

FLIC VOICE

Official Newsletter of the Finger Lakes Independence Center

Spring 2016

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Help FLIC update our Try it Room (TIR)!!

In November 2015, the Finger Lakes Independence Center began promoting the "Item of the Week."

Each week, a different adaptive device or piece of assistive technology from the Try-it Room is chosen to be featured.

Now, the items that could help someone maintain their independence or make everyday tasks easier are seen by community members throughout Tompkins County.

The Try-It Room at the Finger Lakes Independence Center is an opportunity for people to try adaptive devices and equipment that make everyday tasks easier.

By borrowing items, people can assess whether they want to purchase them for long term use. Items in the Try-It Room can be borrowed for a month with no deposit or cost associated.

Due to the success of the "Item of the Week," the Try-it Room has been a highly praised, well utilized service in our community. Waiting lists have been started and new

items have been purchased due to the Try-it Room's popularity.

The Finger Lakes Independence Center wants to ensure that the Try it Room remains a building block for independence by offering a wide variety of the most up-to-date, effective adaptive devices and assistive technology.



To achieve this, we have created an Amazon wish list of items we need, to make sure our Try it Room has the latest assistive devices available for people in the community to try.

Each month we will feature an area of the TIR to update. For the next month, we are seeking donations to add to our Home Health & Wellness section.

If you are interested in donating any of the items we need please use this link:

<https://amzn.com/w/1X5ASX4JIC7R6>

If you use Amazon Smile, selecting the Finger Lakes Independence Center means a portion of the purchase price may be donated to FLIC.

Raising the Minimum Wage: The Problem at FLIC

New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo has been pushing for a \$15 minimum wage for fast-food workers, NY State workers, State University of New York workers, New York City workers, and his plan now includes all of NY. Sounds great, right? People who are working should make a living wage. Unfortunately, raising the minimum wage isn't simple in the service provision and home-care sector of employment.

FLIC is one of the many disability and home health service agencies where the minimum wage increase could have a devastating effect on our ability to continue operating the Consumer-Directed Personal Assistance Services, also known as CDPAS. Unlike the fast-food industry, where profits can support an increase, the people who work providing CDPAS through not-for-profit fiscal intermediaries such as FLIC, are paid based on what Medicaid Managed Long Term Care Companies will reimburse for the service. Medicaid reimbursement needs to increase significantly to support any wage increase.

In response to these concerns, the state has committed to distributing up to \$65 million to health care employers to assist in covering the minimum wage hike in fiscal year 2017, which started this month, and up to \$198 million the following year. The specifics of how this

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

money will be distributed, as well as whether it is enough to cover the wage changes are questions without clear answers.

When processing payroll for Consumer Directed Personal Care Aides, FLIC pays the hourly wage, and is required to pay FICA, Workers Compensation, Disability, and Unemployment Insurance for each Personal Care Aide. In addition, we have the salary of a FLIC employee that processes time sheets, payroll and billing Medicaid Managed Care and the associated infrastructure costs such as computers, phones, copying etc. If we have to implement a state minimum wage increase without increased Medicaid reimbursement rate it would not be financially feasible for FLIC to continue this much needed service in Tompkins and Tioga counties.

Although FLIC's CDPAS fiscal intermediary services affect a relatively small number of workers (approx. 150), there are about 275,000 health care workers who would get a raise if the minimum wage rose across the board in New York State, according to a recent report by State Sens. Jeff Klein and Diane Savino. In addition, if the lowest-paid workers start earning

\$15 per hour, workers with more skills and experience who currently earn \$15 should get an increase as well.

At the budget hearing over a month ago, Executive Director Bryan O'Malley, of the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Services Association of New York State testified on behalf of consumer directed personal assistants who provide services to chronically ill or physically disabled individuals.

"There is no more fat to trim," O'Malley said. "There are no more efficiencies to find. The failure to fund this minimum wage increase, and adequately fund this program, will cause fiscal intermediaries to go out of business. We are discussing the potential wholesale collapse of an industry."

If Cuomo and New York State legislators want a higher minimum wage they must also be willing to pay for the care of the most physically and mentally fragile New Yorkers. This can only be accomplished by raising the Medicaid reimbursement rates to a level that matches the increased costs of a minimum wage hike.

■ Jan Lynch, Executive Director



Making Independence a Way of Life

Universal Design –
easy to get to, easy to use,
easy to understand



In one activity, they learned about accessible medical equipment, and used universal design to plan the layout of a medical clinic.

They considered automatic doors, motion sensor devices, easy to read signs, space to maneuver, short routes to exam rooms, adjustable exam equipment, and communication options, like remote video interpreting for people who are deaf.

The result - a health care utopia where everything was accessible for all patients with disabilities.

In real life, things may not be so ideal – A restroom has a wheelchair-accessible stall, but the restroom door is hard to open. A restaurant has an automatic door, but no Braille menu. A store has easy to read department signs, but high service counters.



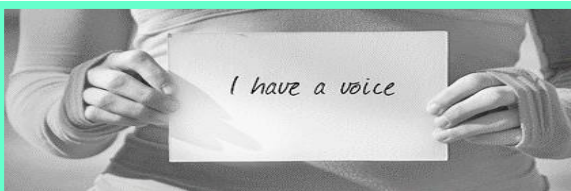
In addition to access for large spaces, many devices are now easy to use – motion sensors activate doors, faucets, and hand dryers. Touch screens are available on check outs, ticket machines, and information kiosks.

People with disabilities participate in the same activities as people without disabilities. You can use universal design to enable your clients and patrons to access your establishment and services.

FLIC can provide information about the ADA, and assist you with accessibility and universal design.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires public places and services be accessible for people with disabilities. But often, only parts of them are accessible. Universal design make all aspects accessible – easy to get to, easy to use, and easy to understand.

Recently, Ithaca College students visited FLIC to learn about FLIC services and disability awareness.



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.

**ALERT
ME
NOW**

Disability Etiquette Tip #1: Accessibility and Customer Service



What if your place or service is not yet fully accessible? Use customer service to make up the difference. Treat people with disabilities the same way you treat people without disabilities. Greet them the same way. Offer assistance. If they say they don't need assistance, take their word for it. People with disabilities prefer not to draw attention to their disability. A good guideline to use is this – "I just want to be able to do things the way everyone else does them, as much as possible". FLIC provides customer service training on customers with disabilities.

Healthy Living with Disabilities:

A Workshop Series by FLIC

Currently, Finger Lakes Independence Center is in the middle of a monthly Healthy Living with Disabilities workshop series. The series centers on the premise that everyone can live healthy, active, full lives regardless of their disability status or abilities. Starting off the series was a panel discussion on Living well with Diabetes on September 24. Past Healthy Living workshops include:

- Cancer
- COPD
- Stress Management
- Heart Health
- Anxiety

On March 23, we held a Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) workshop with Finger Lakes Independence Center's Advocacy Specialist Rachel Ferrara, MSW, and Charles Niven, Outreach Program Director at the Mental Health Association in Tompkins County.

WRAP program creator Mary Ellen Copeland, Ph.D says, "The Wellness Recovery Action Plan® or

WRAP®, is a self-designed prevention and wellness process that anyone can use to get well, stay well and make their life the way they want it to be."

WRAP Plans® are appropriate for people of all ages, skills, and abilities. Workshop attendees received an overview of WRAP® and its parts, different strategies for developing a WRAP®, and ways that WRAP® can help to maintain overall health and wellness.

Advocacy Specialist Emily Papperman organizes the Healthy Living Series. Emily enjoys hosting workshops for the community because:

"Recently, I have been thinking about different ways I can be of service to the community. I work as an Advocacy Specialist at FLIC, and I serve many people that way. While I hope I make a difference to everyone I help, there are not always immediate or tangible results. So, I love the aspects of my job where I get to be involved in something that makes an immediate impact on somebody's daily life. I love to facilitate community education through various disability and health-related workshops. Part of that education

includes presentations about dealing with anxiety, loss of physical function, sleep disorders, and other conditions."

Workshops are an opportunity for community members to learn in an engaging way and interact with their peers.

If you are interested in attending future workshops, upcoming Healthy Living Series workshops include:

- Falls Prevention (June 23)
- Coming to Terms with Change (July 21)
- Depression and Anti-depressants (Aug 25)

For more information, call FLIC at 607-272-2433.



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.
Cheryl Baker 272-2433 - The Registry



Did you know?

In the 2015 eRecruiting and Accessible Technology Survey, the Partnership on Employment & Accessible Technology interviewed 427 job applicants with disabilities; 46% described their last experience applying for a job online as “difficult to impossible.”



Thank you to our 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; Society for Human Resource Management of 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.

World of Skills Job Fair 2016 was a Success!

Thursday, April 28, was a successful morning – over 150 eager job seekers got to meet 32 employers.

When Larry Roberts, Director of Community Advocacy at FLIC, spoke to job seekers they said they got some good leads and when he checked in with employers they said they had a great day.

What Larry likes about World of Skills is that it's really a collaborative effort among all its partners, those who provide financial support, those who help plan the event, those who volunteer the day of the event to help make things run smoothly.

It's a great community effort that involves everything from getting posters printed and hung up, advertising, web-based promotions, encouraging clients to attend, conducting preparatory workshops, welcoming job seekers on the day of, greeting the employers and helping them set up, and collecting resumes and evaluations of the day.

Larry Roberts says, “We do this event because we want to provide an opportunity for job seekers to

meet employers and for employers to meet some qualified, skilled, and talented candidates. **That's really the heart of what this event is: An opportunity for people to connect”**

At the Annual World of Skills Job Fair, FLIC took the first step toward having at least one area employer make its employment application available in alternative accessible formats for applicants with disabilities. A Job Application Accessibility Fact Sheet was created and distributed to the 32 participating employers.

Included on the fact sheet were tips to increase the accessibility of web-based applications, such as:

- Ensuring that your application is compatible with assistive technology and adaptive software

For employers who do not have the means to make web-based applications accessible, it was noted that they need to offer alternative formats. These include, but are not limited to:

- Audio Applications – tape or create an audio file with application questions.
- Large Print or Braille Applications.



ADVOCACY SPECIALISTS: AN ALLY IN STRESS REDUCTION

Living with a Disability can be hard and stressful at times. If one doesn't manage stress properly it can have an impact on physical, mental and emotional well-being. Having one or two personal strategies to handle stress is essential for happiness and to maintaining a healthy lifestyle.



The best way to manage stress is to learn healthy coping strategies. There are many stress reduction strategies people can try. It may be necessary to try a variety of stress reduction techniques before finding one or two that work. Below are examples of stress reduction techniques:

- Talking to someone with the same or a similar disability can help put your mind at ease.
- Writing about what is bothering you for ten to fifteen minutes a day can help you learn how often you feel stress, the cause of stress, and new coping strategies.
- Doing something you enjoy is a great, fun way to relieve stress.
- Focusing on the present. Meditation and guided imagery are two ways to focus and relax your mind.

The Advocacy Specialists at the Finger Lakes Independence Center (FLIC) actively listen and empathize with people with disabilities who may need someone to listen non-judgmentally about their stresses and frustrations of living with a disability. Letting feelings out is a healthy, productive way to relieve stress. Advocacy Specialists are also prepared to help people develop coping skills for living with a disability and everyday life.

Advocacy Specialists use their personal experiences of living with a disability to help their consumers achieve their goals.

Two Advocacy Specialist at the Finger Lakes Independence Center have past experience facilitating Living Well with a Disability a personal goal setting health promotion program for people with disabilities. FLIC also offers monthly Healthy Living Series monthly workshops. Topics usually have a tie-in with stress reduction.

At our Stress Reduction Workshop, presenter Lynn Benedetto taught participants "6 Strategies to Help Reverse Unhealthy Stress Responses:"

- | | |
|----------------|-----------|
| 1. Stop | 4. Switch |
| 2. Swap | 5. Scribe |
| 3. Store/Share | 6. Shhh |

Are you interested in learning new skills, building a support system, and increasing your quality of life?

Visit a support group at FLIC!

**Invisible Disabilities - Weekly,
Monday 1-2PM & Biweekly,
Wednesday 3:30-4:30PM
contact Rachel@Fliconline.org**

**Depression – Biweekly,
Wednesday 3:30-4:30PM
contact Rachel@Fliconline.org**

**Friends and Family Stroke Recovery- 1st Thursday of the
Month 1:30-3PM
contact
Mitchraymond614@gmail.com**

Our groups are free, confidential, and peer run!



FLIC's Loan Closet



One of our most popular programs at FLIC is our Loan Closet. We have a variety of durable medical equipment; all equipment is available for short term loan.

In our Loan Closet we have wheelchairs, walkers, commodes, shower chairs, canes and many other items that might be helpful for you or someone you know.

Many times the people that use our Loan Closet program have a temporary need for equipment due to an upcoming surgery, or a recent accident. The Loan Closet is also a good opportunity to try a piece of equipment that you think might help with daily living needs. It is a chance to try the equipment before you buy it for yourself. Please call our office for more information about our Loan Closet.



BE A SELF-ADVOCATE – SPEAK UP!

Being an effective self-advocate is essential to being successful. While self-advocacy may come naturally to some, others need assistance acquiring the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary.

With this in mind, the Finger Lakes Independence Center's Student Transition Services Coordinator, Amy Jo DeKoeyer, is helping high school students **SPEAK UP** and ask for what they need!

During a self-advocacy presentation with local students, Amy Jo reviewed three key components to successful self-advocacy:

1. Know what you have
2. Know what you need
3. Know how to get it



Know what you have. Students were encouraged to get to know themselves. Taking a personal inventory of skills, abilities, resources, and supports aids in identifying areas where extra help may be needed.

There are numerous self-inventories and surveys anyone of any age can take to help them identify areas of strength and areas where they need support. They can also help you realize how your interests might lead you to specific jobs.

Know what you need. Often, students may be aware they need extra help, but are unaware of what is available to them. Amy Jo provided real life examples of accommodations students can use to be successful. In addition, students learned about their legal rights and protections now and in the future.

Amy Jo covered the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and how Individualized Education Plans help students be successful in school. The presentation went on to discuss how the Americans with Disabilities Act will help them be successful when they transition into adulthood.

Know how to get it. Once students have identified their needs, it is critical that they ask the right people to fulfill that need. Amy Jo pointed students in the right direction by naming the appropriate parties to approach at school, work, or in college.

In addition, Amy Jo discussed how the Finger Lakes Independence Center can help students participate in their own Individualized Education Plan meetings.

Self-Advocacy is an independent living skill that everyone should have the opportunity to develop. Through education and skill building, people with disabilities can overcome barriers to getting what they need!

Ballot Marking Device (BMD)

After the 2012 election, a study done by the Research Alliance for Accessible Voting found that 30.1% of voters with disabilities reporting difficulty voting at their polling place.

FLIC staff can register you to vote, and help you prepare to vote in this year's elections.

They can also explain the directions for the Ballot Marking Device at polling places.

When you vote, the Poll Site Manager can assist you in setting up and using the Ballot Marking Device (see photo ➤).

- Use the **blue UP** and **DOWN arrows** to look through the **candidates**.
- You can also **listen** to a description of the candidates.

- Use the **red X button** to **select** a candidate.
- Use the **yellow CONTESTS arrows** to skip **forward** or to go **back**.
- To write in a candidate, press the **blue DOWN arrow** until you get to the **WRITE-IN** box. Press the **red X** and follow the instructions.



After you complete and confirm your voting, the paper ballot will print on both sides. Use the privacy sleeve to receive your ballot. If you are voting by **affidavit**, place the ballot into an affidavit ballot envelope.

Insert your ballot into the scanner at the opposite end of the machine. Follow the instructions on the screen. Press the **CAST** button to cast your ballot.

Once your ballot is scanned and cast, it is deposited into the ballot box, and you are finished. This voting process takes 15-20 minutes.

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 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



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RETURN TO SENDER