

2013 Henry Viscardi Achievement Award Recipient



Yoav Kraiem

Chairman, National Council for Community Rehabilitation, Mental Health

Yoav Kraiem is chairman of the National Council for Community Rehabilitation, Mental Health, in Israel. For more than half of his life (20 years), Kraiem has aggressively advocated for the rights of Israeli citizens with disabilities. Born with Cerebral Palsy, he led two movements to pass the Law for Inclusion and the Law for Equality – Israel’s version of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). He also helped lead, and was the spokesman for, a two-month demonstration outside the Israeli Ministry of Finance. The action was seen as a pivotal moment in raising awareness and advancing meaningful change in the way individuals with disabilities are perceived and treated in Israel.

“I am honored and excited to receive the Henry Viscardi Achievement Award, which is important for the recognition it provides for the acceptance of all individuals, and of the belief in the ability of people with disabilities to be a part of the human mosaic as contributing members of society,” Kraiem said. “We are approaching the Jewish holiday of Passover, the central story of which reflects the delivery of the people of Israel from slavery and their long and difficult journey towards freedom. At this time we are obligated to remember that we were once slaves and thus, have a special responsibility to ensure that individuals and groups suppressed by societal systems be freed. My colleagues and I, from various organizations of and for people with disability, devote our lives to this goal.”