

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

Edited and Designed by Cinque Singleton, Social Media Specialist

Community Health Team News

Over the past few months, from July through September, our Community Health Team has been out and about in the community every week, Tuesday through Thursday. We've visited all kinds of places—local restaurants, clothing stores, nursing homes, and community centers—sharing helpful resources and information. But more importantly, we've taken time to really listen to people's needs and concerns. These personal connections help us understand how best to support individuals and families, making sure everyone feels welcome and knows about the services available to them. In July and August, we have had over 200 attendees at these events!

Every Thursday from 3 to 4 PM, we host friendly workshops on important health and wellness topics. Recently, we talked about simple ways to stay active both inside and outside, which is especially helpful as the days get shorter and cooler. Our workshops also cover things like mental health, nutrition, and managing stress—all aimed at helping people stay healthy and feel their best. We love creating a space where folks can ask questions, share their stories, and learn new ways to take care of themselves and stay connected with loved ones throughout the year.

Looking ahead, we are gearing up for an important event in October: our flu vaccine clinic organized in partnership with Walgreens. This clinic will offer a convenient way for everyone to get their flu shots. With cold and flu season on the horizon, staying protected is more important than ever, and we are committed to helping keep our community safe and healthy.

Alongside these efforts, our outreach also provides information on other helpful services like SNAP benefits, voter registration, rental assistance, and COVID-19 resources. We know these things can sometimes feel tricky to navigate, so our team is here to help guide and support people every step of the way.

If you would like to join one of our Thursday workshops or learn more about the Flu vaccine clinic, please get in touch with our office. We are excited to connect with you and keep working together to build a stronger, healthier community.



Photo Description: A table with a green disABILITY LINK table cloth, flyers, masks, and COVID tests at a community outreach event

Article by Shikha Desai

Celebrating 35 Years of the Americans with Disabilities Act

On July 25, 2025, disABILITY LINK hosted a vibrant celebration for the 35th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Passed in 1990, the ADA prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in employment, education, transportation, and access to public services and spaces. The event highlighted both the progress made and the ongoing work to ensure equity and accessibility.

The day began with a screening of short films capturing historic moments in the disability rights movement. The Capitol Crawl and other iconic actions were brought to life on screen, reminding attendees of the courage and activism that shaped the ADA. Guests paused, reflected, and shared stories of personal connections to these milestones.

The exhibition space buzzed with activity as an inclusive art show welcomed all. Each piece of art featured built-in audio descriptions, giving visually impaired guests access to the full experience. Attendees moved from display to display, discussing colors, techniques, and stories behind each creation.

Hands-on activities brought excitement and engagement to the day. Participants challenged themselves in Tower Tension, an assistive-technology game using grabbers to move Jenga pieces; tried wheelchair games that tested skill and coordination; and explored creative stations filled with coloring, drawing, and crafts. Laughter, friendly competition, and teamwork filled the room.

Throughout the celebration, music played in the background, conversations flowed, and tables of food invited attendees to relax and connect. The event created a space where people of all abilities could gather, participate, and celebrate.

By the end of the day, it was clear that this celebration was about more than the ADA's 35th Anniversary. It was about community, resilience, and the ongoing work to ensure full participation in public life. Attendees left energized, inspired, and reminded that every action—big or small—helps protect and expand the rights that make inclusive communities possible.

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Celebrating 35 Years of the Americans with Disabilities Act Cont.

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For more information on disability rights and advocacy training, please reach out to Einisia Jones at ejones@disabilitylink.org.



(Photo Description: Shown is Jameson Listermann surrounded by consumers enjoying the 35th annual ADA celebration)

Article by Einisia Jones

Empowering Our Youth Talent Show Marks

Summer Program Finale

disABILITY LINK closed out its Empowering Our Youth summer program with a Talent Show that celebrated creativity, confidence, and community. The event gave participants a stage to showcase their skills and mark the end of a summer filled with learning, growth, and connection.

Performances included lively dance numbers, powerful singing, original poetry, gymnastics, drumming, and displays of visual art and crafting. Each act reflected the unique strengths and passions of the youth involved.

More than a showcase, the Talent Show was a celebration of community. Participants encouraged one another, shared their achievements, and enjoyed the support of family, friends, and peers.

The finale highlighted the impact of the Empowering Our Youth program: building self-confidence, fostering new friendships, and creating opportunities for young people to be seen, heard, and celebrated. For more information on our youth programs contact William Thomas at Wthomas@disabilitylink.org

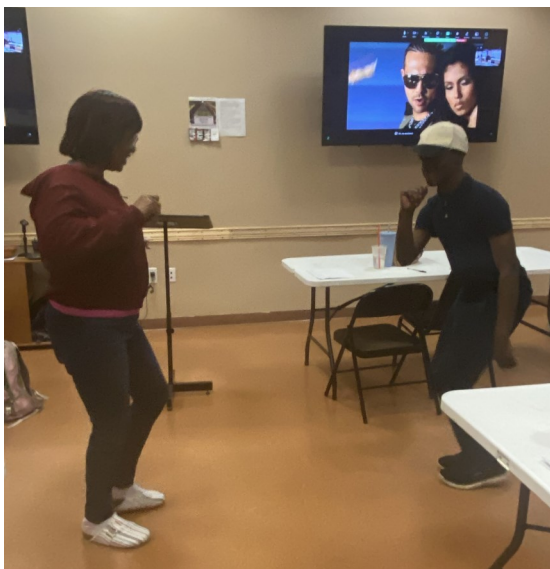


Photo Description: Shown is Xyon Banks performing during our “end of program” talent show.

Article by William Thomas

Empowering our Youth Advocacy Training

As part of the Empowering Our Youth Independent Living skills program, disABILITY LINK hosted a workshop on how to file complaints with the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC). The session gave youth the tools and confidence to advocate for accessibility and inclusion in their communities.

Youth Independent Living Specialists, Stevie Poulaille and Jameson Listerman guided participants step by step through the complaint process, including timelines for responses, what documentation to gather, and options for appeal if needed.

Youth also received hands-on training in navigating the ARC website, learning where to find forms, contact information, and plain-language resources. Each participant left with practical guides to support future advocacy efforts.

By practicing these skills, youth not only gained knowledge but also built confidence in their ability to speak up and take action. The workshop reinforced the core goal of Empowering Our Youth: preparing young people with the skills they need for independence, advocacy, and community engagement.

For more information on programs and workshops like this, contact William Thomas at wthomas@disabilitylink.org



(Pictured above is Stevie Poulaille leading an advocacy training, at the time of the photo, discussing how to file a complaint)

Article by William Thomas

A Day at the Ballpark

On August 22nd, consumers and staff from disABILITY LINK came together for a special outing to Truist Park, where the Atlanta Braves faced off against the New York Mets.

The day was filled with the sights, sounds, and excitement that make baseball such an important part of American culture. From the first pitch to the last inning, our group enjoyed the energy of the crowd, the thrill of the game, and the simple joy of spending time together outside the office.

For many of our consumers, the trip was more than just a baseball game, it was a chance to connect with their peers, build friendships, and participate fully in a community tradition. Staff and consumers cheered, laughed, and shared in the fun, creating memories that will last long after the final score.

Staff member Kevin Randle, a lifelong fan of Atlanta sports, shared his excitement about the day: "Being able to cheer on the Braves with our consumers was such a special experience. I've always loved Atlanta sports, but it was even better getting to share that passion and see everyone enjoying the game together."

Events like this remind us of the importance of community inclusion. Experiencing local sports, music, arts, and other aspects of society together helps break down barriers and reinforces that everyone deserves to be part of the excitement.

Our visit to Truist Park was a home run, and we look forward to hosting more events that bring our community together to celebrate life, independence, and shared experiences.

Photo Description: Shown is Kim Gibson, Abdul Rakib Sualihu, Kevin Randle, Jake Key, and Felicia Banks



Article by Jake Key

From Ghana to Atlanta: My Transformative Experience at disABILITY LINK

During my four-week stay at disABILITY LINK as part of the Mandela Washington Fellowship, I explored the importance of advocacy, peer support, and inclusion. In this reflection, I describe how the experience influenced my personal growth and professional development - and why it will leave a lasting impact even after I return to Ghana.

Participating in my Professional Development Experience (PDE) at disABILITY LINK was both inspiring and transformative. Over the course of four weeks, I had the privilege of engaging with a dynamic team that works tirelessly to promote independence, advocacy, and inclusion for people with disabilities.

As a person who stutters, I also identify as someone living with a disability. This made my experience at disABILITY LINK even more meaningful. I saw how the organization not only provides essential services but also creates a supportive space where differences are respected and strengths are celebrated. My journey with stuttering has taught me resilience and empathy, and I have found those same values deeply reflected in the work of disABILITY LINK.

During my time here, I gained first-hand insight into the wide range of services disABILITY LINK provides - from housing and employment support to assistive technology, Medicaid/Medicare navigation, SNAP benefits, and health and wellness initiatives. Beyond these programs, I was particularly struck by the organization's commitment to advocacy and peer support.

Another highlight of my experience was participating in the Peer Support Training sessions, where I not only learned from the facilitators but also witnessed the strength of community-driven empowerment. Working alongside staff members who are deeply committed to their roles gave me a true sense of what it means to combine professional expertise with personal passion.

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Beyond the office, I was grateful for the warmth and hospitality extended to me. A special memory was when the Executive Director, Dr. Kim Gibson, took me sightseeing to give me the “Atlanta experience.” It was a thoughtful gesture that made me feel not just like a visiting fellow, but truly part of the disABILITY LINK family.

This journey has been more than a professional placement; it has been a reminder of the importance of including people with disabilities in conversations about leadership, accessibility, and equity. I am grateful to the entire disABILITY LINK team for welcoming me, teaching me, and challenging me to carry forward the lessons I’ve learned.

As I return to my work, I am committed to applying these insights to expand opportunities for inclusion and advocacy within my own community.



Photo Description: Shown is Kim Gibson and Abdul Rakib Suali-hu enjoying some of the sights around Atlanta



Article by Abdul-Rakib Suali-hu
Mandela Washington Fellow, 2025

L.E.A.P.S.: Guiding the Way to Employment Success

Finding a job can feel overwhelming, but L.E.A.P.S. (Locating Employment Avenues through Peer Support), offered through disABILITY LINK's Employment Department, provides the tools, strategies, and encouragement needed to move forward. This weekly program combines practical job readiness training—like resume building, interview preparation, and application tips—with the power of peer support, creating a community where participants learn from one another, gain confidence, and stay motivated. Held every Tuesday from 10:00–11:30 AM via Zoom or phone, L.E.A.P.S. is a flexible, supportive resource for anyone seeking meaningful employment. For more information contact Chrisie Lee at clee@disabilitylink.org



Photo Description: The photo shows a LEAPS workshop in progress at disABILITY LINK, with participants seated at tables while a presenter speaks at the front of the room beside a podium and presentation screen

Family and Friends Appreciation Cookout

This fall, disABILITY LINK hosted a Family and Friends Gathering at our office, bringing together consumers, staff, and community supporters for an afternoon of connection, learning, and fun.

Attendees enjoyed a variety of food and refreshments, creating a welcoming space for conversation and community building. To highlight the diverse experiences of people with disabilities, the office was set up with interactive sensory games that allowed participants to gain new perspectives and deepen their understanding of accessibility challenges.

Throughout the event, staff members shared information about the programs and services offered by disABILITY LINK, supported by flyers and brochures that broke down the many ways we assist individuals in achieving their independent living goals. Every so often, a staff member stepped forward to speak directly with attendees about the resources they coordinate, from advocacy and peer support to skills training and transition services.

Adding excitement to the day, guests had the chance to participate in a 50/50 raffle for Atlanta Braves tickets, which brought a lot of smiles and friendly anticipation.

The Family and Friends Gathering was more than just an event, it was an opportunity to celebrate the power of community, highlight the supports available through disABILITY LINK, and strengthen the connections between consumers, their families, and our staff.

We thank everyone who attended and contributed to making the day such a success. disABILITY LINK looks forward to continuing to create inclusive spaces where people with disabilities and their allies can come together, learn, and thrive.

Honoring the Life and Legacy of Shelly Simmons

Shelly Simmons, Executive Director of the Statewide Independent Living Council of Georgia (SILC of GA), passed away on August 29, 2025.

Since stepping into her role in 2017, Shelly was a tireless advocate and dedicated leader whose vision and determination transformed independent living services throughout Georgia. She worked relentlessly to advance equal access, strengthen community partnerships, and ensure that people with disabilities had the opportunities and support needed to live independently.

Shelly's unwavering commitment to the independent living movement created lasting change—change that will continue to shape the lives of Georgians with disabilities for years to come. Her leadership, compassion, and determination left an indelible mark on our community.

As we grieve this tremendous loss, we also celebrate Shelly's life and the countless contributions she made. Her legacy lives on through the work she championed and the lives she touched.

Shelly will be deeply missed, but never forgotten.



Executive Director Message

Dear Friends:

Summer has been full of energy, connection, and growth across our programs and the broader disability community. From our Empowering Our Youth summer program to workshops, outings, and skill-building events, this season has showcased the resilience, creativity, and leadership of the people we serve.

As we move into fall, we are reminded that our work—and our voices—remain essential. With critical elections ahead, we encourage everyone to vote and participate in shaping policies that impact people with disabilities. As Justin Dart said, “The ultimate civil rights struggle is for the right to live as full citizens in our communities, with choice, respect, and dignity.” Exercising our civic rights is a direct way to honor that legacy.

This year continues to bring challenges, including federal-level shifts and ongoing threats to essential disability rights protections. Our advocacy remains steadfast: defending these rights, elevating the voices of people with disabilities, and ensuring that inclusion and accessibility are central to every conversation.

Looking ahead, we are thrilled to invite you to our Annual Consumer Appreciation Event in December. More details will follow, but we hope you’ll mark your calendars to celebrate our community and all that we’ve achieved together.

Thank you to everyone who has participated in our programs and events this year. Your energy, support, and engagement keep this community strong and moving forward. Whether attending an event, sharing your story, or raising your voice for change—you are a vital part of this work.

Stay connected, stay engaged, and let’s keep building inclusive, empowered communities together.

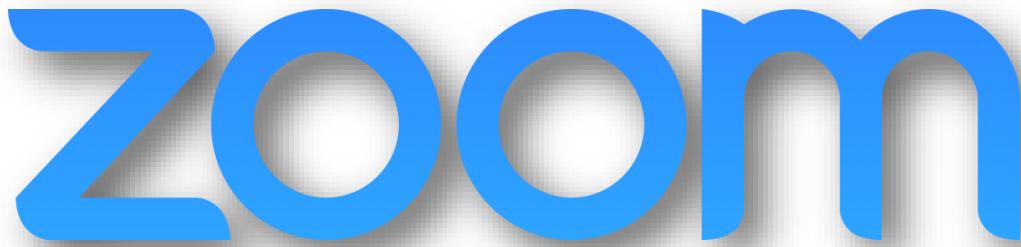
With appreciation,

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
- ♦ Bean Bag Chairs
- ♦ 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:

1901 Montreal Rd. Suite 102 Tucker, Ga 30084

404-687-8890 Voice

404-381-8117 Video

404-687-8298 Fax



www.disabilitylink.org

