



Independent Life

The Center for Independent Living In Central Florida, Inc. March 2007

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Balloons Bring Budding Business

A new business has many objectives, but for this expanding endeavor employing people with disabilities is an important goal. Central Florida businessman Stuart Gutter started overnightballoons.com to bring joy and beauty to people and he hopes to also use the business to employ people with disabilities.

Stuart started overnightballoons.com in the summer of 2006. His company creates a wide variety of interesting and attractive balloon sculptures to celebrate weddings, anniversaries, birthdays, corporate functions or just about any special event. Customers can choose from a catalog of over 50 existing designs or order something custom made.

Stuart is 39 now but his interest in balloons started when he was young. As a boy Stuart's father, Marty, performed magic in his spare time. Stuart became interested and also practiced magic tricks. Stuart went along with Marty to a magic convention and came away with a book about balloon sculpting. Soon Stuart was sculpting balloons in his own amateur magic show. Today he's a "master twister".

Stuart was born with Spina Bifida, a



Stuart Gutter can create hundreds of colorful balloon sculptures

type of birth defect caused by incomplete closure of the embryonic neural tube, resulting in malformations of the spinal cord. He had a successful career as an Elementary School teacher but was forced to resign because of the long hours spent standing. As a person with a disability, Stuart knows how difficult it is to find a job. As his business expands he would like to employ people with disabilities as balloon sculptors and give them an opportunity to work. Stuart

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CIL Receives Technology Grant

CIL has been awarded a grant of \$8,200 to upgrade its computer system for data collection and maintenance. The grant will purchase a computer server and the software needed to better serve the growing numbers of people with disabilities in Central Florida. The new server was installed in late February.

nology upgrades is a challenge for all organizations, whether for profit or not for profit. It's become clear that to continue to grow we need to bring our technology up to today's standards. On behalf of the consumers we serve, I thank the Winter Park Community Foundation for funding this important program. "

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

of Central Florida

This project was funded by a grant from the Winter Park Community Foundation funds of the Community Foundation of Central Florida, Inc., made possible by many generous donors since 1994.

The new server has replaced a legacy computer system consisting of three separate servers, each over four years old. In *technology years* four years is very old. One of the three servers was a file server with a full hard drive running at maximum capacity.

CIL Executive Director Liz Howe says, "Paying for expensive tech-

Established in 1994 to advance local philanthropy while responding to community needs and supporting charitable organizations, the Community Foundation of Central Florida holds over 350 individual, family and corporate funds valued at over \$40 million, and serves the charitable needs of communities throughout the Central Florida region.

Along with the new hardware, CIL has updated its database software with one that is more versatile and agile. This new server will have a positive impact on all current and new consumers.

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.

Personal Assistant Pilot Program

Help is here for working people with disabilities. The Florida Work Incentive PAS Pilot Program is for working persons with chronic physical, cognitive or certain psychological disabilities who need a personal care attendant (PCA) to help them maintain employment.

You must live in Orange, Osceola, Lake or Seminole county and need assistance with at least two activities of daily living to maintain employment. If you think you may be eligible, please fill out and return the program application package. The package of required documents can be found on our web site at: <http://www.cilorlando.org/pas/application.asp>

The program application package includes: Application, Income Worksheet, Required Documentation Checklist, and Eligibility Statement and Declaration of PAS Need. Based on the Income Worksheet formula, program participants can receive up to \$1,500 per month for reimbursement of actual PAS expenses.

This program runs from January through June of 2007. Funding for this pilot program is provided through a non-recurring legislative budget line item. The Florida Association of Centers for Independent Living (FACIL) is working with the Florida Legislature to continue this pilot and make it a permanent statewide program. Representative Andy Gardiner has sponsored HB497 and Senator Steve Wise has sponsored SB922 which, if passed, would provide funding to make this program permanent. Contact your lawmakers today and encourage them to support these important bills. Visit the Florida Legislature online at: <http://www.leg.state.fl.us/>

For more information contact Martina Schmid, Executive Director, Florida Association of CIL's at 1-866-575-6004 or email: facil.martina@earthlink.net.

(Continued from page 1)

says teaching people with disabilities a skill and giving them a means of support will help them gain more self-confidence and a sense of self-worth.

Stuart visited CIL in October, November and January. During his visits he conducted workshops in balloon sculpting for a group of about ten participants. He went over some of the basic techniques and then everyone tried their hands at creating scul-



Stuart Gutter

tures of their own.

Stuart and Marty Gutter hope that their balloon sculpting and delivery business “inflates” in the next six months. If so, a few job opportunities for people with disabilities may also be “ballooning”.

To learn more about Stuart’s business visit www.overnightballoons.com or call 407-774-8412.

For more information about employment opportunities for people with disabilities call CIL at 407-623-1070.

Rampage! 2006 Brings Independence

Thanks to the following businesses for donating food for our volunteers, building materials, or money for Rampage 2006.

- The Advisory Board for the Disabled
- AirTran Airways
- Bed, Bath, and Beyond
- The Casselberry Chamber of Commerce
- CiCi's Pizza
- Darden Restaurants
- First Watch Restaurant
- Flashy Red Hatters
- The Home Depot/St. Cloud
- The Home Depot/West Colonial
- Macy's
- MAS Ministries
- The Orlando Convention and Visitor's Bureau
- Pampered Chef
- Rachel's Steakhouse
- Smith Barney
- St Mary Magdeline Church
- Starbucks
- Uno Chicago Grill

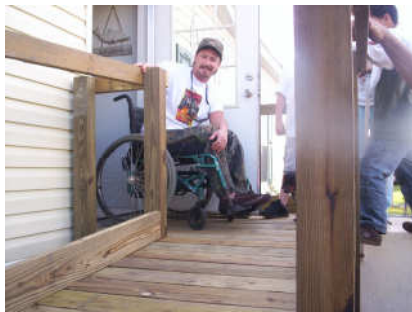
If we missed publishing your name, we apologize and thank you also.

CIL's *Rampage! 2006* wheelchair-ramp building event came to a successful conclusion in November with four completed ramps and lots of very happy people. Thanks to the over 50 businesses and individuals who donated money and materials and thanks to the teams and individual volunteers who did the work.

Volunteers and staff built four ramps. One in Seminole County, two in Polk and one in Osceola.

The ramp in Osceola County was built for Blake Perkins on November 4, 2006 by a team volunteers from 2 area fire departments. The following is an excerpt from a letter written by Blake Perkins's wife, Leslie:

"My family and I would like to send a letter of thanks for the best gift that can be given from the Center for Independent Living and the wonderful volunteers of the Osceola County and Ocoee fire departments. My husband was a fireman in Monroe, Louisiana. He was injured and paralyzed on November 4, 2000. Ironically, all of you put together the best group of men and women and built a beautiful ramp



Blake Perkins

on November 4, 2006. What was a tragic day six years ago was a wonderful day on this November 4. I want everyone to know that the work put in that one day of their lives has made everyday so much easier and better for us from now on. Thanks seem so small for what you have done for us, so we send our love as well. "



Sylvester Goodwin



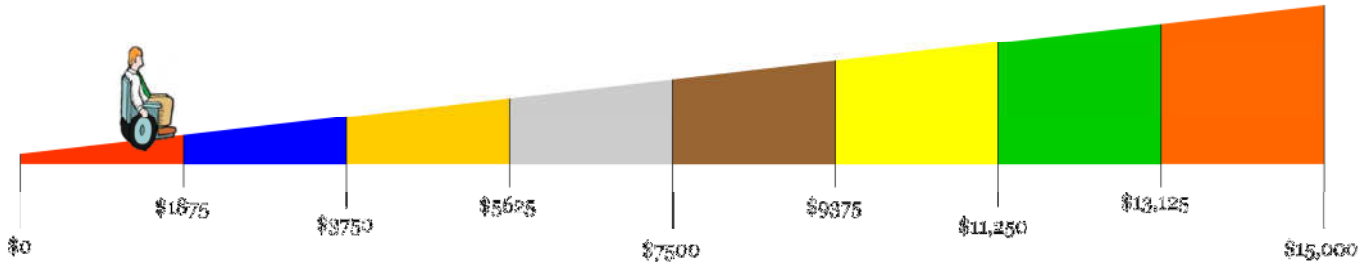
Ethel Smith



Lillian Mallone and volunteers

Rampage! 2007 Funding Goal

Help CIL Build Ramps to Independence
 Amount Raised to Date: \$1835



Planning is already underway for CIL's *Rampage! 2007*. As you know, the struggle to bring independence to people with disabilities never ends. Often just one or two steps separate many people in Central Florida from working, going to the store or visiting family.

CIL is dedicated to the struggle for independence, so more wheelchair ramps will be built in Central Florida this year. We built four ramps last year and want to do more this year. We can succeed, but only through the generous donations of people like you.

If you believe in the mission of CIL, please use the donation form below or use our secure website at: www.cilorlando.org/donate

For more information or to volunteer, please contact Oceana Sanchez at 407-623-1070 or osanchez@cilorlando.org.

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

I want my gift to help CIL build more ramps for Rampage! 2007

Please charge my VISA MasterCard

Card Number _____ Exp Date _____ Signature _____

Please send your gift to:

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

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF CIL

Nationwide Bus Tour on ADA Rights Stops at CIL

CIL hosted the *Road to Freedom* bus tour on Tuesday, January 30 at its offices in Winter Park.

The *Road to Freedom* tour is a year-long, cross-country educational and promotional bus tour to inform and inspire America about the compelling history of disability rights and what remains to be accomplished to fulfill the promise of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).



The bus stops feature a multi-media display and presentation. The history exhibit features photography by Tom Olin, a social documentarian whose

work has been exhibited at the Smithsonian. The exhibit guides viewers through the civil rights struggle for people with disabilities, culminating in the signing of the ADA more than 15 years ago.

Jim Ward, President of ADA Watch and the National Coalition for Disability Rights, made a presentation about the ADA, the challenges still faced by people with disabilities, and the need to keep the promise of the ADA.



CIL Director of Advocacy, Rogue Gallart says, "The ADA promised to protect the rights of people with disabilities and to give people with disabilities full access to the American Dream. We hoped the ADA would help people with disabilities shed the stereotype as America's 'forgotten population.' But America has not yet delivered on the full potential and promise of the ADA."

You can learn more about the *Road to Freedom* tour by visiting <http://roadtofreedom.wordpress.com/>

"True independence and freedom can only exist in doing what's right."

—Brigham Young, American religious leader, second president of the Mormon Church, 1801-1877

The ADA owes its birth-right not to any one person, or any few, but to the many thousands of people who make up the disability rights movement.

These are people who have worked for years organizing and attending protests, licking envelopes, sending out alerts, drafting legislation, speaking, testifying, negotiating, lobbying, filing lawsuits, being arrested - doing whatever they could for a cause they believed in.

Without the work of so many - without the disability rights movement - there would be no ADA.

CIL Donors “Answer The Call”

CIL is proud to announce that a new telephone system has been installed in its offices thanks to the generosity of donors and Dr. Phillips, Inc. Dr. Phillips challenged CIL to raise over \$6,200 from individuals and businesses and that challenge was met in December.

The new system allows CIL staff to receive more calls simultaneously – without sending consumers to voicemail. The Lakeland branch office can now call the Winter Park office without using long distance land lines, saving long distance charges. The new system helps make CIL more efficient. The added efficiency lets us devote more time to serving people.

In the last fiscal year, approximately 4500 consumers called CIL with questions regarding independent living issues. All of these requests, and more, are a large part of our on-going mission to serve people with disabilities and their families.

The Dr. Phillips name has been a major economic and philanthropic presence in the central Florida community since the turn of the 20th century. Once considered the largest citrus producer in the world, Dr. Phillips companies share a rich history spanning several generations, culminating in the establishment of two distinct funding organizations, The Dr. P. Phillips Foundation and Dr. Phillips Inc., perhaps best known for their support of central Florida programs through specialized grant funding.

Again, thanks to CIL donors and Dr. Phillips for making the new telephone system possible. For more information on Dr. Phillips visit: <http://www.drphillips.org/>

Proposed Budget Released By Governor Crist

Governor Charlie Crist recently released his budget recommendations for Fiscal Year 2007-08, allowing for people with developmental disabilities to continue to receive needed services through Florida’s Agency for Persons with Disabilities.

The agency currently serves more than 35,000 Floridians with developmental disabilities. Of those citizens, 25,416 are currently enrolled in the Home and Community-Based Service Waiver. The waiver allows them to receive services to support living in their community rather than in an institution. The proposed budget includes \$119 million to cover the growing demand for waiver services through increased utilization from existing customers, and to provide waiver services to customers transitioning from the developmental services institutions.

Interim Agency Director Barney Ray said, "We thank Governor Crist for recognizing the escalating demand for services from our citizens with developmental disabilities and including funding in the budget to meet their needs. This agency’s goal is to provide our customers with the services they need in order to be contributing members of their community, and Governor Crist’s recommended budget will help us achieve this mission."

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

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Phone: 407.623.1070

www.cilorlando.org/



Assistive Equipment Available at CIL



- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 Potty Chairs• 5 Walkers• 12 Sets of Crutches• 1 Adult Power Wheelchair• 1 Child Power Wheelchair• 2 Manual Wheelchairs | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 Shower Chairs• 2 Roll-in Shower Chairs• 2 Hoyer Lifts• 1 Oxygen Tank• 1 bag and 1 box of Medical Supplies• 1 Bed Cushion |
|---|---|

CIL is always willing to accept donations of slightly used, fully functional assistive equipment. If you or a loved one needs an item listed here please contact Christinne Sherman at 407-623-1070 or email csherman@cilorlando.org.