

MICHELLE MIDDLEMISS

Michelle Middlemiss was diagnosed as being on the Autism Spectrum at the age of 30. She has spent the past ten years as a self-advocate for Autism. After entering into the Adult Autism Waiver in Pennsylvania I received my Associates degree as a Special Needs Teacher's Assistant. She volunteers at Spectrum and Sunrise Schools; working with students on the spectrum and found that she could help them in ways that only someone who "lives it every day" is capable. To achieve her goal for increased awareness of the disability rights of my autistic peers, she speaks about daily life challenges dealing with autism at conferences such as the "6th PA Training Conference in Lancaster, PA. As a presenter at the Everyday Lives Conference in Hershey, PA, where she explained how the Autism Waiver in Pa has had a positive impact on making her daily life better. She was the recipient of the 2017 Autistic Advocacy Award which is given to an autistic person who has demonstrated commitment to the mission of the disability rights movement in Western PA.

She continues to serve as a member of the ISAC Provider Oversight Committee and on the Information and Sharing Committee (ISAC) in Harrisburg, which creates a forum to exchange ideas and develop policies on key autism initiatives. Last year she was the recipient of a fellowship grant through SARTAC to develop my project, "My Safety, My Rights." She wanted to ensure that individuals with disabilities are treated with the respect they are entitled to. This involved educating the Police so they better understand how to recognize someone on the spectrum and ways to ensure their safety. Recently Michelle was happy to be asked to join the advocacy group for the Autism Society of PA to learn more about ways to advocate for autism and share her ideas.

