



FLIC NEWS

The Newsletter of the
Finger Lakes Independence Center
Ithaca, New York

Volume 15 Issue 1 WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE Spring 2010

*Vision Support Group

1-2:30 pm the 1st Tuesday of each month
at Finger Lakes Independence Center
215 5th Street
Contact: Sherry Thurston 272-2433

*Low Hearing Group

1:00-2:30 pm at Longview
Every 3rd Wednesday
1 Bella Vista Drive
Contact: Sherry Turston 272-2433

Acquired Brain Injury

7-9:00 pm
2nd Tuesday of every month
Finger Lakes Independence Center
215 5th Street
Contact: Dr. Richard Maxwell
256-5076

*Support Group for All Disabilities.

1:00 pm to 2:30 pm
2nd Wednesday of every month
Titus Towers
Contact: Sherry Thurston
272-2433

Depression Support Group

5:30 pm to 7 pm
Every Thursday
215 5th Street
Contact: Larry Roberts
272-2433



BUSY TIMES!

FLIC will be busy this Spring with many exciting and interesting things to do.

April this year brings World of Skills to the Holiday Inn in Ithaca. And in April look for an Emergency Preparedness Workshop with important information for people with disabilities on being prepared in an emergency. Living Well With A Disability along with the start of American Sign Language III also begin April.

April is the time for taxes and thinking about finances. FLIC and Alternatives' Financial Counselor and IDA Coordinator Brendan Wilbur will facilitate, Individual Development Accounts: What Are They and Are They Right For Me? an informative program which will explore what IDAs are, offer examples of predatory lending and explain who Alternatives FCU is and what services they have to offer. This informal program will offer opportunities for participants to ask questions, and Wilbur will be available following the workshop for one-on-one discussions.

Look inside for dates and times for all these upcoming events.

*If you will need an ASL interpreter or other accommodation for a disability to attend an event please ask for the deadline for the event to make such a request. All events are in wheelchair accessible locations.

Executive Director Column

By Lenore Schwager

Winter this year has been different. We have had a lot of small snowfall storms and so far one fairly large one. In addition, we were spectators to a number of storms which passed either to the south or east of us. All that said winter does present a number of challenges especially to people with disabilities. Are the sidewalks free of snow? Are the curb cuts free of snow and ice? Can someone in a wheelchair get from the sidewalk across the street to the next curb cut? Many times the answer is no because even if the sidewalk and curb cuts are snow and ice free the path to the next curb cut may be laden with snow and ice. Yes, winter does have some challenges but hopefully, by the time you read this, spring is well established and we no longer have any more snow and ice hindering our travel.

FLIC along with many other agencies try not to schedule a lot of activities during the winter because we know that people do not like to get out and face the winter weather and travel related problems. However, we do begin to plan our spring and summer events when we are indoors because of the weather.

One of the events that we are planning this year is the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on July 26th. What has the ADA meant to people with disabilities here in Tompkins County? First, there are many buildings that have made accessible over the last 20 years. Just think about the buildings you may have visited in the last year. Weren't most if not all of them accessible to people with mobility disabilities? This is especially true of county, city and other municipal buildings. Did you notice that polling places were all accessible to people with disabilities at last November's election? There were even new machines to vote on that were accessible to people with all types of disabilities. The theaters all have places for wheelchairs—some better than others. Curb cuts are noticeable all over the City of Ithaca. TCAT Buses all are wheelchair accessible. All of those changes have taken place over the last 20 years.

You might even see more people with disabilities out all over the area especially when the weather is nice. However, the one thing that has not really changed is employment of people with disabilities. While the

unemployment rate for people without disabilities in Tompkins County is still under 10%, between 50 and 75% of people with disabilities who want to work do not have jobs. The ADA did level the playing field for people with disabilities who want to work, but it is still very difficult for people with disabilities to find a job. One thing that FLIC along with other sponsors is doing is holding the 15th annual World of Skills job fair on Thursday, April 29 from 9 a.m. to 12 noon at the Holiday Inn in downtown Ithaca. Wouldn't be a positive thing if people with disabilities who are looking for a job would find one? Do come and check out the work opportunities that are available here in Tompkins County.

Maybe by the time FLIC is ready to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the ADA, there will be no more issues relating to people with disabilities that still need to be resolved. We have 5 years in which to make that happen.



FLIC NEWS

Spring Volume 14 Issue 1

Contributors:

Sherry Thurston, Teri Reinemann, Larry Roberts,
Lenore Schwager, Jeff Boles, Emily Papperman,
Monica Voionmaa

Design/Editing/Production/Sweat:

Patricia Liddick

The FLIC News is a quarterly newsletter published by the Finger Lakes Independence Center, 215 5th Street, Ithaca, NY 14850. Your questions, comments, or suggestions concerning the contents of this publication are always welcome. *Any opinions or ads printed in this newsletter are not to be perceived as endorsement by FLIC. Medical and legal issues should be discussed with professionals in these fields.*

You may contact the Center at: 607-272-2433 Voice/TTY; Email: FLIC@clarityconnect.com; or FAX 607-272-0902.

Visit our website: www.fliconline.org

*Finger Lakes Independence
Center
Spring Events 2010*

April 8-May 27, 2010

“Living Well With A Disability” 11:00-1:30

Weekly workshop at FLIC; for information call Jeff Boles, 272-2433.

April 21&May 12 “Emergency Preparedness is Everyone’s Business” 1:30-4:30;

Tompkins County Public Library

For information call Jeff Boles at FLIC, 272-2433.

April 23&April 28, Preparatory Workshops for World of Skills

April 23 workshop: 1:00-3:00;

April 26 workshop: 1:00-3:00

at the Tompkins Workforce Career Center; call 272-7570 for information.

April 27, Individual Development Accounts: What Are They & Are They Right For Me? 1:00-2:00 pm. At Finger Lakes Independence Center.

Presented by Brendan Wilbur, Alternatives Federal Credit Union.

April 28-June 16; American Sign Language III; 3:00-5:00

Weekly class at FLIC; for information call Teri Reinemann at FLIC, 272-2433

April 29, World of Skills (job fair) 9:00-Noon

Free job fair at the Holiday Inn, 222 S. Cayuga Street, Ithaca. For information call Larry Roberts at FLIC, 272-2433.

*Spring
By Emily Papperman*

For me, spring is a refreshing time of year. The snow is melting, the birds are chirping and the flowers are blooming. Historically, spring is also a time of rebirth and renewal. Personally, I like to use spring as a time to remove clutter from my life. Every spring and summer, I try to remove a little more physical and emotional confusion in my day-to-day existence. If I have clothes that don’t fit me and I only keep them for sentimental value, I try to get rid of them. It doesn’t always work, but I try. It frees up space in my closet. Likewise, I also attempt to get rid of my most persistent nagging worry. It frees up space in my mind. I am naturally inclined to worry, so letting things go emotionally is even harder. But, spring is a time of natural beauty, and if you can let some clutter go, it will be easier to enjoy it.



Access Pass for People With Disabilities

An access pass permits a resident of New York State with a permanent disability free use of parks, historic sites, and recreational facilities operated by OPRHP and the Department of Environmental Conservation. The passholder may have free use of facilities operated by these offices, for which there is normally a charge, for example, parking, camping, greens fees and swimming. The pass is not valid at any facility within a park operated by a private concern under contract to the State. To obtain an application visit the OPRHP website (see link under "Off-Site Links" on the right side of this page). For additional information, call (518) 474-2324 or write to: Access Pass, NYS OPRHP, Empire State Plaza, Agency Building 1, Albany, NY 12238. You must allow 8-10 weeks for processing the application, so act now to get your pass for this summer!

World of Skills 2010
By Larry Roberts

This is the fifteenth anniversary of World of Skills. For that long the sponsors have worked together to offer job seekers the opportunity to meet employers that are looking for qualified candidate. Over the years hundreds of job seekers have taken advantage of the fair and most of the employers that attend have returned year after year because they find the fair a useful way to meet lots of different job seekers with lots of different abilities and skills.

World of Skills started as a project of Leadership Tompkins. Originally a job fair for immigrants and refugees to Ithaca, then a fair aimed at people with disabilities, over time the fair has evolved to meet the needs of any job seeker and many job seekers have found jobs.

The sponsors of the fair are proud of World of Skills because, most importantly, it has helped people find jobs. To job seekers the fair is only important if it points them toward a new career or actually helps them get a job. We hope that you will use this opportunity and make the job fair part of your successful job search.

World of Skills Sponsors

Challenge

Collegetown Bagels Inc./Ithaca Bakery

Cornell University

Finger Lakes Independence Center

Franziska Racker Centers, Inc.

Ithaca College

The Ithaca Journal

Ithaca Rotary Club

Mental Health Association in Tompkins County

NYS Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped

NYS VESID

World of Skills Sponsors Continued:

SPACE

Tompkins Community Action

Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce

Tompkins Cortland Community College

Tompkins Workforce New York

Women's Opportunity Center

Travel Resources

With thoughts turning to spring and warmer weather come thoughts of travel. Travel is not always easy for some so look below for web pages, phone numbers and other information taken from New Mobility Magazine on traveling with a disability.

Able to Travel, United Spinal Association, infor@unitedspinal.org, www.abletotravel.org, www.unitedspinal.org, 718/803/3782. ABLE to Travel's agents can help travelers who use wheelchairs plan their whole trip.

Barrier-Free Travel: A Nuts and Bolts Guide for Wheelers and Slow Walkers, Third Edition; barrierfreetravel.net. This \$20 book by Candy Harrington is a great resource for both new and veteran travelers with disabilities.

Rolling Rains Report, www.rollingrains.com. Scott Rain's blog focuses on all things related to inclusive travel and universal design from a variety of angles.

Society for Accessible Travel and Hospitality, www.sath.org, 212/4477248. SATH is a nonprofit membership organization that works to raise awareness of the needs of all travelers with disabilities.

Waypoint Yacht Charter Services, contact@waypointcharter.com, www.waypointcharter.com, 888/491-2949 or 360/656-5934. Waypoint specializes in customized boat trips to world-wide locales.

Living Well With a Disability ***By Jeff Boles***

The Finger Lakes Independence Center (FLIC) presents, *Living Well with a Disability: Making the Most of Your Life*, weekly, Thursdays, 11:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., April 8 - May 27. The series of workshops is open to people with disabilities and is free of charge.

“Living Well is a chance to explore what you want out of life, to meet new people, to break isolation, and to learn about people that can help you. The materials we teach from are used around the United States to help people with disabilities get excited about what they want out of life. It’s a fun program and an opportunity to explore how to get what you want.” said Jeff Boles, peer counselor at FLIC and a facilitator of the program.

FLIC is pleased that many community experts will talk to participants in this series. Kevin Nickerson, Disability Navigator, Tompkins Workforce New York will talk about how people on limited budgets can build financial assets. Helen Ranck, Financial Education Program Manager at Cornell Cooperative Extension will discuss the importance of developing a common sense approach to money. Sarah Beyler, a Nutrition Educator also at Cornell Cooperative Extension, will demonstrate that it is possible to eat healthy on a limited budget. Fran Spadafora Manzella who is the Call Center Manager; Tompkins County 2-1-1, will show how to access the information needed to live comfortably. Rachel (Shri) Bush is a yoga teacher and licensed massage therapist; she will teach easy-to-do stress reduction technique. Emergency preparedness is a hot topic among people with disabilities. Julie Holcomb, the Ithaca, City Clerk and Beth Harrington the Assistant Director of emergency management services for the county will show participants how to develop their own emergency plans. Christine Barksdale, Ithaca Police Department, Investigator will talk about how people with disabilities can protect themselves in difficult situations.

For more information and to register, please call Jeff Boles at 272-2433.. To request an ASL interpreter or an accommodation for a disability in order to attend Living Well, call by Thursday, April 1, 2010.

Emergency Preparedness is Everyone’s Responsibility - a two-part workshop designed for people with disabilities

By Jeff Boles

‘Emergency Preparedness is Everyone’s Responsibility’ is a two session workshop series designed for people with disabilities, family members, professionals, and anybody else who might need assistance during an emergency. Both sessions will be held at the Tompkins County Public Library. The first session is Wednesday, April 21; the second session is Wednesday, May 12, both at 1:00 pm- 4:30pm.

Participants will create a personal emergency preparedness plan. They will be introduced to the emergency and disaster planning that the City of Ithaca and Tompkins County are engaged in. And participants will have an opportunity to give input to the plans that are being developed.

“In most communities people with disabilities are left out of the emergency and disaster planning process. This is a great opportunity for us to let people know what we need,” said Jeff Boles, peer counselor, Finger Lakes Independence Center. “Emergencies can be large or small and happen any place at any time to anyone. Being prepared is everyone’s responsibility,” agree workshop presenters Beth Harrington, Assistant Director/EMS Tompkins County Department of Emergency Response and Julie Holcomb, City Clerk, City of Ithaca.

Workshop sponsors are the Finger Lakes Independence Center, City of Ithaca, Tompkins County Department of Emergency Response, Tompkins County Public Library, and the City of Ithaca Disability Advisory Council.

For more information and to register, call Jeff Boles at 272-2433 x23. To request an ASL interpreter or accommodation, please call by April 15.

Get a Job! *by Monica Voionmaa*

Work is a universal part of being human. It seems to be part of what makes being human worthwhile - learning, training, and preparing to do something you are interested in, the sense of accomplishment in reaching a goal or producing results, the ability to provide for yourself and others.

The motivation to work is also part of being human when you have a disability. People with disabilities who can work often choose to, or would like to be employed, in the same way as people without disabilities. People with disabilities can be otherwise healthy and capable, and those who have received Social Security and public assistance often see working as a way to give back for the support they have received. Both personal and workplace assistive equipment and technology are available to make that a reality.

Nowadays, we are used to accessibility:

wheelchair signs in parking lots
automatic door opening buttons
seated shopping carts
touch screens
closed captioning, American Sign Language interpretation
Braille numbers in elevators, service dogs

An even more inclusive concept, universal design, is being used to design buildings, spaces, and products that are people-friendly for all, not just those with disabilities.

There is a variety of equipment and technology for personal use and in the workplace, and people can bring their own technology to the job. Some of these include:

physical mobility – power wheelchairs, arm canes, prosthetics, ergonomic workstations and devices

blind or vision loss – computer software programs that read documents and web pages aloud, and workstations that magnify text
hearing loss – programmable hearing aids for different settings (conversation, meetings, conferences, public events), sound amplifiers
learning or intellectual – protocols for learning procedures and accomplishing tasks

There are also job training and job coaching services, and assistive equipment available through various agencies.

Perhaps we should also have “universal perspective” on hiring and working with people with disabilities.

Do you think a person with a disability is capable of doing a job as well as someone without a disability? Do you think they would have constructive ideas? Can you see their assistive technology as just another part of the technology in your workplace?

What about your personal impressions? How do you feel about interacting with someone who uses a wheelchair, who looks different physically, who can't see or hear as well as you, who has difficulty speaking, who is different intellectually or emotionally?

People with disabilities would like the same opportunity to learn, train, prepare, and work as you. They would put forth the same effort, and may use assistive equipment and technology to do so. People with disabilities would like to be included, respected, taken seriously about their contributions, and have opportunities to move ahead.

“What matters deafness of the ears when the mind hears? The one true deafness, the incurable deafness, is that of the mind” -Victor Hugo



Ask A Peer Counselor By Sherry Thurston

Q: I am on disability benefits and seem to be living from check to check. Is there anyone at the Independent Living Center who can help me budget my money so I know where and what I am spending each month?

A: Yes, one of the peer counselors can sit down with you and help you figure out where you are spending your money and possible ways to cut back on other ways.

Q: My family keeps telling me that I should attend a support group but I feel that a support group is for people who want to complain and leave feeling more depressed than when they first came in. What are your thoughts?

A: Support groups are very helpful to many people. Usually support groups offer individual's personal experience in a certain topic, techniques in coping with that issues and offer support to each other who share in that specific area. Finger Lakes Independence Center offers many support groups. For more information on our group call us at 607-272-2433.

Q: Does Finger Lakes Independence Center help people with disabilities in learning how to ride the local buses?

A: Finger Lakes Independence Center can explain to you the difference between Gadabout and ADA Paratransit services. We can also help you in understanding the bus schedules and how to transfer. If you need assistance in travel training either TCAT, FLIC or depending on your disability, we would find the appropriate people to help with travel training.

Q: Isn't there one agency in Tompkins County where a person can go to get answers to all of their questions pertaining to their disability?

A: Unfortunately No. If you need Medicaid, you will need to go to the Department of Social Services

(DSS). If you need Social Security Disability Benefits, you will need to go to the Social Security Administration Office. If you need assistance with your heat, you will need to go to DSS or the Tompkins County Office for the Aging depending on your age. You could come to the Finger Lakes Independence Center and we could prioritize your needs and then work with you on those needs. We can do some phone calling from our office to minimize the running around to start the process for whatever your needs would be regarding your disability. If you have any questions to where you should go to receive services, you can give FLIC a call and one of our peer counselors can talk with you or meet with you.

Walking Safely By Sherry Thurston

Just like motorist, pedestrians are expected to follow certain rules of the road, including the following:

- Pedestrians are to use sidewalks whenever they are safely available.
- When sidewalks are unavailable, pedestrians must walk facing traffic, as far to the left as possible.
- Pedestrians must follow traffic signals and traffic officers.
- At crosswalks where there is neither a traffic signal nor traffic light, pedestrians have the right-of-way.
- If there aren't any crosswalks, signs or signals, the pedestrian have the right-of-way.
- Regardless of the right-of-way, the driver is required by law to take great care to avoid hitting pedestrians.

There are specific laws regarding pedestrians with visual impairments. Every driver of a vehicle approaching an intersection or crosswalk shall yield the right-of-way to a pedestrian crossing or attempting to cross the road when the pedestrian is accompanied by a guide dog or using a cane, which is metallic or white in color or white with a red tip. (NYState-SafetyNY.Com)

**Finger Lakes Independence Center
215 Fifth Street
Ithaca, New York 14850**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**Non Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
Paid
Ithaca, NY
Permit No. 148**

Making Independence a Way of Life ...

United Way of Tompkins County

