

AWARD WINNING New York **Able**



THE NEWSPAPER *POSITIVELY* FOR BY & ABOUT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

NYU HONORS

Heumann Speaks At Commencement



Disability Rights Activist Judith Heumann receives honorary degree at 2020-2021 NYU Commencement.

New York University (NYU) recently held a special commencement ceremony, honoring the classes of 2020 and 2021.

Some 10,000 students who received undergraduate, graduate and professional degrees amid the global pandemic returned to convene with more than 20,000 family, friends, alumni, faculty and other NYU community members in a first-ever evening all-university celebration at Yankee Sta-

dium, part of a double-header commencement day that included a morning ceremony honoring the class of 2022.

Judith Heumann, a decades-long activist who developed groundbreaking legislation supporting people with disabilities, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree (*honoris causa*). She delivered remarks on behalf of the honorary degree recipients.

“The last few years have been hard, and at times heart-breaking, no question about it. But like the finest of swords – or chocolates if you prefer – the tempering you’ve experienced in the forge of the pandemic has made you stronger, even when you might not always feel that way,” said Heumann “That’s why I’m so excited about the world you are going to rebuild and are already shaping with

Continued on page 15

IN THIS ISSUE

**The ADA
32 Years**
PAGES 6 AND 7

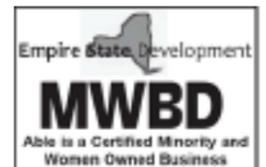
Roe vs. Wade Decision
Advocates React
To DOJ Action
PAGE 2

Subway Access
Agreement Increases
Accessible Stations
PAGE 2

Leading Age New York
Health Workers Advocate
For Nursing Home Residents
PAGE 3

NYS BOE Sued
Court Approves Online
Ballots For Blind
PAGE 4

Disability Unite
Festival Returns To
In-Person Event
PAGE 10



— **READ ABLE** —
— **FREE ONLINE** —
— **REGISTER AT** —
www.ablenews.com

Advocates React To Roe Decision

Disability organizations reacted after the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision to overturn the court's rulings in *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, ending any federal right to abortion.

The statement from American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD); Autistic Self Advocacy Network; Autistic Women and Nonbinary Network; Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law; Be A Hero Center for American Progress; Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund; Little Lobbyists; and Women Enabled International expressed grave concern and outrage.

"This decision overturns *Roe* and *Casey* and eliminates any federal right to abortion," the statement said. "In doing so, it puts many disabled people, particularly Black people, Indigenous people, and other people of color, LGBTQIA+ folks, immigrants, survivors of sexual assault, poor people, and our allies at risk for forced childbirth, death, criminalization, and other physi-

cal, emotional, and material harms.

"People with disabilities are more likely to experience sexual assault, and people with some disabilities face increased and serious health risks from pregnancy. Disabled people need and deserve access to affirming and accessible reproductive health care services, including abortion.

"We cannot wait for a future Supreme Court to reverse this devastating decision. Congress must act to protect these important rights.

"This decision threatens the true meaning of many values that are proclaimed to be core American values – freedom of choice, self-determination and independence from government interference in one's personal affairs," said Maria Town, president and CEO of AAPD. "Today's Supreme Court decision does not just threaten value systems and rights, but the health and safety of disabled people.

"This decision will cause grave, and in many cases, lethal, bodily harm to far too many disabled people, espe-

cially those who already face the most significant barriers to accessing reproductive health care – low-income disabled people, disabled people of color and disabled LGBTQIA+ people. We must do all we can to preserve bodily autonomy and prevent further harm. All people deserve access to abortion care when they need it, on the timeline they choose and in the community they trust."

AAPD's statement said they will find a way forward, guided by their belief that each person deserves to live, work and make decisions about their health and future with dignity and respect. AAPD will continue to provide updates and information about how this landscape will impact people with disabilities and will continue to fight for a future where everyone can live with self-determination and dignity."

The group statement ended with, "To protect our communities, we stand united in our opposition to this opinion and its unjust result. Our rights – and the rights of countless Americans – depend on it."

DOH Honors Marcie Roth

Marcie Roth, executive director and CEO of World Institute on Disability (WID), has been appointed chair of the National Advisory Committee on Individuals with Disabilities and Disasters, led by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

She was also elected as Focal Point for North America along with German Parodi (co-executive director at the Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies) for the U.N.

Thematic Group for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Action.

Additionally, she was invited to attend the seventh session of the U.N. Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction for the fourth time, speaking at a plenary session on "Leave no one behind – Empowering the most at risk through social protection."

Finally, she recently served as a juror for the prestigious Sasakawa Awards for Disaster Risk Reduction.



Hochul Extends Eligibility For Students With IEPs

Gov. Kathy Hochul has signed into law a bill clarifying that schools can continue serving students with disabilities who turned 21 during the 2021-22 school year, but who need more time in high school due to the pandemic.

Students with IEPs who are interested in returning next year should have a conversation with the principal at their school.

To read the bill, one may visit www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2021/S7866.

**Able Newspaper's
Next Issue
Will Be Published
Sept. 1
The Deadline For
The Sept. Issue
Will Be August 10**

ABLE NEWSPAPER

P.O. Box 395, OLD BETHPAGE, NY 11804
516 939-2253 FAX 516 939-0540
ablenews@aol.com
www.ablenews.com



Published By
Melmont Printing

Publisher
Angela Miele Melledy

Editorial Assistant
Pat Horwell
Allison Howe

Staff Writers
Beth Guarino (emerita)
Karin Falcone Krieger

Columnists
Disabled in Action
Phil Beder
Edith Prentiss (emerita)
United Spinal Association
Jim Weisman

Production Director
Debbie Simko

Art & Production
Jennifer Becker (emerita)
Ann Imbrogno
Marilyn Wheeler (emerita)

Technical Assistance
Louis Melledy

Social Media Assistance
Sofie Melledy

Office Manager
Fannie Miele (emerita)

Accounting
Margaret Wenzel

Advertising Rates
Furnished Upon Request

Postmaster: Send address changes to Able News at P.O. Box 395, Old Bethpage, N.Y. 11804. Periodicals are being paid for at Bethpage, N.Y. post office. ©1994 ABLE NEWSPAPER. Able Newspaper is published monthly by Melmont Printing, 6 Robert Court, Bethpage, N.Y. 11714. Able welcomes manuscripts and suggestions for articles. However, to assure safe return, manuscripts must be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. No responsibility is assured for unsolicited manuscripts or art. Submissions are the author's warranty that the material is not an infringement of the rights of others and that the material may be published without further approval. Editorial material does not necessarily reflect the view of the editor/publisher of Able Newspaper. Advertisers are responsible for the content of advertisements. No part of this publication may be reprinted without the permission of the publisher. Able is not responsible for errors in advertisements beyond the price of the space occupied by the error. The publisher reserves the right to decline advertising for any reason.

Deal Increases Subway Station Access

Disability advocates in New York signed a settlement agreement in June that will make the New York City subway accessible for more than half a million people with disabilities who cannot use stairs to access the system.

At present only 25 percent of stations (113 stations) have elevators or ramps and are usable by people with disabilities, affecting their mobility.

Plaintiffs Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York (CIDNY), Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled (BCID), Bronx Indepen-

dent Living Services (BILS), Harlem Independent Living Center (HILC), Disabled In Action of Metropolitan New York (DIA), New York Statewide Senior Action Council (“State-Wide”), Sasha Blair-Goldensohn, Dustin Jones, Jessica De La Rosa, and Jean Ryan have, with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, signed a Settlement Agreement that will make at least 95 percent of the NYC subway’s 364 currently inaccessible stations accessible by 2055. Only 113 stations have been made accessible since the subway was built in 1904.

The Settlement Agreement provides that the MTA commits to dedicating 14.69 percent of each of its 5-year Capital Plan budgets to station accessibility, barring unexpected critical needs. Should such unexpected needs arise, the MTA commits to devoting no less than 8 percent of its total Capital Plan to station accessibility. Never before has the Capital Program mandated a minimum, let alone such a significant investment, in making stations accessible to people with disabilities.

Two Suits Settled

Additionally, the agreement

ensures that stations will be made accessible as part of many renovation and rehabilitation projects. In total, the MTA commits that in addition to the 81 stations currently slated for accessibility in the 2020-2024 Capital Program, 85 more stations will be accessible by 2035, another 90 by 2045, and the final 90 by 2055.

The plaintiffs are involved in two lawsuits brought against the MTA by Disability Rights Advocates (DRA) and Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP (Sheppard Mullin).

Continued on page 12

Health Workers Fight For Better Care

In 2021, after nursing home workers and advocates fought for years to improve staffing and care for residents, New York lawmakers approved new laws requiring nursing homes to provide residents with a minimum amount of nursing care and to spend the majority of their revenue on resident care.

On May 23, the nursing home trade association LeadingAge New York, along with many affiliate nursing homes, filed suit to block the laws calling them infeasible and arbitrary. Prior to the law’s passage, New

York was one of a handful of states without a minimum staffing requirement.

Far from arbitrary, requiring a minimum amount of daily care is a standard required by many states including Massachusetts, Washington, Illinois, Florida, the District of Columbia, Delaware and California. The complaint calls the new law “inflexible staffing ratios.”

However, the law says that, on average, each resident must receive 3.5 hours of care from RNs, LPNs, and CNAs with 2.2 of these hours provided by CNAs, and 1.1 hours from li-

censed staff. The law is intended to give providers flexibility by making the requirement

A statement issued by the Healthcare Workers Union 1199SEIU states, “We are disappointed and concerned that nursing home operators and their trade associations continue to spend their resources fighting commonsense resident protections rather than investing in improving care at their facilities.

“Nursing home residents deserve high quality care provided by staff who have the time needed to spend with every

resident. Taxpayers and consumers have the right to demand the money spent on care is used for care. These expectations are neither arbitrary nor infeasible.

They are in fact the minimum we should expect for the elderly and frail who receive care, and the dedicated staff who work hard every day providing their residents with care and comfort. Instead of fighting these laws, providers should focus on providing good jobs and high quality care. If they do, they will meet the new standards.”

Suit Challenges Long Institutionalization of IDD

Disability Rights New York (DRNY), Kasowitz Benson Torres LLP and Mental Hygiene Legal Service (MHLS) have filed a class action lawsuit against the New York State Department of Health (DOH) and Office for People with Developmental Disability (OPWDD).

The complaint was filed in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York on behalf of a class of individuals with developmental disabilities (IDD).

The complaint alleges that the DOH and OPWDD, which jointly operate New York’s Medicaid program for IDD, are flagrantly violating plaintiffs’ federal statutory right to reside in less-restrictive community-based residential settings.

Under New York State’s Home

and Community Based Services Waiver Services (the “HCBS Waiver Services”) program, New York State is required to develop specialized community-based residential programs and services for people with developmental disabilities.

Instead, plaintiffs are being institutionalized in hospitals, nursing homes and intermediate care facilities for prolonged periods of time, often for many years. “We are talking about a statewide crisis. People who are approved for community-based services languish in hospitals, nursing homes, and intermediate care facilities. These are our family members who want to be part of their communities. Instead, they are forced to remain segregated in institutional settings,” said DRNY Executive Director Timothy Clune.

“Disabled individuals are being wrongly institutionalized and denied their statutory right to reside in less restrictive community-based residential settings that are more appropriate for their needs, in many cases for years. We look forward to vindicating our clients’ rights to more humane treatment,” said David Abrams, partner and chair of the Pro Bono Committee at Kasowitz Benson Torres LLP.

The named plaintiffs in the lawsuit have all been determined to be eligible for and willing to transfer from institutional settings to community-based residential programs and to receive HCBS Waiver Services. However, the complaint further alleges that New York State has violated its obligations by failing

to provide the requisite medical assistance and services with reasonable promptness and that these illegal delays have resulted in the plaintiffs’ institutionalization in hospitals, nursing homes and other intermediate care facilities for prolonged periods of time, in violation of the ADA and other federal statutes.

The lawsuit identifies eight individuals with developmental disabilities who remain in institutional placements, despite having been medically approved for discharge to community-based residential settings. These eight individuals seek to represent several hundred New York State residents with disabilities who are approved by OPWDD for community-based services but are instead institutionalized.

Suit vs. NYS Board Of Elections Resolved

A group of advocacy groups and individuals have settled the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) lawsuit they brought against the New York State Board of Elections (NYSBOE) in 2020.

The group included The National Federation of the Blind of New York State, American Council of the Blind of New York, Inc., Center for Independence of the Disabled New York, Disability Rights New York and several New York voters with disabilities, including Rasheta Bunting, Karen

Gourgey, Keith Gurgui and Jose Hernandez.

A federal court has approved and ordered the terms of the settlement agreement. NYSBOE will create a statewide program allowing blind and disabled voters to fill out a remote, accessible vote-by-mail ballot online, print it out and mail or return it to their county board of elections.

The settlement requires NYSBOE to choose a remote accessible vote-by-mail (RAVBM) system that allows blind people and people with print disabili-

ties to use their own computers to read and mark a ballot, using their own screen-reader software that converts the ballot content into spoken words or into Braille displayed on a connected device.

NYSBOE must also create a statewide portal that voters can use to request an accessible absentee ballot and train each of the fifty-eight county boards of elections on the use of the RAVBM system. The county boards of elections will provide return envelopes for the ballots, just as they do for paper absentee ballots.

The inside oath envelope into which the ballot is to be placed must have a tactile marking indicating where it is to be signed, and NYSBOE will instruct county boards of elections to accept a signature anywhere on the envelope.

County boards will also be required to help voters who do not have their own printers to facilitate the printing of their ballots.

Plaintiffs were represented by Disability Rights New York, Disability Rights Advocates, and Brown Goldstein & Levy, LLP.

CAP Studies Ways To Eliminate Worker Obstacles

A new analysis from the Center for American Progress (CAP) examines how the 2021 economic recovery affected disabled workers.

The report builds on the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' recently released annual review of disabled people in the labor market, which showed that while disabled people made gains in employment last year, they continued to lag behind people without a disability. In-

vesting in this population will have an outside impact on the strength of the labor market. If disabled workers experienced the same employment rate as those without a disability, nearly 14 million more disabled people would have been employed in 2021.

Disabled workers also earn far less than their nondisabled counterparts – 66 cents for every \$1 earned by those without a disability. The report also

looks at the role that asset and income limits for life-sustaining programs such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid may have on disabled workers' ability to seek remunerative work. These programs cut off support or impose penalties if even the most basic economic security is reached.

In 2021, the second-most-common reason, after health, that disabled people reported working part-time was "retired or Social Security limit on earnings." Removing asset and income limits for disabled workers would allow more disabled

people to fully participate in the economy.

The report also outlines solutions that the federal government can implement to eliminate barriers for disabled workers so that they can participate in the labor market. Increasing funding for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; making substantial improvements to the Vocational Rehabilitation and AbilityOne programs; establishing universal paid family and medical leave; and raising the minimum wage to at least \$15 per hour are just some of the measures mentioned.

ALPHA CARE SUPPLY

Accessibility Solutions Specialist



Serving NYC Metro Area for 20 years

Ramps of every type and application
Stairlifts - Interior and Exterior
Wheelchair Vertical Platform Lifts
ADA Bathroom Remodels
Residential Elevators

New
and Used
Rentals

Fully Insured and Properly Licensed



Call Alpha Care Supply for all your ADA & Accessibility needs

516.568.3010



WWW.ALPHACARESUPPLY.COM

21 STRINGHAM AVENUE, VALLEY STREAM, NY 11580



Lighthouse Honors Neuroscientist

Sheila Nirenberg has been awarded the 2022 Bressler Prize from the Lighthouse Guild for her outstanding advances in vision science, including deciphering the retina's neural code, which is the key to restoring meaningful vision in people who are blind from retinal degeneration. A leader in the field of neural coding and a recipient of a MacArthur Genius Award, Nirenberg is currently the Nanette Laitman professor in neurology and neuroscience and a professor of computational neuroscience at the Institute for Computational Biomedicine, Weill Medical College of Cornell University.

She is also the founder and principal of Bionic Sight LLC, which is developing BS01, an investigational optogenetic gene therapy for advanced stage retinitis pigmentosa.



Sheila Nirenberg

The results from the first clinical trial show that the first six patients, all of whom started with complete or near-complete blindness, can now see light and motion, and, in four cases, can detect the direction of motion. These results were with the lower doses of the dose escalation study; the higher doses will be started this summer.

CPW's BRIDGE School Celebrates Class Of 2022



Joining Graduate Nariah are, left to right, BRIDGE School Asst. Clinical Supervisor Tina Weisman, Teacher Assistant Crystal Norman-Fauntleroy, and BRIDGE School Principal Barry Wasser.

With graduate Graduate Christopher, left to right, NYS Sen. Shelley Mayer, Christophers parents Sen. Shelley Mayer and Port Chester High School student Gwen Dominguez.

BRIDGE School Principal Barry Wasser, left, with Graduate Veronica and BRIDGE School Teacher Jessica Collazo.

PHOTOS BY HONORA BANKS

Cerebral Palsy of Westchester's BRIDGE School at Rye Brook, N.Y., held its graduation ceremony in June. The school's three graduates were surrounded by their peers from the BRIDGE School, as well as staff, family and friends.

Hosted by Principal Barry Wasser, the ceremony opened with the Pledge of Allegiance led by three of the school's Adaptive Boy Scouts. Musical performances were provided by BRIDGE School student Malakieh and CPW's Vocal Groove Ensemble. Guest

Speaker NYS Sen. Shelley Mayer spoke on behalf of the State of New York, congratulating the graduates on this wonderful achievement and wishing them luck in all future endeavors.

A graduate slideshow honored each student and includ-

ed a tribute to classmate Ariel Jean-Baptiste who died this year.

Teachers offered words of encouragement to each of the graduates embarking on their new journeys, and Principal Wasser presented framed diplomas.

Research Highlights Experiences Of Black Females

Despite the fact that an estimated 3.5 million Black women have a disability, there has been little research in the ways those three identities – Black, disabled and woman – intersect with each other. There has been little written about the unique structural barriers that Black disabled women face.

The Center for American Progress is releasing a series that looks at these barriers and offers policy solutions in the areas of economic security, education access and health care.

The reports are based on interviews as well as the discussions that took place last June in three roundtables of Black disabled women to discuss these issues. While the reports offer overviews of the economic, health, and educational challenges that Black disabled women face, along with a preliminary discussion of policy solutions, the authors conclude that the lack of quantitative data makes it difficult to devel-

op policies and pass legislation that directly address the barriers faced by Black disabled women. In order to ensure that Black women and girls with disabilities are included in and benefit from policy decisions, more data and research need to center them.

“As Audre Lorde said, ‘There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.’ Adopting an intersectional approach to policymaking does not diminish single identity or oppression, but rather allows all who experience that identity to benefit,” said Mia Ives-Ruble, director of CAP’s Disability Justice Initiative.

“With these reports, we hope to continue a conversation and reinforce the need to take an intersectional approach to policymaking that benefits anyone who identifies as Black, disabled or woman – but most specifically Black disabled women themselves.”

NY Connects can help people with disabilities...

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. NY Connects Your Link to Long Term Services and Supports 1-800-342-9871



- Remain independent
- Understand care options— Understand paths to care
- Find transportation— Discover transportation options
- Learn about supports in caregiving Learn about caregiver supports
- Get answers about Medicaid, Medicare, and health insurance
- Apply for benefits
- Find housing— Learn housing options

NY Connects can help! Call 1-844-862-7930



CID-NY

Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY Manhattan 841 Broadway, Suite 301 New York, NY 10003

Queens 80-02 Kew Gardens Rd, Suite 400 Kew Gardens, NY 11415

Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled (BCID) 27 Smith St, #250 Brooklyn, NY 11201



Community Health Action of Staten Island (CHASI) 56 Bay St, 4th Floor Staten Island, NY 10301



Bronx Independent Living Services (BILS) 4419 Third Ave, #2C Bronx, NY 10457



Locations and Partners



@LighthouseGuild
@LighthouseGld
@LighthouseGuild

Lighthouse Guild is Here for You

Low Vision Services

Low vision exams and recommendations for tools and exercises for reading, working, and socializing.

Behavioral Health

Individual and group therapy, and medication management.

GuildCare

Adult Day Health Care program specializing in care for people with vision loss. Includes nursing care and therapeutic activities.

Vision Rehabilitation & Technology

Occupational therapy, assistive technology training, orientation and mobility, college prep and career services, and the latest technology solutions. In person and via telephone and video sessions.

For more information call **800-284-4422**
or visit lighthouseguild.org

Tele-Support Groups

Parents, teens, young adults, and adults meet by phone or online. A licensed professional leads the discussions, to offer support on coping with vision loss, finding resources and networking opportunities.

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).

UNITED SPINAL^{NOW}

Happy 32nd Anniversary, But...

BY JAMES WEISMAN
GENERAL COUNSEL



July 26 is the 32nd anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) – the 32nd time we celebrate the disability community’s Emancipation Proclamation.

I had the privilege of participating in the drafting and legislative advocacy that resulted in this great awakening – that reasonable accommodation is socially appropriate and equitably required when people with disabilities need it.

The philosophy compelling the ADA’s passage 32 years ago, I suppose, was, “Everyone who can work, should,” and the left and the right agreed, regardless of political party, or even motivation. The most mean-spirited legislator would agree that people with disabilities should work rather than collect benefits, and the most perceptive Congresspeople and staff could see the potential for productivity, accomplishment and integration that had always been ignored by most Americans and their government.

Of course, we celebrate every year on July 26, the date Pres. George H.W. Bush signed the ADA into law in 1990, just like we do on July 4, the date that American patriots declared their independence in 1776. This year, on July 4, it will be hard to ignore internal threats to the independence and democratic principles for which our founders risked their lives.

As we celebrate our liberties, there is a creeping awareness among the public of a new fragility – that rights come with responsibilities. One of those responsibilities is the responsibility to speak up when rights are threatened.

So, 32 years after I sat with hundreds of others on the White House lawn, what did we all envision that day for July 26, 2022?

I, for one, thought “key station access” would become “all station access” on fixed-rail systems long ago. I believed Patty Hearst was innocent and wouldn’t go to jail; that Donald Trump would never really run for president; and that the designated hitter rule wouldn’t last. So, I suppose my predictions are predictably wrong, most of the time, but consider this:

a) Housing was not included in the ADA, because it was addressed in the Fair Housing Act Amendments of 1988. Single-family housing, including new single-family housing, is just about as inaccessible as it was 32 years ago, and affordable, accessible multi-family housing is impossible to find. I would have predicted this would be better;

b) Airline access was not included in the ADA, because the Air Carrier Access Act had already passed. Is there a less accessible mode of transportation than airplanes, 32 years after the passage of the ADA? I would have predicted this would be better;

c) While a great many more people with disabilities are living in the community rather than institutions, the percentage of those employed is about the same as 32 years ago. I definitely would have predicted this would be better;

Continued on page 16

ADA – 32 Years Of Slow Progress

By Karin Falcone Krieger

Thirty-two years ago Pres. George H.W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) into law. At the time, only 38 states had any protections for people with disabilities.

This national law introduced the idea of “reasonable accommodation” in the workplace, and mandated that federally funded public buildings be accessible to all. The courts continue to hear cases on a daily basis which solidify and strengthen these and other mandates.

A generation later, these ideas are the foundation upon which new activism and legislative proposals have been built.

When the ADA mandated that telecommunications be accessible, the internet, as we know it, did not exist. Recently, several U.S. Senators urged the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to provide guidance for state and local governments to better comply with the ADA accessibility requirements on their websites, mobile applications and other forms of technology.

In a letter sent to Atty. Gen. Merrick Garland, the Senators wrote, “For people with disabilities, website accessibility and other forms of accessible [technology] are necessities – not luxuries or conveniences – that foster independence, economic self-sufficiency and active, meaningful participation in civic life.

“Although the Department has clearly stated that the ADA applies to such digital spaces, the lack of specific requirements or technical compliance standards incorporated in regulation has led to a widespread lack of meaningful digital accessibility for people with disabilities. It is past time for the Department to issue robust clarifications and remedy this exclusionary *status quo*.”

Perhaps the most noticeable triumph of the ADA is the way brick and mortar structures are built, to eliminate barriers to those with mobility impairment. Last Fall, Pres. Joe

Biden signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act into law.

The American Association of People with Disabilities states that the law “funds long underfunded accessibility mandates in our nation’s transit systems” and “provides critical investments in broadband and digital equity to ensure that all Americans have access to high-speed internet and will work to close the digital divide often experienced by disabled people.”

The Build Back Better Act has earmarked 2.5 billion dollars specifically for the construction of housing for people with disabilities, but it is still stalled in Congress along party lines.

The Disability Integration Act of 2020, if passed into law, would ensure that people with disabilities can live in the community as a civil right and provide the supports necessary for that to happen for each individual.

Right now individuals who need long-term supports and services must prove eligibility and fight the pipeline to institutionalization in varied state health care systems.

The Health and Community Based Services Access Act (HCBSAA) would establish HCBS as a mandatory Medicaid service and fund these services entirely by the federal government.

The Better Care Better Jobs Act introduced last year “establishes programs and provides funds for state Medicaid programs to improve home- and community-based services (HCBS), such as home health care, personal care, case management and rehabilitative services.” This extension of “the money follows the person” would help stabilize the underpaid care-providing workforce.

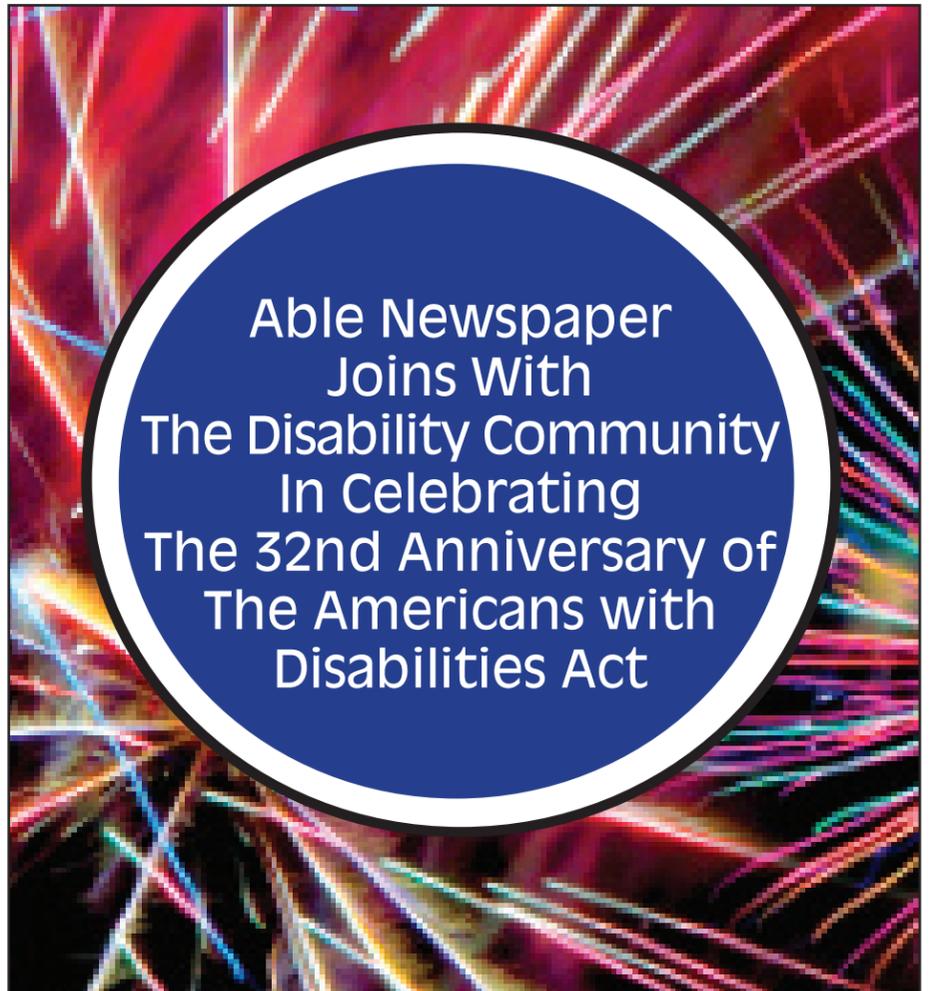
The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, better known as COVID Relief, was passed into law and set aside funding for home- and community-based services in the form of a 10 percent, one-time rise in the federal government’s share of spending on the Medicaid program. The program expired in March.



Pres. George Bush passes a pen to Rev. Harold Wilke at the signing of the ADA in 1990. Wilke, born without arms, accepts the pen with his foot. Sharing the dias are, standing, Vice Pres. Dan Quail, and Sandra Parrino, National Council on Disability. Seated, left to right, are Evan Kemp, Equal Opportunity Commission and Justin Dart.

The White House last year proposed a wide-ranging agenda to advocate and include people with disabilities in policy making in the U.S. and around the world, especially as related to voting rights, climate change and health care access. The Disability Integration Act is absent from the agenda.

With many bills that specifically build on the framework set forth by the ADA stalled in a deadlocked Congress, it is expected that, Biden like Pres. Barack Obama, will sign executive orders into action this year which may forward the White House agenda for the disability community.





BRANDOW LAW
Plan Smart. Plan Ahead.

**We Are Offering
50% Off
Initial Fees For Telephone or
Video Skype Consultations**

*We Provide Planning for Families & People with Disabilities
Supplemental Needs Trusts,
Guardianships, Elder Law Planning,
Wills, Trusts and Real Estate*

Melville Location
445 Broad Hollow Road, Suite 25
Melville, NY 11747
(Office & Mail Service)

Riverhead Location
21 East 2nd Street
Riverhead, NY 11901
(Not for Mail Service)

Garden City Location
600 Old Country Road, Suite 328
Garden City, NY 11553
(Not for Mail Service)

Or, we can come to you in the convenience of your home!

**Contact us today at
(631) 675-2540**

Or visit our website at www.brandowlaw.com

INNERSIGHT

**INNERSIGHT MEANS FREEDOM
ADVOCATES FOR THE DISABLED**

**Listen to INNERSIGHT FREEDOM PODCAST weeknights
8:00 PM TO 9:00 PM
Call In # 213-816-1650
www.BlogTalkRadio.com/innersightinfo**

**New on Wednesday Nights – Nursing Institutions Kill People.
Get rid of them! Help Us Save Lives and Make Everyone Equal!**

Television Talk Show on Public Access
Altice local programming (Nassau and Suffolk County)
Thursday nights at 7:30 pm, channel 20

**mnn.org (New York City and world wide on the internet)
Channel 1997 and Channel 3
Spirit Channel online for world wide coverage at 11:00 pm**

**Innersight is an all volunteer nonprofit charity.
We can be reached at 631 224-3090
Frank director, 631 478-3590
Suzanne assistant director 917-848-9477**

**FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/innersightinc
WEBSITE: www.innersight.info
TWITTER: @innersightinfo**

**EMAIL: innersight@pmpmail.com No Attachments, urls, logos,
text only please!! Email for the blind converted into mp3 file!!**

CIDNY SAYS

Does True Access Exist? A Reflection From Then – 1990, To Now – 2022

BY SHARON MCLENNON-WIER
EXECUIVE DIRECTOR

On July 26, 1990, Pres. George H.W. Bush signed into law the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Since this seminal piece of legislation was enacted, July has been disability pride awareness month, and we take this opportunity to reflect on the accomplishments that this critical legislation provided for people with disabilities living in the United States.

This law characterized that a person with a disability was classified as having a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a person from completing a major life activity. Life activities such as seeing, hearing, understanding and processing information, writing, reading, talking, walking, breathing, thinking and so much more.

This legislation provided the disabled person the right to access and further required integration for persons with disabilities into life activities such as employment, entry into environmental spaces, transportation, technology and recreational spaces.

In 1990, I was an undergraduate-biology student attending Syracuse University. I was totally blind, and I had much optimism for this new legislation. I had the conviction that despite my blindness, I could work hard and I would achieve a degree in medicine.

My belief was that my hard work, fortitude, intelligence, passion and resilience coupled with this new legislation providing access to the sciences would help me to achieve my medical goal. I did not think that one's preconceived notions, ableism, prejudice and stigma would be further obstacles in the road to my vocational goal.

Legislation can help to remove the obvious physical barriers for people with disabilities, but there are so many invisible barriers encompassed via the human disposition toward preconceived notions, ableism, prejudice and stigma. Therefore, as we reflect on this disability pride awareness month, we acknowledge the many accomplishments that this legislation achieved for people with disabilities.

More people with disabilities became employed. More people with disabilities have access to standard bus and train service. More people with disabilities can use a restroom which provides room for their wheelchair. More people with disabilities can cross a street in the middle of New York City by using auditable pedestrian signaling and curb cuts. More people with disabilities can use a bank ATM independently and so much more.

However, we still have a long way to go. We still need to improve the way people without disabilities think about people with disabilities. Having a disability does not mean that your life is over. At times, it could mean that it is just beginning.

We need to remember that the life activities such as family, love, work and play are critical for all. We all want to achieve these milestones, we just need an environment free of physical and human-dispositional barriers. As a result, we have disability-rights organization like CIDNY to help advocate and educate all people regarding diversity, equality and inclusion for a society built on difference.

We all can achieve our goals – it just takes one step at a time. By the way, I am happy to report that I was able to achieve a career in the field of human service and psychology despite having a visual disability. Please pursue your dreams and CIDNY is here to help you!

Webinar To Address Access In Residential Facilities

The U.S. Access Board receives many technical questions about access and residential facilities.

Residential dwelling units are addressed by accessibility guidelines and standards issued under the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Fair Housing Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

These laws, guidelines and standards can be difficult to understand and lead to con-

fusion for many design professionals, lawyers, and citizens.

The next webinar in the board's free monthly series will take place 2:30 to 4 p.m., July 7. It will clarify these laws and their application in the ABA and ADA Accessibility Guidelines for residential facilities. Presenters from the board and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will review differences between Title II and III of the ABA and the ADA, as well as overlaps

with HUD's 504 regulations of the Rehabilitation Act.

Presenters also will highlight accessible design and construction requirements under the Fair Housing Act that apply broadly to most multifamily housing. The session will cover scoping and technical requirements in the ADA and ABA Accessibility Guidelines for work surfaces, turning space, accessible routes, reach ranges, and windows in residential dwelling units.

All webinars include video

remote interpreting (VRI) and real-time captioning. Questions can be submitted in advance of the session or can be posed during the live webinar. Webinar attendees can earn continuing education credits. The series is hosted by the ADA National Network in cooperation with the board. Archived copies of previous board webinars are also available on the site.

For more information or to register for the webinar, one may visit www.accessibilityonline.org.

Helen Keller Services Presents Access-Ability Awards

Helen Keller Services (HKS) has presented its Access-Ability Awards recognizing companies, non-profit organizations and individuals doing work to support the individuals who are Deaf-Blind, blind or have low vision in a variety of ways.

The awards were presented in a special virtual ceremony on June 29 to coincide with Helen Keller's birthday.

This year's winners are Clean Logic, which supports the independence of people who are blind and also gives a portion of its sales to organizations for the visually impaired; Service Skills, an e-learning solution that delivers a collection of soft skills training courses designed to improve the way employees communicate; Unide-

scription, a grant-funded research initiative based at the University of Hawaii at Manoa; Accessible Pharmacy, a comprehensive, home delivery pharmacy service specializing in the needs of people who are blind, Deaf-Blind and have low vision; and WundermanHealth, a New York-based global marketing agency that has produced HKS' DeafBlind

Awareness Week posters pro bono for more than 30 years. As part of the program, Jessica Rafuse, Microsoft director of Strategic Partnerships and Policy will deliver a keynote address.

Microsoft was one of last year's inaugural recipients of an Access-Ability Award and continues to be a strong advocate for and innovator of accessible technologies.

On A Roll's Expert Wheelchair Service is Open for Business!



- ◆ Scheduling visits one at a time
- ◆ COVID-19 precautions in place
- ◆ Services covered by many insurance plans

Making an appointment is easy.

Call **646-653-6266** or email onaroll@icsny.org.

On a Roll

Disability Unite Festival Back Live

This year for the first time, Disability Unite Festival will be a hybrid event, both as an in-person celebration and live streamed virtually.

Everyone from the entire disability community and allied communities are invited to join at the Central Park Naumburg Bandshell on July 17th from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m., for New York City's only City-wide celebration of July's Disability Pride Month to commemorate the 32nd anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

For those outside of New York City, or for whom virtual is their preferred way to participate, all festival performances and programming will continue to be live streamed on the DisabilityUnite.Org website.

After 4 p.m., the party will continue exclusively online, for another two hours of exciting virtual music, dance, theatre, gaming and more.

ASL, CART, Audio Descrip-

tion will be provided for both in-person and virtual performances. Additionally, Plain Language will be provided for virtual performances.

The Disability Unite Festival is a community driven, free, non-ticketed celebration, and all are invited to join for incredible music and arts performances either as an audience member, a volunteer helping at the event, or a Disability Unite Team member helping virtually.

This year's Festival theme is "A Future Of Inclusion". As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, our world is undergoing fundamental restructuring. "A Future Of Inclusion" envisions humanity entering a world where inclusion is embraced on every level and highlights that the time is now to build a future where we can live the life we want.

"Disability Unite Festival's motto, "For the community, By the community" reflects how the creation of the Fes-

tival comes from all of us," said Disability Unite Dir. Matt Axel. "Based on Mutual Aid principles, together community members participate, collaborate, and are inclusive, creative and connective. We are the sum total of our collective advocacy, information, imagination and activities."

"Incredible organizations, each take an active role in whatever capacity they are able," said Axel. "Organizations who have shared amazing leadership going above and beyond to make this community event possible include these Event Community Partners: Art Beyond Sight, 504 Democratic Club, CUNY CCSD, AHRC, BEAT, Positive Exposure, Harlem Independent Living Center, Heidi Latsky Dance, *Able Newspaper* and more."

Disability Unite Festival is made possible by the generous support of M&T Bank, John H. Hart Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts and New

York State Council on the Arts.

To attend the Disability Unite Festival, one may join in-person on Sunday at the Central Park Bandshell, using the entrance on 72nd Street and 5th Ave.

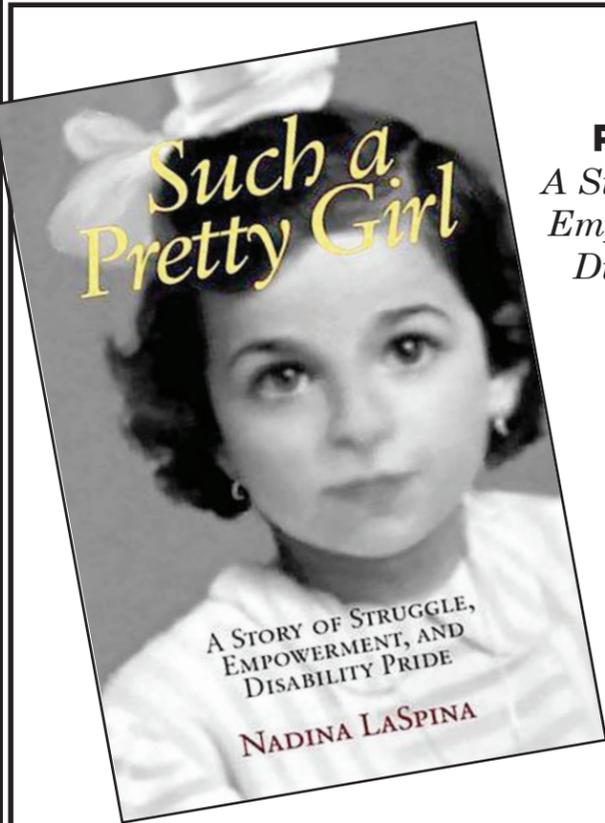
To attend virtually, one may join the fun at www.DisabilityUnite.Org and click on the Live Stream Center button.

Those interested may RSVP to attend in person at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2022-disability-unite-festival-tickets-356641202437?aff=Able-News>.

Those interested in volunteering for Disability Unite, may fill out the form at <https://forms.gle/WeMabFnbUNcWzxyt8>.

The Disability Unite festival offers tabling opportunities, where city agencies and organizations can connect and engage with the communities they serve.

Those who have interest in a table at the festival may fill out the form at <https://forms.gle/w45gj7tDWro5gdjt9>.



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

Available at NYU Press, Amazon.com & Local Book Stores

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.

NJS ELECTRIC LLC

**** Specializing in home monitoring systems for the safety of the disabled ****

"We don't just Keep intruders out - We keep loved ones in"

NJS ELECTRIC LLC

New York State Licensed Alarm Contractors
Nassau and Suffolk Licensed Electrical Contractors

516 596-1895

www.njswiringsolutions.com

CURTIS BREWER

BY WARREN SHAW

These days people call them superpowers – disproportionate abilities wielded by regular mortals. Superpowers can be small, even cute – someone, say, who can identify any Beatles tune in under two seconds, or does amazing card tricks. But it's a whole other animal when a superpower lines up with its owner's greatest ambition.

Curtis Brewer was one of those. He was among the pioneers of the New York City Disability Rights Movement – one of the few people of color, and the most profoundly disabled among them. But aside from his other talents, Curtis had an outsized, almost supernaturally compelling presence.

Many Accomplishments

Very much a man who went his own way, Curtis Brewer notched a whole list of disability rights accomplishments. He won quite a bit of recognition for a while, but like so many leaders of our movement he's gradually faded into obscurity.

Curtis was born in 1925, in Cambridge, Mass. Early biographical information is sparse, but by 1955 he was living in the Bronx and may have been working as a letter carrier. He was studying at the New School and dating a woman named Bettie, when he began experiencing symptoms that were initially diagnosed as arthritis.

Soon he was unable to feel a coin in his hand, and a month later he was in a hospital bed, permanently paralyzed from the neck down. It turned out he had a viral infection known as transverse myelitis. Curtis, however, not only finished his undergraduate degree, he married Bettie and fathered a son.

It is not clear when he became politically active, but Curtis made an important mark as a disability activist at one of the modern movement's most formative events – the tow away picket of 1967. People with disabilities, parading in front of City Hall, hastily assembled in response to a new rule barring all parking in midtown. It was the first civil disobedience by disabled New Yorkers in more than twenty years.

Radiated Power

While people like Julie Shaw traded blows with the politicians, Curtis liaised with the press. Archival video shows him adroitly handling the reporters, turning aside veiled insults, resisting pigeon-holing. Rather than the helplessness then expected from people with disabilities, Curtis radiated power at ease. He put the protesters' case to the journalists, then cannily spoke of his hope that a peaceful solution could be arrived at.

"We're willing to do all reasonable things to resolve the problem, because we are convinced that the problem can be resolved," he would say. It was peak protest era, 1967. Any mention of a peaceful solution, then, raised the possibility of an UN-peaceful solution. Especially when the message was coming from a Black man.

The tow-away protest was an historic success. It helped establish the disability rights movement in New York City, and led to what is now known as the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (or MOPD).

It was right around the time of the tow-away picket that I met Curtis. I was eight years old. He was a big guy, extremely good looking, posed in his wheelchair with one leg crossed over the other. That he didn't shake hands felt more like majesty than disability.

By 1970, now living in lower Manhattan, Curtis enrolled at Brooklyn Law School and embarked on an extraordinary jour-

ney towards becoming a lawyer, as a quadriplegic. His wife typed out the class notes that he mentally collected during the day and dictated to her at night. In 1974 he was admitted to the bar.

Founded Untapped Resources

Armed with his law license, Curtis founded an advocacy group called Untapped Resources and developed a legal practice that included, among other things, physical accessibility claims and Social Security benefits cases.

Curtis always had an office staff, and a number of people shuttled through over the years. One of them was a young college grad named Ruth Lowenkron, he hired in 1981. She is now well known as the longtime Director of the Disability Justice Program at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest.

"He ran a tight ship," Ruth recalled. "He was very clear that you had to arrive by a certain hour, no arriving late. One day I came in wearing pants, and a client was coming. I had to go out and purchase a skirt! I still have it by the way. He was pretty demanding and particular, but there was a lot of mutual respect, and my two years with Curtis pretty much set the path for my legal career."

'I'm Not Freight'

Like many of our movement's pioneers (including my parents), Curtis could be unyielding, even rigid when it came to "The Cause." As he once put it, "I don't go through back entrances, and I don't ride in freight elevators. I'm not freight and I'm not garbage. That's just not for me baby – I'm too old or too Black or too something."

Curtis became friends with the famed (and disabled) Israeli-born violinist Itzhak Perlman. In 2021, Mr. Perlman described to me Curtis' fury when he couldn't attend Mr. Perlman's performance at Carnegie Hall:

"[Curtis] was on the 56th Street side. He couldn't get up the steps. He refused to be carried. And he was saying I'm running out of air because the batteries for his respirator were running down. He made a big scandal, there was a demonstration.

He was not polite, never satisfied. That's what made him relevant, his tenaciousness. He was a bulldozer.

He was important. If people don't listen to you, you've got to shout."

The upshot was the disability community's first-ever access to one of the world's great concert venues, Carnegie Hall.

In spite of his increasingly severe disability, Curtis was married three times and raised three children.

Curtis rarely affiliated for long with disability groups other than his own, but over time his blend of skill and stubbornness led to profiles in publications ranging from academic journals to *Jet* magazine, and appearances on talk shows like "Positively Black."

Handicapped American of the Year

In 1980 he was named Handicapped American of the Year by the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped.

Curtis always went his own way. A man who "couldn't move a beard hair" (as my father Julie once described a quadriplegic colleague), Curtis turned his paralysis-downsized, low-decibel voice into an effective weapon. And by the time he passed away in 1990, at age 65, the onetime letter carrier had carved a singular path.

We can take pride in Curtis' story. We can try to learn from him, as with all our movement's great leaders.

But only if we remember him.



Addressing The Need For Parity In Medicare

Ninety-three percent of Medicare beneficiaries, 65 years and older, with substance use disorder (SUD) do not receive treatment, nor do an estimated one in three with mental health needs. Further, 38 percent of those with SUD cite cost as the main barrier to obtaining care, and 26 percent of those with mental health needs reported the same.

The members of the Medicare Addiction Parity Project (MAPP), are encouraged to see growing recognition of this critical issue at the top levels of government:

The president's recently released FY2023 Budget "requires parity in coverage between mental health and substance use disorder – or behavioral health – and other medical benefits and expands the types of providers

covered under Medicare to treat these conditions." The budget also calls for the application of the Parity Act, which bars discrimination in insurance coverage of mental health and substance use disorder benefits, to Medicare.

The Senate Finance Committee's report, "Mental Health Care in the United States: The Case for Federal Action," highlights the lack of parity in Medicare. Likewise, in a hearing held by the committee on March 30, both senators and witnesses testified to the same need.

In a report released by the Government Accountability Office, many of the concerns and recommendations outlined by the administration and members of Congress, as well as MAPP, regarding limited access to mental

health providers and restrictive benefit coverage, were also highlighted.

Ellen Weber, senior vice president for health initiatives at the Legal Action Center states, "At a time when fatal overdose is skyrocketing and rates of substance use disorder continue to increase among Medicare-eligible Americans, it is encouraging to see bipartisan support for addressing the current gaps that exist in Medicare coverage of addiction care.

We know that in order to remedy this crisis, parity protections must be applied and the full continuum of care, consistent with the American Society of Addiction Medicine criteria, must be covered and reimbursed. This alone will ensure that the millions of in-

dividuals with substance use disorder who are enrolled in Medicare, or soon will be, can access and afford the full range of evidence-based treatment services and supports they need to get and stay well."

To help boost MAPP's advocacy efforts, the collaborative is collecting stories from Medicare beneficiaries who have been unable to get the drug or alcohol addiction treatment they need. Stories on behalf of such individuals from friends, family members, and providers are also being accepted. No name or other identifying information is required. Those wishing to share their story or learn more may visit <https://www.lac.org/news/share-your-story-help-us-improve-medicare-coverage-of-substance-use-disorder-treatment>.

SUBWAY STATION ACCESS

Continued from page 3

The first lawsuit, filed in 2017 in New York State Supreme Court, alleges violations of the New York City Human Rights Law because of the vast inaccessibility of the current subway system.

Last year, the court-appointed plaintiffs representatives for a certified class of all people with disabilities affecting their mobility who are unable to access the subway. The second lawsuit, filed in 2019 in federal

court in the Southern District of New York, alleges that the MTA consistently renovates and rehabilitates subway stations without adding stair-free access as part of those renovations. This Settlement Agreement will resolve both lawsuits and the settlements must be approved by both courts before it takes effect.

Plaintiffs React

"Everyone who lives, works, or visits New York City and our amazing state will benefit from the promise of universal access that our work with the MTA on this settlement agreement will afford our community," said Sharon McLennon-Wier, executive director of the Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York.

"Hallelujah! Finally, some good news." said Joe Rappaport, executive director of the Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled. "This extraordinary agreement ensures that no one will be shut out of the fastest, best way to get around town."

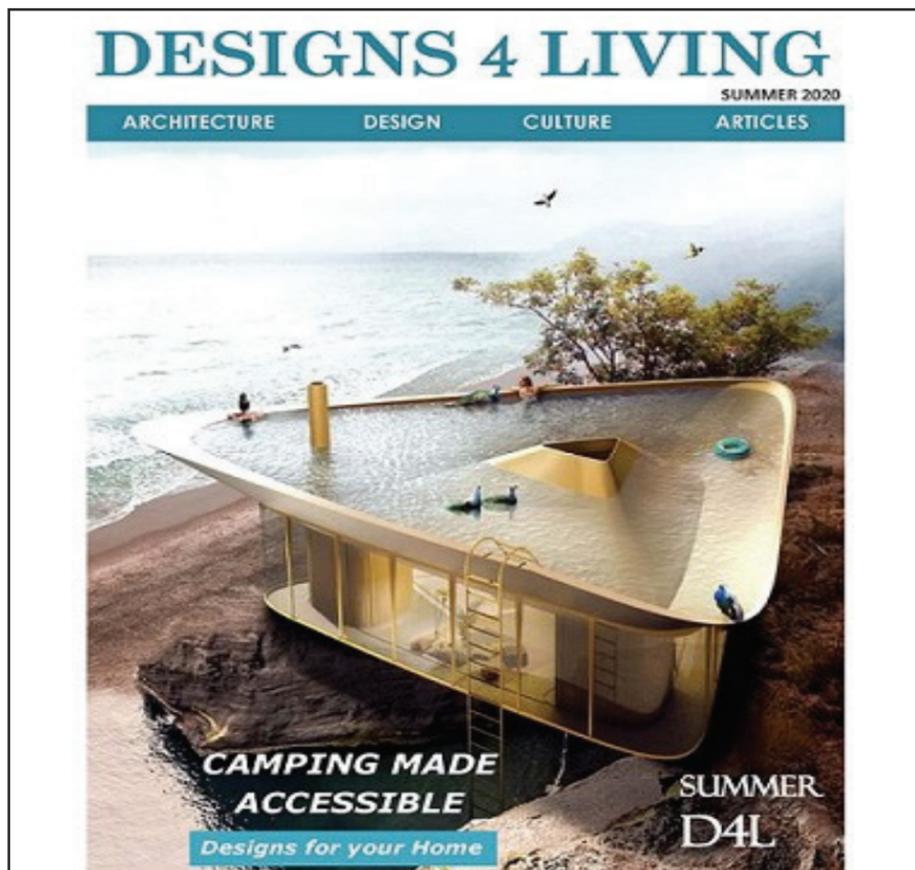
"The Harlem Independent

Living Center is pleased and excited to be part of this historic achievement regarding the MTA and assisting in making the subway transit system accessible to the disabled community and to everyone in general," said Christina Curry, executive director of Harlem Independent Living Center.

"I've been waiting for this moment since I was 15 years old," said Jessica De La Rosa, who uses a wheelchair. "I am thrilled that the subways will be more accessible for the next generation of 15-year-old disabled children to ride the subway in their city like every other New Yorker"

DRA Represents

"Disability Rights Advocates is honored and privileged to represent these trailblazing activists who have secured a more just and accessible future for everyone who uses the subway," said Torie Atkinson, staff attorney at Disability Rights Advocates. "We look forward to working with the MTA to swiftly implement these commitments."



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

**SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS
THEY MAKE THIS
NEWSPAPER POSSIBLE**

Artwork by Lisandro Neris



Disability unite Festival 2022

Disability Unite Invites You To Create
"A Future Of Inclusion"

at the Third Annual Disability Unite Festival, Celebrating Disability Pride
and Marking The 32nd Anniversary Of The Americans with Disabilities Act!

Together we can envision humanity entering a world where inclusion is embraced on every level,
and tell the world the time is now to build a future where we can live the life we want.

Sunday, July 17th
12PM - 4PM (EST)

In-person
Naumburg Bandshell
Central Park

Virtual
www.DisabilityUnite.Org

In-Person Performing Artists

Blessing Offor
Lachi Gaelynn Lea
Wheelchair Sports Camp

In-Person Visual Artists

John Bramblitt

Virtual Only Performing Artists

Amy Steffen | Colton Purcell | Connor Wink | Flat Moon Theory | Lara Nakhle | Mira Gaitanis
Rebecca Oslacky | Sarah Khan | Shayy Winn | Sierra Brooke McCarthy

Event Community Partners

TO BE ANNOUNCED

With Thanks To Our Sponsors

M&T Bank
Understanding what's important®

JOHN H. HART
FOUNDATION

NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
for the **ARTS**
arts.gov

NEW YORK
STATE OF
OPPORTUNITY
Council on
the Arts



INFORMATION FORUM

BCID SEEKS BOARD MEMBERS LIVING IN BROOKLYN

The Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled (BCID) is looking for new volunteer board members to lead and strengthen the 65-year-old grassroots Brooklyn independent-living center (ILC) operated by people with disabilities, for people with disabilities.

The ILC is recruiting those committed to disability rights who can contribute time, skills and leadership to the organization.

Candidates should send their resume and a paragraph about why they're interested to info@bcid.org with the subject line: BCID board.

They are especially looking for Brooklyn residents from diverse backgrounds who have fundraising, financial or business experience. "We strongly encourage persons with disabilities to apply," said BCID's former Executive Director and current Board Member Marvin Wasserman.

REGISTRATION OPENS FOR WHITE CANE DAY IN OCTOBER

Registration is open for the annual White Cane Day celebration, Oct. 15, in partnership with the Accessibility Working Group and the Transportation Equity Working Group of Downstate New York ADAPT.

Participants will learn about everything from the history of this day, how a cane is used by a blind person on a daily basis to navigate the world and a variety of other topics.

One may register by visiting https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwoceivqjkoH9JwWDMuE_mXC-jUEdOW-2slz to register.

DATE CHANGES FOR VISIONS BROOKLYN AWARDS DINNER

The date of the VISIONS Brooklyn Advisory Board's annual awards dinner has been changed to 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, July 27.

Proceeds will be used to support VISIONS Free Programs in Brooklyn.

The dinner will be held outdoors under a tent at Gargiulo's, 2911 W. 15th St., Brooklyn.

Honorees will include Gregory Anderson, Bridge Street Development Corporation; Tricia Bartholomew, Medgar Evers College; Paul Geraci, NYS Office of Children and Family Services/Commission for the Blind; and the Russo Family, Gargiulo's Restaurant.

Those interested may register at <https://visionsvcb.org/event/bab-dinner>. The deadline to get tickets is July 11.

AMPUTEE COALITION VIRTUAL SUPPORT GROUPS MEET

Amputee support groups provide a safe and supportive environment for individuals living with limb loss or limb difference as well as their family members.

The Amputee Coalition Peer Support Team and Support Group Leaders from the National Support Group Network offer monthly virtual support group meetings via. These meetings are open to individuals living with limb loss or limb difference and family members who are caring for loved ones along their journey.

The meetings are held at 6 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month. One may register by visiting <https://amputeecoalition.zoom.us/j/9201212121>.

LIGHTHOUSE GUILD AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS TO STUDENTS

Lighthouse Guild is awarding 15 college scholarships of \$10,000 each to students from across the country who are visually impaired and will be entering college or graduate school in the Fall.

The scholarships are based on strong academic accomplishment and merit to help students who are legally blind make a successful transition to college and graduate school. The 2022 recipients will be attending some of the nation's most competitive universities.

Local recipients include Iliana Mejia, Woodhaven, who will attend Marymount Manhattan College; Cindy Liu, Flushing, who will attend Yale College; and David Mo, Ridgewood, N.J., who will attend Stevens Institute of Technology.

EMPLOYMENT RESOURCE FOR AUTISTIC ADULTS AVAILABLE

Research shows that nearly half of 25-year-olds with autism have never held a paying job, though many are willing and able to work. The Autism Speaks Roadmap to Meaningful Employment for Autistic Adults is designed to help adults with autism navigate their employment journey and offers guidance and resources at every stage of their career, whether they're looking for their first job or preparing for retirement.

More information is available by visiting www.autismspeaks.org for.

ABLE ACCEPTS EVENT AND PROGRAM INFORMATION

Able Newspaper will print event and program information from agencies when space permits. Items may be sent to able-news@aol.com.

AUCD NOMINATIONS OPEN TO HONOR EMERGING LEADERS

Each year, AUCD recognizes people, programs and organizations for their leadership and contributions to the disability community.

It honors leadership, advocacy, research, policy and practice that create more inclusive communities for people with disabilities and their families.

AUCD invites everyone to nominate someone who inspires them in the spirit of this year's theme, "Health Equity: Serving the Whole Person." This year's AUCD awards ceremony will be held in person on Tuesday, Nov. 15 at the end of the conference day.

For more information and to submit a nomination, one may visit www.aucd.org/conference/index.cfm/awards2022.

SPECIAL EDUCATION WEBSITE SUPPORTS FAMILIES & EDUCATORS

The Educational Partnership is a professional development and technical assistance network run through the New York State Education Department's Office of Special Education. It is designed to support and empower schools and families in improving equity, access, opportunities, and outcomes for students with disabilities.

The partnership recently launched a new website for use by the public, including parents and families of students with disabilities, young adults with disabilities and education professionals. The site includes contact information for Regional Educational Partnership Centers and Family and Community Engagement Centers as well as links to register for upcoming professional development and training offerings.

One may visit <https://osepartnership.org/> for more information.

VIDEO PRESENTATION AND NYC BUDDY WALK SET FOR SEPTEMBER

The National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS) will hold its annual Times Square video presentation on Sept. 17.

The 2022 Times Square Video and NYC Buddy Walk® kicks off at 9:30 a.m. in the heart of Times Square.

Following the presentation, participants will gather for the Buddy Walk at the Great Hill in Central Park from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. There also will be a walk-at-home option.

The deadline for photo submissions is July 10. More information is available by visiting www.nycbuddywalk@ndss.org.

GETTING PERSONAL

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

GENTLEMAN INTERESTED IN LADY FOR MARRIAGE

Do you have a physical challenge? In tradition we call you a mitzuyan, "one who excels." Because G-d in his infinite wisdom gives you some compensation--in your case 2 pluses, one is your lovely smile. Jewish man seeks very caring woman, 55 and up. Company president and have great personality. "Wheel of Fortune" thought so, as I was a contestant and did very well. I am very caring. Last winter I made sure my dates had warm hat and gloves and an extra sweater. I made sure the car was warm. As a result of being so caring, a recent survey showed women who dated me, got 50 percent less colds than women who dated brand x. I believe every woman is beautiful, no exceptions. Keep smiling. My mantra is if at first you don't succeed, do not go skydiving. I would like to hear from Maxine F (pianist). **A406**

SWM 57, WHEELCHAIR USER

seeks single female for friendship and dating, into fishing, nascar, baseball, murder mystery dinners, and comedy clubs, I live in Suffolk County NY and I do not drive. Send photo, letter and phone number **A405**

WOULD LIKE TO MEET HIGH FUNCTIONING MEN

for friendship and serious relationship 50-55. Send phone number and picture. **A404**

SINGLE CHRISTIAN 54

enjoys conversing about life, current events, seeking penpal. **A403**

WWF 81 WANTS FRIENDSHIP

male or female, age unimportant, being kind, caring and thoughtful and with a car. **A402**

SBW 50's SEEKING FRIENDSHIP

social companion, bible discuss, healthy, no drugs, non smoker, non drinker, serious, smart, male, female respondent. **A401**

RACE, COLOR, RELIGION, I'M NOT PREJUDICE

looking for romantic female in her late 60's or 50's, who wants romantic 73 year old male in her life.. **A400**

Your Ad Can Be here Call 516 939-2253

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.

TO ANSWER AN AD

Put your response letter in an envelope with the A# of the person you are writing on the front. Put this envelope in another envelope addressed to *Able Personals*, P.O. Box 395, Old Bethpage, N.Y. 11804. Enclose \$2 per response to cover the cost of handling and mailing fees. Do not send cash. Checks or money orders only. Be sure to include your address or phone number. For faster response place a postage stamp on envelope.

TO PAY BY CREDIT CARD CALL THE ABLE OFFICE, 516 939-2253

GUIDELINES: Able assumes no liability for the contents of or replies to any personal advertisements, or the actions of any individuals. Any such liability rests exclusively with the advertiser, or a respondent to such advertisements. Able may, in its sole discretion, reject or delete any personal advertisements which it

deems inappropriate. This service is intended solely for personal advertisements of singles. No ads will be accepted from couples, groups or organizations. Advertisers and respondents must be 18 years of age or older. No ads will be published seeking persons under the age of 18.

ABBREVIATIONS

A •Asian B •Black C •Christian D •Divorced F •Female G •Gay H •Hispanic
J •Jewish M •Male N/D •Non drinker N/S • Non Smoker P •Professional S •Single W •White

HEUMANN SPEAKS AT NYU COMMENCEMENT

Continued from page 1

your creativity, your power and your diverse voices," she said.

NYU president Andrew Hamilton added, "It's customary in a commencement speech for a university president to set the tone before students go out into the world and continue their new lives. But being as you've already been out on your own, the tables are somewhat turned today.

"I would venture a guess that we have a lot to learn from you. There is little wisdom I can impart on your classes who have displayed a maturity beyond your years, navigating your time at NYU and your new lives with such

grace and aplomb. Today, I am brimming with violet pride. I am proud of you, and you should be proud of yourselves, too."

In keeping with NYU tradition, commencement included the ceremony of the torch.

The university torch, designed and fashioned by Tiffany and Co. in sterling silver and donated to the University in 1911, was passed from a senior member of the faculty to the youngest undergraduate degree recipients from both the classes.

In honor of the graduates, the Empire State Building was illuminated in violet on the eve of commencement.

IDNYC Renewals Extended Through December

IDNYC is a free municipal ID card for all New Yorkers that not only provides government photo identification, but can serve as a library card; provides free memberships to more than 30 cultural institutions and qualifies an individual for discounts at health and wellness centers; and a multitude of other benefits.

New Yorkers can also use the card to access city services and apply for jobs when submitted with proof of work authorization.

Certain financial institutions will accept IDNYC as identification to open a bank account.

Individuals may renew their IDNYC card from 90 days before and up to one year after the expiration date on the card and are encouraged to complete the renewal application online.

The IDNYC Program has expanded the renewal period for all cardholders whose cards expired in 2020. The card may be renewed through Dec. 31, 2022. After this date, the cardholder will need to submit a new application at an Enrollment Center.

For more information or to renew an ID card, one may visit <https://a069-idnyonlineportal.nyc.gov/IOPWeb/#/>.



CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING



AIDE AVAILABLE

CNA/ HOME HEALTH AIDE
Trained live-in aide/companion for elderly or a disabled person or as a nanny. Caring and compassionate with many years of experience. Great references are available. Call for more information **347 754-2486**.

REPAIRS

WE FIX THEM ALL
Wheelchairs, Scooters, Power Chairs, Recliner Lift Chairs and Hospital Beds. Call for more information **631 704- 6212**.

SMITHY'S
Stair Lift and Wheelchair repairs. Call **516 406-5937**.

TAILOR

SEAMSTRESS AVAILABLE
Tailor, hemming, darning, patches, alterations. This "seamstress" knows sewing. Call **516 799-8716**.

FREE

POWER WHEELCHAIR
Quantum power wheelchair, 16 inches wide, needs some work. Call for more information **718 327-6321**.

HAIRDRESSER

HAIRCUTTING IN YOUR HOME
Call for more information **917 363-6834**.

YOUR AD COULD BE HERE **516 939-2253**

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING MAIL-IN FORM

Print my ad as follows
(Use one space per word)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

ZIP _____

PHONE () _____

CHECK ENCLOSED \$ _____

Make Checks payable to Able Newspaper

VISA MASTERCARD

Acct# _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____ Security code _____

CLASSIFIED AD RATES

INDIVIDUAL - \$10 PER 5 WORD LINE

BUSINESS - \$15 PER 5 WORD LINE

MAIL TO:

ABLE NEWS,
PO Box 395, Old Bethpage,
N.Y. 11804
OR to place your ad with a credit
card by phone call 516 939-2253
OR by email to ableangela@aol.com

DEADLINE:

The 10th day of the month prior to
publication

ROCKERS PLAY BALL

Continued from page 17

"Participating in adaptive sports has helped me overcome many of the challenges and pitfalls associated with vision loss," said Plumacher. He went on to discuss the importance of community and competition. "Apart from the physical benefits

of being active, being part of a team and the challenge of competition helps you regain confidence, stamina and inspires you to push the limits of your perceived boundaries and inspires you to take on and master new challenges."

UNITED SPINAL NOW

Continued from page 6

d) A government benefits system has not kept up with the social and vocational gains and opportunities that the Americans with Disabilities Act prompted;

1. Personal care attendant services are hard to get and hard to access if you're employed, even though employment was ADA's goal;

2. Medicare imposes the "in the home" rule and does not cover mobility equipment for use in the community;

3. 43 years after Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association (United Spinal's former name) sued MTA for bus and subway access, MTA has yet to publicly commit to full station access. (We get closer everyday, as transit managers

and board members realize, generations too late, that transit needs to be accessible to stay relevant and necessary, and that the paratransit alternative is an expensive nightmare, just like we told them it would be, four decades ago.);

We all can make a list of things to be done as we celebrate. The ADA definitely changed things for the better, but the rights people with disabilities obtained need to be expanded, and the responsibilities that come with rights need to be met.

United Spinal Association joins the disability community in saying, happy 32nd anniversary, ADA. Speak up, speak out and vote. Those are our responsibilities.

In addition to Adaptive Blind Baseball, there are other groups that promote accessible sports for the visually impaired community that include running, goalball, skiing, canoeing, biking,

martial arts, and more.

Jeremy Morak, is a Marketing Specialist at Lighthouse Guild. For more information about Lighthouse Guild, one may visit www.Lighthouseguild.org.

Sports Organizations For Visually Impaired

USABA (United States Association for Blind Athletes);
<https://www.teamusa.org/Team-USA-Athlete-Services/Paralympic-Sport-Development/Getting-Started/Find-A-Club/Club-Search/United-States-Association-of-Blind-Athletes-USABA>;

Baseball <https://www.nbba.org>;

Goalball <https://www.usaba.org/usa-goalball/>;

Running <https://www.achillesinternational.org/>;

Skiing- Alpine, Cross Country and Water <https://www.sfl.org>;

Leaps of Faith Adaptive Skiers (Water & Alpine) <http://lofadaptiveskiers.org/>;

Outrigger Canoeing <https://www.makapo.org>;

Biking <https://www.intandembike.org>;

Martial Arts <http://www.thirdeyeinsight.org>;

World Seido Karate Organization <http://www.seido.com>;

Bowling <https://www.abba1951.com>;

Camps <https://www.campabilities.org>.

GallopNYC Central Park Promenade A Success



PHOTO BY DIANA DE ROSA

Riders from GallopNYC on the Central Park Promenade.

New York City's Central Park came alive when horses, riders, volunteers, instructors, equine therapists, supporters and sponsors converged for the annual GallopNYC Central Park Promenade in May.

GallopNYC is New York City's premier therapeutic riding program serving children and adults with disabilities and a community of veterans at four locations. GallopNYC serves hundreds of New Yorkers each week with life-en-

hancing equine-assisted therapy.

Riders arrived dressed to the nines in fashions by a group of diverse designers, styled by creative director, wardrobe stylist and costume designer Nyeelah Lewis.

The horses unloaded without fanfare and quietly took in the activity and the crowd of Promenade participants and onlookers. When everyone assembled, the first group mounted up and went for their ride down the historic bridge path. Groups of riders included GallopNYC youth, adults and veterans, led by supporter, Sa'eed Mustafa, CSM, U.S. Army (Ret.).

After the ride, a champagne reception, sponsored by Dunoyer de Segonzac, was held at The Museum of the City of New York. GallopNYC's miniature horse ambassadors Priscilla and Joy greeted guests and they toasted to the event's success.

A short program kicked off

with GallopNYC Executive Director James Wilson. "Your support allows us to offer lessons to those who may not have the opportunity," he said. "Thank you for your generosity."

Wilson introduced supporter Sarah Maslin Nir, *New York Times* writer and author of "Horse Crazy." She talked about how supporting GallopNYC and the Central Park Promenade helps children and adults take what they learn at the barn with the horses to enrich and improve their lives.

Christina, a U.S. Air Force veteran, had a car accident that left her with traumatic brain injury. She found a community of veterans among the greater community of young people and adults at GallopNYC.

She described the GallopNYC community's answer to veterans' specific needs for friendship, recognition and understanding. Christina is also the parent of Ethan, a GallopNYC rider.

Visually-Impaired Rockers Play Ball



Ed Plumacher assists batter.

By Jeremy Morak

For many people, summer and its long, warm days means playing outdoor sports.

But roughly 4 million Americans have been shut out from the fun because they have low vision. They had no choice but to sit on sidelines. Enter sports leagues and ac-

tivities designed specifically for people who are blind and visually impaired.

Low vision is defined as a permanent loss of vision that cannot be improved with eyeglasses, contact lenses, medicine or surgery. It makes everyday tasks more challenging. For people who are living with low vision and also want to be active, finding activities that are accessible could be challenging – until recently.

Adaptive Blind Baseball helps people with low vision step up to the plate. Based on traditional baseball rules, players still run, hit and play the field, but no sight is required. Using specially designed balls with bells in them, players are able to use audible cues to play.

A play begins when a batter drops the ball with one hand and swings with his or

her free hand. Sighted volunteers use clappers and horns to help players navigate the bases. Fielders then carefully listen to the bells to find the ball and make a play.

This sport, which began in Italy in 2015, is quickly gaining popularity around the world, including the United States. One team based in New York, The Rockers, even competed internationally in 2019. The team practices weekly in Central Park and hopes to compete again this fall.

In April, the Rockers held a special clinic for members of Lighthouse Guild's Teen Program – a group comprised of teenagers with varying degrees of visual impairment. The goal was to teach the teens about accessible sports and give them an opportunity to try a new activity in



Pitcher winds up with adapted ball.

a forum where vision is not needed. The teens practiced running, fielding and batting, while learning about inclusion in sports.

One Rockers team member, Ed Plumacher, Adaptive Technology Specialist at Lighthouse Guild, has continued to live an active life even as his functional vision has decreased over the years.

Continued on page 16