Kannan</b> Albany	 <b>Joe Porcello</b> Syracuse
 <b>Jen Leonard, Pro Bono at Large</b> Buffalo	 <b>Paul Sanders</b> Rochester

## Americans With Disabilities in the Workplace



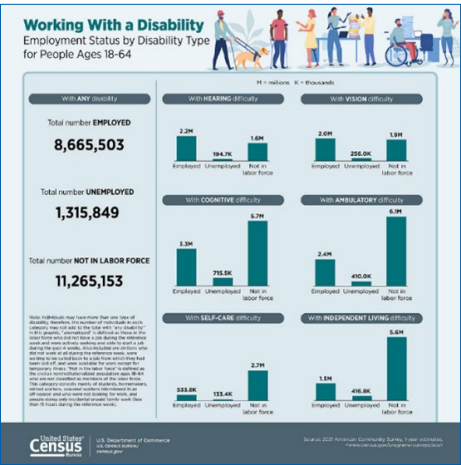
**Haley Hagadorn, Administrative Process Specialist**

The United States Census Bureau reports that an estimated 13.6 percent of the American population has a disability. Further, almost 7 percent of America’s workforce has a disability, totaling an

estimated 10,248,418 people. Each person with a disability faces a unique set of challenges in their lifetime, as disabilities present in a variety of ways across a broad range of people. For example, someone with dyslexia likely requires much different accommodations than someone with cerebral palsy. Fortunately, our society has forged innovative tools and created new accommodations to bring

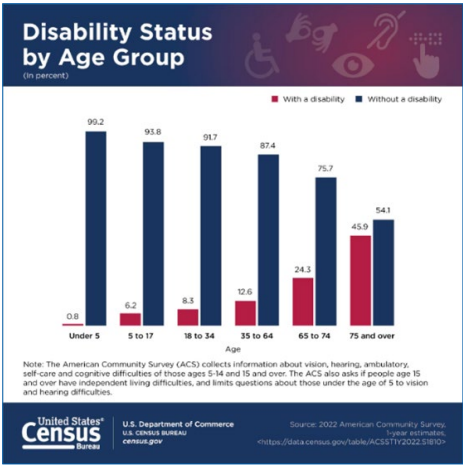
about a more accessible and inclusive world to ensure that people with disabilities are provided equitable opportunities.

According to the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), “A person with a disability is someone who has a physical or mental



impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a history or record of such an impairment

(such as cancer that is in remission), or is perceived by others as having such an impairment (such as a person who has scars from a severe burn).” Disabilities extend across a complex spectrum of conditions, from the physical to the psychological and visible to invisible. While some disabilities are immediately apparent, such as someone requiring a wheelchair, others may be unseen, such as someone with a learning disability. Based on the authority of the ADA, employers are required to provide reasonable



accommodations to their employees with disabilities, ensuring that their potential can be maximized and their contributions can be celebrated.

The ADA also protects people with disabilities from discrimination not just in their professional life but also in other

aspects of life. Through its five different titles, the ADA sets protections for people with disabilities in employment, state and local government services, public transit, public businesses, telecommunications, and more. Thanks to these protections, some of our greatest minds, such as Steven Hawking, Frida Kahlo, and Stevie Wonder, have been able to thrive in their fields despite the adversity they faced.

For more information about the ADA and guidelines on various disability and accessibility topics, visit the [ADA website](#). For specific demographic data about working Americans with disabilities, the [United States Census Bureau’s website](#) is an excellent source of up-to-date information.

Sources:

- “Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).” *Employer Assistance and Resource Network in Disability Inclusion*, [askearn.org/page/americans-with-disabilities-act-of-1990-ada](https://askearn.org/page/americans-with-disabilities-act-of-1990-ada). Accessed 18 Dec. 2024.
- “Employment Status by Disability Status and Type.” *United States Census Bureau*, [data.census.gov/tables/ACSDT1Y2023.B18120?q=disability](https://data.census.gov/tables/ACSDT1Y2023.B18120?q=disability). Accessed 18 Dec. 2024.
- “Introduction to the Americans with Disabilities Act.” *ADA.Gov*, U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, 16 Dec. 2024, [www.ada.gov/topics/intro-to-ada/](https://www.ada.gov/topics/intro-to-ada/).
- “What Is the Definition of Disability under the ADA?” *ADA National Network*, [adata.org/faq/what-definition-disability-under-ada](https://adata.org/faq/what-definition-disability-under-ada), Accessed 18 Dec. 2024.

## DEI Lunch 'n' Learn Recap: Disabilities in the Workplace, With Miriam Moore



**Zach Forward,**  
Syracuse Office Co-Diversity Partner

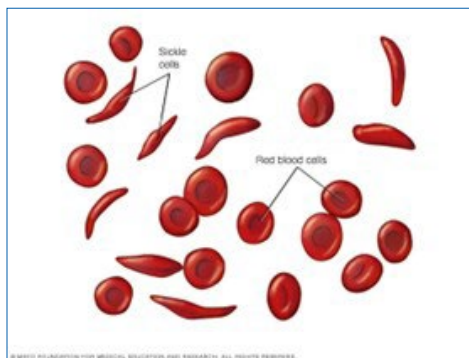
Barclay Damon's Syracuse office Diversity Leadership Team hosted a lunch 'n' learn featuring speaker Miriam Moore, a diversity, equity, and inclusion strategist who currently serves as the first chief

diversity officer for the Town of Brighton, New York. Miriam spoke about disabilities in the workplace and shared her experience living with sickle cell anemia. This article provides a brief overview of sickle cell anemia and expands upon some of the information Miriam shared.

Sickle cell disease is a group of hemoglobin blood disorders. The most common of these is sickle cell anemia, which affects the shape of red blood cells the body produces. Red blood cells are responsible for carrying oxygen to all parts of the body. A typical red blood cell is usually round and flexible, as depicted in the visual below. In sickle cell anemia, some of the red blood cells are shaped like crescent moons or sickles, hence the name. Sickle cells are rigid and sticky and cause blood

to flow more slowly. They may even result in blockages.

The sickle cell gene is a recessive gene trait, meaning that in order for a child to be born with sickle cell anemia, both parents



must carry the sickle cell gene and both copies must be passed to the child. About 100,000 people in the United States have sickle cell disease. Of these, more than 90 percent are non-Hispanic Black or African American, and an estimated 3 to 9 percent are Hispanic or Latino.

Sickle cell disease affects millions of people throughout the world and is particularly common in sub-Saharan Africa, Spanish-speaking regions in the Western Hemisphere, Saudi Arabia, India, and certain Mediterranean countries.

Symptoms of sickle cell anemia usually appear around six months of age and can vary from person to person. Some of the more common symptoms include:

- Anemia. Given the name, this one should come as no surprise. A typical red blood cell lives for about 120 days. Sickle cells break apart easier and usually live for about 10 to 20 days. This results in a lack of red blood cells, known as anemia, which causes fatigue because the body is struggling to get enough oxygen.
- Spurts of pain. Given the shape of the red blood cells, they are more likely to block blood flow (as opposed to normal shaped blood cells), which can result in episodes of pain.
- Other potential symptoms, just to name a few, include swelling of the hands and feet, frequent infections, and vision problems.

These symptoms can cause individuals with sickle cell to experience a host of complications. On average, the estimated life expectancy of those with sickle cell disease in the United States is 20 years shorter than the average life span.

Currently, the only cure for sickle cell disease is a bone marrow transplant. However, this is a major surgery that involves significant risks. Researchers are actively working on developing new treatments that will hopefully provide more accessible and affordable options.

Sources:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/sickle-cell-anemia/symptoms-causes/syc-20355876>

[https://www.cdc.gov/sickle-cell/data/index.html#:~:text=Sickle%20cell%20disease%20\(SCD\)%20affects,shorter%20than%20the%20average%20expected](https://www.cdc.gov/sickle-cell/data/index.html#:~:text=Sickle%20cell%20disease%20(SCD)%20affects,shorter%20than%20the%20average%20expected)

## Pro Bono Corner

### Firm Pro Bono Achievements

[Dena DeFazio](#), [Naresh Kannan](#), [George Pond](#), [Tessa Hilt](#), [Sehee Kim](#), and [J. R. Payne](#) participated in a transgender name change clinic held by the Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York and Empire Justice Center in Troy, New York. The team assisted with filling out petitions and proposed orders and then met with clients to answer questions and run through the name-change process. They also had the chance to assist walk-in clients. The attorneys offered to file the paperwork for all clients to help these individuals navigate what can be a very complex process. Overall, Barclay Damon was able to assist eight individuals with changing their names and sex designations through the clinic.

[Brian Donnell](#) drafted a template agreement for not-for-profit pro bono client the Connecticut Radio Information System, Inc. (CRIS) that allows for compensation by third parties that contract with CRIS for services. CRIS recently reached out, unsolicited, to let Brian know that the agreement is being put to good (and repeated) use to raise money to support its mission, which is to provide audio access to printed materials for individuals who are blind or unable to read due to other print disabilities, including visual, learning, physical, emotional, or intellectual disabilities.

## Office Updates

### FIRM UPDATES

#### Elevating Women

Barclay Damon was named one of *Rochester Business Journal's* 2024 Elevating Women Awards winners. Winners, who were selected based on their commitment to supporting and empowering women in New York, were recognized at the publication's 10th Annual Women's Leadership Summit and were profiled in a special issue of *Rochester Business Journal*. [Rachelle Nuhfer](#) accepted the award on the firm's behalf.



#### 7.5 Million Steps to Honor Mike Lucyszyn

The Barclay Damon Wellness Committee's annual Firm-Wide Step Challenge honored our late GLC colleague Mike Lucyszyn, who was with the firm for 14 years. Sadly, it was the first year that Mike did not participate. Mike's "unwavering enthusiasm and dedication to the event" was noted in the firm's wellness newsletter announcing the challenge. In his honor, the Wellness Committee made a donation to the Highland Park Conservancy, one of Mike's favorite organizations. At the conclusion of the challenge, participants logged over 7.5 million steps in a two-week span.

### ALBANY

#### Troy Pride Festival

[Dena DeFazio](#) and [Ron Oakes](#) attended the Troy Pride Festival, held at Riverfront Park in Troy, New York, and hosted by Collar City Pride, Inc. It was the first Pride festival ever held in the city. Through the firm's pro bono program, [Ray McCabe](#) and Dena, with help from [Jamie Dughi Hogenkamp](#) and Ron, assisted Collar City Pride with incorporation and the receipt of not-for-profit tax-exempt status. In addition to hosting the festival, Collar City Pride provides care, community, and training around substance-use services specific to the queer community. The organization's long-term goal is to open Rensselaer County's first inpatient substance use treatment center geared specifically toward transgender, gender nonconforming, and nonbinary individuals.



#### Wellness Update

The Albany Wellness Committee hosted its second spin class at Revolution in Latham, New York. Ten attorneys participated—including all three of the Albany office summer associates.



#### City & State New York Albany 40 Under 40

[Amanda Fitzgerald](#) was named a 2024 Albany 40 Under 40 honoree by *City & State*. According to the publication, "The Albany 40 Under 40 list recognizes individuals . . . who are on

their way to amassing accomplishments well beyond their age in New York State government, politics, advocacy, business, labor, and media."

#### Community Day With Rehabilitation Support Services

The Albany office participated in a volunteer day with Rehabilitation Support Services (RSS), which strives to enrich and empower the lives of individuals with psychiatric and substance abuse disorders. [Naresh Kannan](#), [Melissa Bennett](#), [Oksana Ludd](#), and [Amanda Miller](#) are shown in the photo along with a representative from RSS.



### BOSTON

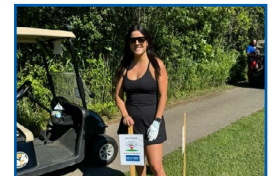
#### Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly Top Women of Law

[Gillian Woolf](#) has been named to *Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly's* 2024 class of Top Women of Law.

### BUFFALO

#### Sponsorship for Veterans

The firm sponsored a hole at the 716 Veterans Invitational golf tournament, which supports the Western New York chapters of HOPE (Helping Our Patriots Everywhere) and PGA REACH WNY Foundation. The mission of the event is to positively impact the lives of youth, military, and diverse populations by enabling access to the game of golf. Said [Briana Krawczyk](#), "My dad works for the Buffalo Department of Veterans Affairs and runs the tournament each year."



#### Celebrating Human-Centered Work

[Jen Leonardi](#) was honored by *City & State New York* in its Above & Beyond: Social Services issue. Read more about it [here](#).

#### Blue Crew for the Win

After a great season—and 30 years of anticipation—Buffalo's Blue Crew brought home the championship in league play, beating the team from Goldberg Segalla 9–8 in extra innings. [Bridget Daley Atkinson](#) said there was "pure jubilation, and cheers erupted from the enormous crowd. The party continued with commemorative photos and, in win or lose fashion, the festivities continued late into the night, reflecting the collective joy of a long-awaited championship! Special thanks to all our fans who came in support throughout the year! What a season for the Barclay Damon Blue Crew!!"



Continued on page 4

## Office Updates

### Woman of Influence

A previous issue of *Voices of Excellence* noted that [Rosemary Enright](#) was named to *Buffalo Business First's* Women of Influence 2024 list. Read more about her profile [here](#). Check out this photo from the event held to celebrate the honorees.



### Community Day at Tiff Nature Preserve

The Buffalo office held its annual Community Day at Tiff Nature Preserve. As part of the preserve's efforts to manage invasive species across its 63 acres, our volunteers assisted with tree and shrub planting. The afternoon's activities included an introduction to Tiff at the on-site education center.



## NEW YORK

### Mentoring Moment

[Janice Grubin](#) is one of the American Bankruptcy Institute members volunteering for the organization's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee 2024 Mentoring Program. The mentoring program connects active or recently graduated business and law students with ABI past presidents and members who provide guidance on career and professional development and discuss ethical issues, common malpractice risks, career goals, and more.

### Wachtler Veterans Memorial Fund Announced

The New York Bar Foundation announced the creation of the Wachtler Veterans Memorial Fund, an initiative spearheaded by [Lauren Wachtler](#) and former Chief Judge Sol Wachtler. "This fund is focused on providing civil legal services through our grant partners, helping veterans obtain the resources and benefits they have earned through their service to our country," said the foundation's press release.

### ABA Stonewall Award Leads to New Appointment

[Janice Grubin](#) has been appointed to the American Bar Association's Commission on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI). As a commissioner, Janice will be a member of one or more the commission's committees: Advocacy, Education and Training, Resources and Development, ABA Communications, Scholarship, and Fundraising. This appointment follows Janice receiving a coveted Stonewall Award from SOGI earlier this year.

### She's a Finalist!

As noted in a previous issue of *Voices of Excellence*, [Sharon Brown](#) was one of 11 finalists in the Diversity Initiative category of the *New York Law Journal* 2024 New York Legal Awards. "It was a huge honor for Sharon to be included in an incredibly prestigious list of finalists," said Connie Cahill.

## ROCHESTER

### Rochester Pride Parade

For the first time, members of Barclay Damon's Rochester and Syracuse offices participated in the Rochester Pride Parade. Attorneys, staff, and summer associates, together with friends and family, marched with the [Lawyers' Coalition for Racial and Social Justice](#) in support of the local LGBTQIA+ community. [Emma Becker](#) and [Hanz Carrillo](#) spearheaded the parade efforts. [Paul Sanders](#) marched with the Bring Them Home Now group just behind the Barclay Damon group. We hope to continue to support the LGBTQIA+ community by marching under our own banner in Pride 2025!



### Community Day at Homesteads for Hope

The Rochester office held its Community Day at Homesteads for Hope, a not-for-profit, 55-acre community farm near Spencerport, New York. Homesteads' mission is to maintain an inclusive community farm and to provide educational and work opportunities. Our volunteers took a tour of the facility, met some of the farm's apprentices, and headed out to the field to plant, harvest, and weed.



## SYRACUSE

### Vettes for Pets Sponsorship

Barclay Damon was a sponsor of the annual Vettes for Pets fundraiser. [Kevin Newman](#) and his family are active with both of the organizations involved: the beneficiary, Central New York SPCA, and the Syracuse Corvette Club, which organized the event. Kevin's wife, Donna, is the SPCA's volunteer coordinator and a dog trainer. They raised over \$5,000 for the SPCA.



### Run for It

[Tom Paul](#) and his wife, Jamie, ran in a race benefitting the Arc of Onondaga Foundation at Long Branch Park in Liverpool, New York. The event raised funds so individuals with developmental disabilities can lead purpose-driven, independent, and inclusive lives in the community.



### A Shining Moment for the VFW

[Darlene Baker](#), in her new role as the president of the Department of New York VFW Auxiliary, was in Niagara Falls, Ontario, to commemorate the visit of National VFW Auxiliary President Brenda Bryant. As part of her visit, President Bryant was invited to "light up the falls."

