

The ABILITY LINK



Angela Williams, Shikha Desai, & Juanita Anderson

What's inside

Empowering Our Youth
Certified Peer Support Training
Recycling/Disability Diversity
Annual Fundraiser
Volunteer Week
(GLASS) Conference
Christopher & Dana Reeve
Coca-Cola Foundation
GSU Interns
Executive Director Message
Zoom
Office Closures
Wish list/Contact us

Social Media



@disabilitylink

www.disabilitylink.org

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



Edited and Designed by William Daniels, Social Media Specialist

Empowering Our Youth

The first year of the transition program is coming to an end. The inaugural schools; Hillgrove and Kennesaw Mountain High schools were our first endeavors. We meet and engaged with a total of 21 students, between the two schools ,and discussed topics ranging from Independence, proper way to fill out an application, public speaking, developing social skills, and much more. The students are excited to have us return in the fall.

We also are in the process of holding our second transition summer program which began on May 28th and will end the first week of August. The summer program is building on what we did last year and what we started in the school system this year. The activities range from employment, transportation, health and wellness, CPR certification training, social skills, peer support, and list goes on. We will take a trip to the Georgia Library for Accessible Statewide Services to practice mobility skills as well as other events.

Currently, there is a total of 23 students from a variety of counties that are enrolled to participate in the program.

Article by Garrick Scott



Garrick Scott & Taeren Quigley teaching our Empowering Young Adults in Locating Employment Avenue through Peer Support summer program

Peer Support Training at disABILITY LINK

Any discussion about, or in, peer support training begins with the question...what is Peer Support?

- *“Been there, done that!”*
- One person with a disability supporting another person with a disability
- Benefiting from the experiences of someone else (a trained peer supporter) in a similar situation – someone who has learned some life strategies, how to be a self-advocate and how to live independently
- Assisting someone to live their own independent life
- Carefully listening and asking questions to help people with disabilities make our own decision
- Building bridges to people and resources in the community

Peer Support is the basis of the Independent Living Movement; an important tool to support self-determination and self-advocacy; and a practice at the very core of Centers for Independent Living (CILs), such as disABILITY LINK. Opportunities for learning and enhancing peer support skills are offered as part of disABILITY LINK’s series of classes and activities. The training is free to consumers and available to other CILs and related organizations (contact the disABILITY LINK office regarding costs, etc. <http://disabilitylink.org/peer-support/>).

On May 16, disABILITY LINK’s Peer Support Training proudly graduated another enthusiastic and skilled class including consumers, volunteers, staff and representatives from other organizations.



**Article by
Linda Pogue**

Linda Pogue & Dustin
Gibson with the Peer
Support Graduate's

Recycling

Recycling Facts:

- Every three months, Americans throw out enough aluminum in the land fill to build our nation entire commercial air fleet.
- Recycling at least 75% will generate new jobs, less toxic chemicals and greenhouse gases.
- Recycling can increase our economic security.
- Reduces the need for new material and save our forest and wildlife.

The recycling initiative is once again in the works at disABILITY LINK. The Recycling Team of Angela Williams, Katrina Parsons, and Travis Evans have placed recycling bins around the office. Since, we are using the singles stream method, simply put everything in the same bin.

What is recyclable? You can recycle **Aluminum, Metal, Plastic, Cardboard, Paper and Paperboard**. Check with anyone on the Recycling Team, if you have a question.

Disability as a Diversity Issue

There has been discussion after discussions about our need to ensure diversity, but they rarely mention disabilities. It's as if people with disabilities are a postscript of some great event. If the omission is cited, people often get apologetic, as if they are being accused of insensitivity. But if another protected class like gender, race, religion, or sexual orientation were omitted, people would be up in arms about that.

Some cities have a section on civil rights in the media but fail to include disabilities. Museums were also made aware of the oversight nonetheless still haven't done anything to correct it. Museums across the country, such as the National Museum of African-American History and Culture in Washington, DC and the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York City, that are dedicated to ensuring civil rights for various populations, tend to overlook those with disabilities.

Even when people with disabilities are included, the inclusion is usually limited to those with a visible disability, such as someone who uses a wheelchair, crutches, a Seeing Eye dog, or American Sign Language, in order to ensure that everyone notices the inclusion. This means that people with invisible disabilities, such hearing impaired, mental illness, dyslexia, lupus, HIV and Parkinson are seldom included and therefore, their disability is forgotten.

In 2019, would anyone consider having a white person play a black person by wearing black face, yet able-bodied people regularly portray people with disabilities? In fact, it has been a way to win an Oscar. Best Actor and Actress winners have portrayed people with disabilities and even some of your more popular television show employs actors instead of using actors with disabilities. Producers often chose actors who “act” as if they have a disability. If this is unacceptable based on race, then should it acceptable based on disability?

It was once reported that the New York Attorney General, who championed access for people with hearing loss, omitted people with disabilities when he issued a press release to stand up against hate crimes. Such crimes against people with disabilities are underreported.

Article by Richard Dawson



Annual Fundraiser

Creative endeavors is profitable business in Georgia bringing in over \$37 billion in revenue and employing over 200,000 people in various art-centered industries, according to the Georgia Dept. of Economic Development.

But, statistics that break down those with disabilities' actual employed participation in the \$12.1 billion in Georgia earnings is not easily located.

To bring awareness to the goal of more peoples with disabilities' participation and employment in creative industries, the disABILITY LINK's 2019 gala theme was "Celebration of Disability Diversity in the Arts."

Over 150 guests purchased tickets or sponsorships ranging from \$50 to \$1,000 this year; enjoying dinner, music by DJ Donald Render, and creative performances by disABILITY LINK consumers.

In a separate ballroom, a silent auction brought in an additional \$600 in auction proceeds and included art and hand-crafted items from consumers and donations by supporters. The evening's proceeds benefit the many programs and services disABILITY LINK provides to consumers in its 12-county service area.

Board Chairman, Danny Housley, presented "Radical Art in the Disability Community" and served as master of ceremonies for the evening. Danny is the Assistive Technology Acquisition Manager at Tools for Life.

Gala performances included a movement piece by R2ISE Theatre, whose mission is to create a safe place for those in recovery and their allies to maintain wellness through the arts. disABILITY LINK staff member Travis Evans and consumers Alvin Cooper (Noble Prophit), Lisa Williams and Lewis Curtwright performed vocal, spoken word and stand-up performances.

This year's special presentations included the 2019 Catalyst award, which recognized employment and discrimination law firm Schwartz Rollins LLC for its enduring commitment to people with disabilities.

disABILITY LINK's Assistant Director, Ken Mitchell, presented the Ann M. Robertson award –in memory of his mother –to Angela Williams for her enthusiastic engagement with consumers and passion for her work.

For more information and resources about the arts and the disability community, visit <https://ada.georgia.gov/arts-and-culture>

Article by Lisa Parks

Volunteer Week

National volunteer week was held at disABILITY LINK, April 7th-13th 2019. During the week volunteers participated in daily events. In addition, the volunteers gathered together in daily peer groups to discuss and talk about the reasons for volunteering and James talked about the importance of volunteering, what it means to disABILITY LINK as an organization.

The volunteers assist in many different capacities of disABILITY LINK including filing, making phone calls, mail outs, and so much more. Volunteers truly are appreciated. In addition, we also provide trainings to volunteers who want to learn about opportunities in the community. Some of our Volunteers volunteer from their home, at other organizations, and in the Community at events.

The closing of the volunteer week included providing the volunteers a gift of a volunteer lanyard and a certification. Learning to volunteer and Volunteering is a great way to give back, gain life long friendships, and leadership skills.



**Article by
James Turner**

James Turner &
Taeren Quigley with a
group of Volunteers

(Glass) Conference

Independent Living; Accessibility and; Assistive Technology: Through the Inclusive Looking GLASS

Lake Blackshear Resort; Cordele, Ga. - On March 25, 2019 yours truly along with, Linda Pogue had the pleasure of opening the 2019 Georgia Accessibility Conference. This 3 day conference hosted by the Georgia Library for Accessible Statewide Services (GLASS) brought together representatives from various library systems throughout the state with like-minded agendas- Providing accessible and inclusive library services to patrons with disabilities.

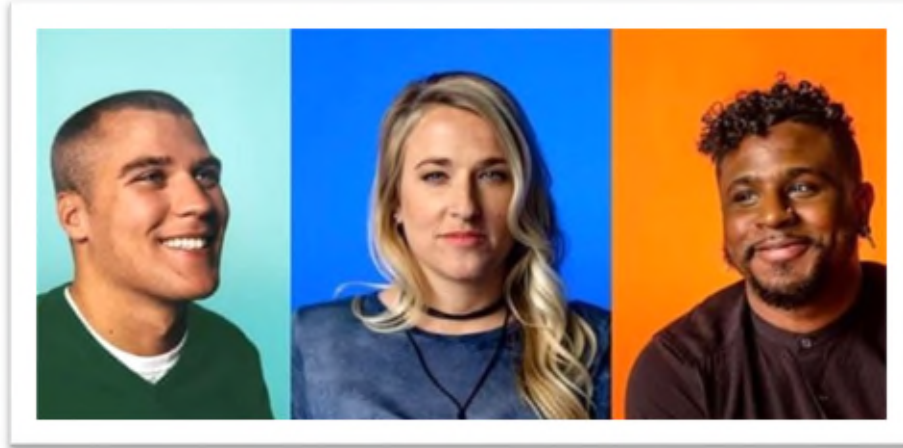
Linda and I educated attendees on: Independent Living including the philosophy, what accessibility means, how establish an accessible business, assistive technology and various other areas of concern as they related to the training topic and conference agenda. The thing about the conference that stood out to this ILS was the level of eagerness of the librarians, the eagerness to learn the eagerness to adapt their site to meet the needs of all and; the eagerness to share what they learned with their coworkers. Linda and I truly enjoyed sharing the knowledge we have amassed with the audience both during and after the presentation.

Article by Angela Williams

Linda Pogue & Angela Williams at the GLASS Conference



Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation



Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation launched an exciting campaign called See Us to gather the largest collection of stories from individuals living with paralysis and challenge the misperceptions and stigmas they face in all aspects of life. We are proud to partner with the Reeve Foundation and work together to elevate the voices of the paralysis community. As Christopher Reeve taught us, one thing cannot define everything. Join us and tell the world how you want to be seen by visiting ReeveSeeUs.org. #ReeveSeeUs

We also would like to thank the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation Quality of Life Grants Program for providing funding to our organization, which help give greater independence to individuals living with paralysis. This grant will provide our community with services and education that will truly enhance all our lives.

<https://christopherreeve.org>

disABILITY LINK is honored to have been awarded the Direct Effect



disABILITY LINK Awarded Coca-Cola Foundation Grant

disABILITY LINK has been selected as a recipient of funds made possible by the Coca-Cola Foundation, the company's primary international philanthropic arm.

"This grant provides support to continue our mission of promoting choice and full participation in community life," said disABILITY LINK executive director Kim Gibson. "Funding from the Coca-Cola Foundation allows our organization to focus on a younger, under-served population to provide skills needed in gaining meaningful careers and not just a job."

disABILITY LINK is a 501(c) 3 center for independent living (CIL) led by and for people with disabilities. The non-residential center for rights and resources serves 12 metro-Atlanta counties' residents with independent living skills training, advocacy, peer counseling and transitional services.

"The ultimate goal (of the grant funds)," said Gibson, "is to provide support to young adults with disabilities to develop a career path which will provide sustainable employment and financial independence for their future. It is truly exciting to have been selected to do this project meant to increase the independence of young adults," she said.

In fiscal year 2018, disABILITY LINK provided informational and referral services to over 3,874 individuals and provided 10,852 individual services to people with disabilities.

disABILITY LINK 2018 Program Highlights

- relocating 14 individuals from institutions to the community of their choice
- hosting the first Empowering our Youth Locating Employment Avenues through Peer Support (EOY LEAPS) summer program with six students with disabilities graduating
- assisting voter registration for over 100 individuals with disabilities
- provided vocational and employment services to over 1,068 individuals with disabilities seeking career options and employment



Article by Lisa Parks

**Congratulations to our Georgia State University Intern
Graduate's Shikha Desai & Leona Andrews**



Shikha Desai, MSW
With Darnell Johnson



Leona Andrews , BSW
With Taeren Quigley &
Gwen McCray



Executive Director Message

Dear Friends:

I hope everyone is enjoying their summer. Here at disABILITY LINK, we have been enjoying the different internships and Empowering our Youth LEAPS (Locating Employment Avenues through Peer Support) summer program sponsored through grants from community partners including the Coca-Cola Foundation and Christopher Reeves Foundation as well as programs through Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation. Our participants are developing skills and experience that create opportunities of how to be a follower and then a leader.

Outside of the summer internships and programs, we continue to host many different events, peer led groups, and workshops to promote independence in the community of choice. Across the nation, Centers for Independent Living provide the same core services including: Peer support; Information and referral; Individual and systemic advocacy; and Independent living skills training; and Transitional services for those who want to transition out of institutions and into the community and youth who are transitioning from high school to adult life. All Centers for Independent Living provide the same core services but each one may provide those services a little different depending on the individual's need and the community. Regardless, the programs are always consumer driven and our service is through peer mentoring.

There is a lot going in the political world. It is important to make sure you gather information and vote. In addition, there are many measures that will affect people with disabilities. I always revert back to Justin Dart, Jr., one of the great civil rights leaders of the disability community. Through words and actions, Justin and his wife Yoshiko promoted the vision of the Americans with Disabilities Act: equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living and economic self-sufficiency. I would like to remind you of two of the most famous quotes shared by Justin, "Vote as if your life depends on it, because it does." He also said, "If you don't vote, you don't count."

I look forward to seeing each of you at the upcoming Consumer Appreciation Picnic and/or many of our other events.

Kim Gibson,
Executive Director

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 Note: Our computer lab is open every Monday-Thursday from 10:30 am to 2:30 pm.



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

Normal Business Hours

Mon. – Thurs. 8:30 AM-4:30 PM

Fridays by appointment only

Upcoming Events

July 12-(Friday) Consumer picnic-11:00 am to 1:00 pm

October 5-(Saturday) Doggie Day-10:00 pm-2:00 pm

For more information contact our office at

404-687-8890

We are closed on the following dates:

July 4Independence Day

September 2Labor Day

November 5th..... Election 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:

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