5TH ANNUAL FRIENDS OF INDEPENDENCE BREAKFAST

Two hundred sixty supporters attended our 5th annual fundraising breakfast on October 17th at Anthony’s Pier 9 in New Windsor, NY. Organized around the theme of “Purpose – Partnership – Progress,” the program included testimonials from service recipients in both Orange and Sullivan Counties who have been involved with our advocacy efforts, independent living skills and home care programs. Executive Director, Doug Hovey, spoke about the ways in which Independent Living addresses the “social determinants of health” – specifically, continued on page 3

A THRIVING PARTNERSHIP

Independent Living welcomes Valentina DiTomasso as the Supportive Housing and Homeless Services Manager at the Cornerstone Residence. Valentina attended Mercy College, where she majored in Psychology and Business Administration, and she brings a wealth of experience in management, client services and team leadership. Valentina replaces Emanuel Hemsi, who recently relocated to pursue new adventures with his family. Emanuel was a strong advocate who promoted tenant participation in community activities. He is greatly missed, but everyone wishes him all the best in his next endeavors.

For over ten years, Independent Living, Inc. and Safe Harbors of the Hudson have worked in partnership at The Cornerstone Residence in Newburgh, helping to transform lives and revitalize the Lower Broadway community. Tenants at The Cornerstone include people who were formerly homeless, veterans, artists, individuals with psychiatric diagnoses, and other adults who need affordable housing.

Independent Living’s case managers are on-site to provide outreach and engagement as well as demand-responsive support services to residents at The Cornerstone. Needs range from assistance with day-to-day challenges to financial management, referrals to community resources, life skills, and goal-setting toward employment, volunteer opportunities, education and nutrition.
**4TH ANNUAL WHITE CANE AWARENESS DAY**

On Monday, October 15th, Independent Living, Inc. hosted its 4th annual Mid Hudson Valley White Cane Awareness Day. This year’s event focused on “Creating More Livable Communities” and included a presentation by Kevin McGuire, a national consultant who assists corporations, architects and planners, municipalities, and government officials in meeting the standards prescribed by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, anticipating barriers to accessibility and designing creative and cost-effective solutions for public venues.

In collaboration with the City of Newburgh, and with support from Orange County Legislator Patrick Berardinelli, crosswalks have been established at the busy intersection in front of Independent Living’s Newburgh location, and a crosswalk safety brochure was distributed to attendees at the White Cane Awareness Day event. Robert Gumson, Manager of Independent Living Services at the NY State Education Department of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services (ACCES-VR), spoke about the role of Independent Living Centers as advocates for systems changes in local communities that can serve as models to be replicated across the country. Members of the support group for people who have visual impairments also shared experiences regarding challenges and barriers they have encountered in the community.

**HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?**

Participants in the Community Independence Program (CIP) at Independent Living have been reaping produce from their garden all summer, and learning cooking skills as they turn their harvest into delectable treats. This year’s garden has yielded beets, herbs, squash, tomatoes and more. For information about the CIP program, call (845) 565-1162 x231.
**4th Annual Hudson Valley Diversity Job Fair**

On Thursday, October 11, 2012, Independent Living, Inc. hosted another successful job fair that was attended by approximately 280 job seekers and numerous local and regional employers offering positions in air and ground transportation, banking, distribution, healthcare, human services, janitorial and cleaning services, production, sales and retail. Early feedback from just three of the employers indicates that at least 30 of those who applied for jobs that day will be hired.

The job fair was preceded by a breakfast for participating employers at which speakers shared their experiences as workers with disabilities and as the employer of people with disabilities. There was also a presentation by the NY State Department of Education – ACCES-VR and the NY State Commission for the Blind outlining workplace accommodations and financial incentives for hiring people with disabilities. This year’s job fair included a voter registration booth and Walgreen’s provided free flu shots.

Collaborating with Independent Living, Inc. to present the Diversity Job Fair were: the Association for the Visually Impaired, Capabilities Partnership, Inc., the Mental Health Association in Orange County, NY State Commission for the Blind, N.Y. State Department of Education ACCES-VR, and Safe Harbors of the Hudson, Inc.

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**5th Annual Friends of Independence Breakfast, continued from page one**

housing, employment and social and recreational opportunities, illustrating positive outcomes with real-life situations we have encountered. He also provided a brief update on the service centers in Middletown and Monticello that we opened just one year ago, new hospital diversion and recovery center programs, and announced that pre-development work has begun on “Independence Square” – a mixed-tenancy, apartment complex that will be built on the property adjacent to our Newburgh Center.

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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, Benefits Counseling, Education Advocacy, Deaf and Hard of Hearing advocacy and support, Medicaid Service Coordination, Access to Home, Mental Health Case Management, Hospital Diversion & Bridger Services, and Peer Advocacy.

Upcoming Events

“Friends of Independence” Tour and Open House

5:15 – 6:15 pm: We start & end on time!

Wednesday, January 16, 2013
66 Bennett Street, Middletown, NY

Thursday, February 7, 2013
5 Washington Terrace, Newburgh, NY

Support Group for Individuals with Visual Impairments

2nd Tuesday of every month from 6-8p.m., at 5 Washington Terrace. There is no cost to participate. Light refreshments are provided. Call (914) 993-5389 for more information or to register.

Did You Know?

Autism is a developmental disability that affects 1 in every 110 children in the United States. Every day sixty-seven children are diagnosed with autism. More children will be diagnosed with autism this year than with AIDS, diabetes & cancer combined. Autism is the fastest-growing developmental disability in the U.S. yet receives less than 5% of the research funding of many less prevalent childhood diseases. There is no medical detection or cure for autism.

Sources: Autism Speaks, New Horizons in Autism