

The ABILITY LINK



disABILITY LINK/AAPD Summer Interns

What's inside

NCIL
 AAPD Graduation
 Pre-ETS Graduation
 Consumer Picnic
 Back to school Drive/Volunteering
 GARRS
 Voters Registration Week
 Assistive Technology
 Linda Pogue
 Executive Director Message
 Schwartz Rollins LLC
 Zoom
 Office Closures
 Wishlist/Contact us

Social Media



@disabilitylink

www.disabilitylink.org

**Advocating for human rights,
not special rights**



NCIL Conference 2018

The NCIL Conference (National Council on Independent Living) was attended by Cierra Reid, Beverly Myers, and Anissa Favors from disABILITY LINK/AAPD Summer Internship Program. In addition, staff attended including Darnell Johnson, Linda Pogue, Ken Mitchell and Kim Gibson as well as Board Members Danny Housley and Kate Seelman. The theme of the conference was "Mobilized Resistance through Action." The highlight of the 2018 Conference was the annual march from the hotel to the Capitol with over 1,000 NCIL members from across the country chanting, singing and ringing voices to be heard for disability rights. Following the march was a rally at the park near the Capitol where we heard from several State Representatives and Senators. In addition, several workshops were held that addressed a broad range of topics for people with disabilities.

Article by Ken Mitchell



disABILITY LINK/AAPD Summer interns and Kevin Webb from Mitsubishi along with Helena Berger Executive Director of the AAPD



National Council on Independent Living

Photo of Kim Gibson sitting at the table with other board members

Our Executive Director, Kim Gibson, was elected to serve on the National Council of Independent Living (NCIL) Board in July. NCIL's Governing Board is composed of 22 individuals, a majority of whom have disabilities. The National Council on Independent Living is the longest-running national cross-disability, grassroots organization run by and for people with disabilities. Founded in 1982, NCIL represents thousands of organizations and individuals including: individuals with disabilities, Centers for Independent Living (CILs), Statewide Independent Living Councils (SILCs), and other organizations that advocate for the human and civil rights of people with disabilities throughout the United States.



Group photo of NCIL board members

disABILITY LINK/AAPD Summer Internship Graduation

The disABILITY LINK/American Association for People with Disabilities (AAPD) Summer Internship Program came to a close on August 3, 2018. On graduation day, the three interns, Cierra Reid, Anissa Favors and Beverly Myers, were radiant and exuding great pride, as they stood in front of colleagues, family and friends, and gave a presentation on their internship experience. They spoke of their adventures off site; showing particular interest in the weeklong trip to Washington, D.C. for the 2018 National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) Conference. The interns stated that the conference was both educational about independent living, and inspiring for disability rights.

Each of the interns reported that they were forever changed by this 10 week long internship journey, and it was evident in their confident demeanor. Both disABILITY LINK and the interns expressed such gratitude for having been given the opportunity to participate in the program, as well as much appreciation for the host sites (Atlanta Regional Commission, City of Clarkston and Atlanta Legal Aid), mentors (Dawn Alford, Stacy Ramirez and Vanessa Meadows) and peer supporters (Angela Pratt, William Daniels and Darnell Johnson). disABILITY LINK is so proud to have had the honor of supporting these three interns in their professional growth, and we are excited to be hosting the disABILITY LINK/AAPD Summer Internship Program again next year. In 2019, we are not only repeating the program, but we will be expanding to 6 interns. We are recruiting for next year, including; interns, host sites and mentors.

Article by Emily Shaw



disABILITY LINK/AAPD
Summer Interns

Empowering Our Youth Locating Employment Avenues

The Empowering Our Youth (EOY) Locating Employment Avenues through Peer Support (LEAPS) 2018 Summer program came to a close on July 26th. One student said, "Man, time really flew by!", and another asked if we were going to have the class again next summer. On graduation day, the students stood proudly as they accepted their certificates of completion. Over the course of this 6 week long pre-transitional/pre-employment class, the students learned a great deal about themselves, and what they wanted for their future.

disABILITY LINK held this one of a kind experience for our young consumers (ages 14-22) with support and referrals from Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, teachers, parent and the students themselves. The class focused on areas such as; Communication, career exploration, and job readiness. Overall, EOY LEAPS Summer 2018 was a great success. Not only are we planning on having the program again next summer, but we are also continuing our services throughout the school year. Parents are encouraged to ask their child's teacher for more information. You may also contact Emily Shaw: eshaw@disabilitylink.org

Article by Emily Shaw



Group photo of Emily Shaw & a few graduates of the EOY LEAPS summer program

disABILITY LINK 's Annual Family and Friends Picnic

We held our annual Family and Friends Picnic in August. This picnic is not only to show appreciation but also to bring together everyone for fun and activities. Hotdogs was provided with individuals bring in their favorite side dishes. There was over 100 individuals participating in the event. We had a variety of events including a massages where a massage therapist provided free massages, a bowling completion (Mr. Banks was the winner in that event), outside games and other fun event. One highlight was Karaoke where staff, volunteers and consumers all brought out their singing voices.

Over all it was great day to show our appreciation to our consumers, volunteers and to the community.

Article by Travis Evans



Annual Family & Friends Picnic
Staff and Friends doing karaoke



Mina's Touch from Heaven giving
Kristal Southern a back massage

Back to School Drive

Going back to school is a time of remembering old things and learning new things. Our students of today are our future. With that being said, for the second year in a row, volunteers of disABILITY LINK created and designed a box for school supplies to be gathered. The volunteers provided outreach to the community to gather supplies such as notebooks, papers, pens, crayons, bookbags etc. and provided supplies to local teachers and schools to assist in creating opportunities for students to learn. The volunteers really wanted to give back and felt that providing these supplies to our students of the schools it would provide a good start in keeping up with other students around them. In addition, it brought awareness to the needs of the community and how our volunteers can become involved in the communities that they live in.

Article by James Turner



James Turner & volunteers standing next to the donation box for the Back to School Drive

Georgia Radio Reading Service

disABILITY LINK and Georgia Radio Reading Service (GaRRS) have worked in collaboration since January 2010. Every month, staff and associates from disABILITY LINK provide original programming with Disability Rights Updates, easy-to-access, up-to-date information and ideas each Saturday morning in the 9am break between the live reading of the Atlanta Journal Constitution. The first Saturday of the month is Independent Living, the second Transportation, the third Youth Transitions, and the fourth Assistive Technology (AT). You can hear some of these Disability Rights Updates on the disABILITY LINK web page <http://disabilitylink.org/garrs-broadcast/>.

GaRRS provides programming that “informs, entertains and connects.” The service is available statewide to people who have vision or print disabilities. The programs are free and available 24/7 online, through an app, using one of the free radio receivers, or over the phone. Each month, GaRRS broadcasts and streams hundreds of programs including local and national newspapers, books, magazines, events, employment opportunities, and shopping ads...and disABILITY LINK’s Disability Rights Updates. You can access the expansive program library or sign up to listen to the live broadcast, all the information you need is at <https://garrs.org/>.

On June 22, (The Anniversary of the Olmstead Decision), GaRRS hosted the disABILITY LINK/American Association of People with Disabilities Summer Internship Program to a tour of the GaRRS studio and the opportunity for the interns to record their impressions of the internship program up to that point, here is the interview <http://disabilitylink.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/DR-Independent-Liv-Aug-2018.mp3>. Thanks to GaRRS for making this opportunity for the summer interns, and for the long-term collaboration with disABILITY LINK to promote Independent Living.

Article by Linda Pogue

disABILITY LINK/AAPD Summer
Interns with Linda Pogue at GaRRS



National Disability Voter Registration Week

In recognition of National Disability Voter Registration week, July 16 – July 20, 2018, disABILITY LINK hosted a registration drive on July 17, 2018 with over 38 individuals participating in the event. The event was held at the disABILITY LINK Location in the Activity Room that was patriotically decorated in shades of red, white and blue. As part of this drive, 7 participants were registered as new Georgia Voters and 28 voters pledged to vote in the November 6, 2018 General election. Understanding that the more educated a person is on the issues, the more engaged they will be in the voting process, we also included an educational segment where the participants were asked questions regarding voting rights and current disability policy priorities. The person with the correct answer to the question received a prize. This was an excellent way to get the participants involved and it opened up dialog for additional conversations on other voting topics like guardianship, the active voters roll and how to have your voter rights reinstated. This event was a wonderful success and many thanks go out to the consumer and volunteers that helped register voters, decorate the room and set-up the refreshments.

Over the week, we also launched a Facebook campaign that included pictures of consumers and staff members holding signs stating “I vote to support disability rights” and other affirmative statements regarding voting. In addition, handwritten statements from consumers answering the question, “Why do you vote?” was set-up in a collage and posted on Facebook to engage more consumers through social media.

To top off this week of Disability Voter Registration, the agencies that are active members of REV UP Georgia (<https://www.facebook.com/RevUpGeorgia/>), gathered at the Governor’s office for a photoshoot acknowledging the Proclamation signed by Governor making July 16-20 Georgia Disability Voter Registration Week.

The National Disability Voter’s registration week reminded us that we have a right to vote and that the disability vote counts.

Article by Angela Pratt

Picture of a Rev Up Georgia at
The Georgia Capitol



Assistive Technology

What do you know about Assistive Technology (AT)? Well, most people hear Assistive Technology and automatically assume, something electronic or, some huge mechanical contraption. Well, let's dispel that myth! Assistive Technology can be something as simple as using a tennis ball to stabilize a writing tool to something as complex as a bionic arm that grows with you—yep there really is such a thing! What is the point of this discussion, you ask? I am telling you this because, as your Assistive Technology Specialist, I want you to know I am here for you no matter how small you consider your need for AT is. Do you need help threading a needle? Do you need help getting your socks on? Do you need a wheelchair that you can take under water so that you can enjoy the sights of the sea? Times, they are a'changin --and maybe....you can participate in that sport you have always wanted to try... and yes... maybe you can get your drivers' license. Do not limit yourself. What is it you have always dreamed of being able to do? The world of Assistive Technology is forever changing, forever adapting to the needs of mankind. Want to find out what's out there for you? Why not take advantage of the Assistive Technology program at disABILITY LINK, your local Center for Independent Living? I can't wait to hear from you!

Article by Angela Williams

Angela Williams sitting at her desk
With her computer screen open
saying "What is AT?"



Celebrating Linda Pogue at disABILITY LINK from 2001 to 2018

While there have been numerous times of me complaining and venting over the years, they are absolutely insignificant compared to all the wonderful exciting opportunities and experiences I have had in the past 17 years of my involvement with disABILITY LINK. I began as a volunteer....I think it was back in 2001! Much of that volunteer time I was supporting the re-establishment of People First of Atlanta and development of People First of Georgia.

Subsequently I was offered contract work with disABILITY LINK on a brand new project called Georgia Voices that Count (GVTC), a cross disability, statewide, advocacy and support program funded by the Georgia Council on Development Disabilities. We traveled many miles during those years as the quarterly meetings were held around Georgia, including Athens, Toccoa, St Simon's Island, Warm Springs and Atlanta. GVTC continued until 2009, with about 100 participants over the course of those 7 years. I met many wonderful people through this project and was provided encouragement and support by many others.

I continued my support of People First and was involved in local, statewide, regional and national meetings. In 2006, Atlanta was the site of the National Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) conference and that was very exciting with thousands of self-advocates from all over the US and some internationally. For extra excitement, the same week of the conference, I received an invitation by the Department of Immigration and Naturalization (as it was called then) to undertake the first of the interviews as part of my application to become a citizen of the USA!



Photo of Linda Pogue, George and Esme.

The Long Road Home (LRH) was a project of People First, and other disability rights organizations in Georgia, and is a celebration of the Olmstead Decision and a demand that the Olmstead plan be fully implemented in Georgia, we are the home of the decision after all! In the early days of the LRH we visited institutions, marched and rallied for the right for everyone to live in the community....the work continues.

In September 2003, disABILITY LINK organized and supported for 25 people to attend the Mi Cassa Rally in Washington DC (Mi Cassa is a precursor to the Disability Integration Act, legislation to ensure the right of people with disabilities to live in the community...no excuses accepted!). Many of the group that travelled from Atlanta to DC were people who were still living in nursing facilities or who had just moved back into the community. We had to work around the trepidation by participants of being out and about in the world, as well as some equipment disasters like inadequate or broken wheelchairs, etc., but the real test of our mettle was Hurricane Isabel that shut down the Metro and airport, we were stuck in DC for an extra day and night! Thankfully it all ended safely and happily, but I was on the phone to the airline company for many hours to get us all home again.

The Georgia Peer Support Project was a part of the Real Choices grant from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid to the Georgia Department of Human Resources. I was lucky to be around in 2004, when disABILITY LINK coordinated the development and review of the very best of peer support practice and created the three day training. We traveled to Centers for Independent Living in Georgia and provided the training to dozens of people in that first year. Since then I have provided training to hundreds of people (in Georgia and beyond), presented at national conferences, and continue to share the very best of peer support to people, Centers for Independent Living and other organizations and programs. Training and discussing of peer support continues to be a regular part of my working week fourteen years later!



Photo of Linda Pogue smiling after receiving retirement gifts from the RESPECT Institute

In October 2009, ADAPT came to town. In the preceding months, I coordinated a committee of hard working disability rights advocates to prepare hospitality and all the other ingredients of a successful ADAPT action. There was a great deal of excitement during that week, but a couple of things I particularly remember include paying the Atlanta Police motor cycle cops (several hundred dollars in cash in the middle of the street!) for their escorting us as we marched from the Omni Hotel to the MLK Center, and I remember standing in the pouring rain outside the accessible entrance of the Georgia Capitol holding open the door to let as many people as possible get inside the building and a Capitol cop wrestling with me for control of the automatic door opener.

Another amazing, but exhausting, highlight for me was the Disability Pride Parade in downtown Atlanta as part of the celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the ADA in 2015. It was another example of the mundane details that must accompany the gathering of a large group of people, things like organizing porta potties and trash collection as part of obtaining a permit to march. Boy was it hot....Atlanta in June, marching on asphalt and concrete, but people turned up to march and chant, "Disability Rights are Civil Rights!"

I might have complained from time to time, but I have never been bored at work. Cleaning out my office, and looking back at projects and photos gives a bit of perspective to what at the time seemed like a swirl of activity, worries, deadlines, lists of thing to do, and so on. There is always more that can be done to support Independent Living, self-determination, justice, an equal playing field, the same opportunities and responsibilities for people with disabilities as everyone else, etc. I am oh so lucky to have the ongoing support and encouragement of bosses, colleagues, family and friends so I could participate in activities, to try and make a difference sometimes successfully, sometimes not, and often not even knowing the outcome as the process continues.

Over the years there have been many, many presentations made, articles written, meetings attended, notes taken, consumers supported, Circles of Support facilitated, funds raised, discussions with legislators, protests and marches, trainings given, friends made, lessons learned, birthdays and weddings to celebrate, too many funerals to count, and so much more that has been a vital part of my life since the first day I crossed the threshold at disABILITY LINK. Never a dull moment and I consider it all a mighty privilege, huge good fortune and I am so grateful.

Article by Linda Pogue

We sincerely appreciate all that Linda has contributed. Although she is retiring, she will continue to be a part of our team. Congratulations and in Justin Dart's terms "Lead on! Lead on!"

-written by Kim Gibson

I want to take this time to thank everyone who has participated in our events, meetings and programs throughout the summer. It was an exciting time with our Empowering Our Youth summer program, the AAPD internship, the consumer picnic party and all the other many peer support events, groups and programs.

disABILITY LINK has grown from a handful of programs to a vast amount of programs focusing on diversity, youth, employment, peer support groups and all the different things that Independent Living means to individuals. These groups are led not only by the passion of our staff but by the consumers and board members who have involved themselves in our organization. The involvement of all is the reason why we are considered a lead in the disability community of bringing forth diversity. I want to thank those board members past and present, the consumers, volunteers and the community who make these programs successful and meaningful.

Each newsletter I remind everyone to make sure to “Vote as if your life depended on it, because it does”, and this time is no different. I encourage you to become involved in your community and life by becoming informed and then voting for what matters to you. We are offering different events throughout the fall that focuses on voting. I hope to see you there.

I hope everyone had a great summer and all of us here at disABILITY LINK look forward to seeing you at the office or at one or more of our event.

Kim Gibson

Executive Director

Kim Gibson with Sandy Hoke



disaBILITY LINK congratulates James (Jay) Rollins and Debra Schwartz of Schwartz Rollins LLC as being included in the 2019 Best Lawyers in America 25th Edition.

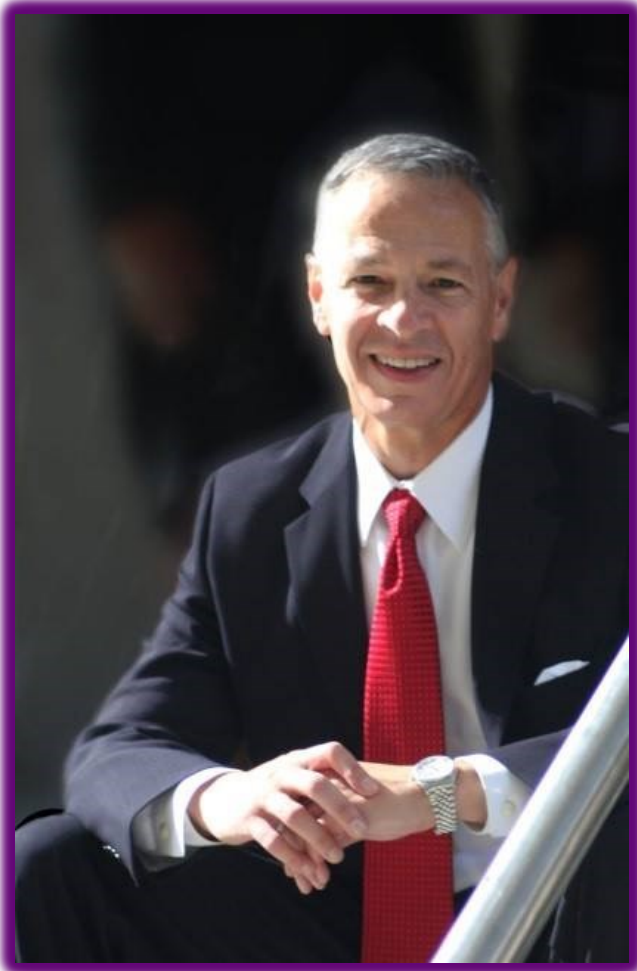


Photo of James (Jay) Rollins



Photo of Debra Schwartz



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

Upcoming Events

Doggie Day October 1310:00am-1:00pm

For more information on these events contact our office at

404-687-8890

We are closed on the following dates:

November 12..... Veterans Day

November 22-23..... Thanksgiving Day

December 21 - January 2 Holiday Break



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 30084

404-687-8890 Voice

404-381-8117 Video

404-687-8298 Fax



Kim Gibson, MSW
Executive Director

1901 Montreal Rd. #102
Tucker, GA 30084

470-395-2276 (Direct)
404-687-8298 (Fax)
404-381-8117 (Video)

kgibson@disabilitylink.org



Ken Mitchell
Assistant Director

1901 Montreal Rd. #102
Tucker, GA 30084

404-687-8890 (Ext 103)
404-687-8298 (Fax)
404-381-8117 (Video)

kmitchell@disabilitylink.org



@disABILITY LINK

www.disabilitylink.org