



Photo of disABILITY LINK staff and Friends at the MLK Jr. Day Parade

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Choices

Social Media



@disabilitylink

www.disabilitylink.org

Advocating for human rights, not special rights



Choices (Independent Living)

Centers for Independent Living, focus on consumer's choice. We advocate choices which is reflected through our mission statement. The mission statement reads "disABILITY LINK is an organization led by and for people with disabilities and promotes choice and full participation in community life." This statement highlights two very important aspects of Independent Living: (1) being peer-led (this means that the majority of the staff, managers and members of the Board of Directors are people with disabilities) and (2) promoting choice (this means you will not be told what to do, but will be offered information and ideas that can help you to make your own decisions). We loudly proclaim these statements because neither one is a very typical characteristic for organizations that serve people with disabilities.

People with disabilities have choices. Regardless if the outcome is positive or negative, we'll live with the result of our decisions. We deem ourselves to be experts in knowing what works best for us; primarily since people with disabilities are used to being viewed as perpetual children - someone that needs decisions made for them because we cannot be trusted to make the right decision for ourselves.

When it comes to difficult choices, Independent Living is associated with peer support, "people who provide knowledge, experience, emotional, social or practical help to each other." These specialists do not tell their peers what to do, but rather use the benefit of their experiences to pass along encouragement and support. Peer Support Specialists don't say "what you should do is...", but say, "this is what I did and it worked for me, so maybe it will work for you." This type of support will empower individuals to develop self-advocacy, while making their own choices.

Consumers
&
staff visiting legislators





It is a human right to make choices regarding all aspects of one's life. Imagine if we no longer had those rights or options necessary to make a choice. For instance, imagine if you had to stay in the hospital and was unable to choose who is allowed to visit you. What time to wake up and had limited meal choices. Not many people enjoy hospital stays for those reasons not to mention any physical discomfort associated with medical interventions. People have shared that living in a long-term care nursing facility or other institutions also experience limited options.

It is our core belief at disABILITY LINK (and that of Independent Living) is to celebrate, practice, support, promote, and recognize choice for the powerful element it is on our lives. If you want to talk about choice, or any aspect of Independent Living, please speak to any of the Independent Living Specialists at disABILITY LINK .

Article by Linda Pogue



Group photo of the LEAPS class holding up ADA signs that say Because of the AMERICANS with DISABILITIES ACT, I



Congressional District 7 candidate , Kathleen Allen visits disABILITY LINK

Make
Choices



Eating Healthy

It is one's choice to be healthy by choosing to eat nutritional foods and healthy snacks. When one chooses to be healthy, health experts recommend that one sets realistic goals, exercise everyday by walking a mile or two, eating a well-balanced meal that consists of grains, vegetables, fruits and proteins. Experts also say that it is important to drink 8 to 10 glasses of water a day instead of sugary drinks and to avoid highly processed food. One could follow many health experts' suggestions, if they choose, so that he or she can maintain an overall health and wellness. If you are interested in health related issues or want to participate in the Health and Wellness activities hosted by disABILITY LINK, contact Juanita Anderson, Health and Wellness Independent Living Specialist at janderson@disabilitylink.org or by phone at 404-687-8890 extension 112

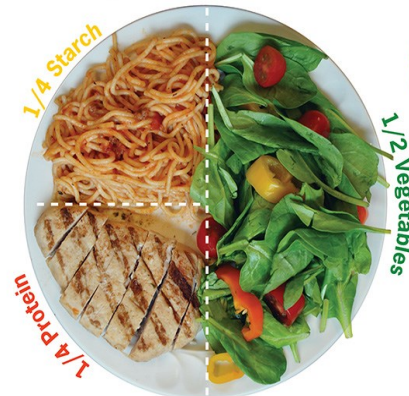
Article by Juanita Anderson



Photo of Staff members working out in a colleague



My Healthy Plate



Plan the portions on your plate.



Optional Fruit or Dairy

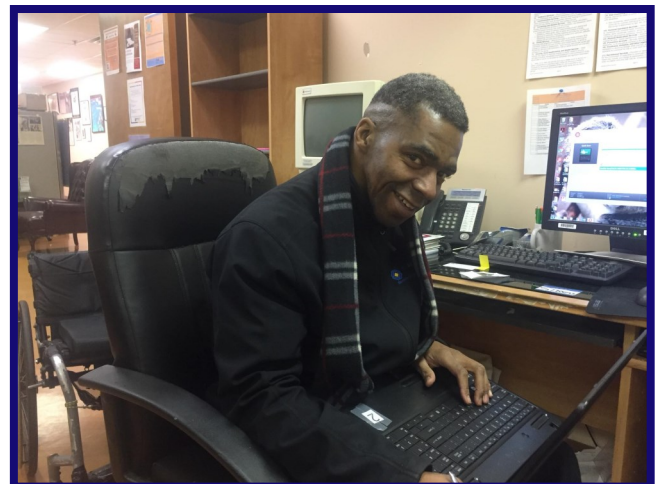


AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Article by Travis Evans

Living in satisfactory housing conditions is one of the most important aspects of our lives. Housing is essential to meet basic needs such as shelter, but it is not just a question of four walls and a roof. It also knowing where we want to live. Do you know what your choices are when deciding the best places to live? Remember, we may have to take different routes to get to the place where we want to live including (maybe) being on a waiting list. When the opportunity for housing arises, our choices where to live may be affected by our income, transportation options, and the moral support we have. Ultimately, it's up to you to decide what is in your best interest as you start your housing search. One question you might ask yourself is, do you prefer being around lots of people or not being around any at all? When it comes to these types of questions, you are the expert. Especially since you know what you want better than anyone else. Each of us has a choice where we want to live instead of being told where we are going to live. It's called Independent Living- in action; living on our own terms and not the terms arranged by others such as a family members or professionals. When it comes to deciding where we want to live, we can make our own choices.

For more information about housing opportunities, please contact Travis Evans, Computer Lab and Housing Independent Living Specialist at 404-678-8890 Ext 109 or by email at tevens@disabilitylink.org





“My Choice”

People with disabilities are making choices with their voices through demonstrative actions and their votes. One example of this is when I participated in a demonstrative action with ADAPT five years ago. This action allowed individuals with disabilities to be vocal about a bill that would impact their living rights. ADAPT is a disability rights organization that advocates for civil rights, civil justice, and often through civil disobedience. This demonstration took place in the main intersection at the State Capitol in Harrisburg, PA, in 2013. This action was for the purpose of letting state legislators know that people with disabilities did not approve of their efforts to cut the state budget. The budget that would support them to live among their neighbors in their communities.

“I’d rather go to jail than to die in a nursing home”

“I’d rather go to jail than to die in a nursing home”

“I’d rather go to jail than to die in a nursing home”

This is the chant that I heard in my head as I listened to hundreds of others aligned along the sidewalk. I, along with others, was standing in the middle of the intersection at the State Capital in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania chanting “I’d rather go to jail than to die in a nursing home.”

I had no intentions of being so involved in this demonstrate. Yet, here I stood cane in hand yelling “I’d rather go to jail than to die in a nursing home.” I noticed State police cars slowing down around me, their sirens blaring, and using their public address system to bark out orders, I stood there shouting “I’d rather go to jail than to die in a nursing home.”



I was surprised that the State Capitol police were extremely friendly to me when they asked "Sir, can I guide you to the sidewalk?" I replied "No thank you" and continued repeating the chant "I'd rather go to jail than to die in a nursing home." Although the police were pleasant to me, I could not help but hear off to the left my fellow chanters being carried off by the police. Left standing there, a policeman ever so slightly grabbed my arm to guide me to the sidewalk. Standing my ground I replied "I'd rather go to jail than to die in a nursing home." The officer said again "Hey! Just let me take you to the sidewalk" and I said, "I'd rather go to jail than to die in a nursing home."

The State of Pennsylvania legislative focus is not where people with disability would like it to be. In addition, their state facility lacks comfort and they could spend a little more on heating. So here I sit, cane in hand, with my fellow announcers, chanting "I'd rather go to jail than to die in a nursing home."

Article by Ken Mitchell



Picture of Ken Mitchell & Jesse sitting on a bench



A word from the Executive Director

Picture of Kim Gibson
&
Danny Housley

Dear Friends:

We are fast approaching our annual fundraising event and want to take time to reflect on the many accomplishments that disABILITY LINK has over the last 20 years. We are certainly proud that we are an organization ran for and by people with disabilities. It addition, we continue to strive towards providing options to individuals through peer support, advocacy, independent living skills training, information and referral and transitional services. Our event will celebrate the many wonderful things that we have been able to accomplish with the support of staff, community, and the consumers and hope you will join us to celebrate. Please contact our office for more information on how to purchase a ticket.

At disABILITY LINK we have a variety of groups that focus on different aspects. Some of these groups include youth peer support groups, assistive technology, assistive technology for blind and deaf, computer classes, computer lab, LGBTQIAP++disability, mental health peer groups, and so many more. I want to invite you to join in one or all of the groups, if you already are not part, as well as invite you to become a volunteer, host or co-host a group of interest.



I also want to point out that political issues and new legislation focused around people with disabilities all have been on the front line. It is very important that each of you take time out and become involved in your community. We encourage you to sign up to vote and then vote. If you need more information on how to do this, please contact our office.

Thank you all for being part of the disability community and the support you provide. We look forward to seeing each of you in the at our annual event or perhaps at some of our ongoing groups or classes.

Sincerely,

Kim Gibson

Kim Gibson was a guest panelist to discuss disability rights for the international group at Kennesaw State University





disABILITY LINK's Gala Spectacular
20 years of Promoting Choices
Saturday, April 28, 2018
6:00pm-10:00pm

Silent Auction-Live Music-Cash Bar
Courtyard Marriott 130 Clairemont Avenue, Decatur, GA 30030

For tickets contact our office at 404 687-8890 or

squareup.com/store/disability-action-center-of-ga-GALA2018

For more information contact Kristal Southern at
404 687 8890 Ext 107 or ksouthern@disabilitylink.org

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or
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Honored Guest Mark Johnson



For more information contact **Kristal Southern** at
404 687 8890 ext 107 or ksouthern@disabilitylink.org

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zoom

We are excited to announce that all of our classes held at disABILITY LINK are available through video conferencing. To participate outside of disABILITY LINK office join in from your computer, cell phone or landline phones. Webcams are not required but can be used for participation.

Join from a PC, Mac, Linux, iOS, or Android: <https://zoom.us/j/4046878890>

Or iPhone one-tap :

US: +16465588656,4046878890#

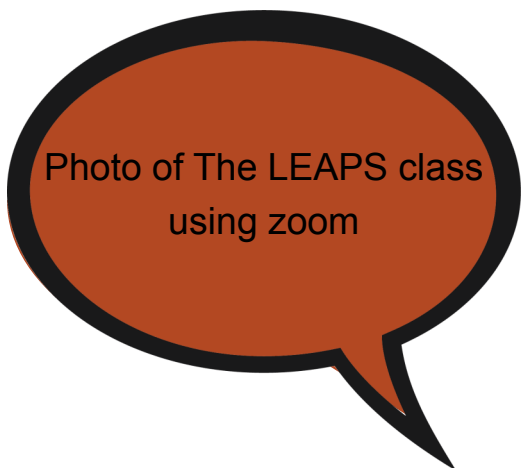
Or Telephone:

US: +1 646 558 8656

Meeting ID: 404 687 8890

Or by going to <https://zoom.us/> and click on join a meeting. Meeting ID is 404-687-8890. Please note: All video conferencing is recorded. You can join in without signing up.

For additional information and accommodations please contact our office.





Please review the following list of dates for office hours, annual events, and office closings.

Normal Business Hours

Mon. – Thurs. 9:00 AM-4:30 PM

Fridays by appointment only

disABILITY LINK’s Gala Spectacular

20 years of Promoting Choices

April 28 6:00pm-10:00pm

Courtyard Marriott

130 Clairemont Avenue, Decatur, GA 30030

For more information call us at 404 687 8890

We are closed on the following dates:

May 28.....Memorial Day

July 4.....Independence Day





Wish List:

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>QUANTITY</u>
Laptops	3
Youth Sponsorships	2

Youth Support for conferences – please contact staff for information!

Contact Us:

1901 Montreal Rd. Suite 102 Tucker, Ga 30088

404-687-8890 Voice

404-381-8117 Video

404-687-8298 Fax



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