



Independent Life

The Center for Independent Living In Central Florida, Inc. August 2008

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Legislative Session Yields Gains for Seniors, Even in Tough Budget Year

By Jeff Kottkamp
Lt. Governor, State of Florida

As we head into the summer, it is a good time to review the accomplishments of the 2008 Legislative Session. While we are facing challenging economic times, with fewer dollars coming in, our Legislature passed a budget that addresses the budget priorities of the state, yet does not raise taxes.

At a time when many states relied on tax increases and far-reaching measures such as releasing prisoners early, Florida was able to develop a responsible budget by using a combination of spending reductions and tapping reserves which exist for just this purpose. For example, we were able to avoid drastic service reductions in health and human services by drawing on \$354 million from the Lawton Chiles Endowment Fund. These dollars have helped preserve the Medically Needy program and the Medicaid Waiver for the Aged and Disabled, which provides direct services to more than 42,000 Medicaid recipients.

health-care front is the approval of the *Cover Florida* plan, which will provide coverage for the 3.8 million Floridians who do not have health insurance at no cost to the taxpayer. Thanks to the good work of Governor Charlie Crist and the Legislature, the uninsured will have options that will free them from worrying about health care. By negotiating with health insurers – and allowing them to compete for our business – the people of Florida will be the winners. What we are doing is a model for the nation.



CIL Director of Advocacy Rogue Gallart and Lt. Governor Jeff Kottkamp.

The *Cover Florida* plan will provide affordable health insurance for Floridians ages 19 to 64 who have not had coverage for at least six months. Expected to be available as early as January 2009 and cost about \$150 per month, benefits will include – at a minimum – coverage for

preventive services, screenings, office visits, outpatient and inpatient surgery, urgent care, prescription drugs, durable medical equipment, and diabetic supplies. Additionally, all approved carriers must offer consumers at least two plans, one with catastrophic and hospital cov-

(Continued on last page)

One of the major achievements on the

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Voter Registration Drive at CIL

CIL wants to encourage you to vote by hosting three Voter Registration Days.

CIL invites you to visit the Winter Park office on Thursday August 28 from 11 AM to 3 PM and Tuesday September 16 from 11 AM to 3 PM to receive assistance with voter registration. The Lakeland office will be hosting a registration day on Friday September 12 from 11AM to 3PM.

Staff will hand out registration forms and help explain the voter registration process.

Self-advocacy is important and what better way to stand up for your rights than to take an active interest in the political process by registering and voting.

For more information on CIL's Voter Registration Days contact Rogue Gallart or Doug Davis at 407-623-1070.

County Supervisors of Elections/Voters Registration

Orange — 407-836-2070
Osceola — 407-742-6000

Seminole — 407-708-7700
Polk — 863-534-5888

BAC Meeting Highlights Technology and Customer Service

Members of the Business Advisory Council (BAC) met May 30 at the Wyndham Orlando Resort, Palms ballroom. The participants were entertained and educated by a number of interesting presentations highlighting technology, human resources, and savvy consumerism.

BAC Co-Chair/Treasurer Nichole Arguello kicked off the event by welcoming the nearly 64 attendees from a variety of industries including hospitality, theme parks, staffing agencies, schools, state agencies, retail, banks, and more.

Walt Disney's Guest Services specialist, Mark Jones showed attendees how the Disney Parks were accommodating guests with disabilities by demonstrating "Disney's Handheld Device", a wireless device that provides deaf and hard of hearing

guests with captioning and assistive listening or amplification services.

Senior Human Resource Representative, Buddy Meyer, talked about how Disney provides accommodations for employees with disabilities.

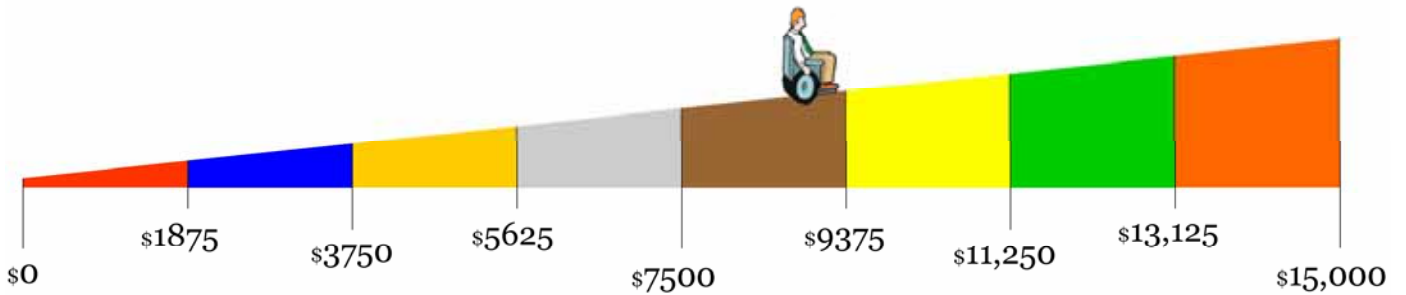
Universal Orlando's Manager for Attraction Safety and ADA Compliance, Kevin L. Huff, talked about the wide variety of accommodations for guests with disabilities at Universal's two Orlando theme parks.

Stacey Cooper, Talent Management Human Resource Manager for The Home Depot and Orlando Better Business Bureau President Judy Pepper also presented.

The next BAC meeting is scheduled for September 12. For more information contact Rogue Gallart at 407-623-1070

Rampage! 2008

Dollar Goal: \$15,000



If you've already made a donation to Rampage 2008, thanks very much! As of July 23 we have raised a little over \$9,000 dollars. If you haven't donated yet — WE NEED YOU! Please consider making a donation today. CIL needs to raise \$15,000 by October 1.

In it's fourth year, Rampage! continues to bring dignity and independence to people with disabilities. With the help of generous volunteers, CIL built 6 ramps last year. We can succeed this year but only with the generous donations of friends 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 CIL at 407-623-1070

I Would Like to Support Rampage 2008

CIL is a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering people with disabilities to maximize their independence.

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 _____

Please make checks made payable to the Center for Independent Living in Central Florida.

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

CIL and Disney partner on *Dreams and Plans*

For the second year in a row CIL has won a grant from Walt Disney World to conduct the *Dreams and Plans* project. This grant comes from the Disney "Helping Kid's Shine" program and will be used to provide transition services to middle and high school students with disabilities in the Osceola County School system.

A 2006 needs assessment conducted by CIL found there was a need for more services for people with disabilities in rapidly growing Osceola County. As a result CIL, with the help of Disney's Helping Kids Shine grant, is expanding its transition services to serve students with disabilities in Osceola County Middle and High Schools.

CIL's *Plans and Dreams* project will run concurrent with the 2008-2009 school year.

6 Days 6 Ramps Project Brings Greater Access

Through a collaborative project, three Central Florida residents with disabilities received wheelchair ramps in May as part of 6 Days 6 Ramps. CIL, Volunteer Florida, and volunteers from AmeriCorp and Adventist Health System (AHS) Information Services teamed up to build ramps in the Orlando neighborhood of Colonialtown North, Southeast Orlando, and Apopka.



Volunteers from AHS built two wood ramps approximately 24 and 34 feet long. AHS employee Jennifer Mahoney is an experienced ramp builder and said that building a ramp was a great hands-on experience versus simply donating money. She said

she enjoys the teamwork aspect of ramp building.

6 Days 6 Ramps is a yearly, multi-site collaborative service project between Volunteer Florida; not-for-profit organizations; organizations that serve persons with disabilities; volunteer centers; faith-based organizations; AmeriCorps programs and the business community.

CIL organized the 6 Days 6 Ramps project in Central Florida and provided partial funding. Additional funding for the project came from Volunteer Florida also known as The Governor's Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service.



CIL constructs wheelchair ramps throughout the year and every November CIL leads a special ramp building event called *Rampage*. To donate or to volunteer please visit our web site at www.cilorlando.org. You can also contact Doug Davis, Outreach Director at 407-623-1070 or ddavis@cilorlando.org.

Emergency Management Conference Provides Timely Information

Hurricane season reminds us that being prepared for emergencies and natural disasters is necessary for all Central Floridians. Experts warn that citizens need to be prepared for natural disasters year round, not just during hurricane season. Fires, floods, and other emergencies can threaten our homes and lives any time of year. It's even more important that people with disabilities be ready with an emergency preparedness plan.



About 100 people attended the Emergency Preparedness for Persons With Disabilities Conference in June at the Wyndham Orlando Resort to learn about government emergency management plans and the importance of personal planning for emergencies.

Representatives from Progress Energy, the Kissimmee Utility Authority, and Florida Hospital talked about the steps their companies were taking to help prevent service interruption during and after storms and how they prioritize service restoration.

Emergency management executives from Orange, Osceola, and Seminole counties talked about county emergency plans and how county governments work together to provide a regional approach to emergency management. Almost every Florida County has its own emergency management plan for people with special needs. The requirements vary from county to county. Many counties require advanced registration for individuals with special needs.

Personnel from LYNX and the Orange County Office of the EMS Medical Director talked about the unique challenges facing transportation and sheltering issues concerning people with disabilities and some possible solutions to those challenges.

Representatives from the Orange and Seminole County Sheriffs' office were joined by Florida State Representative Sandy Adams to discuss public safety issues in emergency situations. Representative Adams is also a former law enforcement officer and says the legislature is working closely with law enforcement to ensure the safety of citizens is the utmost priority in an emergency or natural disaster in Florida.



When a hurricane approaches many people begin voluntary evacuation well in advance which means that roads become congested and emergency shelters can become filled quickly. Make your decision to evacuate early.

Plan ahead to protect yourself when disaster strikes. If you don't have an emergency plan, now is the time to prepare one. If you already have a plan, take time to review and update it. The time to create your emergency plan is before an emergency or natural disaster strikes. Preparation is your best defense.

The Emergency Preparedness for Persons With Disabilities Conference was sponsored by CIL, the State of Florida Office of Emergency Management and the Big Bend Health Council.

CIL Dramatically Expands Employment Services

An exciting new enhancement to CIL's existing employment services has arrived. Through a generous grant from The Able Trust, also known as the Governor's Alliance for the Employment of Citizens with Disabilities, CIL is providing employment services to more Florida residents who are U.S. military veterans with disabilities.

This grant will allow CIL to provide a wide range of skills training and other services according to the consumer's Individual Plan for Employment. Services include: resume writing help, effective interviewing, dress for success skills, effective job search, and others.



CIL's Veterans Employment Manager, Janet Gooding says, "We are extremely pleased to be expanding our employment services and to be working closer with the Veterans Administration. This program expansion is needed now more than ever, especially in light of the recent economic downturn and more veterans returning home from overseas service."

The Business Advisory Council (BAC) will play a pivotal role in providing placement services. Through the BAC, CIL has a direct link to employers willing to hire veterans with disabilities. Businesses can advise the BAC of obstacles to employment of people with disabilities and assist in developing strategies that reduce and/or eliminate these barriers. The BAC will provide guidance and offer services to organizations, with the intent of providing employment outcomes for the BAC participants and non-participants, which include sensitivity training, accessibility surveys, latest information on ADA issues, and job shadowing.

Finally, CIL will provide continued support and follow-up after the veteran is hired. CIL will maintain close contact with employers and placed employees. Employment Specialists will work with both the employer and veteran employee to ensure positive integration of the employee into the job, as well as satisfaction with the employee on the part of the employer.

CIL's service area for this program will encompass Orange, Seminole and Osceola Counties. The agency has the ability, expertise, and experience to deliver expanded employment services to veterans with disabilities. CIL has been providing employment services to our three-county area for over 15 years and currently receives referrals from the Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Veterans Administration.

In 2007, CIL Employment Specialists served 181 consumers with employment services.

The Able Trust, also known as the Governor's Alliance for Employment of Citizens With Disabilities, is a 501 (c) (3) public-private partnership established by the Florida legislature in 1990. Its mission is to be the leader in providing Floridians with disabilities fair employment opportunities through fundraising, grant programs, public awareness, and education. Since its establishment The Able Trust has awarded over \$22 million to individuals with disabilities and nonprofit agencies throughout Florida for employment related purposes. Its programs enable over 2000 Florida citizens with disabilities to enter the workforce each year.

For more information on these and other services call CIL at 407-623-1070.

Lakeland Happenings

Two Wheelchair Ramps Built in May

CIL organized a 28 foot wheelchair ramp build in Arcadia, Florida. Ace Hardware generously donated over \$682 worth of materials and the work was performed by the community group, Volunteer DeSoto. Lunch was provided by 6 Days 6 Ramps and Albertsons.

A ramp build occurred in Dundee, Florida with volunteers from Stillwater Christian Center. CIL provided the materials. The consumer's sister generously donated lunch for the hungry workers.

Innovative Solutions

CIL organized an unusual accessibility project. Mr. Fred Abel (pictured at right) was having difficulty passing safely between his vehicle and home because of a grassy strip hindering the path. A solid, firm walkway was built out of concrete pavers providing stability and safety. Funding was provided by the State of Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and volunteer labor came from the Lakeland Fire Department.



Planning Underway for Disability Mentoring Day

CIL plans to help promote career development for students and job-seekers with disabilities by participating in this year's Disability Mentoring Day on October 15, 2008.

Lakeland Site Manager John Hurt recently attended a planning meeting with representatives of the Polk County School Board and the Agency for Person's with Disabilities to discuss goals and the various activities to be conducted in Polk and surrounding areas on Disability Mentoring Day. The planning meeting resulted in identifying a number of other community and governmental agencies that would be instrumental in greater success of Disability Mentoring Day.

Disability Mentoring Day is an opportunity to underscore the connection between school and work, evaluate personal goals, target career skills for improvement, explore possible career paths, and develop lasting mentor relationships. The program's history shows that students' and job seekers' participation in Disability Mentoring Day can result in an internship opportunity with the host employer; function as a first interview on the way to a part-time or full-time employment offer; or even a firm on-the-spot job offer.

Disability Mentoring Day provides public and private employers with an opportunity to recruit interns; tap a pool of potential future employees; learn more about the experience of disability; develop lasting relationships with disability community leaders; demonstrate positive leadership in their communities; and attract positive media attention. In addition, employers can get involved by enabling employees to serve as volunteer mentors, functioning as a Local Coordinator for a community, and sponsoring Disability Mentoring Day at the national or local level.

For more information on Disability Mentoring Day contact Lakeland Site Manager John Hurt toll-free at 877-891-6448.

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in Central Florida, Inc.**

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Legislative session...

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erage, and one without.

Even in a challenging budget year, the Legislature generously provided for an additional 4,000 seniors in the Nursing Home Diversion Program. Without a doubt, older adults prefer to remain in their own homes and communities as long as possible. This program helps frail elders avoid nursing home care and reduces the cost of care, while also improving their quality of life.

For seniors and persons with disabilities who require full-time assistance, additional staff in Florida's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program will improve opportunities to recruit additional volunteers and extend services to more seniors. Volunteer ombudsmen are concerned citizens who work to improve the quality of life and care for people who live in licensed long-term care facilities such as nursing homes, assisted living facilities and adult family care homes. Florida's 400 ombudsmen are dedicated individuals who identify, investigate and resolve the concerns of long-term care residents and their loved ones, as well as perform annual assessments of each facility throughout Florida.

Another achievement during the legislative session for older adults was the continued recognition by the Florida Legislature of the importance of senior centers. For the second year in a row, funds have been designated for competitive grants to construct, repair and maintain Florida's senior centers. These dollars will help more than 380,000 older Floridians access health and educational activities and maintain involvement in their communities.

Florida's seniors are a vital component of Florida's rich heritage, and Governor Crist and I are proud to serve this dynamic segment of Florida's population. I send a special thanks to the Center for Independent Living of Central Florida – and the many other community-based organizations throughout our state – who serve older adults, persons with disabilities and their caregivers.