ON VOLUNTEERING

By Kara Lynn Dorsey,
Board President

Greetings and Happy Spring!

It’s that wonderful time of year again! Spring is a time for new growth. It’s a chance to start fresh, broaden our horizons and share our talents with others.

My days are truly filled with a sense of purpose and fulfillment due in great part to my time spent volunteering as a Board member for Independent Living. It’s an amazing feeling to know that my active participation helps improve the lives of thousands of individuals affected by disability every year.

You can have the same sense of fulfillment too. As the baby boom population continues to age, there will be more and more families affected by disability. We are working daily through our Long Term Care program to prevent individuals from being automatically sent into a nursing home. There’s so much more that can be done with the help of people like you.

Won’t you consider your good fortune and search your heart to see what you can do to help make this world a better place for everyone?

For more information on volunteer opportunities at Independent Living, please contact Anne Miller, Development Director at 565-1162 ext. 202.

Warmest regards,
Kara

DONNA REMEMBERS: One Woman’s Battle to Stay at Home

By Donna Ponessa, former manager of Family Services at Independent Living, Inc.

After many years with Independent Living, Inc., Donna is now putting her education and experience in nursing to work as a Nurse Evaluator for the NYS Department of Health’s new Nursing Home Transition and Diversion Waiver. She will evaluate people in nursing homes to help determine whether they can return to their homes and/or live in the community instead. We can’t imagine anyone better qualified in any way for this opportunity.

Fifteen years ago, there weren’t too many choices available for people like Donna who needed assistance for daily living. Donna was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS) when she was in college. Read Donna’s story on our website: www.myindependentliving.org where she has captured in her own words the spirit of independence - a spirit that continues to drive our organization.
Imagine being in need of assistance in order to live independently at home yet not having a say in who comes in to care for you, when they’re coming or what they’ll do to help you. That may sound preposterous, but until Independent Living, Inc. established Options/CDPAS in the early 1990’s, that’s exactly what a person with disabilities on Medicaid had available to them. They could arrange to have a home health company schedule and send a personal care attendant—generally a total stranger—to do housekeeping and some personal care chores. An attendant couldn’t touch a breathing apparatus, change a catheter or treat a wound.

The only other option when advanced care was needed was a nursing home.

Today, Babi Satzman heads up the Options/CDPAS program at Independent Living, Inc.. Options is a Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Service (CDPAS) that gives self-directing persons with disabilities on Medicaid the opportunity to take charge of the services they receive. In other words, the consumer (or their designee) handles the services from hiring through scheduling and, most importantly, training. “No one knows better than the person who needs care what needs to be done, when, and by whom,” Satzman says. “They can choose someone they know, someone related or someone they hire…and they can train that person to provide the care they need.”

Options/CDPAS is made possible through Independent Living, Inc. in cooperation with the local Departments of Social Services in Orange, Ulster, Sullivan, Greene and Putnam counties. It’s handled by the CASA office in Dutchess county as well.

It’s essential that people be capable of self-direction. That means willing and able to assess their own needs, monitor the quality of their services and understand the consequences of their choices. Once deemed eligible by the DSS, the person who needs the services (or their designee) can take charge of their care.

For more information about the consumer-directed approach to receiving home care services, please contact the Options program at: 845-565-1162 in Newburgh; 845-331-3313 in Kingston; 845-791-5988 in Monticello; 845-342-5114 in Middletown and 845-473-5045 in Poughkeepsie.

Meet Governor Paterson

By Susan Stockburger, Systems Advocate

In his inaugural speech on March 17th, Paterson said in a self-deprecating way, that he awoke that morning to a New York dawn that was no different than any other. In spite of obstacles and regardless of the circumstances, he would move forward.

But that day marked a New York dawn that was different indeed.

Governor Paterson has overcome barriers his whole life. As an infant, an eye infection left him totally without sight in his left eye and severely limited in his right eye. His parents moved to Long Island and found a school that agreed to teach him in a regular classroom. Like it or not, Governor Paterson is a person who has a disability. In his own words, he acknowledges that he has suffered because of discrimination but in spite of obstacles and regardless of the circumstances, has moved forward.

After being elected as Senate minority leader, he admitted that he had a lifelong desire to prove people wrong—to show them he could do things they didn’t think he could do.

I guess he showed them. Now he is the first legally blind person to serve as governor in any state.

The vision of Independent Living is a barrier-free society in which all persons can achieve their maximum potential. Thank you Governor Paterson for being the embodiment of that vision. Now get to work. We’re watching.
Independent Living, Inc. recognizes students in the LEAP program for poster contest participation

Two students in our learning enrichment after-school program (LEAP) submitted posters for the 21st Annual Alcoholism & Drug Abuse Council Poster Contest.

Did You Know?

There are 51.2 million individuals with disabilities in the United States (i.e. 18% of the population or 1 in 5 people). 11% of children between the ages of 6 and 14 have disabilities (4 million). 26% of people with disabilities live in poverty vs. 8% of people without disabilities.

Source: www.census.gov

Getting Out of Nursing Homes . . .

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sad to think that the primary reason individuals end up in a nursing home is because they can no longer walk, move easily within their home, cook for themselves or maintain their home.

But there’s a light at the end of what has been a long, dark tunnel. This year’s nursing facility transition and diversion waiver program will allow redirected Medicaid dollars to pay for a broad range of services that can assist individuals who want to get out of nursing homes or avoid being placed in one. Pivotal to this waiver is ‘Service Coordination’ – creating individualized service plans to achieve personalized goals, like living in the community and not in a nursing home to name one.

Over the past two years, Independent Living, Inc. has assisted several individuals with service coordination so they could get out of nursing homes and move back into the community. One of the greatest challenges is finding housing that is accessible and affordable. If an individual was awarded the same amount of money to live independently as they’re given to live in an institution, this problem would easily be solved. Plus there would be money to spare for medical and supportive services. We’re working on that as well.

If you’d like information about Independent Living’s Nursing Home Transition and Diversion Program, or if we can assist you in your efforts to make your home accessible, please call the Center at (845) 565-1162, ext. 219.

Doug Hovey.

Kudos to Mr. Baker and volunteers like him who are true friends of independence.
Our Mission

Independent Living, Inc., a consumer-directed, cross-disability service and advocacy organization, is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for persons with disabilities. Our vision is a barrier-free society with opportunities for all persons to achieve their maximum potential. Programs and resources offered by our agency provide needed support to individuals with all disabilities at literally every stage of life and include services in the areas of: Early Childhood Direction, Personal Attendant Care, Work Incentives Counseling, School-to-Adult Life Transition, Deaf and Hard of Hearing advocacy and support, Traumatic Brain Injury and Medicaid Service Coordination, Access to Home, Long Term Care Planning and Mental Health Case Management and Peer Advocacy.

BULLETIN BOARD

Upcoming Events:

3rd Annual Regional Early Childhood Conference - June 11th at Anthoney’s Pier 9 in New Windsor.

8th Annual Orange County Mental Health and Wellness Conference - June 25th at Anthony’s Pier 9.

Friends of Independence 1st Annual Breakfast - October 1st at Anthony’s Pier 9.

Friends of Independence Tours
Come visit our Center and learn more about our services. Tour dates are May 8th, June 12th, and July 10th. 5:15 - 6:15 pm. Call ahead so we know to expect you or to arrange a special tour date for your group.

2ND ANNUAL YOUTH EMPOWERMENT CONFERENCE

Make a smooth transition from high school special education to the adult world

Date: May 15, 2008 • Time: 9:00 am to 1:00 pm
Orange County Community College
Middletown, New York

For information or to register contact:
Amanda Rhodes, Community Services Liaison
INDEPENDENT LIVING, INC
arhodes@myindependentliving.org • 845-291-0501

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