Letter From The Executive Director

Independent Living joined a group of over 600 stakeholders of the mental health system who braved the bitter Albany weather on January 29th to urge state legislators to support one of the largest single increases in community based mental health services in state history. This year we expect the Executive Budget to infuse the local service systems with over $200 million of community based treatment, rehabilitation, housing and crisis, peer and family support services. The rally cry was “Reinvest in my Recovery!” as advocates expressed strong support to direct public healthcare dollars to where they’re needed the most by investing in more robust and responsive community based systems of care and recovery.

On February 25 we gathered once again in Albany with our colleagues from the New York Association on Independent Living (NYAIL) and Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Association of New York State (CDPAANYS), to urge the Legislature to take action in the 2014-15 Budget and to support the State’s efforts toward the full integration of New Yorkers

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Independent Living, Inc. Collaborates with Bloomingdeals!

Independent Living, Inc. is working in collaboration with Bloomingdeals! - the Hudson Valley SPCA’s resale shop. Every year, the Hudson Valley SPCA donates a portion of proceeds generated by resale operations to a select group of local charities. Independent Living is honored to be one of the organizations chosen to receive a $500 grant this year.

Whether shopping, donating or consigning, you can help Independent Living, Inc. and the Hudson Valley SPCA make a difference in our community. Donations of gently used clothing, books and household items may be made at Bloomingdeals! Resale, located at 436 Blooming Grove Turnpike in New Windsor, NY. Also at this location is the Bloomingdeals! Consignor’s Emporium, where you may consign a piece of quality furniture or home décor and choose to donate up to 50% of the sale to Independent Living, Inc. For more information, directions or store hours, call (845) 561-3180.

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**What’s in a name?**

Last year, the NY State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB), a division of the Office of Children and Family Services officially changed its name by removing the term “Visually Handicapped” at the end, signifying a step forward in affording blind individuals the same respect as their peers. “The word ‘handicapped’ suggests a helplessness that goes beyond a physical or mental limitation created by a health condition. No such word defines any New Yorker who is blind,” says Julie Cardone, Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor.

NYSCB offers vocational rehabilitation services to help people who are blind live as independently as possible, giving all individuals the opportunity to succeed. The Commission offers the tools, counseling, and guidance to assist New Yorkers, many with multiple disabilities, in making decisions that will help them achieve their personal and vocational goals.

An individual can receive assistance from NYSCB early in life. The Commission provides rehabilitation services to children who are blind, and works with parents to arrange services to supplement educational activities, building skills and promoting the future independence of each child. Sometimes, the help provided comes in the form of job training, or a liaison to bridge the gap between individuals and their employers; sometimes, it means helping New Yorkers find a new way to do things. NYSCB is focused on equality, giving everyone the chance to be integrated in their communities and to live fulfilling, productive lives.

For more information about services provided by NYSCB, including the Business Enterprise Program, go to: www.visionloss.ny.gov

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Independent Living, Inc. Friends of Independence**

**Open House & Tour**
- Thursday, June 5th – 5 Washington Terrace, Newburgh, NY
- Wednesday, July 16th – 10 Prince Street, Suite 12, Monticello, NY
- Wednesday, August 20th – 66 Bennett Street, Middletown, NY

**Spring Into Wellness Open House: Independent Living, Inc. Wellness Center**
- Thursday, April 24th, The Lobby at the Ritz Theater, 107 Broadway, Newburgh, NY 12550
  - For more information contact Bryon Abrams at 845-561-4061 ext. 266

**Seminar Series for Culturally Sensitive Behavioral Health Practices: Working with Deaf or Hard of Hearing People**
- Tuesdays: May 20th, September 16th, October 21st, November 18th
  - 5 Washington Terrace, Newburgh NY 2:30pm – 5:00pm
  - For more information contact Suzanne Tremper by phone (845)565-1162 ext. 209, videophone (845) 764-8384 or email stremper@myindependentliving.org

**Support Group for Individuals with Visual Impairments**
- Tuesday, May 13th – 5 Washington Terrace, Newburgh, NY
  - For more information contact Suzanne Tremper at 845-565-1162 ext. 209

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**Did You Know?**

Harris Poll results of interviews with over 900 managers showed:

19 out of 20 managers give employees with disabilities a “good” or “excellent” rating on their job performance. They say employees with disabilities work as hard or harder than their employees who do not have disabilities.

The average cost of hiring people with disabilities is the same as hiring people without a disability, according to 75% of the employers surveyed.

However, only 43% of EEO officers say that their companies have hired people with disabilities.

(Source: disabilityfunders.org)
Welcome Yolanda Montoya

Our Monticello service center welcomes Yolanda Montoya, Early Childhood Direction Center (ECDC) Outreach Specialist. The Mid-Hudson Regional ECDC at Independent Living, Inc. serves families in Sullivan, Orange, Ulster and Dutchess Counties with children from birth through age 5 who have developmental delays or disabilities, offering free neutral information, resources and referral services for early intervention programs, child evaluation and assessment, preschool special education, parent training and more.

Visit our website at www.myindependentliving.org to sign up for E-News and view our video.

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with disabilities. In October, Governor Cuomo issued the long awaited Olmstead Implementation Plan, detailing how the State intends to comply with the Supreme Court’s Olmstead v. L.C. decision of 1999 to ensure individuals with disabilities receive services and supports in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs.

The plan commits to reducing the long term stay nursing facility population by 10 percent over the next five years, and continues deinstitutionalization efforts in the developmental disability and mental health systems. In addition, New York is implementing the Community First Choice Option and the Balancing Incentive Program -- made available under the Affordable Care Act to create new opportunities for people with all types of disabilities to live in the community with services and supports. Independent living centers in New York State are well positioned to play a central role in the implementation of these initiatives.

Community Independence

Our Community Independence Program (CIP) participants sincerely thank the Ralph E. Ogden Foundation for their generous donation toward the purchase of a new van, which allows access to many social, recreational, community service, cultural and arts-related activities.

Second Annual Conference – 2014
Educating English Language Learners in Early Childhood – Birth Through Age 8

Neuroscience and Education: Leveling the Playing Field

KEYNOTE SPEAKER – Dr. Eric Pakulak, Senior Research Associate, Brain Development Laboratory, University of Oregon
Dr. Pakulak’s team is researching neuroplasticity and evidence-based approaches for improving attention, language, and school readiness in children from lower SES backgrounds.

SPECIAL GUEST – Dr. Angelica Infante-Green, Associate Commissioner for the Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies at NYSED.

Saturday, May 10, 2014
9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
SUNY New Paltz, Student Union Building
1 Hawk Drive, New Paltz, NY 12561
To register, please visit
http://ucboces.schoollines.com/earlychildhood/2014

Questions? Please call us at (845) 256-1-02 or email us at hvrhern@ulsterboces.org

A low $20 conference fee covers entry to the conference and workshops/breakout sessions, and includes morning refreshments and lunch!

See you in New Paltz on May 10!
Registration is now open!

Organized by

Hudson Valley Regional Bilingual Education/Resource Network (HV RBERN) of Ulster BOCES

With Support From

• Hudson Valley Writing Project
• SUNY New Paltz
• Mid-Hudson Early Childhood Direction Center at Independent Living, Inc.
• Lower Hudson Early Childhood Direction Center at Westchester Institute for Human Development
Independent Home Care is a licensed home health care service agency (LHHCSA) dedicated to providing reliable, high-quality home care and related services for individuals of all ages. Our vision is a barrier-free community with a broad array of supports, enabling people to live with dignity in the home of their choice.

IL Strategy Group is dedicated to assisting affiliates in the Independent Living System with their missions, and designing solutions for issues of poverty, disability and the social determinants of community and individual well-being, including, but not limited to, the provision of affordable and accessible housing, opportunities for education, employment and social inclusion.

INDEPENDENT LIVING, INC.
5 Washington Terrace
Newburgh, NY 12550
Phone: (845) 565-1162
Videophone: (845) 764-8384
Fax: (845) 565-0567
www.nyindependentliving.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED