

Independent Life

The Center for Independent Living In Central Florida, Inc. October 2006

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

WE NEED 2
YOUR HELP!

Disability 4
Employment

Rampage! 4
2006

Disability 5
Sensitivity

Deaf Re- 5
source Fair

Housing 6
Workshop

Mentoring 6
Day

Equipment 7
Give-A-Way

Volunteers 7
Work Hard

Wheelchair Ramp Changed Life in a Big Way

Life is getting better and better for Gena Rikard. She recently graduated with a bachelor's degree in health-care administration and is looking for a job. She's getting out and getting around better. Things are looking up thanks in part to a new wheelchair ramp to Gena's front door; built with funds supplied by Orange County's Community Development Block Grant.

Gena uses a powered wheelchair and lives with her mother, Christine, in a west Orlando home. Christine has a visual disability and also uses a walker.

Life was very different and somewhat dangerous before the new gentle-sloped ramp was built. Before the new ramp Gena had not been out the front door in thirty years.

There was a very small, very steep concrete ramp at the front door. When Gena still had a manual wheelchair, Christine was helping Gena negotiate the old ramp. The steep ramp caused Gena's chair to flip over backwards, trapping Christine beneath. They were both also concerned about the possibility of being trapped in their home in the event of a fire. The new ramp gives them a little more security and another way



Gena Rikard enjoys her new ramp

out in case of an emergency.

The home has a side door that was installed a number of years ago. Gena and her mother had to exit the side door and navigate through part of the yard to get to the front of the house and the driveway. The back door was not much better.

Gena says she could make it out these doors but it was a real hassle. "Going to school was very difficult before the new ramp. I had to use the side door and if it was raining I would get wet. Now I can come straight up from the driveway to the door and not worry about getting too wet."

Gena's sister was delighted to hear that a new ramp was installed. She

(Continued on page 3)

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WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Several years ago CIL purchased a telephone system for our office. It was a fine phone system with many features that met our needs. Fifteen years later this same system has become tired and worn out.

This is why WE NEED YOUR HELP! Dr. Phillips Inc. has pledged two dollars for every dollar CIL raises through donations from individuals and businesses like you to purchase a new telephone system.

In the last fiscal year, approximately 4500 consumers called CIL with questions regarding independent living issues. People with disabilities and their families want to know about employment opportunities or transportation. Others want to know about assistive technology, independent living skills training or are looking for a Sign Language interpreter. All of these requests, and more, are a large part of our on-going mission to serve people with disabilities and their families.

CIL is always striving to make the most of its resources – money, people, and time. Our consumers

and all the people we serve deserve no less. A telephone system will help CIL use time wisely and more efficiently. A new system will allow CIL to receive more calls simultaneously – without sending consumers to voicemail.

Because the telephone system touches everything CIL does, a telephone system upgrade will greatly increase CIL's ability to serve our consumers, their families, and our community.

There's a new, secure, online way to donate to CIL. Please visit our website at:

www.cilorlando.org/donate/

Be sure to choose Phone System as the description for your donation so we can count it toward our goal. Or if you prefer, use the donation form in the newsletter and check "phone system".

Remember, Dr. Phillips Inc. has pledged two dollars for every dollar CIL raises through donations from individuals and businesses like you. This is your chance to "answer the call" and be a hero to everyone CIL serves.

The Center for Independent Living in Central Florida, Inc., in partnership with the community, promotes personal rights and responsibilities among people with all disabilities and strives to eliminate architectural, communication and attitudinal barriers by providing education, resources and training to enhance self-determination through informed choice.

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 want my gift to help CIL and Dr. Phillips fund a new PHONE SYSTEM

I want my gift to help CIL build more ramps for Rampage! 2006

Please send your gift to:

Center for Independent Living
720 N. Denning Drive
Winter Park, Florida 32789

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF CIL

(Continued from page 1)

has polio and even though she doesn't use a wheelchair she really appreciates the handrails. Gena is encouraging her to get a ramp installed at her house.



Gena Rilard

The slope of the new ramp looked pretty steep to Gena and at first she was a little bit frightened given her previous fall. She turned the speed on her electric wheelchair

down to slow to negotiate the ramp the first cou-

ple of times. Now she gets in and out without problems.

The ramp wasn't the only home modifications performed at Gena's house. Bathroom modifications included a wider door and a roll-in shower with grab bars.

Gena says the wheelchair ramp has changed her life in a big way. She strongly recommends a ramp if you need one and don't have one.

She says, "You do need to get a wheelchair ramp. Even if you have one step, you need the ramp. If you have a wheelchair or use a walker or even a cane you need to get a wheelchair ramp. The ramp is the way to go."

October is Disability Employment Awareness Month

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month and the theme for this year is "Americans with Disabilities: Ready for the Global Workforce".

On Tuesday October 24th at 9:00 AM CIL will be celebrating by hosting a gathering of employment specialists and employers. They will be speaking on a variety of employment issues people with disabilities face.

Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao said this year's theme highlights the fact that workers with disabilities are an underutilized and ambitious group of Americans eager to pursue their career dreams.

For more information contact Rogue Gallart, Director of Advocacy, at 407-623-1070 ext. 3120.

Rampage! 2006 Will Bring Independence to People with Disabilities

VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF RALLY TO BUILD WHEELCHAIR RAMPS FOR ONE DAY SPECIAL EVENT



Volunteers mixing concrete for a wheelchair ramp

CIL's *Rampage! 2006* wheelchair-ramp building event is Saturday November 4. The second annual *Rampage* brings together CIL staff and volunteers for an all-day, Central Florida-wide, ramp building event aimed at giving people with disabilities more independence and freedom.

CIL staff and volunteers will be building four ramps; one in Seminole County, two in Polk and one in Osceola. CIL is looking for companies and individuals who would like to support *Rampage! 2006* with a gift of financial support.

Building supply stores are encouraged to donate wood, concrete,

and other building materials. We are still looking for volunteers to help build ramps (no experience necessary).

Only 0.9% of U.S. homes currently have a wheelchair ramp, yet 29.2% of families include at least one member with a disability. One or two steps separate many people in Central Florida from working, going to the store, or visiting family and friends.



A Job Well Done!

There's a new, secure, online way to donate to CIL. Please visit our website at :

www.cilorlando.org/donate/ .

For more information on *Rampage! 2006* please contact Emily Rose at 407-623-1070 ext 3122.

To volunteer, contact Oceana Sanchez at extension 3119.

CIL Conducts Disability Sensitivity Training

Helping to make voting a reality for people with disabilities is one goal of the poll worker training conducted by CIL during the months of August and October.

In August, eight CIL staff members conducted nearly 85 disability sensitivity trainings for poll workers in preparation of September's primary elections. 50 trainings were held at the Supervisor of Elections office in Orange County and 34 at the Supervisor's office in Seminole County.

Florida statute requires poll workers to receive disability sensitivity training. The hour-long training sessions have two parts: a PowerPoint presentation and a hands-on demonstration of typical obstacles faced by people with disabilities in a polling place.



New touch screen voting machines were used for the first time, which made it possible for many people with disabilities to exercise their civic responsibility. CIL Program Director Jeannette Gassie said surveys were taken in Seminole County and it was learned that one person with a disability had voted independently for the first time in 40 years.

CIL will also be conducting disability sensitivity training for poll workers in October in preparation for the general election.

Deaf Resource Fair Returns for Second Year



CIL's second annual *Deaf Resource Fair* is coming up Thursday, October 12, from 5:00 to 7:00 PM. Exhibitors from a variety of agencies, businesses and churches will gather in CIL's main conference room to answer questions, display products and talk about the unique challenges facing those in the deaf community.

2005's event was a hit and this year promises to be even better. Last year twelve companies that serve the deaf community attended and represented a broad spectrum of interests like mortgage companies, technical schools, and an attorney specializing in Social Security law. Approximately 40 people browsed the displays, talked and gathered information.

The *Deaf Resource Fair* is funded by a grant from the Heart of Florida United Way. There is no fee for exhibitors wishing to be a part of the fair but space is limited. If you are interested in being an exhibitor or if you just want more information, please contact Program Director, Jeannette Gassie at 407-623-1070 ext. 3118.

Housing Workshop Scheduled for October

CIL will be hosting a Housing Workshop on October 25 from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM. It's designed to be an interactive workshop with CIL staff and participants talking about the housing market and learning about some of the challenges people are facing.

CIL will offer some tools and information like a "Frequently Asked Questions" sheet with some common questions and answers on finding an apartment. To help determine what type of housing may be in your price range, there will be budget worksheets available.

Because of the tight housing market in Central Florida, CIL receives many calls a month from those looking for housing information.

Sign language interpreters will be attending. For more information contact Consumer Coordinator Jennifer Myers at 407-623-1070 ext. 3135.

Disability Mentoring Day

Disability Mentoring Day on October 18 is a national effort to promote career development for students and other job seekers with disabilities through hands-on career exploration, job shadowing, internship and through mentee/mentor relationships. This program is hosted nationally in regions around the country by the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) in close partnership with the Social Security Administration. Orlando-based Darden Restaurants is also a national sponsor.

Some of the goals for Disability Mentoring day include:

- Promotion of diversity recruitment for a more inclusive workforce,
- To enhance internship and employment opportunities.
- To dispel employers' fears about hiring people with disabilities.
- To increase confidence among students and job seekers with disabilities.
- To serve as a launching point to promote a year-round, national effort to foster mentoring and career-exploration opportunities.

Some of the activities include one-on-one job shadowing. With job shadowing, mentees with disabilities are matched with workplace mentors according to expressed career interests. This enables mentees to learn more from their assigned mentors about a typical day on the job and how to prepare for that particular career.

There will be group visits to worksites. Mentees with disabilities can tour a workplace, meet with its various employees, and learn first-hand about different types of jobs and related opportunities within that career field.

If you are a Central Florida student or job seeker with a disability who is interested in getting involved as a mentee, or if you are an employer, educator or vocational counselor who is interested in becoming involved as a workplace mentor, visit the AAPD's website at <http://www.dmd-aapd.org/coordlist/coordlist.php> to find a coordinator. There are a number of coordinators in the Central Florida area.

"I learned that the richness of life is found in adventure. . . . It develops self-reliance and independence. Life then teems with excitement."

—William O. Douglas, United States Supreme Court Justice, 1898-1980

Equipment Day Give-A-Way a Success!

On July 26 CIL gave away about 45 pieces of assistive equipment during our second annual Equipment Day. Over 50 people visited CIL and browsed the selections that included vehicle lifts, text magnifiers, wheelchairs, walkers, canes and much more.



Aurea Perez

One of the most unusual items was a set of eating utensils with extra large, easy-to-grip handles for those with arthritis. There was also a ceiling lift, a hoist-like device that can move a person into and out of bed.

Throughout the year CIL attempts to give away as much equipment as possible. We make Equipment Day a special day to give away even more assistive equipment and to clear out our inventory.

For those of you who may have missed Equipment Day, please call CIL and let us know your need. If we have it or can get it, we will be happy to serve you.

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

Volunteers Work Hard for CIL

On September 9, twenty volunteers from Alcon Laboratories, Inc. in Orlando showed that they “dig” CIL by clearing out a 600 square foot bed of overgrown bushes and weeds and replanting with a number of fresh plants and decorative grasses. This “Curb Side Appeal Project” was part of United Way’s *Day of Caring* for area non-profits. Thanks to Alcon Laboratories for the hard work and the donated plants, and thanks to Starbucks in Winter Park for donating the coffee that helped fuel the crew.



Fifteen volunteers from the Summit Church in Orlando showed that landscaping can be fun. They spent Saturday September 23 mowing lawns and doing other landscaping chores at the homes of two deaf couples.

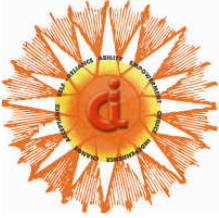
CIL values and appreciates all the volunteers who make life better for so many people in our community. Thanks a million. If you or your group would like to volunteer for CIL please call Community Relations Specialist Oceana Sanchez at 407-623-1070 ext. 3119.

**Center for Independent Living
in Central Florida, Inc.**

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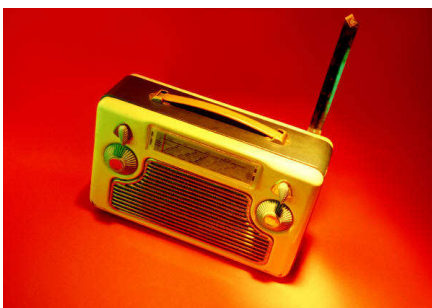
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High Definition Radio May Serve Blind and Visually Impaired

High definition digital radio may deliver better services to the blind and visually impaired in the future.



tion digital radio.

HD Radio will be able to pack more – and different – forms of programming into a radio signal which means greater services for the blind and visually impaired.

There's been a lot of media attention focused on high definition television, or HDTV, but lesser known is the future digital conversion of radio. The same technical advances are coming to radios of the future with high defini-

The greater bandwidth of HD radio will allow audio services that provide daily reading of newspapers and magazines to hitchhike along the digital signal. It may also be possible for reading services to be addressed to specific receivers, in much the same way XM Radio and Sirius Satellite Radio send programming to subscribers. This new delivery method could bring information specific to the needs of the blind or visually impaired.

Here in Central Florida, the public broadcasting stations of WMFE provide an Audio Reading Service. Those with a qualifying disability can get a specially tuned radio that receives broadcasts of volunteers reading a number of popular newspapers and magazines. You can get more information on the WMFE Audio Reading Service by visiting their website at <http://www.wmfe.org/ars/>.