

INDEPENDENT TIMES

Newsletter of the Regional Center for Independent Living · Summer 2013

Ray Kenney
Board Chair

Bruce E. Darling
President/CEO



Our Mission

is to empower people with disabilities to self-advocate, to live independently and to enhance the quality of community life. We seek to overcome the barriers faced by people with disabilities who choose to live independently.

Page 2: Summer Roundabout

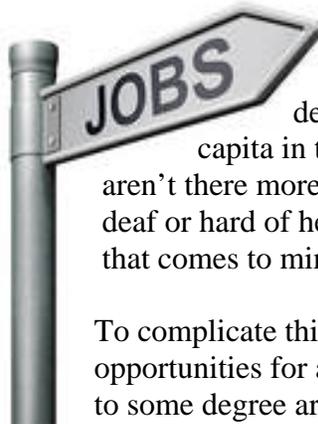
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Employment Test Advocates Wanted!



For years, the priority of deaf people has been jobs. They want to work. Rochester has the largest deaf and hard of hearing population per capita in the U.S. If that number is so large, why aren't there more stores or other companies with many deaf or hard of hearing employees? That is the question that comes to mind everyday.

To complicate this further, the employment opportunities for a deaf person who can speak or hear to some degree are more plentiful than for a person who depends on America Sign Language (ASL) as their preferred communication. For such a large deaf and hard of hearing community, why aren't we seeing great opportunities for employment and leadership for deaf people? It is important to note, deaf people have been recognized by countless employers as hard workers.

Nowadays, employers are starting to get smarter. They are starting to decline applications of deaf people and using such language as, "we have put your information on file" or, "we have selected another candidate." This is not necessarily discrimination, but this response is impossible to find out if Discrimination had occurred in the process. Without the correct information, there is no way to know if deaf and hard of hearing applicants were evaluated by their speaking or hearing skills over their ability to do the job.

A few years back, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination developed an employment tester project that was similar to the testers for housing discrimination. Unfortunately, they could not find any deaf people to start the project.

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RCIL's Summer Roundabout!

As the summer heats up, the RCIL team is in high gear and preparing for a smokin' year!

RCIL is the "best kept secret" in our field but our team would like to change that! We want everyone to know us! We are currently developing our "road show" with marketing materials and outreach presentations of all the wonderful services we provide here at RCIL, to share with our community. We would love to have the opportunity to talk with groups and organizations that could benefit from our services or provide a partnership in our community in getting the word out. Please contact us if you would like to set up a presentation for your business or organization! We can share the latest on any or all of our services: employment, home ownership, environmental modifications, ADA surveys, our loan closet, benefits advisement or our youth group and mentorship program.



RCIL is very excited to have been awarded a grant through Rochester Works to provide a Summer Youth Employment Program/ Summer of Opportunity program for six weeks. It is exciting and rewarding to provide five youth in the community the opportunity to gain work experience, start to build a professional tool kit, and develop a work ethic that will carry them through their career in the future. We will update readers on all the details and excitement once we have completed this project in August!

RCIL is also ramping up our Environmental Modifications services to provide home modifications through the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), for existing homeowners who find themselves in need of adaptations, so that they can stay in their own home. We have several satisfied customers and are looking to add more success stories to our portfolio. Contact RCIL for more details!



Youth from our Youth Employment/ Summer of Opportunity program assist with washing Jensen's power chair at Summer Fest!

Our Benefits Coordination crew has been teaming up with Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR) to provide supports and consultation in navigating and coordinating systems with Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security and other programs to assure each consumer receives individual attention and consideration for their unique circumstances. It can be scary to be faced with the need to access these services and not know where to begin. Our knowledgeable Benefits team can offer decades of experience and has a track record of success!

Finally we are hosting an intern from RIT who is providing tremendous support for our deaf services and tackling some long time projects for our RCIL team. We are lucky to have her join us for the summer months! RCIL welcomes interns all throughout the year to join our team and gain knowledge, skills and information in the field!

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(800) 993-8982 (TOLL FREE)
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NOTICE for IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TRANSITIONS TO DISABILITY ADVOCATES ON JUNE 1, 2013

On June 1, 2013, Disability Advocates, Inc., operating as Disability Rights New York (DRNY), will run New York State's Client Assistance Program (CAP). CAP provides advocacy to applicants for and recipients of vocational rehabilitation services and services from an Independent Living Center, as well as information on rights, services, and benefits available under the Rehabilitation Act.

CAP was originally operated by the New York State Commission on Quality of Care and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities. On May 7, 2013, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo determined that it was in the best interest of New Yorkers to designate DRNY as the sole provider of CAP services in New York State.

As a result of this designation, Independent Living Centers and other organizations will no longer provide CAP services after May 31, 2013. Beginning June 1, 2013, CAP services will be provided exclusively by DRNY. Anyone interested in obtaining services through New York's CAP program should contact DRNY at:

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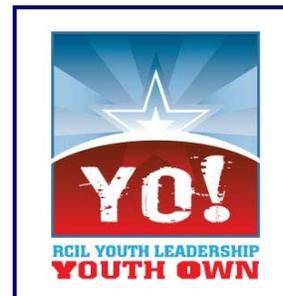
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**PROVIDING PROTECTION & ADVOCACY, CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, AND FREE LEGAL SERVICES TO
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.**

YouthOwn has a Busy Summer Schedule!

RCIL YO! - Youth Own - Has had a Busy Summer Schedule!

In June, YO visited some friends and young residents of Monroe Community Hospital (MCH) to hear their stories and discuss the Independent Living Center's role in the deinstitutionalization movement. Our own mentor, Jensen Caraballo, a former MCH resident, led this effort and it was deemed a "real eye opener" for youth about the various settings people call home.



In July, RCIL hosted five young people with disabilities through Rochester Works Summer of Opportunity for Youth program. RCIL served as a job site where these young people worked on a youth "job readiness" video project and built their career portfolio. YO! Mentors and Young Professionals with Disabilities hosted an ADA Networking Happy Hour at the Strathallan. Young mentors had the opportunity to practice their networking skills with seasoned professionals from our community. A wonderful time was had by all and some valuable connections were made.

YO! also hosted Summer Fest with RCIL and the Center for Disability Rights (CDR) at our downtown, State Street office. We had three vendors; Monroe Wheelchair, Fonte Healthcare Solutions and Westside Medical Supply here to help wash and tune-up wheelchairs, power chairs, scooters and more! We also had Sandra Barbato from Differently Abled Alternative Care (DAAC) providing free massage therapy to anyone who attend this event, and RCIL's loan closet was open for guests to check out, or drop off donations! Combined with music, dancing and free food; this event was a success!

This August, YO members plan to march in the Puerto Rican Festival parade! Afterward, we'll hang out for some food and fun. We will also hold a Video Premiere party to unveil the RCIL Employment video produced by our youth Summer of Opportunity employees! Stay tuned!

As event times get closer, we will have more details posted on the YO! Facebook page, at www.facebook.com/YouthOwn (don't forget to "like" us!), or call Jean Grover at (585) 442-6470. YO - Youth Own - is looking for tomorrow's leaders of Rochester's disability community!

Jeiri, Luticha, Jensen and Wilfredo at our ADA Networking Happy Hour event on July 10th!



Staff, YO! members and residents at MCH in June. YO! is really making themselves known in the community!

Employment Test *(Continued from page 1)*

RCIL along with the Center for Disability Rights (CDR), have decided to start our own employment discrimination project. To successfully gauge whether this discrimination in employment occurs in Rochester, we will need a good number of hearing and deaf testers who are willing to apply for jobs as a group.

We have already had a good number of deaf people sign up for the Employment Advocates Wanted project. However, RCIL and CDR are struggling to find candidates who can hear, whether they have other disabilities or not, to be part of the project.

This project will benefit everyone, whether currently looking for a job or not. If you currently are not satisfied with your job and would like a new opportunity, this project is for you as well. People participating will be applying for specific jobs that they are qualified for. We will be comparing the call-backs, interviews and job offers to see if there is the possibility of discrimination. If you get a job and you want one, great! You can accept the job. If you get a job offer and you don't want a new position, you can simply turn it down.

All of the findings will be shared with the New York State Division of Human Rights and they will decide if any legal proceedings will be needed.

If you are interested in being part of the Employment Advocates Wanted project, please sign up by emailing employment@rcil.org or calling (585) 286-2725. You can call our Advocacy Department (585) 442-6470 for more information. Again, RCIL needs help from different hearing people with or without disabilities. This is an exciting new initiative to create change in Rochester. Please sign up today!!!



Join the RCIL team!

**Employment opportunities are frequently posted on
www.rcil.org.**

**See what fits your talents and interest.
For more information, please contact Human Resources (HR)
at resumes@rcil.org or call (585) 442-6470.**

Mike Rackovitch Story

Mike Rackovitch, a deaf native from New York City moved to Rochester when he was a young adult. His family is hearing but knows sign language. Mike and his family decided that Rochester is a good fit for him because of a large deaf population and services provided. Mike is a kind individual with a big heart and smile on his face. Mike has minimal signs and relies on gestures and facial expressions. For his entire life, he has struggled to maintain a healthy lifestyle due to his multiple disabilities, but that doesn't stop him from smiling and greeting people daily.

Mike loves Mae West; an actress from the 1940s and collects all her pictures, movies and books. He loves imitating her and owns all movies she's in. Mike enjoys holidays, especially Halloween and his favorite costume is Frankenstein. Mike loves to take long walks, making dinosaurs puzzles, planting flowers and petting animals.

This year, he contacted RCIL for assistance in getting services he desperately needed. Mike was involved with DePaul Community Services for many years; however the group home designed specifically for the deaf was closed. Mike lived in several other places over the course of two years with no deaf services available, which eventually affected his mental and physical health.

Mike became frustrated with his limited social and communication opportunities and not seeing his deaf friends after the group home closed. He lost touch with everyone and became isolated in the hearing population.

Since RCIL's involvement in advocating, assisting with communication needs, working on life skills and reconnecting with friends, Mike is clearly a happier and healthier person. He continues to maintain his independence and it would have not been possible without RCIL.

Mike struggles in communicating effectively, expressing his feelings, and understanding what is right and wrong. With supports, he can process through the daily situations he encounters and has a greater understanding of his surroundings. Mike shows his appreciation for his supports and life changes through his wonderful smile and gestures.

He enjoys working regularly at ARC works and the supports RCIL can provide. Meanwhile, RCIL continues to work with Mike to improve on strategies to reach out to people with his needs, maintaining life skills, and self advocating.

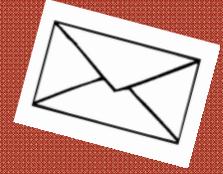


Mike Rackovitch poses for a photo at his kitchen table!

Mark your Calendars! RCIL Board Meeting:

Thursday, August 15, 2-4pm, 497 State Street, Rochester, NY
Members are encouraged to attend.

Problems with this newsletter? Receiving too many copies? Have you changed your address? Not a member of RCIL? Wish to speak with the board?



Contact Kristin Salter at (585) 442-6470 to answer any of these questions!

ANNOUNCEMENT!

RCIL has a Loan Closet of Assistive Devices for both Adults and Children!

We can loan out any of these devices free of charge to anyone in need of this service! If RCIL doesn't have an item, we will search to see if another regional loan closet has the item for you!

Contact RCIL at (585) 442-6470 or email TRAID@rcil.org for more information on how we can help you today!

See what's happening online!

Go to <http://www.rcil.org> for more information on our services and advocacy or go to one of our social media pages below



<http://www.facebook.com/rcilnys>



<http://www.twitter.com/rcilny>



<http://www.youtube.com/rcilvideo>



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Visit us on the web at
www.rcil.org

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**Help us address
the needs of
people with
disabilities,
every day.**

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**Minimum contribution \$10 per year.
Membership year is November 1 – October 31.**

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Enclosed is my contribution of \$_____.

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