Marilyn Saviola, who has spent most of her life advocating for people with disabilities in New York City, recently died at age 74, at her home in Brooklyn.

Born and raised in the Bronx, she spent much of her life helping people with disabilities live at home in their communities. At 10, she was diagnosed with polio and hospitalized for two months in an iron lung. When she was able to breathe on her own with a portable ventilator, she was transferred to Goldwater Memorial Hospital for 18 months, then returned home. At 16, she urged her parents to let her return to Goldwater, where she could be with teens like herself. There she joined forces with other young residents to demand a youth ward.

Continued on page 8
HR and Hiring

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) recently released a report on work-place disability inclusion which found that many human resource (HR) professionals and hiring managers are not properly prepared to hire, retain or advance people with disabilities.

Some key findings include the fact that 61 percent of managerial and underemployed for no good reason.

Managers Need Training

The Department of Transportation (DOT) assembled leaders from industry, academia, non-profits and government to participate in panel discussions and breakout sessions during the summit. They focused on inter-agency coordination, advanced vehicle technologies and innovations in mobility services.

"We are focused on streamlining the multiple steps involved in traveling between locations into a smooth and seamless trip," said Jane Williams, acting administrator of the Federal Transit Administration.

During the past three years, DOT increased its investment in accessibility-related research by approximately 50 percent. Recently, DOT and 10 other federal agencies approved the strategic plan for the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility, an inter-agency partnership to coordinate the efforts of federal agencies funding transportation services for targeted populations.

The strategic plan includes goals to improve access to jobs, health care, education and community services by eliminating government duplication of services, reducing regulatory burden, increasing access to cost-effective transportation services and ensuring that transportation services are centered on the citizens who depend on them as a lifeline to community participation.

The plan will help provide better transportation outcomes through the coordination of more than 130 government-wide programs.

More Training

To address this issue, SHRM is planning to launch a new training for HR professionals called the Employing Abilities @ Work Certificate in January. This new certificate will teach best practices in implementing disability inclusion.

Initiatives Give More Access to Internet

Comcast, one of the largest telecommunications companies, recently announced a series of initiatives designed to help Americans with low-incomes, who are disabled, with their Internet Essentials Program.

The largest of these initiatives was a $150,000 grant from the company to the American Association for People with Disabilities (AAPD), which will help fund the creation and delivery of digital literacy training programs specifically designed for people with disabilities who have limited income. Once developed, the programs will be delivered at 10 sites across the country, as well as shared on-line for anyone to access.

Since 2011, the Comcast’s Internet Essentials Program has connected more than 8 million low-income Americans to the internet at home. In addition, the company recently instituted changes that will make more people eligible for the program.

“The Internet is an incredible resource, so long as you have the skills and the tools to use it,” said David Cohen, senior executive vice president at Comcast Corporation. “By partnering with AAPD and working with disability inclusion initiatives at work.

"It’s time we busted some myths about hiring people with disabilities,” said SHRM President Johnny Taylor. “We’re talking about a high-quality talent pool that remains untapped and underemployed for no good reason.”

The purpose of this $50 million new initiative is to identify ways to provide more efficient, affordable and accessible transportation services for people with disabilities, older adults and other underserved communities that often face greater challenges in accessing essential services,” said Chao.

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Judge Rules Against CDPAP Cuts

A lbany County Supreme Court Judge Christina Ryba recently ruled that the New York state’s Department of Health (DOH) budget cuts for the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP) are unlawful.

“The court’s decision today was an important first step in protecting services for the tens of thousands of senior and disabled New Yorkers who rely on the CDPAP program,” said Bryan O’Malley, executive director of the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Association of New York State (CDPAANYS). “As they go back to the drawing board, CDPAANYS and our partners stand ready to work with the DOH to come up with real solutions that will save money without ruining the lives of 70,000 New Yorkers who rely on the program for their dignity and independence and the over 100,000 people it employs.”

Ryba stated that the payment methodology implemented on Sept. 1, violated the State Administrative Procedures Act and the constitution. DOH’s policy switched the administrative payment model to a per-member per-month system. Plaintiffs claimed that it set the rates so low that it would have put almost all fiscal intermediaries (FI) out of business.

The judge declared the rate cuts null and void. The ruling was based on a lawsuit against the DOH that was filed by CDPAANYS, the New York Association of Independent Living (NYAIL), the New York State Association Healthcare Providers (NYSHCP) and 11 FIs.

More than 75,000 people with disabilities and seniors rely on CDPAP to live at home and stay out of institutions. The program puts the individual in control of their services and who they hire as aides. FIs provide important administrative supports that help individuals run their programs.

“I am pleased that the court struck down this unfair rate structure,” said Kathy Febriaio, president of NYSHCP. “The arbitrary rates implemented by DOH created a great deal of uncertainty in CDPAP. HCP urged DOH to hold sensible conversations with stakeholders in order to ensure a safe and orderly transition in the program. Failure to do so was most assuredly going to create an unnecessary and easily avoidable crisis for the department, FIs, the consumers with whom they work and their personal assistants.”

Tax Credit Bills Await Cuomo’s Approval

Gov. Andrew Cuomo was recently given two tax credit bills to sign, both of which he vetoed in the past, that could help people with disabilities in New York state.

The Visitability Tax Credit bill (A.2493/S.2424) would provide homeowners with a tax credit of up to $2,750 which can be used to renovate their home to make it more accessible or be used towards developing a universally visitable home.

This measure is meant to help people with disabilities pay for modifications that help them remain in their own homes. Some of these accessibility features could include a no-step entrance, an accessible path to an exterior door or an accessible bathroom on the first floor.

Due to the high cost of home modifications, many people who cannot afford to make changes to their homes must move to a nursing home or similar facility.

The small business tax credit bill (A.7475/S.5545), which is also pending the governor’s approval, would create a tax credit for small businesses who hire a full-time employee with a disability. This incentive is meant to help curb the high unemployment rate of the disabled throughout the state. After Cuomo originally vetoed this bill, few changes were made to address some of his concerns.

The New York Association of Independent Living has been a big supporter of both tax credit bills. They conducted public outreach initiatives to garner the support of the public.

As of press time, the governor has neither vetoed nor signed either bill.

Comic Book Super Hero Has CP

Software designer and author Farida Bedwei recently created the comic book Karmzah about an archeologist who becomes a superhero and can fly using her crutches.

Both Bedwei and the main character in her stories have cerebral palsy (CP). Bedwei said she was inspired to create the character and this series from looking back on her youth when she loved super heroes but there was never a character that represented her. She hopes this project will give her readers a character they can identify with and look up to.

Bedwei is a co-founder of a successful technology company and a disability activist. In addition, she had a novel published called “Definition of a Miracle,” which is based on some of her experiences growing up in Ghana.
The National Council on Disability (NCD) recently released the findings of a study, “Assisted Suicide Laws and their Danger to People with Disabilities,” of the country’s assisted suicide laws and their effect on people with disabilities, which concluded that the laws’ safeguards are ineffective.

Currently, eight states and the District of Columbia have passed assisted suicide laws which make it legal for doctors to prescribe lethal drugs to patients diagnosed with terminal illness and with a prognosis of six months or less to live, if certain procedural steps are followed. NCD claims that despite the belief that pain relief is the primary motivation for seeking assisted suicide, the most prevalent reasons are directly related to unmet service and support needs.

“Assisted suicide laws are premised on the notion of additional choice for people at the end of their lives, however in practice, they often remove choices when the low-cost option is ending one’s life versus providing treatments to lengthen it or services and supports to improve it,” said NCD Chairman Neil Romano.

The study closely examined the experience in Oregon, where the practice has been legal for 20 years. NCD found that the list of conditions eligible for assisted suicide has expanded considerably over time, including many disabilities that do not result in death when properly treated. They include arthritis, diabetes and kidney failure.

One key finding of the report states that insurers have developed a practice of terminating medical treatment, but offered to subsidize lethal drugs. Also, misdiagnoses of terminal disease and depression can cause frightened patients to hasten their deaths, although referral for psychological evaluation is extremely rare prior to doctors writing lethal prescriptions.

“As someone who has battled cancer and been given weeks to live and am still thriving years later, I know firsthand that well-intending doctors are often wrong,” said Romano. “If assisted suicide is legal, lives will be lost due to mistakes, abuse, lack of information or a lack of better options. No current or proposed safeguards can change that.”

NCD recommends federal research on disability-related risk factors in suicide prevention, as well as on people with disabilities who request assisted suicide and euthanasia. They are also urging greater federal investment in long-term services and supports.

NCD’s bioethics and disability report series focuses on how historical and current devaluation of the lives of people with disabilities by the medical community, researchers and health professionals perpetuates unequal access to medical care. Reports in the series include “Organ Transplant Discrimination Against People with Disabilities,” “Genetic Testing and the Rush to Perfection,” “Quality-Adjusted Life Years and the Devaluation of Life with a Disability” and “Medical Futility and Disability Bias.”
Advocates Call for Action on Paid Leave

The Arc is working to raise awareness regarding paid family and medical leave as it pertains to caregivers of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

One of America’s largest disability rights organizations, The Arc, released the results from the Family and Individual Needs for Disability Supports (FINDS) survey and the FINDS policy advocacy team gathered for a meeting at the United Nations in New York City.

The findings gathered from the UN, three organizations addressing vision loss, and more than 60 UN ambassadors and leaders from global non-governmental organizations gathered for a meeting and a unique dining experience at the UN in New York City.

Drawing on the newly released World Health Organization (WHO), “World Report on Vision,” the organizers called for immediate action to prevent the quickening rates of visual impairment and vision loss as we age. WHO claims that the vast majority of cases are avoidable with screening, treatment and access to quality care.

“Vision loss increases mortality risk, contributes to decline in physical function and reduces quality of life,” said Alan Morse, president of Lighthouse Guild. “By 2020, an estimated quarter of a billion people worldwide will have moderate or severe vision loss, and more than 36 million will be blind. These numbers are staggering and unacceptable. We must advocate to increase public education about vision loss; improve maternal health and nutrition; identify individuals at risk for, or affected by, vision loss; integrate vision care with all other health care services; and train healthcare professionals to identify and address vision loss.”

Guests at the dinner were blindfolded for the entire meal, only learning what they had eaten at the close of the evening. The menu was curated by American celebrity chef Christine Hà, who is blind. Known as “The Blind Cook,” she is a chef, author, restauranteur and winner of “MasterChef” season three.

Continued on page 14
Do you have diabetes, vision loss or healthcare needs?
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UNITED SPINAL NOW
U.S. Personal Care Attendant Shortage

BY JAMES WEISMAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

During Pres. Barack Obama’s last year in office he fulfilled a promise he made to the National Domestic Workers Alliance.

Domestic workers, i.e. household employees, had been exempt for decades from the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), which provides minimum wage and overtime protections for other American workers. The vast majority of personal care consumers are elderly people. People with disabilities are also consumers of personal care.

The long-term care business in the United States is substantial - approximately $310 billion in 2013. Twenty percent of this cost is paid out-of-pocket and private insurance covers another 8 percent. The remaining 72 percent is paid for by Medicaid. Medicaid pays for two-thirds of that care. Medicaid is a poor person’s benefit, so individuals needing personal care pay privately until they are impoverished, at which point, Medicaid takes over.

When Pres. Obama raised workers’ pay, there was a split in the disability community - not over institutional care (nursing homes) vs. community-based care (in the patients’ homes)— both sides agreed that homecare was more desirable and cheaper.

The split was over supporting the pay raise or not. Supporters of the pay raise said that homecare workers were underpaid and overworked. They were isolated in the homes of individuals and received little-to-no fringe benefits.

“Homecare worker” became employment of last resort. Immigrant women who had trouble finding employment elsewhere find their way to homecare. It is rarely, if ever, a career objective. Proponents of the pay raise pointed out that for millennia, those who carted away the dead and the garbage had the least desirable jobs in the community. Now, one must have a degree in mortuary science to be an undertaker and be eligible for decent pay and benefits. Similarly, sanitation workers are organized and receive good pay and benefits in a competitive job. Professionalizing the homecare industry would serve both those who need personal care assistance and those who provide it.

Opponents of the pay raise felt that the relationship between the attendant and the individual with a disability could be jeopardized by the increase in pay. Many of these attendants resided in the homes of consumers and provided 24-hour care, but were compensated for far less.

Nevertheless, they had roofs over their heads and deep personal relationships with the individuals to whom they were providing care. If they had to be compensated for more than eight hours, they would receive overtime pay, so opponents felt, states might mandate two or three eight-hour shifts so no overtime would be necessary.

Care would not be provided around the clock, but only during waking hours without new Medicaid dollars to pay for care, which would become more expensive with the pay raise. (Albeit, only to minimum wage and time-and-a-half.)

So, where are we several years later? There is a nationwide homecare-worker shortage plaguing those who need personal care assistance.

Even with the new FLSA protections, the job is just not attracting workers. The pay is not high enough, and the job is not desirable enough. People with disabilities, United Spinal members included,
Financial Stability Initiative to Expand

Citizens (CCD) and municipal leaders from several major U.S. cities announced the expansion of Empowered Cities, an initiative launched in 2017 to advance financial inclusion and economic opportunity for lower-income people with disabilities.

The $2 million, multi-city commitment will expand the initiative’s existing focus to include housing and employment for financially vulnerable households in the disability community, building on the partnership with National Disability Institute (NDI). More than 25 percent of Americans with a disability are living below the poverty level. In addition, according to research by NDI, many of them have difficulty managing and navigating household finances, benefits, insurance, medical costs and long-term supports.

“The intersections between housing, employment and financial empowerment for people with disabilities is a critical component to making sure that policies best serve their needs,” said MOPD Commissioner Victor Calise. “This new initiative will lead to research and best practices that will greatly improve our understanding of how to deliver quality and accessible services to the disability community.”

Each participating city will design a “roadmap to economic inclusion” with technical expertise and guidance from NDI and other partners, which will include an analysis of existing capacity, assets and gaps across housing, employment and financial empowerment. The roadmaps will recommend opportunities and solutions that each municipality can lead. In addition, program collaborators will organize and participate in national convenings to share best practices and inform policy and advocacy efforts.

“The financial needs and challenges of people with disabilities are complex and interconnected, requiring research-based solutions that traverse housing, employment and overall financial capability,” said Bob Annibale, global director of CCD. “This expansion of Empowered Cities will equip more municipalities to provide the specialized, holistic support that individuals with disabilities and their families need to build more secure financial futures.”

The expanded Empowered Cities program is based on what was discussed at a convening held in New York City in the spring, where commissioners from 10 mayoral offices and disability leaders gathered. Led by the Calise’s MOPD and NDI, the convening explored how to harness the expertise and efforts underway to take on the most pressing financial security issues facing the disability community.

“People with disabilities have gained increased opportunities for independent living in the 30 years since the ADA was passed. However, financial stability and security still remain out of reach for so many,” said Kristen McCosh, disability commissioner in Boston, Mass. “The City of Los Angeles has long recognized that people with disabilities and their families are fully capable of setting and achieving financial goals, particularly when supported with well-developed financial empowerment programs,” said Stephen Simon, executive director of the Los Angeles Department on Disability.

The national expansion of Empowered Cities builds on the first municipal model, Empowered NYC. The program launched in January 2018 with an initial $2 million investment from CCD to support the New York City and NDI to test strategies that advance financial inclusion and stability for the disabled and their families. To date, Empowered NYC has engaged nearly 500 New Yorkers in more than 875 financial counseling sessions.

Advocacy Group Calls For Action On Paid Leave

The Arc is working to raise awareness regarding paid family and medical leave as it pertains to caregivers of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

One in five Americans has a disability—therefore the caregiver crisis is affecting millions of people and families. However, paid family leave proposals have stalled in Congress for years.

Results from The Arc’s Family and Individual Needs for Disability Supports survey led the organization to call for caregiver policy reforms. It revealed that 80 percent of people with IDD live with a caregiver who is a family member.

Unlike sick leave, paid family and medical leave helps employees with longer term or more serious needs that require extended absences from work. Without it, many care-takers have had to choose between the well-being of their loved one, and the stability of holding onto their job.

“We call on Congress to pass inclusive paid family and medical leave legislation that recognizes the important role of all family caregivers. People with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families often experience greater financial insecurity and are more likely to face barriers to employment, making the impact of unpaid time off particularly devastating,” said Peter Berns, CEO of The Arc. “Siblings are increasingly taking on the role of primary caregiver as parents and grandparents age and become unable to care for children and grandchildren who have disabilities and important care needs.”

Advocate Marilyn Saviola Dies

Remembering Marilyn

“Marilyn was a fierce advocate for people with disabilities,” said ICS in a statement. “She was bold and spoke truth to power whenever she had a chance.”

“Marilyn spent her entire life breaking down barriers, improving access for people with disabilities and standing up for people's rights. Marilyn’s work spanned more than 50 years and touched all aspects of disability rights – accessibility, housing, health care, home care, transportation and employment.”

Always the Advocate

Saviola has served as the chair of the Manhattan Borough Disability Advisory Group, as a board member of the Association of Independent Living Centers in New York, a member of the New York City Medicaid Managed Care Task Force and a board member of DIA. In 2015, she received the Viscardi Achievement Award, and in 2017 she was inducted into the New York State Disability Rights Hall of Fame.

Saviola was a fierce advocate for people with disabilities, and her legacy will live on as we continue to make accessibility improvements that she spent her whole life advocating for.

Victor Calise, Comm. Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities

As Thanksgiving arrives this week, all of us at ICS are thankful for the life of our beloved colleague, Marilyn E. Saviola, Senior Vice President for Advocacy and the Women’s Health Program.

Marilyn was only a couple of years older than me, but I considered her a mentor. I remember her presiding at meetings at CIDNY, round face crowned by curls, sitting majestically in her massive power chair, with the ventilator humming. I was awed by the life she was able to build for herself, after freeing herself and helping to free others from the institution (Goldwater).

Marilyn was a fierce advocate who moved people by speaking of their experience of disability and helping to free others from the institution (Goldwater). Bemievert Richard Gottfried, and the facility stayed open.

Saviola’s Brooklyn apartment became a meeting place for the then-new organization, Disabled in Action (DIA), and eventually the DIA singers.

Saviola testified at public hearings and health-related forum forces about barriers to health care. In 2012, she co-authored the report “Breaking Down Barriers, Breaking the Silence: Making Health Care Accessible for Women with Disabilities,” with New York Lawyers for the Public Interest. The report led to an oversight hearing regarding the inaccessibility of the Women’s health care facilities and the allocation of public funds.

In her own words Saviola has said “Everyone benefits from accessible care and universal design. At some point in your life, you’ll probably need something accessible.” She is survived by a community of people who loved her.

Marilyn Saviola was the Executive Director of CIDNY from 1983 until 1998. Among her accomplishments at CIDNY was a strong intellectual advocate who moved people by speaking of their experience of disability and helping to free others from the institution (Goldwater).

Marilyn Saviola was a fierce advocate who moved people by speaking of their experience of disability and helping to free others from the institution (Goldwater). Bemievert Richard Gottfried, and the facility stayed open.
I was blessed with the opportunity to have known and worked with Marilyn during my time of employment at Independence Care System (ICS) but there couldn’t have been a prouder moment than when I presented her with the Women’s Rights Award several years later in 2013 at 504 North Star’s 12th Anniversary Awards dinner. It was very fitting for her to be honored on that particular night along with an illustrious group of disabled advocates, legendary Harlem luminaries and the many elected officials who all had a defining impact on the disability community in one way or another. Marilyn will be remembered as a woman who was ahead of her time, who never let her desire to enforce positive change for persons with disabilities take away from her uncanny ability to put a smile on someone’s face with her wit or from her stories about the disability movement back in the day. She changed the lives of so many that she influenced, but more importantly the ones for whom she helped to shape and mentor to carry on her legacy and the fight for equal and human rights for all. We’ll miss you Marilyn!

Christopher Noel, NYC Parks Accessibility Coordinator

I have known Marilyn over 40 years. She was a pioneer in disability rights, a good friend, very funny, and cared deeply about making the world a better place for people with disabilities. She will be missed.

Jim Weisman, Dir. & CEO United Spinal Association

Marilyn was my mentor from the time my 35-year-old twin daughters were toddlers. She was a true advocate and helped guide me through the disability world of advocacy. Always cheerful, wicked sense of humor and a brilliant mind. We will miss her and will never forget her.

Mary Somoza, Advocate

I met Marilyn in 1985 when I was 15 years old. She was a role model for a young man with a physical disability, when I thought none existed. She was the first person I met who was “living” with a disability. There is a void in NYC that cannot be filled.

Anthony Trocchia, Former Pres. Disabled in Action

“Marilyn was the fiercest advocate for accessible, affordable, quality healthcare, especially for women with a disability. Thanks to her work educating hospitals about the radiology equipment needed by folks who can’t stand for an X-ray, thousands of NYC women can now obtain a mammogram and have confidence in the results. Her tireless efforts saved lives and will continue to do so for years to come.”

Susan Scheer, CEO, Institute for Career Development

Marilyn made it easy. She had that quality that took you past the tubes and tanks and immediately brought you in. The person she was would always come through. She was warm and friendly and always advocating – an amazing person. I’m glad I had the honor to have known her.

Angela Melledy, Publisher Able Newspaper

Stars Come Out for Disability Inclusion

Film and television actor Vincent D’Onofrio recently conducted a workshop with members of the Queens Theatre’s Theatre For All (TFA) program which focuses on disability inclusion in the performing arts. D’Onofrio, best known for his role as Det. Robert Goren on the TV series “Law & Order: Criminal Intent,” has many acting credits to his name. The two-week training program is for early career actors with disabilities. Nineteen aspiring and working actors participated after being selected through an application process. The program was free of cost to participants, thanks to the support of the New York Community Trust. Courses include acting for the stage, movement, voice, business, improvisation and auditioning. In addition to D’Onofrio, instructors included actress Brigid Brady of Broadway’s “The Phantom of the Opera” and television’s “Gossip Girl.” TFA is led by an advisory council made up of artists with disabilities, advocates and educators. The theater offers accessibility services such as American Sign Language interpretation, audio description and open captioning. They produce new plays by playwrights with disabilities and produce plays featuring characters who are disabled.
Inaccessible Transit Can Be Hazardous to Your Health

By Joan Peters

Accessible transit isn’t just about being able to get from one place to another—it’s also about health.

Some aspects of a person’s health are considered “modifiable,” meaning they can be affected by medical care, behaviors or living environment. According to the National Academy of Medicine, generally speaking, 80 to 90 percent of these modifiable aspects relate to a person’s behavior, socioeconomic factors or their environment, and only 10 to 20 percent to the medical care they receive.

So, environment is critical to health. “Environment” includes air and water quality and the availability of healthy food and stable housing. These environmental factors affect both people with and without disabilities, although some people with disabilities may be more vulnerable to their influence.

For example, poor air quality will have a greater impact on people with asthma or other breathing disorders.

Likewise, socioeconomic factors, which include education, employment, family and community supports are also key. In the language of public health these are some of what are called the “social determinants of health.”

Transportation directly impacts these environmental and socioeconomic issues and so affects many aspects of health. Obviously, simply being able to get to medical appointments affects one’s health, but access to transportation affects most of the other environmental factors.

To take advantage of healthy food, you need to be able to get to, as well as get into, a store. Transportation is necessary for getting to school, participating in community and/or religious integration and full inclusion for people with disabilities, because “accessible, reliable transportation is necessary for keeping the needs of people with disabilities,” said Barbara (Bobbi) Linn, president of Bronx Independent Living Services. “About 20 percent of Americans have a disability. That is not a trivial number. Public health professionals need to understand the needs of people with disabilities. If we joined forces, we could sooner see better transportation and healthier environments for people with disabilities.”

Their questionnaire answers and their previous record on disability issues can be found at www.aapd.com/advocacy/voting/presidential-elections-2020.

Pres. Donald Trump and several other candidates have not responded to the questionnaire as of press time. However, information on their record on disability positions and/or legislation they may have sponsored is listed.

AAPD and NCIL wants this information will serve as a tool which voters can use when deciding which candidates have the strongest record on disability issues in the past and what initiatives they plan for the future if they are elected.

This information can be used when voting in the primaries as well as the general election next November.

In an effort to inform the public of the presidential candidates’ disability policy positions and priorities, the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) and the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) developed and sent questionnaires to all candidates for the 2020 election.

So far, the candidates who completed and returned the questionnaire are Gov. Steve Bullock (D-Mont.), Mayor Pete Buttigieg (D-Ind.), Sen. Kamala Harris (D-Calif.), Sen. Bernie Sanders (D-Vt.), former Pennsylvania rep. Joe Sestak (D), Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) and author Marianne Williamson (D).

INTERNET ACCESS

Continued from page 2

With the disability community, we want to address and break down the barriers to broadband adoption that are unique to this population. The first step is to address digital literacy issues and facilitate digital skills development. So, we’re going to create relevant training programs and then fund their delivery at locations across the country."

New York state Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli, left, recently held a press conference at the Lexington School for the Deaf in East Elmhurst, N.Y., where he also had an opportunity to spend time with students and the school’s superintendent Russell West, right.

The event was called “An Economic Snapshot of the Greater Jackson Heights Area.” It was attended by many political leaders such as Queens Borough President Melinda Katz, Assemblymember Michael Den Dekker (D-334), Assemblymember Catalina Cruz (D-Dist. 39), Councilmember Daniel Dromm (D-Dist. 25), New York Police Department Commanding Officer of the 115th Precinct Carlos Ortiz and Queens Chamber of Commerce CEO Thomas Grech.

After the press conference, some of the students performed a dance. In addition, the children all received certificates of commendation from DiNapoli.
Publisher Sets eBook Limits

Ocean County Library has voiced concerns regarding Macmillan Publishers' new policy of restricting public libraries to the purchase of only one copy of a new e-book title following its release, after which the publisher will impose an eight-week embargo.

“Ocean County Library’s top priorities are our patrons and the products we offer them,” said Christi Aldellizzi, a supervisor at the library. “We see our digital services as an integral part of bridging information and entertainment from these authors to our patrons. As a result, our library system will not be adding new titles from the Macmillan publishing house during the eight-week embargo.”

Mary Somoza receives her award from Bryan O’Malley, executive director of CDPAANYS.

“Macmillan Publishing’s e-book embargo limits the public’s access to information and education by denying public libraries the opportunity to purchase e-books in sufficient quantities upon publication,” said Susan Quinn, the library’s director. “This embargo will impact people who depend on the digital format for reading material, but who cannot afford to purchase these titles.”

This embargo will impact e-books only. Patrons can still reserve material in print, e-audio or audiobook. However, Quinn noted that many people with visual impairments and other disabilities rely on e-books for various accessibility features.

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IN THIS ISSUE
Federal Courts Deny Bi-Partisan Effort to End SSDI Waiting Periods
Advocates Want Drug Law And LTC Funding
Mental Health Week Association Provides Info. And Support Services
SILO Conference
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PAGE 11: DECEMBER 2019 NEW YORK ABLE NEWSPAPER
DE BLASIO URGES PUBLIC TO TAKE PART IN CENSUS

The New York City Department of Social Services wants to remind the public to participate in the 2020 census, which will begin in six months.

The census will help determine the level of Congressional representation, federal funding and other important things important to residents for the next 10 years. In 2010, the city’s census participation rate was only 61.9 percent, compared to the national average of 76 percent.

For information visit www.nyc.gov/census.

RESEARCHERS SEEK PARTICIPANTS FOR VCFS PSYCHOSIS STUDY

At least 50 people with velo-cardio-facial syndrome (VCFS) psychosis are needed to provide blood samples to create the world’s largest VCFS biobank.

Researchers at the Center for Precision Neuropsychiatry and the Virtual Center for Velo-Cardio-Facial Syndrome will study these samples to find out why people with VCFS often develop mental illness and how to better treat it.

To participate, visit www.vcfsmentalillness.org.

AAPD TO HOST PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE FORUM

The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) is inviting the public to Elected for Inclusion: A Presidential Forum on Disability Issues, which will be held in Texas on Jan. 13.

The event will give major party presidential candidates an opportunity to reform the early intervention program and draw on the expertise of individuals and agencies who have experienced the challenges of providing services to infants and toddlers with disabilities throughout New York do not receive needed therapies or preschool special education classes. They claim that this is the result of a provider shortage, partly due to individuals and agencies having left the field because of low reimbursement rates. For information, visit www.acinionetwork.org/letters/kids-cant-wait-2/.

PAGEANT ORGANIZERS SEEK ‘MISS AMAZING’ COMPETITORS

New York Miss Amazing is recruiting females ages five and older to participate in their next pageant on March 21.

The competition, which began in 2007, is broken down into many different age divisions. For information visit www.ny.missamazing.org.

DRA SEEKS INPUT ON LACK OF ACCESS AT SCHOOLS

Disability Rights Advocates (DRA) is investigating obstacles experienced by students and family members, who use mobility aids or have other disabilities, which prevent them from fully participating in New York City schools.

The organization will work to find solutions to help make city schools more accessible, as required by law.

For help email Rebecca Serbin, rserbin@draelagal.org.

TRAVELERS SOUGHT FOR ONLINE SURVEY

Airbnb, which connects people who want to rent their homes with people who need accommodations, is conducting an online survey of people with disabilities to learn more about what is important to travelers with disabilities. The survey is available at www.airbnb.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_CaTTjSALMyzn0PH.

NOMINATIONS OPEN FOR NYS DISABILITY HALL OF FAME

The New York State Independent Living Council has opened applications for the New York State Disability Rights Hall of Fame, created to recognize outstanding contributions of people with disabilities.

Three to five individuals will be chosen for induction. Nominations are due by Dec. 18.

For information visit www.nysilc.org nominate.

PUBLIC NEEDED TO ADVOCATE FOR PRESCHOOL REFORMS

Advocates for Children (AFC) of New York is asking the public to urge Gov. Andrew Cuomo and the state legislature to reform the early intervention program and the preschool special education system.

According to AFC, many young children with disabilities throughout New York do not receive needed therapies or preschool special education classes. They claim that this is the result of a provider shortage, partly due to individuals and agencies having left the field because of low reimbursement rates. For information, visit www.airbnb.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_CaTTjSALMyzn0PH.

LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE FOR YOUNG ADULTS

New York State Independent Living Council (NYSILC) offers Pat Figueroa scholarships for young adults, ages 18 through 28.

Awardees will receive up to $1,000 to attend conferences, training seminars and other events that will enhance their disability leadership abilities. The funding is meant to help defray the cost of travel, food and other out-of-pocket expenses.

For information email Brad Williams, bradw@nysilc.org.

OFT PEDIATRIC VISION LOSS COURSE AVAILABLE ONLINE

Lighthouse Guild, in partnership with the American Occupational Therapy Association, is offering a 90-minute online program for occupational therapists (OT) entitled “The Impact of Visual Issues on Child Development.”

It provides an overview of the visual system and describes the varied impact of visual impairment on children’s achievement of developmental milestones and their function in daily activities. It also provides tools and strategies for OTs to develop therapeutic interventions for children.

For information, visit www.lighthouse-guild.org/ce.

AAPD TO HOST ANNUAL AWARDS GALA IN MARCH

The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) will hold its 2020 leadership awards gala in Washington, D.C., on March 10.

Attendees include AAPD partners and supporters, as well as business and government leaders. Special guests and awardees will be announced soon at www.aapd.com.

JOB AND SNAP CENTERS RELOCATE TO NEW FACILITY

The New York City Department of Social Services and the Human Resources Administration have relocated the Bushwick Job Center and the Williamsburg SNAP Center from their present locations to a new facility at 2 George Street in Brooklyn.

The new modern space is expected to allow for enhanced client experiences. Operating hours will continue to be Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is similar to the previous food stamp program.

For information contact Vanessa Fuentes, fuentesv@dss.nyc.gov.

INFOGRAPHIC
DECEMBER 1

Through Dec. 20.

DECEMBER 2
Learn to Draw & Paint with Rich 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at ICS, 25 Elm Pl., 5th Floor, Brooklyn. For information call Laticia James 718 907-1622. Also Nov Dec. 9, 16, 23 & 30

Knitting & Crochet Group for seniors and adults with physical disabilities 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at ICS, 25 Elm Pl., 5th floor, Brooklyn. For information call Laticia James 718 907-1622. Also Dec. 9, 16, 23 & 30

VISTIONS Senior Speak Out 2 p.m. at 841 Broadway #301 13-14 Sts. For information call Eva Eason, 646 442-4156. Also Dec. 3, 9, 10, 16, 17, 23, 24, 30 & 31

DOUBLE GOAL SUPPORT Group 6 p.m. For information call 212 684-9366. Also Dec. 9, 16, 23 & 30

Stroke Brain Injury Survivor Support Group 12:15 p.m. at SUNY College of Optometry, 33 W. 42 St. For information call 212 938-4040.

SORT Support Group for Clutterers/Hoarders 6 to 8 p.m. at EIS, 80 Maiden Lane, 11th floor. For information call 212 308-2210.

Housing and Benefits Clinics, 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at CIDNY 841 Broadway #301 13-14 Sts. For information call Eva Eason 646 442-4156. Also Dec. 3, 9, 10, 16, 17, 23, 24, 30 & 31

DECEMBER 3
Art for Everyone 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at ICS, 400 Fordham Rd., 10th floor, Bronx. For information call Laticia James, 718 907-1622. Also December 10, 17, 24 & 31

TBI Support Group 12:30 to 2 p.m. at BCID, 27 Smith St., #200, Brooklyn. For information call 718 998-3000. Also Dec. 17

Lupus Alliance of Long Island/Queens Support Group/Meet and Greet 7:30 to 9 p.m. at NSLIJ Forest Hills Hospital, 102-01 66th Rd., Forest Hills. For information call 718 494-0786. Also Dec. 18

The Rainbow Meeting connection 1 to 3 p.m. at Independence Care Systems, 25 Elm Pl., Brooklyn. For information call Evelyn, 646 836-4078. Also Dec. 18

Navigating Your Child’s Disability: One-to-One Expert Assistance 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Information Commons, Room 2, Central Library, 10 Grand Army Plaza. For information call 212 677-4650 ext. 19.

Memory Arts Café free art events for people living with Alzheimer’s, caregivers and public 6 p.m. at NY Memory Center, 199 14 St., Brooklyn. For information call 718 499-7701.

DECEMBER 5
Peer Support Group 1 to 3 p.m. at BCID, 27 Smith St., Brooklyn. For information call 718 998-3000. Also Dec. 12, 19 & 26

Writers Workshop 4 to 6 p.m. at 841 Broadway #301 13-14 Sts. For information call Eva Eason, 646 442-4156. Also Dec. 3, 12, 19 & 26

Family Legos: Imagine It! Build It! For children and teens with and without disabilities 1 to 3 p.m. First Saturdays at Flatlands Library, 2065 Flatbush Ave., Brooklyn. For information call 718 253-4948.

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DECEMBER 6
Friday Night Hangout for seniors and adults with physical disabilities, 5 to 8:30 p.m. at ICS, 25 Elm Pl., 5th floor, Brooklyn. For information call Laticia James, 718 907-1622. Also Dec. 13, 20 & 27

DECEMBER 7
Family Legos: Imagine It! Build It! For children and teens with and without disabilities 1 to 3 p.m. at Flatlands Library, 2065 Flatbush Ave., Brooklyn. For information call 718 253-4948.

Movie Club, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at NAMI, 505 Eighth Ave., 35 St., #1103. For information call 212 684-3365.

Medicare Open Enrollment Deadline

DECEMBER 11
Touch Tour 6 to 8 p.m. at The Tenement Museum, 53 Orchard St., Manhattan. For information call 646 518-3038.

DECEMBER 12
My Time, Inc. Gala and “Fun” raiser Event honoring parents, grandparents, and caregivers of children with autism and other developmental disabilities. 7 to 11 p.m. at Russo’s on the Bay, 162-45 Cross Bay Blvd., Queens. For information call 646 812-0910.

Long Term Care Webinar presented by Long Term Care Community Coalition 1 p.m. For information visit www.nursinghome11.org.

DECEMBER 17
Call for Nominations to the NYS Disability Hall of Fame Deadline for information visit www.nyislc.org/nominate.

DECEMBER 21
Family Legos: Imagine It! Build It! For children and teens with and without disabilities 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Saratoga Library, 8 Thomas S. Boyland St., Brooklyn. For information call 718 253-4948.

DECEMBER 23
Navigating Your Child’s Disability: One-to-One Expert Assistance 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Information Commons, Room 2, Central Library, 10 Grand Army Plaza. For information call 212 677-4650 ext. 19.

Memory Arts Café free art events for people living with Alzheimer’s, caregivers and public 6 p.m. at NY Memory Center, 199 14 St., Brooklyn. For information call 718 499-7701.

MOVIE CLUB 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. first Saturdays at NAMI, 505 Eighth Ave., 35 St., #1103. For information call 212 684-3365.

ONGOING EVENTS
Free Workshops and Services at United Cerebral Palsy of New York City Family Connect Centers throughout the five boroughs. For information call 718 436-7979 ext.704.

Lupus Alliance of Long Island/Queens Support Group meets the 1st Saturday of every month, on Tuesdays 7:30 to 9 p.m. in Flushing. For information call 516 282-3142.

To have your event or meeting listed, send information to news@aol.com. The deadline for calendar items is the 10th day of the month preceding the date of publication. Calendar items will be accepted only if they have a specific date.
"The Dine in the Dark experience puts sighted people in our shoes and makes them aware of the types of challenges we come across on a daily basis," said Hà. "At the United Nations, ambassadors and other global decision-makers gained a first-hand appreciation of our sense of sight and what we can and should be doing to promote eye health for all."

"That 2 billion will be over age 60 by mid-century and aging is identified in the new WHO report as the primary risk factor leading to visual impairment should be a clear call to action for all of us," said Michael Hodin, CEO of the GCO. Representatives from the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB), the Lighthouse Guild and the National Council for the Blind of Ireland (NCBI) discussed key issues that need increased public awareness, such as the fact that vision loss is not just a normal part of aging and is largely preventable.

They also agreed that aging populations are causing the number of individuals with blindness to keep increasing, along with health care costs to nations. Attendees also called for a commitment to improving age and disability friendly cities that are accessible.

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are finding themselves in institutional care, despite their desire to live in the community and their states’ desire to facilitate community living.

Combined with a dramatic decrease in lawful immigration, the poor working conditions and pay of personal care attendants and the relatively low unemployment rate, it seems that the personal care worker shortage is a national problem that must be addressed by state and federal legislators. A system that professionalizes homecare while ensuring consumers control of the relationship between the care recipient and caregiver would be a perfect solution to the problem.

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Daniel Romanchuk of Illinois recently broke a record at the New York City Marathon by becoming the first American in the wheelchair division to win the event two years in a row.
The 21-year-old, who was born with spina bifida, finished in a time of one hour, 37 minutes and 24 seconds. He beat Marcel Hug of Switzerland by just one second.
Romanchuk accomplished a record-setting feat last year as well by becoming the youngest man in his division to win the New York City Marathon with a time of 1:36:21. Not long after, he also became the youngest to win the Boston Marathon. These performances as well as his recent win in the Chicago Marathon secured Romanchuk’s participation in the upcoming Paralympic Summer Games in Tokyo.
Manuela Schar of Switzerland won the women’s race in the New York City Marathon with a time of 1:44:20. Schar, 34, beat out Tatyana McFadden of the United States, who came in second place.
Romanchuk and Schar both won $25,000, which is much greater than last year’s purse. Prize money for wheelchair races, as well as sponsorship support has continued to grow in recent years.

USABA to Host Winter Sports
The United States Association of Blind Athletes (USABA) will host two winter sport events.
Their 13th Vermont ski festival will take place Feb. 7 to Feb.10. USABA will also host its Anthem winter sports fest, which includes skiing and snowboarding, in Colorado from Feb. 26 to March 1.
Individuals of all skill levels are welcome to participate, including beginners. To register contact Kevin Brousard, kbrousard@usaba.org.

Romanchuk and Schar Win Marathon WC Divisions

Parks and Rec Offers Full Slate of Programs
The New York City Department of Parks and Recreation provides many adaptive sports, as well as accessible parks, hubs, programs and events throughout the city.
Some of these activities include swimming classes, wheelchair basketball, goalball, soccer, rock climbing, chair aerobics and Special Olympics track.
For a complete list of accessible hubs and programs, visit www.nycgovparks.org/accessibility.

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