



Independence Now, Inc.
 12301 Old Columbia Pike, Suite 101
 Silver Spring, MD 20904



IN TOUCH

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 Independence Now, Inc.
 Fall 2011

Independence Now is the Center for Independent Living for
 Montgomery and Prince George's Counties

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SIZZLIN' SUMMER FUN FOR THE MEMBERS OF

M.Y. V.O.I.C.E.

What a sizzling summer it has been! After a vote, IN's Youth program has finally been given a name- M.Y. V.O.I.C.E (**M**entoring **Y**outh to **V**oice their **O**wn **I**deas, **C**hallenges and **E**motions).

The excitement of the summer program was kicked off with a six week cooking class. IN teamed up with Operation Frontline, a program of Capital Area Foodbank, to host this event. Fifteen students from all over the state learned about healthy eating, food selections and nutrition. The students prepared all the ingredients, measured, and cooked several recipes each session. Project Frontline had volunteer chefs and nutritionists every week to demonstrate what to do. They also provided the food AND grocery bags of the ingredient for students to take home every week!

MY VOICE also offered two two-hour sessions of activities for students. The first event was a fitness and heart rate awareness day. There were multiple stations of athletic activities which each student was to visit and test their heart rate after the activity. It was a fantastic way to combine healthy eating and healthy living.

The second event, a grocery store challenge, was held at the Burtonsville Giant Food. All of the students and staff, along with our travel trainer, took the metro bus to Giant, giving students an opportunity to learn about public transportation and other services IN offers. Students were to come up with their own recipe, while staying within a \$10.00 budget. Students also broke into groups for a healthy eating scavenger hunt, comparing prices and labels for smarter choices. All of the students stayed within their budget and had their own recipe and groceries to take home and try.

Our sixth and final week was graduation! All students who attended five out of six weeks, received a certificate and their own apron, measuring cups, and recipe book. After our cooking session, students played a game of charades of professions they have interests in. IN Independent Living Specialists also shared information about IL services and the benefits of receiving such services. It was a huge hit!

The summer was fun filled and once again flew by with our youth program and looking forward to the next activities the fall will bring. As we say goodbye to the summer, we are looking forward to all the events we are planning for the fall and winter. Check back for the news of our upcoming events.



Give to INDEPENDENCE NOW #59275

www.cfcnca.org

Complete the Pledge Form and save campaign costs by donating through e-Giving paperless or online printed pledge options.

INDEPENDENCE NOW, INC. is a nonprofit organization created by and for people with disabilities. INDEPENDENCE NOW, INC. assists residents of Montgomery and Prince George's counties to use community services and resources that will enhance their independence. All services are provided without regard to race, gender, ethnicity, national origin, age, religion, or type(s) of disability.

This Newsletter and all public information is available in alternate format such as Braille, large print, or by e-mail upon request.



**CALLING FOR
DISCRIMINATION
COMPLAINTS
AGAINST METRO**

The Equal Rights Center (ERC) is a national non-profit civil-rights organization dedicated to promoting equal opportunity in housing, employment, public accommodations, and government services through education, research, testing, counseling, advocacy, and enforcement.

For years, the Equal Rights Center has been committed to improving transportation and other daily aspects for people with disabilities.

They are asking for help, once more. They want to hear from Metro riders with disabilities about their experience riding Metrorail and Metrobus.

The Equal Rights Center has heard many stories from people with disabilities who have experienced unlawful discrimination on the DC Metro. These have included stories of Metrobus drivers failing to pick up a passenger with a disability or denying access to a passenger because of the use of a service animal. They have heard stories of Metro elevators being broken, without notice being provided to riders or without providing alternative shuttle service.

These all constitute discrimination against people with disabilities, and the Equal Rights Center needs input from the community in order to end such practices.

If you have experienced any of the above situations, or other possible forms of discrimination, please e-mail your stories to intakes@equalrightscenter.org or call 202-234-3062.

Together, we can work to improve Metro and DC transportation for all people with disabilities.

**Work Incentives Corner
The Employed Individuals with Disabilities (EID)
program**

Most of the work incentives that we deal with have to do with preserving benefits that a person already has. This can be very important to people who have come to rely on these benefits. However, there is one work incentive that can give people something that they didn't have before: Medicaid.

Medicaid, or Medical Assistance as we call it in Maryland, is state-sponsored health insurance that is partially funded by the federal government. Many people qualify for it through a variety of ways, mostly due to having very limited income and resources. Most of these people have to be very careful about how much money they receive and how much they save.

The EID program, however, is a way to buy into Medical Assistance. If a person has a disability that meets Social Security's standards and is working, they can get Medical Assistance through EID. For those who don't have any health insurance, this can be a significant help to cover medical expenses. For those on Medicare, this can pay the premium for part B (outpatient care) and allow them to get the Low Income Subsidy for part D (prescription drug coverage).

If a person uses a health care provider that accepts Medicaid, there will be no co-pays for office visits. And, almost all prescription drugs are covered. Co-payments for prescriptions are either \$1.10 for generic drugs and \$3.30 for name brands.

Income and asset limits are far more flexible than those of other Medical Assistance plans. A person can earn as much as \$66,000 a year and save as much as \$10,000 and have EID. This can be a big help to those who are trying very hard to live within the limits of other forms of Medical Assistance.

This is a work incentive. This means that working is a primary requirement for it. There is not minimum income requirement: just that a person works for money somewhat regularly. If a person is self-employed, they need to show tax records to show that they are working. Otherwise, paystubs are usually sufficient.

We have found EID to be one of the most powerful work incentives available. Not all states have such a buy in. In addition, we have been fortunate enough to have an outreach program that will help individuals with the application process. Unfortunately, the funding for that program has been lost. The outreach program will likely close in the middle of next year, unless further funding can be found. EID, however, will continue to make employment a more attractive proposition for people with disabilities across the state of Maryland.

Snapshot: Capture...Connect...Create

An event celebrating Maryland Disability History and Awareness Month
& National Disability Employment Awareness Month
October 11, 2011

Registration Form – Deadline September 27

A free event for People with Disabilities and those who support them!

Name: _____ email: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ County: _____

Special Dietary Needs: _____

A sign Language Interpreter will be provided. If you need other accommodations, please request:

Send completed registration forms to Independence Now by September 27 to: info@innow.org or fax to 301-625-9777.

QUESTIONS? Call Independence Now – 301-277-2839

Transportation Information:

- If you will be using a GPS or traveling via Metro Access, please use this address: 8525 Fenton Street, Silver Spring, MD 20910.
- To find parking, access public transportation information go to www.silverspringdowntown.com

*This event is sponsored by:
Independence Now*

*Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Aging and Disability Services,
Commission on People with Disabilities
Prince George's County Government, Department of Family Services, Commission for Individuals with Disabilities
Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS).*

Snapshot: Capture...Connect...Create



An event celebrating Maryland Disability History and Awareness Month & National Disability Employment Awareness Month

October 11, 2011
Silver Spring Civic Building at Veterans Plaza
8525 Fenton Street
Silver Spring, MD 20910

- 10:30 Registration begins
- 11:00 Welcome – Uma Ahluwalia, Director, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
- 11:05 Remarks by Secretary Cathy Raggio, Maryland Department of Disabilities
- 11:30-12:15 Presentation on Maryland's Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP) by Leta Blank, SHIP Coordinator, Montgomery County and Dianne James, SHIP Coordinator, Prince George's County
- 12:15-1:00 Lunch – Box lunches will be provided
- 1:00-2:30 Snapshot on Hot Topics Panel Presentation
- Employment – Sue Schaffer, Director, Office of Blindness and Vision Services, Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services
 - Transportation – Kat Taylor, Disability Rights Program Manager, Equal Rights Center
 - Housing – John Brennan, Chief of Staff, Maryland Department of Disabilities
- 2:30-3:30 Work Incentives Options by David Mitchell, Project Director, Benefits INfoSource

**Vendors will be in the Resource Area all day for you to visit and gather information!

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Independence Now*

*Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, Aging and Disability Services,
Commission on People with Disabilities
Prince George's County Government, Department of Family Services, Commission for Individuals with Disabilities
Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS).*



IN STAFF ATTENDS RALLY IN SUPPORT OF MEDICAID

With chants of “OUR MEDICAID MATTERS” and clad mostly in mustard yellow T-shirts, hundreds of people with disabilities and their supporters gathered in the shadow of the Capitol on a gray September day in hopes of sending a message to lawmakers, leave Medicaid alone and refrain from cutting the program that provides a vital safety net to so many.

Several members of IN's staff joined the rally on the grass in front of the Capitol as a parade of lawmakers and advocates, including high profile US Senators Tom Harkin and Bernie Sanders, Congressman Dennis Kucinich and others, addressed the crowd.

“Medicaid may not mean anything to the hedge fund people on Wall Street, Medicaid may not mean anything to those who have a lot,” Harkin said, “But Medicaid matters to every single person here. It matters to our families and it matters to the welfare of the United States of America.”

“Not only should we make sure that children and people with disabilities and low income people are not thrown off of Medicaid, but we should expand Medicaid and Medicare so that every person in this country, regardless of income, has healthcare as a right of citizenship,” Senator Sanders said in his speech.

There are about eight million people with disabilities who rely on Medicaid for their insurance, event planners estimate. Medicaid is a state program which uses a combination of state and federal funds to pay for healthcare for those who meet income thresholds.

Those who attended the rally were given postcards to fill out as they entered the event. They were urged to share personal stories of how Medicaid matters in their daily lives.

The rally was organized primarily by disability civil rights group ADAPT and co-sponsored by a cadre of other disability organizations including the National Council on Independent Living.

With widespread talk of budgets and deficits dominating the headlines, disability advocates hoped to convince lawmakers not to cut millions of dollars in state funds used to pay for Medicaid. That money, they say, goes to enable people with disabilities to be able to afford medications, medical equipment, and other essential services they need to live.

Organizers and speakers urged the crowd to use their voices to urge their Congressional leaders to pass key legislation that are important to the disability community such as the Community Choice Act—a measure proposed in 2007 that would allow people with disabilities to have the choice as to whether they want their care in a nursing home or in a community-based non-institutionalized setting.

WELCOME ABOARD!

Independence Now, Inc. (IN) welcomes **Justin Chappell, Will Estrada and Denise Thomas** to the Independent Living Services staff.

Justin is a life-long resident of Montgomery and Prince George's County living with, working and advocating for people with disabilities. This includes working for U.S. Senator Tom Harkin, the National Council on Independent Living, and serving on numerous local citizen advisory committees. He will be serving residents of Montgomery County. Justin is "very excited to help other people with disabilities in his community achieve their personal independent living goals in every aspect of society."

Denise has also been active in the disability community. She has served as the Treasurer for the MD State Independent Living Council, is a commissioner on the Montgomery County Commission on Disabilities, and has worked for the Developmental Disabilities Council as well as other non-profits serving Marylanders with developmental disabilities. Denise is hoping to "help as many people as possible to attain their goals to live independent lives."

Will is a recent graduate from Montgomery College. He has interned at NIH and Easter Seals. He is looking forward to "gaining experience in a new environment."



HOLIDAY BLAST OFF

Independence Now will host the **Creative Cooking Class, Craft Social and Thanksgiving dinner as one event.**

**This event will take place at The Hillandale Recreational Center
10615 New Hampshire Ave 12301 Old Columbia Pike, Hillandale MD
on Wednesday November 16 from 2:30 pm to 6:00 pm.**

Learn to make homemade candy for the holidays, design and make your own gift box, make a quick and easy thanksgiving dinner

Then everyone will gather for the feast!

**Consumers MUST pre-register for this event by November 1st to participate.
Space accommodation and number of attendees to serve is limited.**

NURSING HOME TRANSITIONING

"In the Meantime"

Dreams really do come true!! Many residents of nursing facilities may not need round the clock care. There are situations where the level of care could possibly be met through supported services while living in the community. This will affords candidates that are ready for transitioning to live independently in their own homes, enjoying their family and friends, eating, sleeping, and bathing when they want. They will have the freedom to come and go without restrictions.

Representatives from Montgomery and Prince George's County Long Term Care Ombudsmen Program will facilitate a workshop on "In the Meantime". Topics will include the Long Term Care (LTC) Ombudsmen Program, Your Rights and Resources for Independence after transitioning.

All nursing facilities residents who are in the process of moving out of a nursing facility, or contemplating moving back to the community please join us on Wednesday, November 2nd, 3:00 – 5:00 PM at our Silver Spring office. Travel reimbursement will be provided.

Please register with your IL Specialist for this event by October 26th. Or call 301-277-2839 for more information.



BRINGING HOLIDAY CHEER TO OUR CONSUMERS

**IN will host a holiday celebration at the
Epiphany Lutheran Church, 14411 Old Columbia Pike, Burtonsville, MD
on Tuesday, December 13th, from 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM.**

The evening will be filled with fun, food and fellowship with your peers.

**Consumers MUST pre-register with their IL Specialist for this event by
November 30th.**

Space accommodation and number of attendees to serve is limited.



WOMEN'S GROUP

1st Monday of each month
12:00 pm -- 2:00 pm

The Brownbag Social is a new theme to IN's women's group. From noon-1pm we will have lunch and an open discussion about current affairs, issues and concerns of women and help strategize for the holistic woman. The second hour we will have a presentation or a speaker.

The **OCT 3rd** discussion will be about breast health, proper examination and mammograms.

On **NOV 7th**, Denise Fay Guthrie of NAMI will lead a discussion on mental health and the use of good coping mechanisms to keep stressors and triggers at bay.

The **DEC 5th** discussion will revisit the Holiday blues—learning how to keep your spirits up during the holidays.

The Brownbag Socials will be held at the Prince George's office at 8181 Professional Drive, Suite 170, Hyattsville, MD. **Contact Rochelle Harrod or your Independent Living Specialist at 301-277-2839. One-way travel reimbursement will be provided.**



HOUSING SEMINAR

4th Thursday of each month
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

IN's welcomes persons with disabilities to attend our monthly Housing Seminar. This event is a convenient way to receive and share information on ways to obtain and sustain affordable and accessible housing. This quarter, such topics for review will be your credit rating, budgeting, understanding the rental application process and applying for low cost fix mortgages. Also, we are excited to have the following presenters tentatively scheduled during the upcoming months:

OCT 28 - Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP) / Electric Universal Service Program (EUSP) - Office of Home Energy Programs.

NOV 30 - Housing Opportunity Commission of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties

DEC 22 - Habitat for Humanity Montgomery and Prince George's Counties



MEN'S GROUP

3rd Wednesday of each month
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

OCT 19th Wheels for Independence

Three of IN male staff will demonstrate the accessibility and driving features of their own personal vehicles. Attendees will get a first-hand and up close demonstration along with steps you can take to have your own wheel to independence.

NOV 16th Holiday Blast (see article in Newsletter)

DEC 21st Happy New Year: Keeping the Old Out of the New – What are the some of the major choices you have made in the last year? Share how these choices and events in the past year have impacted your life and your future plans for the New Year. The group will also discuss healthy and positive ways to let off some steam and mend relationships.

The group will also discuss future topics that are related to men and make plans for 2012. **Contact Kelvin Hawkins or your IL Specialist to register. One-way travel reimbursement will be provided.**



TRANSPORTATION ACTION GROUP (TAG)

2nd Wednesday of each month
12 pm – 2 pm

OCT 12 meeting is cancelled due to the Disability History Awareness Conference.

NOV 9 and **DEC 14** meetings will feature guest speakers from agencies/organizations on Transportation issues.

LET OUR VOICES BE HEARD!

TAG encourages everyone interested in improving transportation for people with disabilities to attend the **WMATA Town Hall Meeting to discuss new MetroAccess contract** on Wednesday, October 26, 2011 from 6 – 8 pm at The First United Methodist Church of Hyattsville, 6201 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD 20782.



CREATIVE COOKING CLASS

See calendar for times

Independence!! This class is designed to enhance independence in the lives of people with disabilities. As people with disabilities, it's often thought that we cannot prepare our own meals and have to eat on someone else's schedule. Well, these classes will enlighten you on ways meal preparation can be quick, safe, inexpensive and healthy. You will see your own creativity and self-sufficiency come to light. In the upcoming months, plan to attend these classes to learn more and enjoy time with your peers.

OCT 12th Todd Thorpe, Director of Operations for IN will be our featured chef. The dish for the evening will be Sausage Stir-fry. This event will take place at the Prince George's office at 8181 Professional Place, Suite 170, Hyattsville, MD from 5:00 –7:00 PM 7:00PM. **Register with your IL Specialist by Oct 1 for this event. One-way travel reimbursement will be provided.**

NOV 16th Holiday Blastoff! See information in this Newsletter.

MOVIE ADVOCATE'S THEATER

4th Tuesday of each month
2:00 pm -- 5:00 pm



Independence Now will once again show movies that include audio description and feature a person with a disability as part of our monthly Advocates' Theater on the 4th Tuesday of every month from 2-5pm at the Independence Now Silver Spring Office.

OCT 25th -- The recently released ***Soul Surfer***--The life of Bethany Hamilton, a promising amateur Hawaiian surfer who overcame a shark attack at age 13 to succeed on the pro circuit.

NOV 22nd -- The 2009 remake of ***The Miracle Worker***, -- The story of Helen Keller, the young girl who was blind, deaf, and mute since infancy, who was in danger of being sent to an institution until a persistent and outspoken teacher named Annie Sullivan came into her life. Together they accomplished the impossible and taught one another the values of patience, tolerance and compassion.

DEC 27th -- ***Mr.Holland's Opus*** -- Glenn Holland is a musician and composer who takes a teaching job to pay the rent while, in his 'spare time', he can strive to achieve his true goal--compose one memorable piece of music to leave his mark on the world. As Holland discovers, 'Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans.'

Independence Now encourages our consumers of all ages and disabilities to attend. **Please contact Justin Chappell at 301-277-2839 or email jchappell@innow.org to RSVP or suggest future movies featuring a person with a disability that you would like to see. One way travel reimbursement will be provided.**



GETTING YOUR "ACT" TOGETHER

See calendar for times

A series of monthly seminars on existing laws and bills being considered by Congress that affect the rights of people with disabilities. This series will help you to become a better self-advocate s and increase your system advocacy skills.

The **OCT 17th** seminar will focus on healthcare laws that protect your rights and bills Congress is considering that could affect Medicaid.

The **NOV 18th** seminar will focus on transportation laws that protect your rights and bills. Congress is considering reauthorizing the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act.

The **DEC 16th** seminar will focus on employment laws that protect your rights and bills Congress is considering to reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act.

Please contact Justin Chappell at 301-277-2839 or JChappell@innow.org to RSVP. One way travel reimbursement will be provided.

Oct. 2011



Nov. 2011



Dec. 2011



SUN MON TUES WED THURS FRI SAT

Disability Awareness Month National Disability Employment Month Down Syndrome Awareness Month Dyslexia Awareness Month Spina Bifida Month						1
2	3 Women's Group 12-2	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12 Creative Cooking Class 5-7 Prince George's Office	13	14	15
16	17 Getting Your "Act" Together 1-3	18	19 Men's Group 1-3	20	21	22
23	24	25 Advocate Theater 2-5	26	27 Housing Seminar 1-3	28	29
30	31	October 15 th --White Cane Safety Day Sept 15 th -- Oct 15 th —National Hispanic Heritage Month				

SUN MON TUES WED THURS FRI SAT

National Epilepsy Month		1	2 Nursing Home Transition "In the Meantime" 3-5	3	4	5
6	7 Women's Group 12-2	8	9 TAG 12-2	10	11	12
13	14	15	16 Holiday Blast Off 3-7	17	18 Getting Your "Act" Together 11-1	19
20	21	22 Advocate Theater 2-5	23	24	25 <i>Thanksgiving Office Closed</i>	26
27	28	29	30 Housing Seminar 1-3			

SUN MON TUES WED THURS FRI SAT

Universal Human Rights Month Dec. 8 th – 16 th - Hanukkah Dec 26-Jan 1 Kwanzaa				1 World AIDS Day	2	3
4	5 Women's Group 12-2	6	7	8	9 Getting Your "Act" Together 11-1	10
11	12	13 Holiday Party 4-7	14 TAG 12-2	15	16	17
18	19	20	21 Men's Group 1-3	22 Housing Seminar 1-3	23	24
25 <i>Christmas Office Closed</i>	26	27 Advocate Theater 2-5	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve

Please be sure to check the back of this calendar and for articles throughout this Newsletter for more information about the events above.

Some require registration, one way reimbursement will be provided for each event.

