**Hovey Receives Human Rights Award**

At the 14th Annual Orange County Human Rights Commission Awards Dinner on April 23rd, Doug Hovey was honored for having enriched the quality of life by building better relationships, encouraging all to participate in community life on an equal basis, and for seeking to foster mutual respect and understanding among people through disability awareness and education.

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Meet Our New Board Members

- Jeffrey Sculley is an attorney with the firm of Rider, Weiner & Frankel, PC
- Dreena Pross is Director of Sales at Emblem Health
- Charles A. Walwyn, III is Business Development Officer at the Hudson Valley Federal Credit Union

How We’ve Grown

by Executive Director Doug Hovey

People come to us at different times in their lives and for different reasons, and we understand that eventually they must move on. Thanks to their dedication and service Independent Living, Inc. is stronger than ever before. We now employ over 200 people and serve thousands of individuals with disabilities and their families each year. Our programs and services continue to grow in response to the needs of our community.

We recently said “au revoir” to Debbie Metzner after 8 years of dedicated service on our Board of Directors. Words cannot express our gratitude for her contributions.

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Debbie and Kara

*Honorees
THE FRIENDS OF INDEPENDENCE SOCIETY

At a reception held at the Powelton Club in Newburgh on April 21st, Independent Living, Inc. gratefully acknowledged the meaningful financial contributions we have received from loyal supporters. Executive Director Doug Hovey thanked Provident Bank and Ulster Savings Bank for their sponsorship of the annual fundraising breakfast, and Board President Kara Dorsey recognized the Founding Members of the “Friends of Independence Society” – individuals who have pledged a minimum of $1,000 per year for 5 years, whose names are engraved on a plaque that is displayed at the Center. They are:

- Beth & Luis Abarca
- Albin Anderson
- Hollis & Allan E. Atzrott
- Joseph S. Bilello
- Maureen Crush & Robert Whelan
- Ricki A. DeSantis
- Kara & Jack Dorsey
- Doug & Ann Hovey
- Richard A. & Patricia M. Hovey
- Bridget & Pernell Judge
- Stuart & Nancy Kessler
- Matthew Migliaccio
- Anne & John Miller
- Bill & Mary Murphy
- Dr. Geraldine Petrosino
- Becky & Bill Potter
- Susan Stockburger

HOW WE’VE GROWN, continued from page one

of time and talent, nor does space permit us to share her perspective on all the changes that have taken place during her tenure. We don’t say ‘goodbye’ or ‘farewell’ because it is rare for anyone who has been so closely connected to our agency not to stay in touch, and Debbie assures us that she is only a thought away.

We also want to acknowledge Arnie Abrams, formerly our Director of Development, who joined IL in 1996 and “retired” last year. Arnie held many different positions within our organization, starting as a part-timer teaching computer skills to people with disabilities and later moving into leadership roles in program development and operations. He continues to support our mission and vision as a grant writer, advisor and friend. We offer sincere thanks for all he has given of himself over the years.

In Memoriam

It is with heavy hearts and fond remembrances that we mark the passing of JoEllen Ridley Bonse, wife of Vernon, our Deaf Services Coordinator, who was a familiar face at Independent Living and a devoted volunteer. Our sincere and deepest condolences also go out to the family of Jonah Bethge with the hope that they will be comforted by the knowledge that Jonah is being remembered in ways that give lasting hope to others.

We’ve launched our new website!

If you haven’t visited www.myindependentliving.org lately, you’ll notice big differences in visual appeal, organization and navigation. Users now have the option of making the text larger or smaller according to their reading preferences, there’s now a Search function, and donations can be made online!

Interested in a Yoga class? Visit our website today. You can also see photos from our donor appreciation event, or download registration forms for the Early Childhood and Wellness Conferences being held in June.

Alan McCormick, Cheri Stalter, Emanuel Hemsi, Arnie Abrams, Margaret Abrams, Susan Stockburger
Seated: Doug Hovey

Seated: Doug Hovey
**How can you help Independent Living?**

Join our legislative action team -- Make a difference simply by making occasional calls or sending emails to key legislators.

Want to help in an important way that takes little time and costs nothing at all? Then visit www.myindependentliving.org and click on the Action Alerts link on the home page to send an email to Susan Stockburger. Tell her to count on you to send email Action Alerts to legislators.

When you sign up to be on the Action Alert team, we’ll contact you when legislation comes up in Albany that could positively or negatively impact people with disabilities. We’ll ask you to either call or send an email to your legislator. We make it easy by providing the exact email to send or script to read when you call. Of course, we encourage our volunteers to speak their own words from their hearts if they prefer.

Legislators are busy people. But when they hear the voices of their constituents, they listen. In fact, the most powerful sentence you can say to a legislator is “I live in your district and I vote.”

Are there a few moments a month you can spare? Please contact Susan and join the chorus of voices making a difference for people with disabilities.

**Join the Statewide Systems Advocacy Network (SSAN)!
Our volunteers are the best! Go to www.myindependentliving.org and become a volunteer today!**

*By Susan Stockberger, Systems Advocate*

The 2009-10 New York State Budget contains a number of victories for Independent Living, most of which would not have been possible without ongoing advocacy efforts of the SSAN.

- Independent Living Center Funding will remain level for 2009-2010 at the 2008-2009 level. We were successful in avoiding cuts in the proposed 2009-10 Executive Budget.
- Restoration of SSI cuts - Thanks in large part to our endless calls, faxes, letters and emails; the Governor and Legislature have restored funding for the state share of SSI for people with disabilities.
- CDPAP - – The budget includes $500,000 for expanding participation in the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program. This enables consumers to avoid nursing home placement and receives services in their home.
- Regional Long Term Care Assessment Centers – there will be a three year demonstration program, ensuring that individuals receive the services they need to stay in the community.
- Cuts to home care and personal care rates were restored.
- An appropriation of $2,303,000 was made available for housing subsidies to participants in the Nursing Facility Transition and Diversion (NFTD) waiver.
- No premium increases for Medicaid Buy-In Program for Working People with Disabilities.
- Elimination of barriers to general Medicaid application such as the asset test, finger printing and face-to-face interview requirements.
- Pharmaceutical Reforms - Efforts to preserve Medicaid pharmacy benefits for people with psychiatric disabilities were successful.
- The proposal to weaken and delay NY’s SHU Law, the law to end solitary confinement of state prisoners with psychiatric disabilities, was rejected.

*By Kara Dorsey, President of the Board of Directors.*
**Our Mission**

Independent Living, Inc., a consumer-directed, cross-disability service and advocacy organization, is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for people 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, Employment, Work Incentives Counseling, Education Advocacy, School-to-Adult Life Transition, Deaf and Hard of Hearing advocacy and support, Nursing Home Transition & Diversion Waiver, Traumatic Brain Injury and Medicaid Service Coordination, Access to Home, Long Term Care Planning, Mental Health Case Management, Bridger Services, and Peer Advocacy.

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**Save the Dates!!**

- 4th Annual Regional Early Childhood Conference is June 3rd at the Ramada Inn in Newburgh, NY. Keynote address on “Auditory Information Processing & Its Disorders” by Dr. Jay Lucker, Ed.D., CCC-A/SLP, FAAA
- 9th Annual Orange County Mental Health & Wellness Conference is June 17th at Anthony’s Pier 9 in New Windsor, NY.
  
  *For registration forms/information, please visit our website.*
- Friends of Independence Tours are held on the first Thursday of every month from 5:15 – 6:15 pm. Call ahead so we know to expect you or to arrange a special tour date for your group.

**Did You Know?**

Q. What practices and activities are covered by the employment nondiscrimination requirements of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)?

A. The ADA prohibits discrimination in all employment practices, including job application procedures, hiring, firing, advancement, compensation, training, and other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment. It applies to recruitment, advertising, tenure, layoff, leave, fringe benefits, and all other employment-related activities.