



Independent Life

CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING IN CENTRAL FLORIDA, INC. JUNE 2006

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Honoring Volunteers 2

Equipment Day 3

Surplus Computers 4

ADA Mediation 6

Rampage 2006! 7

Support CIL 7

Assistive Technology Benefits Central Florida Schools

In the 2005-2006 school year Central Florida students with disabilities learned more, learned faster and learned better with the help of assistive technologies, also known as AT, made possible by grants from the Heart of Florida United Way and the Darden Foundation.

In Seminole County, Maitland Middle School student Amanda is in sixth grade and enjoys all the things any other sixth grader does. Amanda has a difficult time processing information and has a slight learning disability. She also has a difficult time with her handwriting. She now uses an *Alphasmart Neo* – a simple word processor that helps with a variety of learning tasks. She can take lecture notes, do her homework assignments, type notes while reading and is allowed to use it to take tests like the FCAT.

Amanda is an A-B student. Christine Wallace, head of Exceptional Student Education at Maitland Middle School says the Neo helps Amanda maintain her high grades. Amanda uses it at home as well as at school but she says she prefers her computer when working at home.

Christine says in the past, children with handwriting problems may have been put through a form of occupational therapy. They would have performed exercises, had hand massage, or been given small tasks to perform to improve hand movement. Christine adds that therapy never did work all that well but it was the only approach. Now children are benefit-



Amanda and Christine at Maitland Middle School

ing from AT like the Neo word processor.

Amanda says before she got the Neo her hand hurt when writing; now she can type all her work. She adds, "It didn't take long to learn how to use it. I've been using it for more than a year now and it helps a lot".

Amanda says some of her friends mistake the Neo for a laptop. She adds, "They see my Neo and get a little jealous because they would like one too."

At Seminole County's Carillon Elementary School a playful second grader named Olivia is keeping her good grades with help from AT.

With dark hair and a winning smile, Olivia is like any other second grader, inquisitive, thoughtful, and eager to learn. However, when she started having problems hearing the teacher, Audiologist Ellen Solomon saw an opportunity to

(Continued on page 3)

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Honoring CIL Volunteers

A big “Thank You” went out to our volunteers on April 28, 2006 during the annual Center for Independent Living’s Volunteer Appreciation event. Two volunteers received recognition



Ice Cream Social!

This year’s theme was a good, old-fashioned ice cream social with over 20 gallons of ice cream and sorbet in flavors like chocolate, vanilla, strawberry, lemon, and raspberry. There was also a sugar-free Neapolitan and fruit salad for those who may have been watching their weight.

Nearly 7,000 total volunteer hours were generously donated to CIL between April 2005 and April 2006 from over 200 volunteers.

The event was coordinated by CIL’s Community Relations Specialist, Oceana Sanchez. The ice cream was

from the President of the United States.

More than 20 volunteers were seated at tables covered in white tablecloths and decorated with festive details. Every volunteer received an *out-standing volunteer* pin, a Champagne flute filled with Hershey’s Kisses, and a gift certificate for ice cream from Marble Slab Creamery.

A number of volunteers were recognized for exemplary service. Margie Winkler, who reads for CIL’s blind consumers, received a certificate of appreciation for ten years of service, a framed letter from the consumers she reads for and a Publix gift certificate. Patrick Hirsch received a certificate of appreciation for sixteen years of service and a gift certificate from Publix.

For donating over 500 hours of volunteer service Carla and Marisa Hill received a special *Points of Light Award* and a letter signed by President George W. Bush.



Marissa and Carla Hill Receive the Points Of

Light Award donated by the food service company Sysco. Thanks Sysco!

Thanks go out to the following:

Corporate Volunteer Groups

- AARP
- Aloma Baptist Church
- Cingular Wireless
- Deloitte & Touche, LLP
- Hands On Orlando
- Rollins College
- RSVP

(Continued on page 5)

Equipment Day is Coming



**Sara
McConnell at
Equipment
Day 2005**

The Center for Independent Living's (CIL) second annual *Equipment Day* give away is July 26, 2006 from 10:00am to 2:00 pm. Equipment Day also celebrates the 16th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

CIL will be giving away disability-related equipment that has been donated to the agency over the past year. CIL will give it away until the equipment is all gone or until 2:00 pm. Equipment availability is first come, first served. A variety of equipment may be available like electric scooters, wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, and much more.

Help CIL by donating any good, useable disability-related equipment like:

- ✦ Wheelchairs
- ✦ Scooters
- ✦ Walkers w/or w/o seats
- ✦ Vehicle lifts
- ✦ Assistive Devices (such as reach extensions, magnifiers, etc.)
- ✦ High Volume Phones
- ✦ Transfer Boards/Discs

Simply come to CIL, give us your name, address, and phone number, then pick out the piece of equipment that is right for you. One piece of equipment per person, please.

This event is open to all people with disabilities and their families.

It is the mission of CIL to help people with all disabilities, whether it's a visual impairment, hearing impairment, mobility impairment, or medical or age-related impairments.

For more information please contact Consumer Coordinator Jennifer Myers at 407-623-1070 extension 3135.

**We make
Equipment
Day a special
event to get
more
equipment to
those who
need it**

(Continued from page 1)

put assistive technology to work.

Ellen says Olivia started having what's called a *cookie bite* type of hearing loss where the midrange frequency of her hearing is failing.



**Olivia says the Easy Listener is
"Really Cool!"**

Olivia now uses a device called an *Easy Listener* by Phonic Ear.

The Easy Listener is a small FM receiver with a built-in

speaker about the size of a desk telephone. It helps combat the background noise, distance and echo that can interfere with speech understanding. Olivia's teacher wears a small microphone with a wallet-sized FM transmitter. Olivia keeps the receiver on her desk and can clearly hear the teacher no matter where the teacher is in the classroom.

Olivia says the device is, "Really cool, when I didn't use it, I couldn't hear the teacher. Now, when I bend down to tie my shoe, I can still hear the teacher." Even her classmates enjoy the device because it helps them hear better too.

Olivia will be moving on to third grade soon and she will be able to take the *Easy Listener* with her to enjoy the benefits of improved hearing.

Musher with Visual Impairment Finishes Iditarod

The first musher with a visual impairment finished the great Alaska dogsled race known as the Iditarod.

21-year old Rachael Scdoris finished 57th in a field of 72 teams but at the same time is also the first – the first person with a visual impairment to finish the grueling race filled with danger, dogs, and 50 below zero temperatures.

Scdoris and her visual guide, Tim Osmar finished the race in 12 days, 11 hours, 42 minutes. Scdoris will skip next year's event to concentrate on her college studies, but plans on being back for another attempt in 2008.

Surplus Computers Help Students

Two deaf students now have a way to get homework done and keep in touch with loved ones thanks to the Center for Independent Living's *Surplus Equipment Program*.



Elvin Nazario

In April, CIL gave Elvin Nazario a surplus computer with monitor and keyboard. Elvin is a 27 year old student attending Mid-Florida Tech in Southwest Orange County. He is studying English grammar and composition.

Elvin says he's very thankful to receive the computer from CIL. He says he will be using the computer to further his studies by typing papers for school. Elvin also says it will be great to keep in touch with family and friends through email.

During May, 32 year old Kelvin Jordan also received a computer from CIL. Originally from Atlanta, Kelvin has been in Central Florida for six years.

He was recently laid off from his job so he decided to go back to school. Kelvin attends Embry-Riddle University and is studying Physical Engineering. He says he wants to learn how to become an airplane pilot.

Kelvin has big plans for his new computer. He wants to look for a job, do homework, surf the Internet, and keep in touch with family and friends via email.

When Kelvin first heard that he could receive a computer from CIL he said he was. "Very happy because I really needed a computer". He added, "I am very excited to start using it".



Kelvin Jordan

The Center for Independent Living's Communication Coordinator, Ybon Romero was instrumental in helping get these computers to consumers who can put them to good use.

"You cannot build character and courage by taking away man's initiative and independence."
—Abraham Lincoln

(Continued from page 2)

Summit Church
 United Postal Service
 University of Central Florida

Individual Volunteers

Guillermo Alonso
 Chara Allen
 Flo Allen
 Karime Alvarado
 Phil Amari
 Sarina Amin
 David Anderson
 Isaac Arozqueta
 Beth Babili
 Marilyn Baldwin
 Christopher Bany
 Martin Barger
 Carli Barrios
 Robin Beeker
 Steve Berghane
 Hector Bergollo
 Jenny Bermudez
 Marcia Berry-Martin
 Niti Bhagat
 Garry Blackstock
 Georgett Blair
 John Bohde
 David Bottomley
 Stephen Bowman
 Melody Bradshaw
 Mary Bray
 Angela Brilliant
 Frank Burton
 Bob Buttaro
 Brenda Cardella
 Brett Chabot
 Amanda Choos
 Chris Churchill
 Caleb Clements
 Colby Coletta
 Marian Cordova
 Phyllis Cordova
 Katie Coronado
 Eric Cullars
 Anna Curran
 Evelyn Dawursk
 Sandra Desler
 Judy Dickerman
 Basil Dixon
 Kyle Dixon
 Jonathan Doherty
 Joanne Dorgan
 John Draper
 Tom Easton

Rebecca Eberwen
 Rafaela Echevania
 Malvie Edwards
 Stacy Eyer
 Crispen Faress
 Tara Farrar
 Dello Figueiras
 Terry Fitzpatrick
 Sharon Fleischer
 Kari Floyd
 Esterh Franco
 Carlata Freeman
 Evelyn Frost
 Alicia Gonsalvez
 Bo Goodwin
 Katy Gore
 Chuck Graham
 Linda Grant
 Pat Grealy
 Alex Greear
 Cari Greear
 Mike Greear
 Adrian Green
 Emily Green
 Jazmine Green
 Shahra Green
 Eric Grendor
 Robin Grunwell
 Danny Guelzow
 Angie Guettler
 Anju Gupta
 Pam Gustaff
 Paul Hagge
 Susan Hamm
 Kerry Hannaford
 Michele Hickman
 Carla Hill
 Marisa Hill
 Patrick Hirsch
 David Hoppock
 Doug Hughes
 Nicole Hughes
 Helia Garrido Hull
 Rob Hutchinson
 Christa Hyatt
 Josh Ingram
 Keith Jacobson
 Tom Jacobson
 Dan Jarvis
 Daniel Jimenez
 Shirley Johnson
 Mark Jones
 Lisa Jones
 Zvezdana Jovic
 Timothy Keefe
 Blair Keller

Peggy Kelly
 Warren King
 Mark Kirkham
 Neil Klaproth
 Michelle Knapp
 Lucy Kola
 Carey Larabee
 Elizabeth Law
 Mario Lejarza
 Fran Lindley
 Andrew Lindsay
 Breeze Long
 Lona Love
 Han Mac
 Carlos Macau
 Carolina Madera
 Hector Maldonado
 Alicia Marshall
 Linda Mathis
 Marlene Matthews
 Caridad (Cherry) McAlpine
 Marin McAlpine
 James McKey
 John McLellan
 Mari McTaggart
 Antonio Medina
 Buddy Meyer
 Jessica Mikalavicius
 Jim Minessale
 Rex Molina
 Michael Moniz
 Maxine Moul
 Aishah Muhammad
 Jasmine Narine
 Carolyn Nelson
 Susan Nicholas
 Phil Nix
 Faye Nutting
 Peter Okiewele
 Gulmira Omarova
 Sandy Osborn
 Beth Paulus
 Arwen Pritchett
 Jack Raleigh
 Tiffany Ray
 Louise Reaves
 Sara Regenstein
 Tim Reichardt
 Jason Reilly
 Neil Rennart
 Beverly Richardson
 Matt Richardson
 Keith Ricketts
 Sandy Robinson
 Astrid Rodriguez
 Tim Roebuck

Kelly Roman
 Richard Rosencrans
 Jim Ruddy
 Kelly Russ
 Ian Saenz
 Huma Saleem
 Nick Sambrato
 Fernando Santos
 Benjamin Sargent
 Aryan Sarparast
 Abby Schuttler
 Michelle Schuttler
 Joy Seaton
 Pat Shanower
 Jan Sheffer
 Christinne Sherman
 Brian Siewert
 Arin Slavis
 Donald Spangler
 Travina Springer
 William Spurlin
 Janice Standage
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 Cheryl Stone
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 Tiago Tregansin
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 Ana Vargas
 Anthony Velez
 Ken Votapka
 Arlene Walker
 Faye Warren
 Sandra Watkins
 Donald Watson
 Eboni Webb
 Rickard Wilkerson
 Marsha Williams
 Austin Williams
 Margie Winkler
 William Winslow
 Tom Zimlich

ADA Mediation Program

Possible Property Tax Breaks

If proposed legislation passes, Florida's older veterans with disabilities may get a break on their property taxes.

In the recently concluded Florida legislative session, the House and Senate proposed a constitutional amendment that would give veterans with disabilities over age 65 a property tax discount equal to their percentage of service connected disability. The proposed amendment goes before Florida voters in this November's election.

For instance, if a veteran over 65 had a fifty percent service connected disability; they would receive a 50 percent discount on their property taxes.

People with disabilities have a responsibility to speak up for their rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), signed into law in 1990. If you have a dispute regarding access or any other part of the ADA with a public or private party, you can use the U.S. Department of Justice *ADA Mediation Program*.

According to the online encyclopedia, Wikipedia, mediation is defined as a process of alternative dispute resolution in which a (generally) neutral third party, the mediator, using appropriate techniques, assists two or more parties to help them negotiate an agreement, with concrete effects, on a matter of common interest. More generally speaking, the term "mediation" covers any activity in which an impartial third party (often a professional) facilitates an agreement on any matter in the common interest of the parties involved.



ADA Mediation is confidential and voluntary and may take a number of meetings before a resolution is found. The mediator does not give legal advice but will refer parties to appropriate professionals when necessary.

The main goal of mediation is to come to a successful conclusion that satisfies both parties in the dispute. When

the ADA was written, informal dispute resolution through mediation was (and still is) preferred over formal legal proceedings. However, if the parties cannot come to a resolution through mediation, private lawsuits may still be pursued.

The following is a sample case study from the ADA Mediation program where a dispute was resolved.

In Florida, two people with disabilities said a restaurant in a shopping center refused them service or even allowed them access to the establishment because they were in wheelchairs. As a result of mediation the restaurant owner agreed to:

- welcome and serve both people as patrons,
- educate all employees about the rights of people with disabilities,
- pay the complainants \$500.00.

The shopping center owner agreed to:

- provide space for a disability awareness event,
- cooperate with the organization presenting the event,
- contribute \$250 toward the publicity for the event,
- pay \$500 in attorney's fees.

The rights of people with disabilities can be utilized or neglected. The ADA Mediation Program a useful tool for exercising your rights. To learn more about the ADA Mediation Program please visit <http://www.ada.gov/>.

Rampage 2006! Kickoff



**Your group
can volun-
teer to
help**

SAVE THE DATE!

Rampage 2006! Kickoff July 10, 2006

6:00pm-7:00pm

We are building ramps to independence and we want your help!

- Sponsor a Ramp
- Volunteer to Help Build a Ramp
- Donate In-kind Materials
- Be a Recipient of a Ramp

Volunteers and CIL Staff will be gathering to build wheelchair ramps for people who are unable to get in and out of their homes.

Get the Facts:

- Only 0.9% of homes currently have a wheelchair ramp. Yet, 29.2% of US families include at least one member with a disability.
- There are hundreds of people in Central Florida who have great difficulty getting into and out of their own homes. One or two steps separate them from the outside world.

The Center for Independent Living will continue to build ramps one by one until everyone has the independence that we all deserve.

For more information, contact Emily Cabrera
407.623.1070 - ecabrera@cilorlando.org



**Making a
concrete
difference
in some-
one's life**

I Would Like to Support CIL with a Gift of Financial Support

Mr. Mrs. Ms. Mr. and Mrs. _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Email Address _____

Enclosed is my tax deductible gift of \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 \$1000 _____

I enclose my check made payable to the Center for Independent Living in Central Florida

Please charge my VISA MasterCard

Card Number _____ Exp Date _____ Signature _____

I would like information about remembering the Center for Independent Living in my will

My employer will match my gift. Completed forms included Forms will be sent

Please send your gift to:

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF CIL



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Sailing Brings Freedom

**Enjoying
the Great
Outdoors**



Former ironworker Gregory Williams says his disability doesn't stop him from tackling the world head-on. Williams pilots a sailboat and teaches sailing from his wheelchair.

Over 20 years ago, Williams was injured in a construction accident that resulted in his disability, but now sailing has become a big part of his life.

Williams is part of a group in San Francisco called BADDs, the Bay Area Association of Disabled Sailors, which includes members who are blind, deaf or have had a stroke.

Williams leaves his wheelchair on the dock when he sails and says the feeling is like heaven. He adds that sailing is about enjoying the great outdoors and the ocean and that nothing can replace the feeling of freedom.