

THE FLIC

NEWS FLASH

News from the Finger Lakes Independence Center

August 2026

SHORT *notes*

- **FLIC will be closed on Monday, September 7**, in observance of Labor Day.
- **We have items we can offer you for FREE!** Two-wheeled walkers, crutches, commodes, infant diapers sizes 3 and 4, incontinence briefs size M, and supplements for those who get nutrition through a feeding tube. Simply stop in. While supplies last.
- **FLIC has a JAWS (Job Access with Speech) screen reader** available on its public-use computer. To book time on JAWS, just contact our office.
- Visitors to the Roy H. Park Preserve in Tompkins County can now enjoy a **universally-accessible trail and expanded wetland boardwalk**. For more information, visit flit.org/park.
- The **Invisible Disability Support Group** meets twice a month via Zoom, on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month. For this month's meeting times, email Brenda at brenda@fliconline.org.
- You can **contact FLIC** by calling 607-272-2433 or by emailing the general mailbox at info@fliconline.org.

**"No amount of smiling at a flight of stairs
has ever made it turn into a ramp."**

— Stella Young, comedian and disability advocate

With NY Connects, We Have Staff to Help Navigate Your Questions



Stephanie, our NY Connects Specialist, is here to provide FLIC clients with resources that enable you to remain healthy and safe while living in your home. Things like ...

- Finding home care services
- Applying for Medicaid or other long-term programs
- Finding transportation to medical appointments
- Locating meal programs
- Finding housing options
- And so much more

If you need help, reach out to Stephanie at 607-272-2433 or stephanie@fliconline.org.

NY Connects is a free New York State program that provides trusted information and assistance for long-term services and supports. Stephanie helps people with disabilities live independently and navigate care options like home care, meals, and benefits.

Welcome Support Specialist Shelby Piotti

One of our newest team members that supports the Consumer Directed Personal Care Assistant Department of Health Grant Program, Shelby is a lifelong resident of Tompkins and Cayuga counties with a background in human services, caregiving, and health care support. Her experience includes working as a nurse's aide, Residence Counselor, Assistant Program Manager, Day Habilitation Specialist, and health insurance enrollment assistant.



Shelby holds an A.A.S. in Human Services from Tompkins Cortland Community College.

Outside of work, Shelby enjoys crafting and hiking with her 9-year-old pup.



Primary Reasons that Disability Rights Advocates Oppose Medical Aid in Dying (MAiD)

For those who were unable to attend FLIC's free screening of the documentary, *Life After*, the film explored Medical Aid in Dying through several people's personal experiences.

Many disability rights advocates oppose medical aid in dying (MAiD). They raise significant ethical, legal, and systemic concerns regarding how these laws impact the disabled community. However, not every person with a disability is opposed to MAiD. Like with any group of people, there are different opinions.

FLIC supports the position of the New York Association of Independent Living (NYAIL), which is opposed to MAiD based on the reasons below:

The primary concerns with MAiD voiced by disability advocates can be summarized across five key areas:

Systematic Devaluation of Disabled Lives

- The "Better Off Dead" Bias: Advocates point out that able-bodied individuals often project their own fears of dependency onto disabled people. Clinicians and the public often mistakenly view needing help with basic daily activities as a complete loss of dignity. People with disabilities do not necessarily view needed assistance in their lives as a loss of dignity.
- Disparities in Suicide Prevention: When a non-disabled person expresses suicidal ideation, they are universally met with psychiatric intervention and prevention services. When a disabled person expresses the same desire, advocates argue that the medical system is more likely to validate the urge as rational and offer MAiD instead.
- Lower Quality of Life Assessments: Studies indicate that non-disabled people and medical professionals routinely rate the quality of life of a disabled person lower than how disabled people rate their own lives.

Socioeconomic Coercion and Lack of Real Choice

- Failing Healthcare Infrastructure: Advocates argue that MAiD becomes the "cheaper option" in our flawed for-profit healthcare system. Patients may feel pressured to choose death if they cannot afford or have access to proper long-term

home care, mobility aids, or adequate palliative pain management.

- **Being a Burden:** Many patients who seek MAiD cite a fear of being a financial or emotional burden on family and caregivers. Disability groups worry this perceived obligation to die overrides genuine personal autonomy. If the healthcare systems provide the care that is needed at a realistic cost for those who can't afford their own care, it would negate much of the concern of "burden."

Broadening Scope and the "Slippery Slope"

- **Expansion Past Terminal Illness:** While U.S. laws currently restrict MAiD to individuals with a terminal prognosis of six months or less, advocates look to international examples. In Canada, for instance, eligibility expanded under "Track 2" to individuals with non-terminal chronic disabilities and mental health conditions.
- **Subjective Definitions:** Activists express concern that the line between a "progressive disability" (like multiple sclerosis or muscular dystrophy) and a "terminal illness" can be highly subjective and easily blurred by medical professionals.

Inadequate Legal Safeguards

- **Doctor Shopping:** Advocacy memos note that safeguards fail to prevent coercive family members or abusive caregivers from "doctor shopping" until they find a physician willing to approve the lethal dose.
- **Lack of Post-Prescription Tracking:** Once a lethal prescription is filled, there is usually no legal requirement for an independent witness to be present during ingestion. This leaves room for undetected coercion or elder/disabled abuse.

Access and Inequity Dilemmas

- **The Self-Administration Paradox:** Most standard U.S. MAiD laws require the patient to physically self-administer the medication to prove final consent. This creates a paradox: it excludes individuals with advanced neuromuscular conditions (like ALS) who cannot swallow or move, effectively creating

an unequal tier of healthcare access based entirely on physical disability.

NYAIL is Part of this Lawsuit:

In June, a coalition of national and state organizations filed a federal lawsuit against New York State. This lawsuit argues that assisted suicide law violates the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act by singling out people with disabilities and other vulnerable individuals, placing them at risk of premature death rather than ensuring access to care, support and suicide prevention services. Several Independent Living Centers across the State are organizational plaintiffs in this case, and NYAIL's Advocacy and Policy Associate, José Hernández, is an individual plaintiff.

You can read more about the lawsuit [here](#).

Share your thoughts on Disability Freedom

FLIC wants you to share how disability freedom improves a person's quality of life and what disability freedom means to them.



With the threats we're facing to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Olmstead, and Section 504, collecting stories of Disability Freedom are a crucial step for getting the LaTonya Reeves Freedom Act (LRFA) passed and for helping FLIC in its state level advocacy. LRFA codifies the right of people with disabilities to receive home- and community-based services in the setting of their choice. LRFA is named after LaTonya Reeves, a woman who had to flee her home state of Tennessee, where she was forced to live in a nursing home. LaTonya Reeves relocated thousands of miles away to Colorado, where she was able to receive the services she needed to remain living in the community. LRFA would protect the freedoms of people with disabilities.

Please check out this [VideoRequest](#) link.

Please share the link with your networks, too!

If you have issues with the platform or need an alternative way to share your story, please email Andrea@FLIOnline.org or call her at (607) 272-2433.

YOUR donations are going to Ukraine!

Rich and John from Crutches4Africa drove from Rochester to FILC to pick up more than 60 walkers and dozens of crutches to be given to recipients free of charge in rural or underserved areas, local clinics, and community centers in Ukraine. The walkers and crutches came from FLIC's overflowing Loan Closet.

"I am so proud to work for an agency with the ability to service not only our own community but also serve others around the world!" -- Janet Goodrich, who manages FLIC's Try-It-Room.

Crutches 4 Africa (C4A) is a nonprofit organization based in Denver, dedicated to collecting, shipping, and distributing mobility devices such as crutches, walkers, and wheelchairs to people in need across Africa and several other countries.

To learn more visit <https://www.crutches4africa.org>



Introducing Our Interns!

Seun Opabisi is an MBA student at Cornell's SC Johnson College of Business, with more than seven years of experience in audit, financial analysis, and business advisory across Nigeria and the United Kingdom. Before Johnson, she worked at PwC Nigeria and KPMG Jersey, supporting clients across



industries including fintech, real estate, manufacturing, and investment management.

Seun joined FLIC through Cornell's MATCH program, which connects MBA students with local organizations for hands-on summer projects. At FLIC, she is supporting financial analysis, budgeting, reporting, and strategic planning.

Originally from Nigeria, Seun is focused on building a career in finance and is excited to contribute her experience to an organization serving the local community.

Lhoobovna Wallace-Ollennu is an MBA candidate at Cornell's SC Johnson College of Business. Originally from Accra, Ghana, she has a background in finance, accounting, and investment management and is passionate about using leadership, finance, and community engagement to create meaningful social and economic impact.

At Cornell, Lhoobovna serves as Vice President of Communications for both the Johnson Africa Business Society and the Women's Management Council. She is also an Admissions Ambassador and a Lead Graduate Course Assistant, where she enjoys mentoring students and fostering an inclusive and supportive community.

Through the MATCH program, Lhoobovna has enjoyed building meaningful connections within the Ithaca community while learning from people with diverse lived experiences. As an international student, the program has provided a wonderful opportunity to become more connected to the Finger Lakes region and to support FLIC's mission of promoting inclusion, independence, and community participation for people with disabilities. She is grateful to be part of a program that brings people together through genuine connection, mutual learning, and friendship.

EllePeaAcres@Gmail.Com

Sponsored by
Caregiver Action Network

CAREGIVER

U Pick & Bouquet Making Event

TIME

August 22 or
August 23
10:30 AM – 3 PM

WHO

Caregivers of
loved ones living
with long term
illness or injury

PLACE

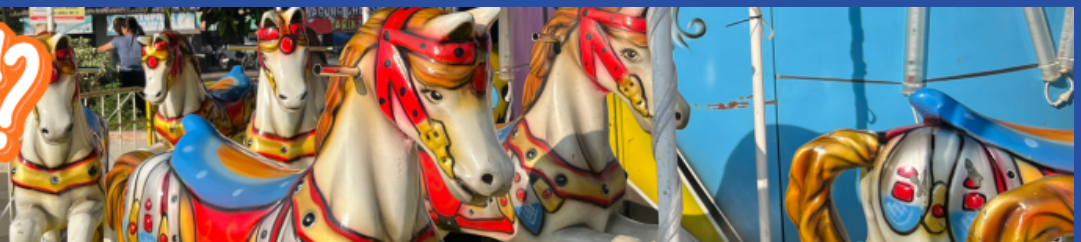
Elle Pea Acres
430 Auburn Road,
Groton, NY 13073

Event is FREE for Caregivers

Register By scanning QR
Code



Did You
Know?



The historic carousel at Stewart Park -- -- opened in 1952 -- was modified around 2018 for the enjoyment of people who use

wheelchairs or have other mobility disabilities. With the help of Play By Design and volunteers, Friends of Stewart Park added a **ramp and adaptive chariot** where a wheelchair could be secured next to a seated caregiver.

In 2026, more changes are coming! The first ride of each hour will be a sensory-friendly ride where carousel music will not play and will operate at a reduced speed, reducing auditory overstimulation and offering predictable, low-speed movement.*

For more information, visit

[https://www.friendsofstewartpark.org/carousel?
utm_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.friendsofstewartpark.org/carousel?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

**We can't confirm if this has or has not yet happened. Please reach out to Stewart Park to confirm.*

TRY THIS FOR FREE

Humidifier



Available in our Try It Room

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

FLiC

Awareness Spotlight

August 31:

International Overdose Awareness Day

International Overdose Awareness Day is a global campaign dedicated to ending overdose, remembering without stigma those who have died, and acknowledging the grief of the family and friends left behind. The campaign also raises awareness that overdoses are preventable and encourages education, action, and access to lifesaving resources.

What is one great way you can get involved? Wear **purple** on August 31 and share a photo on social media using **#InternationalOverdoseAwarenessDay** to help raise awareness and show your support.

Increased Awareness is a Powerful Tool.



Share This Email



Share This Email



Share This Email



Share This Email

Thoughts to Share?

Voice (607) 272-2433

Video (607) 216-9683

Fax (607) 272-0902

info@fliconline.org

Office Hours:

Monday-Friday

9:00am-5:00pm

215 Fifth Street,
Ithaca NY 14850



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