DIVERSITY JOB FAIR
Job seekers and employers meet their match!

Mark your calendars for Thursday, October 15, 2009 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Join us in the Green Room at the Cornerstone, 111 Broadway, Newburgh, New York, as Independent Living, Inc. sponsors a diversity job fair. That means it’s open at no charge to employers, job seekers and the public.

“This is a great opportunity for employers to recruit qualified, reliable employees, and to receive support from state and local human service organizations, including tax credits and other incentives,” said David Owens, vocational case manager at Independent Living, Inc.

And it’s an ideal time for people looking for a job to find potential employers in one place. There will be a complimentary informational breakfast session for participating employers from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

Co-sponsors of the Diversity Job Fair with Independent Living, Inc. include the Association for the Visually Impaired, AHRC, Capabilities Partnership, Inc., Orange Works, Local Business Advisory Council, Mental Health Association in Orange County, OSCEAN and VESID.

For more information, or to register for the job fair, contact David Owens at (845) 561-4061 ext. 262 or by email: dowens@myindependentliving.org.

4TH ANNUAL EARLY CHILDHOOD CONFERENCE DRAWS RECORD CROWD

Over 150 parents, child care providers, speech and language clinicians, human service and early childhood professionals from Orange, Ulster, Dutchess and Sullivan counties gathered for the 4th annual Early Childhood Conference on June 3rd at the Newburgh Ramada Inn.

The standing-room only event opened with a keynote address by Dr. Jay R. Lucker, Ed.D., CCC-A/SLP, FAAA, who spoke about Auditory Processing Disorder (APD) research, common misconceptions regarding APD, and how it differs from language disorders.

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Building Capacity and Even Stronger Values
by Doug Hovey, Executive Director

On July 20th, Independent Living employees gathered for a Values Signing Ceremony in our new training room. This was a significant occasion for two reasons. It was our first meeting as a group in our brand new training room in the lower level of our building. It also marked the culmination of many months of working together to develop a formal statement of the values that guide our organization: Integrity, Respect and Customer Service.

As a team, we have embraced a new Continuous Development of People Process (CDPP). That process replaces the traditional “performance management review” with a values and systems approach.

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Financial independence is a prerequisite for true independent living. That’s why we are particularly excited when we can assist individuals in reaching their employment goals.

Milton is actively involved in the Center’s Community Independence Program (CIP). He likes being with people and hopes to contribute in a retail environment. He has expressed an interest in either becoming a cashier or in doing stock work. Naomi is a Washingtonville High School graduate, class of 2008. She holds an IEP diploma. She’s already spent time volunteering with a children’s group. She enjoyed the experience, and has a strong desire to continue working with kids. Robert is passionate about his desire to work in a job where he can clean and organize. He is very good at sorting and arranging things. Cathy also participates in the Community Independence Program. She’s eager to work – preferably indoors where she can sit when she needs to. Heather wants to work with animals or children. She says her ideal position would involve grooming, cleaning, walking or feeding animals. She also enjoys working outdoors; performing chores associated with gardening and general yard maintenance.

These candidates are seeking part-time employment for 8 hours or more per week, so if you’ve got a position available or know someone who does, give us a call.

**OMRDD SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GRANT TO WORK HARD FOR FIVE PARTICIPANTS**

Consistent with the Olmstead Decision and the Most Integrated Setting Plan, the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD) has approved a grant to Independent Living, Inc. that will make a difference: “PEOPLE FIRST in Orange County” will provide intensive, individualized vocational services to five individuals with significant developmental disabilities who want to become competitively employed and more fully participate in community life. Our employment specialists offer innovative supports beyond the capacity of existing traditional vocational rehabilitation services. All activities will be completely individualized, community based and designed to foster independence, self-direction, social integration, economic productivity and the continuing cultivation of natural supports in the workplace.

**How can you help Independent Living?**

**Provide career exploration/job shadowing experience . . . Learning is doing!**

Letting someone come into your life-on-the-job can give immeasurable insight to a person with disabilities who is seeking to be employed. When you show people exactly what you do, and maybe even let your “shadow” do some of the work for you, you provide an unforgettable experience—an experience that could change a person’s entire life.

You may not think that that kind of sharing really amounts to very much, but it has untold worth to people who have not had the benefit of exposure to work. People who have provided such an opportunity find that they take away just as much happiness and appreciation as the person they’ve allowed to peek into their work-a-day world.

Call us for more information.

Q. What is “reasonable accommodation” as defined by the ADA?

A. Reasonable accommodation is a modification or an adjustment to a job or the work environment that will enable a qualified applicant or employee with a disability to participate in the application process or to perform essential job functions. Reasonable accommodation also includes adjustments to assure that a qualified individual with a disability has rights and privileges in employment equal to those of non-disabled employees.
Steve Miccio Honored at 9th Annual Orange County Mental Health and Wellness Conference

At the 9th Annual Orange County Mental Health and Wellness Conference on Wednesday, June 17th, Steve Miccio, Executive Director of PEOPLE, Inc. was honored for his leadership and unwavering dedication to promoting wellness and recovery as well as service to individuals with psychiatric disabilities.

The conference, sponsored by Independent Living, Inc., the Orange County Department of Mental Health and the Wellness Task Force, drew over 150 providers, service recipients and family members. A riveting keynote address by Matt Canuteson, policy specialist at the New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services (NYAPRS), highlighted the importance of advocacy, relationships, peer support and hope in the recovery process. Conference workshops focused on employment and work incentives, nutrition, crisis and hospital diversion. The day wrapped up with a presentation by Angie Kays-Burden, project director of the new Orange County Children’s Mental Health initiative along with members of the implementation team for the System of Care for Children and Adolescents.

Senate Passes Two Bills from New York Association on Independent Living (NYAIL) 2009 Disability Priority Agenda!

Two bills that NYAIL lobbied hard to have passed are now law.

S.5396 (Huntley) incorporates Title II of ADA into NYS Human Rights Law, providing protections against discrimination on the basis of disability in services provided by public entities, including state and local governments. The Assembly version of this bill, A.781-B (Paulin) passed the Assembly in May as part of the Disability Awareness Day package.

S.1058 (Addabbo) – Poll Site Access Bill requires all poll sites to comply with the accessibility guidelines of the ADA. It also eliminates the practice of granting waivers for inaccessible sites. The Assembly version of this bill, A. 584 (Cahill), also passed the Assembly as part of the Disability Awareness Day package.

Early Childhood Conference, continued from page one

The conference included workshops on Seizure Recognition and First Aid; American Sign Language, and Yoga for Children, as well as extensive product displays by Education Station and Inquiring Minds Bookstore.

The conference was sponsored by the Mid-Hudson Regional Early Childhood Direction Center (ECDC) at Independent Living, Inc. and the Orange County Provider Coalition.

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According to our new approach, employees are empowered to develop agreements with their managers to achieve individual, departmental and ultimately organization-wide goals.

It’s a very exciting time for all of us at Independent Living, and there is a contagious spirit of enthusiasm among us as we move ahead. Thanks to the generosity of our donors and M. Martin Construction, we have surpassed even our own expectations for the renovation of our lower level. It now consists of a beautiful atrium, a conference/training room that can accommodate up to 65 people, five new offices, a kitchen, two fully-accessible bathrooms, and demonstration areas for assistive technology. We are planning a grand opening ceremony this fall, and we’ll do it with renewed dedication to the values we cherish--integrity, respect and customer service.
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.

OCTOBER 15TH IS WHITE CANE AWARENESS DAY.

CBVH joins IL raising White Cane Awareness

Orange County will have its first White Cane Awareness Day on October 15th. This day focuses on the white cane as a tool for maintaining independence and dignity—a symbol of freedom, not of pity or helplessness. “A lot of people look at a person walking with a cane and think ‘disability’. We’d like the perception to change so that they recognize that the white cane signifies independence,” remarks Julie Cardone, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor at NYS Office of Children and Family Services Commission for the Blind (CBVH). She is planning the October 15th event at Independent Living with members of the support group for people who are blind and visually impaired that meets on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at Independent Living, Inc.