

FLIC VOICE

Official Newsletter of the Finger Lakes Independence Center

Fall 2016

What's Inside?



- Page 1 – Benefits Advisement**
- Page 2 – Board News; Fall Events**
- Page 3 – Systems Advocacy Update; Disability Etiquette**
- Page 4 – Upcoming Events**
- Page 5 – Disability and Diversity**
- Page 6 – Employment and Ticket to Work**
- Page 7 – CDPAP FAQ; New Web Resources**
- Page 8 – ADA Anniversary Celebration**

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FLIC can now offer a continuum of Benefits Advisement Services

“People with disabilities face many barriers to economic success — low expectations, discrimination and a complex public support system that often limits employment opportunities and upward financial mobility. Americans with disabilities are also twice as likely to live in poverty when compared to their typically-abled peers.” (Disable Poverty Campaign, 2016). In an effort to reverse these trends in our community, FLIC has expanded their benefits advisement services.

FLIC staff member, Rachel Ferrara, MSW, recently completed the Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability’s Benefits and Work Incentives Practitioner credentialing process. With a Certified Benefits and Work Incentives Practitioner on staff, FLIC can now offer a continuum of Benefits Advisement Services, including Benefits and Work Incentive Advisement to individuals receiving employment services through the American Dream Employment Network (see p. 6 for more information).

Benefits Education is a useful service for individuals applying for benefits, individuals who need

assistance understanding/ managing their current benefits, Social Security Beneficiaries interested in employment, and students transitioning out of high school.

Benefits Advisement Services include:

- Information about the SSA’s Ticket to Work Program (see p. 6 for information about Ticket to Work)
- Assistance applying for benefits
- Information and analysis about benefits and entitlements already received
- Accurate information about the impact of employment on all benefits
- Assistance ensuring proper reporting of income and work activity
- Referrals to appropriate community organizations
- Assistance completing necessary forms and documentation
- Proper planning for the transition from benefits to financial independence
- Assistance utilizing available work incentives

Rachel is ready to use her knowledge and expertise to help support you in the management in of your Social Security Disability Benefits.

FLIC Welcomes Bob Meek to their Board

Robert (Bob) Meek, the most recent addition to the Finger Lakes Independence Center (FLIC) board, has been a disability rights lawyer for nearly 30 years, 25 of those years, he was the Managing Attorney of the Philadelphia office of Disability Rights Pennsylvania, the federally-funded protection and advocacy system for people with disabilities in Pennsylvania, retiring in late fall 2015. Prior to that he was a legal services lawyer, representing low income people in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, focused on securing disability benefits and Medicare/Medicaid for people with disabilities.

He is a 1978 graduate of Villanova University School of Law. He also received a Master's Degree in International Relations from the University of Pennsylvania in 1975 and a Bachelor of Science degree from the United States Naval Academy in 1971.

He currently is a volunteer attorney with Disability Rights New York, the New York protection and advocacy system for people with disabilities. Aside from serving on the board of FLIC, he also sits on the New York State Independent Living Council and the board of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, an environmental organization.

Bob lives with his wife, who has a private practice in psychology in Ithaca, on the west shore of Cayuga Lake just outside the Village of Interlaken where they enjoy kayaking, canoeing, and all things related to the lake.

Our Mission:

To empower all people with disabilities while creating an inclusive society through the elimination of social and architectural barriers



FLIC's Fall Calendar is Filling Up

The fall season is shaping up to be a busy one here at the Finger Lakes Independence Center (FLIC). All of our events and workshops are open to anyone with an interest in the topic.

"Power Up", a series of workshops about assistive and adaptive devices will start September 23rd. Come to one, or all of these five informative workshops.

On September 19th we will be holding a Disaster Planning Forum for individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing as part of an ongoing collaboration with Tompkins Emergency Services, aimed at meeting the needs of people with disabilities in planning for disaster services.

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). FLIC will be sponsoring the screening of two films - Bottom Dollars and CinemAbility. In 2016, nearly 250,000 people are legally paid less than the minimum wage, on average, less than \$2 an hour. "Bottom Dollars" is a documentary that exposes the exploitation of people with disabilities through personal stories and expert interviews.

"CinemAbility" is a dynamic documentary that takes a detailed look at the evolution of "disability" in entertainment. Watch for upcoming releases with dates, time and place for these powerful films.

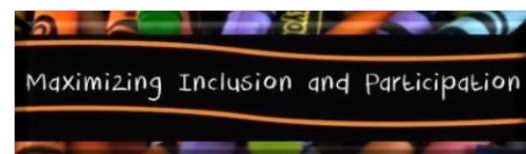
On October 19th FLIC will have an American Dream Employment Network Beneficiary Outreach event. See our newsletter article for more information.

The Brain Injury Association of America will be showing a webinar at FLIC on October 20th. Did you know that an estimated 1.7 million people sustain a TBI annually? (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) Anyone with brain injury, family members, or with an interest is welcome to attend.

The 23rd Annual Depression Conference is on November 30th, and this year's focus will be on trauma-informed care.

I hope you will join us for one of these events this fall where we hope to teach, inform, inspire and provoke thought about disability in American society.

■ Jan Lynch, Executive Director



Change happens because people make it happen: Systems Advocacy Updates



FLIC's advocacy team supports the disability policy agenda of the New York Association on Independent Living. Thanks to advocates throughout the state:

The New York State legislature created a program to allow trained advanced home health aides to perform certain tasks under the supervision of a registered nurse. Tasks include: giving medication, emptying urine bags, basic ventilator care including suctioning, and giving insulin. Once regulations are in place, this change will give people who need home health

care more options in hiring people to provide them that care.

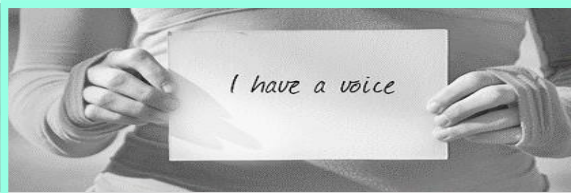
The legislature created a tax credit for purchase, construction or retrofitting of a principal residence if it is done to improve accessibility for the home owners. We told the governor that he should sign this bill because a tax credit of this type could be an important tool to increasing the availability of accessible housing, and among other things, would allow people to 'age-in-place', because as homeowners age their need for accessible housing increases as their mobility and other abilities probably will decrease over time.

The legislature rejected a physician assisted suicide proposal. FLIC is concerned about such proposals because there are conflicting opinions and

complicated issues involved.

A bill to allow companies such as Uber, to operate in outside of New York City did not pass. These companies don't provide accessible services effectively. Upstate New York isn't well served by taxis; we don't need another inaccessible transportation service.

Change happens because people make it happen. Get involved in FLIC's advocacy work. Contact, Larry Roberts, Director of Community Advocacy to find out how to get involved.



Are you interested in improving the quality of life for all people with disabilities and their families? Removing barriers of systemic segregation? Promoting full community integration and equal participation in every aspect of society?

Join the systems advocacy team at FLIC!

The Finger Lakes Independence Center is always looking for new members of its System Advocacy team. Volunteer members respond to "action alerts" that describe an issue and the action to be taken.

The issues we work on are: Health Care, Employment, Housing, Education, Civil Rights, Voting, Transportation, and Funding for Independent Living.

To volunteer contact
Larry Roberts
larry@fliconline.org,
Jeff Boles
jeff@fliconline.org or
call 607-272-2433.



Disability Etiquette Tip #2: Person-First Language

My disability is a part of me and doesn't define the person that I am. I am a person, son, a coach, and an uncle. When we talk about people with disabilities or interact with people with disabilities it's important to be respectful, knowledgeable, use person first language, and proper etiquette.

"Jeff has cerebral palsy" versus "victim of cerebral palsy" puts me as a person first and shows you are respectful and knowledgeable about people with disabilities. Person first language and disability etiquette is a little thing that makes a big difference. – Jeff Boles, Advocacy Specialist

Upcoming Events at the Finger Lakes Independence Center!

Powering Up Your Potential: Adaptive Devices and Assistive Tech

Every Other Friday from
3-4:30 PM at FLIC

We invite individuals with or without disabilities, family members, caregivers, and service providers to join us for our exciting five part workshop series.



September 23rd

Part I: "Freedom Machines"

October 7th

Part II: Durable Medical
Equipment

October 21st

Part III: Home Modification

November 4th

Part IV: No & Low Tech Devices

November 18th

Part V: High Tech Devices

To Register: Contact Rachel at
(607) 272-2433 or
Rachel@Fliconline.org

American Dream Employment Network Beneficiary Outreach Event

Wednesday, Oct. 19th from
2-4 PM at FLIC

Are you a Social Security disability beneficiary and want to know how working will affect your benefits? Are you afraid of losing benefits or medical coverage if you return to work?

Join us for our Beneficiary Outreach Event and learn about these important topics that will help you return to fulfilling work!

ADEN's live webinar will be streamed at FLIC. There will be time for questions during the webinar and at the end of the event. Finger Lakes Independence Center's ADEN Ticket Specialist, Rachel Ferrara, will be hosting and available to talk after the event, as well.

To Register: Contact Rachel at
(607) 272-2433 or
Rachel@Fliconline.org



23rd Annual Depression Conference: A Focus on Trauma

Wednesday, November 30, 2016
from 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM

The conference is being held at
the Tompkins County Public
Library
101 E. Green St.
Ithaca, NY 14850



For information contact: Larry
Roberts, 272-2433;
larry@fliconline.org

Watch for more details!

Are you, or someone you know an older adult that needs some assistance at home?

Call The Registry

The Registry is a listing of qualified individuals who can help with:

- Grocery Shopping
- Cooking
- Dr. Appointments
- Companionship
- Personal Care
- Housekeeping

WHO YOU HIRE IS YOUR CHOICE!

The Registry program is made possible through funding from the Tompkins County Office for the Aging.
Contact Cheryl Baker 272-2433 - The Registry



Did you know?

The 2015-16 Comprehensive Annenberg Report on Diversity in Entertainment only focused on the underrepresentation of females and people of color.

People with disabilities were excluded from this “comprehensive” report on diversity.



Diversity – What about Disability?

When you hear about diversity, it often means including people of all races, ethnic backgrounds, or gender identities, because there is still discrimination or lack of opportunity for certain groups.

However, when was the last time you heard someone talk about people with disabilities as an aspect of diversity? People with disabilities have faced discrimination, and worse, for as long as other groups.

People with disabilities want the same civil rights as others - equal access to facilities and services, the same education and job opportunities, and to be accepted and included in society.

What does this mean, practically speaking?

First, it means changing how you think about people with disabilities, such as “person first language” – an individual is a person first, not their disability. They have the same thoughts, feelings, interests, and goals as anyone else.

Second, it means action.

There are already federal laws that give people with disabilities equal access and inclusion, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (covering employment, accessibility, transportation, and communication), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), (covering K-12 grade education), and the Fair Housing Act. Many state laws also add to these rights.

Does that mean everything is OK? No. Just like other civil rights, having laws does not mean everyone follows them. In addition, these laws do not cover all issues.

Currently, disability advocates are focusing on social inclusion for people with disabilities, like housing and services within the community, not institutions.

FLIC’s role is to assure there is a disability perspective in local policy making - in the City, County, school district, services, healthcare, and emergency preparedness.

Specifically, through The Tompkins County Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee, that the County’s commitment to reasonable accommodation for its employees

is clear and visible, and the process for requesting accommodation is easy to find and to understand.

Also, through The Diversity Consortium of Tompkins County, to assist organizations and the community with diversity in hiring, programming, understanding, and removing barriers that people face. The Consortium identifies needs and holds workshops, and holds the Diversity Roundtable each year, an all-day conference on diversity topics.



What does this mean for you? If you work for an agency, business, or government organization, be disability-friendly for your staff, clients, customers, and students.

Use people first language and disability etiquette. Provide access and accommodation. Promote these concepts to others in your field.

For more information, FLIC staff can provide disability awareness training, advise you on best practices, and direct you to appropriate resources.

FLIC is Expanding the Definition of Wellness!

Typically, the term wellness conjures up images of eating healthy, physical activity, and coping effectively. However, FLIC recognizes that true wellness occurs when a person is satisfied in all the domains of life. For many, this includes finding fulfilling employment. Work is more than a pay check; it helps many find purpose, provides opportunities to socialize, and helps individuals develop their passions and strengths.

This September, FLIC is celebrating one year as an American Dream Employment Network (ADEN) member. ADEN is the first national administrative Employment Network providing face-to-face services to individuals receiving Social Security Administration (SSA) disability benefits under the Ticket to Work program (see right to find out more about Ticket to Work).

“Due to myths and rumors surrounding work while on SSA benefits, the thought of entering the workforce is scary for many beneficiaries. Fortunately, when we can educate them about Ticket to Work and supports available through the American Dream Employment Network, beneficiaries can feel secure pursuing their employment goals,” says ADEN Ticket Specialist, Rachel Ferrara.

Beneficiaries assigning their Ticket to FLIC are receiving assistance to secure employment that can help them reach their vocational and financial goals. Assigning their Ticket to ADEN is voluntary and there is no fee to assign their Ticket with ADEN. There is no risk involved, only benefits in assigning. As an ADEN Member, we can explore with them how the Ticket program can further expand the resources available to them to support them in their current job, assist them in finding a job, and help them advance in their career. We can also assist them in understanding how best to leverage their current financial situation, and future planning for a more secure financial future.

Services available through the American Dream Employment Network include: (1) Career counseling (2) Job search supports (3) Social Security Work Incentives Advisement (4) Financial Wellness Resources (5) Long-term Supports. Contact Rachel Ferrara for more information.



For individuals receiving SSA disability benefits, the return to gainful employment can be complicated and challenging.

The SSA recognizes the challenges that beneficiaries face in returning to work and, as a result, are able to offer supports through the Ticket to Work program to individuals who have the goal of achieving financial self-sufficiency.

If you are receiving SSI or Social Security Disability Insurance benefits and are between the ages of 18-64 and looking for employment, Ticket to Work can be one of many work incentives to help get individuals with disabilities into the workforce.

October is Disability Employment Awareness Month!

“Reflecting the important role disability plays in workforce diversity, this year’s National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) theme is “#InclusionWorks.” Observed each October, NDEAM celebrates the contributions of workers with disabilities and educates about the value of a diverse workforce inclusive of their skills and talents.” – Office of Disability Employment Policy

Check in with FLIC to see what events and activities we have planned for NDEAM!



New Web Resources

A New and Innovative Addition to Information & Referral Services

Here at FLIC we're always looking for new ways to reach people and provide meaningful information and resources. One way we've been doing that this summer has been through our Pinterest.

As a center for independent living, one of our core services is Information and Referral. Getting familiar with Pinterest has really allowed us to explore another means of providing this service. Check it out and see what tips and tricks we're currently loving!

Search for The Finger Lakes Independence Center on Pinterest and you can find our page!



Gadabout Announces New Website

Gadabout Transportation is delighted to announce their new Website: www.gadaboutbus.org.

Site visitors can learn about service, request transportation, and make donations. Send them an e-mail, they would love to know what you think.

Frequently Asked Questions about CDPAP

What is CDPAP? CDPAP (Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program) is a Medicaid program with Tompkins County Dept. of Social Services, Tioga County Dept. of Social Services, Fidelis NY, VNA Homecare, iCircle Care or Total Care. A Nurse from one of these agencies does an assessment to determine eligibility and hours.

Who is eligible? Must have: Medicaid, be eligible for personal care or long-term health care services, have doctor orders, be in a safe environment, be "medically stable" and be self-directing or have a designated representative.

How do I sign up? Contact your Medicaid Managed Long Term Care (MMLTC) provider and ask to get an aide through Finger Lakes Independence Center (FLIC). Fill out and sign a Consumer Application and Agreement.

What am I responsible for? You, or your designated representative must be able to participate in hiring, supervision, evaluation, and termination of aides. Ensure aides turn in required paperwork to FLIC before starting work (application, health assessment, W4, I9 with 2 proof of identification, within past year both physical exam and PPD (TB test), proof of MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella vaccine). Make sure signed timesheets are turned in every 2 weeks, signed by aide and consumer.

What does FLIC do? FLIC confirms hours on timesheets, does payroll for aides, and bills Managed Long Term Care for services. We provide a list of aides. We don't do references or background checks or recommend aides on this list.

Who can be my aide? Anyone BUT a spouse or designated representative.

What if I'm not satisfied with my aide? Since you hire the aide, you are responsible to terminate their work. If there is a criminal problem, contact police and your case worker.

How do I become an aide? Fill out the Application paperwork and return to FLIC: application, W4, I9 with 2 proofs of identification, physical exam and PPD (TB test) within past year and proof of MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella vaccine).

Who do I call with questions? Contact your case worker at Tompkins County Dept. of Social Services, Tioga County Dept. of Social Services, Fidelis NY, iCircle Care, VNA Homecare, Total Care, or Cheryl at FLIC 272-2433

The Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program is about informed choice, flexibility, freedom, and community living.



#26onthe26th

July 26th was the 26th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Staff and interns at FLIC planned and participated in various activities throughout that week to celebrate the signing of the ADA and to bring awareness to the accomplishments of the ADA.

For the month of July, Tompkins County Public Library featured the "Disability Rights are Civil Rights" display. It contained books, DVDs and other materials from the TCPL collection and included first person narratives, histories, books and DVDs on particular disabilities, and feature length movies and documentaries.

With submissions from FLIC staff and other members of the community we created a display board for the celebration week

that featured stories of what the ADA means to individuals. More than 25 quotes were submitted.

FLIC staff member Rachel Ferrara was featured on "All Things Equal" on WHCU. Visit <http://whcuradio.com/podcasts/all-things-equal-july-26-2016/> to listen to the show.

FLIC staff participated in Stories in the Park at the Dewitt Park Farmers Market where more than 30 children and adults participated in "sing and sign" using American Sign Language to tell stories.

About 30 people gathered on the Ithaca Commons on July 28th to participate in our ADA Anniversary "Flash Mob."

On the 29th of July more than 60 people stopped in to FLIC to sign the ADA Anniversary Pledge. For more information and to pledge to recommit to the full implementation of the ADA visit: www.adaanniversary.org



Above: "What the ADA Means to Me" Display. Below: Pledge table where over 60 people sat to recommit to the ADA.



YES! I want to help support FLIC with its mission

\$100 Sustaining Member
 \$50 Contributing Member
 \$25 Business / Organization
 \$15 Individual
 \$5 Student / Senior Citizen
 \$ _____ Other

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Making Independence a Way of Life...

Please help us continue providing your community with the important services and programs we offer. Your contributions are greatly appreciated.

A United Way of Tompkins County Partner Agency
 Let us know if you would like to receive this newsletter electronically by email

Finger Lakes Independence Center
 215 Fifth St.
 Ithaca, NY 14850

Return to Sender
United Way