

The ABILITY LINK



disABILITY LINK Quarterly Newsletter

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Picture descriptions:

Shown is a group photo of the disABILITY LINK staff at our annual Consumer Appreciation Party

Social Media



@disabilitylink



**disABILITY
LINK**
the center for rights & resources

The Unexpected Gift of Regret: A Fresh Take from GARRS

In a recent GARRS radio feature, Jameson offered a thought-provoking perspective on an emotion many of us try to avoid: regret. He challenged the common idea that regret is simply a painful experience, instead suggesting it holds a deeper, more valuable purpose.

Jameson argues that regret can serve as a powerful reminder of life's precious and fleeting nature. These moments of reflection, he explained, aren't meant to be self-punishing.

Rather, they can be opportunities to realign our values, prompting us to seriously consider what truly matters when we look back on past decisions.

Think of it this way: when we acknowledge that twinge of regret, it can become a catalyst for change. It encourages us to make more intentional choices going forward, guiding us away from paths we might later wish we hadn't taken and towards actions that genuinely resonate with our authentic selves.

Embracing this perspective can ultimately help us live with greater clarity, making us more mindful of our actions and their broader impact on our lives.

Jameson's segment encourages all of us to welcome regret not as a sign of failure, but as a potent signal that we deeply care about the paths we choose and the lives we're building. It's a reminder that even our perceived missteps can hold valuable lessons for a more fulfilling future.

For more information on this fresh perspective, contact Jameson Listermann at jlistermann@disabilitylink.org

Article by Jameson Listerman

Your Community, Your Resources

Did you know disABILITY LINK is out and about in our community, making it easier than ever to connect with our Independent Living Specialists? We're hosting "pop-up" tables from Tuesday through Thursday at various locations across our 18-county service area!

At these outreach events, you can grab fliers and brochures about our many valuable programs and workshops, including assistance with SNAP and the Georgia Access health insurance program. We're also distributing COVID PPE to help keep our community safe.

You'll find us at a variety of convenient spots, from libraries and discount stores to restaurants and apartment complexes. We also team up with other organizations for larger community resource fairs. We're thrilled to share that over 600 attendees have joined us at our events so far this year!

Keep an eye out for disABILITY LINK in your neighborhood – we're here to connect you with the resources you need!

For more information on Transportation or to apply for Marta Mobility contact Katrina Parsons at kparson@disabilitylink.org



Photo Description: Shown is an individuals a
community resource fair.

Article by Katrina Parsons

Youth Summer Programs

Our Youth Summer Program is in full swing, and we're already seeing incredible growth and engagement from our participants! This summer is packed with engaging sessions designed to equip young people with essential skills for their future, and the first half has been a fantastic success.

So far, our program has focused on a diverse range of activities. Participants have immersed themselves in job exploration counseling, delving into various career paths and gaining valuable insights into different industries and roles. This has been wonderfully complemented by work-based learning experiences, providing hands-on opportunities that allowed our youth to apply their skills in practical settings, offering a real taste of the professional world.

Beyond immediate employment, we've provided valuable counseling on opportunities for enrollment in postsecondary educational programs, helping pave the way for their academic journeys, whether to colleges, technical schools, or other advanced programs. A key component of our curriculum has been workplace readiness training, where crucial social skills and independent living techniques are developed, ensuring our youth are prepared to thrive in any professional environment. Participants have also received vital instruction in self-advocacy, empowering them to voice their needs effectively, and guidance in setting clear career goals so they can pursue their aspirations with confidence. We're incredibly excited to announce that our second session begins on July 7th and runs through July 31st!

We can't wait to welcome new and returning participants as we continue to build on the momentum from the first half of the summer. We are truly inspired watching these young individuals develop new skills, explore their passions, and build a strong foundation for future success, and we look forward to even more accomplishments in the weeks to come!

For more information on programs and workshops like this, contact Kyle Baker at kbaker@disabilitylink.org



(Pictured above is of youth during one of our EOY session for our youth program.)

Article by Kyle Baker

In Loving Memory: Jesse "Yellow Dog" Mitchell

We are deeply saddened to share the news of the passing of Jesse Mitchell, a beloved service dog and an integral part of the disABILITY LINK family. Jesse, affectionately known as "Yellow Dog," served Ken Mitchell with unwavering loyalty for over 12 years as a faithful companion, protector, and friend.

Jesse was a rescue, and though not trained in a traditional service dog school, he proved all doubts wrong through his quiet dignity, relentless dedication, and uncommon heart. He navigated life alongside Ken not just as a guide, but as a grounding force, a source of strength, and a true partner. Together, they traveled life's roads—some rough, some smooth—never apart in spirit or purpose.

Ken often recalls telling Jesse upon their first meeting, "I will support you all your life." What he didn't realize then was that Jesse would be the one offering support—every day, in every way—for all of Ken's life. For this profound partnership, Ken expresses his eternal gratitude and humility.

Jesse leaves behind many friends and admirers and will always be cherished as a member of the Mitchell family. Special thanks go to Robbie Huff, whose loving friendship and ongoing support meant the world to both Jesse and Ken.

To Jesse: you wore the red vest with pride. You didn't need a title or a certificate—your service spoke for itself. So long, my friend. You were more than a dog. You were family.

Rest well, Jesse. You served with honor.



(Pictured above is Jesse with his fellow service dog friend, Charlie, who passed away two years ago.)

Article by Kim Gibson

Peer Support Training

Colleagues, I'm thrilled to share an update on our recently concluded Peer Support Training, which ran from June 10th to June 12th here at the disABILITY LINK office. It was a truly exceptional three days, filled with remarkable growth, deep connections, and renewed enthusiasm among all participants.

This intensive training was designed to empower individuals with essential skills to both support their peers and confidently lead community groups. We dove deep into crucial areas, beginning with mastering active listening – a foundational skill for empathetic connection.

Participants honed their problem-solving abilities, learning practical strategies to navigate challenges faced by individuals with visual disabilities.

We also focused heavily on techniques for building trust and fostering truly inclusive environments within peer networks, ensuring everyone feels valued and heard. The interactive nature of the training allowed participants to put these skills into practice immediately, engaging in dynamic discussions and hands-on exercises that reinforced their learning.

A core component of the training was the emphasis on empowerment through lived experience. We encouraged leaders to share their personal journeys, highlighting how authentic stories can create powerful bonds and a strong, supportive peer network.

Watching these individuals develop and practice their communication and advocacy skills in a safe, supportive setting was incredibly inspiring. The energy and camaraderie among the attendees were palpable, leading to meaningful relationships that we know will continue to strengthen their work long after the training ended.

Cont. on page 7

Peer Support Training cont.

The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with participants expressing how much they gained from the experience. They've walked away with invaluable tools and newfound confidence to lead their peer support groups effectively. At disABILITY LINK, we're committed to continuing to provide resources and opportunities that empower individuals with disabilities. If you're interested in learning more about upcoming training sessions or peer support programs, please reach out to Einisia Jones at ejones@disabilitylink.org.



(Pictured below is Jake Key with his fellow Colleagues displaying their peer support certificates)

**Article by Einisia Jones
Cont.**

Tap Into Culture

This past month, disABILITY LINK had the opportunity to participate in Tapestry Charter School's Tap Into Culture Event, an event designed to connect students, families, and educators with valuable community resources. We were proud to be among a wide variety of vendors offering support and information, and we were especially excited to share about something that often sparks curiosity: Assistive Technology (AT).

At our table, we engaged with attendees about what assistive technology is, how it supports individuals with disabilities, and the many forms it can take. AT is any item or system that helps people with disabilities live more independently—whether that's communicating, managing tasks, getting around, or staying organized. While many people think of assistive technology as high-tech or medical in nature, (like power wheelchairs or screen readers) we emphasized that it also includes everyday items that many may not think of as "technology." Things like:

- Adaptive kitchen tools, such as jar openers and built-up handles for utensils
- Smart home devices like Alexa or Google Home, which can assist with reminders, lighting, or calling for help
- Phone apps for reading assistance, memory support, or navigation
- Visual schedules, timers, and large print tools for people with cognitive or visual disabilities

Visitors to our table were often surprised to learn how many simple, everyday tools qualify as assistive tech. That's part of what makes outreach so important: it helps shift perceptions and opens doors to greater independence. Students, teachers, and families were engaged and often surprised at how simple tools can make such a big impact. These conversations help break down barriers and highlight the importance of accessibility in all areas of life, from school to home to the workplace.

We're grateful to Tapestry Charter School for hosting us and for valuing inclusive resources. We're always eager to participate in events like these, where we can spark conversations, build relationships, and spread awareness of the resources available to people with disabilities. Events like this allow us to connect directly with the community and spread awareness of how disABILITY LINK supports individuals with disabilities in leading independent, self-directed lives. If you'd like to learn more about our services or explore how assistive technology might help you or someone you know, don't hesitate to reach out, we're always happy to help.

Article by Jake Key

Executive Director Message

Dear Friends:

Spring is a time of renewal and momentum—and there is certainly a lot happening across our organization and in the broader disability community.

This year has brought a wave of change, especially at the federal level. With the recent shifts at the **Administration for Community Living (ACL)**, many of us are navigating uncertainty about what lies ahead. While the future of certain programs and funding streams remains in question, our mission remains clear: **to advocate, empower, and stand beside people with disabilities every single day.**

We're also witnessing **increasing attacks on critical disability rights protections, including Section 504**, which have sparked serious concern across our community. In response, we've been deeply engaged in advocacy efforts to defend these hard-won rights and ensure that the voices of people with disabilities remain front and center in every conversation. Now more than ever, **our collective advocacy matters**—and we thank each of you for your continued involvement and commitment.

As we look toward the coming months, we're excited for all the opportunities to connect and celebrate together. Our **Annual Event on April 26th** is just around the corner, and we can't wait to gather in community. Looking ahead to summer, we have fun events planned—from our **Consumer Appreciation Cookout**, to a **Braves game outing**, and so much more.

We are incredibly grateful to everyone who makes this work possible. **Your sponsorships, donations, and ongoing support** allow us to keep fighting for justice, creating opportunities, and building inclusive spaces for all. Whether you join us for an event, share your story, or raise your voice for change—**you are a vital part of this movement.**

We invite you to stay connected, get involved, and be part of what's ahead.

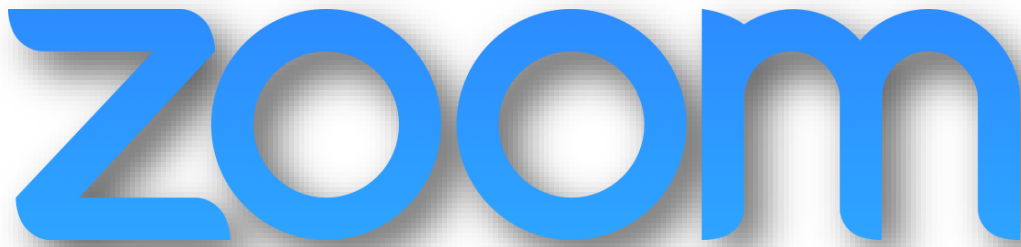
With appreciation,

Warm regards,

Kim Gibson, DSW, LMSW

Executive Director

Written by Kim Gibson



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://us02web.zoom.us/j/4046878890?pwd=dm9WTjA5aTBmMldscVplVTBqUzFSZz09>

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 and password is 1901. 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. 8:30 AM-4:30 PM

Fridays by appointment only

Workshops

Join us through audio and/or video conferencing for all our workshops

Join us
From personal computer, cell phone or landlines
By calling 1-646-558-8656 or by going to
<https://zoom.us/> and click on join a meeting.
Meeting ID is
404-687-8890 & password is 1901

Holiday and Office Closures

September 1st, 2025

Our Funding comes from different sources including grants, foundations, and fee for service programs.

"Funding provided in part by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners under the guidance of the Department of Community Development."



Supporters and grants:



Wish List:

- ♦ Laptops
- ♦ Youth Sponsorship/donations for programs and outings

disABILITY LINK is now an application site for SNAP (Federal Nutrition Assistance program). If you would like to learn more about SNAP, to be screened for eligibility, or to apply for food stamp benefits. Please contact our office at 404-687-8890 or visit our office.

Contact Us:

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404-687-8890 Voice

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