

The ABILITY LINK



disABILITY LINK Quarterly Newsletter

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Shown is a group photo of the disABILITY LINK staff stood in front of the office, staff names available on our website

Social Media



@disabilitylink



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

Edited and Designed by Jake Key Social Media Specialist

What is Assistive Technology?

Assistive technology is the technology used by individuals with disabilities in order to perform functions that might otherwise be difficult or impossible. The primary purpose of an assistive device is to maintain or improve an individual's functioning and independence, thereby promoting their well-being, including accomplishing everyday tasks. Each assistive technology device follows under a category: no- technology, low-technology, and high-technology.

No- technology usually involves changing the environment, policies, or procedures to accommodate a person's ability to complete a task. Some examples include but are not limited to: pencil grips, post-it notes, desk lamps, or special seating arrangements. Low technology usually is easier to use and does not require training. Some examples are a voice recorder, buzzer, or magnifying glasses. The last category is high- technology. High Tech requires more complex training/classes to learn how to use particular devices. Devices that fall within this category include: touch screen computers and e-readers. If you would like to learn more about assistive technology, please email: Shuronda Dixon at sdixon@disabilitylink.org.

Article by Shuronda Dixon



Picture Description: Shown is a diagram of different assistive technology devices surrounding the word accessibility.

What We Are doing to Combat COVID

Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has expanded its services to the entire state of Georgia. disABILITY LINK is very fortunate to be a partner agency with them. We are one of the Centers for Independent Living in Georgia that continues to assist individuals with uploading documents to the Georgia Rental Assistance (GRA) portal. We continue to collaborate with other outside organizations like DCA and CORE to set up a monthly vaccine clinic. On July 19, 2022, disABILITY LINK held a vaccine/booster clinic where individuals could receive the booster/vaccine shot. disABILITY LINK also partnered with QITEK Labs and became a COVID PCR Testing site. QITEK Labs conducted weekly testing every Thursday morning. Every week 8 to 11 individuals participated in our COVID PCR testing. Beginning in July 2022, COVID PCR Testing switched from every week to on the first and third Tuesday mornings.

disABILITY LINK has neighborhood outreaches at various sites in the community, including in front of our office and at libraries, bookstores, and other public spaces within the 12 county service areas. During these events, we share information and resources on COVID-19 vaccinations, testing, voter registration, address voting issues related to COVID-19 as well as distributing masks, hand sanitizer, and COVID-19 information, supporting applying for different benefits. In addition, we have laptops and Wi-Fi ready to support through processes such as applying for SNAP, unemployment, and other applications.

Article by Shikha Desai



Picture Description: Cartoon image of people wearing masks being protected from the viruses around them.

Transportation Opportunities

Transportation is very important in everyone's lives, especially the disability community. Living in the counties of Dekalb, Fulton, and Clayton, Marta mobility can allow riders to travel within the prospective places of their choosing. Please understand that Marta mobility is a shared ride, meaning passengers could be on with others.

Marta mobility is a door-to-door service where riders can book trips a day in advance and also have the option to have personal care attendances accompany them at no charge. To participate, a person with a disability must complete the application process. Part A of the application is completed by the rider (applicant), and Part B can be completed by a doctor or can contact disABILITY LINK for support to complete the process.

Marta mobility is a great way to enhance one's independence to the next level in one's life. With anything in life, you have to be patient, Marta Mobility is not always on time, but at the end of the day, the service will get you to where you need to be. At times, advocacy needs to be done to ensure that riders' rights are not violated. You can receive training on Marta Mobility and taking public transportation through disABILITY LINK. For more information, contact James Turner at jturner@disabilitylink.org

Article by James Turner



Picture Description: Marta Mobility bus with accessibility door shown.

Ticket to Work

Are you on Social Security and want to go to work but are afraid of losing your benefits? Well, let us give you a few FACTS about participating in the Ticket To Work Program!

First, you must be between the ages of 18 and 64.

You must be committed to taking the necessary steps to go back to work.

The Ticket To Work program supports career development for Social Security disability beneficiaries who want to work. Individuals who receive Social Security benefits because of a disability likely already qualify for the program if they are in the correct age bracket.

As an active Ticket to Work participant and actively working towards your employment goal, you would be exempt from the continuing medical reviews Social Security has for three years. If you did not know, disABILITY LINK is an EN (Employment Network) that can assist you with this process!

If you want more information, reach out to us here at 404-687-8890, and let us get you on the road to employment and self-sufficiency!

**Article by Tawanda Cargile
and Katrina Parsons**



Shown is a ticket with the words "Ticket To Work" and "Employment" printed on it

Remembering the Olmstead Decision

Olmstead, or Olmstead v. L.C., is the name of the most important civil rights decision for people with disabilities in our country's history. This 1999 United States Supreme Court decision was based on the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Supreme Court held that people with disabilities have a qualified right to receive state-funded support and services in the community rather than in institutions when the following three-part test are met:

1. The person's treatment professionals determine that community supports are appropriate;
2. The person does not object to living in the community; and
3. The provision of services in the community would be a reasonable accommodation when balanced with other individuals with similar disabilities.

The Olmstead lawsuit started with two women from Georgia named Lois Curtis and Elaine Wilson, who both had diagnoses of mental health conditions and intellectual disabilities. Lois and Elaine found themselves going in and out of the state's mental health hospitals dozens of times. After each stay in the hospital, they would go back home, but then, because they did not have help at home, they would start to struggle again and would have to go back to the hospital to get help again. Lois and Elaine asked the state of Georgia to help them get treatment in the community so that they would not have to go live at the state mental hospital off and on. The doctors who treated Lois and Elaine agreed that they were capable of living in the community with appropriate support. However, Lois and Elaine ended up waiting for years for their community-based support to be set up.

Sue Jamieson, who was an attorney at the Atlanta Legal Aid Society, filed a lawsuit on behalf of Lois (and then later added Elaine) for support to be provided in the community. The lawsuit, which is known as "Olmstead v. L.C." or "the Olmstead decision," ended up going to the highest court in the country, the United States Supreme Court. The name Olmstead comes from the name of the Defendant in the case, Tommy Olmstead, who was the Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Human Resources.

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Remembering Olmstead cont.

The Supreme Court agreed with Lois and Elaine. The Court found that under the Americans with Disabilities Act, or "the ADA," it is against the law for the state to discriminate against a person based on their disability. The Court said that the state discriminated against Lois and Elaine by requiring them to live in a mental health hospital. It should have instead provided services for them in the community. By confining them in the hospital, the state was segregating them by requiring them to live with others with disabilities. The Court said that people with disabilities like Lois and Elaine have the right to receive the treatment they needed in an integrated setting if that is what they want, if their doctors agree, and if it does not fundamentally change how the state provides services to people with disabilities.

The Americans with Disabilities Act was passed in 1990 and signed into law by President George H.W. Bush that same year. At the outset of the ADA, Congress made a number of historical findings. This included recognition of the history of institutionalization in the United States. Congress stated, "historically, society has tended to isolate and segregate individuals with disabilities, and, despite some improvements, such forms of discrimination against individuals with disabilities continue to be a serious and pervasive social problem." In signing the law, President George H.W. Bush declared that the ADA "takes a sledgehammer to [a] wall . . . which has for too many generations separated Americans with disabilities from the freedom they could glimpse, but not grasp."

Title II of the ADA prohibits public entities, including state and local governments, from discriminating against "qualified individuals with disabilities" by excluding them from services and activities due to their disability. As part of the ADA, federal regulations were created to enforce the Act. One of the regulations created by the United States Justice Department was called the "integration mandate." The integration mandate requires public entities to "administer services, programs, and activities in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of the qualified individuals with disabilities." This integration mandate would become the basis of the Olmstead decision in 1999.

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Remembering Olmstead Cont.

In 1995, the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, in the case of *Helen L. v. Didario*, found that a woman with a disability who was confined in a nursing facility had the right under the ADA to receive attendant care services in the community so she could leave the nursing facility. The appellate court rejected the state of Pennsylvania's argument that the woman needed to remain on the waiting list until funds became available. Pennsylvania appealed to the United States Supreme Court, but the Supreme Court decided not to hear the appeal, which left the Third Circuit's decision intact.

The Olmstead Lawsuit

On May 11, 1995, the Atlanta Legal Aid Society filed a lawsuit on behalf of Lois Curtis challenging her confinement at Georgia Regional Hospital Atlanta based on Title II of the ADA. In January 1996, Elaine Wilson was allowed by the trial court to join the case as a plaintiff who was also seeking the right to return to the community from the state hospital.

In March 1997, Judge Marvin Shoob ruled in favor of the plaintiffs declaring that the failure of the Georgia Department of Human Resources and Georgia Regional Hospital to "place plaintiffs in an appropriate community-based treatment program violates Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act" and that it was required to do so for both plaintiffs.

As Olmstead expands, it becomes possible to foresee a time when all Americans will have the supports they need regardless of the extent of any disability or impairment to live in the community and not in institutions and nursing facilities.

To learn more about Olmstead or other areas of concern in disability rights, reach out to disABILITY LINK at (404)687-8890.



Article by Angela Williams

Preparing for the Atlanta Pride Parade

While the LGBTQ community serves as advocates of gender and sexually diverse communities worldwide, in Atlanta, the community responsible for these resources is Atlanta Pride. Since 1971, Atlanta Pride has vowed to advance unity, visibility, and wellness among people with widely diverse gender and sexual identities through cultural, social, political, and educational programs and activities. A vision for the future shared by Atlanta Pride and disABILITY LINK is a world where people with widely diverse gender and sexual identities are united, visible, and equal. The main purpose of the Atlanta Pride Committee is to advance unity, visibility, and self-esteem among lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgender and queer persons. And to promote a positive image in the Atlanta area through community activities and services.

Every year, Atlanta Pride puts on a parade to commemorate “National Coming Out” Day. The parade is always held at Piedmont park in Atlanta and is always held on the second day of the two-day event. disABILITY LINK will be participating in the march on October 9th, and we will be hosting a booth for the entire event! If you would like to volunteer, visit our booth, or learn more about Pride involvement with disABILITY LINK, contact Jake Key at jkey@disabilitylink.org or (404) 687-8890 ext. 125.

Article by Jake Key



Shown is the Atlanta Pride Parade with large colorful balloon letters spelling out the word PRIDE.

Addressing Health in Schools

With the pandemic is still affecting people all around the world, the school systems have not been overlooked. Today's top health issues among Georgia teens are as follows

- Obesity
- Teen Pregnancy
- Drug/Alcohol Abuse
- Eating Disorders
- Anxiety/Depression

While 1 in 5 adults live with a mental health disability, more than 1 in 3 high school students have experienced persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness since 2021. Mental health in our schools is a crisis with approximately 1 in 6 youth having made a suicide plan. Some things we can all pay attention to in order to check on the mental health of our youth is to address low energy, loss of motivation, decreased participation in social activities, and any increase in argumentative or defiant behavior. With some of the signs in mind, schools can link students to mental health services, integrate social emotional learning, and reviewing discipline policies to ensure equity. But it is not only up to schools, at home, families can communicate openly and honestly, supervise adolescents to facilitate health decision-making, and become engaged in activities that interest the adolescent. The key to monitoring a student's mental health without prying, is open and clear communication between guardians and teachers or administrators.

For more information on how to get involved in youth programs at disABILITY LINK contact Kevin Turner at (404) 687-8890 ext. 120 or at kturner@disabilitylink.org.

Article by Kevin Turner



Shown is a cartoon depiction of a child's mind with all of the things a child thinks about floating inside the mind.

On Site vs Remote Employment

Even before 2020's unpredictable events, 4.7 million people were already working remotely, and the Coronavirus pandemic had significantly increased. Statistics taken in 2021 show that 68 percent of large companies plan to downsize their office space to compensate for so many employees working remotely. A remote workforce means fewer managers, no commutes, and a better work-life balance. If this does not seem to suit your style of work, hybrid working can offer the best of both worlds, offering the flexibility to work from anywhere but still maintaining a physical workplace at the same time.

The benefits are clear but remote, and hybrid working does not come without its unique challenges. Moving to either of these new working ways can be a steep learning curve for traditional office-based businesses. To prepare the community for such workplaces, disABILITY LINK has made every workshop hybrid, with the option of joining in person or from the comfort of your own home through zoom meetings. We have also geared our monthly computer classes towards understanding some of the necessities of working from home like understanding email, using Microsoft programs, and general understanding of problem solving behind the screen.



Article by Jake Key

Picture description: Shown is a web connecting people to each other using remote devices and apps

National Day of Voter Registration

On September 20, 2022, the Nation celebrated the National Day of Voter Registration, and things were no different here at disABILITY LINK!

With this day as important as it is, the week before, we had the Fulton County Board of Election's voting bus here to train individuals on how to use the new voting machines properly so that you can ensure that your vote counts!

All day long, the office was abuzz with staff in voting shirts, and the office was decorated with flags, fancy tables, and wall décor, and there was even pizza to boot! We had registration cards for anyone not registered to vote or who needed to update their registration, whether it was a name or address change. In addition, we had gift bags with a treat and information about locating their polling place, and other information, including the rules about wearing clothing that advertises a specific candidate!

If you need any of that information, please reach out to us at 404-687-8890 ext. 117, and we will get that information to you!

Employment

OUR EMPLOYMENT DEPARTMENT IS GROWING!! One of the many things people are doing, as they begin moving around more in the community, the state, the country, and the world, is returning to in-person work positions! We know that many may be ready to return to work but need support in making sure that they are job ready; Let us help you with that! We have several ways that we can support you in your goals! Stop by or schedule an appointment with an Employment Specialist to support you by sprucing up your resume, learning interview skills, or much more.

If you have social security and want to give going back to work a try, call us and get started with Ticket to Work. You can also stop in every Tuesday from 10 am-11:30 am for LEAPS job readiness classes.

You are also welcome to come in and speak with a specialist about volunteering in the agency to help some of your job skills grow, sign up for computer classes to improve your skills and knowledge base, or look into an internship opportunity!

We offer many things to support you on your road to Independence, and we are excited to do just that!

If you need any of that information, please reach out to us at 404-687-8890.

Article by Tawanda Cargile

Executive Director Message

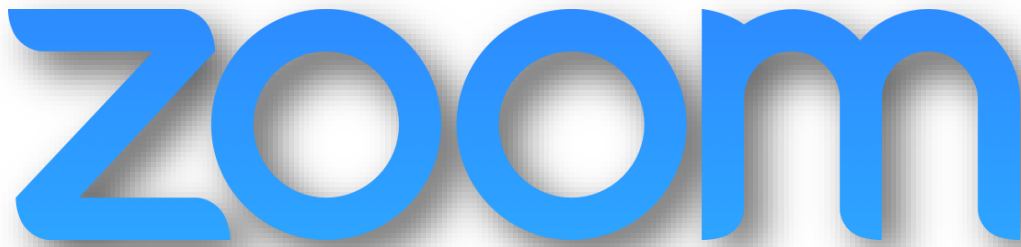
As the end of the year approaches, I am thankful for the years I have worked here at disABILITY LINK. Whether it has been collaborating with the consumers, board, staff, member representatives, partners, or supporters, I am fortunate to be in the company of such compassionate and knowledgeable leaders in the disABILITY community.

Even more so is the energy each of you continues to give in the face of many of the nation's current health, economic and social challenges. At this time, I remind you to make your voice heard by getting out and voting. disABILITY LINK provides workshops on topics related to the disABILITY community, holds voter registration, and supports individuals in locating polls.

There are so many events coming up that I encourage each of you to participate in what interests you. We have our Annual Job fair and Doggie Day in October. Emergency prep and information events are held ongoing. In December, we will host our annual Consumer appreciation event.

I hope to see you at one or all of the events. Enjoy the upcoming holidays, and all my best,

Kim Gibson, Executive Director



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

February 15th- President's Day

May 31st- Memorial Day

July 5th- Independence Day

Sept. 6th- Labor Day

Sept. 26th through October 1st- Office paperwork catch-up

Nov. 2nd – Election Day

Nov. 11th – Veteran's Day

Nov. 25-26th – Fall Break

December 20th through Jan. 2nd- Winter Break

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.



Wish List:

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

Reminder to join us for our Annual Family and Friends Picnic at our office on July 15th from 11 am to 1 pm.

Contact Us:

1901 Montreal Rd. Suite 102 Tucker, Ga 30084

404-687-8890 Voice

404-381-8117 Video

404-687-8298 Fax



@disABILITY LINK

www.disabilitylink.org