



KATY SANCHEZ - GOVERNOR HOCHUL CAN YOU HEAR US? WE MATTER!!!

BY: Keith S. Shikowitz, Editor in Chief/Investigative Reporter
Photos courtesy of Katy Sanchez



Katy Sanchez who is part of the NY Special Olympics and ARC of Rockland, came to prominence at the Rally in the Valley at RCC with her impassioned speech asking Governor Hochul, "Can you hear us? We matter!!!"

I was able to get an exclusive interview with her about herself and the agencies she is a part of. Tell me what, tell me what ARC of Rockland is and does.

"ARC of Rockland is an agency where they help you, where we have, group homes. I'm in a group home in the Pearl River house. We have excellent staff, managers and two amazing managers.

What does ARC do for Katy? It helps her to become more independent, deal with her learning and social emotional disabilities.

What activities do you have at the group home?

At the group home we do Special Olympics, recreational activities, like dances, once a month, do self-advocacy. I'm the self-advocacy president. I got reelected as the president again, president of self-advocacy of ARC of Rockland. There's bingo, recreational activities and other stuff too.

Apparently you travel because you just came back from London.



Katy and friends in London

https://youtu.be/WB_3otXV0s

You run the mile and the marathon. Do you do sprint races, like 100-yard dash and stuff?

"I do long, running long distance, like the 1500 for track and field. The sports I do in Special Olympics are soccer. Floorball, basketball, track and field. I'm an all-around athlete."

So, let's talk about you from when you were younger. When I was younger. She was first diagnosed with the issues that she's got since birth.

Do they know why you ended up; did they ever say what happened that you ended up with the disabilities?

"I was in special ed classes throughout my whole school years, through from preschool until 12th grade when I graduated high school.

I see that you're a very intelligent young lady just from the speech you gave at the, at the rally.

Did you face any, prejudice, any people picking on you?

"Yes, in high school, some 7th grade." So, you were fine up until 7th grade. Nobody picked on you. "Nobody picked on me."

What happened 7th grade through 12th grade? "I got picked on. I got bullied. I got put down because I was different." I'm proving them wrong."

She agreed that the best revenge is a good life.

I've got to tell you, just from the time I saw you and things I've heard about you from other people, you're doing very well.

"My goal for Special Olympics is to get to World games. I've done, plenty of USA games, and I'm just focusing on that goal."

What does she want to do with her life? Well, right now she works at Stop and Shop as a bagger. She is still trying to figure out what she wants to do.

Well, what are some things you like to do?

"I like to be with animals. I like sports, you know, things like that."

Would you consider working maybe in an animal shelter or something?

"I used to work at an animal hospital. I grew up in Virginia in the kennel, walking dogs. That's fun. Dogs are cute. Especially when they look at you like, hi there. I'm here. Come get me. Come pet me."



Do you feel a special bond with animals or that you don't feel with people.

"Animals."

"I have a cat at my mom's. I do have a special bond with dogs and cats. I love all, I love dogs, cats.

All right, so you might want to do animal stuff as an adult as a career.

Have you ever thought about maybe, working younger children that have similar problems as you? Maybe working at Jawonio or with the ARC or something.

"Never considered that."

This is all part of life and growing up. You see where you just get a feel for where you want to be.

"It might be something to try." She said.

With me, I went to school for communications, OK? I got it, came out of college. They weren't giving jobs in journalism unless you had 5 years' experience before you got a job, how do you get the experience of getting a job. I ended up going into teaching. I had a lot of things to consider. I had a family, so I got a job teaching. I spent 37 years teaching in New York City, Social Studies doing my journalism part time. Now I'm doing it full time, my own news agency.

She says she's still young and she is. She's only 38. What's her general outlook on life? She's a very upbeat, outgoing young lady. How does she feel about facing any people that put her down or try to hold her back or anything now?

"No, not facing it, no. When it happened I just like go home and cry but never cried in front of them. I'd tell my mom, my dad and my brother."

Your mom seems at, at the rally seemed very supportive of you. What's your relationship with your mom? Are you really, are you very close?

"We're getting close, yeah. She wants me to be me to be more independent and more advocate for myself."

She is doing just that, her speech at the Rally in the Valley showed her ability communicate and advocate for herself and others. There was another young lady at the podium with her who was one of the staff members at her group home.

Do you have an assigned advocate?

"No, I don't have an assigned advocate. There's a lot of staff in my house so, anybody, who needs help, is whoever happens to be there, you can go to. Yeah.

She spoke of her relationship with her brother and her trip to London.



https://youtu.be/Utsiz73R0_g

During the Rally in the Valley, Katie made an impassioned speech calling on Governor Hochul listen to the people with physical and intellectual disabilities and pass the 4% raise for the workers in the industry

<https://youtu.be/7w1Pe38pNss>