



Finger Lakes **Independence** Center

*Opening Doors to Independence*

*Image Above: Finger Lakes Independence Center--FLiC--Logo: The letters: F-L-I-C and the letter I looks like an open door. Finger Lakes Independence Center Opening Doors to Independence*

# DECEMBER 2024

December is Persons with Disabilities Awareness Month, and the United Nations' International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) is celebrated on December 3rd. The IDPD is a day to promote the rights and well-being of people with disabilities, and to raise awareness of their experiences in all aspects of life.

## *December is also...*

- **World AIDS Day: December 1**
- **International Day of Persons with Disabilities: December 3**
- **Human Rights Day: December 10**
- **International Day of Epidemic Preparedness: December 27**

**\*\*FLiC will be closed beginning Tuesday December 24th thru Wednesday January 1st. We will re-open on Thursday Jan 2nd at 9am. Have a happy, safe, and joyful holiday season\*\***

**\*\*An Important Message about the**

## Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program or CDPAP\*\*

If you are receiving CDPAP services in your home, or you are a CDPAP Aide/Personal Assistant, please read the following:

Some of you may have been following the ongoing news about Governor Hochul working on having all CDPAP people and programs of New York State under one For-Profit organization. That organization is PPL, and they aren't from NYS.

Many aren't happy about the change and there are lawsuits against the state because of the huge change that is expected.

Some consumers and aides are already getting calls from their Medicaid Managed Care Plan or directly from PPL saying that they must switch now to PPL for their Fiscal Intermediary (FI) services (FLIC is currently your FI).

***Please don't feel rushed into switching.*** You have until March 28, 2025 to make a decision, and FLIC still plans to be part of CDPAP and we have been, and will continue working on the details.

Following are key points I would like to emphasize:

- PPL is new to NYS and is planning to take over CDPAP across the state.
- FLIC is still working as your FI and can continue.
- You don't have to make a quick decision if you are contacted. You have until 03/28/25 to think about your choices, discuss them with trusted people in your life, and then decide what is best for you.
- The administration at FLIC is working behind the scenes to preserve your right to choose.
- We will be sending this information to all consumers and aides, and any future updates.
- You can call us during normal working hours if you have any questions at 607- 272-2433 and ask for Jan or Tracy.

Sincerely,  
Jan Lynch, MSW  
FLIC Executive Director



### **NEW TOYS for KIDS with DISABILITIES:**

**Barbie® Introduces First Blind Barbie Fashionista Doll**



*Images Above on left: Blind Barbie in a pink and purple ruffled dress with long brown hair, using a white-tipped cane.*



*Image Above on right: Barbie with Down Syndrome with long dark blond hair, a flowered dress and short pink braces on her lower legs.*

Released as part of this year's global Barbie Fashionistas lineup, Barbie partnered with the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) to introduce a Barbie doll who is blind, joining an ever increasing group of Barbie Fashionistas featuring dolls with a variety of appearances and differing abilities.

"We proudly introduce a new blind Barbie doll reinforcing our commitment to creating products that represent global belonging and inclusivity in the doll aisle," said Krista Berger, Senior Vice President of Barbie and Global Head of Dolls. "We recognize that Barbie is much more than just a doll; she represents self-expression and can create a sense of belonging,"

Barbie partnered with AFB, an organization dedicated to creating a world of endless possibilities for individuals with blindness and low vision, to ensure details of the blind Barbie doll, including face, fashion, and accessories accurately depict individuals with blindness or low vision.

The doll comes with a white and red cane with an identifiable marshmallow tip and includes stylish and functional sunglasses. With some blind or low-vision individuals sensitive to light, the shaded lenses provides additional eye protection.

Barbie and AFB conducted testing with blind and low-vision children to ensure that the doll provided an accessible and satisfying play experience.

Barbie designed the doll's fashion to include a satiny pink blouse with a textured ruffle skirt for tactile interest. There is even a written tag with 'Barbie' in braille on the package.

In 2023 Barbie introduced the first-ever Barbie doll with Down syndrome, which won the Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative of the Year award presented by the Toy Association. As they did with AFB, Barbie partnered with the National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS) to ensure the doll accurately reflected and resonated with members of the Down syndrome community.

Physical characteristics of the doll that reflect people with Down syndrome include a shorter frame, longer torso and low muscle tone. Additionally, the doll's palms

include a single line, a characteristic often associated with those with Down syndrome. Special care was put into the face and head, featuring a rounder shape, smaller ears, and a flat nasal bridge. The eyes are slightly slanted in an almond shape while white dots can be seen in the iris.

Symbols are incorporated throughout the doll's outfit, such as the blue and yellow color palette representing Down syndrome awareness.

Berger cites several studies showing that doll play has proven to help develop empathy and social processing skills among children, fueling social skills needed to excel in their futures as they imagine they can be anything. As the brand's most diverse doll line, the Barbie Fashionistas series offers more than 175+ looks in a variety of skin tones, eye colors, hair colors and textures, body types, disabilities and fashions. This includes dolls with vitiligo, dolls that use a wheelchair or a prosthetic limb, a doll with hearing aids and a doll without hair.

"The 2024 Fashionistas dolls aim to advance Barbie's continued goal of reflecting a multi-dimensional view of beauty and fashion, allowing more children to see their world reflected through play," said Berger

The Barbie Fashionistas line is a product of the toy company Mattel.

~Rick Holborow, FLIC Board Member

## Fun for the Whole Family:

Squigz, A Toy for Children of all ages and abilities!

Squigz is a 36-piece building set made of silicone pieces that connect via suction cups. With all the bright colors and bendy shapes, you can spend hours making shapes and structures of all sizes, or just enjoy the popping sounds of the pieces pulling apart. A convenient plus: They can be washed in your dishwasher.

Squigz was chosen as one of 20 of the best toys this season for children with autism or special needs by Healthline, a website promoting health and wellness for all ages and abilities. Healthline's review states that the toy was chosen because "this toy provides an opportunity for open-ended play. There's not one right way to use it, and it may appeal to children who do not gravitate toward a traditional game with rules." Another reviewer says that she learned about Squigz from her child's occupational therapist. "They're great for building hand strength or sticking on different levels to work on your little one's squatting or bending."

Sold by Fat Brain Toys, the company is committed to selling educational toys and games that spark curiosity and inspire creativity. Priced at \$39, the company suggests the toy is best fit for ages 3 to 6 years and older.



*Images Above:*

*Top: a picture of the SQUIGZ mentioned in the article.*

*Multicolored shapes with suction cups on each end for building and creating structures, etc.*

*Middle: a dreidel set with gold*

~Rick Holborow, FLIC Board Member

## WINTER IS COMING! COLD WEATHER SAFETY TIPS:

When you are outside, frostbite and hypothermia are possible, so you need to protect yourself.

1. Wear layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing.
2. Wear a hat. Try to stay dry and out of the wind.
3. Cover your mouth to protect your lungs from extreme cold.
4. Mittens, snug at the wrist, are better than gloves.

Ice Safety - Please visit this informative link:

<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/safety/ice/thickness.html>

To keep pipes from freezing on an outside wall:

1. Let hot and cold-water trickle or drip at night from a faucet.
2. Open cabinet doors to allow more heat to get to un-insulated pipes under a sink or near an outer wall.
3. Make sure the heat is left on and set no lower than 55 degrees.
4. If you plan to be away: (1) Have someone, check your house daily to make sure the heat is still on to prevent freezing, or (2) drain and shut off the water system (except indoor sprinkler systems).

If Pipes Freeze:

1. Make sure you and your family members know how to shut off the water, in case pipes burst.
2. NEVER try to thaw a pipe with an open flame or torch. Use a hair dryer instead.
3. Always be careful of the potential for electric shock in and around standing water.

Carbon monoxide poisoning is a silent, deadly killer claiming about 1,000 lives each year in the United States.

1. Install a carbon monoxide detector.
2. NEVER run generators indoors.
3. Open a window slightly when using a kerosene heater and follow the manufacturer's instructions.
4. NEVER use a gas oven to heat your home.
5. If your heat goes out, you can keep warm indoors by closing off rooms you do not need, dressing in layers of lightweight clothing, and wearing a cap.

For More information:

1. <https://www.weather.gov/safety/cold-wind-chill-chart>
2. <http://www.ready.gov/winter-weather>
3. <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/winterstorm.html> Source.

Source:

<https://www.weather.gov/media/aly/PSAs/ExtremeCold.pdf>

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## **\*\* FEELING DISCOURAGED? GET INVOLVED \*\***

Volunteer Systems Advocacy Team – **[Join the mailing list here!](#)**

Regardless of who is in office, there is always important advocacy needed to fight for systems that are more accessible and inclusive of people with disabilities. One way we can fight for this is by connecting with our elected representatives and speaking out about issues like Medicare, homecare, housing, and transportation.

FLIC's Andrea Champlin will be conducting a Volunteer Systems Advocacy Team Info & Recruitment Session virtually on December 11, 2024, from 6:00 – 7:00 PM. She will be discussing what the Statewide Systems Advocacy Network is, what volunteers do, and how you can get involved.

**Please register for this session in advance using this link.** If you have any accessibility needs, please let Andrea know ahead of time by emailing her at **[Andrea@FLICOnline.org](mailto:Andrea@FLICOnline.org)** or calling (607) 272-2433 ext. 203

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## **SIGN UP FOR THE STATEWIDE OMH TOWN HALL**



# OMH Statewide Town Hall



**Featuring Commissioner Ann Sullivan, M.D.**  
**Wednesday, December 18, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.**

OMH is conducting a Statewide Town Hall with **Commissioner Ann Sullivan, M.D.**, presenting and taking feedback on the future of New York State's public mental health system.

OMH is dedicated to providing individuals and families access to quality, integrated services and supports that foster recovery and well-being. Public input is crucial in assisting the agency in meeting the needs of all of the people we serve. All comments will be reviewed and considered pursuant to Section 5.07 of the New York State Mental Hygiene Law.

## **Accessible In-Person and via Livestream**

This year, the town hall will be held in person at the Empire State Plaza in Albany. Additionally, there will be an option to livestream the event.

Registration will be available soon.

If you require any special accommodations to participate in the event or have any questions, please contact us at [planning@omh.ny.gov](mailto:planning@omh.ny.gov) no later than December 4, 2024.



## **The Registry Referral Program**

The Finger Lakes Independence Center administers the Registry Referral Program. This is a free referral service linking individuals seeking independent employment to people who need care in their home. Opportunities include: elder companion, housekeeper, run errands, cook, personal care aide, home care aide, LPN, RN. People looking for help can call and receive names of people willing to provide those services. If you either need assistance or if you would be interested in listing your name as a caregiver, please call FLIC at 272-2433 or email: [info@fliconline.org](mailto:info@fliconline.org). If you have experience caring for a friend or loved one, please consider sharing your compassion with others. This program is made possible through funding from the Tompkins County Office for the Aging.



## Need a Notary Public?

Contact Cheryl Baker at FLIC at 607-272-2433 to make an appointment.

Services are free!

*Image Left: gold star seal with the words "Notary Public" in black, bold letters in the center. Double circle surrounds these words. In the circle at top it reads "Official" and, at the bottom, "Duly Commissioned."*

Finger Lakes Independence Center | 215 Fifth Street | Ithaca, NY 14850 US

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