

The ABILITY LINK



disABILITY LINK Quarterly Newsletter

What's Inside?

Affordable Housing Options
Commemorating Service Dogs
Health Benefits of Walking
Voting Accessibility
Youth Priorities
Employment Networking
Reasons to Learn How To Code
Adaptive Driving
Assistive Technology
Transportation
Executive Director Message
Volunteering
Zoom
Wish list/Contact us

Picture descriptions:

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

Affordable Housing Options

Inflation is affecting all of us on so many levels, including housing affordability. A variety of factors have set the stage for the financial challenges American homeowners and renters have been facing in the housing market, including incomes that haven't kept pace with housing cost increases and a housing construction slowdown. A surge in home buying spurred by record-low mortgage interest rates during the COVID-19 pandemic and; the influx of housing investors has further strained the availability of homes. So what about those that are the most strained financially? Those with low-paying jobs? Those who are on fixed incomes? Housing and living on a fixed income. Let's talk about affordable housing options:

States, counties, and local governments receive HUD funding to pay for programs that can help Social Security disability recipients. Two of these programs are public housing and housing vouchers.

Public housing is a HUD-run program that provides decent and safe rental housing at subsidized rates for eligible low-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. HUD gives money to local public housing agencies to manage and operate these housing programs. The public housing agency makes the final decision about who qualifies and who is accepted.

HUD-funded housing vouchers are an important source of housing assistance for families with disabled family members. The programs are designed to serve people with extremely low incomes that are at or below the poverty line. City and state public housing agencies decide who's eligible for a voucher.

Housing Choice Voucher: Previously known as Section 8, the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program is HUD's main housing assistance program. It's designed to help "very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market." HCV is run by more than 2,100 state and local housing agencies. About 2.2 million low-income households across the country receive housing choice vouchers. Several types of housing vouchers are awarded based on whose eligible and administrative details. Tenant-based vouchers stay with the person or family who receives them, not the landlord or unit owner. To receive tenant-based assistance, the tenant's unit must first be approved by the PHA. The PHA then creates a contract with the unit's owner to make subsidized payments directly to the landlord. If the family moves out of the leased unit, the contract with the unit owner is terminated, and the voucher stays with the family as long as the family follows the program's requirements.

Cont. on page 3

Affordable Housing Options cont.

A mainstream voucher is specifically for families with a disabled family member who is 18 to 61 years of age and in need of housing assistance. HUD estimates that more than 66,000 people or households in the United States receive mainstream vouchers.

HUD-VA Supportive Housing Vouchers: The HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program combines HUD's HCV rental assistance with case management and clinical services from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). HUD-VASH vouchers are specifically for military veterans and their families who are homeless or are at risk of losing their homes.

HUD's Continuum of Care (CoC) program- formerly known as Shelter+Care, helps provide long-term housing and support services to people with certain disabilities who become homeless. People with disabilities, including mental illness, chronic problems with alcohol and/or drugs, or conditions like AIDS may qualify. The program allows for a variety of housing options and support services that are paid by outside sources.

It can be difficult for low-income people with disabilities to find housing assistance. Once they do, it can take a while for the assistance benefits to kick in. The process can be stressful, but it's worth it for the families of people with a disability who needs support.

Unfortunately, the demand for housing assistance is much greater than the funding available. It can take years for people to receive assistance. Many people will become homeless or be in danger of becoming homeless while waiting for help.



Article by Angela Williams

Picture Description: Cartoon image of colorful houses labeled affordable housing

Commemorating Service Dogs

Five hundred thousand service dogs in the united states keep their handlers safe; along with this number, 1600 specialized military dogs serve not only their handlers but their country. Such service and honor should not go unnoticed. Especially in Washington DC, the home or Arlington cemetery and where we represent the best and bravest among us. Unfortunately, to this day, there is no dog memorial site in the country's capital.

Thankfully, the house of representatives has agreed that the disgrace needs to end. The national service animals memorial act authorizes the national service animals monument corporation to establish a commemorative work on federal land in the District of Colombia to commemorate the heroic deeds and sacrifices of service animals and handlers in the united states. All we need now is for the act to pass in the house and get sent to the president. Then we can do what we need to do to support and commemorate these heroic animals.

Article by Charlie Cannon



Picture Description: Shown is statue of a service dog at a war dog memorial service.

Great Health Benefits of Walking 30 Minutes a Day

Most people would be surprised at how easy it is to fit in 30 minutes a day of walking into their routine. Skipping the bus or train to get to work, incorporating it into your lunch break, or taking the pets out to get some fresh air are all great ways to get your daily step count. This low-impact form of exercise sometimes goes unrecognized as a great way to build muscle, lose weight, tone up, and improve mental health.

Weight loss and walking are options entailing caloric cutback and perhaps walking for a more extended period- of time per day. People typically burn between 100 and 175 calories in an hour's walk. Walking more vigorously and at an incline will help burn more calories. In addition, carrying weights will help you burn more energy. These activities can assist in creating core and leg strength, boosting cardiovascular endurance, and building bone density.

Boosting your immune system is a surprising benefit of walking. Exercise increases the circulation of immune cells in the body. Thus, protecting you during cold and flu season. A study of over 1,000 men and women found that those who walked at least 20 minutes a day, at least five days a week, had 43% fewer sick days than those who exercised once a week or less, and if they did get sick, it was for a shorter duration, and their symptoms were milder.

Walking outside has been proven to lower your levels of the stress hormone cortisol and alleviate depression and anxiety. Some forms of exercise can be exhausting, but walking can relieve stress and tension while increasing physical and mental energy. It strengthens overall mental well-being by stimulating the release of endorphins.

If your disability limits your mobility, it is essential to remember that any exercise will offer health benefits. No matter your ability, you should incorporate three types of exercise into your routine. These include cardiovascular exercises (raising your heart rate to your level of comfort), Strength training (some resistance), and flexibility exercises (enhancing range of motion). As with any exercise program, check with your doctor and make a plan.

Overall, walking is an excellent way to keep your weight in check, build muscle strength and endurance, and lower levels of depression. It is also an excellent activity to involve family and friends. So, set aside some time to get outside and rejuvenate your body and mind.

Article by Diane McKenna

Voting Accessibility

It's that time of year to listen to debates, read candidate profiles, and rock the vote. So, as a disabled voter, how well-versed are you in accessibility features of your voting site? Let's discuss this for a few; Georgia paper ballots voting systems include adjustments to accommodate various disabilities.

Headsets are available so you can hear your choices read to you, large controls are available for people with limited mobility called limited tactile interface, they can accommodate sip and puff devices, patta devices, and if you are visually impaired, you can use an app on your phone to read your ballot to you before you cast it, however, before you leave the voting site you must delete any photos of your ballot before it can be read. Whether you register to vote online or fill out voter registration applications, you can receive assistance to complete them. The person providing the assistance must sign an oath next to your signature. Georgia law requires all voting locations to be fully accessible and equipped with poll workers that are trained to take care of all needs of voters. On election day, voting sites are open from 7:00 am—7:00 pm. If you have a disability and show up between 9:30 am and 4:30 pm, you will not be required to wait in line; tell a poll officer you would like to move to the front of the line; any voter who is 75 years or older or who is disabled and requires assistance with voting may vote immediately at the next available voting booth instead of waiting in line. You can get help voting if you cannot sign your name, see or mark your ballot, operate the voting equipment, or enter the booth without assistance. When you arrive, you must give the poll worker the name of the person assisting you or write it on your voting certificate. You may have anyone assist you with voting except an employer, candidate, or candidate family member



Article by Angela Williams

Picture Description: Shown is an cartoon of a person in a wheelchair turning in their ballot

Youth Priorities

Young people are demanding change. For some young people, climate change is urgent; for others, gun violence is a crisis. From truth and reconciliation to inclusion and diversity and mental health, young people are bringing awareness to societal crises and making headlines along the way.

Historically this is nothing new; young people have long been leaders and catalysts for important movements. Unfortunately, these change-makers are often labeled problematic, selfish, or not yet ready to lead. This negative view of young people aligns with the multitude of research studies that frame their questions within a deficit model. In a deficit model, the standard for healthy development is preventing behavioral or emotional problems. In both cases, there is a failure to acknowledge the youth's capacity or motivation to contribute to something larger. Here at disABILITY LINK, we have established a youth group seeking to engage youth in discussions centered around those issues that they are concerned with and that directly impact their lives. This group meets every fourth Saturday from 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm. For more information, contact William Thomas at wthomas@disabilitylink.org

Written by William Thomas



Picture Description: Shown is a diverse group of students gathered together with the words "Youth Group" above

Employment Networking

This quarter, disability LINK's employment & training department partnered with many reputable companies to offer employment and internship opportunities to our consumers. This is especially important due to the low employment rates for people with disabilities. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Only 19.1% of people with disabilities were employed compared to 63.7% of those without disabilities.

disABILITY LINK continues to address this with collaboration from partners such as GVRA, local businesses and employers, and the community. We also host our annual job fair in October. This year we supported ten job seekers in connecting to an employer and applying for a job during the event. In addition, we have continued collaboration with Dress for Success, which now has an onsite career center with live training from employers such as Home Depot and Ikea.

We offer support and training through various workshops. The weekly LEAPS (Locating Employment Avenues through Peer support) hosted topics such as growing careers, staying positive during the job search, and exploring telework. The Speechcraft classes discuss how to construct a speech and informative speeches.

We invite you to our many classes and workshops. If you would like more information, contact Stephany Knight at sknight@disabilitylink.org

Article by Stephany Knight



Picture Description: Shown is a web connecting the word you to the word job after going through all the networking that needs to happen

Reasons to Learn How to Code

Why is coding important for individuals to learn? Learning how to code has been seen as a niche skill that few can benefit from, but that could not be further from the truth. It is about far more than developing skills to build or manipulate computer programs. The skills learned through the coding curriculum can be applied to activities that span well beyond computers.

Strategic problem-solving is one of the biggest strengths gained from learning how to code. One small action for a program can be achieved in numerous different ways. There is rarely ever one way to complete a task, allowing individuals to use creativity that can be used in all problems.

Along with problem-solving and creativity, learning to write code builds persistence. When creating a program, the programmer often hits a wall where they cannot imagine a way to make something work. Because of the intricacies presented when writing code, it is common to get caught in one mindset where they have to take a step back and view the project from a different perspective. When a solution is discovered, not only does this build persistence, but it also increases confidence immensely.

All this being said, while coding can be seen as a daunting task that can have no application in the real world, at least one of the skills listed here can be applied to most obstacles in life. If you or anyone you know would like to learn more about coding, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at jkey@disabilitylink.org.

Article by Jake Key



Picture Description: Shown is the orange and blue disABILITY LINK logo

Adaptive Driving

Assistive technology is anything or devices that may support and make your daily living easier. It gives each situation a different approach. Individuals with disabilities use assistive technology to perform functions that might otherwise be difficult or impossible. Assistive technology can include mobility devices such as walkers, wheelchairs, and automobiles. Adaptive driving makes it possible for the mobility-impaired to drive vehicles easily and safely.

Driving is an important part of life. The mobility-impaired have to meet the challenges of life just like any other person. However, standard cars cannot be used by the mobility-impaired because they require special services. Adaptive driving helps people in wheelchairs to gain independence, move in or out of the vehicle, and drive the vehicle with assistive technologies.

There are many adaptive driving aids for your car. Some of the most popular ones are hand controls, pedal extensions, driver seats, and wheelchair modifications. Hand controls, levers, and buttons are used to apply the brakes. Pedal extensions assist people with shorter legs in reaching the pedal. Driver seat modifications help position, balance, and provide stability to the driver.

Wheelchair ramps and lifts are provided in vehicles to enable easy entry or exit from vehicles. All of these modifications in adaptive driving aids allow people with disabilities to gain or maintain their independence. If you would like to learn more, please contact Shuronda Dixon, Assistive Technology Deaf-Blind IL Specialist, at sdixon@disabilitylink.org.

Article by Shuronda Dixon



Picture Description: Shown is a steering wheel geared with 2 knobs and a grip for people with mobility disabilities

Temporary Assistive Technology during the Holidays

As we approach the holiday season, many of us welcome family and friends into our homes for food, fun, and festivities. With a little more effort and planning, accommodations can be made to ensure everyone feels welcome and comfortable as possible in your home. As we consider the accessibility needs of our guests at the next holiday functions. I would like you to consider the following: Will your guest need help getting around your home? Do you have grip bars in bathrooms? Is there a need for a temporary ramp? These considerations and the appropriate assistive technology can make a home more accessible and enjoyable for each guest.

Did you know that temporary ramps vary in length? Ramps can be used inside or outside of a home. Using ramps outside of your home will allow guests to enter and exit your home easily. How about a light switch extender? The extender can be placed over a traditional switch for loved ones that may be a little shorter or those using a wheelchair to reach the lights easier. Temporary grab bars can be used in the bathrooms. Grab bars offer assistance when getting up and down from toilets and tubs. Remember, whatever temporary assistive technology you need for your next holiday party, make sure it accommodates each of the needs of the individual by asking them. If you would like more information, please feel free to contact Shuronda Dixon at sdixon@disabilitylink.org

Article by Shuronda Dixon



Picture description: Shown is a web connecting accessibility to different assistive technology

Transportation in Metro Atlanta

Transportation is very important in everyone's lives, especially the disability community. Living in the counties of DeKalb, Fulton, and Clayton county, Marta Mobility can provide riders the ability to travel within the prospective places of their choosing. Marta mobility is a shared ride, meaning passengers could be on with others. In addition, travel time takes longer than driving in a personal vehicle.

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 attendants accompany them at no charge. To ride Marta Mobility, you must complete an application and be approved. Riders can complete parts A of the application themselves, and one's doctor can complete part B, or riders can contact disABILITY LINK and speak with James Turner or any other staff member to complete the application. For more information or to get travel training contact James Turner at jturner@disabilitylink.org.

Article by James Turner



Picture Description: Shown is an accessible bus with a man in a wheelchair entering via a ramp

Executive Director Message

Dear Friends

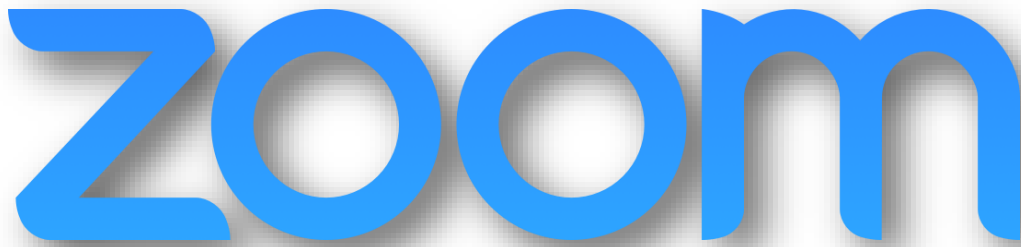
Holidays are a great time to spend time with family and friends, gather together, share good food, and celebrate life. After these last few challenging years, we have so much to be thankful for! We are grateful to our dedicated staff, fantastic consumers, generous donors, and community partners. This year, disABILITY LINK provided 28,463 individual services to individuals with disabilities designed to support choice, autonomy, education, employment, social connections, peer support, and much more to increase or maintain independence. Along the way, we made immeasurable social connections between people and resources in the community by providing 13,808 information and referral services.

As we move into 2023, we invite you to continue participating in the disABILITY LINK family and by participating in our many events. In January, we kick off the season with visits to our legislatures. Join us in advocating for housing, employment, and transportation for people with disabilities. In April, we look forward to our annual GALA. Be sure to get your tickets early. Contact our office to learn more about supporting our organization.

We wish you a safe, happy, and healthy holiday season and a Happy New Year!

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

Jan. 16th- MLK Jr. Day

Feb. 20th- President's Day

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



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