Bazelon Center's Jennifer Mathis Receives 2016 Frances Olivero Advocacy Award Presented by NYAPRS

August 30, 2016 – Bazelon Center Director of Policy and Legal Advocacy Jennifer Mathis is the recipient of the 2016 Frances Olivero Advocacy Award presented by the New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services (NYAPRS). The NYAPRS presents the award annually to "an individual who has demonstrated inspiring community leadership and unique contributions in advocacy on behalf of people with psychiatric disabilities."

Ms. Mathis, who also serves as Bazelon's deputy legal director, was cited for her work on federal policy and legislation. "Jennifer is one of the nation's most fervent, vigilant and effective national advocates for American with psychiatric disabilities," the NYAPRS Board of Directors said in announcing the award. "She has helped lead the fight for recovery, rights, and full community inclusion, specializing in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 and Medicaid rights protections. Most recently, her great leadership helped to make numerous improvements in pending federal mental health legislation."

In addition to her work on these issues at the Bazelon Center, Jennifer Mathis also served on the team of disability community negotiators who worked with the business community to craft what became the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. She left the Bazelon Center for one year to serve as special assistant to the federal Equal Employment Opportunity commissioner. In that role, she helped draft regulations implementing the ADAAA.

Before joining the Bazelon Center, Ms. Mathis conducted litigation involving ADA, Section 504, the Fair Housing Act, and Title XIX claims with the Disabilities Law Project in Pittsburgh. She also practiced with a private law firm where she pursued litigation on a broad range of civil rights issues. She holds an A.B. from Harvard University, an M.A. from New York University, and a J. D. from Georgetown University Law Center.

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