

THE FLIC

NEWS FLASH

News from the Finger Lakes Independence Center

JANUARY 2026

SHORT NOTES

- FLIC will be **closed January 19** in celebration of **Martin Luther King Jr. Day**.
- **Free concert in commemoration of Martin Luther King Jr.** on Sunday, January 25 at the James J. Whalen Center for Music. <https://www.visitithaca.com/event/ithaca-college-annual-mlk-celebrat/8326/>
- Reminder: **When Ithaca City School District closes schools for inclement weather, FLIC is closed.** We follow their schedule.
- **Are you a caregiver** looking for more clients? Join FLIC's Registry! We help match caregivers with those in need. Contact cheryl@fliconline.org.
- We currently have **free incontinence supplies** in a variety of styles and sizes. Stop in and see what we have. While supplies last.

- You can **contact FLIC** by calling 607-272-2433 or by emailing the general mailbox at info@fliconline.org.

A Message from Executive Director, Jan Lynch



2025 in Review and Moving into 2026

Advocacy, Resilience, and Independence

The Finger Lakes Independence Center (FLIC) remains a strong, trusted voice for people with disabilities throughout our region. As we moved through 2025, we did so during a time of significant change, uncertainty, and concern. These challenges have reinforced why Independent Living Centers like FLIC are not only important—but essential.

One of the most significant changes in 2025 has been New York State's transition of the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP) to Public Partnerships LLC (PPL). While intended to streamline administration, this transition has created confusion, stress, and disruption for many consumers and personal assistants. FLIC has stood firmly beside our community, providing information, hands-on assistance, and advocacy to ensure that people do not lose services, choice, or control over their own care. Self-direction is a right, and we continue to defend it.

At the same time, there is growing fear about cuts to Medicaid, SNAP, and other critical assistance programs. These programs are not optional supports—they are lifelines that allow people with disabilities to live independently, safely, and with dignity. FLIC continues to advocate at every level to protect these vital services and to remind decision-makers that disability policy is human policy.

Even during challenging times, there is much to celebrate. Our building's beautiful mural by artist Nico Cathcart, stands as a visible statement of inclusion, strength, and community pride. It reflects the voices, experiences, and resilience of the people we serve. We are deeply grateful for our dedicated Board of Directors, whose leadership keeps advocacy at the heart of our mission, and for our exceptional staff, who show up every day committed to empowering others.

We are deeply grateful for our community partners, whose collaboration strengthens our work every day, and for the many community supporters

who give so generously through monetary donations and donations of equipment. Your kindness and belief in our mission make a real difference, helping people live with greater independence. Most of all, we

thank those of you who come to FLIC for assistance. Your trust, resilience, and willingness to share your journeys remind us why this work matters so much.

Looking ahead to 2026, FLIC is committed to continuing and adding to services and supports for people participating in the CDPA program, as well as continuing with all our other services. We will continue to adapt, advocate, and lead—ensuring that people with disabilities are not left behind during times of change. Together, we will keep pushing forward, united in the belief that independence, choice, and equity are rights worth fighting for.

Contact me at jan@fliconline.org if you have suggestions for new ways FLIC can support you.

I wish you all the very best in the upcoming year. *Jan*



Let's say you see someone in a public space who has limited mobility.

If your mind thinks, "This person needs a ramp because they can't use stairs ... "

Instead, train your mind to think, "How can we design this space so everyone can access it easily, using ramps, elevators, or alternative routes, ensuring full participation?"

Ithaca is Inclusive Window Clings

Celebrating the diversity within our communities—those things that make Ithaca 'Ithaca' and Tompkins County so unique – provides an

important opportunity for local businesses and organizations to visibly declare they are committed to inclusiveness and to welcoming lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people and families. This county-wide visibility program is open to any business or organization wishing to make this commitment.



The 'Ithaca is Inclusive' window clings represent a project and partnership of the Tompkins Chamber, Visit Ithaca, the Downtown Ithaca Alliance, Ithaca College's Center for LGBT Education, Outreach & Services, and Planned Parenthood's Out for Health program. Each organization values diversity, inclusion, and respect, and seeks to offer resources to businesses and organizations in our community.

For more information, visit <https://www.ithaca.edu/center-lgbt-education-outreach-services/resources-and-services/inclusive-decals>

Continuing the Story of How Our Walkers Went to Honduras

Last month, we told you about how we donated some of our of our foldable walkers to a Honduran community for seniors through ACTS ("Americans Caring Teaching Sharing") Honduras, a non-governmental organization doing "community building" work in rural Honduras.

Well, they made it! And here is a thank you letter we received.

ACTS Honduras' goal of stronger communities throughout the region is resulting in modest growth. People moving to the region cite a better quality of life, safety, and living with dignity. ACTS has a broad scope of interests including health, water, agriculture, education, and building leadership.

To learn more, visit <https://actshonduras.org/>

Jan,

I am back from Honduras where I delivered the walkers, canes and commode that your organization so generously donated.

This is a link to some of the pictures from our trip. The lady in the yellow top is using one of your walking canes. I wish I had taken a picture of how she arrived at the gathering, using a broken tree branch to support herself.

Thank you so much for your generosity. I will be in touch about the needs in the village before my next trip down there.

Thank you,
Brad Taylor DVM



For more pictures:

<https://actshonduras.smugmug.com/Trip-Reports/2025-Trips/November-2025/Best-Nov-2025>



Braille is Evolving, Not Disappearing, in the Digital Age

Despite the rise of audio technology, braille and independence for the blind and those with low vision, integrating with modern digital tools to ensure its continued relevance.

While screen readers and audiobooks offer convenient alternatives, advocates emphasize that audio alone cannot replace the foundational understanding of spelling, punctuation, and grammar that braille

provides. Studies consistently show that individuals proficient in braille tend to have higher rates of education and employment, underscoring its critical role in academic and professional success.

The future of braille lies in its seamless integration with digital technology, broadening access to information:

- Refreshable Braille Displays: These devices translate digital text from computers, smartphones, and tablets into a tactile braille format in real-time, allowing users to interact with online content, emails, and e-books using touch.
- Next-Generation Devices: New innovations such as the "Monarch" tablet are being developed to provide advanced access to multi-line digital braille and tactile graphics for complex data like charts and math equations, transforming educational opportunities.
- Increased Accessibility in Public Spaces: Beyond personal devices, braille is appearing in more public applications, such as the initiative by United Airlines to add braille signage to its entire fleet by 2026, enhancing independent navigation.

Of course, challenges remain, including the high cost of digital braille devices and a shortage of qualified braille teachers. However, organizations like the National Federation of the Blind and the Library of Congress National Library Service are actively working on solutions. As technology advances, so too will braille's role in breaking down barriers and fostering an inclusive world.

Snow and Ice Removal in Ithaca and How FLIC Stays Involved

Snow and ice pose barriers for everyone, but especially for people that are aging and/or live with disabilities. According to the Americans With Disabilities Act, it is a municipality's responsibility to ensure that sidewalks, curbcuts, and other paths remain accessible.

Most municipalities require that home and landowners maintain the sidewalks and curbcuts 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're interested in learning more about the SnoCo and how to get involved, please contact Andrea at andrea@FLIOnline.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.



Free NYSEGEnergy Savings Kits Available

Our local Office for the Aging has **free** do-it-yourself energy savings kits available for **individuals over 60**. Each kit contains 10 outlet and switch gaskets, 2 door sweeps, 1 can of spray foam and a 3-pack window insulation kit.

To get a kit, visit Office for the Aging, 214 W. Martin Luther King Jr./State St., 8:30am-4:30pm, Monday-Friday. (The kits are not able to be mailed.) *While supplies last. One kit per household. For individuals 60 or older.*

For more information, call Office for the Aging at (607) 274-5482.

"Setting goals is the first step into turning the invisible into the visible."

— Tony Robbins, life and business coach, author, and entrepreneur, who lives with benign pituitary tumor and extreme mercury poisoning

Try this for free!

Ideal Stretch



Available in our
Try It Room

Items in our Try It Room can be borrowed for one month. There's no deposit or cost associated with using items from the Try It Room.



January is National Blood Donor Month

Blood donation is safer than ever before and saves lives. Millions of people including cancer patients, organ recipients, and victims of accidents rely on blood donations. About 36,000 units of red blood cells and 7,000 units of platelets are needed every single day in the U.S.

What one step can you take to celebrate National Blood Donor

Month? Give blood. Don't wait for a disaster. Someone needs blood now! Contact the **American Red Cross** or your local blood bank for more information. Use #NationalBloodDonorMonth and #GiveBlood to share on social media.

Increased Awareness is a Powerful Tool.

 Share This Email

 Share This Email

 Share This Email

 Share This Email



We'd Love to Hear From You!

Voice (607) 272-2433

Video (607) 216-9683

Fax (607) 272-0902

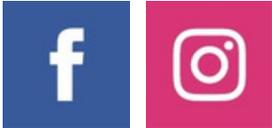
info@fliconline.org

Office Hours:

Monday-Friday

9:00am-5:00pm

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