IN THIS ISSUE

VOTE
AS IF YOUR LIFE DEPENDS ON IT

BECAUSE IT DOES!

JUSTIN DART • FATHER OF THE ADA

FOR INFORMATION ON CANDIDATES' PLATFORMS SEE ABLE'S OCTOBER ISSUE - WWW.ABLENEWS.COM - ARCHIVES
From The Commissioner’s Desk

This past October marked the 75th anniversary of National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). NDEAM is a celebration of American workers with disabilities and a reminder of the importance of inclusive hiring practices.

In celebration, the New York City Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) held a range of virtual events and activities centered on the theme “Increasing Access and Opportunity.”

Over the past month, MOPD held business-led workshops and panel discussions that focused on reasonable accommodations and disclosure, accessible hiring practices, securing remote work and the new job landscape post-COVID-19.

Although the month of October is over, our office never stops providing financial empowerment and employment resources for the disability community.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it’s more important than ever that we focus on providing people with disabilities with the financial resources that they need to live independently. This means adapting our programs to meet a changing landscape.

In 2018, MOPD created EmpoweredNYC: free, trustworthy financial counseling for people with disabilities. EmpoweredNYC is an initiative to help New York City residents with disabilities and their families take control of their finances and become more financially stable.

To make an appointment with Empowered NYC you can call 311, text 311-692 or visit NYC.gov/empoweredNYC. EmpoweredNYC was created by a group of organizations including Citi Community Development Fund.

For additional financial resources during the pandemic, the Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund created BankOn. BankOn is a safe affordable bank account where participants can receive SSI, unemployment, economic impact payments and more.

BankOn participants can receive payments faster and cheaper without having to leave home. For additional information on BankOn, visit JoinBankOn.org or call 646-362-1645.

Through programs like EmpoweredNYC and BankOn, people with disabilities have the resources to map out their financial future and plan for a safe transition back into the workplace.

For employment assistance, MOPD has created NYC:ATWORK employment program for New Yorkers with disabilities. NYC:ATWORK is the first public-private partnership that connects New Yorkers with disabilities to meaningful living wage jobs.

In addition, NYC:ATWORK provides professional development opportunities, skills workshops and more programs that help people with disabilities in their journey to employment.

For more information, visit nyc.gov/nycatwork or call 212-788-2830 and press 4.

With more people with disabilities in the workplace, there is a louder voice in the room ensuring that products and services are accessible for the disability community. As we continue to move the needle on reducing the unemployment rate of people with disabilities, we are also reinforcing the creation of a more accessible future.

Please reach out to MOPD if we can be of any further assistance during this time. Remember to wear face coverings, keep your social distance and follow all applicable public health guidance to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Gregory Mansfield
@GHMansfield

Disability rights is on the ballot. Health care, including coverage of pre-existing conditions with no annual or lifetime caps, is on the ballot.

The survival of disabled people is on the ballot.

Vote

Gregory Mansfield has a twitter following @GHMansfield He is a Disabled Lawyer - Disability Rights and Justice

REMEMBER TO VOTE
NOVEMBER 3 OR BEFORE

The Deadline For The December Issue of Able Newspaper Will Be Nov. 10

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Judge Amy Coney Barrett has been nominated to fill the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg’s vacant seat on the United States Supreme Court.

Senate confirmation hearings are over and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has said that the Senate will move quickly with a vote. At press time the Senate Judiciary Committee had planned an Oct. 22 vote with a vote by the full Senate within the week. Prior to the election, President Donald Trump nominated Barrett in late September to replace the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Barrett is a former professor at the Notre Dame Law School and is a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit.

AAPP, the Association of University Centers on Disabilities, the Autistic Self Advocacy Network, the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law and the National Council on Independent Living were among the organizations which sent U.S. senators a letter opposing the nomination because of Barrett’s direct hostility toward the Affordable Care Act and her record on many issues that would harm people with disabilities. The disability community had called for a national call-in day on Oc. 12 to voice opposition to her confirmation.

Ginsburg, whose opinions were dissimilar to Barrett’s, wrote the majority opinion in the landmark 1999 ruling in Olmstead v. L.C., which affirmed the right of people with disabilities to live in the community.

Disability Groups Oppose Barrett Appointment

Repeal of ACA Would Hurt People With Disabilities

Since the passing of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Pres. Donald Trump and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell have been scrambling to fill her seat with a conservative justice who will side with them in repealing the Affordable Care Act in California v. Texas, which the court will hear on Nov. 10.

The possible repeal of the ACA comes as the disability community is expected to grow by the greatest number of people in 30 years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Insurers will likely now consider the more than 7 million people who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 to have a pre-existing condition, potentially leaving them unable to obtain or maintain insurance if the ACA is repealed.

According to Rebecca Cokley, director of the Disability Justice Initiative at the Center for American Progress, the consequences of ACA’s repeal are many, including the following:

Hurting young adults with disabilities, who would no longer be eligible to stay on their parents’ plans until the age of 26, possibly leading to a return to institutionalization for some members of the disability community.

Eliminating support for survivors of interpersonal or gender-based violence, many of whom are members of the disability community.

Returning to annual or lifetime caps on coverage. Many disabled people, including disabled children, reached these caps at young ages, putting a huge financial burden on themselves and their families and sometimes leading to institutionalization.

Limiting many disabled people’s access to Medicaid.

Erasing the ACA’s essential health benefits provisions, which ensure that all Americans are covered for disabilities such as behavioral health issues and chronic health conditions such as diabetes.

AAPP Urges Accessible Voting

The American Association of People with Disabilities published a nonpartisan policy report, COVID-19 and the Disability Vote, urging federal, state and local governments to take action and ensure voters can cast a ballot safely, accessibly and securely in the 2020 general election.

This report explores how COVID-19 has both created and worsened a variety of accessibility barriers that disenfranchise voters with disabilities. For many people with disabilities who face a higher health risk from COVID-19, in-person voting is too risky.

However, vote-by-mail and absentee voting present other accessibility barriers to voters with disabilities. Nationwide, disability and voting rights organizations are already engaged in advocacy and litigation to fight voter suppression.

This election season will be remembered for taking place during a global public health crisis, outrage over systemic racial injustice, natural disasters across the U.S., and a hyper-polarized political climate” said Maria Town, president and CEO of AAPP.

This report outlines key actions that federal, state, and local governments must take to safeguard the democracy during a public health crisis. Many states have already adopted a few of these policies. In 2020, 38 million with disabilities are eligible to vote.

Voting Tips

Voters must be 18 years old but can register at 16 and 17. They must live at address for 30 days prior to election day. Anyone in jail awaiting a felony trial may vote. Past felons may vote. Only a judge can make decision that someone is not competent to vote.

People with disabilities must have a right to access at the polling site. Someone may help mark a ballot. If a voter’s name is not listed at their polling site they have the right to request a provisional ballot. Everyone can always ask for help at the polling site.

The accessible voting machine will only mark the ballot. The voter must submit it.

For more information visit www.votesmart.org.

Father Has Pride and Gratitude

Former Philadelphia 76ers Coach Brett Brown watches his daughter Julia work the cash register at GET Cafe. Julia, 24, is Brown’s oldest daughter. Her developmental disabilities don’t stop her from performing her duties of making coffee, working the cash register and washing dishes at the café.

GET Café is a coffee shop with a commitment to the gainful employment of individuals of all abilities. Julia enjoys serving the customers “because they’re so nice.”

Brett jokes that since she has a job and he doesn’t, she had to pay the electric bill, while being grateful the job has given her “a great self-worth that she never had before.”

Information was taken from an article by David Block in the Main Line Times, a Pennsylvania newspaper.

To read the story, visit https://www.mainlinelinetimes/former-sixers-coach-brett-brown-takes-special-pride-in-his-daughter-s-work/article_45a76d04-09c9-11eb-809d-fb-c51b378d3e.html.
ADAPT Demands COVID Relief Funding

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DAPT, the nation’s largest grassroots disability rights activist organization, is demanding Congress include significant funding in a new COVID relief package to stem the flood of deaths that have occurred in congregate settings during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The funding is vital for preventing the forced institutionalization that has led to thousands of deaths in these congregate settings and for providing PPE and adequately paid caregivers to keep people safely in their own homes. Additional funding is also needed to provide affordable, accessible housing in the community.

A second ADAPT demand is permanent reauthorization of the Money Follows the Person program. And a third demand is no Supreme Court appointment until after the Nov. 3 election. (The Senate had scheduled a vote on the Supreme Court Justice in late October, after press time.)

Disabled and aging people in nursing homes, institutions, and other congregate settings have experienced severe outbreaks in institutional settings, which have meant many individuals with disabilities or age.

ADAPT, along with other advocacy groups contributed to the Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights issuing a bulletin that states “Persons with disabilities should not be denied medical care on the basis of stereotypes, assessments of quality of life or judgments about a person’s relative worth based on the presence or absence of disabilities or age.”

“ADAPT urges the National Academies to include individuals with disabilities and the care professionals who serve them in the first phase allocation of COVID-19 vaccine,” said ADAPT in their letter. “We further urge the National Academies to make vaccine distribution processes and materials accessible to all. It is both an ethical imperative to support this vulnerable population and a practical measure to mitigate the spread of the novel coronavirus.”

The Arc Supports National Coronavirus Commission Act

Members of the U.S. House and Senate recently introduced the bipartisan National Coronavirus Commission Act of 2020. The proposed legislation seeks to create an independent, non-partisan commission to assess the nation’s preparedness and response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Commission would also make recommendations to improve readiness in the future. The Commission has a specific charge to review the impact of COVID-19 on people with disabilities.

The Arc supports the bipartisan bill and believes establishing a National Coronavirus Commission is important to ensure that as a country we fully understand the extraordinarily detrimental impacts the pandemic has had on millions of people with disabilities across the country. The pandemic continues to disproportionately harm them. Recognizing where the country’s response has fallen short and committing to doing better in the future is key to truly moving forward in a way that is intentional and inclusive of people with disabilities.

“We are pleased to support this important bi-partisan effort to ensure that we have a full accounting of the National response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We specifically thank Sens. Menendez and Collins for ensuring that the Commission is charged with
MindFreedom Creates Video Addressing Racism

Chacku Mathai, Celia Brown and Ron Bassman of MindFreedom recently put a training video together that addresses racism and other forms of oppression.

Mathai is an Indian-American, psychiatric survivor/ex-patient, whose personal experiences with extreme states, suicide attempts, emergency hospitalization and being diagnosed with psychiatric and substance use disorders led him and his family to seek and engage alternatives to mental health and substance use treatment systems. He started some of the first peer support meetings in Rochester when he was 16 years old. In 2000 he collaborated on the initial rewriting and responses to the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities to eliminate the section supporting forced treatment.

He has been training on racial equity and engagement strategies and issues since 1996, with a special focus on psychiatric systems, integrating racial equity into rights-based systems transformation efforts including advance directives, rights protection and advocacy, employment, education, and community engagement.

He currently serves as a board member for the National Association for Rights Protection and Advocacy and is president of Friends of Recovery — New York. He works as a project director for the Center for Practice Innovations at Columbia University.

The 90-minute webinar is available at www.mindfreedom.org.

Autism Center Creating Anti-Racist Curriculum

The Brooklyn Autism Center’s mission is to help individuals with autism live better lives and is rooted in the belief that every individual should be treated with dignity and afforded the opportunities to achieve success.

Staff members have worked and created an environment that is free from racism, discrimination and inequality. But they realized they needed to do more. Several immediate actions have already begun, including discussions to identify ways they can take positive action toward change, ensuring that anti-racism is embedded in everything they do. Resources including charities to support and important books and articles to read have been compiled and shared. Staff members have participated in fundraisers, such as FastFeetNYC’s, raising funds for nonproﬁts that directly support the Black Lives Matter Movement.

To maintain momentum over the longer term, the center is seeking experts to help facilitate conversations about race and unconscious bias. Appropriate lesson plans, that integrate more black history year-round, educate students about racial injustice and anti-racism and teach individuals with autism how to respond to law enforcement, are currently being created.

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- Scheduling visits one at a time
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Regardless of Who’s Elected

BY JAMES WEISMAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

In a short time we will know who’s been elected, if there’s a new Supreme Court Justice, if Obamacare is likely to live or die, if there will be a national plan to combat COVID or more of the same, and if another COVID relief stimulus package, including state and local governments, is likely to pass.

Since the future of the country will soon be clearer than at the time I’m writing, let’s consider things we need, no matter who is elected.

We need faith in government. Without it, we are at sea. We need to feel good about government, for so many reasons:

If citizens have contempt for government, or don’t care about it, it will not attract the best and the brightest. Future Dr. Fauci’s will be less inclined to serve our country, because we’ve come to disrespect those who dedicate their lives to public service.

When we need to believe government, we won’t, at least not en masse. Enemies, corporate giants, media moguls and conspiracy theorists will fill the void.

Our volunteer Armed Forces will be threatened by citizen apathy or distrust of government objectives. Would you risk your life to serve your country if you felt ambiguously about its military goals or didn’t trust its leadership?

Assuming we can trust government, do we agree upon basic disability-related objectives?

The future, regardless of who is elected, will include people with disabilities. If the Affordable Care Act is maintained, pre-existing conditions will not prevent people with disabilities from leaving the Medicaid system and converting to employer-sponsored health plans, i.e. they will be able to work without fear of losing coverage for illnesses related to their disabilities.

We require a solution to the problem created by Medicaid homcare services, i.e. there are little-to-no services and supports for those needing homcare who are working. Extended life expectancies, improved therapies and access to enhanced transportation, communication and information technologies for people with disabilities make it possible stay in the labor force after onset of disability.

Generally-available community-based services and supports for working people with disabilities are a must. The future will demand that a source of funding be created to keep people with disabilities in the labor force and not used exclusively to pay them not to work. Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) dollars could be tapped for support/chore services and personal care services to keep people in the labor force, so they can be productive and pay taxes.

All new technologies, buildings and public transportation vehicles, INCLUDING AIRPLANES, must be accessible. It’s 2020 and that should be the design standard. End of discussion. Inaccessible technologies and services, buildings and vehicles perpetuate discrimination. Employment options are limited by inaccessibility.

Government can solve problems. When we elect those comp-

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Healthcare
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To make an appointment, call 800-284-4422 or visit lighthouseguild.org

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In person and via telephone and video sessions.

To access services, call 646-874-8545

Tele-Support Groups
Parents, teens, young adults and adults meet by phone or online. A licensed professional leads the discussions, to offer support on how to cope with COVID-19 and vision loss; to help find resources; to provide opportunities to network and find solutions for vision-related challenges.

Learn more or register at lighthouseguild.org/adult-tele/

We are a Medicare and Medicaid provider and accept many insurance plans. We are licensed by the NYS Office of Mental Health (OMH).
**OBITUARY**

**Activist for Disabled, Bob Schoenfeld, Dies**

By Allison Howe

Bob Schoenfeld was born in the Bronx in 1941, and attended the Bronx High School of Science. In 1969, he moved to East Meadow on Long Island. He became an electrician and then started his own company that installed telephone systems. Most recently, when his health began to worsen, he moved into a nursing home. At this time, he became a member of Suffolk Independent Living Organization’s (SILO) Open Doors Program for people residing in nursing homes who want to try to go back to living in their communities.

“He was a great guy and a great advocate,” said Marilyn Tucci of SILO. “He used public transportation a lot, which I give him so much credit for.”

“It was ironic that after years of trying to help people get out of nursing homes and back into their communities that he should end up getting stuck in a nursing home at the end of his life,” said Downstate NY Adapt Member Marie Hickey.

Schoenfeld is survived by his son Howard, daughter-in-law Shani and granddaughter Zahava. His wife Pearl died several years ago.

Bob Schoenfeld and his wife Pearl

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“He was a patriarch for so many disability causes and so many transportation issues,” said Gina Barbara, co-coordinator of downstate ADAPT. Schoenfeld was the chair of the Accessible Transportation Oversight Committee (ATOC) for the Long Island MTA bus system (Nassau bus system before it was renamed NICE). Although paratransit offers the convenience of door-to-door service, the rides must be pre-planned and are often not on time. So, he was a strong advocate for equal access to the fixed-route bus system. According to Frank Ryan, Long Island MTA Bus senior director of planning in the 1990s, Schoenfeld wanted people with disabilities to have the option of using a bus-stop, with regular buses, which all have lifts.

“Bob wondered why people with disabilities had to be segregated on Able Buses,” said Ryan. “He knew all the routes and schedules and the ADA better than anyone I knew, so he would hold our feet to the fire. If he saw a fixed-route driver ignore a wheelchair user at a bus stop, he would take down the bus number and call us. He was a pioneer.”

Schoenfeld was involved in many causes and groups, including the 504 Democratic Club. He attended their meetings regularly and was very involved in several of their projects.

“In 2015, when I was vice president of 504, I organized the first New York City Disability Pride Parade, and Bob was the treasurer. He did a stellar job. I admired all the work he did,” said Mike Schweinsburg, current president of the 504 Club.

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Sue Austin, 55, an artist with a disability, created a wheelchair that allows its user to scuba dive. She went to school to study art and that other people felt differently. She began to realize that many thought of wheelchairs as restricting and taking away freedom. Seeing how others saw her, started to change how she thought about herself.

But she was determined. She had been working as a mental health specialist. When she was 29, she contracted an illness that attacked her nervous system leaving her paralyzed. Having a new disability, she could barely move around and felt powerless. She felt like her life was slipping away from her.

When she started using a wheelchair, “It was a tremendous new freedom... It was like having an enormous new toy. I could whiz around and feel the wind in my face again,” Austin said in a TED Talk.

She was happy with her wheelchair but started to notice that other people felt differently. She began to realize that many thought of wheelchairs as restricting and taking away freedom. Seeing how others saw her, started to change how she thought about herself.

Having a BA in fine art led her to begin using art as a form of therapy which enabled her to express herself.

Austin began to explore her wheelchair and play with everything it could do. She used her wheelchair to create patterns and art works. She would pour paint on the wheels of her wheelchair and move around making patterns on the ground.

Austin wanted to use this idea as a new form of art with her wheelchair. In the beginning, many said it would never work because wheelchairs weren’t designed to go underwater.

But she was determined. She worked with engineers anddiving experts to turn her vision into a reality. When she finished her wheelchair design, she used it to perform an underwater ballet which she titled “Creating the Spectacle: Finding Freedom.” It was through this project that she gained most of her popularity and fame.

Photographer Norman Lomax told The Independent that Austin’s underwater ballet “broke down a deeply engrained perception that I had of disability that I think a lot of us share.”

National Hall of Fame Honors Reader Inventor

In honor of Disability Day in December, the National Inventors Hall of Fame inducts Chieko Asakawa, inventor of the Home Page Reader (HPR). Asakawa invented the HPR, the first practical voice browser to provide effective internet access for computer users who are blind and visually impaired. It is designed to enable users to surf the internet and navigate web pages through a computer’s numeric keypad instead of a mouse.

The invention debuted in 1997. By 2003, it was widely used around the world. Asakawa and her team developed the HPR at IBM Research in Tokyo, combining existing synthetic-speech technology with an understanding of HTML programming.

The HPR enables users to independently navigate the web. It could speak text, frames, images and text links; describe graphical elements like clickable maps; allow users to understand complex tables; and differentiate content through devices like reading hyperlinks in a female voice and plain text in a male voice.

Blind since the age of 14, Asakawa’s experience informs her work. This includes a digital system to input and edit Braille, a network allowing Braille libraries to upload documents and books and a disability simulator that enables sighted web developers to mimic the experience of blind users.

Born in Japan, Asakawa earned her doctorate in engineering from the University of Tokyo. She joined IBM in 1985, and was named an IBM Fellow in 2009. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Achievement Award from the Society of Women Engineers. She also holds more than 20 patents.
November Is Diabetes Awareness Month
By Carmen Pal

For millions of people in the United States who have diabetes or pre-diabetes, improving health and avoiding diabetes-related complications are essential.

The good news is that there are new medications and technologies that can help people manage diabetes and improve their quality of life. One of the most common and serious complications of diabetes is vision loss. Careful monitoring and regular eye exams can help preserve vision.

The most important step is to have regular physical exams with a physician and regular comprehensive dilated eye examinations with an ophthalmologist or optometrist. Diabetic eye diseases, such as diabetic retinopathy, a serious eye disorder caused by damage to the blood vessels in the back of the eye, often have no symptoms in its early stages.

By regularly monitoring eye health, treatment can begin as soon as signs of disease appear, helping to prevent vision loss.

As always, anyone experiencing sudden changes in vision should see an eye care professional immediately.

Technology can help people with diabetes monitor their sugar levels in their blood if they are unable to use the traditional finger stick. Continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) allows levels to be monitored using sensors placed on the arm or the belly that collect data on a continuous basis.

There are also implantable CGM sensors that can be placed under the skin in the upper arm by a physician. The sensor, known as Eversense, sends glucose data to a transmitter worn on the skin over the implant and then to the system’s mobile application via Bluetooth.

While the finger stick remains the gold standard and the most accurate method for monitoring sugar levels, a combination of traditional and new methods can help people manage their diabetes in a more efficient and safe way. Talking meters that read sugar levels out loud can be particularly helpful for people with diabetes who have vision loss.

Mobile medical apps can help with key components of diabetes.

Brooklyn Autism Center Provides Training Videos
One way the Brooklyn Autism Center has been helping parents during the pandemic has been to provide customized parent training modules and videos to assist parents with how to best implement behavior analytic strategies that focus on skill development and the reduction of interfering behaviors.

Some strategies include how to use visual schedules, effective prompting strategies, teaching self-care skills, the use of differential reinforcement, easing transitions, tolerating non-preferred activities, staying on task and managing problem behaviors.

In addition, for many of the students, being able to follow health and hygiene protocols related to COVID-19 – wearing masks, social distancing, washing hands thoroughly – are no easy feat. Staff has worked with families to develop these skills to keep students and their families safe.

To further educate families on providing effective instruction, educational director Julie Russell and her team developed parent training modules, which include videos with her own daughter Sadie. The training includes how to use a token system, how to increase attending and focus, how to develop communication skills, how to tolerate termination of a preferred activity and how to develop instructional control.

Continued on page 14
Report Tracks Automobile Accessibility

In honor of the 30th anniversary of passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the American Association of People with Disabilities issued its first public progress report on its Automobile Accessibility Scorecard. The scorecard tracks progress by auto manufacturing companies toward design and production of an accessible vehicle that can accommodate people with a wide range of disabilities, including power wheelchair users, along 29 criteria. Currently, no manufacturer offers a fully accessible vehicle that does not require expensive aftermarket modifications for wheelchair users. Although autonomous vehicles’ (AVs) potential to remove barriers is frequently touted, as automakers pave the way with new concepts for these vehicles, it is crucial that people with disabilities are not left out and left behind.

This year’s inaugural progress report found that, although industry has not yet reached the point of significant design or production progress, multiple major auto manufacturing companies working on AVs are already tackling the challenges associated with accessible design and are expanding their accessibility outreach programs as they work on these problems.

Highlights from the report include: Automakers are broadening the scope of their outreach with disability groups with some automakers engaging with local and national disability groups in discussions design standards and user testing.

Auto manufacturing companies are forming internal cross-departmental staff working groups on accessibility; COVID-19 has impacted the speed of developments on accessibility research and development. However, accessibility remains a core commitment. The next step for accessibility work is to identify and address common barriers to production across the industry, and to work with industry stakeholders to address them collaboratively.

Many of these common barriers identified in the report are as follows:

1. Accessible transportation is a cornerstone of participation today and present options do not meet the accessibility communities’ needs. No major manufacturer producing a vehicle for sale to the consumer is built with accessibility as a cornerstone of the user experience.

2. Further, no major automaker produces a purpose-built light-duty vehicle that can accommodate a wheelchair user. The average wheelchair user is forced to spend $10,000-$30,000 on substantial modifications to purchase a vehicle that is accessible. This price tag is often too high for the average person.

3. For others, such as those in the blind community, who are currently unable to attain a driver’s license the AV technology currently under development by auto manufacturing companies holds the promise to help millions of people gain access to new transportation options. And with billions of dollars being invested in developing this new technology, this moment presents the opportunity to ensure that new vehicle designs — autonomous or driven by humans — are accessible to all.

The goal is full production of light-duty passenger vehicles that are accessible to people with a wide range of disabilities. As part of its role as convener of the We Will Ride campaign, AAPD developed the scorecard to track automotive industry progress toward creating an accessible vehicle. The scorecard was first announced in 2019, on the 29th anniversary of the passage of the ADA.

ACCESS-VR Holds Art Competition

Each year the Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation, in collaboration with the New York State Rehabilitation Council, publishes an annual report highlighting the council’s accomplishments. The council provides advice and support on behalf of people with disabilities and their families regarding the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services.

As part of the annual report artwork created by an individual who is receiving, or has received, ACCES-VR services is featured on the cover. The report will be posted on the ACCES-VR website and distributed to the State Rehabilitation Council members, the Board of Regents, ACCES-VR staff and others.

To submit artwork for consideration, email a photo of the artwork, signed application and consent form at http://www.acces.nysed.gov/to Jennifer.Semonite@nysed.gov by Nov. 16. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Look for our Magazine DESIGN 4 LIVING coming out this July. Read our Contributors Stories, Accessible Home Design and So Much More.

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COVID-19 – Stay Safe with Testing & Flu Vaccine

By Margi Trapani
Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY

As we get deeper into late fall and winter, it’s important for those of us with disabilities and chronic diseases to continue practicing prevention measures and to get tested for COVID-19.

As the colder weather increases and we begin to close our windows, get out less if we’ve been going out, and as our family members or others we live with are staying inside more, we have to become more vigilant. We’ve come up with a few safety reminders to help you stay safe this season:

• Stay home, especially if you are sick.
• Wear a face covering (if you can medically tolerate one) whenever you are outside your home and unable to maintain at least six feet of distance from others.
• Frequently wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. When soap and running water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol.
• Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
• Practice good respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes with your arm or a clean tissue (that you promptly dispose of), not your hands.
• Keep at least six feet of physical distance from people outside of your household. Especially avoid close contact with people who are sick.
• Get the flu vaccine.
• Worship safely - Avoid large gatherings, especially indoors. If your house of worship has reopened, wear a face covering, don’t share chalices or utensils and avoid close contact with others including hand shaking and hugging – wave instead. If you’re singing, you must stay at least 12 feet apart from others.
• If we begin to return to activities like visiting with friends and shopping, it is essential that we continue to take steps to prevent transmission of COVID-19.

Unfortunately, we have already seen upticks in the virus in portions of Brooklyn and Queens. To see the ZIP codes where the City has reported an increase in COVID-19 cases you can visit https://nycgov.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/lookup/index.html?appid=021940a41da04314827e2c782d3d1986f

It’s important that we do everything we can to keep ourselves safe and healthy, and to stop the spread of COVID-19. All New Yorkers, and especially people living in these ZIP codes, should make sure they are following COVID-19 prevention recommendations and get tested even if they do not have symptoms.

It’s also important to get a flu vaccine this year so that we can be as protected as possible as cases of both the flu and COVID-19 increase.

The flu vaccine does not protect against COVID-19 but it will help reduce the number of people that get sick from the flu, which includes many of the same symptoms as COVID-19.

Check with your doctor about the flu vaccine. People over 65 can get a flu vaccine that is specifically made for seniors. Most chain pharmacies have flu vaccines available, but call first to make sure they have enough and to see what kind of identification you need.

CIDNY is updating the information on testing and testing sites as we get it to make sure you have the most recent information on testing sites, geographic areas where COVID-19 is spreading, and on any changes testing protocols. To find a testing location near you, you can text ‘COVID TEST’ to 855-48 or go to nycgov/covidtest.

If you would like to receive weekly updates on where the mobile testing sites will be or would like to talk to someone about testing and tracing, please email T2@cidny.org.

You can also tell your CID-NY counselor that you would like to talk to someone about COVID-19. If you don’t have a CIDNY benefits counselor, call 212 674-2300 and tell our receptionist that you would like to talk to someone about COVID-19. A member of CID-NY’s T2 team will get back to you.

Tourette Association to Award Research Scholarship

The Tourette Association of America and the American Brain Foundation have announced the 2021 Clinical Research Training Scholarship in Tourette Syndrome that aims to recognize the importance of good clinical research and to encourage young investigators in clinical studies related to Tourette Syndrome.

The two-year award provides $130,000, including a $10,000 per year stipend for tuition to support education and research-related costs for a total of $150,000.

“The more we understand about Tourette Syndrome and Tic Disorders, the better and more effective treatment and care become for the community. To support this, we are committed to fostering cutting-edge research,” said Amanda Talty, president and CEO of the Tourette Association of America. “It’s our honor to partner with the American Brain Foundation to offer this prestigious scholarship in Tourette Syndrome study.”

Pre-proposals that describe the scientific basis and relevance of the proposed project are due on Feb. 1, 2021. Full proposals from finalists will be due on Dec. 4.

To apply, interested candidates should visit the Tourette Association of America website at www.tourette.org/american-brain-foundation-partnership.

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Depression Common in Alzheimer’s Patients

Depression is common among people with Alzheimer’s, especially during the early and middle stages. Treatment is available and can make a significant difference in quality of life. Identifying depression in someone with Alzheimer’s can be difficult since dementia can cause some of the same symptoms. Examples of symptoms common to both depression and dementia include apathy, loss of interest in activities and hobbies, social withdrawal, isolation, trouble concentrating and impaired thinking. The cognitive impairment experienced by people with Alzheimer’s often makes it difficult for them to articulate their sadness, hopelessness, guilt and other feelings associated with depression.

Alzheimer’s depression might look different than depression in people without Alzheimer’s. It might be less severe; symptoms may come and go; and a person may be less likely to talk about or attempt suicide.

Diagnosis
With no single test or questionnaire to detect depression, diagnosis requires a thorough evaluation by a medical professional. An evaluation for depression will include a review of the person’s medical history, physical and mental examination and interviews with family members who know the person well.

The National Institute of Mental Health established a formal set of guidelines for diagnosing the depression in people with Alzheimer’s. Although the criteria are like general diagnostic standards for major depression, they reduce emphasis on verbal expression and include irritability and social isolation.

For a person to be diagnosed with depression in Alzheimer’s, he or she must have either depressed mood (sad, hopeless, discouraged or tearful) or decreased pleasure in usual activities, along with two or more of the following symptoms for two weeks or longer: social isolation or withdrawal; disruption in appetite; that is not related to another medical condition; disruption in sleep; agitation or slowed behavior; irritability; fatigue or loss of energy; feelings of worthlessness or hopelessness or inappropriate or excessive guilt; or recurrent thoughts of death, suicide plans or a suicide attempt.

Treatment
Appropriate treatment for depression can significantly improve quality of life. The most common treatment for depression in Alzheimer’s involves a combination of medication, counseling, and gradual reconnection to activities and people that bring happiness. Simply telling the person with Alzheimer’s to “cheer up,” “snap out of it” or “try harder” is seldom helpful. Depressed people with or without Alzheimer’s are rarely able to make themselves better by sheer will, or without lots of support, reassurance and professional help. The Alzheimer’s Navigator, a free online tool, is available to help map out a treatment plan. Visit their website www.alzheimernavigator.org.

Non-Drug Approaches
Support groups can be helpful, particularly an early-stage group for people with Alzheimer’s who are aware of their diagnosis, and prefer to take an active role in seeking help or helping others; counseling is also an option, especially for those who are uncomfortable in a group. Scheduling a predictable daily routine and taking advantage of the person’s best times of day to undertake difficult tasks, such as bathing is helpful.

Making a list of activities, people or places that the person enjoys and schedule these things more frequently and helping the person exercise regularly, particularly in the morning is a good practice.

A caregiver should acknowledge the person’s frustration or sadness, while continuing to express hope that he or she will feel better soon and elaborate small successes and occasions.

They can find ways that the person can contribute to family life and be sure to recognize his or her contributions.

Family should provide reassurance that the person is loved, respected and appreciated and not just for what she or he can do now.

They should nurture the person with offers of favorite foods or soothing or inspirational activities and reassure them that he or she will not be abandoned.

Medication
There are several types of antidepressants available to treat depression. Antidepressants called Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors are often used for people with Alzheimer’s and depression because they have a lower risk than some other antidepressants of causing interactions with other medications.

As with any medication, non-drug approaches need to be considered and be discussed with a doctor to weigh the risks and benefits, as well as what type of monitoring and follow-up will be needed.

Kids’ Video Books Available
Books4TheDisabled is a series of videos that contain read-alongs of children’s books.

The series will contain books read by and adapted 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
FIRST RESPONDER TRAININGS AVAILABLE ONLINE
Niagara University First Responder Disability Awareness online trainings throughout the United States offer people with disabilities, advocates and first responders the tools they need to work together to improve outcomes during emergencies involving the disabled community.
For information on upcoming trainings or to request the scheduling of a new training, call Cary Newman, 716 286-8139.

AFB RELEASES INACCESSIBILITY REPORT
The American Foundation for the Blind has released the Flatten Inaccessibility research report, the culmination of survey findings from 1,921 U.S. participants who are blind or have low vision. Of those who participated, 65 percent of participants were blind and 35 percent had low vision.
Forty-three percent reported having an additional disability, with diabetes, hearing impairment, and significant psychiatric disorders being the most frequently reported. The survey investigated the experiences of these participants during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic to determine how they were affected in areas including transportation availability, healthcare, access to food and supplies, employment, education, and voting.
“While other research projects examine the risk to people with disabilities of contracting COVID-19, AFB and the other organizations behind this study had concerns about the quality of life for those most affected by community and public policy responses, such as reduced public transportation options, the quick transition mandating employees work from home, and school closings,” L. Penny Rosenblum, AFB director of research said.

ACB SPONSORS COMPETITION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
Blind and visually impaired young people can review audio described films in a competition sponsored by the American Council of the Blind – Audio Description project and the Described and Captions Media Program.
The Benefits of Audio Description in Education contest is open to those aged seven to 21.
Students choose an audio described film or video from thousands available through DCMP via streaming or on DVDs or borrow an audio described video or film from a library. Thousands are available on their website, www.dcmp.org.
Submit reviews in writing, in Braille or via an audio recording. You can register for the contest at www.listeningislearning.org. Entries can also be submitted via e-mail or postal mail to ACB-DCMP Benefits of Audio Description in Educa tion, 1703 N. Beauregard St., Suite 420, Alexandria, VA 22311 or jsnyder@acb.org. The entry deadline is Friday, Jan. 22, 2021.
For more information, call 202 467-5083.

HELP STOP SPREAD OF COVID-19 WITH FREE MASKS
The Spina Bifida Resource Network has acquired packages of five white cloth masks from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services “Project: America Strong,” which can be mailed to households.
The masks are free. They have a cotton face with polyester elastic and do contain silver and copper. They can be machine washed up to 15 times.
Persons with spina bifida or other disabilities or who live in households with a person with spina bifida or other disability and are in need of masks, please fill out the information and they will send you a package. Limit is one per household.
For information visit thesbrn.org or call 908 782-7475.

FLU VACCINE FIRST DEFENSE AGAINST TWINDEMIC
The threat of the seasonal flu virus and COVID-19 virus hitting at once is a real possibility say medical providers and public health experts. And the flu vaccine is the first defense. Hospital leaders and county health officials from the nine counties east and north of New York City recently launched a campaign to raise awareness about this possibility and the importance of getting a flu vaccine now.
The campaign is sponsored by the Urban Hospital Alliance of New York State and the New York State Association of County Health Officials. Its messages are reaching residents in Westches ter, Rockland, Orange, Putnam, Sullivan, Dutchess, Ulster, Suffolk, and Nassau counties.
“We’re entering flu season at a time when COVID-19 activity is on the rise, making it more important than ever to develop and follow a wellness plan. We strongly encourage everyone to talk with their health care provider now and put together a plan that gives them the best chance to stay healthy through the fall and winter,” said Sarah Ravenhall, executive director of NYSACHO.
“Your provider will help determine the best courses of action and will identify strategies that are proven to help prevent the flu and COVID-19. Now is the best time to act.”

COVID-19 SCHOOL CLOSINGS LOOKUP
**PERSONAL PLACE**

**MEET A COMPANION, PHONE FRIEND, PEN PAL, OR EVEN A SPOUSE**

Professional man seeks nice lady for long term serious relationship. Please include phone number. Serious replies only.

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

A398

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 aged 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

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**DIABETES AWARENESS MONTH**

Continued from page 9

Diabetes self-management, helping with keeping track of insulin dosing, communication with caregivers and collecting, organizing and transmitting data to a health care team.

In addition to new technologies and apps that can be installed on smart phones to help individuals manage diabetes, there are new treatments and methods of delivering insulin that are more user friendly.

Everyone is different, so it is important that people with diabetes consult with their health care providers to determine the best plan for care for their individual situation.

For people with diabetes who have vision loss, joining a diabetes support group in their local area is a good way to learn from others and share experiences. Some of these support groups may now be meeting virtually. In New York City, Lighthouse Guild’s self-management diabetes education program, which is recognized by the American Diabetes Association, offers both in-person and virtual sessions for individuals with diabetes or pre-diabetes, providing guidance on practical techniques for taking medications, strategies for monitoring blood sugar and essential tips on making healthy lifestyle changes.


Carmen Pal specializes in internal medicine, endocrinology, diabetes and metabolism in Lighthouse Guild’s Health Center.

**THE ARC COVID**

Continued from page 4

reviewing the health and economic impacts of the pandemic on people with disabilities, a population that is far too often overlooked in the face of crises, this information will be vitally important,” said Nicole Dorvic, Senior Director of Public Policy at The Arc.

We are hopeful the bill will move swiftly through Congress as people with disabilities work to rebuild their lives.

The Arc advocates for and serves people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), including Down syndrome, autism, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, cerebral palsy and other diagnoses.

The Arc has a network of more than 600 chapters across the country promoting and protecting the human rights of people with I/DD and actively supporting their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetime and without regard to diagnosis.

**UNITED SPINAL NOW**

Continued from page 6

Committed to solving problems, they appoint talented people, whose only agenda is to meet needs. Public service is noble and should be treated as such.

The commitment to analyzing problems and developing solutions that serve people with disabilities and the communities in which they live should be acknowledged and respected.

Social workers, lawyers, teachers, rehabilitation and medical professionals, health planners, community living specialists, transportation providers, vocational rehabilitation professionals and benefits specialists have toiled in government service for generations, knowing that their work was worthwhile. Their passion has served our community well, but will be lost if we consider service to others for suckers only. The future demands better.
New study suggests that people with type 2 diabetes taking metformin appear to have significantly slower decline in thinking and memory as they age. While additional research is necessary, the study's results provide hope for a means of reducing dementia risk in people with type 2 diabetes. Scientists are planning a three-year study in people without diabetes.

The six-year study of older Australians with type 2 diabetes showed a connection between metformin use and slower cognitive decline. It is thought that type 2 diabetes or insulin resistance may play a role in the degeneration of brain and nerve tissues and there are more studies planned.

Metformin May Help Protect Aging Brains

Metformin is an inexpensive drug and has few side effects. It is thought that type 2 diabetes or insulin resistance may play a role in the degeneration of brain and nerve tissues and there are more studies planned.

NYAPRS Awards Julie Erdman & Federation of Organizations

Julie Burroughs Erdman, who is a peer specialist in Federation’s Home and Community Based Service program, is the recipient of the Jason Brody Faith and Fellowship Award, which recognizes an individual who has been an extraordinary source of kindness, caring and devotion to people within the mental health community.

“We at Federation of Organizations encourage the people they support and the staff to speak up,” NYAPRS said in a statement announcing the awards, for which Federation was nominated by one of its peer specialists. Regarding Erdman’s selection, the NYAPRS statement read, “Julie makes a point of staying informed of current events and the ever-changing system so she can support the people. Julie has a unique ability to always see people’s potential then support that person in bringing out their abilities.”

Erdman began working for Federation in September 2017 and was instrumental in the development and implementation of home- and community-based services. Her practice has always aligned with the HCBS philosophy that all individuals have the capacity to recover from mental illness and substance use and lead productive and purposeful lives.

 Organizations is committed to providing its clients with the supports they need to reach their full potential.
The State of Maryland Board of Public Works approved $1.8 million in funding for the city of Annapolis to acquire property on Bembe Beach Road for an adaptive boating center. The vote was unanimous and came during the Board’s meeting on Wednesday.

“The property is currently privately owned,” said city manager David Jarrell. The plan is for the city to purchase what is currently the Port Williams Marina, then lease the property to Chesapeake Region Accessible Boating to create an adaptive boating center to facilitate sailing opportunities for people with disabilities.

USABA was chosen as one of this year’s recipients for its use of adaptive sports to empower and support individuals who are blind and visually impaired. Programs support participation from individuals of all ages and abilities with a focus on each participant developing a healthy lifestyle.

“Winning the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Sports Award is an affirmation that the United States Association of Blind Athletes is building a culture of health and wellness for blind and visually impaired Americans,” said CEO Molly Quinn.

Diveheart Wins Sharecare Award
Diveheart is a winner in the 2020 Sharecare Awards in the category of Healthy Living for Diving Past Boundaries.

The Sharecare Awards promote and reward excellence for the best productions and programming in health and well-being.

Diveheart’s entry showed how chronic pain is relieved when two young men with spinal cord injuries join ‘Diveheart’ and escape gravity underwater. The award was launched in 2018 as a first-of-its-kind awards competition that promotes and rewards excellence for the best productions and programming in health and wellness. ‘Diveheart’ is one of 16 winners in the second annual awards across categories spanning various media formats and health topics.

Past Sharecare Award recipients include some of the most prominent names in health and health media, including acclaimed actress, producer, author, social activist and philanthropist Marlo Thomas; renowned neurosurgeon and CNN chief medical correspondent Sanjay Gupta; and various world-leading health advocacy and healthcare institutions.

The United States Association of Blind Athletes is one of the five 2020 winners of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Sports Award. The winners receive a $25,000 cash award.

Annapolis Gets Boating Center
The plan is for the city to purchase what is currently the Port Williams Marina, then lease the property to Chesapeake Region Accessible Boating to create an adaptive boating center to facilitate sailing opportunities for people with disabilities.

That long-term lease is expected to be approved by the Annapolis City Council. The initial lease term will be 20 years, with a renewal option after June of 2040. The terms of the lease will require CRAB to take on construction and maintenance, with necessary renovations to make the facility accessible to people with disabilities. CRAB buildouts will include classrooms and offices.

Mayor Gavin Buckley said, “this will be a tremendous amenity for Annapolis and another reason people call us the ‘sailing capital.’ I am happy that we can make adaptive sailing a priority.”

For three decades, CRAB has been operating out of a single slip at Sandy Point State Park.

CIM and USABA Marathons Canceled
The California International Marathon announced the cancellation of the 2020 event, scheduled for Dec. 6, due to the COVID pandemic. The announcement also effectively cancels the 2020 USABA Marathon National Championships that are held annually in concert with the CIM.

Plans are in the works for a possible virtual running event to be held nationwide.

USABA Marathon race director Richard Hunter runs with his guide, Scott Jurek, during the 2018 Marathon National Championships as part of the California International Marathon.