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SPEEDING ACCESS

Bus Self-Securing Program Launched



Quantum Self Securement Station is being tested on New York City buses.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority has launched a six-month pilot to test an automated wheelchair securing device, the Quantum Self Securement Station, on 10 buses along the M7 route.

The system is designed to allow people using manual or power wheelchairs to independently secure themselves

on a bus with just the push of a button. Currently, bus operators must leave their seat to secure a wheelchair in place and free the wheelchair from its position to let the customer off. Quantum streamlines that process by improving the experience for customers who use wheelchairs and speeding up the bus for all riders.

The M7 was chosen because of the high volume of mobility device users along that route. Customers will be able to know if their bus has system by a decal on the side of the bus near the front-boarding door. There will be one Quantum self-securement station on each of the ten buses. Passengers

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Designing Accessible COVID Tests

Available now and presented by the U.S. Access Board, the Best Practices for the Design of Accessible COVID-19 Home Tests document aims to ensure that more people can access and use COVID-19 home tests, including those who have no vision or low vision, have a reduced range of dexterity or motor skills and are aging.

This document details recommendations for test designers and manufacturers to create user-friendly and accessible COVID-19 home tests. While the initial focus is on COVID-19 testing, the ergonomic and accessible design principles outlined can also be applied to home tests for other diseases and conditions.

Marcie Roth, executive director and CEO of the World

Institute on Disability said, "Commitment to providing accessible products is good business. If these recommendations are put into practice, more people will be able to use home tests independently and these devices will be more usable by everyone."

The document captures the knowledge accumulated during the RADx Tech program to improve the accessibility of home testing options. Launched in 2022 to address current and emerging COVID-19 test products, the initiative sought out existing standards and collaborated with advocacy organizations and academic centers to find people with expertise in the needs and experiences of target user populations.

"The American Council of the

Blind commends the National Institutes of Health for working with the disability community to publish the Best Practices document for the creation of more accessible at-home tests. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it became readily apparent that at-home COVID-19 testing products were not designed for people with disabilities.

The utilization of these best practices by test manufacturers will ensure that people with disabilities will have greater access to all forms of at-home medical testing and diagnostics privately and independently," said Clark Rachfal, American Council of the Blind's director of advocacy and governmental affairs.

The document is available in HTML and PDF formats at www.access-board.gov/tad/radx/.

Webinar Addresses Accessible Housing

Accessibility barriers within a person's home, where they spend most of their time, are imperative to address. Residential dwelling unit accessibility guidelines and standards are addressed under many laws, including the Architectural Barriers Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Fair Housing Act and Section

504 of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure these facilities are accessible to people with disabilities. These laws, guidelines and standards can be difficult to understand and lead to confusion for many design professionals, lawyers, and citizens.

The next webinar in the U.S. Access Board's free monthly

series will take place from 2:30 to 4 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 7 and will clarify these requirements and their application to different types of residential facilities, including both privately and publicly funded 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 ADA and the ABA, as well as their overlap with HUD's 504 regulations of the Rehabilitation Act. Additionally, presenters will give an overview of the accessible design and construction requirements under the Fair Housing Act that apply broadly to most multifamily housing.

Information or registration is available by visiting www.accessibilityonline.org/ao/session/?id=111075.

All webinars include video remote interpreting 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 webinar series is hosted by the ADA National Network in cooperation with the Board. Archived copies of previous Board webinars are available on the site.

Gaining Economic Self-Sufficiency

Making sure that government programs are generating results and helping the people they were created for is a big part of the state comptroller's audit agenda. Back in 2015, the NYS Employment First Commission tasked the Office of Mental Health (OMH) with developing a life coaching network for individuals with disabilities seeking economic self-sufficiency.

A 2021 audit by the Office of the State Comptroller found that while OMH had designed and launched a benefits and work incentives systems within the New York Employment Services System to address the report's recommendations, it had not included all recommended actions including an interactive benefits advisement calculator, automated life coaching communications and information regarding

nutritional and housing assistance.

A recently released follow-up report found that OMH has made progress in implementing these audit recommendations.

"While our previous audit found the state Office of Mental Health was falling short in its efforts to help individuals with disabilities seeking jobs, I'm pleased to report that the agency has acted on our recommendations and has made real progress in expanding its vital support network. Assisting individuals with disabilities to navigate their way to economic self-sufficiency is key to our economy," Thomas DiNapoli, NYS comptroller, said.

Those wishing to read the report, should visit www.osc.state.ny.us/state-agencies-audits/2023/06/22/.

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**Deadline for the
October Issue of
Able Newspaper
Will Be Sept 12**

Former Rep. Langevin Joins NOD Board



Former Congressman Jim Langevin has been appointed to the board of directors of the National Organization on Disability (NOD).

During his career in Congress, Langevin was a staunch advocate for Americans with disabilities,

He served his Rhode Island constituents for 22 years in the U.S. House of Representatives and was the first quadriplegic to serve in the House.

He played a big part in passing the ADA Amendments Act and was the first wheelchair

user to serve as Speaker Pro Tempore and preside over the U.S. House of Representatives and is a leading voice in the national disability community.

Langevin was paralyzed because of an accidental gun discharge when he was a Police Explorer. He was 16 at the time. In his first election to Congress, he famously pledged, "I'll stand up for you."

"I am tremendously honored to join the National Organization on Disability Board and contribute to the organization's critical work in promot-

ing inclusivity and empowering individuals with disabilities," Langevin said. "I look forward to collaborating with fellow board members and leveraging my experience to advance NOD's mission on a national scale."

He will play a big role in guiding NOD's strategic direction and advocating for disability rights.

"We are delighted to welcome Congressman Jim Langevin to the NOD Board of Directors," NOD Chairman Luke Visconti said.

DOJ Proposes Title II Improvements For Web

The Justice Department sent to the Federal Register for publication a notice of proposed rulemaking under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) that aims to improve web and mobile applications (apps) access for people with disabilities and clarify how public entities – primarily state and local governments – can meet their existing ADA obligations as many of their activities shift online.

Across the United States, people routinely rely on web

and mobile apps to access a variety of vital public programs and services like employment and educational resources, voting information, health and emergency services, parking, and transit schedules. The proposed rule is particularly significant in the wake of the pandemic, as public entities have significantly increased the scope of essential services and programs offered through the web and mobile apps.

"This marks the first time in the history of the Amer-

icans with Disabilities Act that the Justice Department has issued a proposed rule on website accessibility," said Attorney General Merrick Garland. "This proposed rule seeks to ensure that Americans with disabilities have equal access to the websites and apps that connect them to essential services provided by state and local governments."

"This proposed rule, which is the culmination of years of work and collaboration, is a

historic moment for the Justice Department," said Associate Attorney General Vanita Gupta. "It will help enshrine the right of Americans with disabilities to access critical information needed to lead safe, productive, and prosperous lives."

As state and local governments continue to move more of their programs and activities online – from applying for permits to checking the status of service requests, reg-

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Airline Lavatories Must Be More Accessible

On the 33rd anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the U.S. Department of Transportation announced a new rule that requires airline lavatories to be more accessible.

This rulemaking, authorized by the Air Carrier Access Act, would require airlines to make lavatories on new single-aisle aircraft large enough to permit a passenger with a disability and attendant, both equivalent in size to a 95th percentile male, to approach, enter and maneuver within as necessary to use the aircraft lavatory.

Vice Pres. Kamala Harris and U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg previewed this rule at a recent White House ADA Anniversary event.

"Traveling can be stressful enough without worrying about being able to access a restroom; yet today, millions of wheelchair users are forced to choose between dehydrating themselves before boarding a plane or avoiding air travel altogether," Buttigieg said.

"We are proud to announce this rule that will make airplane bathrooms larger and more accessible, ensuring travelers in wheelchairs are afforded the same access and dignity as the rest of the traveling public."

The announcement builds on the administration's major investments in making infrastructure more accessible. DOT has awarded billions of dollars through Pres. Biden's Bipartisan Infra-

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ADA Celebrated In Albany



As the U.S. commemorated the 33rd anniversary of the Americans With Disabilities (ADA) passing, Abilities First CEO & Pres. Jeffery Fox, with other leaders and advocates were on hand with Gov. Kathy Hochul to celebrate in Albany.

"The impact of this monumental legislation has allowed significant progress in the areas of Accessibility and Accommodations, Employment Opportunities, Education and Access to Services and Public Awareness and Advocacy," said Hochul.

"As New York celebrates the 33rd anniversary, we are grateful for the progress but stay steadfast in the fight for continued commitment and advocacy for a more inclusive and equitable society for every person, regardless of their abilities."

EEOC Sues Covius For Disability Discrimination

Covius Services, LLC, a provider of services, solutions and technology for financial companies, violated federal law by rejecting a qualified applicant for a position in Spokane Valley, Washington because of her disability and need for prescribed medication, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has charged in a lawsuit.

According to the lawsuit, Covius scheduled Kelli Ebert

for a job interview after an outside recruiter identified her as a qualified candidate for a customer service position. During the interview, Ebert shared that she had chronic conditions which required her to take prescribed pain management medication. Covius explained that it did not hire her, despite her experience, due to her use of these medications. Around the same time, Covius hired at least two other applicants with

similar or lesser qualifications in the same office.

Such alleged conduct violates the Americans with Disabilities Act, which prohibits employers from refusing to hire qualified applicants due to an actual or perceived disability. The lawsuit seeks back pay, compensatory and punitive damages for Ebert, and injunctive relief designed to prevent such discrimination in the future.

“Fighting prejudice against people who need medication is

an integral part of the EEOC’s work to eliminate employment barriers for workers with disabilities,” said EEOC Seattle Field Director Elizabeth Cannon. “The ADA protects employment opportunity for applicants who can accomplish the essential functions of the job, with or without reasonable accommodation.”

For information on disability discrimination, the public should visit <https://www.eeoc.gov/disability-discrimination>.

Judge Orders DOE To Improve Implementing Orders

Manhattan Federal Judge Lorette Preska has issued an order compelling the New York City Department of Education (DOE) to take more than 40 steps to improve its systems for implementing special education hearing orders.

The DOE must create a structure for parents to contact the DOE when their hearing orders are not implemented; develop a support hotline; recruit new staff; and more. The order resulted from a class action suit that Advocates for Children of New York brought against the DOE.

AFC and pro bono co-coun-

sel Milbank LLP filed the class action lawsuit in 2003, alleging that, after parents of children with disabilities received favorable orders in special education administrative hearings, the DOE was failing to implement the ordered remedies. The DOE settled the case in 2008, with the lawsuit ending if the DOE implemented most orders within 35 days. But the DOE did not comply for more than ten years as students continued to wait for ordered relief.

“Families file hearings only as a last resort, after their child has already been denied the

services or school placements they need to learn,” said Kim Sweet, AFC executive director. “To then wait months or years without ordered services or reimbursements adds insult to injury for students and their families, and in our experience can lead to further harm for the families.”

A Special Master was appointed in 2021 to investigate the delays in implementation of hearing orders. In March 2022, Special Master David Irwin issued his findings on the failures within the DOE’s hearing order implementation systems. The next year, he issued recommendations.

The judge’s order incorporates the changes to the DOE’s systems and internal structures that the Special Master recommended and includes more than 41 required steps that the DOE must take with deadlines ranging from two months to a

little more than a year for the DOE to make all changes.

The order requires the DOE to create a structure for parents to contact the DOE when their special education administrative hearing orders are not implemented, including a support hotline; improve technology systems for implementing hearing orders; and recruit and fund new staff to implement hearing orders.

“After enduring the lengthy and burdensome process of a hearing, families rightly expect their child will finally get the services they need – not months of stalling,” said Rebecca Shore, director of litigation at AFC.

“AFC and Milbank have fought for decades to fix the Department of Education’s hearing order implementation system, and ultimately, secure vital services for all New York City students with disabilities,” said Jasper Perkins of Milbank LLP.

FCC Says Emergency Info Must Be Accessible

The FCC recently reminded video programming distributors, including broadcasters, cable operators, and satellite television services that deliver video programming directly to the home, of their obligation to make televised emergency information accessible to persons who are blind, visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing.

The FCC also provides information for consumers about where they can find more information about access to televised emergency information – including an American Sign Language (ASL) video at [\[gencyAccessASL\]\(https://www.fcc.gov/Accessibility/ASL\) – and how to file complaints when televised emergency information is not accessible.](https://www.fcc.gov/TVEmer-</p>
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To view the public notice, those interested may visit <https://www.fcc.gov/document/accessibility-televised-emergency-information-0>.

Those interested in information about accessible televised emergency info. may visit <https://www.fcc.gov/general/access-emergency-information-television>. Those who use video phones and are fluent in ASL may call the FCC’s ASL Consumer Support Line at 844 432-2275 (videophone).

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Audit Finds State Parks Not Accessible

Parks across New York State were found to have inaccessible entrances and restrooms, obstacles on access trails and paths and limited parking for people with disabilities, according to an audit released by New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli.

The Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (Parks) oversees more than 250 parks and historic sites and works to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. While the parks examined generally met the ADA's minimum standards, auditors found they could be significantly improved to make them far more accessible.

"New York State strives to promote inclusivity and broad access to all the resources it has to offer, and this includes our state parks and historic sites," DiNapoli said. "The Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation recognizes the importance of improving accessibility to the New York State parks system, but must do a better job incorporating this goal into its processes for maintaining

and operating its sites. Auditors reviewed 40 parks across the state from January 2018 to October 2022 and examined 1,446 amenities such as restrooms, campsites, swimming areas, playgrounds, pavilions, elevators, boat launches and parking. They found that 62 percent of them could be improved to enhance accessibility. These included correcting mislabeled accessible signage, fixing rough or uneven access routes, increasing the number of wheelchair accessible stalls in restrooms and ensuring there are more accessible, clearly labeled parking spaces.

Several parks had accessibility information misrepresented online, while others had incorrect accessibility signage on-site. During the audit, parks officials said they would take steps to improve the accuracy of the information.

The audit found some parks had taken steps to improve accessibility. At many beaches and pools, wheelchairs were available and mats were put down to improve access to the water. Signage for such amenities were prominent at some parks, while

others offered unique amenities.

For example, Midway State Park offered a wheelchair accessible playground, and Letchworth State Park had an Autism Nature Trail, featuring sensory stations to help children with autism and all visitors explore nature. Braille was also on all signage along the trail.

In 2015, Parks developed a transition plan as required by the ADA after identifying physical obstacles for people with disabilities at its parks and historic sites. However, the plan did not include a specific timetable for improvements, had not been updated for eight years and little action had been taken to implement the plan's provisions.

The audit also found Parks did not establish grievance procedures as required by the ADA. Although Parks provides a general complaint form and email address for patrons to contact, the agency had not established or published procedures to ensure fair and prompt resolution of complaints, as required.

Instead, each park developed its own process for handling and tracking complaints related to

accessibility, which makes it difficult to determine if they were adequately addressed. Auditors reviewed 27 complaints at 14 parks, and when those parks were visited, it was observed that little had been done to address the complaints.

Additionally, the ADA requires Parks to have at least one ADA Coordinator responsible for coordinating compliance with the law and investigating related complaints, but Parks could not definitively identify who filled the position from January 2018 to March 2022. It was determined the position was vacant for at least four months, but possibly longer. During the audit, Parks assigned a new ADA coordinator in March 2022.

DiNapoli recommended Parks incorporate accessibility into its processes to operate and maintain parks and improve accuracy of publicly reported information on accessibility, both online and through park signage.

Parks agreed with their recommendations and will conduct a multi-faceted review of its policies, facilities and programs to improve accessibility.

Grant Funds Services For Kids

Because of a \$7.5 million grant by the Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau to the American Academy of Pediatrics, children and youth with disabilities will receive services from a new national center health care

With the cooperative agreement, the AAP will establish a National Center Consortium (NCC) with Boston University, Family Voices and The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health.

The goal of the collaboration is to provide better care for more children and youth with special health care needs by supporting the implementation of the MCHB Blueprint for Change: Guiding Principles for a System of Services for CYSHCN.

According to the 2020-2021 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH), only 13.7 percent of children with disabilities receive care in a well-functioning system. The Maternal and Child Health Bureau identified structural racism, ableism, complicated and siloed service systems, and weak links between clinical and non-clinical

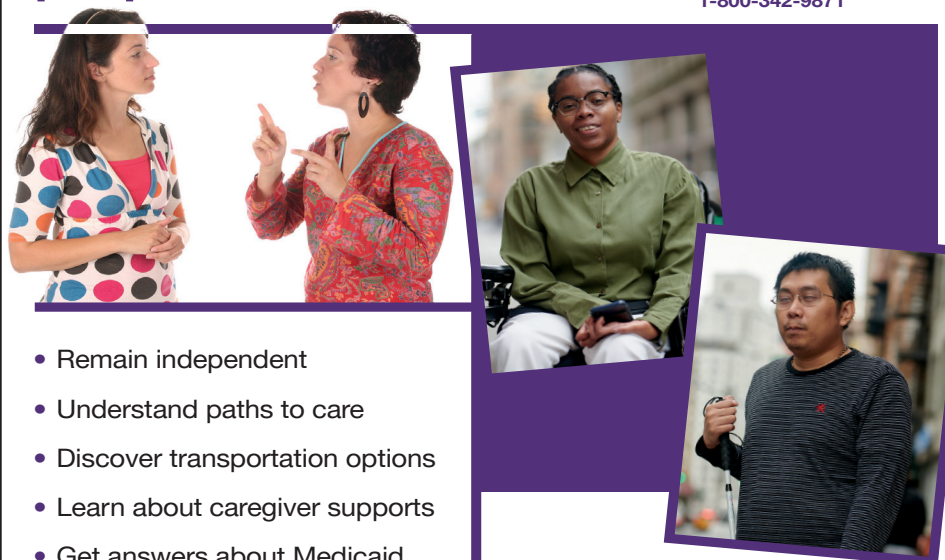
supports as some of the reasons. One of the goals of the NCC will be to assist state Title V Programs for Children with Special Needs and various stakeholders who serve children and youth with disabilities and their families. Strategies will be implemented in four critical areas: health equity; financing of services; well-being and quality of life; and access to services to improve the cross-sector systems serving this population.

To advance the system of services, the NCC will develop an implementation roadmap based on the MCHB Blueprint for Change: Guiding Principles for CYSHCN that identifies actionable steps at the research, practice, and policy levels for sectors serving CYSHCN and their families across their lifespan.

The target audience includes state Title V programs, families, pediatricians, child health clinicians, education professionals, early childhood and adolescent experts, mental and behavioral health professionals, community-based organizations, payers, health systems, and policymakers.

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UNITED SPINAL^{NOW}

Eventually – But Not Really

BY JAMES WEISMAN
GENERAL COUNSEL



Airplane access for wheelchair users is supposed to get better, according to the Biden administration's Department of Transportation. Secretary Pete Buttigieg, Vice Pres. Kamala Harris, and other bigs at U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) celebrated the 33rd anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act by announcing that new single-aisle aircraft, ordered after 2033 or to be delivered after 2035, must have at least one accessible restroom.

This is great news for some. However, the vast majority of aircraft will remain inaccessible for years to come, and aisles may remain so narrow that they prevent wheelchair travel, requiring transfers to aisle chairs as if it was 1990. At least there's a commitment to accommodating the bodily functions of those with mobility impairments who choose to travel.

By 2035, medicine will be keeping us alive much longer, i.e. there will be more wheelchair and scooter users. The airline industry is lagging, and will continue to lag decades behind others in the travel industry. Twenty years from now, people will wonder about the slow pace of airline accessibility. Remember, it took until 2023 to require airlines to provide accessible restrooms, and that took USDOT action. Compare that with the cruise ship industry who saw the retiree market (aging with disabilities) – and went for it.

More important to air travelers with disabilities today is something that USDOT did a year ago. The Airline Passengers with Disabilities Bill of Rights describes the fundamental rights of air travelers under the Air Carrier Access Act, and each can be found along with supporting documentation on USDOT's website with descriptive materials. An explanation of each right can be found on USDOT's website under Airline Passengers with Disabilities' Bill of Rights.

The right to be treated with dignity and respect

The right to receive information about services and airplanes

The right to receive information in an accessible format

The right to accessible airport facilities

The right to assistance at airports

The right to assistance on the aircraft

The right to travel with an assistive device or service animal

The right to receive seating accommodations

The right to accessible aircraft features

The right to resolution of disability-related issues

USDOT has linked each of these rights to laws and regulations supporting them on their website. Airlines will be unable to fool aggrieved passengers with disabilities if those passengers are armed with knowledge of this Bill of Rights. Incidentally, contractors with airlines must comply with this Bill of Rights, although the airline may ultimately be responsible for violations of the law.

Foreign carriers are covered for flights to or from the United States. All flights of all U.S. airlines are covered. The provisions of this Bill of Rights, which is really just a collection of statutory and regulatory provisions in one place for passengers and airlines, do not render inaccessible aircraft accessible. However, if airlines obey its provisions, the process of boarding for passengers with disabilities and even lavatory use on accessible planes (wide-body aircraft with at least two aisles must have an accessible restroom now) will be made easier and more dignified.

If you're a wheelchair user, you're probably wondering why new aircraft ordered after 2033 or delivered after 2035 don't need to have wide aisles and permit travel in your wheelchair. Me too.

International Autism Advocates Gather For Biennial Meeting



Advocates from 33 countries gathered in New York City for the sixth biennial Advocacy Leadership Network (ALN) meeting. They met to share their successes and best practices in promoting autism awareness and improving the lives of autistic individuals and their

families around the world. The ALN aims to enhance global advocacy efforts, foster collaboration and promote initiatives that support autistic individuals and their families, contributing to a more inclusive world for those with autism.

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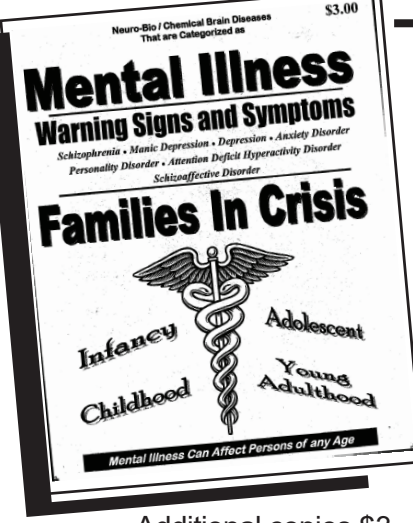


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CIDNY SAYS

The Terrible Blues Can Hurt Unnecessarily

BY SHARON McLENNON-WIER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Did you know that suicide is the twelfth leading cause of death for people living in the United States. According to the National Institute of Mental Health (2023), in 2020, male suicide rates were four times higher (22.0 percent) than female suicide rates (5.5 percent). Females aged 45 to 64 had the greatest suicide rate (7.9 percent). Additionally, males aged 75 and older had the greatest suicide rate (40.5 percent).

When we examine suicide statistics rates based on race and gender, we find that the Hispanic female rate is 2.8 percent compared to the male rate of 12.3 percent. The suicide rate for white female is 6.9 percent compared to the male rate of 27.0 percent.

Among Black females, the suicide rate is 2.9 percent compared to the male rate of 12.9 percent.

The suicide rate for Asian /Pacific Islander female rate is 3.8 percent compared to the male rate of 10.3 percent. American Indian female suicide rate is 3.8 percent compared to the male rate of 27.3 percent.

These statistics demonstrate that men and women of color are affected by high levels of depression and anxiety. It is important for these racial groups to obtain mental health treatment that can lead to good mental health wellness.

September is national suicide prevention awareness month. CIDNY wants to use this monthly column to promote this salient awareness that having “the blues” can lead to a chronic condition known as clinical depression. Clinical depression can physically hurt.

The brain is nexus with the body. Many New Yorkers are dealing with stressful-life events, and they may not have the coping skills needed to avoid having a psychological mood disorder like depression. This is why it becomes imperative for a person to know how to recognize the warning signs which can encompass both psychological and physical symptoms.

Symptoms of clinical depression can cause numerous physiological symptoms such as executive functioning challenges, difficulty with short-term or long-term memory retrieval, periods of uncontrollable crying, feelings of sadness and helplessness, despair, feelings of hopelessness and dread, lack of motivation to complete tasks, irritability, difficulty regulating one’s mood, great fatigue, difficulty sleeping, anhedonia, lack of euphoria, body aches, headaches, chest pain just to name a few.

Some people report having some of these symptoms and it gets to the point that they cannot deal with the overall despair and physical symptoms, and they try to find a way out of the gloom. This is why we want to alert our consumers that committing suicide is not a way out.

You can contact 988 to speak to a trained mental health professional to assist you with addressing your chief complaint. The phone resource of 988 can connect you to clinical providers in your area that can offer you psychological treatment that might include, but is not limited to, talk psychotherapy, individual and group therapy, cognitive behavioral techniques, bibliotherapy, journaling, biofeedback, hypnosis, meditation, guided imagery, rational emotive therapy, family systems, substance and alcohol abuse counseling, relapse pre-

Continued on page 17

State Sues Nursing Home Owners

New York Atty. Gen. Letitia James has filed a lawsuit against the owners, operators and landlords of four nursing homes for years of repeated and persistent fraud and illegally misusing more than \$83 million in taxpayer money that resulted in significant resident neglect, harm and humiliation.

The nursing homes, owned and operated by Centers for Care LLC, doing business as Centers Health Care, include Beth Abraham Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing (Beth Abraham Center) in Bronx County, Buffalo Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing (Buffalo Center) in Erie County, Holliswood Center for

Rehabilitation and Healthcare (Holliswood Center) in Queens County, and Martine Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing (Martine Center) in Westchester County.

Residents at these facilities were forced to sit for hours in their own urine and feces, suffered from severe dehydration, malnutrition and increased risk of death, developed infections and sepsis from untreated bed sores and inconsistent wound care, sustained life-changing injuries from falls and died.

The lawsuit alleges that the owners and operators converted more than \$83 million in Medicaid and Medicare funds to enrich themselves, their families and business associates through

a network of related companies and collusive, fraudulent transactions, rather than use the funds to provide sufficient staffing and resident care.

Centers for Care LLC doing business as Centers Health Care (Centers Health Care), a multistate network of nursing, rehabilitation, and senior care services and facilities, allegedly controls and manages the nursing homes. Beth Abraham Center is a 448-bed facility in the Bronx; Buffalo Center is a 200-bed facility in Buffalo; Holliswood Center is a 314-bed facility in Queens; and Martine Center is a 200-bed facility in White Plains. Centers Health Care is co-owned by Kenneth Rozenberg and Daryl Hagler.

The companies named in the lawsuit are Abraham Operations Associates LLC, Delaware Operations Associates LLC, Hollis Operating Co. LLC, and Schnur Operations Associates LLC, doing business as Beth Abraham Center, Buffalo Center, Holliswood Center, and Martine Center, respectively.

These companies are owned by Rozenberg. Also named are Light Property Holdings Associates LLC (Light Property), Delaware Real Property Associates LLC (Delaware Property), Hollis Real Estate Co. LLC (Hollis Real Estate), and Light Property Holdings II Associates LLC (Light Property II), which own the real property on which the nursing homes are located. These property companies are owned by Hagler.

The lawsuit states that residents did not receive adequate care and suffered neglect, mistreatment and humiliation. Due to insufficient staffing, employees were often unable to assist residents with basic activities of daily living, such as help using the bathroom, getting in and out of bed, eating and maintaining personal hygiene.

James encourages anyone with information or concerns about alarming nursing home conditions, or resident abuse or neglect to file a confidential complaint online or call the MFCU hotline at 833 249-8499.

NYC Comptroller Holds Disability Justice Roundtable

New York City Comptroller Brad Lander hosted a disability justice roundtable recently to address accessibility concerns in New York City. The inaugural roundtable brought advocates and organizations together to discuss the various intersectional adversities faced within disability communities.

“As the city’s chief accountability officer, our office must actively advocate for the disabled community and hold city agencies accountable where they fall short. Engaging in meaningful conversation and building strong relationships is the first step as we strive to create a more inclusive city, and I look forward to using the tools of this office to make sure all New Yorkers receive the support and services they need,” Lander said.

During the roundtable, participants highlighted the need for clearer express bus times on the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) app and improving bus drivers’ lift operation training. They also discussed the challenges that would arise if the MTA reduces stops on regular bus routes, which increases walking distance for people with mobility issues.

Participants also discussed strategies for increasing the hiring of disabled individuals

across city agencies, as well as the importance of expanding bias training to foster a more inclusive environment.

Several notable disability advocates and organizations attended the discussion, including advocates and representatives from the New York City Office of the Public Advocate, New York City Department of Transportation, Disabled In Action of Metropolitan New York, Staten Island Center for Independent Living, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, Harlem Independent Living Center, AHRC New York City, Hearing Loss Association of America, 504 Democratic Club, INCLUDEnyc, Brooklyn Center for Independence, Advocacy Initiatives, CUNY School of Professional Studies, Verona Carpenter Architects, Young Adult Institute, Bronx Independent Living Services, ADAPT Community Network, Housing Campaigns, Center for Independence of the Disabled New York (CIDNY), Greater New York Council of the Blind, Caring Majority, National Federation of the Blind in New York City, and One Heart One Vision.

Moving forward, Lander’s office plans to organize disability justice roundtables with advocates on a quarterly basis.

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Need Affordable Housing?



**Check Able's
Website Homepage
at
www.ablenews.com
For the Latest Listings.**

Open House Educates Care Workers On Rights

The Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP) recently held an open house at the Brooklyn Public Library to help paid care workers understand their rights and the resources available to them, like the City's Domestic Worker Mediation Program.

The event was co-hosted by DCWP and the New York City Commission on Human Rights, Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, the National Domestic Workers Alliance and the Carroll Gardens Association. DCWP research has found that more than half of the city's paid care workforce – the majority

of whom are immigrants and women of color – have experienced wage theft, safe and sick leave violations, harassment, discrimination and fear of retaliation from their employers if they report illegal behavior.

"Paid care workers often lack the support they need to resolve challenges like wage theft or harassment, so it's crucial we ensure these vulnerable workers know their rights and the resources available to them," said DCWP Commissioner Vilda Vera Mayuga.

Under the law, a private home employing one or more domestic workers is a workplace, Annabel Palma, commis-

sioner and chair of CCHR, said. "Domestic workers deserve to be treated with dignity and respect and it's important that we let them know that their city has their back."

Workers learned about the history of domestic workers and key tactics when negotiating work agreements with employers. DCWP provided an overview of worker rights and of the city's Domestic Worker Mediation Program, which helps domestic workers, and their employers resolve workplace issues in a respectful, confidential and free way without going to court. New Yorkers can visit nyc.gov/workers

for a multilingual overview, or email OLPS@dcwp.nyc.gov or call 311 to make an appointment.

DCWP's Paid Care Division enforces key worker protections for paid care workers, like the Paid Safe and Sick Leave Law, investigates and refers complaints to address workplace violations at the local, state, and federal levels.

Domestic workers can file a complaint online or call 311 if they believe their rights have been violated. Complaints can be filed anonymously. It is illegal for employers to retaliate against employees for filing complaints.

Health Care Cost Transparency Bill Is NYC Law

New Yorkers will now be able to compare costs charged by New York City hospitals for the same service thanks to a bill signed into law by New York City Mayor Eric Adams.

Passed unanimously by the New York City Council, the bill also establishes the nation's first Office of Health

Care Accountability to examine health care and hospital pricing practices and make it easier for New Yorkers to know how much their health care costs.

"Health care is a human right, not a privilege, and this includes ensuring that there is cost transparency in our health

care system," Adams said. "New Yorkers shouldn't have to break the bank to get the health care they need."

Intro 844-A, the bill sponsored by Councilmember Julie Menin, establishes the Office of Health Care Accountability to provide recommendations related to health care and

hospital costs, analyze expenditures on health care costs for city employees, provide information relating to the costs of hospital procedures on its website, convene stakeholders to examine health care costs and collect and make available hospital financial documents.

EPOCH Communities Achieve Purple Flag Status

EPOCH Senior Living, a Northeastern senior health-care organization, has recently partnered with Purple Flag for Dementia Care™ to implement systemwide accreditation across all 12 of its communities offering memory care.

Purple Flag is an accreditation program developed to recognize excellence and drive continuous improvement in the quality of services provided to residents in assisted living and long-term care communities, Home Care Agencies and other settings with an emphasis on individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and other related dementias.

Purple Flag's platform recognizes organizations that go above and beyond every day, that is, those communities that truly see residents for who they are and through care, support, and programming aim to enhance their cognitive, physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. The program's aim is to equip providers with the tools needed to stay

ahead of the curve in providing high-quality care by using effective, data-driven performance advancement methodologies. In doing so, Purple Flag-accredited communities are setting the gold standard for memory care.


The first three EPOCH Senior Living communities to complete their evaluations and achieve Purple Flag Accreditation are Waterstone on High Ridge, Bridges by EPOCH at Trumbull and Bridges by EPOCH. All three of the Connecticut communities underwent a rigorous audit to demonstrate best practices in care programs alongside conformance with the requirements of 60 practice standards across ten content areas.

"EPOCH is leading the way in the world of memory care by adopting the high-quality standards set by Purple Flag Accreditation systemwide. We believe this to be a clear indicator of EPOCH's passion and commitment to providing the best care

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DESIGNS 4 LIVING
SUMMER 2020

ARCHITECTURE DESIGN CULTURE ARTICLES



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coming out this July. Read our Contributors Stories,
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Diversity, Equity & Inclusion In NY Public Schools

New York Atty. Gen. Letitia James and New York State Education Department Betty Rosa have reminded New York public schools and local education agencies of their obligation to promote diversity, equity and inclusion in educational planning and decision-making.

As states and school districts across the country adopt exclusionary educational policies that deny students from diverse backgrounds and identities access to a safe and affirming learning environment, James and Commissioner Rosa are providing resources to school leaders that assist in fulfilling their commitment to ensuring every student in New York has the opportunity to learn free from the fear of discrimination, harassment or intimidation.

The joint guidance offers recommendations for upholding the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion in three key areas of the school experience – learning and teaching; student discipline; and addressing bullying and harassment. It also

warns against actions that may contribute to a hostile environment for students of diverse backgrounds and identities, such as banning books, and provides schools with resources to help create and foster environments that protect every student's right to access equal education.

"Every student in New York is entitled to learn, grow and discover in an environment free from discrimination or harassment," James said. "As states such as Texas, Florida and Missouri are banning books and canceling classes, New York is making clear that diversity, equity and inclusion will always be protected and central to our children's education."

"We are urging every school district to reflect on local policies, strategies, and tactics and advance the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion to ensure all students have the supports necessary to be fully engaged," Rosa said. "Students cannot learn and develop socially and emotionally when they feel disconnected, intimidated, harassed or discriminat-

ed against. We have a responsibility to remove the barriers that stand in the way of success for many students. In partnership with Atty. Gen. James and our school and district leaders, the Department and Board of Regents can foster a safe, supportive environment where all New York State students feel included and welcome."

State and federal human rights laws prohibit discrimination in educational institutions on the basis of race, national origin, disability, sex, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and age, among other protected classes. In addition, New York's Dignity for All Students Act, which took effect in 2012 and was updated in 2021, requires that public schools create an educational environment where students are free to learn without fear of discrimination, harassment, or intimidation. In 2021, the Board of Regents adopted a policy urging districts to develop and implement policies and practices advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion.

James and Rosa identified three core principles that public schools and local education agencies can implement to honor their obligations to their students under the law – ensure teaching and learning reflect the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion; address disproportionately punitive student disciplinary policies and practices; and establish effective policies and procedures to prevent and respond to bullying and harassment.

The guidance also warns schools and local education agencies against actions that may violate the law, including but not limited to: banning books; prohibiting discussions of slavery, disability, or the LGBTQ+ community; preventing students from joining extracurricular activities or using specific facilities because they may not conform to gender stereotypes; barring a non-binary student from a single-gender extracurricular program; and forbidding natural hair or hairstyles most closely associated with Black people.

Back-to-School Eye Care Tips

Courtesy Of
The Lighthouse Guild

Children's Eye Health and Safety Month is a national health observance during back-to-school season that highlights the importance of protecting children's vision and eye health.

As parents get their children geared up for the new school season, it's a good time to add an eye exam to their checklists. Lighthouse Guild offers a few important tips to help safeguard children's eye health during back-to-school season and throughout the year.

Regular Vision Screenings

"Vision health is one of the keys to success in school, and the most important thing one can do to protect a child's vision is to make sure they get an eye exam," said Laura Sperazza, director of Vision Rehabilitation Services at Lighthouse Guild.

"An eye health professional can determine if a child needs eyeglasses or contact lenses, or

if there is a vision problem that requires further intervention."

Eating Those Carrots

People should encourage their children to eat a well-balanced diet loaded with different types of fruits and vegetables, as well as fish.

Speak Up

Children should be asked if they notice any vision changes such as vision that is blurry; if they are squinting a lot; or if their eyes are bothering them.

Wear Those Glasses

Parents should help their children understand the importance of wearing their eyeglasses. If they are resistant because they believe glasses are unattractive, parents can try pointing out sports figures and other well-known people who wear glasses.

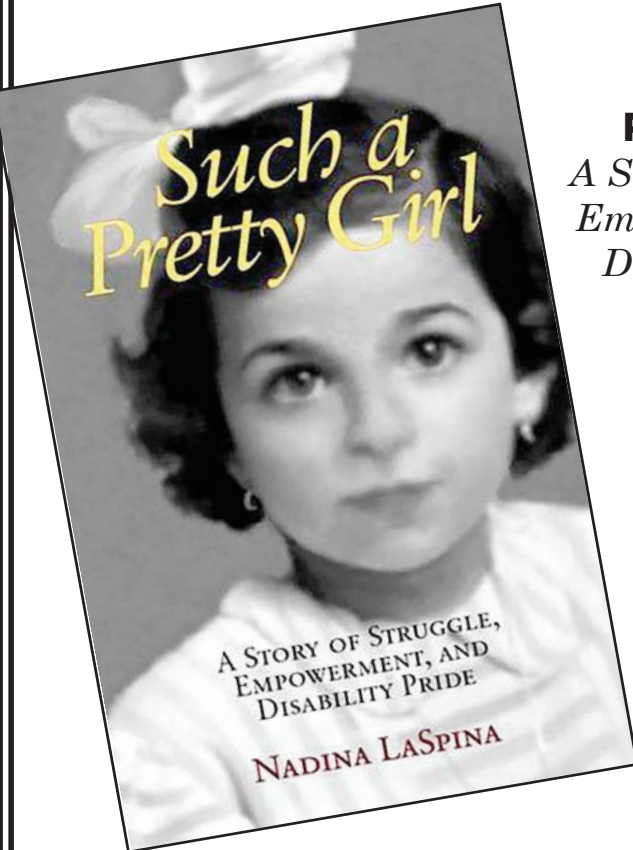
Clean Those Glasses

Children should be taught how to clean and store their glasses.

Rest Those Eyes

Looking continuously at a computer, phone or TV screen

Continued on page 17



"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.

DISABILITY HISTORY

An Improbable, Repeat Birthplace (Part One)

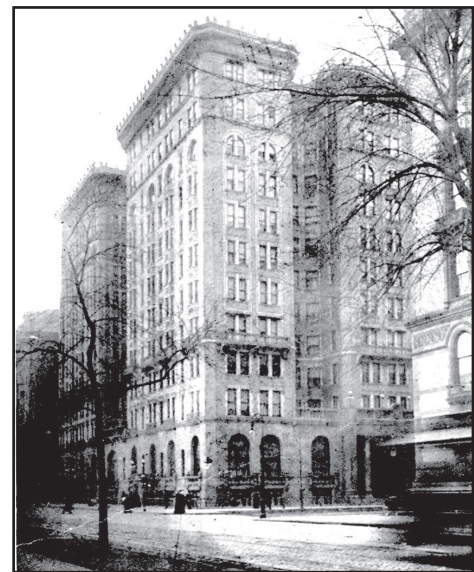
BY WARREN SHAW

There is one Street in Manhattan that has the unique distinction of having helped birth disability activism in our City – not once, but twice, in completely independent episodes that are separated by more than half a century and are remembered by practically no one.

That Street is West 72nd St.. The place where I was born in 1958 and where my family resided until 1977.

Today it's a busy mixed-use Street, four blocks long, with small 19th Century buildings, early and modern apartment buildings and lots of stores and restaurants. It is perhaps an improbable candidate for disability distinction – especially when you consider the Street's origins.

The bottom layer on West 72nd St. is wealth – big money, as epitomized by its anchor tenant The Dakota, the dowager queen of American communal palaces. It was built in the early 1880s on land bought from August Belmont. By the 1890s the Street was filled with showy row houses and private mansions, each trying to outdo the other. For about fifteen years, 72nd St. was the main boulevard in the City's newest place to be, the Upper West Side.



The Majestic Hotel in 1907, with corner of the Dakota in right foreground

In 1894 the Dakota was joined by a massive 600-room hotel right across the St., the Majestic Hotel. It was a fancy place indeed. In "Custom of the County," the novelist Edith Wharton described its charms, lightly fictionalized, as featuring rooms with "wainscoting of highly-varnished mahogany, hung with salmon-pink damask and adorned with oval portraits of Marie Antoinette and the

Princess de Lamballe. In the centre of the florid carpet a gilt table with a top of Mexican onyx sustained a palm in a gilt basket tied with a pink bow."

It was in this building that the improbable became real, in the form of a fundraiser run by Louise Balfe Erlanger, the wife of Abraham Erlanger, the most fearsome and feared theatrical producer in the United States. Erlanger was the author of the widely quoted statement, "I never trust a man I can't buy." His company discovered such enduring classics as Dracula, Ben Hur, and the Jazz Singer and built the New Amsterdam Theater. They became millionaires in the process.

By 1901 the Erlangers were searching for something to distract from Abraham's ruthless reputation. Ideally, it would be something sufficiently removed from anything theatrical to preclude talk that Abe was being self-serving, yet possess sufficient publicity potential to enable him to be exactly that. It should be a project primarily for his wife – charitable projects had become quite fashionable among elite New York women, and the Erlangers might earn respectability that way.

One of the subjects of the Erlangers' mixed-motive outreach was a woman named May Darrach.

Darrach was born in 1869, in New Jersey. At less than three years old she was diagnosed with spinal tuberculosis. She was unable to walk unaided until she was thirteen years old, and

she retained a hunched posture and diminished height.

In 1890, at the age of twenty, Darrach conducted the first survey of disability in the general population. She later established the nation's first school classes for children with disabilities, and raised an endowment sufficient to open the Darrach Settlement Home for Crippled Children on West 69th St., a twenty-bed combination school and shelter.

In her spare time, she went to medical school and became a physician.

Darrach was disabled, yet she was far too formidable to be overlooked. A unique figure in the United States, Darrach was the first disability activist.

May Darrach was tailor-made for the Erlangers. She had made disabled children an up and coming cause – and the appeal of the kids was undeniable. The icing on the cake was May Darrach's highly impressive self, while the incredibly convenient location of her Settlement Home, just a couple of blocks from the Erlangers' brownstone on West 70th St., meant an easy visit with other fashionable wives, followed by a no doubt self-congratulatory tea in the Erlangers' parlor. What could be better?

And so it was that May Darrach landed her most important backer, shortly after New Year's Day, 1901.

On a Friday afternoon that March, Erlanger threw what she called a "charity euchre" on behalf of Darrach's Settlement Home (complete, of course, with publicity in the New York Times and elsewhere). The location was the Majestic Hotel at Central Park West and 72nd St., the most elegant public place on the entire West Side.

Erlanger and Darrach proved an instant hit. Many more events followed, and Darrach plowed the receipts back into her Settlement House, which moved to a larger building on West 104th St. (Neither building still exists.)

As her budget and her medical practice expanded, Darrach set up offices in a ground floor suite in the newly-built Severn Apartments, at 73rd St. and Amsterdam Ave., two blocks from the Majestic.

Erlanger and Darrach only lasted three years. The reasons for the split are far from clear, but after it ended, in the trademark Erlanger style Louise Erlanger set out to bury her former benefactee. Stealing Darrach's concept and setting up a better-funded and better publicized competitor, Mrs. Erlanger began raising funds for her own settlement home, the "New York Home For Destitute Crippled Children." Erlanger used the same fundraising and promotional methods as she had for Darrach, complete with a kickoff fundraiser at the Majestic Hotel.

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Louise Balfe 1889

Goalball Team Takes Gold In Berlin



After dropping their opening match, the USA Goalball Men's Team reeled off six consecutive victories to claim the gold medal at the June 9-11 Nations Cup in Berlin, Germany.

The American squad outscored its opponents 78-37 and reached double-digits in goals in five of their seven games.

USDGA Championship To Return To Ryder Course

The PGA of America will serve as presenting partner of the U.S. Disabled Golf Open Championship (USDGA).

"It's a proud moment for the PGA of America to build upon our partnership with the USDGA, as we once again present the USDGA Championship at PGA Golf Club next April," said PGA Pres.

John Lindert, PGA director of golf at Country Club of Lansing (Michigan). "Personally, I have a staff member who has competed in adaptive golf championships and witnessed the tremendous positive impact they have on the game.

"PGA Golf Club is thrilled to again serve as the host site for

such an amazing event as the USDGA Championship," said PGA Director of Golf/Head Professional Holly Taylor. "This is part of our tradition and commitment to reach out to golfers everywhere to experience and enjoy the game. The event will present golfers from across America who play the game at an impressive level, as they have overcome great challenges and serve as an inspiration to us all."

Known as "The Ultimate Golf Experience," PGA Golf Club is owned and operated by the PGA of America. The USDGA mission

is to provide people with physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities an opportunity to showcase their ability in a golf championship at a high level.

Designed by Tom Fazio, the Ryder Course in Prot St. Lucie, Fla. is named in honor of Samuel Ryder, the namesake and founder of the Ryder Cup.

Player registration for the 6th USDGA Championship will open in December, with the field scheduled to be announced in January. Golfers must have a handicap index of 36.4 or lower and a WR4GD pass in order to register.

Scouts Compete In Pinewood Derby



PHOTO BY HONORA BANKS

Pinewood Derby winner, center, poses with BRIDGE School Principal Barry Wasser and Troop Leader Jay Singer. Adaptive Cub Scout Pack 535 and Girl Scout Troop 1902 participated in their tenth annual Pinewood Derby at Cerebral Palsy of Westchester in July. The event was sponsored by the Mid-Westchester Elks Lodge #535.

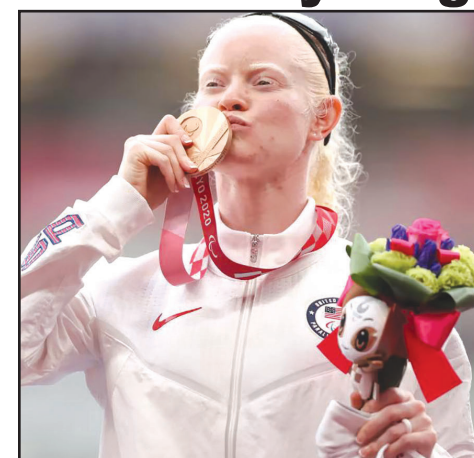
The scouts built, equipped and decorated their cars. From a block of wood, four plastic wheels, and four nails, the scouts produced vehicles that can reach 20 miles per hour. The cars were raced on an official Pinewood Derby Track where only gravity is used to speed them along. On competition day, Elks volunteers and scouts from Troop 36 Montrose ran the derby heats. Three top winners from each troop received trophies.

Track Paralympian Adds Cycling

Two-time Paralympic track and field athlete Kym Crosby, 30, is training in Paracycling in addition to track and field for 2024.

"My goal is to get back on the podium in track and field and do better than a bronze," said Crosby, who has three Paralympic bronze medals as a sprinter. "But I want to be different. I want to be able to medal not only in track and field, but also cycling. My goal is to always show the kids, the young, aspiring athletes who have visual impairments, that they can do anything they put their mind to," she said.

In visually impaired cycling, the sighted guide rides in front on a tandem bicycle and pedals, steers and gives commands



such as when to sit up and down in the saddle and when to add power depending on where they're at on the track and how the race is going. The visually impaired athlete rides in the back and pedals.

"I'm the engine," Crosby said. "I'm just giving it everything I've got."

AN IMPROBABLE, REPEAT BIRTHPLACE (PART ONE)

Continued from page 12

The new project moved ahead fast, repurposing a brownstone. Mrs. Erlanger had been busy – you could tell from the doorway plaques which announced that five beds had

Darrach – she fought back. She figured prominently, for example, in a nearly full-page spread in the *N.Y. Times* about the Children's Aid Society's work on behalf of children with dis-

day fundraiser at the Polo Grounds in upper Manhattan, presided over by George M. Cohan. It drew an audience of five thousand and raised a small fortune.

Amazingly, the actors' field day remained a nearly annual New York City event into the 1980s, and probably no one at all remembers its origins in an unlikely rivalry between the nation's first disability activist and the wife of Abraham Erlanger.

While the Erlangers slugged it out with Darrach, the universe surrounding disabled children in New York City expanded with incredible speed. Thanks to Darrach the cause had won the backing of New York's elite, and new organizations multiplied.

It was the beginning of the peak in what I've dubbed the Dickensian Disability Movement – a largely private-sector effort that was led, especially in its earlier years, mostly by elite college educated women whose primary cause was what they called "crippled children."

But Darrach would not live to see her efforts fully flower. In 1910 her health broke down, and she passed away a few years later, at age forty nine.

Over her twenty-year career Dr. May Darrach achieved success beyond anything she might have reasonably expected. Yet she was often minimized – more than one contemporary telling



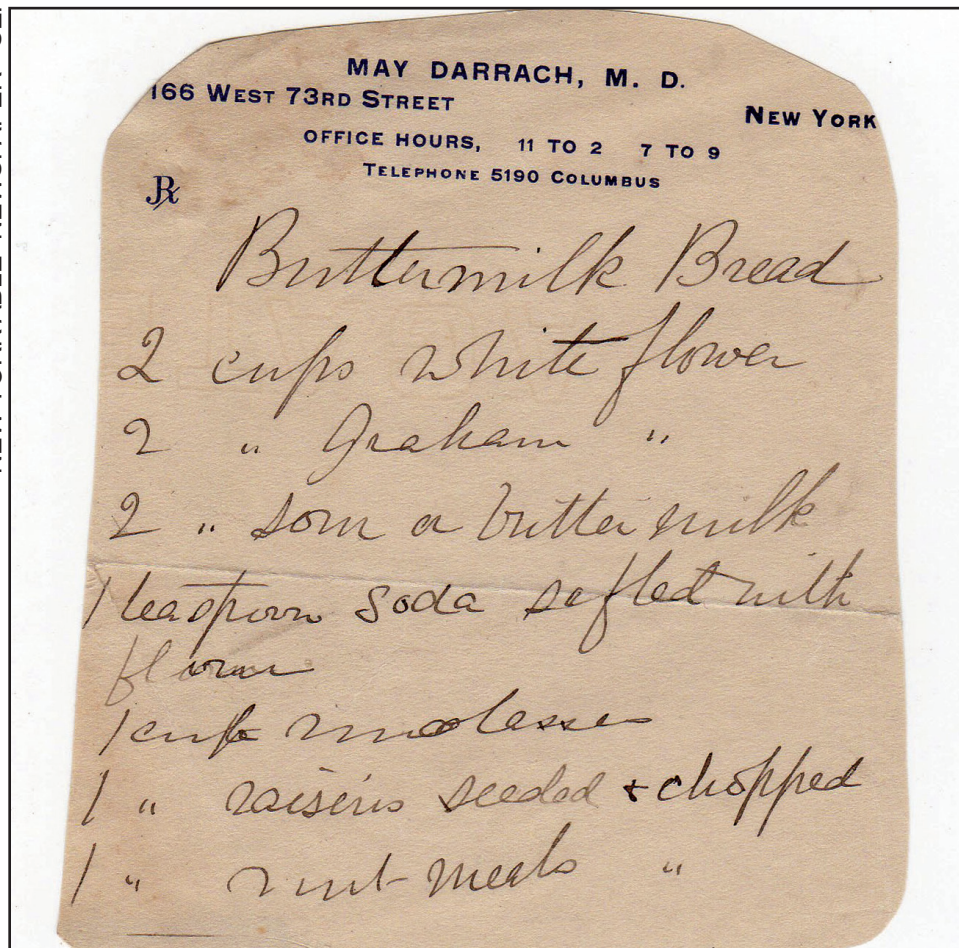
May Darrach, 1902

of the children with disabilities charity movement states that it was "begun by a woman who was herself a cripple," but neglects to identify who that person was, or recount any portion of her story.

The sad outcome is that my old St.'s role in the Dickensian Disability Movement may be forgotten, but May Darrach is very likely the single most important person in the history of disability rights in New York City, and she is forgotten too.

For more of Warren Shaw's work in disability history, please go to www.DisabilityHistoryNYC.com

(Read Part 2 of "An Improbable, Repeat Birthplace" in Able's October issue)



A recipe for buttermilk bread written on May Darrach's office letterhead, circa 1905-6

been endowed by Edward Albee; another four beds by Anna Held. The matron's room came courtesy of Isadora Duncan.

Who knew the little children had friends in such high places?

But you've got to hand it to

abilities. Mrs. Erlanger retaliated with a fundraising auction of dolls at the Waldorf-Astoria, just in time for Christmas.

Their competition reached a conclusion in Mrs. Erlanger's favor a few years later, when Erlanger held an actors' field

DOJ PROPOSES TITLE II CHANGES

Continued from page 3

istering vehicles and paying taxes and fees – ensuring that people with disabilities have equal access to these same services is essential. When websites and mobile apps are not accessible, they can be difficult or even impossible for people with disabilities to use. This can block people with disabilities from readily accessing important government services and programs that others can quickly and easily obtain online.

The Department is eager to hear from the public and get input from relevant stakeholders on the regula-

tory proposal set forth in our forthcoming proposed rule. The proposed rule will soon be available for review on the Federal Register's website, www.federalregister.gov.

A fact sheet that provides information about the proposed rule will soon be available on www.ada.gov. The Department invites the public to submit their comments on the proposed rule once it is published. The comment period will be open for 60 days from the date the proposed rule is published. Public comments can be submitted on www.regulations.gov.

ACCESSIBLE AIRLINE LAVATORIES

Continued from page 3

structure Law to modernize airport terminals, including adding wheelchair ramps, accessible restrooms, and more.

Last December, DOT awarded nearly \$700 million through its All Stations Accessibility Program to retrofit old rail and subway stations, adding elevators, ramps and other improvements.

DOT also has begun laying the preliminary groundwork for a potential future rule that would address passengers staying in their own wheelchairs when they fly.

It is working on rules that would require better training for airline staff who physically assist passengers with disabilities.

The new rule can be found at www.transportation.gov/airconsumer/latest-news and at www.regulations.gov, docket number DOT-OST-2021-0137.

For information about airline passenger rights, as well as DOT's rules, guidance and orders, the department's aviation consumer website can be found by visiting www.transportation.gov/airconsumer.

INFORMATION FORUM

DISABILITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OFFERS HELP

The Northern Manhattan Immigration Coalition has announced a grant to provide legal services for those denied federal disability benefits under the SSI or SSDI programs.

For information about this program, anyone may email abrahamgreene@nmic.org or call 929 415-8745 on Mondays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

PEACE OF MIND AVAILABLE BY SCHEDULING A SCREENING

It only takes ten minutes and a computer, tablet or smartphone to have a virtual memory screening.

A qualified professional evaluates thinking and memory skills instantly.

Participants will be given a confidential report shortly after completion.

Appointments are available by calling 866 232-8484.

BRAILLE AND TALKING BOOK LIBRARY FAIR SET FOR OCTOBER

Everyone is invited to the Andrew Heiskell Braille and Talking Book Library's annual Community, Culture and Technology Fair which will take place Friday, Oct. 20, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

This year's fair will be held at the New York Public Library's Stavros Niarchos Foundation Library, 5th Avenue and 40th Street in Manhattan.

The last fair brought in around 300 attendees to learn about the many resources, groups and offerings for community members who are blind, low vision, deafblind or have physical disabilities.

The event will include representatives from educational, employment, advocacy, arts, support and recreation groups; technology demos; fun accessible activities; speakers on entrepreneurship and advice on starting a business.

SIGNUP OPEN FOR ASL WORKSHOP WEEKEND

ASDC's ASL Weekend is a unique two-day workshop for parents, professionals and anyone interested in learning American Sign Language. It is a fun, interactive weekend full of activities and discussions that will give in-depth support as one learns and masters ASL.

It's a great way to get personalized instruction and meaningful practice to help you sign confidently. All levels and abilities are welcome.

There are two sessions to choose from. Dates are Sept. 16 and 17 in Clarks Summit, Pa. or Oct. 7 and 8 in Gooding, Idaho.

Information or registration are available by visiting www.deafchildren.org/events/asl-weekend/.

REGISTRATION OPEN FOR WID'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

World Institute on Disability (WID) is celebrating 40 years with a virtual party from noon to 1 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 7.

ASL and captioning will be provided. Requests for additional accommodations can be made when registering.

For the past four decades, WID has been committed to advancing inclusion, independence and equal opportunities for people with disabilities.

This virtual event will feature special guests and entertainment, and will highlight findings from WID's Global Strategic Planning Sessions.

Those interested may register and receive the Zoom link, by visiting www.wid.org/registration-now-open-wids-40th-anniversary-virtual-celebration/.

TICKETS AVAILABLE TO ABILITIES' FIRST GOLF COCKTAIL PARTY

Abilities First is gearing up for its upcoming Golf and Tennis Classic event, Monday, Sept. 11, at the Powelton Club in the heart of the Hudson Valley. Although the event is sold out, there are still ways to participate.

Silent and live auction items during the cocktail reception include exclusive golf experiences such as New York Yankees tickets, Ocean City, Md. condo week stays, a one-of-a-kind wine-making opportunity with City Winery and an evening with a private chef and more.

Tickets to the cocktail reception are available.

Information is available by emailing joannparker@abilitiesfirstny.org or calling 845 275.2311.

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR CDPAANYS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Registration is open for the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Association of New York State Annual Conference, "Leading the Way."

The conference will be held Oct. 23 and 24 at the Hilton Garden Inn, Troy, N.Y. This year CDPAANYS is offering a hybrid conference option for those who cannot or do not wish to attend in person. Make sure to specify when registering whether attendance will be in person or virtual.

The conference will feature educational sessions targeting fiscal intermediaries and providers, as well as sessions geared toward consumers and advocates.

A block of hotel rooms at the Hilton Garden Inn has been reserved for \$129 a night. For more information and to register for the conference and discounted hotel rooms, visit cdpaanys.org

NY PUBLIC LIBRARY TO HOLD ACCESSIBLE TECH CONFERENCE

The New York Public Library's Accessible Technology Conference, Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 21 to 22 at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Library, is a free and inclusive conference focused on the impact, affordances and evolution of accessible technologies used by blind, low-vision, and print-disabled people.

It is open to all community members and free to presenters and participants alike. It will be a fully accessible conference, providing accessible materials, hybrid participation and other access needs.

To find out more or to submit a proposal, the public is asked to visit www.nypl.org/blog/2023/07/17/upcoming-nypls-accessible-technology-conference-2023.

DIA GENERAL MEETING SCHEDULED FOR SEPT. 3

The first DIA general meeting will be held from 1:30 to 4 p.m., Sept. 3 at Selis Manor, first-floor auditorium, 135 West 23rd St. (between Sixth and Seventh avenues).

Everyone is welcome.

WORKBOOK SET HELPS ENSURE HEALTH EQUITY FOR ALL

Health equity means that every person in the community, including every person with a disability, has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. A cornerstone to health equity for people with disabilities is ensuring that health-promoting opportunities are accessible.

A series of user-friendly workbooks for Centers for Independent Living and other community-based organizations that prompt and engage readers to think beyond their current knowledge and experience.

These workbooks can be used together or individually and can be shared widely. There are also corresponding workbooks designed for health departments.

Those interested in more information, should visit www.wid.org.

DATE SET FOR GOLF OUTING TO BENEFIT BAC ON SEPT 19

A golf outing to benefit the Brooklyn Autism Center (BAC) is set for Sept. 19 at the Dyker Heights Golf Course in Brooklyn.

The event will consist of lunch, golf, a cocktail hour and prizes.

BAC is a private, non-profit school dedicated to providing high-quality education to individuals ages 5 to 21 with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Information is available by visiting www.brooklynautismcenter.org.

GETTING PERSONAL

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

MIKE 62, FROM FARMINDALE

Stroke victim, looking for female friend.

A 408

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

Your Ad Can Be here Call 516 939-2253

WIDOWED 67

seeks simple, playful lady friend. Send phone number. Age, race unimportant.

A407

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

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

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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

MTA TESTS PILOT BUS PROGRAM

Continued from page 1

will still have the option to use the traditional four-point method with the assistance of a bus operator. Whichever

a customer chooses, the bus operator will be available to help.

"This is just the latest in-

NYC COMPTROLLER HOLDS ROUNDTABLE

Continued from page 9

"The Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York (CIDNY) was pleased to participate in the New York City Office of the Comptroller's Disability Roundtable to connect with the disability community. We discussed the need for comprehensive reform regarding employment, housing, and transportation for people with disabilities. CIDNY recogniz-

es that one meeting cannot fix the systemic barriers faced by people with disabilities living in New York City. This was a beginning step to a larger conversation and plan to address these barriers to the full independence for people with disabilities. We look forward to partnering with this office and working together," said CIDNY CEO Sharon McLennon-Wier.

novation to improve the accessibility and customer experience for our bus riders," said MTA chief accessibility officer and senior advisor Quemuel Arroyo. "Independence has long been the top priority of the disability community, and I'm very happy to be testing a new product that can help our customers in wheelchairs ride more independently."

"I am thrilled that the MTA has started this pilot program and think this could be a game changer for bus riders and operators," said Unite for Equal Access

NY President and founder Dustin Jones. "In addition to having the traditional securement spot, the new Quantum self-securement system will allow more freedom and access to passengers who use wheelchairs, giving us the option to secure ourselves with little to no help from the operator. The M7 runs a few short blocks from my residence, and I cannot wait to give this a try while the bus is in service."

For further instructions on how Quantum works, the public may visit <http://new.mta.info/quantum>.



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Signature _____ Security code _____

CLASSIFIED AD RATES

INDIVIDUAL - \$10 PER 5 WORD LINE
BUSINESS - \$15 PER 5 WORD LINE

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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

PURPLE FLAG STATUS

Continued from page 10

possible for their residents," said Christopher Carter, president of the Connecticut Assisted Living Association (CALA) and Purple Flag Governance Committee member. "We hope that more organizations implementing

widespread standards for improvement like Purple Flag will inspire positive change throughout the country, motivating an overall trend supporting higher quality care for those with dementia and

all who reside in senior living."

The Purple Flag for Dementia Care™ Accreditation standards, which include a quality frame-

work and specific required elements for care programs, are considered essential and valuable in making a difference in the care of a person with dementia.

CIDNY SAYS

Continued from page 8

vention, sex therapy, gender identification counseling, cultural competency and so much more.

CIDNY comprehends that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) covers both mental and physical impairments that substantially limits a person with performing a major life activity. Thus, we want consumers to know that mental health disabilities are

treatable and require a treatment regimen. You do not have to suffer in silence or alone.

There is help for you. We know that resources are limited, especially post the COVID-19 pandemic, but we know that the stress inducing events have not ended.

Please contact CIDNY at cidny.org or call 212 674-2300 for help! We are here to support you!

BACK TO SCHOOL TIPS

Continued from page 11

can tire eyes. Parents should encourage their children to take a break from staring at the screen.

Wear Safety Gear

Everyone should wear goggles or other types of protective eye wear while playing sports, using chemicals or tools for school projects, or engaging in other activities.

Many eye injuries can be prevented with better safety habits.

Lighthouse Guild provides ser-

vices that inspire people who are visually impaired to attain their goals.

They provide coordinated care for eye health, vision rehabilitation and behavioral health as well as related services.

The Guild's podcast series, "On Tech & Vision with Dr. Cal Roberts," offers information and insights about technological innovations that are tearing down barriers for people who are blind or visually impaired.

THE ACCESS INDEX

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SPORTS SCENE

Achilles Runs Annual Hope & Possibility Race

By David Block

A terrible experience can bring about a positive outcome. Such is the case of “Central Park Jogger,” Trisha Meili who was assaulted while jogging through Central Park in 1989.

“I couldn’t walk, I had trouble talking, I couldn’t even feed myself, so I had to learn to do all those things again.”

While recovering, she met and ran with members of Achilles International, a track organization that makes it possible for people with disabilities to race.

The Achilles athletes inspired her to stay active. Because she viewed her recovery as a gift and was grateful to Achilles, she decided to volunteer with the organization.

In 2003, Meili helped launch the annual Achilles Hope & Possibility Race, held in Central Park.

This year’s race had the highest number of entrants – more than 6,000 participants with and without disabilities.

Hand Cycles

Puspa Poarangan, born in Indonesia, who now lives in Harlem, N.Y., was the first female finisher in the hand cycling division. Her finishing time was 28 minutes, 36 seconds.

“I was not expecting to win,” said the 43-year-old Poarangan. “I stopped in the middle of the race to help someone.” She got help for another hand cyclist’s whose bike chain was disconnected from his bike.

Last year, her life improved after she learned about Achilles International.

“When they had me use a hand cycle for the first time, I never before felt so free,” said Poarangan. “It was fantastic.”

Learning about Achilles and using hand cycles was also a freeing experience for this year’s first male finisher in the hand cycling division, Andrew Hairston a former Marine

Corps Captain who had his leg amputated due to an automobile accident after returning from active duty in Africa.

The 30-year-old Hairston of Jacksonville, N.C. won with a 13:05 clocking. In 2022, he finished second, 13:34 and in 2021, when he competed in this race for the first time, he finished third, 20:48.

While recovering at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Virginia, he learned about Achilles.

Hairston said that when Achilles members showed him how to hand cycle, it was the first time since his amputation where he felt like his old self again.

Push Rim

In the push rim wheelchair division, Elyse Levine, 32, of Far Rockaway, N.Y. finished first with a 21:14 clocking.

The first male finisher in that category was Neider Israel Parra Contreras, 25, of Bogota, Colombia who clocked 32:52.

In the ambulatory Athletes With Disabilities division, Tess Levinson, 27, of Boston Mass. finished first, posting 36:07.

The first male finisher was Edilson Zacipa, 44, of the Bronx, N.Y. whose finishing time was 27:28. This is a category for athletes who can walk but have mental or physical disabilities.

Mobility Impaired

In the mobility impaired division, Tiffanie Johnson, 29, of Rockville, Md. was the first woman finisher, 50:59. The first male finisher in this category was Jeremy Young, 51, of New York City who clocked 48:37.

A mobility impairment is a disability that affects movement ranging from gross motor skills, such as walking, to fine motor movement, involving manipulation of objects by hand.

Visually Impaired

In the visually impaired division, Alison Lync, 35, of New



Crystal Jones

York Harbor, N.Y. finished first, 34:18. The first male finisher in that division was Michael Zampella, 48, of Blue Bell, Pa who posted 33:34.

Lower Limb Deficiency

In the lower limb deficiency category, Jenny Marcela, Carreno, Espinel, 31, of Bogota, Colombia finished first, 41:24.

The first male finisher in this category was Rubiel Ro-

driguez, 39, of Bogota, Colombia who clocked 28:39.

People with lower limb deficiencies live with the absence or severe hypoplasia of a limb or part of a limb.

Achilles International, now in its 40th year, currently has 28 chapters in 19 states and 34 chapters in 17 countries, according to www.achillesinternational.org.



Puspa Poaranga



Andrew Hairston

PHOTO BY ANTHONY QUINTANO, TD BANK

PHOTO BY CHEER EVERYWHERE

PHOTO BY ANTHONY QUINTANO, TD BANK