THE FLIC NEWSFLASH

News from the Finger Lakes Independence Center



SHORT notes

- **FLIC will be closed on Monday, September 7**, in observance of Labor Day.
- The Museum of the Earth is hosting **Sensory Friendly Hours** from 5-7pm -- for visitors of all ages and abilities -- on Sunday, September 20. Loud/bright exhibits are adjusted/turned off, and the classroom is designated as a quiet zone. Space is limited, so advance registration is encouraged. Register: **Museum Events Calendar.**
- Check out **Do1Thing**, a non-profit organization that promotes emergency preparedness for individuals and businesses. **Do1Thing** takes emergency preparedness and breaks it down in to small, easy steps each month to make preparing easier.
- **Hear it? Confront it.** The R-word is offensive, outdated, and unacceptable.
- You can **contact FLIC** by calling 607-272-2433 or by emailing the general mailbox at **info@fliconline.org**.

I get to use my wheelchair to get around every day. It's pretty fun, and I love rolling down hills really, really fast.

— Ali Stroker, Tony Award-winning actress
and disability advocate during a kid-friendly interview
-- when asked if she liked her wheelchair --
in a 2017 episode of the YouTube series Queer Kid Stuff.

Finger Lakes Independence Center (FLIC) presents

Lunch and Learn: Voting Rights for People with Disabilities

Wednesday, September 16 from **12pm-1pm**

Disability Voting Rights Week is September 14th – 18th!

Join Statewide System Advocate Andrea Champlin
and Advocacy Specialist Jeff Boles of FLIC
on **Wednesday, September 16** from **12-1pm** for a Zoom
presentation on Disability Voting Rights in New York State.

Andrea and Jeff will focus on
Disability Voting Rights in New York State,
local and state voting resources for voters with disabilities,
leaving plenty of time for questions and answers.

American Sign Language interpretation
will be available at this event.
If you need any accommodations to participate in this event,
please contact Andrea Champlin by emailing
Andrea@FLIConline.org
or by calling (607) 272-2433 ext. 203.
Register for the event here: Lunch and Learn





FLIC

On a related note ...
Disability Voting Rights Week 2026

Disability Voting Rights Week (DVRW) is a nonpartisan movement hosted by the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) through its REV UP -- **Register, Educate, Vote** campaign, created by grassroots activists with disabilities to promote voting access and civic engagement for people with disabilities.

DVRW 2026 will be observed September 14-18, focusing on advocacy, accessibility, and empowering voters with disabilities. The 2026 theme is **"Be an Accessible Democracy Defender,"** emphasizing the importance of inclusive participation in elections.

DVRW 2026 highlights the ongoing barriers that voters with disabilities face, such as inaccessible polling locations, restrictive absentee voting rules, and complicated ballot procedures. DVRW 2026 also celebrates the power of community and collective action, encouraging allies and organizations to support voters with disabilities through education, advocacy, and resource sharing. The week serves as a platform to raise awareness, advocate for policy change, and ensure that all citizens can exercise their right to vote.

For more information, contact Andrea Champlin **andrea@fliconline.org** or Jeff Boles **jeff@fliconline.org**

The Empire apple was developed at Cornell University in the 1940s.
It's a cross between McIntosh and Red Delicious
— and, appropriately, was named for the Empire State.

You Are Not Alone:
Invisible Disabilities Peer Support Group

What is this group?

Not every disability can be seen.

Many people live with disabilities, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, neurodivergence, pain, fatigue, or other conditions that may not be easy for others to see or understand.



FLIC's **Invisible Disabilities Peer Support Group** is a welcoming place to connect with people who may have similar experiences.
The group offers a chance to talk, listen, share ideas, and support one another. We may talk about self-advocacy, relationships, work, asking for help, dealing with stress, or what it's like when other people don't understand what you're experiencing.

You're welcome to talk, listen, or simply spend time with others who understand that not all disabilities can be seen.

The group meets **every other Thursday at 3pm on Zoom.**

September Group Sessions
Thursday, September 3 at 3pm
Thursday, September 17 at 3pm

New members are always welcome. Come as you are and take part in any way that feels right for you.

Interested in joining us? Contact Brenda at **brenda@fliconline.org** to learn more or receive the Zoom link.

A Movie Worth Every Minute You Spend with It:

The Peanut Butter Falcon



The Peanut Butter Falcon is a funny, warmhearted adventure about Zak, a young man with Down syndrome who runs away

from the residential facility where he lives to pursue his dream of becoming a professional wrestler.

What makes the movie special is that Zak isn't simply portrayed as someone who needs to be protected. He has goals, makes choices, takes risks, and pushes back against other people's assumptions about what he can and cannot do. It's a story about friendship, independence, and living life on your own terms, made even more authentic as Zack Gottsagen (pictured above), the actor who plays Zak, lives with Down syndrome.

Photo: Jesse Kornblum / Wikimedia Commons / CC BY-SA 4.0

City of Ithaca Sidewalk Improvement



Have you noticed the bright **pink** spray paint on the sidewalks in City of Ithaca? The paint indicates areas identified by Ari Hama, Program Manager for the City of Ithaca Sidewalk Improvement Program, as needing maintenance. FLIC Staff Andrea Champlin joined Ari Hama and Ducson Nguyen from Ithaca Common Council, on a walk around the 2nd Ward in the City of Ithaca. Andrea, Ari, and Ducson discussed sidewalk accessibility, concerns, and upcoming plans for improvement.

Easy ways YOU can help maintain sidewalk accessibility:

- Avoid driving vehicles on sidewalks that are not part of a driveway. The sidewalk slabs used across driveways are more robust than standard sidewalk slabs. Driving on standard sidewalk slabs can cause them to break down more quickly, creating accessibility barriers and increased need for maintenance.

- Clear sidewalk slabs of overgrown grass, dirt, and other debris all the way to the edges of the sidewalk. Debris can build up on the outer edge of sidewalks, resulting in narrower

sidewalks that are not accessible, particularly for people using mobility devices.

- Trim branches, plants, and brush that overhang the sidewalk. Low-hanging branches can be particularly difficult to navigate for people that are blind or have low-vision.

- Avoid grinding down sidewalks on your own – this can result in more rapid degradation and sharp edges on which people can get hurt. Instead, report the sidewalk issue to City of Ithaca by using the SeeClickFix system (More info below!).

If you notice any issues with sidewalks, potholes, streetlight outages, or other issues in the City of Ithaca, please consider utilizing the SeeClickFix mobile app to report the issue and bring it to the attention of the City of Ithaca staff. You can find the SeeClickFix on the **Apple App Store** and the **Android App Store**. Need some help using the app? Andrea is happy to help! Give her a call at (607) 272-2433 or email her at **Andrea@FLIConline.org**.

FLIC Staff Joins Group Assessing Accessibility on Route 13

Assemblymember Anna Kelles's Post

Assemblymember Anna Kelles
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Last week, we walked Route 13 with partners from NYS Department of Transportation, City staff, Bike Walk Tompkins and the Finger Lakes Independence Center to look specifically at how that overlapping construction is affecting accessibility for residents. Seeing these barriers on the ground together helped identify what needs to change and where better coordination is needed.

More on the walkthrough and ongoing work: https://nyassembly.gov/mem/Anna-R-Kelles/story/119455



FLIC Advocacy Specialist Mason Douglas walked Route 13 with the group, giving feedback that will help people with disabilities safely traverse Route 13 during the construction process.

To visit any of the links in the article below, please click either page to open the interactive version and access links.

September is National Emergency Preparedness Month

Hiroko Takashima, MPH and CDPAP Support
Jeff Boles, Advocacy Specialist



What's the big deal with emergency preparedness?

You might have noticed this phrase in many settings, and that's because every disaster that has happened has been a tough learning experience for everyone involved.

Many lives could have been saved IF...
Injuries could have been prevent IF...

Severe weather events are happening more often, and they have been bigger, more intense, and more destructive. Being prepared and practicing your emergency plan are the best ways to to be ready. Make your plan work for you! Click below to begin.



Plan with others, family or not!

Did you get a weather alert this summer?
Did you know what to do?
Would you like to feel confident in those moments because you prepared for them?
Like any project, get it done little by little.

1. Sign up for local alerts.
2. Want help with your plan? Email tracy@fliconline.org and check out FLIC's Emergency Readiness webpage
3. Add prepping to your weekly schedule and do a little each week.
4. Make it a topic of conversation with friends, family, neighbors, medical and social care providers.

UPCOMING TRAINING PROGRAM

Saturday, September 19th 2026

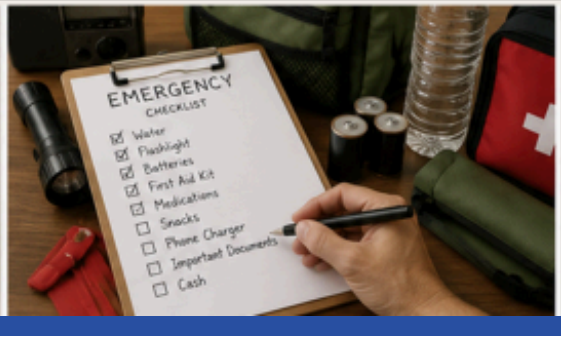
Sign up here for a free training hosted by NYS and Tompkins County Emergency Response.
Tell your friends, family, and neighbors to attend a Citizen Preparedness Training.
When neighbors help each other during an emergency, they make a difference!

MAKE YOUR PLAN WORK FOR YOU



Free Community Resources All of these services provide resources in multiple languages or offer translation support	description	special features
TOMPKINS COUNTY SIREN *SIREN delivers key community alerts to your phone, text, or inbox.* sign up now POWERED BY: RAVE	SIREN alerts are for Tompkins County extreme weather and other community alerts. This is an ALERT system. You still need a plan.	When you sign up, you choose the type of alert messages you receive!
2·1·1 Tompkins/Cortland	Dial 2-1-1 for community services if you are in Tompkins or Cortland County!	Check out their webpage! It doesn't have to be a phone call.
 extreme heat information at ready.gov	Follow Ready.gov on Facebook, Instagram, and X	Social media posts offer quick, important tips that are easy to share with others
  National Weather Service Safety Materials	severe weather safety tips!	Lots of images and videos with safety information.







NEW YORK ASSOCIATION ON INDEPENDENT LIVING

ACTION ALERT

How long have you waited for your wheelchair to be repaired?

Over this past legislative session, wheelchair users and repair providers came together to work on a bill with the shared goal of improving the timeliness of wheelchair repairs. Unfortunately, it became clear providers were only interested in a bill that benefited them. They convinced the legislature that the Consumer Wheelchair Repair Bill of Rights would drive providers out of business, and it did not pass.

It is well documented that Numotion and National Seating and Mobility have already taken over almost the entire wheelchair repair and sales market by buying up smaller, local providers and cutting costs to increase profit. Consumers that previously received reliable service and had relationships with their providers now wait months at a time for repairs, leaving them bedbound or housebound and stripped of the dignity, independence and freedom their wheelchair gives them.

It is time for policymakers to hear the truth – from wheelchair users themselves. It is unacceptable for wheelchair users to put their lives on hold for months on end and risk serious illness or injury while private equity companies work to evade accountability.

NYAIL is gearing up for the next legislative session, and we want to hear from you. **How long have you waited for your wheelchair to be repaired? How did that impact your life?**
Share your story with us.
You can share here
https://video.videorequest.io/request/f556652e-6b58-4a94-88ed-bf73f4bfa5ac
by making a video or submitting it in writing.

TRY THIS FOR FREE

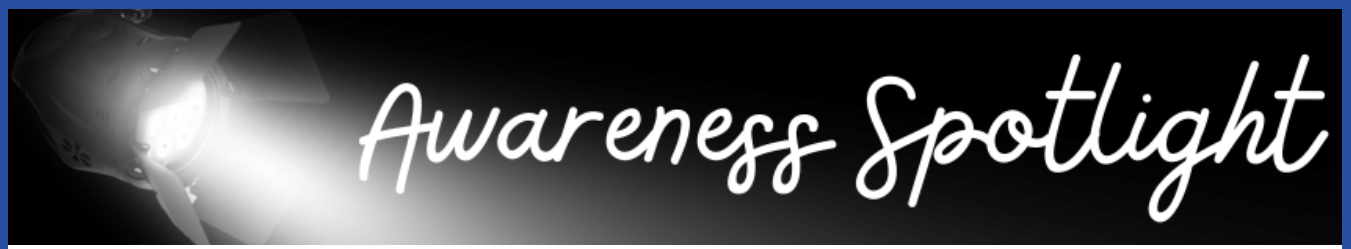
Smart Pen



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



September 10:
World Suicide Prevention Day

World Suicide Prevention Day is observed around the world to raise awareness about suicide prevention, reduce stigma, and remind people that support and connection can make a meaningful difference. It's also an opportunity to encourage open conversations about mental health and make sure people know where and how to find help.

What's one way you can get involved? Start a conversation.
Check in with someone who matters to you, share a trusted mental health resource, or simply make time to listen.

Small actions can help people feel seen, heard, and supported.

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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