

# FLIC VOICE

Official Newsletter of the Finger Lakes Independence Center

Fall 2017

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## Alternative Format Menu

Accessing social opportunities is a vital part of a full life. It helps develop important social relationships that help keep individuals invested in the community.

Many people feel that they do not have access to social activities, like dining out. This contributes to increased social isolation among people with disabilities.

As a result, many restaurants are now offering menus in alternative formats. Examples of alternative formats include large print, easy to read font styles, greater line spacing, high contrast between text and background colors, paper with matte finish to reduce glare, and pictures with clear captions.

The aim is to offer people with and without disabilities a more inclusive dining experience and increase their sense of belonging in local communities.



As part of this work, one of the Finger Lakes Independence Center's goal is that at least one local restaurant will provide its menu in an alternative format, such as Braille, and make it available to its customers.

Therefore, FLIC is working with Coltivare restaurant in Ithaca (part of the culinary center at TC3) to provide a large print menu for patrons with vision and other issues. FLIC and Coltivare are happy to announce that the large print menu will be available this fall.

**Large print is 16 point or higher**

FLIC is also planning to increase awareness about alternative format menus at restaurants that already have them. During the Americans with Disabilities Act Scavenger Hunt (see pg. 4) teams were asked to find an alternative format menu. When FLIC called restaurants to confirm the menu was available, they found that many restaurants did not let all staff know about the availability. In many cases, only the manager knew about it.

FLIC is committed to increasing social opportunities and making a more inclusive community through the removal of barriers.

## Meet Kevin Nickerson, FLIC Board Member

Kevin Nickerson is Co-Director of the American Dream Employment Network, a division of National Disability Institute (NDI). Kevin is a nationally recognized expert on the effective implementation of Employment Networks (EN) within the public workforce system, as well as within for-profit and non-profit organizations that serve individuals with disabilities.

Kevin has over 20 years of experience helping SSA disability beneficiaries, is a certified community work incentive coordinator (CWIC), and has worked under SSA's former Benefits Planning Assistance & Outreach (BPAO) project, as well as the Work Incentive Planning Assistance (WIPA) project. A graduate of Cortland State University, Kevin holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology.

Kevin has a longstanding relationship with many service provider agencies in Tompkins County as a result of his work with Challenge Industries, including the Finger Lakes Independence Center (FLIC). As a Disability Resource Coordinator, Kevin often referred individuals to FLIC for support services. It is because of this longstanding history, and recognition of FLIC as a vital community resource that Kevin sought out a seat on their Board of Directors in September of 2016

When not focused on his work, you'll find Kevin restoring vintage arcade machines and other artifacts from the past.

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



## Highlighting Information and Referral Services

Did you know that Independent Living Centers (ILCs) have core services that are a part of the base of assistance that we provide? The five core services are:

**Information and Referral** – provide information and referrals to meet the request from the individual

**Advocacy** – both individual and systems

**Independent Living Skills** – assisting individuals to access needed skills and services to live independently in their community

**Peer Counseling** – assistance from someone with lived experience with disability

**Transition** – assisting students transitioning out of school, and assisting individuals to transition out of nursing homes to community living with supports

As noted above, the first of the five core services is information and referral. The purpose is to provide individuals with resources and options that may be needed to make informed choices about living, learning, and working independently. We also answer questions from family members or caretakers, from businesses or employers and from community based organizations wanting to ensure that they are doing everything possible to be

inclusive. We also have computers available if you want to research answers on your own.

Typical calls are for accessible housing assistance, acquiring and understanding benefits and entitlements, architectural barrier – individual ramps or a business redesign - consultation, questions about medical and assistive equipment, laws that support having service animals, accommodations, employment supports, laws that pertain to disability such as the ADA and all its titles, availability of individual and group supports, and obtaining in-home assistance to maintain independent living.

Some callers need a quick answer and are done in one call. Others need someone to listen to their story and help them understand their choices, sometimes requiring more than one call or face-to-face meetings. Still others have complex questions that require some specific research.

It is a core service of Independent Living Centers because there continues to be a need for disability specific information. If you have questions that relate to disability, we are here to help answer those questions. Feel free to call 272-2433 for information you are looking for.

■ Jan Lynch, Executive Director

## Support Independence, Support the Disability Integration Act

In 1999, the Supreme Court's Olmstead decision confirmed unwarranted institutionalization was discrimination under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. However, 18 years later, institutionalization remains a serious problem for seniors and people with disabilities because home and community based services are not made available.

On April 7, 2017 Senator Schumer (D-NY) introduced the Disability Integration Act. The purpose of this civil rights legislation is to ensure that people who need long term supports and services can live in the community, rather than be forced to live in nursing facilities or other institutions.

"People with disabilities should not be denied the choice to receive at home and support services. We should not discriminate against people with disabilities, which is a hallmark of our society and so the system needs to be fixed so, I'm calling on congress to pass new legislation which I authored, called the Disability Integration Act! Because we have to do everything in our power to

make sure that those with disabilities have the resources needed to live and thrive in the comfort of their own homes or their own communities if they choose" said Senator Schumer.



The Disability Integration Act has been introduced in both the House and the Senate. In the Senate, the bill has been referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions for review. In the House, the bill has been referred to the Subcommittee on the Constitution and Civil Justice. The committees have not yet taken any further action on the bill.

It is important that you contact your Senators and Representatives and ask them to co-sponsor the bill. To learn who your Senator and Representative are or how to contact them, call FLIC. Passage of the Disability Integration Act can help end a long history of segregation and restore the personal agency of people with disabilities.

This ground breaking legislation proposes four requirements for public entities and insurance providers that pay for long term services and supports:

1. **Cannot discriminate against people with disabilities when providing home and community services.**
2. **Must establish adequate payment structures for home and community based services.**
3. **Must inform people with disabilities of their right to receive services and supports in the community**
4. **Public entities must increase affordable and accessible housing options**

[www.disabilityintegrationact.org](http://www.disabilityintegrationact.org)



## Disability Etiquette Tip #5: Do Not Park Here

When walking through the community, cars can often be found parked across a sidewalk. It's illegal to do this (the fine in the city of Ithaca is \$25), and inconsiderate, but it is also dangerous.



Someone who is blind or has low vision would not expect a car to be on a sidewalk, they may not realize it in enough time not to collide with it, but then how would they safely get around the vehicle? Someone who has limited mobility or a person who uses a power or manual wheelchair would also have trouble negotiating a blocked sidewalk. Even if it's "just for a second" or if it is so you can save yourself a couple of steps, be mindful that what is a moment of convenience for you can be a dangerous obstacle to someone else.

## 27th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act

To celebrate the 27th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), FLIC hosted an ADA scavenger hunt. Teams were given a week to find a list of 27 items in the community. Items on the list were all put into place after the passage of the ADA, including:

- Equal Opportunity Employer notices
- Notices about service animals
- Accessible entrances to government buildings
- Paratransit vehicles
- Phone numbers for the Deaf/hard of hearing
- Alternative format menus



**Team RocknRoll**



**Team Challengers**

On the ADA anniversary, 07/26/17, FLIC invited all 8 teams to a post-hunt celebration. Families, service providers, people with and without disabilities gathered at FLIC to talk about their scavenger hunt experience over pizza and cake. In addition, prizes were awarded at the post-hunt celebration.

First place received gift cards for team pizza and a movie at Regal Cinemas and Pudgie's Pizza. Second place received a gift card for a team meal at Shortstop Deli. Third place received a gift card for team ice cream at Purity Ice Cream Co.

The scavenger hunt was intended to bring awareness to the features that make communities accessible and inclusive. FLIC wanted people to experience the

true impact of the ADA. The scavenger hunt provided educational opportunities as well. Groups had a chance to discuss accessibility features we may consider conveniences, rather than necessities for inclusion; such as automatic doors and curb cuts.

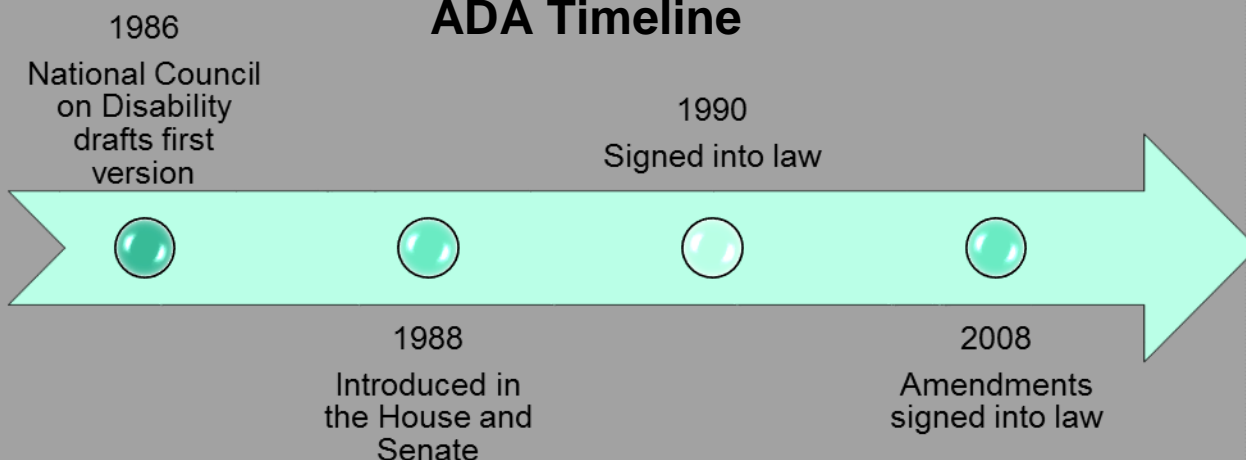
However, the scavenger hunt ended up having an additional purpose. It was brought to the teams' attention how many places and services are still inaccessible to people with disabilities. Even 27 years later, there is work to be done.

Overall, FLIC received positive feedback and the ADA scavenger hunt was a huge success. Want to host an ADA scavenger for your group or team? Contact FLIC to receive the list!



**Team TCAction**

## ADA Timeline



## Did you know?

In 2016, 58.5% of complaints filed with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and Fair Housing Assistance Programs were based on disability status.

The top 2 reasons for complaints were discriminatory terms, conditions, privileges, services, or facilities, and failure to make reasonable accommodations.

(Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity Annual Report FY 2016)



### FLIC Works to Minimize Housing Barriers

People with disabilities face many barriers to finding and maintaining safe, affordable housing. This is especially true in Tompkins County where rents are high, the number of accessible units is low, and housing discrimination is still taking place. Shelter is recognized as a basic human need; therefore, FLIC continues to work at an individual and community level to minimize barriers and secure housing for people with disabilities.

When it comes to finding housing FLIC can offer many levels of support. This includes information about housing programs and resources, assistance completing applications, and help conducting a housing search. In addition, FLIC maintains contact with local housing authorities and developments to have the most up to date information about available units and accessibility. Recently, FLIC signed a letter of support for a Lansing complex, where it is planned there will be units for people using wheelchairs as well as units for people with visual or hearing disabilities.

Unfortunately, finding an available unit does not always mean being accepted into that unit. FLIC's Executive Director, Jan Lynch, recently asked staff what barriers consumers face when trying to find housing. The responses overwhelmingly spoke to income discrimination, which is still legal in Tompkins County despite efforts to pass legislation. Income discrimination unfairly targets populations that are more likely to live below the poverty level and receive benefits; including people with disabilities.



Another issue FLIC often helps people with is obtaining a reasonable accommodation or modification; protections people with disabilities were given with the passage of the Fair Housing Act. As seen above, failure to make a reasonable accommodation was the number two reason for complaints in 2016.

FLIC regularly educates individuals about their rights under the Fair Housing Act and provides individual advocacy services to help someone with the request process. FLIC is also available to educate landlords and community groups about the Fair Housing Act.

**A reasonable accommodation** is a change, exception, or adjustment to a rule, policy, practice, or service that may be necessary for a person with a disability to have an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling, including public and common use spaces.

(HUD and DOJ Joint Statement on Reasonable Accommodation Under the FHA, 2004)

**A reasonable modification** is a structural change made to existing premises, occupied or to be occupied by a person with a disability, in order to afford such person full enjoyment of the premises.

(HUD and DOJ Joint Statement on Reasonable Modification Under the FHA, 2008)

It is important that the voice of people with disabilities continues to be present in community and national conversations about housing access.

## Additional In-Home Personal Care Options:

### CDPAP

The Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program is for individuals who want more control over their in-home services.

If you are a Tompkins County Resident and Medicaid eligible, contact the Department of Social Services or your Medicaid provider to get started with CDPAP!

### EISEP

The Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program is for people 60 years old or older in need of non-medical in-home services.

Cost is based on monthly income and household expenses or a sliding scale, for people that are not Medicaid Eligible.

Contact NY Connects Department of Social Services Long Term Care to get started.

## The Registry at FLIC

If you or someone you know needs home and community based services, the Registry at FLIC is an opportunity to receive the care you need on your terms. The Registry is a program that matches individuals in Tompkins County that need in-home care with individuals who are able to provide the assistance needed.

The Registry is a compiled list of private pay aides who have been screened through a face to face interview with the Registry Coordinator at FLIC. References are provided and verified in order to make sure the aide has the necessary skills and compassion that are important for someone to have when taking care of people in their homes. The Registry also contains a list of skilled nurses varying from pediatrics to palliative care.

If you or your family need someone to help with housekeeping, yard work or assistance with transportation to and from appointments, we have aides that are able to assist with that as well. Call Cassidy at FLIC today if you are in need of in-home care assistance. Cassidy can provide the name and contact information for aides that work in your area and meet your needs.

The Registry serves about 120 people a year. The Registry Program is made possible by funding from The Tompkins County Office for the Aging (COFA) and New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA).



*Interested in being on the Registry List?*

*Are you a responsible and compassionate adult who can provide in-home care and assistance? FLIC is accepting applications for Registry Aides. You must be 18 years of age or older to apply. Please call or stop in our office for an application today.*

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



## Affordable Assistance

### Wonderful Wheelchairs

Wonderful Wheelchairs repairs and sells wheelchairs at very reasonable prices.

Wonderful Wheelchairs works in the basement of Cayuga Ridge, 1229 Trumansburg Road, Ithaca, on Wednesday and Friday mornings.

Since they began, numerous wheelchairs that were unusable have been cleaned, repaired, and delivered to recipients.

For more information call - Monte May at 607-272-8224 or 592-4490

### “Be My Eyes”



Be My Eyes” is a free app available on iPhones and iPads. The app

connects sighted volunteers with blind and low vision users via video chat.

Once connected, the user can ask the volunteer to read or describe something for them. There are currently 540,226 registered volunteers and 37,339 registered users of the app.

To download the app on your Apple device, search “Be My Eyes” in the app store. The app will be available for Android devices soon. To sign up to be notified when the app is released for Android devices visit:

[www.bemyeyes.com/android](http://www.bemyeyes.com/android)

## Helping Seniors Age in Place

Cassidy, NY Connects Coordinator and Nursing Home Transition and Diversion (NHTD) Medicaid Service Coordinator, and Amy Jo, Deaf Services Coordinator, have been presenting information about services at senior living residences. Cassidy explains how the NHTD Waiver helps participants who are Medicaid eligible or already have active Medicaid live at home as independently as possible with service and supports. NY Connects offers information and assistance with referrals to outside agencies to help receive long term services and supports in the community.

As most people lose some ability to hear as they age, Amy Jo gives some practical tips to use when talking to someone who has lost some of their hearing:

- Face them and get their attention before talking.
- Ask, “What works best for you?” Maybe writing is helpful.
- Speak clearly, at moderate pace and volume, and don’t over-emphasize words.
- Don’t hide your mouth, chew food or gum while talking.
- Ask if they understood. If not, try re-phrasing the information.
- Be patient, and positive.



These tips can decrease frustration and increase positive understanding for everyone!

Amy Jo also demonstrates equipment people can borrow from our Try It Room (TIR) without charge to live more independently. Some equipment we offer for people with reduced hearing includes:

- Telephones that crank up the volume of the ringer and voice of the person calling you. Some print the words the caller is speaking.
- Alarms that are extra loud or have a disc you place under your pillow to vibrate and “shake” you awake.
- Lights that flash when your phone rings or someone knocks on your door.

Come check out our Try It Room for many more items not listed. Or, find us on Facebook and see our Item of the Week, highlighting equipment from our TIR. Look at our Amazon Wish List and consider purchasing and donating adaptive technology to help people live independently.



## Purpose. Progress. Power. New Strategies for Systemic Change

On September 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, FLIC was represented at NYAIL's 2017 Conference by Executive Director Jan Lynch. The New York State Association of Independent Living (NYAIL) is a membership organization for Independent Living Centers across the state. There are currently 29 member Independent Living Centers. Programs offered by NYAIL aim to improve Independent Living Centers and community awareness about Independent Living services.

The title of this year's conference, "Purpose. Progress. Power. New Strategies for Systemic Change," was inspired by the current political environment that puts independent living for people with disabilities at risk. The conference overview states:

***"The time is now to revisit our PURPOSE – to advance and protect the rights and independence of people with all disabilities; consider our PROGRESS – we have much to lose, but still so much more to accomplish; and most importantly, recognize and harness our collective POWER."***

The two day conference consisted of concurrent workshops, keynote speakers, and an expo. FLIC's Executive Director attended workshops to help the continued development of newer programs, such as youth transition and long term care, and also revitalize founding core services, such as systems advocacy.



Upon her return, Jan shared a wealth of information (and free incentives!) with staff through handouts, brochures, and pamphlets.

All with a focus on providing FLIC's consumers accurate information regarding services that can support their independent living goals.



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



**Finger Lakes Independence Center**

**215 Fifth St.**

**Ithaca, NY 14850**

*Return to Sender*



A United Way of Tompkins County Partner Agency

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