FIFTY YEARS OF DIA
Civil Rights Force Continues the Fight

By Karin Falcone Krieger

In 1970, a 22-year-old Judith Heumann gathered 80 friends and supporters at the campus of Long Island University, Brooklyn for what would be the first meeting of Disabled In Action (DIA), a group of volunteer, disability activists committed to civil rights and systems change.

Well before the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed in 1990, DIA pushed New York City to put accessibility into practice. Fifty years later, the civil rights organization remains committed to ending discrimination against people with disabilities and continues its mission of advocacy and partnerships. In 1970, Heumann, who

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The Disabled In Action Singers (DIA) held a reunion concert that was announced as their final performance in 2010, after more than 30 years of singing songs of human rights for all, from the point of view of people with disabilities. “We’re all getting older and it has become hard to get together for rehearsals and performances,” said member Anne Emerman.

DIA Singers who performed at that last concert included Amy Emerman, Anne Emerman, Audrey Schading, Charlie Gourgey, Danny Porro, Karen Luxton Gourgey, Kathy Lockwood, Marcia Bernstein, Marilyn Saviola, Mary Ann Marra, Maura Gregory, Mel Tanzman, Michael Imperiale, Sally Campbell, Sidney Emerman, Reid Devlin and Sue Reynolds, with Barry Kornhauser on cello, Robin Burdulis and Warren Shaw on percussion and Nancy DeLuca on harmonica.
When I was first injured in 1994, the first magazine about people with disabilities that I came across was "Sports & Spokes." After reading an article about sled hockey, I eventually fell in love with the sport and competed in the 1998 Paralympic Games in Nagano, Japan as a member of the first U.S. national sled hockey team.

The second disability publication I read at the time was this paper, which introduced me to the world of disability advocacy and shaped the ways I do my job today. "Able News" and "Sports and Spokes" have gone digital, but are still producing print versions for those who request and subscribe.

As we move forward in this increasingly digital age, it is important to remember that not everyone has the same level of access or awareness to these resources.

For the 78 percent of Americans with disabilities who are currently unemployed and many who are living below the poverty line, digital devices with Internet connection are difficult to obtain.

Segments of the disability community, especially seniors, find it difficult to embrace technology, even if they have access to devices, and qualified teachers are few and far between.

Virtual meetings have left certain people with disabilities behind because there is no digital option. More needs to be done to close the digital divide, get connected devices into the hands of those who need them, and ensure that all digital platforms are accessible to people with disabilities.

The Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) is working across New York City agencies to ensure that disability is included in these discussions, so that people with disabilities get the resources they need during COVID-19 and beyond. I hope to see a municipal WiFi network that will enable everyone to get and stay connected.

Please continue to stay safe and maintain your social distance during this time. For the latest guidance from the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, visit nyc.gov/coronavirus or text “COVID” to 692-692.

If you are a New Yorker with a disability who needs resources, visit MOPD’s website at nyc.gov/disability or the COVID-19 disability page at nyc.gov/disability-corona-virus. You can also call our office at 212 788-2830 (Voice Phone) or 646 396-5830 (ASL Video Phone).

As MOPD works hard to provide equal access to everything NYC has to offer, we need your help. The deadline for the 2020 Census has been shortened to Wednesday, Sept. 30. The Census helps our nation get an accurate count of our population. In NYC, an accurate count means that we get the funding and representation that we deserve. At this time, only 56 percent of New Yorkers have filled out the census. As we work to ensure equal access and representation for our community, it’s important that we are all counted.

If you have not already, please fill out the Census. The Census is easy, safe and completely confidential. You will not be asked any questions about income, immigration status, social security or criminal history. Visit My2020census.gov or call 844 330 - 2020.

Ciao,
Commissioner Victor Calise

The Census is Accessible
The online form is Section 508 compliant and is accessible to people using adaptive technology, including screen readers.

The census has guides available in 59 non-English languages, as well as Braille and large print. There is a video guide available in American Sign Language.

One can respond by mail, online or by phone in 12 different languages.

One can also respond in English by TDD at 844 467-2020.

The ARC has created a guide to the census in plain language in both English and Spanish.

What You Can Do
Complete the 2020 Census today.
It’s not too late; the deadline is Sept. 30.

Spread the Word
Help share these important resources and make sure every person with a disability responds to the census.


The Deadline for The Oct. Issue of Able Newspaper Will Be Sept. 15.
Adapt Forms New York Downstate Chapter

Long Island ADAPT recently announced its official merge with the New York City chapter and expansion to form the new Downstate New York chapter of ADAPT (DNY ADAPT). The advocacy organization now encompasses Long Island, all boroughs of NYC, as well as Rockland, Putnam, Orange, Westchester, Dutchess, Ulster and Sullivan counties.

DNY ADAPT is an organization that organizes disability rights activists at every level of advocacy. They partner with local centers for independent living, disability rights groups and other social justice organizations to ensure civil rights for people with disabilities. Their current working groups cover a wide range of disability rights issues that are specifically brought to up by members. Their “Save-Seniors and People with Disabilities Act,” a bill that would require the Social Security Administration to halt unnecessary activities like continuing disability reviews and collection of overpayments for seniors and people with disabilities; Remove administrative barriers to accessing disability benefits and health care and expand eligibility for Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income; Open a Medicare Part B Special Enrollment Period to easily and quickly enroll more people during the public health emergency; Incorporating for the Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission to educate seniors about coronavirus-related scams; Provide flexibility for the senior food box program to limit the number of times a senior must leave their home to access proper nutrition.

Bill Would Protect Disabled and Seniors During Pandemic

While some steps have been taken to help protect older adults and people with disabilities from the coronavirus, the prolonged nature of the pandemic requires additional action and investment. In response, legislators announced the COVID-19 Recovery for Seniors and People with Disabilities Act.

This act would require the Social Security Administration to halt unnecessary activities like continuing disability reviews and collection of overpayments for seniors and people with disabilities; Remove administrative barriers to accessing disability benefits and health care and expand eligibility for Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income; Open a Medicare Part B Special Enrollment Period to easily and quickly enroll more people during the public health emergency; Incorporating for the Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission to educate seniors about coronavirus-related scams; Provide flexibility for the senior food box program to limit the number of times a senior must leave their home to access proper nutrition.

Temporary Waivers Extended For Relay Services

The FCC’s Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau has extended temporary waivers for Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) providers to ensure relay services remain available during the COVID-19 pandemic for individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind or have a speech disability.

These waivers extend actions previously taken to grant TRS providers flexibility to deal with reduced staffing and increased call volumes, to enable more of their employees to provide services from their homes, and to expand the pool of contractors qualified to provide American Sign Language interpretation services for Video Relay Service, (VRS).

The action also extends waivers that enable Internet Protocol Relay Service communication assistants to provide service from home workstations and to allow registered VRS users to make calls to the U.S. from abroad during the national emergency.

Although many states have lifted “stay-at-home” orders through various phased reopening approaches, many restrictions remain in effect with uncertain timetables for their removal, and many employers continue to maintain much of their workforce working remotely.

“Weighing the need for vital communications services and factoring in the uncertainty surrounding the differing approaches to reopening across jurisdictions, we feel it’s clear this action is necessary to ensure reliable, uninterrupted TRS is available for persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, or have speech disabilities,” said Patrick Webre, chief of the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau.

ACI is one of 55 national and state organizations representing older adults, people with disabilities and home health care workers who have signed on to support the bill.

Browns Welcome Baby Logan

On July 1, Sofiya and Clinton Brown welcomed into the world their first child, Logan James Brown. Logan was born 6 lb. 2 oz. hard of hearing, deafblind, or have speech disabilities,” said Patrick Webre, chief of the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau. and 15 3/4”. Clinton Brown is a former athlete and ambassador for the New York State Games for the Physically Challenged. Clinton Brown, now 39, is a manager at AlticeUSA and Sofiya is a teaching artist.

“Mommy and Daddy were very appreciative for the wonderful care from all the doctors, nurses and staff at Winthrop Hospital for making Logans grand entrance so smooth and joyful,” said Clinton. “Logan and Mommy are doing excellent - eating, sleeping, and cooling.”
Alliance Works Toward Resource Acceleration

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he World Institute on Disability, the Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies and ONG Inclusiva have joined forces to form the Global Alliance for Disability Resource Acceleration (Global Alliance) as a call-to-action to galvanize disability-led organizations, foundations, corporations and other allies to identify needs and link partners to accelerate assistance and resources, both during and after disasters.

“The Global Alliance will serve as a matchmaker to identify urgent needs and accelerate resource allocation to disability-led organizations and advance inclusive disaster response solutions,” stated Carlos Kaiser, executive director, ONG Inclusiva.

In order to effectively accelerate resource allocation, the Global Alliance will engage regional, national and global disability-led organizations to jointly identify and meet needs of people, organizations and communities impacted by disasters through a virtual Emergency Operations Network. It will identify corporate and foundation resources with disaster-led organizations to meet critical needs. And finally it will shatter myths that people with disabilities are vulnerable, expendable, and a liability in disasters. The Global Alliance will serve leadership of multiply-marginalized people with disabilities even more disproportionately than other disasters with devastating outcomes,” said Marcie Roth, CEO of WID. “The Global Alliance is also being built as a resource for rapid response to disasters that will surely follow.”

“Disability-led organizations, despite consistently being first on the ground to help their communities in disasters, always struggle to meet urgent needs and fill resource gaps, rarely qualify for government funding to continue operations, and often lack bandwidth to compete for charitable disaster relief funding. The Global Alliance is a collaboration that recognizes that this exclusion must end and that we are stronger and more resilient together,” said Germán Parodi and Shaylin Sluzalis, co-executive directors of The Partnership.

“The Global Alliance will connect local disability-led organizations directly to funding partners that would like to target their support to better serve disaster impacted people and communities that directly. In this regard, the Global Alliance will serve as a matchmaker to identify urgent needs and accelerate resource allocation to disability-led organizations and advance inclusive disaster response solutions,” stated Carlos Kaiser, executive director, ONG Inclusiva.

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The software has been in development since 2015 and utilizes objective information directly from businesses to build its database. Businesses complete a survey documenting their accessibility factors (i.e. ADA accessible table seating, employees fluent in ASL, etc.).

The survey is reviewed and accepted into the 360-Access database and is then available to anyone using the platform.

Creating a business account with 360-Access is a very simple online process. Businesses provide their facility’s accessibility features, address and contact information. After businesses are accepted into the database, a 360-Access partner logo will then be provided to the business to utilize on their website to indicate their commitment to serving the disability community.

To learn more about 360-Access, please visit their website 360-access.com.

Online Service Highlights Accessibility

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 54 million Americans live with a disability. Despite these staggering numbers, and a discretionary spending budget of $490 billion, the disability community’s needs are often still misunderstood and unmet at restaurants, hotels, retail stores and more. That’s why Abator, a women-owned IT consultant company, has launched 360-Access, a revolutionary next step in the natural evolution of support for the disability community.

360-Access is an online service that allows businesses to submit dependable information regarding the accessibility of their establishment for those with disabilities to review on mobile and desktop devices prior to making personal arrangements.

A percentage of every 360-Access sale is donated to disability organizations.

Founded by Joanne Peterson and Madonna Long, both of whom live with physical disabilities, the company is the first of its kind on the market.

A core tenet of this alliance is a stated and genuine commitment to seeking, welcoming, and supporting the leadership of multiply-marginalized people with disabilities who are most disproportionately impacted in disasters. It will engineer individual and collective relationships to connect communities, accelerate solutions, measure outcomes and promote results. It will match corporate and foundation resources with disability-led organizations to meet critical needs. And finally it will shatter myths that people with disabilities are vulnerable, expendable, and a liability in disasters.

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To learn more about 360-Access, please visit their website 360-access.com.

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Tropical Storm Brings Particular Problems to PWD

By Patricia Horwell

New Yorkers received a stark reminder that we are in the middle of hurricane season when fast-moving Tropical Storm Isaias ripped through the region Aug. 2. And, thanks to winds of 50 to 65 miles-per-hour and 3 to 6 inches of rain, nearly 600,000 residents lost their power. In some instances, customers waited for power to be restored for 10 days. It’s difficult to be without electricity, especially in summer - no air conditioning, no lights. And for the disabled community — no electric to power up critical, life-supporting medical equipment.

Problems at Home

On Long Island, Lynn Drucker and her son Max Gold, an amputee who uses a motorized wheelchair, were without power for five days at their North Merrick home. According to Drucker, Gold has a condition that is a “rare vascular anomaly that causes tumor growth and usually occurs in the brain.” Known as arteriovenous malformation or AVM, in Gold’s case it affects the legs.

Gold’s wheelchair must be charged regularly so he can get around. He sleeps in an electric bed that has a specialized mattress — it rotates air. “When I turn at night the mattress alleviates different pressure points,” he said. “Most important, it raises my head and elevates my leg.” Gold’s right leg has been amputated and he has tumors in his left leg. He suffers from pain in his remaining leg and from his amputation. He also has some hearing loss and skin issues, which leave him prone to infection.

Drucker began making calls as soon as they lost power on Tuesday, the first day of the storm. “We lost power midday and I immediately started calling and texting PSE&G (Long Island) and my doctor to receive a quicker response. Gold remains unconvinced. "If I were to get that to them would they actually speed up the process or if there is another storm how much of a priority would we be the next time?" He is a full-grown adult and needs help getting out of the home in such an emergency. "I'm not a child anymore; it's hard to pick me up. Mom can't do it."

Drucker advises others in a similar situation to “Call. Call. Call. And call again.”

Critical Care Program

According to PSEG’s website, those participating in its Critical Care Program receive enhanced notifications when there is severe weather. “Every effort will be made to restore it [power] as soon as possible. However, there may be circumstances when timely restoration is difficult, particularly in the case of a severe storm,” the site reads. To participate, one must provide a medical certificate from a doctor, local board of health, nurse practitioner or physician assistant. Call 800 490-0025 or visit www.pseglny.com for more information.

But when he finally spoke to a representative at PSEG, Gold learned that a note needed to be faxed over to the company by his doctor to receive a quicker response. Gold remains unconvinced. "If I were to get that to them would they actually speed up the process or if there is another storm how much of a priority would we be the next time?" He is a full-grown adult and needs help getting out of the home in such an emergency. "I'm not a child anymore; it's hard to pick me up. Mom can't do it."

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“Wet Ink” Required

BY JAMES WEISMAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The success rate of Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) applicants is almost tripled when they are represented by attorneys and professional representatives than when they apply without a representative. Applying for Social Security Disability can legally use a representative familiar with the process to ensure success.

Why then, in this time of COVID-19, does the Social Security Administration (SSA) confront applicants who wish to use a representative with hurdles to overcome that it does not impose on the unrepresented?

This question is being asked as it relates to the “wet ink” signature requirement to appoint a representative. Electronic signatures are accepted by SSA for many other transactions. The SSA's rejection of electronic signatures violates the E-Sign Act and Government Paperwork Elimination Act. Imposing burdens on those who seek to be represented is unconstitutional as well, as it impedes those seeking to petition the government for redress of grievances.

SSA will accept electronic signatures on applications submitted by a claimant, but will not accept the same signature when a representative is appointed or submits the application on a claimant’s behalf. The public has not been afforded a right to comment on this substantive rule, which limits access to benefits without a statutory basis or adoption of a regulation.

Imagine you are a newly disabled individual with a spinal cord injury. The trauma, both physical and psychological, is overwhelming to you and your family members. You have a disability that is expected to last twelve months or more, and depending on the nature and extent of your injury and your past work experience, you may be unable to obtain substantial gainful employment and need SSDI, for which you are eligible because of the lifetime of taxes you have paid.

Shouldn’t you be able to get the best advice and representation to make your initial application successful? For some reason, SSA requires you to personally sign forms appointing a representative. It will reject forms electronically submitted by a representative, if it does not already have a wet ink signature, i.e. one signed personally by you — and you’ll have to start this process all over again. Why would your government make it harder for you to obtain an insurance benefit you have paid for?

It is likely that SSA will be forced to explain its position, as United Spinal Association will pursue this matter in court in the near future, if this problem is not resolved to our satisfaction. The National Federation of the Blind is also pursuing this matter legally.

Congress passed the Government Paperwork Elimination Act in 2003, which clearly instructs agencies to accept verifiable electronic signatures, and SSA does, in some cases. Slowing down an applicant’s case saves the government money, as does denying represented applicants the same rights to file electronically as unrepresented applicants. If the motive behind the “wet signature” requirement is to encourage more people to be unrepresented and thus unsuccessful, or just to slow down the process to save money, the requirement is mean-spirited and discriminatory and perhaps unconstitutional.

It is United Spinal’s intent to see this through to conclusion. We will keep you informed.
Compliance Projects On Track for Bronx MTA

The MTA Board has approved a contract to bring full accessibility to a major station complex and an additional station in the Bronx. The projects will bring elevators and other ADA features to the 149 Street-Grand Concourse complex on the 2, 4 and 5 lines and the Tremont Avenue station on the B and D line in the Bronx.

“This contract reflects our commitment to ADA and to making our system more accessible as quickly as possible,” said MTA Construction and Development President Janno Lieber. “We’re taking advantage of synergies between the two projects, and the current lower ridership (due to COVID-19) to deliver these projects faster and cheaper — a win-win for the MTA and our customers.”

“Making this station complex and station accessible brings us closer to our immediate goal of ensuring that no one is ever more than two stops away from an accessible subway station,” said Alex Elegudin, New York City Transit senior advisor for systemwide accessibility. “The 149 Street-Grand Concourse project will be particularly helpful for the many students of nearby Hostos Community College.”

The projects will feature design-build services in order to draw from innovation, enhance efficiency, and minimize duration, cost and disruption to customers, and will include at 149 Street-Grand Concourse, a three-stop elevator connecting the street, upper platform and lower mezzanine, as well as two elevators connecting the upper platform, lower mezzanine, and lower platform. It will also include at Tremont Avenue, one street-to-mezzanine elevator and two mezzanine-to-platform elevators and reconstruction of stairs to current ADA standards.

Construction on both projects is expected to begin in

Medicaid Cuts Coming – Will You Be Affected?

Significant changes to New York’s Medicaid program were implemented with the adoption of the state’s fiscal budget on April 1. These changes will have a direct impact on those residents seeking long-term community home care Medicaid services in the near future and may be particularly harsh on those elderly and disabled individuals receiving services in the community.

The most notable change to NYS Medicaid, includes the implementation of a 2 1/2 year or 30-month “look-back period” for residents seeking long-term community home care Medicaid services such as; personal care services; the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP); home health care services; private duty nursing; and the assisted living program.

Originally, the change was due to take effect beginning Oct. 1, 2020 however the New York State Legislature has postponed this rule until the new year. This means that beginning Jan. 1, 2021, applicants seeking long-term Medicaid home care services will be required to provide theirs and if married, their spouse’s bank and other financial records for 30 months prior to the date that Medicaid coverage is sought to begin.

The 2 1/2 year look-back period would apply to outright transfers to a trust. The 30 months of financial records will then be reviewed by the Local Department of Social Services (LDSS) or for those living in New York City, the Human Rights Administration (HRA). The agencies will take a thorough account of the financial record, looking for any uncompensated transfers of assets or “gifts” made during the look-back for less than fair market value.

Continued on page 12

Continued on page 15

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Six thousand five hundred people – that is the acknowledged death toll in New York’s nursing homes due to COVID-19. It does not count the thousands more who were transferred to and died in a hospital.

But 6,500 deaths didn’t stop Gov. Andrew Cuomo from going on national television and telling people they were safer in a nursing home than they were at home.

We know this isn’t true. We know that studies have found the average life expectancy in a nursing home is five months, while the average person uses personal care or CDPA for five years. We know that folks like Michael Bloomberg – folks with means – will never end up in a nursing home.

So why does the Governor say this? We don’t know. What we know is that while the disability community joins the growing chorus to make billionaires pay slightly more to fund critical services and invest in home care and CDPA, the Governor moves forward with cuts to Medicaid home care services that will cost people their lives.

In the middle of the pandemic, he cut funding for home care worker- and PA-wage subsidies by a quarter. Now, the Department of Health is moving forward with regulations putting in place the Medicaid eligibility cuts intended to keep people from qualifying for needed services, delay services for those who still qualify and force the most disabled into nursing homes.

The new regulations require assistance with three or more activities of daily living (ADLs) in order to qualify for home care. They ignore that it is much more cost effective, not to mention humane, to provide minimal services earlier, rather than wait until dramatically more services are needed after people deteriorate.

The regulations require anyone needing over 12 hours a day of services to submit to a “clinical safety review” to make sure they are safe in the community. They ignore multiple checks that take place before the authorization is ever made. They ignore that there is no data that says twelve hours is a magic number where safety in the community becomes threatened. It ignores the reality disabled folks know too well, the reality of Michael Hickson, who despite being a happy husband and father of five was refused treatment because doctors deemed him to have no quality of life solely because he is a quad.

These cuts are happening despite the fact that CDPA solves many of the health disparities the pandemic is forcing Black and Brown New Yorkers from suffering disproportionately from COVID. While the primary factor determining how many people died in a nursing home was the percentage of non-white residents, CDPA was resolving these issues. Language barriers, a lack of cultural awareness, hesitance to engage with the health care community and numerous other factors are eliminated when we put people in charge of who provides their services and how they are provided.

Instead of investing more in home care, and CDPA in particular, Gov. Cuomo is intent on protecting his billionaire friends. Instead of taxing the second and third homes of billionaires, or their yachts, Gov. Cuomo is choosing to tax us. Because make no mistake, the half billion dollars cut from home care and CDPA are a tax on disabled and senior New Yorkers trying to stay home and stay safe.

We can still fight. The regulations are not final. If you want to find out more and send your comments to the Department of Health, the law forces them to listen and respond. And we’ve made it easy for 

Continued on page 15

Look for our Magazine DESIGNS 4 LIVING coming out this July. Read our Contributors Stories, Accessible Home Design and So Much More. Visit us and view our E-Magazine at BRICKHOUSEDESIGNS.NET

Such a Pretty Girl
A Story of Struggle, Empowerment and Disability Pride

Nadina LaSpina, a disability rights activist tells the story of her liberation from oppressive standards of normalcy, showing that freedom comes not through cure, but through organizing to end exclusion from public and social life.

Available at NYU Press, Amazon.com & Local Book Stores
Practicing Social Distancing With Vision Loss

By Carol Moog, Diane Formoso, Jeff Ambury & Voytek Jacobi

Social distancing and other guidelines related to COVID-19 present unique challenges and possible safety hazards for people who are blind or have vision loss.

For example, signage or markers in supermarkets and pharmacies designed to help people maintain social distancing may not be readable or detectable to people with low vision. There are some tips that can help during these challenging times.

Speak Up
When in public spaces and if they think someone may be coming near them, people who are blind or have vision loss can speak up by announcing their presence to indicate that they are approaching. Verbal cues, such as “Please let me know when I can move up in the line;” or “My dog is not trained for social distancing is about the length of two full-size shopping carts. Ask a store employee for directions on where to stand at the check-out counter. Many employers may not be aware that their COVID-19 signage is not readable by people with low vision.

They should be encouraged to have large print, high contrast and color-coded signage.

Embrace Technology
Applications such as Aira and Be My Eyes, and using phone cameras for magnification can help with maintaining social distancing and navigating in public areas.

“Adjust Your Mask”
Masks should be put on and adjusted before leaving home. If a person has low vision and wears glasses, they should try to make sure the mask is not causing their glasses to fog up before they leave the house. It is important not to touch the mask after leaving home.

Stay Connected And Active
Social distancing does not have to mean social isolation. Now may be a good time for people to reconnect with old friends via phone or text. They can consider joining a tele-support group to chat with others in a group setting via phone. Religious establishments, schools and cultural organizations in the area may be offering accessible virtual services and e-learning.

People can also consider learning a new skill, through classes currently being offered via phone or online. Other ideas include, listening to books they have been hoping to catch up on or completing a project around the house can be helpful.

For more tips, visit Lighthouse Guild’s COVID-19 Programs and Services and Tele-Support programs or call 800 284-4422; MOPD (Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities) or the National Association of Mental Illness

Carol Moog, Diane Formoso, Jeff Ambury and Voytek Jacob are mobility instructors at Lighthouse Guild.

Recommendations on Curb Ramp Accessibility

Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer recently issued a report finding that only about 6 percent of pedestrian ramps at subway stations are effectively accessible to residents with impaired vision and those who rely on wheelchairs, walkers and other aids. The Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York assisted with the report.

Of the 248 ramps surveyed, only 14 were found to be ADA compliant. Of the remaining 234 ramps, 85 had one ADA violation; 83 had two violations; 38 had three; 19 had four; and three ramps had five violations. The most common violation was the lack of detectable warning that helps prevent individuals with visual impairments from wandering onto oncoming traffic or unexpectedly encountering the edge of a ramp.

In the report, Brewer urged that the City prioritize the accessibility of ramps around subway stations and other transit hubs, provide greater transparency on ramp status and construction, hold city contractors and third parties accountable for out of compliance work and establish a program of maintenance for all ramps now in compliance.

“As we observe the 30th Anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act, let’s measure our progress in meeting our responsibilities when it comes to accessibility.”

-GALE BREWER
Manhattan Borough President

As we observe the 30th Anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act, let’s measure our progress in meeting our responsibilities when it comes to accessibility.

“As we observe the 30th Anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act, let’s measure our progress in meeting our responsibilities when it comes to accessibility.

Elevators installed at subway stations are of no use if the pedestrian ramps needed to get to them are not functional, non-compliant with ADA standards, or worse, non-existent,” Brewer said. “Our investigation shows that the city has failed to meet its obligations to remove physical obstacles that restrict those with disabilities from participating fully in our City’s life. The City’s commitment on paper to make our streets and sidewalks accessible must be matched by actual improvements and we can begin by making pedestrian ramps around accessible subway stations and hubs the first priority.”

Susan Dooha, executive director, Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY (CIDNY) praised Brewer. “CIDNY applauds Borough President Brewer and her staff for their diligence in surveying the City’s curb ramps and monitoring its activity on correcting non-ADA compliant barriers. Their surveys show that the City is well behind in its responsibilities to ensure safe streets and sidewalks for all,” she said. “While safely crossing New York City streets may be guaranteed by current order, implementation is key. We hope the City will act quickly to improve, replace, and install new curb ramps so that all can safely enjoy access to everything New York City has to offer, without barriers at sidewalk curbs,” she said.

“Continued oversight of the city of New York and the MTA is critical to ensure that these public entities are complying with the law and addressing accessibility needs that are critical to the lives of people with disabilities. The Manhattan Borough President’s Office is an essential watchdog on that front and we appreciate this excellent reporting,” added Michelle Caiona, managing director at Disability Rights Advocates.
Thirty years after passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, people with physical disabilities remain largely invisible and unaccommodated in healthcare, receiving subpar services and enduring high rates of preventable illness and premature death.

There are many reasons for this. One is that data reflecting the unique and specific needs of people with physical disabilities is rarely recorded or counted, and much of what is collected isn’t very useful. For example, to some extent we can answer questions about the gender, age and employment status of people with physical disabilities, but we don’t know how many of these folks who use wheelchairs or rely on home care to remain independent – critical data points for both emergency and long-term planning.

Research, analysis and data collection routinely treats people with physical disabilities as an indiscrete subset of other populations – usually the elderly, or people with intellectual or developmental disabilities – rendering them invisible and distorting policy decisions and funding allocations. The care needs of a 90-year-old man with dementia who rarely leaves home are quite different from those of a 27-year-old woman with a spinal cord injury who works in an office and plays wheelchair basketball on the weekends. Yet, due to the failure to collect discrete data on the needs of people with physical disabilities, the services available to these two very different individuals are identical under Medicaid, the nation’s largest health insurers.

As just one of many examples of our data collection problem, the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) does include a few imperfect but potentially useful questions about disability. However, the ACS collects data from only a small number of Americans – with a target of just 3.54 million for 2018 – whereas the Bureau’s Decennial Census, which aims to count everyone, contains no disability related questions.

Right now, we are living through a global pandemic. While disability per se does not increase the risk of contracting COVID-19, many people with physical disabilities are at higher risk of severe illness should they contract the virus due to preventable underlying health conditions arising from the systemic lack of disability-competent healthcare services mentioned above.

In fact, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), adults with disabilities are three times more likely than the general population to have heart disease, stroke, diabetes or cancer. Yet we were months into the pandemic before the CDC added a single question related to disability to its COVID-19 case report form.

To ignore disability in data collection and research is to ignore a factor that amplifies all of the other risks arising from social disparities. Without a systemic shift and commitment to collect and report essential data on this population, it will continue to be impossible to appropriately allocate resources or implement strategies that address the needs of the millions of Americans living with a physical disability today and in the future.

Regina Martinez-Estela is Co-President of Independence Care System (ICS), the first and only health home program designated as disability expert by the state of New York. For more than 20 years, ICS has helped thousands of New Yorkers with physical disabilities remain independent, at home, in their communities.

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We Can Help!!
Continued from page 1

when he was recruiting people for a demonstration against Pres. Nixon at Federal Plaza in Manhattan to protest the veto of the Rehabilitation Act, which contained Section 504, the first civil rights language preventing discrimination against people with disabilities that was built into any law,” Figueroa said.

“We marched from Federal Plaza in downtown Manhattan up to Nixon’s campaign headquarters on 52nd St. at the cross [Hotel], because he was running for reelection, and we took over the headquarters. DIA organized that with the Vietnam Veterans Association. DIA reached across and worked with different folks; it wasn’t exclusive to certain disabilities and that was one of the most progressive and important things about it.

“I was at DIA demonstrations when they rationed gasoline. The only access to transportation at that time was if you had your own car. We were very involved with accessible transit demonstrations. We had demonstrations at the United Nations Plaza. We blocked traffic there. We blocked traffic on Madison Avenue a couple of times; we were at the governor’s office; we had many, many demonstrations,” she said, laughing.

Willowbrook

“During the exposure of what happened at Willowbrook, DIA worked closely with advocates from the developmental disabilities community. We had created parent advocacy coalitions in a couple of the different boroughs to do advocacy to get people out of institutional settings. We are fighting for that to this day... It was that cross-disability perspective and always looking at the bigger picture. It wasn’t about taking care of me, like so many other organizations. It always had big ideas, bigger than who we were.”

Figueroa recalls how the systems advocacy of DIA and other groups resulted in legislation and funding to establish the first Independent Living Centers, with the Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York (CIDNY) launching in 1978.

In the early 1980’s the late Frieda Zames, a longtime member of DIA, was instrumental in pressuring the city to create curb cuts. Zames, Denise McQuade and Anne Emerman chose acts of civil disobedience on the first “Ride the Bus Day” in 1982, and received much publicity, pushing New York City to actually use their lift equipped public buses, without excuses like lost keys. Later, in 2001, Zames co-authored the book The Disability Rights Movement: From Charity to Confrontation with her sister Doris Zames. In it she documents these and other historic actions of DIA and other groups.

Buses

Anthony Trocchia, former DIA president, acknowledges the group’s long history of fighting for accessible transportation. “DIA’s most significant contribution has been to sue the MTA to get wheelchair accessible buses in New York City in the 1980s, which was before the passage of the ADA,” he said. “We now have 100 percent accessible buses. It was tough back in the ‘80s because every fourth or fifth bus would be lift-equipped. I am proud to say that, in 2020, New York City Transit takes its accessible bus program seriously.”

Phil Beder, DIA’s current treasurer and newsletter editor, has been involved with DIA since the early 1990’s. He compiled and updated a list of DIA’s past accomplishments and current issues which will be featured on their newly designed and updated website. “DIA pushed New York City to do things, pre-ADA, and they did!” He mentions NYC Local Law 58 which mandates access in common spaces in residential housing and businesses and facilitates building ramps on city sidewalks. “We filed the first Title 3 ADA case in the United States. DIA did that. After legislation, DIA president Anthony Trocchia, former DIA president, acknowledges the group’s long history of fighting for accessible transportation. “DIA’s most significant contribution has been to sue the MTA to get wheelchair accessible buses in New York City in the 1980s, which was before the passage of the ADA,” he said. “We now have 100 percent accessible buses. It was tough back in the ‘80s because every fourth or fifth bus would be lift-equipped. I am proud to say that, in 2020, New York City Transit takes its accessible bus program seriously.”

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Power Outage Causes Problems For PWD

Continued from page 5

Major storms. Evacuation from high-rise buildings is difficult enough for people without disabilities, but for those with disabiling conditions it can become a nightmare, even impossible.

According to Susan Dooha, executive director of the Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY (CIDNY) there are any number of implications, including notification and form of communication. A law-suit the advocacy group filed against the City was decided in CIDNY’s favor in 2013. Accommodations required by the lawsuit are still being put into place.

The City now has a website where residents can look up their address to determine whether it is in a flood zone and where there are shelters, including accessible ones, Dooha said. The shelter map lists some examples of reasonable accommoda-tions — where you can plug in your equipment or care for your service animals and where volunteers are responsible for removing all barriers. Some are removed through simple fixes and some are left to be fixed at the last minute.

Shelters Mandated

“Shelters do it because we made them do it,” Dooha said. She said accessible cots, raised toilet seats, walkers, medical supplies, power strips, food and refrigerators for medication are among the requirements.

Shelter workers have been trained and there is at least one already experienced with the issues at each shelter. You Tube and the New York City Emergency Management website are places where training videos can be found.

“We rely on public officials telling the truth and giving us the information we need to be safe. People with disabilities have to be part of their plan,” Dooha said. “Communications have to be clear.” Dooha sits on a city advisory board to offer insights to the planners.

It took seven years for the City to comply but now there are 71 shelters with accessible cots that were not there before.

Always a Struggle

“Every civil rights issue is a struggle,” Dooha said. “Here we are in 2020 still trying to integrate schools and mainstreaming kids. We have to be vigilant and keep on going.” Israel has experience with high rise evacuations and there is some guidance there, but there isn’t a widespread recogni-tion of that expertise. “We are...still by talking to reporters, educating people to write letters — tell their story. Do often change begins because someone told their story.”

Getting people out of their buildings is difficult. People are told to have a backup sim-ple fixes, but many people with disability live in tight quarters and don’t have the room or the money to have backup equipment and a stockpile of medication and other supplies. Many of the mobile vans don’t have wheelchair lifts and don’t necessarily know.

“For every emergency since 9/11 there has been a lack of sufficient preparedness for people with disabilities.” As a result of the lawsuit, city per-sonnel are going up to residents in high rise buildings during emergencies, many didn’t have water or food and couldn’t get down to get it.

“We still have broken side-walks and curb cuts near the shelters. It would be good to know that you can get there easily if dropped off by bus,” Dooha said.

New York has created an inventory of city vehicles that can be used in evacuations, but no plan to deploy has been de-visied, she said.

People need different kinds of accessibility. Many have invisible disabilities, such as autism, intellectual or men-tal health disabilities or have panic attacks in noisy settings and more. Those living in adult homes need to be evacuated. After Sandy some were sent out and became homeless. “Group homes and homeless people are serious issues and the city will have to be prepared that facili-ties might not be able to cope.

The struggle, however, con-tinues. “We never really fin-ished and have to keep moving that rock up the hill,” Dooha said. “In the past few years, we’ve seen challenges to the ADA. We have to keep up the fight.”

To register for priority res-ervation of power, customers are required to fill out and sub-mit a life support registration form, which can be downloaded at www.coned.com.

Emergency Management

Matthew Puvogel, is the individual preparedness specialist for New York City Emergen-cy Management. “I understand the issues,” he said. “I have a disability and a guide dog.”

Besides the supplies men-tioned earlier accessible shel-ters welcome service dogs and have a pet friendly room for those who bring other pets. A quiet room is on hand for those who cannot deal with excessive noise.

Information in Braille is offered as well as video inter-pretation services for the deaf. If someone requests in-person interpretation, it will be made available.

Puvogel urges people to plan ahead and check the evacua-tion zone finder at www1.nyc.gov. At the website, one can download an emergency app for mobile phones, view preparedness videos and register for emergency notifications.

To help those who might have difficulty getting out of their apartment building, he suggests, “Speak to your building manager regarding eleva-tor operations or homebound evacuation if you can’t contact the support system.” People may also call 311 to arrange assistance to an accessible evacuation center or hospital.

“Bring supplies if you can,” Puvogel said. But, accessible shelters will have some sup-pies.

BRONX MTA

Continued from page 7

About three months after a preliminary design stage. The Tremont Avenue project is ex-pected to take 24 months and the 149 Street-Grand Con course project is expected to take 35 months. The stations are expected to remain open during the project.

The MTA was able to negoti-ate for a shortened construction schedule and a favorable price by moving the work forward while ridership is down due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The $93.2 million contract will be awarded to Tully Construc-tion Company Inc. and includes an early completion incentive for reductions to the project duration and liquidated damages for extended durations resulting from con-tractor delays.

Work schedules and service plans will be determined and announced after a preliminary planning stage. The MTA will work closely with the contrac-tor and local community to minimize disruption to cus-tomers and neighbors.
VIDEO SERIES FOCUSES ON BOOKS
FOR KIDS WITH DISABILITIES

Books4TheDisabled is a series of videos that contain read-alongs of children’s books. The series will contain books read by and created for people with disabilities. The stories are engaging and the series exposes children to characters of all different kinds. They will see characters that they normally don’t experience in most stories for children. Characters with various disabilities and of diverse racial backgrounds are in every story.

The first book in the series is called “The Do-Over Day.” Written by Julia Inserro and illustrated by Miro Tartan, this book tells the tale of a young girl whose day goes horribly wrong, and how she wishes it could have gone differently. The videos are ASL signed by The Crom Saunders and captioned by Post Cap.

For more information, visit www.fun4thedisabled.com.

ARRANGE EARLY INTERVENTION EVALUATION BY CALLING 3-1-1

The Early Intervention (EI) Program provides evaluations and services to children from birth to age three who have developmental delays or disabilities and their families.

Families can make a referral by calling 3-1-1. To make it faster and easier to send and receive documents, families can choose to receive messages and documents by email by completing the Parental Consent to Use Email to Exchange Personally Identifiable Information form, or writing to their service coordinator by text or email and requesting messages and documents sent by email.

Families who choose in-person evaluations will have to follow health and safety requirements, including wearing masks or face coverings.

Families who choose evaluations conducted by video should have access to internet and a device with a camera that can connect to video, such as a laptop, tablet or smartphone. If an evaluation cannot be completed by video, they may be asked to complete the evaluation in person.

HOTLINE AVAILABLE FOR COVID-19 HELP

In light of limitations of response capabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies has established a hotline that provides information, referrals, guidance, technical assistance and resources to people with disabilities, their families, allies, organizations assisting disaster impacted individuals with disabilities and others seeking assistance, with immediate and urgent disaster related needs.

The disaster hotline is always available for intake calls, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 365 days a year at 800 626-4859 and info@disasterstrategies.org.

WORKERS’ GUIDE TO MEDICAID CODES AVAILABLE ONLINE

The New York state Department of Health Office of Temporary Disability Assistance Welfare Management System Workers Guide to Codes for Medicaid is available online at www.wnylc.com/health/file/721/?fp=1. It lists and explains hundreds of eligibility codes, also indicating restrictions or categories of an individual’s Medicaid eligibility.

STATE SURVEYS PWD FOR PLANNING ISSUES

The New York State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (NYS DDPC) is creating its 2022-2026 State Plan, which outlines the direction of its work for the next five years. While the NYS DDPC does not provide direct services, it does pilot new programs across the state to try to positively impact the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and people that support them.

As part of this process the state is seeking input from those most impacted by the council’s work, including individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, family members, caregivers, staff, advocates and others. The following survey asks what areas should be worked on and what type of projects should be focused on in the coming years. The survey should take about five to 10 minutes to complete.

To participate, visit https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2022-3026 DDPC-SP.

LIGHTHOUSE GUILD SERVICES CONTINUE DURING PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic presents particular challenges for people who have vision loss. Lighthouse Guild, the leading organization dedicated to addressing and preventing vision loss, has modified its programs and is continuing to provide services. Lighthouse Guild’s behavioral and medical healthcare services are available via telehealth for people with vision loss, connecting patients with providers from the comfort and safety of their own homes. People who are blind or visually impaired can access telehealth services or other Lighthouse Guild services by calling 800 284-4422.

TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL UPDATES PLAN WEBSITE

The New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC) is providing opportunities for virtual community engagement as it prepares its next Regional Transportation Plan, titled Moving Forward, Your Region Connected, for New York City, Lower Hudson Valley, and Long Island.

The site includes opportunities to provide input on the plan’s proposed strategic vision goals, and priorities and solutions for the region as they relate to safety and security; reliable and easy travel; planning for changing demand; reducing environmental impact; and resiliency. The site includes a video introducing the plan’s update.

For additional information visit the NYMTC plan update website at https://www.nymtc.org/planmovingforward.
Continued from page 11

DIA TURNS FIFTY

the fight begins.” That lawsuit, against the Empire State Building, won in 1992.

Beder said, “Most people come to advocacy with a personal advocacy issue, then they stick around to do more. We are a systems advocacy group, we take on the bus system - the court system. We are a volunteer organization with no paid staff. Everything we have done has been through volunteers and energy. People have to realize the fight isn’t over. People have to realize advocacy is so important. Activism is to make people have to realize advocacy is so important. Activism is to make people have to realize advocacy is so important. Activism is to make people have to realize advocacy is so important.

DIA either,” Ryan said.

Ryan was most personally involved in the many issues with Access-A-Ride. “When I started using Access-A-Ride in the mid 1990’s, I could not get a ride, ever. There were a limited number of rides, and you had to call 3 or 4 days in advance. People with disabilities live spontaneous lives also. That (DIA) lawsuit said that Access-A-Ride had to provide rides for every request that they got. They couldn’t say they had no more rides or not pick you up.”

“In the early 2000’s we were able to change the late cancellation penalty. If you cancelled your ride for the next day after 5 p.m., you could lose your privileges. Now there is a two hour window to cancel. We got that changed without a lawsuit by going to the Office of Civil Rights of the Federal Transit Administration and they recommended that Access-A-Ride change their policy, and they did. You don’t mess with the FTA, and you don’t mess with DIA either,” Ryan said.

DIA Singers

DIA continues to raise consciousness about disability rights for the general public through the CDs of the DIA Singers. The liner notes of “In Motion” the first of the DIA Singers two CD’s says, “At DIA Christmas parties in the late 1970’s Sam Anderson, Sid Emerman, Michael Imperiale, Karen Lutton [now Gourgey] and others were playing music together and thought it would be a great idea to share their music not only to encourage people within the disabled community but also to inform those outside it.

“And so the Disabled in Action Singers was formed. Soon this singing group became a prime tool to spread the message of disabled liberation as well as to raise needed funds. They sang in schools and hospitals, at rallies and parties and then began doing concerts, including performing at the Great Hudson River Revival (Clearwater Festival) and later joining Pete Seeger’s Coalition of Choruses... Like other singing groups with a message, they sing songs of peace, songs of love, songs of empowerment and liberation. What made the DIA Singers special was that they sang from the point of view of people living with disabilities who have experienced the attitudes which label them ‘other.’”

Victor Calise, Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities, and MTA Board member said, “It’s really important to have advocates push government to get to the next level. I know although it is sometimes frustrating on the City side of things, seeing what the advocates of New York City push for, in the end really makes sense.”

COVID 19 has forced DIA to place their in-person meetings on hold. They can be reached at 646 504-4DIA, Treasurer at disabledInAction.org, or at www.disabledinaction.org.

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SWM 71, looking for a phone friend. Male or Female.

I am a pretty Asian American lady in her 50’s. I look Latin. 5ft 5 inches tall, looking for a pen pal or companionship with a man age 47 to 62 yrs., who likes museums, comedy clubs, board games, nature, art, music, talking and golf. I am college educated . Please provide phone number and photo.

A397

SWM, 56, wheelchair user, seeks single female 40-55 for friendship and more. Into baseball, fishing, comedy clubs. I live in Sayville. NY. I do not drive. Send photo and phone number.

A396

Senior Female, Nassau, looking for senior male to enjoy simple things in life, family, hugs, walking WHLI, Platters.

A395

A God-fearing SBM, 41 seeking a God-fearing woman for long term relationship, and to spend the rest of my life with. I love going out to the movies and listening to music. I do not drive.

A394

TO PLACE AN AD

Just write your ad and mail it with payment and coupon below to Able personals, P.O. Box 395, Old Bethpage, N.Y. 11804 or email to ableangela@aol.com. We will assign an Able personal number and forward all responses to you. Be sure to include your name and address. Just $12 for 15 words plus $1 for each additional word to appear one month.

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MEDICAID CUTS
Continued from page 7

The look-back period will only be retroactive to Oct. 1, 2020, while the 30-month period is being phased in. A “penalty period” will be imposed for any non-exempt transfers of assets, during which time the applicant will be considered ineligible for Medicaid long-term community home care coverage. The period of ineligibility would begin the first day the applicant was determined for eligibility will be a transfer of non-exempt assets under the Medicaid home care system. Therefore, if an applicant transferred a sufficient amount of his or her assets, they would qualify for home care Medicaid without any waiting period. It is yet unclear as to whether those residents already in receipt of long-term community Medicaid services will be subject to the look-back on Jan. 1 or grandfathered in.

There are other changes too; one of which is a heightened standard in order to qualify for long-term services in the community. Starting October, the eligibility criteria will become more strict requiring assistance with two or more activities of daily living (ADLs).

There is an exception for individuals diagnosed with dementia or Alzheimer’s, which is anyone needing assistance with one or more ADLs. Plus this determination for eligibility will be conducted by an “independent assessor” contracted by The Department of Health.

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CDPAA
Continued from page 8

you. Go to www.StopLTCCuts.org. There you can read more about the new regulations and find out how to fight them.

Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.” But justice delayed is justice denied. CDPAA NYS is committed to bending that arc a little faster because we will not be denied justice. Please join us in the fight.

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CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING
National Blind Sports Week Begins Sept. 28

Join the United States Association of Blind Athletes for National Blind Sports Week (Sept. 28-Oct. 3), a six-day virtual experience focused on participation and awareness of sports and opportunities available to athletes who are blind and visually impaired. The week culminates with the 3rd annual National Blind Sports Day on Saturday, Oct. 3.

National Blind Sports Week celebrates the abilities of and opportunities available to Americans with visual impairments and increases awareness of sports for the blind. This year, to bring our members the best resources within the blindness community, USABA will also be partnering with other national blindness organizations for our virtual programming experience. Each day during the week USABA will host two virtual webinars and two Facebook Live experiences for athletes who are blind and visually impaired as well as their peers. Topics will be focused on sports and resources ranging from goalball to soccer and more, and presenters will be experts in their field, including national blindness organizations and Paralympic medalists from a wide variety of sports.

This year, National Blind Sports Day Oct. 3, USABA and partnering organizations across the country will host both virtual and, if safe, in-person experiences.

“Now entering the third year of this fantastic event, we are excited to expand the rich and rewarding experience of National Blind Sports Day to an entire week of immersive activities,” said USABA CEO Molly Quinn. “Recognizing that this year is like no other before it, we are hard at work putting together an ever-expanding schedule of virtual experiences with world-class athletes, coaches and organizations. There will be something for everybody to get involved with during the week-long celebration.”

For the past two years, USABA has hosted National Blind Sports Day at sites across the United States with 1,360 individuals across 68 events exposed to and involved in blind sports programs. Sport and fitness have the power to provide people who are blind and visually impaired with the framework to set goals, build a work ethic and live a healthier lifestyle. To learn more information on how to participate in National Blind Sports Week, either as an event host or as a participant contact Cat Bouwkamp at cbouwkamp@usaba.org or 719-502-5814. For more visit the National Blind Sports Week event page on Facebook.

Molly Quinn Named New USABA CEO

The United States Association of Blind Athletes has named Molly Quinn as the association’s new CEO. Quinn comes to USABA with more than 20 years of progressive experience in sales, sports marketing, and philanthropy.

In her new role at USABA, Quinn works with the board, staff, members and other stakeholders to develop, implement and achieve a new strategic plan to increase membership, expand programs, and develop new revenue streams. She will ensure a continued collaborative relationship with the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee, the International Blind Sports Federation and other NGBs, and will support the men and women’s goalball teams that have qualified for the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games.

Mark Lucas, USABA executive director, will report to the CEO.

“We are delighted that Molly will be joining the USABA team. We look forward to her leading the expansion of our mission to involve more children and adults in life-changing physical activity. Under the leadership of Executive Director Mark Lucas, we are grateful that USABA established the USABA Goalball Center of Excellence in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and has earned a well-respected reputation within the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic movement, the International Blind Sports Federation, and national blindness organizations,” said board chair Michael Bina.

Throughout her career, Quinn has established executive-level contacts and relationships across sports agencies, brands, national governing bodies, and non-profits. Prior to joining USABA, she was vice president, Fitness and Endurance Partnerships, with St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee.

At St. Jude, she identified and partnered with key global brands to diversify revenue streams. She revamped the charity’s largest fundraising event, where she increased donations to the St. Jude Memphis Marathon Weekend from $9.5M to $13M. She instituted St. Jude’s endurance and walk campaigns making the Top 30 Peer-to-Peer Professional Forum Fundraising List for the first time.

Quinn has served on two boards - Achieve Kids Tri and Triathlon Business International.

“I am honored to serve as the first USABA CEO. This role aligns with my personal passion and purpose around sports and fundraising. My career has been focused on creating life-changing experiences and partnerships that drive new revenue through events, services, and sponsorships, which I will continue at the USABA,” she said. “I look forward to leading an incredible organization focused on providing opportunities for blind and visually impaired athletes to participate and compete.

Through inclusion and diversity, I want to be a bigger part of empowering people to live and grow through sport; leading the USABA’s mission will allow me to do just that.”

Diving Group Honored

Diveheart, a Downers Grove, Illinois-based nonprofit that serves people with disabilities through adaptive scuba and scuba therapy, has been chosen by Sharecare to be a finalist in the Healthy Living category on Sharecare to be a finalist in the Healthy Living category on Sharecare to be a finalist in the Healthy Living category on Sharecare to be a finalist in the Healthy Living category on Sharecare to be a finalist in the Healthy Living category on Sharecare to be a finalist in the Healthy Living category on Sharecare to be a finalist in the Healthy Living category on Sharecare to be a finalist in the Healthy Living category on Sharecare to be a finalist in the Healthy Living category on Sharecare to be a finalist in the Healthy Living category on Sharecare to be a finalist in the Healthy Living category on Sharecare to be a finalist in the Healthy Living category on Sharecare to be a finalist in the Healthy Living category on Sharecare to be a finalist in the Healthy Living category on Sharecare to be a finalist in the Healthy Living category on Sharecare to be a finalist in the Healthy Living category on Sharecare to be a finalist in the Healthy Living category on Sharecare to be a finalist in the Healthy Living category on Sharecare to be a finalist in the Healthy Living category on Sharecare to be a finalist in the Healthy Living category on Sharecare to be a finalist in the Healthy Living category on Sharecare to be a finalist in the Healthy Living category on Sharecare to be a finalist in the Healthy Living category on Sharecare to be a finalist in the Healthy Living category on Sharecare to be a finalist in the Healthy Living category on Sharecare to be a finalist in the Healthy Living category on Sharecare to be a finalist in the Healthy Living category on Sharecare to be a finalist in the Healthy Living category.

Diveheart is an innovative and interactive online health and wellness platform providing an environment for everyone from consumers to health care experts to share. It partners with medical centers, organizations and experts from around the country.

For more information, visit their website diveheart.org or call 630-964-1983.

Molly Quinn

Molly Quinn named the new CEO of USABA. The organization serves children, veterans and others with disabilities through adaptive scuba and scuba therapy. It works with university medical centers around the country on growing and facilitating scuba therapy research and adaptive scuba programs while training scuba divers and scuba instructors on how to work with people with disabilities through the Diveheart adaptive scuba training program.

Sharecare is an innovative and interactive online health and wellness platform providing an environment for everyone from consumers to health care experts to share. It partners with medical centers, organizations and experts from around the country.

For more information, visit their website diveheart.org or call 630-964-1983.