

THE INDEPENDENT



*the hardest battle is to be nobody-but-yourself
in a world that is trying to make you like everybody else.*

e.e. cummings

Summer, 2009

Vol. 21 No. 2

**TRANSITION NEWS
BEGINS ON PAGE 7**

SAFELINK

Safelink Wireless is a government supported program that provides a free cell phone and airtime each month for income eligible consumers.

If you are a New York resident, through SafeLink Wireless' Lifeline Service you can receive

- A FREE Safelink Wireless phone
- A FREE cellular plan that gives you 68 minutes every month.

You qualify for Lifeline Service in your area if...

You already participate in one of the following assistance programs:

- Family Assistance
- Food Stamps
- Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)
- Medicaid
- Safety Net Assistance
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Veteran's Disability Pension
- Veteran's Surviving Spouse Pension

or

Your total household income is at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

In addition, you must meet the following criteria:

No one in your household currently receives Lifeline Assistance through another phone carrier. If someone in your household is receiving Lifeline Assistance you must cancel the service before applying for Lifeline Service through Safelink Wireless.

You have a valid United States Postal Address. In order for us to ship you your FREE phone you must live at a residence that can receive mail from the US Post Office. Sorry, but P.O. Boxes cannot be accepted.

Please note that if you elect to qualify via income you will need to prove your eligibility by sending us a copy of a document that proves your income level. The following are examples of documents that are accepted:

- Medicaid Statement
- Supplemental Security Income Statement
- A document that contains your program ID
- 4 months of consecutive pay stubs
- Letter from your employer
- Last year's income tax return
- Employer W-2 form

Applying in New York

Applying for SafeLink Wireless Service in your area is quick and easy. You may apply in one of the following ways:

If you elect to qualify based on program participation...Fill out the application on the website <https://www.safelinkwireless.com/EnrollmentPublic/home.aspx>.

Download the completed application for your records. Write down the Enrollment ID that is provided when you fill out your application! With your ID you will be able to check on the status of your application at the web site or by calling **1-800-977-3768**.

If you elect to qualify based on your level of income...Fill out the application on this website. <https://www.safelinkwireless.com/EnrollmentPublic/home.aspx>

Then, download the completed application. Once you have the application you will need to print it yourself. Once you have your completed application, sign the application and return it along with copies of documents that prove you qualify for SafeLink Wireless Service. You may return your application in one of the following ways:

Fax the application to 1-800-834-7713. Fax is the fastest way to get your application approved! Or

Mail your application to us at PO Box 220009, Milwaukie, OR, 97269-0009. Please allow 2-3 additional weeks for applications that are sent by mail.

Write down the SafeLink Wireless ID that is provided when you fill out your application! With your ID you will be able to check on the

status of your application on line, or by calling 1-800-977-3768.

If you do not have internet access, call **1-800-977-3768** Monday through Saturday, 8:00 A.M to 10:00 PM, EST, Sunday, 8:00 AM to 7 PM, EST.

Information appeared in NYS E-bulletin April, 2009

RUBY'S BEQUEST

UCP, in collaboration with the Institute for the Future (ITFF) and AARP is sponsoring a unique collaborative storytelling experience for the public good - Ruby's Bequest - in which tens of thousands of people will help forecast the future of caring in the United States. This project will use new media to invite participation from the general population with the goal of uncovering new ways to look at caring in our society. Everyone can help the project by sharing their concerns, questions, and solutions on diverse topics related to the subject of caring, such as elder care or Medicare and Social Security and many other topics besides these.

Ruby's Bequest engages people by introducing them to the fictional town of Deepwell, USA, where a large estate was left to the town on the condition that its citizens improve how they care about their own people. In order to do this the citizens of Deepwell are asking for advice from people all over the world about how to better care for the town's citizens.

To learn more about Ruby's Bequest please visit the Life Without Limits website: www.lifewithoutlimits.org

Or go directly to the Ruby's Bequest Website: Ruby's Bequest <http://www.rubysbequest.org/>

Information appeared in NYS E-Bulletin 5-2009

NONPROFIT EMPLOYEES CAN BENEFIT FROM COLLEGE LOAN FORGIVENESS

The Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program is intended to encourage individuals to enter and continue in full-time public service employment by forgiving the remaining balance of their eligible federal loans after they satisfy the Program's public service and loan repayment requirements. Those individuals with certain federal student loans for college (Federal Eligible Direct Loans) may qualify to have the outstanding principal balance and accrued interest cancelled under the following conditions: (a) the borrower makes 120 monthly payments on the loan after October 1, 2007; (b) the borrower is employed by a "public service organization" at the time that loan forgiveness is requested and granted, as well as during the period the borrower makes the required 120 monthly payments; and (c) the loan is not in default at the time of the request.

"Federal Eligible Direct Loans" is defined to mean a Direct Subsidized Loan, a Direct Unsubsidized Loan, Direct PLUS loan, or a Direct Consolidation Loan. Your loan documentation should identify the type of federal loan you have.

What is a "public service organization?" Public service organizations include full-time jobs at a nonprofit that is a Section 501(c)(3) organization under the Internal Revenue Code. Other public service organizations include federal, state, local or tribal governments, agencies or entities; public child or family service agencies; Tribal colleges or universities; and private organizations that provide public

services like emergency management, public safety, public interest law service, public care for children, elders or disabled, or public health, education or library services.

The Program applies to payments made after October 1, 2007. Every month you work at a public service organization and make your loan payment on time counts towards the necessary 120 payments. Your service does not have to be consecutive however (e.g., if you worked for a nonprofit for a year, then a business for a year, and then again at a nonprofit, you just starting counting payments where you left off).

Do I have to keep working in the same public service job?

No. For a payment to count towards the forgiveness period, the borrower has to have been employed full-time by a public service organization when the payment was made. As noted, there are many types of public service organizations.

What does it mean to work full time? "Full-time" means working in one or more public service jobs for the greater of: (a) an annual average of at least 30 hours per week, or for a contractual or employment period of at least 8 months, an average of 30 hours per week; or (b) the number of hours the employer considers full-time.

What if I am a teacher? For borrowers with a contractual or employment period of less than 12 months, qualifying payments have to be made each month for all 12 months. Teachers who work on an academic year basis, often for only nine months in a year, would still be required to make payments on their loans during the summer vacation period.

What if I was/am an AmeriCorps or Peace Corps volunteer?

Full-time service in an AmeriCorps or Peace Corps position counts as employment in a public service job. AmeriCorps Segal Education

Awards or Peace Corps transition payments used for loan repayment may qualify to meet the 120-payment requirement.

How do I keep track of this?

It is the borrower's responsibility to collect and retain the documents that support eligibility for this benefit.

Does this just apply to loans taken by the student, or does it also apply to the loans a student's parent(s) have taken?

For the most part, this just applies to eligible loans the student has taken directly. Parents with outstanding loans would need to contact the Department of Education to learn the conditions under which part of their loans could be forgiven.

For further information on the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program, contact the Department of Education at 1.800.4FED.AID (1.800.433.3243).

Information appeared in NYS E-Bulletin, June 2009

CHRISTOPHER AND DANA REEVE PARALYSIS ACT

On March 30, 2009 President Obama signed the "Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009". In keeping with the Congressional tradition of heaping pieces of legislation together, this legislation contained the Christopher and Dana Reeve Paralysis Act.

This legislation aims at improving the lives of Americans living with paralysis through:

-- Paralysis Research - Expands research on paralysis at the National Institutes of Health. This will encourage collaborative research by connecting scientists conducting similar work to further enhance

-- Understanding and speed discovery of better treatments and cures.

-- Paralysis Rehabilitation and Care - Builds on research to enhance daily function for people with paralysis, including a Clinical Trials Network, to measure effectiveness of certain rehabilitation tactics and encouraging shared findings on paralysis to improve rehabilitation.

-- Improving Quality of Life for Persons with Paralysis and Other Physical Disabilities - Works with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to improve the quality of life and long-term health status of persons with paralysis and other physical disabilities.

Information taken from Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation web site at <http://www.christopherreeve.org/site/> and the White House Disability Web site at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/disabilities/>

MYBENEFITS

MyBenefits at <https://www.mybenefits.ny.gov/selfservice/> is a quick and easy way for people in New York State to find answers to questions about New York State's programs and services.

Here you can find information about;

- Food stamps
- Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit
- Home Energy Assistance Program
- Medicaid
- Family Health Plus
- Child Health Plus
- WIC- Women, Infants, Children
- Healthy New York
- Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC) Program
- Earned Income Tax Credit
- School Breakfast and Lunch Menus
- Links for Working Families

This information is also available in Spanish.

**ALL NEW 4TH EDITION OF
SPINAL NETWORK:
THE TOTAL WHEELCHAIR
RESOURCE BOOK**

The 4th edition of *New Mobility* magazine's *Spinal Network: The Total Wheelchair Resource Book* is now available.

This 400-page guide is spiral bound to make it easy to handle from a wheelchair and provides information on spinal cord research, health, adaptive sports and recreation, accessible travel, disability rights, relationships and sexuality, fertility and parenting, adaptive technology and much more.

The book goes beyond the informative with dozens of profiles of individuals with paralysis who are thriving members of the community. From soccer moms to well-known radio hosts, these survivors represent a true cross-section of people with spinal cord injury and disease.

Published by No Limits Communications, Inc., in conjunction with *New Mobility* magazine and United Spinal Association, *Spinal Network* is considered the definitive resource for anyone who uses a wheelchair.

Other topics include:

- Up-to-date information on activity-based recovery, the 21st Century therapy championed by the late Christopher Reeve
- Objective analysis of overseas stem cell treatments
- Details on how to live independently
- Tips for landing a job
- Innovators in the world of art, entertainment and media
- The role of spirituality and faith
- Inexpensive adaptations
- Understanding insurance options

Books are available for \$34.95 + \$10 shipping & handling from Leonard Media Group, 888-850-0344, ext. 209, or www.spinalnetwork.net.

**NEW DIAGNOSIS GUIDELINES:
MILD TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) recently announced newly revised mild traumatic brain injury (MTBI) clinical diagnosis guidelines. These guidelines are designed to improve diagnosis, treatment and patient outcomes for the more than one million people who visit the emergency department every year for MTBI or concussion.

The revised guidelines address the following four key questions regarding individuals who present to the emergency department with an MTBI and offer recommended courses of action:

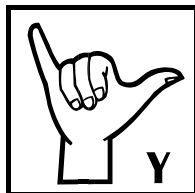
- Which individuals with MTBI should have a head CT scan in the ER?
- Is an MRI more useful than a CT scan when assessing an individual with an acute MTBI?
- In individuals with MTBI, are brain specific blood serum markers predictive of an acute traumatic intracranial injury?
- Should an individual with an MTBI with a normal neurologic evaluation and a negative CT scan be discharged from the ER?

For more information on the guidelines on MTBI, visit: <http://www.acep.org/practres.aspx?id=30060>.

Information appeared in "Brain Power News, Issue 2, 2009

**DEAF INITIATIVE IN
TECHNOLOGY (DIIT)
WORKSHOPS OFFERED IN
SIGN LANGUAGE:**

DiiT provides up-to-the-minute technical training in an all sign environment giving workshop participants the benefit of direct interaction with the instructors without the need for interpreters. This year, DiiT is offering new professional workshops in Graphic Communications, Information Technology, Engineering, English, and Business related topics. All workshops are held at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf at the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, New York. For more information, to register, or to add your name to the mailing list, please visit www.rit.edu/diit or call 585-475-7545 (Voice or TTY). Discounted rates are given to those who register with friends and/or co-workers!



**SPECIAL SPOTLIGHT: AIR
CARRIER ACCESS ACT AMENDED
(ACAA)**

The Department of Transportation (DOT) amended the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA), which took effect May 13th, strengthening protection for travelers with disabilities. Several new requirements have been mandated, including the legal extension of coverage of the ACAA to all commercial flights to and from the U.S., including those operated by foreign air

carriers. Additionally, such foreign carriers must make sure that disabled passengers are able to navigate the foreign terminal where they will be arriving and/or departing, and all new aircraft must have accessible lavatories, moveable armrests, on-board wheelchairs, and wheelchair storage space. Airline carriers will also now be required to offer disabled passengers web-only fares by an accessible means if the fare is offered on an inaccessible web page.

United Spinal Association has released an updated version of the *Accessible Air Travel- A Guide for People With Disabilities* which includes the ACAA's expanded regulations. This helpful booklet informs individuals with disabilities of their rights as passengers on commercial airlines and how to adequately prepare to ensure their air travel experience is enjoyable. It also provides valuable insight on a multitude of air carrier procedures, such as information about requirements for foreign airlines, what to expect in terms of equipment liability, how to file a complaint, and airport screening requirements. "This guide has been a very useful resource to thousands of air travelers over the years that were not aware of their rights under the Air Carrier Access Act. It is our hope that this revised version continues to help people with disabilities across the country experience enjoyable and trouble free air travel," said Kleo King, senior vice president of Accessibility Services at United Spinal Association. To access the guide, go to: <http://www.unitedspinal.org/disability-publications-resources/disability-publications>.

**SILC WILL BE CLOSED
SEPTEMBER 7 FOR
LABOR DAY**



TRANSITION NEWS



LEARNET

LEARNet is a resource for teachers, clinicians, parents and students produced by the Brain Injury Association of NY. LEARNet includes a problem-solving system designed to help you identify useful procedures for helping students with brain injury in school and at home.

Go to the website at www.bianys.org and follow the link.

EDUCATING OUR CHILDREN TOGETHER

Educating Our Children Together: A Sourcebook for Effective Family-School-Community Partnerships, by Susan Carter was developed jointly by the Consortium for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education (CADRE) and the NYS Education Department/VESID. It was compiled as a resource for educators to use to build effective school-family-community involvement.

This document provides practical information for parents and families, educators and administrators, and individuals involved in programs that support partnerships between families, schools and communities. It has been developed to support and promote creative

the sharing of resources and information about family-school-community partnerships.

The publication can be found at <http://www.kvesid.nysed.gov/specialed/resources.htm>.

BREAKING THE SILENCE

BREAKING THE SILENCE was developed for NAMI (National Alliance for the Mentally Ill) as part of their "Campaign to End Discrimination" to end this cycle of ignorance and shame. NAMI is a non-profit, grass-roots organization of families and friends, with more than 1,000 chapters nationwide, dedicated to eradicating mental illnesses and improving the quality of life of all those affected by these diseases.

Three teachers, who as parents experienced first hand the pain of seeing their own children taunted and isolated by classmates, created these materials. They hoped through education to create greater tolerance for children like theirs. It was also their dream to create a new openness about mental illness, which would encourage students to seek treatment for themselves or a friend who might be experiencing the onset of a major mental illness.

For more information, go to <http://www.btslessonplans.org/index.htm>

PARENT-FOR-PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

The Resource Center offers a monthly parent/caregiver support group. The group connects and supports families of individuals with special needs offering support, information, speakers, and presentations on topics pertaining to parents/caregivers in Chautauqua County. This is an opportunity for parents/caregivers to come together to discuss common triumphs, challenges, issues, and concerns.

The group meets the first Wednesday of every month at The Resource Center Staff Training Center, 92 E. Fairmount Avenue, Jamestown.

For more information contact: Tess Kerzner, LMSW LMHC, Social Services Clinical Specialist at The Resource Center, 661-1057, E-Mail: trctkerzner@windstream.net

IN LIVING COLOR DEPRESSION TREATMENT IN PRIMARY CARE

Depression is a highly common health condition affecting nearly 20 million Americans. For many patients, if they receive treatment at all, it is most likely to occur in the primary care setting.

In Living Color: Depression Treatment in Primary Care is a 3 hour education course facilitated by a team- consisting of a consumer, family member and a physician that equips physicians practicing in primary care settings with the knowledge and tools to identify and provide appropriate treatment of depression to medically underserved ethnic and racial groups.

This program is based on an approach of both enhancing skills as well as building relationships among care providers and physicians. Such

relationships, based on mutual respect and trust, can help doctors and consumers move forward as partners in treatment. This program focuses on understanding depression, culture and person centered care; recognition and diagnosis; and treatment, referral and adherence to treatment in African American, American Indian, Asian American and Latino communities.

Its target audience is primary care physicians, general practitioners, family physicians, geriatric physicians, OB/GYNs, internists and pediatricians.

Learning Objectives

- Recognize the signs and symptoms of depression
- Interpret how depression manifests itself in racial and ethnic minorities
- Identify appropriate depression screening, diagnosis and treatment options in the primary care settings
- Recognize ways to involve family and others in the patient’s support system in therapy
- Demonstrate how a physician’s culture and her/his patients’ cultures interact during treatment
- Develop strategies to foster effective physician-patient communication.

Contact macenter@nami.org or go to the NAMI web site at www.nami.org for more information.

VESID requires to do an annual needs survey to help determine how to serve you most effectively. Please fill it out and return it to us. You may also fill it out on our web site at www.ilc-jamestown-ny.org. or call Chris at 716-661-3013 (V/TYY) to do it by phone. If you need it in an alternative format, call Chris.

2009 needs survey

For each of these areas, please indicate which area(s) you feel need the most improvement and are the most important to people with disabilities 1 being the most important;

A. Education

___1. BOCES will institute a system of providing information in the form of a flyer sent to parents about the need for benefits advisement services to be included in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) Transition Plan for all appropriate special education students.

___2. One high school will implement a procedure to present special education students and their families information on accessing services from VESID (NYS Vocational and Educational Services for People with Disabilities) and CVBH (NYS Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped).

B. Employment advocacy

___1. Our Chautauqua County One Stop Center will formally change their policies and procedures for referring consumers with disabilities to community services, including independent living services and resources.

___2. Establish a written agreement whereby the One-Stop will provide, in collaboration with the WIPA Project (Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Project), regular access to benefit counseling services, including updated and accessible written information and materials on work incentives.

C. Health Care

___1. SILC staff will be appointed to advisory committees for local Single Points of Entry.

___2. At least one area medical provider will improve accessibility for patients with disabilities.

___3. One or more SILC staff will become a member a key Long Term Care Task Force that will set the direction and tone of how the county will adopt changes from the state to provide Long Term Care Services to the disability population and that previously has not had representation form the disability community.

___ 4. The Center will develop a mechanism to ensure local implementation of the NYS Department of Health Nursing Home Transition Waiver and have it verified by at least one consumer participating in the program.

D. Commerce Advocacy

___ 1. There will be an increase in the number of affordable integrated and accessible housing options for people with disabilities.

___ 2. SILC will work with local towns and villages to achieve a measurable increase in the accessibility of public right-of-ways, such as curb cuts, constructed for people with disabilities.

- ___ 3. A local bank will produce an audio taped version of its products and services brochure.
- ___ 4. A private and/or a public retirement community will improve access by making its resident's handbook available in alternative formats.
- ___ 5. As a result of advocacy by SILC, at least one media outlet will adopt the use of a SILC developed "Style Book" when writing media pieces that relate to persons with disabilities.
- ___ 6. At least one (1) area of Chamber of Commerce will make a policy and procedural change to routinely provide accessibility information for people with disability.
- ___ 7. The CARTS Paratransit System will adopt a policy assuring the proper training of all telephone dispatch service operators to sensitivity and awareness of individuals with disabilities.

E. Social Advocacy

- ___ 1. At least one recreational facility/program will establish and post easily identifiable policies and procedures for consumers with disabilities to request and receive individual assistance ensuring equal service .
- ___ 2. There will be an increase in the number of faith-based organizations and institutions in Chautauqua County.
- ___ 3. There will be a measurable increase in the number of integrated community social activities that become accessible.

F. Citizenship Advocacy

- ___ 1. There will be an increase in the number of consumers/staff that serve on community and statewide boards/committees/taskforces that previously have not had representation from the disability community.
- ___ 2. At least one local government will start providing agendas in alternate formats at publicly attended meetings.
- ___ 3. A local Board of Elections in Chautauqua County will implement a policy to notify all voters of accessible polling site changes.

THIS NEWSLETTER CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE IN ALTERNATIVE FORMATS- LARGE PRINT, BRAILLE, TAPE AND E-MAIL. FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL CHRIS AT 661-3013(V/TTY) OR E-MAIL ME AT chris@ilc-jamestown-ny.org

TO GET MORE INFORMATION

If you would like to receive more information about the services we provide, please fill in the information below, check the appropriate box/ boxes and return it to Southwestern Independent Living Center, Inc., 843 North Main Street, Jamestown, NY 14701. Or you may call us at (716-661-3010); or 661-3012 (TDD). E-mail- info@ilc-jamestown.ny.org; web site- <http://www.ilc-jamestown-ny.org>

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Peer Support | Individual and Group sessions. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Advocacy | Assistance with legal and economic rights. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Housing | Assistance in locating adequate, affordable, and accessible housing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Transportation | Wheelchair Accessible van available for medical and social appointments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Information and Referral | Information about other area services and organizations. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | TDD Relay Calls | For hearing impaired individuals with <u>T</u> elecommunication <u>D</u> evices for the <u>D</u> eaf |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Public Education | Regarding issues pertaining to people with disabilities. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Newsletter | A bi-monthly publication of SILC. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | SILC Membership | A one year membership is \$5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | WIPA | Work Incentives Planning and Assistance |