



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

JANUARY 2025

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

**FLIC WILL BE CLOSED ON WEDNESDAY JANUARY 1ST
WE WILL RE-OPEN FOR 2025 AT 9AM ON
THURSDAY 1/2/2025!**

SPECIAL DAYS IN JANUARY...

**1/1 - NEW YEAR'S DAY
1/4 - WORLD BRAILLE DAY
1/20 - MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY
1/27 - International Holocaust Remembrance Day**

Three Intentions for the New Year

Instead of entitling this article using the word “resolutions,” I chose “intentions” instead. The definition of “intention” involves a hope or aim or plan. The word resolution not only sounds heavy and abstract, but its definition implies just this: “Committing to a goal or accomplishment.” If setting clear goals is an idea or action you do not know much about or ever tried, considering

attempting some of these following “intentions.” Any attempt towards focusing on one or more of these will expand your personal growth and help to live more confidently and consciously in the New Year.

1. Health and Fitness:

No matter what disability you have, there is always some form of exercise you can participate in. Of course you can always do exercising on your own, but joining others in physical activity is not only a great way to learn new skills, but also an opportunity to meet other people – and hopefully other people with similar and different disabilities. Two programs I know of in the area include the Greek Peak Adaptive Snow-Sports, GPAS, and the YMCA of Ithaca and Tompkins County. Specially trained professionals at Greek Peak offer lessons and day-long skiing and snowboarding for those who are sight-impaired or have been an amputee / prosthetic user, or otherwise mobility impaired. The YMCA of Ithaca and Tompkins County offer a number of adaptive sports programs, including general fitness courses, gymnastics, and swimming.

While there may be other programs in the area specifically organized for the disabled, this doesn't mean you are limited to them. If you just want to get outside to start walking, or increase your overall fitness learning yoga, ask a family member, friend or neighbor who participates in one of these to take you with them to show you how to begin some basic steps. If you don't personally know anyone, ask people for the names of instructors or groups. and then approach them asking if they would be willing to take any extra time needed to help you learn the basics of the exercise. Just know that not every person you ask may be willing, yet you will be surprised how many instructors in their field are equally willing to take on what they view as a newcomer with a new type of teaching ability needed.

As you improve physically, you will also become more confident and may want to reach out and try other sporting activities.

2. Learn more about your disability, and your Disability Community.

Often, individuals who have grown up with a disability or have experienced the recent onset of one may only know that they are the only one who is blind, mobility impaired, affected by depression and anxiety, etc. Reaching out to find others who have the same type of disability as you is a great way to learn new information about your disability, what you need to do to keep yourself healthy, and most important learn what abilities you have and can learn that otherwise-abled people around you don't know about.

For example, if you have severe asthma and do not know anyone else with this condition, you may have been told by your family, friends, and even doctors that you have to stay inside and cannot partake in any strenuous physical activities. This is not the case for many people with this condition. There are adaptations one can make to do more physical activity, and being part of a group of people, or even an organization will provide you with knowledge and skills to broaden your horizons much more than you may have thought or been told.

Many disabilities have consumer organizations which you can join. You can look online to find out if there are any organization groups near you. Some larger organizations even will offer scholarships so you can travel to a state, regional or national convention, where you can meet all types of people in your disability community. Many of these conventions also have exhibition halls where vendors demonstrate and sell particular equipment to improve accessibility and skills for convention attendees.

3. Sharing Knowledge and Awareness about You and your Disability.

If you feel you are comfortable with how you manage in your life and would like to educate others, think about offering to speak to school children or civic groups to enlighten them about what it is

really like to be a person who is disabled. Share with them what your abilities actually are and dispel any common myths or stereotypes. It is helpful also not just to share your greatest achievements and victories, but also to share your everyday likes and dislikes. For example, let's say you are a wheelchair user who races in marathons and drives in an adapted pick-up truck to and from work to supervise a construction site. Certainly, these are proof of overcoming what others may think of as being insurmountable. However, relating with the audience in some way, such as the type of foods you like or concerts you like to attend reveals that you have likes and dislikes similar and different just like any other individual. Show that while you are disabled, you can reach goals and aspirations just as anyone else can who puts their mind and body into taking steps toward self-improvement.

Just Try Anything.

So much is possible! And many would say all of these are impossible! Before you feel defeated before even trying, remember Homer said it took Odysseus, the Greek hero, 20 years to make it back to Ithaca. Again, "intentions" are what to aim for this New Year, not "resolutions." Take an idea one step at a time. Physical and mental health are highly attributed to our extracurricular activities. Setting this intention commits you only to learning more, trying something new, and meeting new people. The reality is, if each of us can grow beyond our limits, share this with others we know and do not know, we as a community can make this truly a Happy New Year.

~Rick Holborow, FLIC Board Member

FLIC Coordinates Adaptive Desk Project with Cornell Assistive Technologies



This month, NY Connects Advocacy Specialist, Ben Bassett, delivered the adaptive desk that the Cornell Engineering team built for one of FLIC's NY Connects clients, Jeff B. Jeff was so happy!

We wanted to share some photos of the finished product, which was a collaboration between FLIC and Cornell's Engineering School. They are looking forward to working on more projects for us.

3 images above, side by side: first is an over the shoulder shot of a man in a wheelchair using his new

adaptive desk with a tablet, second: front shot of the same man with his adaptive desk, showing how his wheelchair fits under the desk, third shot is the same man with his wife beside him, kissing his head.

FROM FLIC'S SAFETY & PREPAREDNESS CORNER:

DO 1 THING - <https://www.do1thing.com/>

- Do1Thing is a non-profit organization that promotes emergency preparedness for individuals and businesses.
- Do1Thing takes emergency preparedness and breaks it down into small easy steps each month to make preparing easier.
- Every month has a low or no-cost option to become better prepared. We give you a choice of three things you can do, then you choose one. You can jump in at any time.

January - Plan! Understand what puts you at risk from disasters and take steps to lower your risk.

1. Plan what to do if you had to evacuate.
2. Take steps now to prevent damage to your home.
3. Learn what disasters can happen in your area and decide what you will do in a disaster.

Winter Safety - Winter Storm Safety

1. Take steps to heat your home safely and know what to do if the power goes out.
2. Limit outdoor time and take precautions to stay safe and warm.
3. Know the signs of hypothermia and frostbite and know what to do if you or someone has them.

Tompkins County Core Advisory Group (CAG)

The mission of the Tompkins County Core Advisory Group (CAG) is to advocate for and facilitate the inclusion of persons with access and functional needs in local emergencies planning activities.

The group identifies issues and barriers and develops strategies for promoting inclusion and integration throughout all phases of emergency management.

At our December 17th meeting the group discussed resources related to mass care, sheltering, feeding, disability needs distribution, emergency supplies, and logistics networks, with a particular emphasis on emergency sheltering for people with disabilities. The complexities of setting up shelters during disasters were discussed, including the importance of client-centered approaches, resource allocation, and collaboration between the Red Cross and local services.

One of the core philosophies of CAG is people with disabilities engaging with local emergency management officials to work towards inclusive planning. Every time a person with a disability shares their personal experience with a first-responder or an emergency management official is one step closer to inclusive planning. CAG is always looking for people with disabilities to join us. Our next zoom meeting will be Tuesday, February 18,

Tompkins County-Safety & Incident Real-Time Emergency Notifications-SIREN

Tompkins SIREN (Safety & Incident Real-Time Notifications) is a real time alert system service that is free and allows individuals to receive alerts sent from local authorities.

The service allows residents to stay informed on potentially hazardous situations such as weather, traffic, and other emergencies.

Who can sign up for SIREN?

SIREN is available to anyone who lives, works, travels through, or visits Tompkins County, City of Ithaca, and other local municipal communities. The address for your account preferences can be your home location, work location, or any other location you care about.

Why should I sign-up for SIREN?

When emergencies happen, you can be the first to know. In addition to emergency notifications this system is used to share critical information with the public in our community. Tompkins County and local municipalities use this system to send official, real-time alerts to the public with information about potentially life-saving actions they may need to take to keep themselves and their families safe. By signing up for SIREN you are taking a large step toward improving your personal safety and the safety of our community.

What types of notifications will I get?

Mass notifications and emergency alerts are sent 24/7 when there is an immediate threat to life and/or property. In addition to emergency alerts, you can also choose to receive customizable community notifications. These include notifications about:

- Severe weather
- Safety risks
- Health risks
- Transportation disruption
- Special event information
- Test messages

You can choose what types of notifications you receive.

How do I sign-up? Signing up for SIREN is easy! Go to:

<https://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/All-Departments/Emergency-Response/Emergency-Notifications-SIREN> and register your contact information.

I don't have a computer-who can help me sign up?

- Text SIREN to 67283 from a mobile phone
- Visit your local library to sign up online for SIREN on an accessible computer.
- Call 2-1-1 (1-877-211-8667) and someone in our local help line will assist you.
- Contact your local city, town, or village official.
- Call or visit the Finger Lake Independence Center



**** 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 periodic Volunteer Systems Advocacy Team Info & Recruitment Session virtually in 2025. She will be discussing what the Statewide Systems Advocacy Network is, what volunteers do, and how you can get involved.

Please let Andrea know if you are interested in future info sessions by emailing her at **Andrea@FLIConline.org** or calling (607) 272-2433 ext. 203 and follow this link to sign up to be a volunteer advocate:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdzxB6SUxkNHsFGxvssWQ9Yp7iATwfS-sCOZWhIpnivAytQAw/viewform>



**ITHACA BRAIN INJURY SUPPORT GROUP
MEETS MONTHLY AT FLIC**



Ithaca Brain Injury Support Group

Please Join Us!

We welcome you to share your brain injury or caregiving story, experiences, and questions with our friendly and supportive network of caring individuals.

2025 Support Group Meeting Dates:

Thursday, January 16

Thursday, February 20

Thursday, March 20

Thursday, April 17

Thursday, May 15

Thursday, June 26 (one week later due to Juneteenth)

Thursday, July 17

Thursday, August 21

Thursday, September 18

Thursday, October 16

Thursday, November 20

Thursday, December 18

When:

3rd Thursday each month
1—3 pm

Where:

Finger Lakes Independence Center
215 5th Street, Ithaca, NY 14850

For more information, please contact:

Jessica Morley, CBIS, FACTS Coordinator
607-278-3097
jmorley@bianys.org

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

The Brain Injury Association of New York State is here to help.
To learn more about brain injury, a support group in your area or for help,
visit www.bianys.org or call 1-800-444-6443.

THE VOICE OF BRAIN INJURY

Winter Weather Accessibility

Snow and ice can pose additional barriers for everyone, but especially for people that are aging and/or live with disabilities. According to the Americans With Disabilities Act, it is municipalities' responsibility to ensure that sidewalks, curb cuts, and other paths remain accessible. Most municipalities require that home and landowners maintain the sidewalks and curb cuts adjoining their property. You can read more about these policies in the City of Ithaca by clicking [here](#). If owners fail to clear paths of snow and ice, they can be fined, but these rules are often not enforced or are enforced inconsistently throughout the municipality. As a result, we know that people can become stuck in their homes, especially if they utilize mobility devices, such as a wheelchair.

The Finger Lakes Independence Center is proud to be part of the Coalition for Snow-free

Crosswalks and Sidewalks (affectionately known as the SnoCo). As we continue to fight for more proactive approaches to ensuring year-round accessibility for all, it is important that individuals report instances of snow and ice that hamper accessibility. This will help bring attention to the issue and demonstrate the need for change. If you live in the City of Ithaca, you can utilize an online portal to report such instances. You can find the portal by clicking on this link **here**. If you live in another municipality, we recommend reporting issues to the Department of Public Works.

If you are interested in learning more about the SnoCo and how to get involved, please contact FLIC staff Andrea by emailing her at **Andrea@FLICOnline.org**. If you're interested in learning more about this issue, you can also **check out this webpage** created by Disability Rights New York or check out **this interview** with DRNY's Christina Asbee.



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. 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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