**disABILITY *LINK* – Legislative and Public Policy Advocacy and Education – Brief Report - January 2015**

Current Major Theme = ADA 25 events – Disability Rights *are* Civil Rights

**Planning for The Americans with Disabilities Act 25th Anniversary (ADA 25) – events and activities include:**

* Nothing About Us Without Us Series, “Disability Rights are Civil Rights” – first Thursday of each month, starting January 8 (to December 3)
* Atlanta’s Martin Luther King Day Parade - January 19
* History Classes –each month February to November
* Open House with AMS Vans and Pride Mobility - March
* ADA Celebration - April 25
* “Human flag” – May, June or July 2015
* Disability Pride Parade at the National Center for Civil and Human Rights - June 13
* Employment Program – June and July
* Health and Wellness Program – June and July
* Veteran’s Program – June and July
* VTAP and Transportation program – June and July
* Youth Program – July 13 to 18
* ADA Open House - early July
* …and much more!

**Other Active Legislative and Policy Efforts:**

* Promote Community First Choice Option (a Medicaid funding opportunity for states to increase funds for community supports) – following up meeting with Medicaid Chief
* Advocate against MARTA privatization (working to keep MARTA accountable for providing accessible transit) – series of meetings with MARTA management including with CEO Parker on January 30
* Legislative Session advocacy – Mental Health Day (January 20), Disability Day (March 5) and Advocacy Days (Waivers - Jan 21, ICWP – January 29, Kids – February 4, Employment – February 11, Youth – February 19) at the Capitol
* Creation of Georgia’s Statewide Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) – first of the Town Hall meetings on December 9
* Fair Labor Standards Act’s Companionship Rules change – address the unfunded mandate to pay overtime to attendants – has the potential to cap attendant hours and force institutionalization
* Promoting Community Integration Act (CIA - addresses Medicaid’s Institutional bias) – working with Congressional Representative John Lewis as potential sponsor
* Continue to promote The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) – participating on collaborative efforts to ratify
* Always promoting independent living (IL), community inclusion, self-advocacy and self-determination, barrier removal, etc. – in every conversation, discussion, meeting, presentation, etc.