

# National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2023 Achievers Award Winners

## Kerry Devlin

Johns Hopkins University (School of Medicine)  
Senior Music Therapist



During her two years at Johns Hopkins, Kerry Devlin has been involved in several innovative disability advocacy initiatives. As someone with lived experience of disability, Devlin is frequently invited to speak on disability-related topics, including at Grand Rounds presentations and department-specific trainings, and she is asked to

participate in student-led disability dialogues focused on disability aesthetics and futurism.

Devlin has co-authored a forthcoming manuscript (Bowen & Devlin et al, under review) with physicians, bioethicists and medical students who are disabled, which is focused on dismantling ableism through innovative approaches to medical education. She presented on this topic at the April 2023 Health Humanities Consortium (Bowen, Devlin & Tolchin, 2023). In her role as co-chair of the disability curriculum advisory board at Johns Hopkins, Devlin has collaborated with medical students, faculty and staff who are disabled and allies to evaluate curricula and make recommendations to improve disability education for medical students at Johns Hopkins.

In 2023, Devlin was appointed chair of the Johns Hopkins Disability Advocacy and Inclusion Committee by the Johns Hopkins University provost. This collective of disabled and allied faculty, staff and students spanning many schools within Johns Hopkins have the shared mission of making

recommendations on strategies, policies and procedures to enhance the well-being of people throughout the Johns Hopkins Health System who are disabled. In this role, Devlin organizes and facilitates monthly meetings, community forums and networking opportunities with core campus partners (e.g., IT, facilities, SDS) to gather information and assess the state of disability advocacy and inclusion across all campuses.

In partnership with two faculty members who are disabled, Devlin co-created the Hopkins Faculty with Disabilities Group, which is a closed space for faculty and staff members across Johns Hopkins to process their lived experiences, seek peer support and engage in grassroots advocacy efforts as a collective. Through her work as senior music therapist at the Johns Hopkins Center for Music and Medicine, Devlin established multiple virtual support groups for adults living with movement disorders and/or neurologic diagnoses. Her efforts make it possible to create a space to cultivate disability pride, share lived experiences and connect through engagement in music.

Devlin's teaching and clinical practice demonstrate her commitment to embodying values of disability justice, including interdependence, sustainability and amplifying the voices of those most affected by systems of oppression. She openly acknowledges the privilege that she holds within the disability community as a person who is white and mostly invisibly disabled, and her presentations center around the work of scholars who are disabled and people who live at the intersections of many forms of oppression (e.g., racial and gendered oppression, anti-fatness, etc.). When she presents, she communicates information in ways that hold space for growth processes while also challenging attendees to engage in critical reflexivity and unpacking of their own biases in a respectful, collegial manner.

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## **Kris Maxfield**

*Johns Hopkins Health System  
Programmer Analyst*



Kris Maxfield has been consistently active with the Employees with Disabilities Employee Resource Group since its relaunch, and has gone above and beyond to ensure its success. Maxfield helped build the ERG's SharePoint site, networks with staff members and has taken the lead on the group's most ambitious project. Maxfield understands

the need for the Johns Hopkins community to care for its employees who are disabled so we can better care for our community as a whole.

Attuned to the needs of the neurodiverse community, Maxfield is exceptional at communicating about what we can do to support our neurodiverse colleagues and patients. Maxfield is leading a pilot project that would create sensory oases in each campus or building, providing a dedicated calming environment when someone feels overstimulated.

As co-chair of the ERG subcommittee dedicated to neurodiversity, Maxfield facilitates inclusion of this minority population, which can easily be unintentionally overlooked. Maxfield helps ensure that when plans are made or discussed, it is with all of our ERG members' needs in mind.

