

# FLIC VOICE

Official Newsletter of the Finger Lakes Independence Center

Spring 2017

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## Improving Accessibility in Healthcare

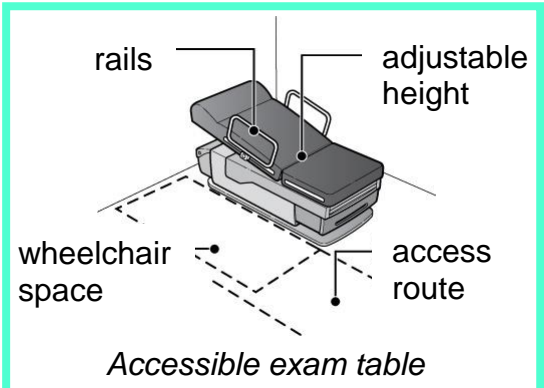
Having access to healthcare is a vital part of living a healthy life. It helps to ensure that the body is working properly, and that health problems are addressed. Health services that are accessible is a high priority.

Unfortunately, having regular access to healthcare isn't always a part of life for people with disabilities. Whether it is an exam room that is accessible, availability of a sign language interpreter, or misperceptions about how to communicate about disability and health issues, healthcare settings should make every effort to be accessible to all – including people with disabilities.

Whatever the barrier, people with disabilities do not always feel connected to the healthcare they need, and this is a problem that needs to be highlighted so solutions can be formulated. Therefore, a current goal of the Finger Lakes Independence Center is to work with dental and healthcare facilities to improve



*American Sign Language interpreter*



physical and communication access for persons with disabilities.

As part of this goal, the Women with Disabilities Health Group, a collaboration between Finger Lakes Independence Center, Tompkins County Office for the Aging, The Mental Health Association, The Health Planning Council, and several community members, has been working on a bulletin for area healthcare providers. This bulletin was created as a reminder to review policies, practices, and trainings to ensure that access to medical care for people with disabilities is a priority for their provision of medical services.

We are pleased to announce that the bulletin has been distributed to facilities in Tompkins and surrounding counties.

For more information about this document, or accessibility to healthcare, call Emily at the Finger Lakes Independence Center at 607-272-2433.

## Meet Tracy Decker, FLIC Board Member

Tracy Decker has worked in the mental health and vocational rehab field in Tompkins County for almost 24 years, with over half of those years in management, program development, and administration. The early half of her career often involved providing services to people with disabilities, particularly individuals with mental or behavioral health disabilities. Because of her wide range of experience, she is helpful to FLIC in working toward our goal of services and programs that will help people with mental health challenges in meeting their goals. Tracy's current position is Director of Residential Services for Lakeview Health Services for Tompkins programs.

Tracy received her undergraduate degree (BS) in Psychology and Sociology with a minor in Political Science from SUNY Cortland. More recently, she has also taken graduate coursework in Research Psychology and Public Health. Tracy currently serves on the Tompkins County Mental Health Subcommittee of the Community Services Board. In the past she was on the Coddington Road Community Center Board of Directors.

Tracy has been a member of FLIC's Board of Directors since December 2015. When asked what she likes about serving on the board Tracy said, "I like the FLIC board because it's a small but extremely well run agency that has a big impact and great reputation in the community."

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



## Disability Does Not Equal Inspiration

I want to challenge everyone to reframe your thinking on inspiration and disability.

Think about the following scenarios and what message they send:

Telling a person who uses a wheelchair and is shopping in the grocery store that they are brave and amazing for getting up and going about their day.

Giving a person with an intellectual disability an award because they are employed, or giving the employer of this person an award for hiring someone with a disability.

An article about how a football team "let" someone with a disability play in a game, giving all sorts of kudos to the generosity of the team.

The message is that people with disabilities are inspiring for living their daily lives, and it makes you feel good about yourself for pointing them out as brave and inspirational. This is called "inspiration porn." Inspiration porn is calling people with disabilities inspirational solely or in part on the basis of their disability.

In a 2014 Ted Talk entitled "I'm not your inspiration, thank you

very much," Stella Young, a noted disability rights activist who coined the phrase "inspiration porn," challenges people to think about the way this sensationalizes disability and the people who live with disabilities. The use of the word "porn" is purposeful because this type of attitude objectifies one group of people, in this case, people with disabilities, for the benefit of another group.

In ABC's "Speechless," a sitcom about a family with a son who has cerebral palsy, Ray DiMeo, a character who is the younger brother of the teen with a disability, explained it in one line in an episode saying, "It's a portrayal of people with disabilities as one-dimensional saints who only exist to warm the hearts and open the minds of able-bodied people." To which his brother, JJ, who has cerebral palsy, jokingly adds: "I blame Tiny Tim."

Having a disability presents challenges, but many of these challenges are built into our society because of physical and attitudinal barriers. People with disabilities can be inspirational; many do incredible things, but like the rest of society, people with disabilities are simply going about the daily business of living just like everyone else.

■ Jan Lynch, Executive Director

## People with Disabilities Participate in Emergency Drill

On March 6, Finger Lakes Independence Center staff and friends participated in the New York State Department of Health Emerging Infectious Disease Drill held at Cayuga Medical Center. This was a state-wide exercise to perform surge capacity testing; the ability of health facilities state-wide to handle a significant increase of patients that would arrive should an infectious disease hit our area.

In such a situation, many people with symptoms of the disease would arrive at the same time, seeking help. They would be accompanied by family and friends anxious for their safety as well as having concerns that they might be in danger since they were also exposed to the disease.

This simulation required that people with disabilities participate so that hospital staff would have hands-on experience working with patients with disabilities. FLIC staff observed how hospital staff responded to volunteers with disabilities that affected their ability to move and/or to communicate.

When the exercise was over, participants and observers met to discuss what went well, what did not go well, and suggested remedial steps to improve. It was a positive learning experience for all, and will result in improved services for people with disabilities.



*Participants/Observers from left to right: Joe Peterson, Jeff Boles, Amy Jo DeKoeuyer, Martha Smith, Beth Harrington*

## CMC Emergency Department Staff Training

On March 9, FLIC Deaf Services Coordinator, Amy Jo DeKoeuyer, conducted a training with Cayuga Medical Center Emergency Department staff regarding the need for American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters to facilitate communication with patients who

are Deaf. When medical staff address a person who is Deaf, a professional interpreter should be available to use ASL to communicate with the patient. When the patient who is Deaf signs to medical staff, the interpreter speaks what is being signed so staff can understand the patient.

Amy Jo explained how video remote interpreting (VRI) works. An interpreter is acquired via a large iPad, much like a Skype experience. While this is an excellent way to acquire an interpreter with minimum wait time, there are drawbacks to not having an interpreter in the room. Amy Jo explained the pros and cons of using VRI versus a live interpreter. She gave a list of three agencies that provide local interpreters and the process to follow when calling for an interpreter.



*Video Remote Interpreting*

## Disability Etiquette Tip #4: Think Before You Speak

In August of 2010 the House of Representatives approved a bill that eliminated the use of “retarded” and “retardation” in health, education and labor laws. While “retard” may be the most common diagnostic term people take out of context and use as a negative adjective, it is not the only one.

“When my son was in high school, a teacher compared her penchant for talking a lot and sometimes saying things out of context to having Tourette’s. My son used that opportunity to let her and the class know that he has Tourette’s and that his tics are non-verbal.

It was a learning moment for the teacher and an empowering moment for my son.

My hope is that every person in the class came away from that moment with a better understanding of choosing adjectives – not disability terms when they describe something.” – Local Parent



## 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual World of Skills Job Fair

Each spring, job seekers gather at the World of Skills Job Fair with hopes of meeting their future employer. Job fairs are an opportunity for job seekers to explore opportunities and gather information beyond the text of a job posting.

The World of Skills is unique because it is a true community collaboration. It is an opportunity for organizations and businesses to work together on an event that benefits the community at large. In addition, the World of Skills focuses on accessibility and ensuring each job seekers needs are met.



Some of the opportunities available for job seekers include:

- A pre-fair workshop to help with preparation.
- A diverse group of employers; ranging from hospitality to human services and food service to banking.
- A “Resume Drop Box,” Participants who use the drop box ensure their resume will be given to every attending employer in their field.
- Information about employment supports and services.

## Thank you to our Job Fair sponsors:

**AVRE**  
**Cayuga Radio Group**  
**Challenge Workforce Solutions**  
**Cornell University**  
**Diversity Consortium of  
Tompkins County**  
**Downtown Ithaca Alliance**  
**Finger Lakes Independence  
Center**  
**Franziska Racker Centers**  
**College Town Bagels/Ithaca  
Bakery**  
**Ithaca College**  
**The Ithaca Journal**  
**Ithaca Rotary Club**  
**Ithaca Youth Bureau**  
**The Learning Web**

**The Mental Health Association  
in Tompkins County**  
**Southside Community Center**  
**SPACE**  
**Tompkins Community Action**  
**Tompkins Cortland Community  
College**  
**Tompkins County Chamber of  
Commerce**  
**Tompkins County Community  
Justice Center**  
**Tompkins County Department  
of Social Services**  
**Tompkins-Seneca-Tioga**  
**BOCES**  
**Tompkins Workforce New York**  
**Women's Opportunity Center**

### Job Application Accessibility Survey

At the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual World of Skills Job Fair, FLIC distributed a Job Application Accessibility Fact Sheet to all participating employers. This year we wanted to see if employers applied this information and improved the application process! Job Fair attendees were asked about their experience completing applications during the fair.

- Only 22% of respondents completed applications at the job fair.
  - Based on the results and comments from respondents, the majority of employers use a web-based application process. FLIC will conduct further research about the accessibility of web-based applications in our community.
- 33% of respondents said employers did not have a clear notice about assistance and/or alternative formats available.
  - While the majority replied “yes” (employers did have a clear notice), these notices were missed by a third of the respondents. Indicating they were not as accessible as needed.
- Additional comments suggested that information about job openings can be unclear, not made available, or difficult to access due to environmental barriers, such as noise.

## Did you know?

“Only 40 percent of households with a disability save for unexpected expenses, compared with 61 percent of other households. In addition, savings are more likely to be kept at home or with family and/or friends rather than in a savings account.”

(Source: National Disability Institute. “Banking Status and Financial Behaviors of Adults with Disabilities: Findings from the 2015 FDIC National Survey of Unbanked and Underbanked Households”.)



### Improving Economic Outcomes for People with Disabilities


Historically, people with disabilities have been denied opportunities to develop the resources and skills needed to become financially stable. This was often due to imposed limits on income, resources, and assets. Additionally, low expectations restricted opportunities to develop financial skills and additional sources of income.

However, new programs and initiatives have been developed and implemented during the past few decades to promote greater economic and employment outcomes for people with disabilities; programs like Individual Development Accounts, Social Security’s Ticket to Work, and, more recently, ABLE Accounts.

Financial opportunities for people with disabilities continue to grow, but finding information and utilizing these programs can be complex. Finger Lakes Independence Center is doing their part to help residents from Tompkins County and

surrounding areas navigate the path to financial stability.

Finger Lakes Independence Center is a member of the Asset Coalition. This is a diverse group of service providers that represent both national and local efforts to increase economic self-sufficiency among people with disabilities. Membership in the Asset Coalition supports the financial services FLIC offers by building strong connections with referral sources and providing access to financial wellness tools.

 Most recently, FLIC has gained access to LifeCents; an exciting new program developed by National Disability Institute. LifeCents helps individuals understand their own financial behaviors and set financial goals. This computer-based program can be used to support financial goals like budgeting, saving, improving credit scores, and increasing financial literacy. Individuals can use LifeCents, at no cost, with support from FLIC staff or independently.

In addition, FLIC continues to provide financial services through the Disability Benefits Education and Assistance Program, which is funded in part by a grant from the United Way Community Care Fund.

**The Disability Benefits Education and Assistance Program served 25 individuals in Tompkins County during the first 8 months of the program.**

Through this program, people with disabilities can:

- Learn about the impact of working on benefits.
- Get information about available work incentives.
- Receive assistance finding employment.
- Receive individualized benefits advisement services.

Participation in this program allows an individual to make an informed choice about economic self-sufficiency and receive continued supports throughout the transition.

Financial Services at FLIC continue to grow as the opportunities and needs present themselves.

## #AgeOutLoud

Every year in May, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) celebrates Older Americans Month. The ACL designs a theme each year to help with the celebration. This year's theme was "Age Out Loud". This theme was meant to give older adults a new voice which helps reflect what they really want to say and sheds light on many important trends.

In honor of Older Americans Month, the ACL asked people to post a selfie with the hashtags #AgeOutLoud #OAM2017 to celebrate our Older Americans.

Older Americans are working longer, being active in their community, and advocating for themselves and others. FLIC is proud to offer services like NY Connects, Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly, and equipment loan that allow older Americans to lead independent lives and age in place.

## FLIC Shares Independent Living Services at CMC



On May 10th, FLIC staff members Ann Collins and Cassidy Stanley provided an in-service to discharge planners from different departments within Cayuga Medical Center. Ann and Cassidy provided information about FLIC programs that can aid patients in the transition back to community living, including:

**Equipment Loan** - The Loan Closet and Try it Room at FLIC have assistive devices and equipment an individual can use in their home while recovering from surgery, an accident, or adapting to changes in their condition.

**Advocacy Specialists** - Advocacy Specialists at FLIC can help individuals build their support network, including help with social services, benefit advisement, housing, support groups, and employment.

**Personal Care** - FLIC can connect people with the personal care option that is right for them. All of FLIC's personal care options give the consumer the ability to control the care they are receiving at home.

**NY Connects** - NY Connects is a resource that can connect people of all ages, with any disability, and even caregivers to information on long term services and supports. NY Connects also collaborates with your local Office of the Aging.

**Nursing Home Transition and Diversion** - The Nursing Home Transition and Diversion waiver is used to help a person continue to live at home or obtain the supports they need to live safely at home after leaving a nursing home.



The staff at FLIC is always available to visit community organizations to share what we do here and how we can help your consumers live independently. Contact Monica at [monica@fliconline.org](mailto:monica@fliconline.org) or by calling the office, to arrange to have us share information about our services with your organization.

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.

Cassidy Stanley 272-2433 - The Registry



## The Chat @ SPCS

### FLIC is Proud to Support Accessible Services in our Community

Suicide Prevention and Crisis Service (SPCS) is excited to announce that Crisis Counselors are now available through text messaging, or as they call it, The Chat.

A traditional telephone call can be a barrier to accessing a lifesaving resource like the Crisisline. That's why SPCS and FLIC have partnered to promote The Chat to people with disabilities and the organizations that serve them.

Emotional problems, big or small, Crisis Counselors will listen without judgment and help individuals find their own best solution.

Text message SPCS at 607-269-4500, Mondays through Fridays from 6 to 9 pm for free and confidential crisis counseling.



Crisis Counselors are still available by phone at 607-272-1616 or 1-800-273-TALK

## Accessible Transportation

Transportation provides a lifeline for people with disabilities to access employment, education, healthcare, and community life.

Transportation services allow individuals with disabilities to live independently within their communities.

The Finger Lakes Independence Center (FLIC) works on many goals to enhance the lives of people with disabilities. It is our fundamental belief that people with disabilities should be able to live their lives as fully as everyone else in their communities.

The Finger Lakes Independence Center has been and continues to be a strong advocate in ensuring that people with disabilities have access to affordable transportation in Tompkins County.

Jeff Boles of FLIC sits on the Tompkins County Coordinated Transportation Planning Committee. This committee ensures that transportation programs within the County receive funding under the Specialized Community Mobility Project grant (SCMP).

In addition, FLIC has worked with Gadabout over the years to provide disability awareness training to their drivers. We will be working with Gadabout again in the near future to give input on their information technology (IT) project which will update their scheduling and dispatch software.

FLIC works with individuals on transportation barriers as well. Advocacy specialists can help individuals with:

- Getting to and from work (the lack of transportation options in many communities is a major barrier to employment opportunities for people with disabilities<sup>1</sup>).
- Accessible and affordable transportation in rural communities (about 560,000 people with disabilities never leave home because of transportation difficulties<sup>2</sup>).
- Getting to and from appointments with healthcare professionals (because many individuals with disabilities have increased health care needs, isolation from providers can have a profound impact on quality of life, health, and safety<sup>3</sup>).

Accessible transportation options can make the difference between health care access and isolation for adults and the children in their care<sup>4</sup>. FLIC can provide information to individuals on local transportation options. If you need assistance with a transportation issue, call 272-2433 and ask to speak with an advocacy specialist.

Contributor: Kristen Wells, Executive Director, Gadabout Transportation

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> - [www.civilrights.org](http://www.civilrights.org)



*Wheelchair accessible van*

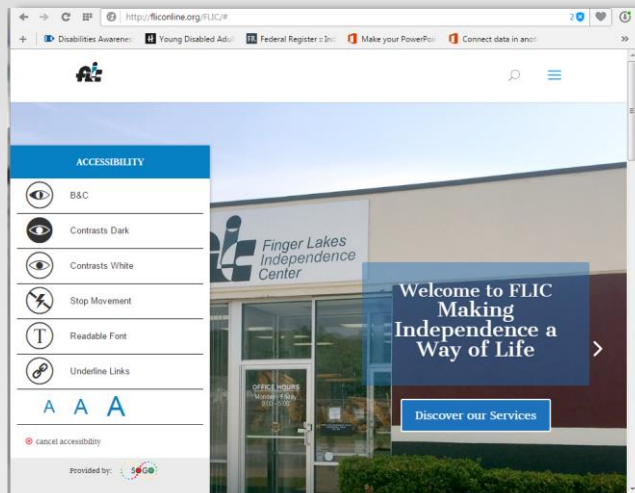
# Make Your Website Accessible to People with Disabilities

Got an accessible website? Not sure? The Finger Lakes Independence Center recently had the FLIC website redesigned to make it user friendly for everyone, including people with disabilities. (website designer [www.infinisol.com](http://www.infinisol.com)). The FLIC website URL is the same - [www.fliconline.org](http://www.fliconline.org)

People with disabilities want to be able to use electronic devices, software, and the internet, just like people without disabilities. Nowadays, computers, tablets, and cell phones have operating systems with accessible features built in, and there are software programs and apps with even more options.

However, website access is up to the website designer. An accessible website can include features such as –

- enlarge font size, simple readable font style,
- change font and background color or contrast,
- descriptions of images, charts, and links, that screen reading software can read aloud,
- large tabs and buttons for links, underline links,
- easy to navigate layout for screen reading software,
- stop content from moving (videos, changing images, scrolling, blinking, etc), so people are not distracted.



on left – pop up menu of accessible features on FLIC website

In addition, if your website offers online forms, services, shopping, or employment applications, it is important that those are accessible.

Is your website accessible to everyone? You can check with your website designer, use an online website checker, and read about Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0.

Your accessible website can enable people with disabilities to use it just like everyone else.

## 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.

## 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 \_\_\_\_\_



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Return to Sender



A United Way of Tompkins County Partner Agency

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