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RICE CONFRONTED

L.I. ADAPT's First Action Hits Dem. Rep.



Rice staffer, left, listens to ADAPT member demands.



Rice staffer, left, listens to ADAPT member demands.

The newly-formed Long Island Chapter of disability-rights activist group ADAPT chose the ADA Education and Reform Act HR 620 and the only New York Democrat to vote for the bill, Rep. Kathleen Rice to target for their first action, Feb. 22. (See story "Rice and House Limit ADA" page 3 and USA Today column page 6.)

Thirteen L.I. ADAPT members entered Rice's Garden City office and demanded an explanation of and a public recanting of her vote on HR 620 that they

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ADAPT members gathered in Rice's conference room include Bruce Darling ADAPT organizer and CEO of Center for Disability Rights, left, L.I. ADAPT co-founder Sophia Ardi, United Spinal's Jose Hernandez, center and co-founder Marie Hickey, standing second from right. They were joined by United Spinal CEO James Weisman, third from left.



ADAPT members video conference with D.C. office.



Amanda Walsh, in doorway, promises meeting.

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Act Improves ‘Money Follows the Person’

The bipartisan Empower Care Act (S 2777), recently introduced in the Senate by Sens. Rob Portman (R-Ohio) and Mariea Catwell (D-Wash.), extends and improves upon Money Follows the Person (MFP). First authorized by Pres. George W. Bush in 2005, also with strong bipartisan support, MFP served to help individuals with disabilities and senior citizens out of nursing homes and other institutions. It enabled them to remain or return to their communities and their families. If passed, the Empower Care Act would extend MFP for five more years, as well as enhance it. Individuals across the country waiting for home - and community-based services (HCBS) would benefit from the reauthorization. The MFP demonstration

project was first authorized by the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 and extended through fiscal year 2016 by the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The MFP project has provided states with enhanced funding to improve access to HCBS. HCBS provides a wide array of supports that people can use throughout their lifetime, such as housing and residential services. Forty-three states and the District of Columbia received funding through the project and used it to assist Medicaid recipients to live in the community. Each state can decide how to utilize the funds, which they have used to expand or enhance HCBS programs, reduce waiting lists and fund housing supports. The program benefits people with physical disabilities, de-

velopmental disabilities, mental illnesses and seniors. Since the program’s beginning, more than 75,000 people have received HCBS. According to the national project evaluation, participants report significant and lasting improvements in quality of life and community integration. In addition, the MFP project has helped realize more than \$978 million in reduced Medicaid and Medicare costs by assisting states to provide more cost-effective care. The MFP project was authorized through 2016 although some states will be able to continue to use their grant funds through 2020. However, without congressional reauthorization, states will lose access to the enhanced funding which helped them maintain better services.

Report Says Home Care In Jeopardy

The financial state of the New York homecare industry is getting worse, and the reforms Gov. Andrew Cuomo is proposing to the managed long-term care (MLTC) system would only exacerbate the situation, according to a report released by the Home Care Association of New York state (HCANYS). The average operating margin for certified home health agencies in New York dipped to -13.46 percent in 2016 from 7.3 percent in 2015, the trade group found. The share of agencies reporting negative margins 2016 grew to about

8 percent from 2015 to 2016. Many homecare agencies rely heavily on the Medicaid funding they get through MLTC plans. The governor’s executive budget includes proposals to cut managed long-term care plans’ administrative budgets, limit the number of homecare agencies that can participate in a plan’s network and raise the requirements for patients to be eligible for services provided under managed long-term care plans. “I would say we’re deeply concerned about the budget

cuts and other administrative actions targeting managed long-term care plans,” said Joanne Cunningham, president of HCANYS. “That will have a dire effect on the home- and community-based sector’s ability to deliver care to a very needy and frail population.” However, Rick Surpin, president of Independence Care System, an MLTC plan based in the Bronx, said it makes sense for the state to concentrate its resources on the neediest patients. “If you don’t raise the bar, the program will just keep on growing and growing. And I don’t think that’s sustainable,” said Surpin. The report states that the growing reliance and increased access to home care services have enabled patients to leave the hospital earlier, avoid nursing home placement, get rehabilitation and receive primary care at the lowest cost and most preferable setting possible – the home of the patient. However, chronic underpayment and unfunded mandates have resulted in a fragile financial position for the home- and community- provider sector.

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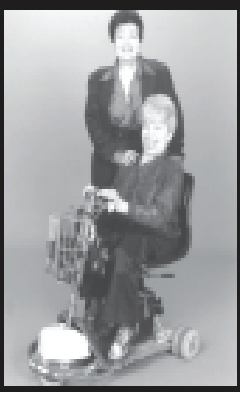
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Rice and House Limit ADA

By David Block

The House of Representatives passed HR620 with a vote of 225 to 192 Feb. 15.

For the most part, this news upset people living with disabilities, as well as James Weisman, President/CEO of The United Spinal Assoc., who says that if the senate were to pass this bill, it can remove business owners' incentives to immediately make their establishments ADA compliant.

This bill prohibits immediate civil action against businesses that fail to remove architectural barriers. Under this bill, lawsuits can only take place if the aggrieved person provides the business owners with written

notice about the exact provision of the ADA being violated.

The business then has 60 days to acknowledge the problem and then 120 days to begin to remedy the predicament before any lawsuits can take place. It means that the individual with a disability has to wait six months before he/she can take legal action. No other civil rights law requires similar waiting periods.

The bill came about because lawyers would frivolously sue businesses in serial fashion. The plaintiffs would not get a remedy and businesses would pay unscrupulous attorneys to drop the suit.

"HR 620 is supposed to get at abuse of the ADA," said Weis-

man. "I'm not going to deny that those lawyers and plaintiffs exist, but it's a small amount. The bill won't fix that practice of extortionate complaints being filed." He said that the difference now is that there would be a 6-month delay before one can sue.

Rep. Thomas Suozzi (D-CD3) was originally a sponsor of HR620, but then decided to vote against it when he realized it would hurt people with disabilities

"Rep. Suozzi fully supports the Americans with Disabilities Act, and while he understands that small businesses deal with too many regulatory hurdles, any solution cannot abridge the rights of people with disabilities to fully access the communities

in which they live and work," said Suozzi's spokesperson Lou Wasson.

Rep. Kathleen Rice (D-CD4) remained a sponsor on the bill and voted for it even after being lobbied intensely by disability advocates. Rice's office did not respond to repeated requests for comment by *Able Newspaper*.

Weisman said that if the Senate passes HR620, people should take the Congress at their word and start giving notice to business owners who have inaccessible facilities for people with disabilities.

"They're putting a stick in the eye of the disability rights community," said Weisman. "I recommend lobbying like crazy to stop it."

Consumer Orgs. Push Back Against Trump Budget Plan

The Center for Medicare Advocacy, Justice in Aging and the Medicare Rights Center recently released a joint statement that expressed serious concerns about Pres. Donald Trump's annual budget request, which prioritizes deep cuts to programs on which older adults and people with disabilities rely, including Medicare, Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

The president's fiscal year 2019 budget proposes more than \$490 billion in cuts for the next 10 years, which the three

organizations claim breaks a key campaign promise not to cut Medicare. If implemented, these changes would cause people with Medicare to face additional, significant barriers to care.

It would curtail beneficiary appeal rights, cause some to fall through the prescription drug "donut hole," expand prior authorization in traditional Medicare and incentivize health care providers to stint on care for those with chronic conditions.

The statement asserts that even though the budget

recognizes the problems of Medicare beneficiaries with the highest prescription drug costs, it does not address the underlying problem of exorbitant drug prices and would worsen affordability for many others, half of whom live on less than \$26,000 a year.

The statement voices con-

cern that the budget would also be devastating for those who rely on both Medicaid and Medicare for their health and long-term care needs. The proposal would end the current state of Medicaid by cutting more than \$1.4 trillion in the next decade and trans-

Continued on page 19

Report Highlights Need for Federal Oversight of Assisted Living

The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) has recently released a report on the extent to which states are monitoring care and ensuring safety in assisted living provided to Medicaid beneficiaries.

The report, Medicaid Assisted Living Services: Improved Federal Oversight of Beneficiary Health and Welfare Is Needed, provides the results of a nationwide survey of state agencies. Forty-eight states participated in the survey, which covered the year 2014.

Across the country, assisted living is viewed by seniors and their families as a desirable option for residential care when

an individual wishes to avoid an institutional environment characteristic of a typical nursing home. While the assisted-living industry has grown rapidly to meet this demand, little is known about the quality and safety provided to residents in these facilities. The survey shows that nationally, the average spending per beneficiary on assisted living services is about \$30,000 per year.

Though state Medicaid agencies retain ultimate administrative authority and responsibility for the quality, safety and integrity of Medicaid assisted living services, the GAO found

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Heart Share Gets a Face Lift and More



Many people recently attended the unveiling of Heart Share's St. Vincent's Wyckoff Gardens Cornerstone Program's renovated space, including, left to right, Robert Sablic, CEO of Quadra Furniture; Regina Mitchell, Cornerstone program director; Brooke Rosenthal, Heart Share youth development and community programs director; Briana Fullwood, manager at Habitat for Humanity; Nicole Haworth, managing director of Quadra; and Nicole Bootz, Quadra Designer.

HeartShare Human Services of New York nurtures and empowers children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, such as autism, Down Syndrome and cerebral palsy and supports their families.

This program, located in Boerum Hill Brooklyn, offers after-school programs, recreational activities, sports and summer camp. Quadra often donates furnishings and their time to help Habitat for Humanity projects. The new space is freshly painted, has two newly furnished classrooms, a computer room and a lounge.

Family Caregiver Bill Signed Into Law

U.S. Sens. Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisc.) have announced the recent signing of the Recognize, Assist, Include, Support, and Engage (RAISE) Family Caregivers Act into law, establishing a national strategy to support family caregivers across the country. It directs the secretary of


Health and Human Services (HHS) to develop and sustain a plan to recognize and support the more than 40 million family caregivers in the country. The bipartisan law is endorsed by more than 60 organizations for the disabled and elderly, including AARP, the Alzheimer's Association, the

Michael J. Fox Foundation and the Arc. "Family caregivers play an essential role in our communities by dedicating time and attention and making countless personal and financial sacrifices to care for their loved ones," said Collins. "I am delighted that our bipartisan legislation to develop a coordinated

strategic plan to leverage our resources, promote best practices, and expand services and training available to caregivers has been signed into law. Family caregivers across America will now receive the much-needed recognition they deserve as well as the resources and training needed to better balance the full-time job of caregiving along with everything else that life brings." "When we work together across party lines we can get things done," said Baldwin. "This bipartisan effort is especially personal to me, as I was raised by my maternal grandparents and later served as my grandmother's primary caretaker as she grew older. I know the challenges that family caregivers face. I've listened to family caregivers across Wisconsin. This reform will provide much-needed support for family caregivers and help ensure that our older adults and loved ones with disabilities receive the highest quality care in their own homes. Every day, family caregivers do right by their loved ones, and I am proud to say we are doing right by them with the RAISE Family Caregivers Act being signed into law to formally recognize and support family caregivers across this country."

"Signing the RAISE Family Caregivers Act into law is an important step in supporting the nation's 40 million family caregivers who take care of loved ones, many of them elderly, often with very little support or resources available to them," said AARP CEO Jo Ann Jenkins. "With the rapid growth of our aging population, it's reasonable to say that many of us will end up either being a caregiver, or needing one." More than 40 million family caregivers in the United States provided an estimated \$470 billion in uncompensated long-term care in 2013. However, many of them put their own health at risk since they experience high levels of stress and have a greater incidence of chronic conditions like heart disease, cancer and depression.





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N.Y.C. Has First ASL Information Service

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio recently announced that the city will be the first in the world to offer its residents ASL Direct, a faster and more efficient way for people who communicate via American Sign Language (ASL) to obtain services.

The Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) has worked with the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DOITT) to implement video technology that allows people who are deaf or hearing impaired to connect via webcam to an information specialist fluent in ASL from any android, Mac, iOS or Windows device via a link at nyc.gov/mopd, or by downloading a free mobile application called the Personal Universal Communicator (PUC).

"Becoming the fairest big

city in America means ensuring equitable access to city services for all New Yorkers, including our deaf and hard of hearing neighbors," said de Blasio.

"Deaf or hard of hearing New Yorkers now have a one-stop shop for information, whether it's how to find affordable housing, enroll in pre-k or three-k, or locate where to get a flu shot. I'm proud to be the first city in the world to offer ASL Direct to its residents."

"The launch of ASL Direct is a terrific example of how technology can be a powerful tool of public good," said DOITT Commissioner Samir Saini. "I encourage all ASL users to engage with city government through the new service, and take advantage of everything the city has to offer."

"We have worked with the



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community to understand their needs and have taken the lead in providing information directly in ASL, continuing to make New York City the most accessible city in the world," said MOPD Commissioner Victor Calise.

In New York City, the deaf and hearing impaired community comprises approximately 208,000 people, the majority of whom communicate primarily through ASL. ASL Direct, which was originally developed by the Federal Commu-

nications Commission, is recognized as an effective digital communications tool for individuals who sign. ASL Direct services are available 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

A symposium on accessing ASL Direct and services that are provided at MOPD will be held at the American Sign Language and English Secondary School in Manhattan on March 3, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. For information visit www.nyc.gov/asl.

Work Requirement for Medicaid Eligibility

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recently issued a state Medicaid director letter providing new guidance for Section 1115 waiver proposals that would impose work requirements as a condition of eligibility.

This action reverses previous democratic and republican administrations, which had not approved such waiver requests on the basis that such provisions would not further Medicaid's purposes of promoting health coverage and access. The guidance asserts that such provisions would promote program objectives by helping states "in their efforts to improve Medicaid enrollee health and well-being through incentivizing work and community engagement." The guidance invites proposals that would "promote better mental, physical and emotional health, as well as help individuals rise out of poverty and attain independence."

So far, a handful of states have submitted proposals to CMS. The proposals require beneficiaries to verify their participation in approved ac-

tivities such as employment, job searches or employment training programs, for a certain number of hours per week in order to receive health coverage. The proposals typically would exempt certain populations, but it is not yet clear how the exemption policies would be administered or obtained.

Working at minimum wage could make some people financially ineligible for Medicaid in states with low eligibility levels for adults. Many people working full-time are still eligible for Medicaid, especially in Medicaid expansion states, because they are working low-wage jobs.

For example, an individual working full-time for a full year at the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour, would earn an annual salary of just over \$15,000 a year, or about 125 percent of poverty, below the 138 percent maximum targeted by the Medicaid expansion.

However, in Kansas and Mississippi, both non-expansion states with low eligibili-

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UNITED SPINAL^{NOW}

HR 620 Passes House

BY JAMES WEISMAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



The ADA Education and Reform Act passed the House of Representatives in a 225 to 192 vote with 12 Democrats crossing party lines to vote for this bill - which will perpetuate discrimination on the basis of disability - and 19 Republicans crossing party lines and voting against the bill.

The Act is a misguided attempt by Congress to assist small businesses that are being exploited by a few unscrupulous lawyers around the United States. These lawyers (who need a cooperative disabled plaintiff), file a complaint stating that a business needs to remove barriers pursuant to the mandate of Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Then the attorney states that the complaint can be withdrawn in exchange for thousands of dollars in attorney's fees, regardless of whether the barriers are removed. In fact, at least one restaurant we're aware of in Manhattan that has been sued in this fashion has no barriers, but the plaintiff's attorney intends to pursue the case and force the restaurant to mount a defense costing thousands.

So far, this restaurant owner has chosen to fight back, but eventually the cost of fighting back can exceed the cost of settling with an unscrupulous lawyer.

The ADA Education and Reform Act will not prevent this practice. It will require an aggrieved disabled person to provide written notice and wait 120 days before suing. How proponents of the legislation think this will stop extortion by unscrupulous attorneys and their clients is unknown.

What it will do, however, is dissuade the perhaps one in 1000 people that confront an architectural barrier at a Title III entity to file a complaint. The vast majority of people with disabilities move on to an accessible business where they can obtain the goods or services they desire.

Creating this extra step impedes justice. It is a license to maintain architectural barriers until the business receives written notice of the ADA violation. (i.e. notice to a business that has had almost 28 years to remove barriers but hasn't).

The penalty for not removing barriers, even after 28 years of maintaining them illegally, is currently having to remove the barrier and perhaps pay attorney's fees. No money damages are available to plaintiffs under the barrier removal requirements of the ADA, but the House, in an effort to help small businesses, thinks they need four months notice and a second chance.

Most of the Democrats who supported this ADA limiting measure were from California, which has seen its share of abuse of the statute. The bill had only one Democratic New York co-sponsor, Rep. Kathleen Rice (D-N.Y. Dist. 4) It is interesting to note that while the bill's supporters state that they are trying to help small businesses, the lobbyists hard at work on limiting the rights of people with disabilities represent giant shopping center and hotel owners.

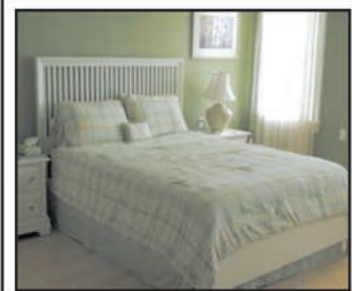
The bill has not passed the Senate and we hope it will die there. However, no ADA reform or notification bills, which have been introduced for the last ten years, have ever passed the House, except for now. Thank you to all who worked to defeat this offensive measure. We will keep you posted about Senate activity.

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DIA SPEAKS

National vs. Local Issues

PHIL BEDER
DIA MEMBER



According to Wikipedia, the job of an activist is to engage in “efforts to promote” and “make improvements in society.”

As disability rights activists, we often focus our efforts on what the government is doing because that's the place where we can change society's rules and regulations. National laws like Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, IDEA and the ADA have prohibited discrimination, set educational standards and guaranteed access for people with disabilities.

The federal government is currently considering several laws of interest to our community. National ADAPT is supporting the “Disability Integration Act,” also known as HR-2472.

This bill would compel states and local governments to provide community-based services and housing to people who want them and help people who are currently stuck in nursing homes.

There is another bill in Congress that would change the way wheelchairs and “complex rehabilitative” equipment is paid for. This bill, HR-3730, would make sure wheelchairs are properly setup and delivered by local suppliers who would be better suited to maintain and repair them. Long Island Rep. Lee Zeldin is the sponsor of this bill.

There are also lots of folks in this area who are concerned about a law being proposed in the House of Representatives that would undercut the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This Newspaper, *Able News*, has published several articles and columns that explained how HR-620 would greatly diminish our ability to correct ADA violations.

In addition, our national government is now sending signals, that they will seek to cut funding for important “social safety net” programs such as Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security in order to pay for the tax bill, passed at the end of last year. That tax “reform” legislation will permanently reduce corporate taxes by 43 percent and give tax breaks, primarily to the well off while temporarily giving small to moderate reductions to the middle class.

While all this activity at the national level is interesting and important, there is little we can do to effect federal policy. Most of the federal representatives in the N.Y. Metro area, already support disability issues.

It's the representatives in Texas, Indiana and Wyoming who often support cutting social safety net programs and we cannot influence them. They, in general, do not listen to people who do not live in their district.

Activists must remember to invest their time and energy where they can and will be heard - on the state and local level. It is true that current federal policies will reduce the amount of money in New York's treasury. We can however, pressure our state lawmakers to protect the programs and services important to the disability community.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo's budget underfunds the home care and MLTC (Managed Long Term Care) programs that some disabled New Yorkers depend on. Independence Care (ICS) System is a MLTC with many clients who require 12 hours or more of personal assistance. On Feb. 2, the director of Independence Care

Continued on page 20



Congratulations!

Independence Care System congratulates all of the wonderful advocates who have been chosen by the New York State Independent Living Council to be inducted into the New York State Disability Rights Hall of Fame.

ICS is incredibly proud that our very own Anna Fay and Marilyn Saviola were chosen as inaugural inductees. For more information visit the council's website at NYILC.org



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Alpha Care is a family-owned business established nearly 25 years ago as a regional durable medical equipment provider. Today, Alpha is a provider of accessibility solutions in the entire metro-NYC region including the 5 boroughs, Nassau, Suffolk, Westchester, Rockland, Yonkers and N.J. to clients in need.

The company specializes in various types of access applications: modular ramps, portable ramps, ramp systems, stair lifts, patient lifts, wheelchair lifts, home elevators and even provides fully ADA compliant bathroom/home modifications.

Clients include residential users, institutions, houses of worship, event planners, schools, universities, property management companies, etc. Equipment is often rented to educational facilities that require access products for short-term

needs such as commencement exercises, concerts, fundraising/benefit events, or for any temporary applications.

In-depth residential and facility evaluations are offered free of charge with no obligations. Primary emphasis is placed on safety and ease-of-use by end users and/or care-givers. As a well-stocked brick and mortar supplier of access ramp systems and lifts, emergency needs can be resolved quickly. Generally, the access equipment can be either purchased or rented.

Alpha is also an approved vendor for NYC Build-it-Back Sandy Recovery project and NYS FIDA insurance program.

Used equipment is also available and is offered at reduced prices based on availability. Properly licensed and insured, Alpha Care is an approved vendor for federal, state and local government agencies.

www.AlphaCareSupply.com • 866 291-7039

COASTAL CARETAKERS, LLC

Offers Those Living With Disabilities Increased Accessibility and Independence

For individuals with disabilities, navigating the home is often difficult and sometimes dangerous. At Coastal Caretakers, we know that accessibility and independence go hand in hand.

Depending on the style and age of the home and the degree of disability, modifications may enable individuals to remain at home safely and comfortably.

From minor fall prevention improvements to full remodels, Coastal Caretakers' network of highly-trained and licensed professionals redesign and renovate with sensibility and sensitivity to the unique needs of individuals with disabilities.

Entering and exiting the home can be difficult. With that in mind, Coastal Caretakers' team widens doorways to accommodate the width of wheelchairs and walkers and adapts thresholds. Modular ramps al-

low for easier access into the home. In instances where entrances are too elevated for modular ramps, a vertical platform lift can be installed.

With more than 30 years of caretaking experience, Coastal Caretakers founder and CEO Bruce Matters compassionately helps those living with disabilities remain in their homes comfortably and safely.

"Bruce's professional approach was reassuring. He went through the building and grounds and provided a list of things that needed immediate attention and a list of suggestions for making the house more user friendly." —Hilary, South Fork.

Coastal Caretakers also performs weekly checks to ensure the home is safe and properly maintained.

Contact us for a free assessment.

info@coastalcaretakers.com • 888 828-6278

Accessible Home Specialists!



INCREASED ACCESSIBILITY AND INDEPENDENCE FOR THOSE LIVING WITH DISABILITIES

From minor improvements to full remodels, Coastal Caretakers' network of highly-trained and licensed professionals redesign and renovate with sensibility and sensitivity to the unique needs of individuals with disabilities. We also perform weekly checks to ensure the home is safe and properly maintained.



*Remain at Home Safely
and Comfortably.*



Contact us for a free assessment at **888-828-6278** or **info@coastalcaretakers.com**
www.coastalcaretakers.com



BUSSANI MOBILITY TEAM

Accessible Vehicle Classes For PTs & OTs

Physical therapists (PTs) and occupational therapists (OTs) play a vital role in helping people living with physical disabilities overcome limitations by assisting with adjustments to facets of daily life.

Transportation is critical for people who use wheelchairs or scooters. To help educate PTs and OTs about today's accessible transportation options, Bussani Mobility offers free one-hour Lunch 'n Learn seminars. They provide the latest information about personal automotive modifications, including a practical system for evaluating, selecting, and purchasing the most appropriate vehicles for patients.

The sessions also offer participants one contact hour of continuing education (CEUs), as certified by The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc.

"PTs and OTs are often the first point of contact for those who are newly disabled, so their support and guidance

is so important," said Daniel Bussani, Co-Owner of Bussani Mobility. "They have the opportunity to help people understand that they can still have an active life. Our lunch-time trainings are packed with information – and healthcare professionals only need to take an hour from their day."

Bussani Mobility specializes in providing wheelchair accessible vans and adaptive driving equipment for people who use wheelchairs, and those who just need a little extra help getting around because of respiratory difficulties, circulation problems, degenerative joint disease, arthritis, and chronic or progressive diseases.

The vehicles also make it easier for caregivers to transport disabled people without risking back strain or injury.

Bussani Mobility Team has been serving people with disabilities in the New York metro area for over 40 years.

Bethpage • Smithtown • Mamaroneck

www.BussaniMobility.com • 888 621-2984

Boy Scouts Enjoy Anniversary Week



Cerebral Palsy of Westchester's (CPW) Boy Scout Pack 535 recently had their annual blue and gold luncheon, a traditional scouting anniversary celebrated by most of America's packs and considered the highlight of the year.

Pack 535 celebrated with pizza, cake and a special presentation from JoJo the Clown. The scouts, who have various disabilities, are currently in the process of obtaining their bear patch.

The next big event they are looking forward to is the Pinewood Derby Race in April. The scouts have been busy building and decorating their cars in preparation for the big day.

Wheelchair Accessible Van Sales, Service & Rentals



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SOUTHAMPTON FRESH AIR HOME Camp For Children With Disabilities

The Southampton Fresh Air Home provides a unique vacation experience for physically challenged youth. Children ages eight to 18 attend one of our three-or one-week sessions.

Camp activities include the traditional camp favorites and adaptive equipment allows campers to participate in every activity from bas

ketball to sailing. During the summer more than 150 campers attend the camp.

They interact with their peers, gain new confidence and return home with memories and new friends.

The camp is a not-for-profit organization and scholarships are available.

For information contact David Billingham.

www.Sfah.org • 631 283-1594

Southampton Fresh Air Home

A Summer Residential Camp for Physically Challenged Children and Young Adults

3 week and 1 week sessions available (ages 8-18 yrs)

Sailing, swimming, computers, basketball, track, horseriding, arts and crafts, off-camp trips, clubs, plus many more!

Scholarships are available.

ACA Accredited

The summer of a lifetime!

Contact David Billingham (631) 283-1594

www.sfah.org



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CENTER FOR INDEP. OF DISABLED, N.Y.

CIDNY Helps With Benefits

Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York (CIDNY) conducts comprehensive benefit screenings for health care, SNAP (formerly food stamps), heating assistance, Social Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Income (SSDI), tax benefits, veteran's benefits, housing subsidies, Disability Rent Increase

Exemption (DRIE), Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE), various waiver programs, prescription assistance, unemployment insurance, subsidized transit, among other benefits. We provide information on these programs, help with applications, explain the appeals process, and make referrals to the appropriate agencies.

We help people:

- find income or other supports including healthcare, housing, transportation, education, and food that make their lives better.
- understand how to look for housing and use the rental support programs that can make it possible for them to live in the community.
- transition from institutions to living in the community so that they can resume their lives.
- understand how moving into the world of work will affect their lives.
- navigate complicated systems and solve difficult problems to get the health services they need.

www.cidny.org • 212/674-2300

REGINA BRANDOW, ESQ.

Planning For Families With Disabilities

Providing counsel to Long Island families since 1997, Regina Brandow has earned a reputation as a tireless advocate for people with disabilities. For almost twenty years Brandow Law has had an ongoing role in educating the community on all facets of special needs law. In order

to increase our ability to serve the community, we are pleased to announce we are expanding! Christin Paglen, Esq. has joined our legal team.

"I am so proud to be a part of this incredible team," said Ms. Paglen, "and I really look forward to helping people better plan for their future." We are here to help!

www.brandowlaw.com • 631 675-2540



REGINA E. BRANDOW, P.C. Attorney At Law

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

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646/350-2681 (VP)

CIDNY-Queens
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Ste 400
Kew Gardens, NY 11415
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CIDNY's Benefits Check-Up

Eligibility for public benefits change frequently. Are you getting the benefits you need?

Find out if you are eligible for:

- * Health Insurance Options
- * Housing: DRIE/SCRIE, HEAP
- * Transportation: Access-A-Ride, ½ Fare Card
- * SNAP
- * SSDI

And more....

For more information call CIDNY and ask to speak to a benefits counselor.

ASL, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Spanish-speaking counselors are available.

District Sued for Neglecting Students With Reading Disabilities

Disability rights lawyers recently filed a complaint in federal court against Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD), the BUSD superintendent, the BUSD Board of Education and the board's directors for allegedly failing to educate students with reading disorders and students who are suspected of having reading disorders.

Under federal and state laws, all students must receive a free appropriate public education.

The suit contends that BUSD is failing to comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and several California Education Codes.

The lawsuit was filed by Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF), Jacobson Education Law and

international law firm Goodwin.

"This is a civil rights class action that challenges a school district's failure to teach children with reading disorders such as dyslexia to learn to read," said Larisa Cummings, DREDF staff attorney. "Without appropriate reading intervention services, these students fall further and further behind academically. Students with reading disorders in BUSD and every public school in this country have the fundamental right to learn to read and participate fully with their peers."

Children with reading disorders have extreme difficulty learning skills needed to become literate, such as sounding out words. However, many of them are very intelligent and simply need to be taught how to read in different ways than their peers. It

Continued on page 18

Device Helps Patients Understand Drug Labels

Nevada recently passed a law where consumers with disabilities who request a prescription drug label reading device from their pharmacies will either be given one or be given directions on obtaining one, thereby increasing the likelihood that everyone is understanding their correct dosages and other crucial information about the drugs they are taking.

Talking prescription readers, which will be free of charge, will help customers who are blind and visually impaired to access critical information from their prescription drug containers.

The devices work in connection with special talking labels that pharmacists add to medication containers. Large print or Braille labels are also available at no additional cost.

Usually these readers are paid for through private insurance, Medicaid or Medicare, but Nevada's new law targets consumers who are uninsured to ensure that they too have access to this technology.

In 2012, Congress tasked the National Council on Disabilities (NCD) with creating a public awareness campaign regarding accessible drug labeling best practices under the

Food and Drug Administration Safety and Innovation Act (FD-SIA). Section 904 of FDSIA authorized the U.S. Access Board to convene a stakeholder working group to develop these best practices.

The following year, the working group convened by the U.S. Access Board released its list of best practices for making prescription drug container label information accessible to the disabled and elderly. The best practices offered are advisory only.

NCD developed a brochure summarizing these best practices and requested pharma-

cies and pharmacy associations disseminate the information to their affiliates and members. They are recommending that the public print and utilize the brochure in conversations with their own local pharmacies to increase awareness of the best practices.

NCD also released a radio public service announcement about the best practices and placed it in several large city markets, which is available for download on NCD's website. For information visit ncd.gov/publications/2016/best-practices-accessible-prescription-drug-labeling.

U.N. Designates Day Of International Sign Languages

The United Nations General Assembly recently declared September 23, as International Day of Sign Languages.

The resolution was proposed through the Permanent Mission of Antigua and Barbuda to the U.N., following a request by the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD). It was co-sponsored by 97 U.N. member states and adopted by consensus.

"This resolution recognizes the importance of sign language and services in sign language being available to deaf people as early in life as possible," said Colin Allen, WFD president. "It also emphasizes the principle of 'nothing about us without us' in terms of working with deaf communities. With effect from year 2018, the WFD is overjoyed at

the prospect of observing and celebrating this day annually."

The choice of September 23, commemorates the date that the WFD was established in 1951. It marks the birth of this advocacy organization which works to preserve sign languages and deaf culture.

It also coincides with International Week of the Deaf, which was first celebrated in September 1958, and has since evolved into a global movement of concerted advocacy to raise awareness of the everyday issues of people who are deaf.

Beauty Pageant Adds Blind Judge To Panel



Ashley Nemeth

The Executive Planning team of Mrs. Canada Globe has announced a new format for the 2018 competition, which includes hiring contest judge Ashley Nemeth, who is blind.

In an effort to make the pageant more than just a beauty contest, its director and producer are working to place more emphasis on the contestants' personality and intelligence.

To further this goal, they added Nemeth to the panel, who can hear how the contestants answer questions, but cannot see them.

Nemeth is recognized as a vocal advocate for people who are blind or visually impaired. The 31-year-old began to lose her sight as a very young child due to a genetic disease called ocular albinism, as well as other conditions that effect the eyes.

Her sight continued to worsen over time, and today she can only perceive light. The activist is a motivational speaker, a spokesperson and staff member for the Canadian National Institute of the Blind, a blogger and a strong presence on many social media formats. She is also active in sports.

"We are very excited to have Ashley join our panel of judges, as she brings a guarantee against unintentional bias," said Lisa Peters, executive producer of Mrs. Canada Globe. Nemeth lives in Canada with her husband and three children.

Disability Services & Transition Fair For All Ages



Sponsored by Henry Viscardi School Septa
Saturday March 10, 2018
10 am – 1 pm
Henry Viscardi School
201 L.U. Willets Road
Albertson, NY 11507

Scheduled Presenters: Access-VR, Bussani Mobility, Lawyers for Special Needs Planning, St. Mary's, Camps, and many more.....

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Dating4Disabled.com is a dating service and online community for people with disabilities. Our user-friendly features will help you meet new friends, date, chat, blog and more. Open a **FREE** card at www.Dating4Disabled.com and join our community today!!!

SPORTS SCENE

Parks Seeking Volunteers and Offering Gym Space

New York City Parks Dept. is offering space in their recreation center gymnasiums and fitness rooms to adaptive physical education instructors or physical therapists to hold classes/ses-

sions, Monday through Friday between the hours of 9:45 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

In addition, NYC Parks is looking for individuals who have a background in adaptive sports and those who are look-

ing to learn more while gaining experience working with children and adults who have physical or developmental disabilities. They are seeking volunteers to help out in a number of indoor and outdoor adaptive

sports programs.

Anyone interested in utilizing the recreation centers or volunteering to help facilitate sports programs should write to christopher.noel@parks.nyc.gov.

Bball Tourney Planned

The National Wheelchair Basketball Association (NWBA) has announced that tickets and athlete registration for certain events is available for the 2018 NWBA tournament in Kentucky, April 12 through 15.

Pre-ordered tickets are available through April 3, which are less expensive than purchasing them on site at the tournament. Individuals can buy a ticket for a single session or at a discounted rate for tickets to all the sessions.

Tickets are also available for the junior division banquet, scheduled for April 14.

The tournament includes showcase scrimmage games for several different junior divisions. All participants will receive a showcase games reversible jersey.

The NWBA has added a new event this year, which is a three-on-three wheelchair basketball tournament. It will feature both a championship and an open division. Players that register individually will be placed on teams by the selection committee.

For information on all the registration deadlines and ticket sales visit www.nwba.org/2018nwbt.

Goalball Set

Spectators are invited to watch the Mid-Atlantic Goalball Tournament at the Overbrook School for the Blind in Pennsylvania on March 10, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The event, which offers free admission, is hosted by The Blind Sports Organization. For information visit www.blindsports.org/mid-atlantic-goalball-tournament.

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SPORTS

SCENE

NBC To Present Paralympic T.V. Coverage

NBC Olympics will present unprecedented coverage of the Paralympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018 including 94 hours on television.

The 2018 Paralympic Winter Games will take place March 9-18, 2018, in PyeongChang, South Korea, with nearly 700 of the world's finest Paralympic winter athletes competing for glory in 80 events across six different sports on snow and ice. Team USA will compete in each of the sports contested in PyeongChang with an estimated team of 70+ athletes.

NBC Olympics' coverage will include all six Paralympic winter sports – alpine skiing, snowboarding, sled hockey, wheelchair curling, cross-country skiing, and biathlon – spread across 10 days.

"It is fantastic news for sports fans that NBC, with

the support of Toyota, will be showcasing 94 hours of television coverage from the PyeongChang 2018 Paralympic Winter Games, the most comprehensive U.S. coverage to date for a Paralympics," said Andrew Parsons, president, International Paralympics Committee. "The amount of TV coverage has almost doubled since Sochi 2014, underlining the growing appeal and interest in Para sports, especially with the L.A. 2028 Paralympic Games on the horizon."

"As an elite athlete and someone who was instrumental in getting Para snowboarding into the Paralympic Games, I am thrilled to see the kind of support and exposure for the world to see what is possible when you chase your dreams and you remove the barriers to succeed," said Paralympic snowboarder Amy Purdy. This is truly momen-



tous and incredibly meaningful for the future of the movement."

In all, NBC Olympics will present more than 250 hours of coverage across NBC, NBCSN, Olympic Channel: Home of Team USA, NBCSports.com, and the NBC Sports app, beginning with the Opening Ceremony on Friday, March 9.

More programming details will be announced closer to the start of the Paralympics.

For Paralympic information and schedules visit www.teamusa.org/US-Paralympics

CALENDAR

OF SPORTS

MARCH 1
Wheelchair Basketball 6 to 7 p.m. at the East 54 Recreation Center, 348 East 54 St., Manhattan. For information call Christopher Noel 212 360-3319. **Also March 8, 15, 22 & 29**

Wheelchair Basketball 6 to 8 p.m. at St. Mary's Recreation Center, 450 St. Ann's Ave., Bronx. For information call Rodolpho Guevara 212 360-3341. **Also March 8, 15, 22 & 29**

MARCH 3
Goalball for athletes with visual impairments 10:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. at the Chelsea Recreation Center, 430 West 25 St., Manhattan. **Also March 10, 17, 24 & 31**

Table Tennis for all ages and abilities 2 to 6 p.m. at Burke

Sports Center Gym, Main Campus. 785 Mamaroneck Ave., White Plains. For information call 914 597-2248. **Also March 10, 17, 24 & 31**

MARCH 4
NY Rolling Fury Youth Wheelchair Basketball 1 to 2 p.m. at Gertrude Ederle Recreation Center, 232 W 6th St., Manhattan. **Also March 11, 18 & 25**

Adult Wheelchair Basketball 2 to 3 p.m. at Gertrude Ederle Recreation Center, 232 W 6th St., Manhattan. **Also March 11, 18 & 25**

MARCH 6
Adaptive Yoga 3:30 to 4:40 p.m. at Burke Sports Center Gym, Main Campus, 785 Mamaroneck Ave., White Plains. For more information call 914 597-2248. **Also March 13, 20 & 27.**

Wheelchair Basketball Axis Project 7 to 9 p.m. at the East 54 Recreation Center, 348 East 54 St., Manhattan. For information call Christopher Noel 212 360-3319. **Also March 13, 20 & 27**

Wheelchair Basketball 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the Al Oerter Recreation Center, 131-40 Fowler Ave., Queens. For information call Christopher Noel 212 360-3319. **Also March 13, 20 & 27**

MARCH 7
Wheelchair Basketball 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the West Bronx Recreation Center, 1527 Jessup Ave., Bronx. For information call Christopher Noel 212 360-3319. **Also March 14, 21 & 28**

ONGOING EVENTS
Adaptive Sports 1 to 2

p.m. for kids with a disability 5+ , every other Saturday (Al Oerter Rec Center, 131-40 Fowler Ave, Flushing) wheelchair basketball, football, tennis, floor hockey, softball, sled hockey, sitting volleyball, adapted swimming, power wheelchair soccer and track and field. <http://www.nycgovparks.org/accessibility>

Adaptive Hubs: West Bronx Rec. Center, 1527 Jessup Ave.; McCarren Play Center, 776 Lorimer St., Brooklyn; Gertrude Ederle Rec. Center, 232 W. 60 St., Manhattan; Al Oerter Rec. Center, 131-40 Fowler Ave., Queens; Greenbelt Rec. Center, 501 Brielle Ave., Walcott-Rockland Aves., across from Sea View Hospital, Staten Island. For information call 212 360-1430.

INFORMATION FORUM

THEATER PROGRAM GIVES NYC VETS FREE TICKETS TO BROADWAY

The Theater Development Fund (TDF) has created the TDF Veterans Theatergoing Program, which provides former New York City servicemembers with free admission to Broadway shows.

The program recently launched with 50 city veterans attending a performance of “Miss Saigon.” Upcoming shows for the vets include “A Bronx Tale” and “Kinky Boots.”

For information visit www.tdf.org.

ADA CENTER STRIVES TO HELP OTHERS IMPLEMENT ADA

The Northeast ADA Center, located at Cornell University, offers resources and training on a wide range of topics concerning people with disabilities in New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

As a member of the ADA National Network, it strives to help people make their communities and workplaces as inclusive and accessible as possible in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

For information visit www.northeastada.org.

U.N. WILL OBSERVE WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY

World Down Syndrome Day, held every year on March 21, will be observed at United Nations headquarters in New York City.

The event includes a gathering of people with Down syndrome, their supporters, advocates, representatives of major employers, experts on disability employment and government officials who will meet for panel discussions and testimonies to discuss workplace inclusion.

For information visit www.un.org/en/events/downsyndromeday.

HONOREES TO BE INDUCTED INTO DISABILITY RIGHTS HALL OF FAME

Eight people will be inducted into the inaugural The New York state Independent Living Council (NYSILC) Disability Rights Hall of Fame in a ceremony at the Troy Hilton Garden Inn, April 26.

For ticket or sponsorship information visit www.nysilc.org/hof.

PUBLIC ASKED TO RELATE ASSISTED LIVING EXPERIENCES

Richard Mollot, executive director of The Long Term Care Community Coalition, is looking for individuals or families who would be willing to speak to a reporter about a bad experience that they had in assisted living.

To participate write to info@ltccc.org.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO ASSESS ACCESS OF CENTRAL PARK

The Central Park Conservancy and Disabled in Action need volunteers to test a prototype of a map and guide that provides accessibility information about the park.

The guide will help visitors with disabilities to better navigate the park by providing information about the accessibility of certain paths, restrooms, playgrounds, stairway locations, other features and barriers.

To participate write to pdcc@central-parknyc.org.

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE TO HELP YOUNG LEADERS

The New York state Independent Living Council (NYSILC) supports leadership opportunities for young adults with disabilities through the Patricio “Pat” Figueroa Scholarship, which provides up to \$250 to attend conferences, training seminars or other events to enhance their leadership abilities.

The funding is aimed to help defray the cost of travel, food and other out-of-pocket expenses. To apply contact Brad Williams, bradw@nysilc.org.

LAWYERS SEEK PUBLIC INPUT FOR TWO LAWSUITS

Disability Rights Advocates (DRA) need public feedback from people with physical disabilities to support two active lawsuits where facilities were not accessible.

One suit is on behalf of people who use the MTA in the Bronx. The other is a suit that alleges the widespread inaccessibility of New York Police Department precinct stations across the New York City.

Anyone who has encountered barriers in these situations should call Rebecca Rodgers, 212 644-8644, ext. 304.

OLDER ADULTS NEEDED FOR MOBILITY STUDY

Researchers at the University of Illinois are looking for senior citizens to partake in their research study on challenges faced by older adults with long-term mobility impairments, with the goal of designing interventions and technologies to help the elderly age in place.

Each person will be compensated \$30 Amazon credit. Participants must be between the ages of 70 to 79, have a mobility impairment that began prior to age 50 and speak fluent English.

For information call Lyndsie Koon, 217 300-5445.

PARENTS SOCIALIZE AND TRAIN AT SUPPORT CENTER

My Time Inc., in Brooklyn, is a support center for parents of children with developmental disabilities.

The nonprofit provides workshops, educational trainings, support groups, advocacy, community forums and social outings.

For information call 917 933-9875.

WEB PROGRAM TEACHES AND ENGAGES POTENTIAL LEADERS

The New York State Independent Living Council (NYSILC) recently launched a Leadership Development and Civic Engagement Program.

It is for New Yorkers with disabilities to engage in online video and podcast training, live chats, action alerts and resources on a variety of topics such as advocacy, leadership development, civic engagement and life skills. Visit www.ldcep.org/register.php.

BROOKLYN LIBRARY PLANS NEXT YOUNG ADULT GET-TOGETHER

The Brooklyn Public Library’s Inclusive Services Department will hold their next meeting for young adults with disabilities on March 9, 11-1pm.

Parents, caregivers and educators are also welcome to attend and join in discussions on various topics such as inclusion and independence. American Sign Language interpreters are available upon request.

For more information call 718.253.4948.

SUPPORT GROUPS AVAILABLE AT MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Queens/Nassau offers a variety of free support groups, educational classes and monthly meetings for family members, caregivers, professionals and those with a diagnosis.

The nonprofit works to improve the lives of people with mental illness by educating the public, advocating for legislation and reducing stigma.

For locations and dates visit www.namiqn.org.

ANNUAL TECHNOLOGY SUMMIT AND SHOWCASE PLANNED

The annual M-Enabling summit and showcase will be held in Washington, D.C., June 11 to 13.

It is a gathering of people who create and contribute to accessible information and communication technology products and services. The event also includes the International Association of Accessibility Professionals annual conference.

To register visit m-enabling.com/.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARCH 1

Peer Support Group 1 to 3 p.m. at BCID, 27 Smith St., Brooklyn. For information call **718 998-3000. Also March 8, 15, 22 & 29**

Writers Workshop 4 to 6 p.m. at CIDNY 841 Broadway #301. For information call Eva Eason **646 442-4156. Also March 8, 15, 22 & 29**

MARCH 2

Friday Night Hangout for seniors and adults with physical disabilities, 5 to 8:30 p.m. at ICS, 25 Elm Pl., 5 floor, Brooklyn. For information call Latricia James. **718 907-1622. Also March 8, 15, 22 & 29**

Lobby Day Training 1 to 3 p.m. sponsored by NAMI, 505 Eighth Ave., 35 St., Manhattan. For information call **212 684-3365. Also March 5, 6 to 7:30 p.m.**

MARCH 3

Family Legos: Imagine It! Build It! For children and teens with and without disabilities 1 to 3 p.m. at Flatlands Library, 2065 Flatbush Ave., Brooklyn. For information call **718 253-4948. Also March 10**

Movie Club, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at NAMI, 505 Eighth Ave., 35 St., #1103. For information call **212 684-3365.**

MARCH 5

Stroke Brain Injury Survivor Support Group 12:15 p.m. at SUNY College of Optometry, 33 W. 42 St. For information call **212 938-4040.**

SORT Support Group for Clutterers/Hoarders 6 to 8 p.m. at EIS, 80 Maiden Lane, 11 floor. For information call **212 308-2210.**

VISIONS Senior Speak Out 3 p.m. at Selis Manor, 135 W. 23 St. For information call Elizabeth Lee **646 486-4444. Also March 12, 19 & 26**

Learn to Draw & Paint with Rich 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at ICS, 25 Elm Pl., 5 Floor,

Brooklyn. For information call Latricia James **718 907-1622. Also March 12, 19 & 26**

Knitting & Crochet Group for seniors and adults with physical disabilities 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at ICS, 25 Elm Pl., 5 floor, Brooklyn. For information call Latricia James **718 907-1622. Also March 12, 19 & 26**

Housing and Benefits Clinics, 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at CIDNY 841 Broadway #301. For information call Eva Eason **646 442-4156. Also March 6, 12, 13, 19, 20, 26 & 27**

MARCH 7

Memory Arts Café free art events for people living with Alzheimer's, caregivers and public 6 p.m. at NY Memory Center, 199 14 St., Brooklyn. For information call **718 499-7701.**

MARCH 6

Art for Everyone 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at ICS, 400 Fordham Rd., 10 floor, Bronx. For information call Latricia James **718 907-1622. Also March 13, 20 & 27**

Hand Cycle Training 5 to 6:30 p.m. at Burke's Main Hospital Building, #7, 785 Mamaroneck Ave., White Plains. For information contact **Aoudheusden@burke.org. Also March 13, 20 & 27**

Metropolitan Parents' Center: Education Advocacy Workshop 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Sinergia, 208 2 Lexington, 4 floor #333. For information call Godfrey Rivera **212 643-2840 ext 307. Also March 13, 20 & 27**

Tuesday Art Sampler 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at ICS, 25 Elm Pl., 5 floor, Brooklyn. For information call Latricia James **718 907-1622. Also March 13, 20 & 27**

Creative Writing Circle for seniors and adults with physical disabilities 5 to 8:30 p.m. at ICS, 257 Park Ave. S., Sec-

ond floor. For information call Latricia James **718 907-1622. Also March 13, 20 & 27**

TBI Support Group 12:30 to 2 p.m. at BCID, 27 Smith St., #200, Brooklyn. For information call **718 998-3000. Also March 20**

Advocacy Training: Who is Looking Out for Your Rights? 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Axis Project, 1325 Fifth Ave., Manhattan. For information contact **info@wheelingforward.org. Also March 13, 20 & 27**

MARCH 8

ReelAbilities NYC Disabilities Film Festival, JCC, 334 Amsterdam Avenue at 76 St. For information visit **www.reelabilities.org. Through March 14.**

MARCH 9

Autism Conference: Promoting Best Practices and Enhancing Quality of Life for Individuals with ASD 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Westchester Marriot, 670 White Plains Rd., Tarrytown. For information call **518 442-2574.**

Voices of Power: A Get Together for Young Adults with Disabilities 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Central Library, Room 214, 10 Grand Army Plaza, Brooklyn. For information call **718 253-4948.**

MARCH 10

Abilities First: A Showcase of Resources for Enrichment & Inclusion 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Poughkeepsie Galleria, 2001 South Rd., Poughkeepsie. For information call **845 485-9803 ext. 215.**

Universal Makerspace for ages 13 and up with or without disabilities 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Central Library, Information Commons Lab, 10 Grand Army Plaza, Brooklyn. For information call **718 253-4948.**

MARCH 11

Disabled Queers 1 to 3 p.m. at the LBGT Community Center, 208 West 13 St., Manhattan. For information call **718 389-8180.**

MARCH 13

Adult Support Group 6:45 p.m. at NY Branch IDA, 71 W. 23 St. #1527. For information call **212 691-1930.**

Law Clinic for people with ID & DD 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at BCID, 27 Smith St., #200 Brooklyn. For information call **718 998-3000.**

MARCH 14

The Largest Minority Radio Show 9 to 10 p.m. presenting news and views of people living with disabilities on WBAI 99.5 FM. **Also March 28**

MARCH 16

Parkinson's Support Group 10:30 a.m. in the Noyes Conference Center at Helen Hayes Hospital, Route 9W N. West Haverstraw. For information call **845 786-4321.**

MARCH 17

Family Legos: Imagine It! Build It! For children and teens with and without disabilities 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Saratoga Library, 8 Thomas S. Boyland St., Brooklyn. For information call **718 253-4948.**

MARCH 18

Disabled in Action Meeting, 1:30 to 4 p.m. at Selis Manor, first floor auditorium, 135 West 23rd Street. For information call **718 261-3737.**

ONGOING EVENTS

Free Workshops and Services at United Cerebral Palsy of New York City Family Connect Centers throughout the five boroughs. For information call **718 436-7979 ext.704.**

Lupus Alliance of Long Island/Queens Support Group meets once a month on Tuesdays 7:30 to 9 p.m. in Flushing. For information call **516 802-3142.**

To have your event or meeting listed, send information to www.ablenews@aol.com The deadline for calendar items is the 10th day of the month preceeding the date of publication. Calendar items will be accepted only if they have a specific date.

Budget Proposal Could Harm LTC Plans

Gov. Andrew Cuomo recently released his proposal for New York state's 2018-2019 budget, and according to the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Association of New York State (CDPAANYS) it could severely impact those who rely on CDPA and other services that help them live independently in the community.

The proposal states that after six months in a nursing home, a consumer will be considered permanently placed and therefore removed from managed long-term care (MLTC). But according to CDPAANYS, nursing homes usually cost more than even the highest cost community-based care, so currently MLTCs are incentivized to keep people in the community.

Cuomo's proposal will reverse that, and while in the nursing home, individuals will lose their housing, workers and community plan. This will make it extremely difficult for

seniors and people with disabilities to return to their homes.

Presently, consumers are allowed to change MLTC plans freely, but the new budget would make that much more difficult. Per CDPAANYS, Cuomo wants individuals who are auto-enrolled to have 45 days to change plans, after which they would be locked into their plan for 12 months at a time.

CDPAANYS also claims that the proposal seeks to prevent more people from accessing CDPA by preventing fiscal intermediaries from advertising the program. Home care agencies would also be limited in this regard. Both are similar to a tactic used by Pres. Trump in trying to suppress enrollees of the Affordable Care Act.

In a statement, CDPAANYS wrote "Governor Cuomo railed against that action. Now he is using it himself. We cannot let others who need CDPA suffer and wind up in a nursing home because the state does

not want them to learn about this program and pay for their services in the community. In other words, the governor is upset that people are finding out about a program that they qualify for and which will improve their life, so he is cutting advertising in the hopes they will stop finding out about it."

Another of their concerns is

RICE ACTION Continued from page 1

say restricts the Americans with Disabilities Act. When the ADAPT activists requested a conversation with Rice, they were told that she couldn't be reached.

According to L.I. Adapt's co-founder Marie Hickey, earlier that the Congresswomen would not be back in the district until May or June.

ADAPT members held up signs and chanted. After of two hours Rice's Deputy District Dir. Amanda Walsh agreed to set up a face-to-face meeting

that the budget does not address stagnant wages and the workforce crisis. In addition, it earmarks \$3 million for the Department of Health to provide for personal assistant wage adjustments in fee-for-service in rural counties, but allocates \$262 million in wage increases for the same workers in developmental disabilities fields.

with Rice in the near future and promised the ADAPT contingent that she would email them by 5 p.m. with a date and time for that meeting.

The group agreed and left. They received no email by 5 p.m. that day, but did receive an email from Walsh the next day that said, "Rep. Rice stands by her support for H.R. 620 and will not be recanting or renouncing her vote." And there would be no meeting.

ADAPT pledges to "hold her accountable."

WORKING FOR MEDICAID Continued from page 5

ty levels for parents, meeting Medicaid work requirements through 20 hours of work per week at minimum wage could lead to loss of Medicaid eligibility. In addition, these jobs are unlikely to have health benefits.

In 2017, less than a third of workers who worked at or below their state's minimum wage had an offer of health coverage through their employer, according to a Kaiser Family Foundation analysis.

Those who are already

working still must successfully document and verify their compliance. Those who qualify for an exemption also must successfully document and verify their exempt status, as often as monthly. States would need to pay for the staff and systems to track work verification and exemptions.

Due to complex documentation and administrative processes, some eligible individuals could lose coverage. In addition, people with disabilities may have challenges navi-

gating the system to obtain an exemption.

Increased documentation requirements shift Medicaid from a health insurance program for low-income families back to one that operates under welfare rules. Some states have decided to not implement waiver authority that they have received due to administrative costs.

Unlike workforce development agencies, state Medicaid agencies are generally not equipped to develop, provide

and administer work support programs.

However, the new CMS guidance is explicit that states will be required to describe strategies to assist beneficiaries in meeting work requirements, but they may not use federal Medicaid funds for supportive services to help people overcome barriers to work. It is unclear how states will come up with the additional funds needed to address the multiple barriers that interfere with the ability to work.

DISTRICT SUED Continued from page 12

is estimated that 6 to 17 percent of the population in the United States demonstrates some sign of dyslexia, making it the most prevalent learning disability by far.

Named plaintiffs, some of whom have special educational plans known as Individualized Education Programs (IEP) in place, have struggled with literacy because of the district's lack of accommodations.

As a result, they are at risk

of multiple academic, developmental and social-emotional delays that could have lifelong consequences.

"This case is critically important, because learning to read is a cornerstone of education and is the foundation of lifelong learning," said Shane Brun, a partner at Goodwin. "Students with reading disorders have every ability to stay on track with their peers, provided they have the right accommodations and tools to

do so. But without them, as is the case for so many in BUSD, students with reading disorders face immense challenges and lose precious opportunities to succeed and keep up with their counterparts."

"What's happening in BUSD matters, because in California alone it's estimated that more than 1 million students in K-12 public schools display signs of dyslexia," said Deborah Jacobson of Jacobson Education Law. "This is po-

tentially an entire population of children who will struggle needlessly and possibly enter society functionally illiterate, no matter how intelligent, driven and capable they are. I've seen too many families in the BUSD have to resort to extreme measures including homeschooling just so their children with reading disorders are spared the shame and emotional trauma of not learning to read alongside their peers."

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DBW-60, Seeking friendship, companion. Love to read, music and movies. Please enclose phone number. **A386**

SWM 70, seeks nice lady for companionship to spend quality time with. I live in Babylon Township. In your response include you telephone number, NS. **A384**

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BUDGET PLAN PUSH BACK

Continued from page 3

forming the program into a block grant or per capita cap system.

This would lead to the rationing of care and could force many low-income seniors and disabled out of their homes and into more costly institutional settings. In addition, it could endanger Medicaid for struggling families by im-

posing punitive coverage restrictions and administrative barriers such as work requirements and asset tests.

Further, the budget renews the administration's efforts to repeal the ACA and replace it with something similar to last year's failed Graham-Cassidy-Heller-Johnson plan.

The statement claims that

approach was widely reviled by most Americans, largely because it would have ended health coverage for millions and restricted access for millions more.

It goes on to say, "Whether in the president's budget or a stand-alone bill, any plan that would reduce coverage, weaken protections for people

with pre-existing conditions or make devastating cuts to Medicaid was and always will be unacceptable," stated in the released statement.

"We urge Congress and the administration to reject this flawed budget and to instead pursue bipartisan solutions that prioritize the health and well-being of all Americans."

THE ACCESS INDEX

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ASSISTED LIVING REPORT
Continued from page 3

that fewer than half the states surveyed were able to provide any information on abuse, neglect, exploitation and death of residents. However, those states reported nearly 23,000 such incidents that year.

Federal law mandates that Medicaid beneficiaries must need a nursing home level-of-care in order to qualify for coverage for assisted living care through a state’s waiver program or other Medicaid plan. By definition, these individuals have significant needs. Despite this, there are no federal rules governing standards of care in assisted living like there are for nursing homes.

“State oversight has failed assisted living residents and the taxpayers who help pay for their care,” said Toby Edelman, senior policy attorney at the Center for Medicare Advocacy.

“This national scandal cannot be swept under the rug any longer.”

“This report verifies reports from families over the years indicating that too often the promise of assisted living is unfulfilled for seniors,” said Richard Molloy, executive director of the Long Term Care Community Coalition (LTCCC). “Medicare beneficiaries deserve good care and dignity no matter where they access care and services.”

The GAO report makes clear that the problems identified in Pennsylvania 11 years ago were not an aberration. The oversight of the assisted living industry at the state level has failed to protect residents.

LTCCC and other advocacy organizations have called on the federal government to immediately take steps to protect

assisted living residents by enacting federal standards to ensure safety and dignity.

They are also urging for the development of federal and state websites, similar to Nursing Home Compare, with validated information on staffing, inspection results, complaints and a comprehensive list of critical incidents that have occurred.

DIA SPEAKS
Continued from page 8

System (ICS), Rick Surpin, announced that his program is on the edge of insolvency because of projected reductions in state funding.

Disabled New Yorkers need to ask the governor why he has vetoed a bill that would give tax breaks to homeowners who make accessible modifications and he has vetoed this bill for three straight years.

New York City residents need to keep pressure on the Mayor and Taxi & Limousine Commission to make sure that UBER and the other “online ride hail”

services are as accessible as the yellow cabs. Disabled and non-disabled cab riders need to understand that UBER, with their unfair business practices toward their drivers and passengers could kill the taxi industry in the City.

As activists and advocates for disability rights, we have to keep our primary focus on local and state issues.

There are many challenges facing us in the coming year and our job now is to be informed, stay united and let our elected officials know who we are.

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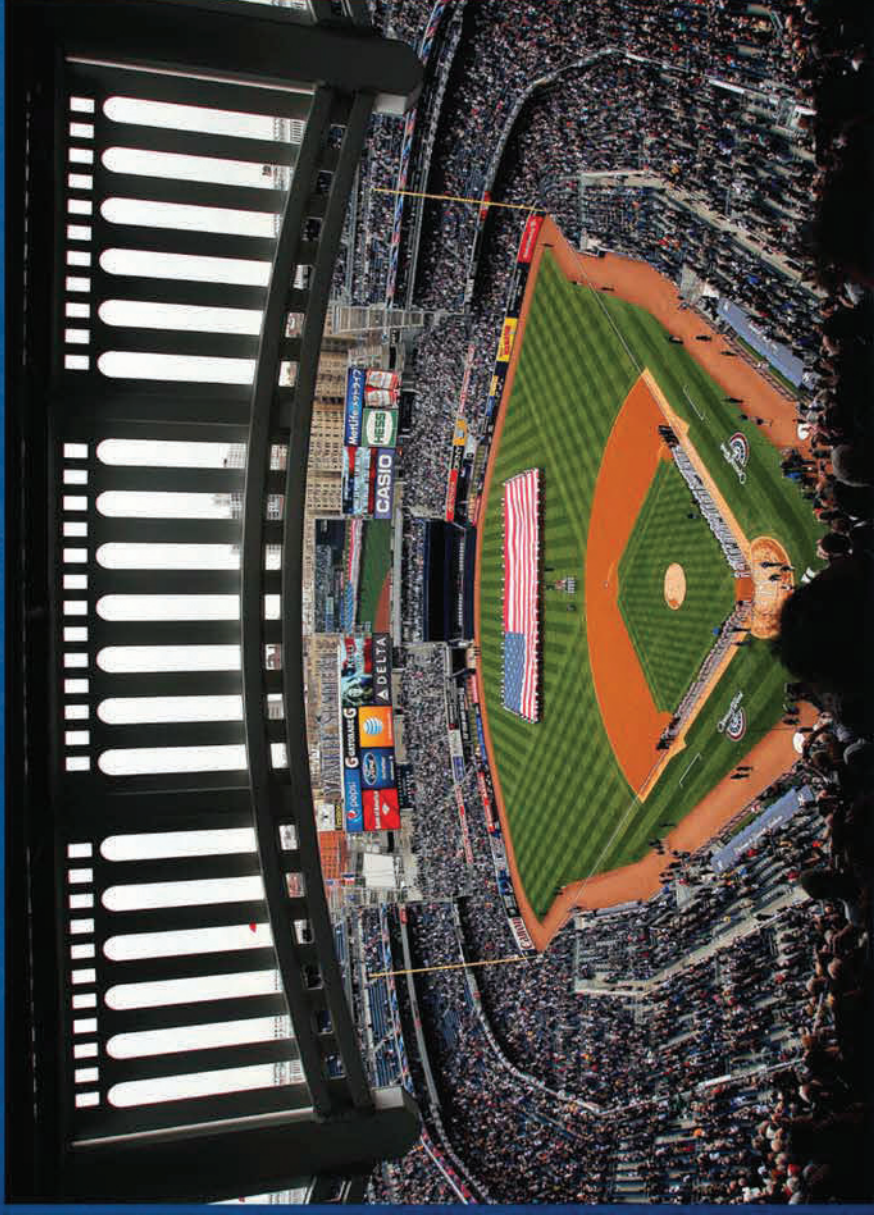
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