

**Nothing More,  
Nothing Less  
For All People  
With Disabilities**

**Access to Independence of Cortland County, Inc.**

# ACCESS NEWS

**Fall 2009 NUMBER XXII**

## **2009 Not-for-Profit of the Year Awarded to ATI by Chamber**

On Wednesday, November 4, the Cortland County Chamber of Commerce recognized Access to Independence as its 2009 Not-For-Profit Organization of the Year.

“We recognize and appreciate your ongoing contributions to making our community a better place to live, work and do business,” said Bob Haight, the Chamber’s Executive Director, in presenting the award.

Sen. James Seward also presented the agency with a New York State Senate Certificate of Merit.

Mary E. Ewing, ATI Executive Director, accepted the awards on behalf of the agency. ATI’s Chief Operating Officer, Chad W. Underwood, Board Vice Chair, Angela Burchfield and Board Secretary, Nancy Hazel, accompanied Ewing to the event.



**Above:** Sen. James Seward, Mary E. Ewing, Bob Haight, Chad W. Underwood, Angela Burchfield and Nancy Hazel at the Chamber of Commerce Annual Awards Banquet.

## **Colorado Foundation Awards ATI \$20,000 For E-Mods**

Last month, the Colorado-based J. M. McDonald Foundation, Inc. awarded Access to Independence a \$20,000 grant to facilitate home modifications. ATI will use the funds to help people who cannot afford to pay for the projects themselves, and who do not qualify for other financial assistance.

“We currently have a waiting list of more than 20 individuals who need ramps and/or other home modifications,” said Rob Ferri, ATI’s Architectural Barrier Programs Coordinator. “This grant is going to make a huge difference for many people in our community!”

According to Mary E. Ewing, ATI Executive Director, the grant funds will aim to help as many people as possible to maintain their independence in their homes and in the community.

## **Disability Advocates Protest Proposed Budget Cuts in Albany**

On Monday, November 9, area disability advocates joined hundreds of activists from across the state to urge leaders not to cut essential disability programs.

“Gov. Paterson’s proposal to make 10% cuts indiscriminately across all programs is poorly thought out and lacks the political will to decide between what is most and least valuable to New Yorkers,” said Mary E. Ewing, ATI Executive Director.

The Governor’s Executive Deficit Reduction Plan proposes more than \$287 million in Medicaid cuts, including cuts to home care and personal care, an \$11.4 million reduction in the State’s Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefit, and \$219,000 in cuts to Independent Living Centers.

“For people with disabilities in particular, the Governor’s proposal has devastating implications,” said Chad W. Underwood, Chief Operating Officer. “It increases the risk of institutionalization, which would cost the state much more,” Underwood said.

Without personal care services, seniors and people with disabilities who require daily living assistance would be forced to go without. Cuts to these services would force a vast number of individuals into nursing facilities which are federally required as part of NY’s Medicaid program.

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## Reasonable Accommodations and the Section 8 Program

Under state and federal fair housing laws, a landlord must provide reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities when necessary to enable them to use and enjoy housing. Under Section 8, there are a number of specific reasonable accommodations that must be available to individuals with disabilities.

**Higher Rent:** Generally, the Public Housing Authority (PHA) may set a standard payment amount for a unit at any level between 90% and 110% of the fair market rate. However, the US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Field Office may approve an exception payment rent between 110% and 120% of the fair market rate. The PHA must approve an exception rent as a reasonable accommodation if necessary for a family that includes a person with a disability to obtain housing within the voucher term.

**Higher Utility Allowance:** A family with a person with a disability can make a request for a higher utility allowance as a reasonable accommodation. Upon such a request, the PHA must approve a utility allowance which is higher

than the amount on the allowance schedule maintained by the PHA if it is needed to make the program accessible to and usable by the person with a disability.

**Longer Search Time:** The term of a Section 8 voucher is at least 60 calendar days. Therefore, once a person receives a voucher, he or she must find an apartment within 60 days. However, if a family needs and requests an extension of this initial voucher term as a reasonable accommodation to make the program accessible to a person with a disability, the PHA must extend the term reasonably required to accommodate the disability.

**Live-In Aides:** A person with a disability can request that the PHA approve a live-in aide to live in the unit with them. The PHA must approve a live-in aid if that person is needed as a reasonable accommodation to make the program accessible to and usable by a person with a disability. A live-in aide affects the size of the family unit and, therefore, may increase the number of bedrooms a person can receive. However, the PHA can refuse a particular live-in aide if that person committed a criminal act against

the PHA; committed a drug-related or violent criminal activity; or owes money to any PHA.

### **Reinstatement on Waiting List:**

A PHA may remove from the waiting list names of applicants who do not respond to PHA requests for information and updates. However, a decision to remove the name of a family with a person with a disability is subject to reasonable accommodation. If the applicant did not respond to the PHA request for information or updates because of the person's disability, the PHA must reinstate the applicant in the family's former position on the waiting list.

**Renting From A Relative:** Generally, a PHA must not approve an owner under Section 8 if he/she is a relative of a tenant. However, the PHA may approve such an owner if it would be a reasonable accommodation for the family member, who is a person with a disability.

### **Assistance with Finding Accessible Unit:**

When a PHA issues a voucher to a family with a person with a disability, it must provide a current listing of available accessible units and, if necessary, assist the family in locating one.

## Medicare: 2010 Annual Coordinated Election Period

The Medicare annual coordinated election period runs from November 15 through December 31 each year. During this time, beneficiaries may change prescription drug plans, change Medicare Advantage plans, return to original Medicare, or enroll in a Medicare Advantage plan for the first time. Enrollment changes take effect on January 1 each year.

If you are thinking of changing your Medicare Part D (prescription plan), it is time to start researching what plan may work better for you. For a Medicare beneficiary who does not receive extra help paying their premiums, this is the only time of year you can change Part D prescription plans.

Part D plan premiums and drugs covered under these plans can change every year, and you want to make sure you are getting a plan that fits your needs. The Medicare.gov website has a great Drug Plan Finder. With this database, you are able to input your current prescriptions and find a plan that will work for you. You can find the Drug Plan Finder at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).

If you are over 60, you can also make an appointment with your local Area Agency on Aging Benefits Specialist to assist you in finding the plan that works best for you. If you are under 60, you can make an appointment with your ATI Independent Living Coordinator, Sue Lewis, by phone at 753-7363.

## ATI Launches 2010 *Friends of the Center* Campaign

By now you may have received a letter from Access to Independence asking for your financial support in 2010. While we realize that many of you probably receive many such requests each year, we hope that you realize the value of our services to the community.

Whether you are an old friend or a new acquaintance, please know that your donation is an investment in our mission. Your support will help us offer additional programming and services to people so they may achieve their independence.

As a nonprofit organization, Access to Independence relies mostly on funds from grants and state contracts to maintain ongoing operations. Since our establishment in 1998, we have grown from a staff of one person to a staff of ten today. Over the past year, we have served more than 3,000 individuals from the Cortland community! Our staff serve on the Boards of more than 30 local, regional and national organizations. Now, more than ever before, we need your assistance to keep our momentum going strong.

During the next 12 months, Access to Independence will undertake strategic initiatives that aim to enhance the quality of life for all people with disabilities in the Cortland community. These initiatives relate to priorities set by our Board of Directors and were based on a recent needs assessment of the Cortland region. They include:

- Increase community awareness of disability issues and services, and work towards systems changes that lead to increased access, opportunity and participation for all people with disabilities.

- Continue to advocate for and oversee home and business modifications that lead to a more accessible Cortland community.
- Expand educational and transition programming to serve more of our young residents with disabilities.

While individual donations in any amount are greatly appreciated, as added incentive for those who contribute \$100 or more, your name will be entered into a drawing for one of several prizes that have been donated, including a \$500 gift certificate from Metro Mattress, a week at a timeshare in the Catskills, and a getaway at the new Hope Lodge Resort.

New this year, Access to Independence is offering a variety of sponsorship opportunities to individuals, businesses and agencies as a way to raise additional funds for advocacy and programming efforts.

For example, Access to Independence is seeking sponsors of its Community Room and Consumer Computer Lab. Sponsors will receive naming rights of those locations for all of 2010. Other sponsorship opportunities relate to the agency's web site: [www.aticortland.org](http://www.aticortland.org), through advertisements in the agency's quarterly newsletter, and as supporters of the agency's other annual events, including the Bowl-a-Thon, the Americans with Disabilities Act Celebration, and the Employment Conference.

For more information on how you can be a friend to the agency and support our 2010 efforts, please contact Mary E. Ewing, Executive Director, or Chad W. Underwood, Chief Operating Officer, by phone at 607-753-7363, or by email at [info@aticortland.org](mailto:info@aticortland.org).

### ATI Board of Directors Elects New Members / Officers

The ATI Board of Directors elected a new slate of officers during its October 20 Board Meeting. The Board unanimously elected Peter Morse-Ackley as Board Chair, Angela Burchfield as Board Vice Chair, Nancy Hazel as Secretary and Kurt Behrenfeld as Treasurer.

In other action, the Board elected Dr. Judy Bentley, Mary Beters, Gail Bundy, Laura Eaton, and Lisa Perfetti as new members to serve two-year terms. The Board re-elected Paul Hamilton to serve a second two-year term. Other returning Board Members include: Patti Conklin and Daniel Mullins.

Mary E. Ewing, Executive Director, presented Certificates of Appreciation to outgoing Board Members, Dr. Polly Cator, Debbie Geibel, Tom Hartnett and Helene Maxwell.

### ARTHRITIS SUPPORT GROUP

#### Upcoming Presentations Tuesday's 1:00 - 2:30 pm

11/24/09:

Lisa Lunas, Community Relations Dir.,  
Walden Place: Dining Wellness

01/12/10:

Wendy Kolodziejczyk, Physical Therapist, CRMC: Preventing Falls

01/26/10:

Carol Horton, LMT: Massage Therapy

02/08/10:

Fran Pizzola, Community Education Coordinator, ATI: Film discussion  
"Super Size Me"

02/22/10:

Dr. James Leonard, Podiatrist: Foot Care for people with Arthritis

03/08/10:

Dr. Howard Lieberman, Chiropractor,  
Back to Health Chiropractic

## Healthy Lifestyles for People with Disabilities

On November 4 - 6, Access to Independence hosted 14 disability health professionals from across the nation during a Technical Assistance Program, entitled *Healthy Lifestyles for People with Disabilities*.

The three-day series aimed to “train the trainers” on the *Healthy Lifestyles* program, which uses an integrated wellness and empowerment approach and provides participants with knowledge and skills to adopt healthier lifestyles. Fran Pizzola, ATI Community Education Coordinator, Karen Sanford, Architectural Barrier Programs Assistant, and Mary Betters, Board Member, participated in the training.

Pizzola plans to launch a *Healthy Lifestyles* program to the Cortland community in Spring 2010. “I am so excited that we were selected as a Technical Assistance site for this project! I am even more excited to take what we learn and offer it to our consumers,” said Pizzola.

After conducting the program for local consumers, participants will meet for two hours each month for six months to share their successes and challenges in meeting their self-identified goals. Support groups will allow participants to remain focused and to learn from each other.

The *Healthy Lifestyles* program covers all aspects of health, including social health, physical health, emotional health, spiritual health, and health through meaningful activities.

ATI collaborated with the Cortland County Health Department to secure funding from the Oregon Health & Science University to host the event, just one of seven appropriated nationwide.

## Lewis Working On Disability Work Incentives Credential

Over the past several months, Sue Lewis, ATI Independent Living Coordinator, has completed a series of web-based workshops and attended a week-long conference on disability benefits and work incentives. Lewis is on track to become a certified Benefits and Work Incentives Practitioner by January.

“I have found that many people who have left the workforce due to a disability are hesitant to try to return once they qualify for disability benefits. People think that they will lose their benefits if they start working again,” said Lewis.

By January 2010, Lewis will be credentialed to professionally counsel people on how they can return to work using existing Social Security work incentives. These incentives give people a chance to try going back to work without losing their benefits completely for an extended period of time.

For more information, please contact Sue Lewis at 753-7363.

## Baier Represents Access at International Round Table

On short notice, the Maryland-based National Youth Leadership Network (NYLN) whisked ATI's Aaron Baier across the country to participate in a Round Table Consortium Meeting of the National Clearinghouse on Disability and Exchange (NCDE).

For two days, Baier collaborated with more than 25 other disability leaders from across the nation at UC Berkeley to develop strategies for building international opportunities for youth with disabilities.

“The ultimate goal of the meeting was to strengthen relationships between the major international disability organizations that represent youth with disabilities,” said Baier, ATI's Youth Transition / Work Readiness Coordinator.

There are hundreds of opportunities available to youth with disabilities to travel abroad for leisure, to study, to work, and even to volunteer. The youth disability movement taking place in the US represents just a fraction of what's going on around the world.

“I'm excited to share all of these opportunities with youth in Cortland and to help them achieve their dreams,” said Baier.

The NCDE is a collaborative effort between Mobility International USA, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) of the US State Department, and 28 international exchange and disability-related organizations, including the NYLN. Baier serves on the NYLN Governing Board.

For more information on international opportunities for youth with disabilities, visit the Mobility International website at: [www.miusa.org](http://www.miusa.org), or contact Aaron Baier at 753-7363.

**Eyes on the Future:**  
**Vision Support Group**  
**1st Thursday monthly**  
**5:00 pm - 6:00 pm**  
**ATI Community Room**  
*Get support from peers with similar vision barriers.*  
*Learn about assistive tools and technology.*  
For more information,  
call Aaron Baier at: (607) 753-7363, or  
email him at: [abaier@aticortland.org](mailto:abaier@aticortland.org)

## Youth Participate in Disability Mentoring Day

Throughout the month of October, the City & County of Cortland joined communities from across the state and nation to recognize October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). In addition to a wide variety of workshops, conferences and keynotes on disability employment issues, Cortland's youth had an opportunity to participate in Disability Mentoring Day (DMD) on Wednesday, October 21. Disability Mentoring Day is recognized on the third Wednesday of every October and is a large-scale national effort to promote career development for students and job seekers with disabilities. Hands-on career exploration, on-site job shadowing, and ongoing mentoring opportunities often lead to internship and employment opportunities for participants.

Here's how it works: Students with disabilities (mentees) are matched with workplace mentors according to expressed career interests. Mentees experience a typical day on the job and learn how to prepare to enter the world of work. Employers gain an increased awareness that people with disabilities represent an overlooked talent pool. Some of the other objectives of Disability Mentoring Day are:

- To enhance internship and employment opportunities for people with disabilities.
- To promote disability as a component of diversity recruitment for a more inclusive workforce.
- To dispel employers' fears about hiring people with disabilities.
- To increase confidence among students and job seekers with disabilities.

This year's Disability Mentoring Day involved more than 25 youth and about 15 different employers from throughout the community. Special thanks to event supporters Tompkins Trust, Country Inn & Suites, Graph-Tex, Cortland High School, Employment Connection, Ponderosa, Cosimo's, & the Downtown Business Partnership.

While Disability Mentoring Day takes place on one day each year, Access to Independence and other local organizations and schools offer mentoring opportunities for youth throughout the year.

Over the past two years, ATI has undertaken a dedicated effort to ramp up on youth transition concerns and has applied its independent living philosophy to an array of new, unique services for the community (service providers and youth consumers). Furthermore, ATI is collaborating with the area's providers of youth transition services to lead the way in developing and implementing a set of programs that complement existing resources by promoting the development of life and independent living skills, including self-determination, self-advocacy and critical thinking. ATI is committed to empowering youth to overcome barriers and to lead productive, independent lives in the community. ATI offers peer counseling and mentoring opportunities to help youth learn to think critically, make independent decisions, manage common adolescent anxieties, and to communicate effectively with parents, friends and authority figures.

For more information on transition services for youth with disabilities, contact Access to Independence at 607-753-7363.

## ATI Holds Disability Awareness Days at Three Schools

Over the past three months, ATI has brought its Disability Awareness Day series to three local schools. On September 22<sup>nd</sup>, ATI facilitated the event for more than 400 students at Smith Elementary school. On September 29<sup>th</sup>, ATI presented to more than 400 students at Barry Elementary school. On October 9<sup>th</sup>, ATI presented to the 300 students of Appleby Elementary in Marathon. ATI is scheduled to bring Disability Awareness Day to Homer Intermediate school on November 24<sup>th</sup>.

The purpose of ATI's Disability Awareness Day series is to provide students an opportunity to learn about the abilities that people with disabilities have, to ask questions about disability, and to open their minds to new ways of doing things. ATI tailors each Disability Awareness Day to suit the particular needs of each school, as well as the age groups of students. For example, ATI offers a different style workshop and curriculum for grades K-2, 3-6, 7-8 and 9-12.

For more information on bringing Disability Awareness Day to your school, please contact Aaron T. Baier by phone at: 753-7363, or by email at: [abaier@aticortland.org](mailto:abaier@aticortland.org).



**Above:** In September, Sue Lewis, Independent Living Coordinator, and Aaron Baier, Youth Transition / Work Readiness Coordinator, introduce Aaron's service animal, Maxie, to students at Smith Elementary School.

## 2009 National Disability Employment Awareness Month

For the fifth consecutive year, ATI collaborated with the Cortland Works Career Center, Employment Connection, JM Murray Center, and VESID to celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). Each year during the month of October the nation recognizes the employment accomplishments of individuals with disabilities. This year's theme was "Experience + Opportunity = Full Participation".

On October 1<sup>st</sup>, ATI kicked off this year's celebration with an Extravaganza. Glenn Everdyke, Cortland County Liaison for the CNY Developmental Services Office, who presented a New York State Proclamation of DEAM on behalf of Governor David Paterson.

On October 6<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>, ATI facilitated two American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) Trainings from Cornell's Disability & Business Technical Assistance Center (DBTAC). The first training, entitled "Getting Hired and Moving Ahead in a Job," aimed to help job seekers with disabilities learn about their rights and responsibilities related to employment. The second training, entitled "Tapping into Talent," aimed to help local employers to understand the benefits of hiring people with disabilities.

On October 13<sup>th</sup>, ATI hosted a Cortland Chamber of Commerce Business Before Hours. More than 25 Chamber members attended the event and learned about ATI and the programs and services the agency provides to the community.

On October 16<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, ATI facilitated its 2009 Annual Employment Conference, themed "Employ Your Abilities." This year's

conference featured 6 local employers who provided their unique perspectives on getting and keeping a job. Representatives joined us from the JM McDonald Sports Complex, Cortland SPCA, Price Chopper, Elizabeth Brewster House, Coffee Mania and the YWCA.

Hannah Rudstam from Cornell University facilitated a workshop on "Overcoming Barriers to Employment"; Michelina Gibbons from SUNY Cortland Career Services facilitated a workshop on "Staying Motivated during the Job Search"; and Jessica Morley from OCM BOCES facilitated a workshop on "Standing Out in an Interview".

Michael Kennedy from Self-Advocacy Associates traveled from Syracuse to share his personal path to success as a peer with disabilities.

The Conference also featured local community employment resources, including the Cortland County Disability Program Navigator, CNY Work Incentives Coordinator, CWCC, Employment Connection, VESID, CBVH, Cortland County Personnel & Civil Service, and CNY Area Health Education Center.

Many thanks go to all of this year's contributors and participants. Special thanks to event supporters: Price Chopper, P&C Foods, Staples, Tops Friendly Market and Wal-Mart.

**ATI Peer Mentoring Program**  
**Every Thursday from 3:00 - 4:00 pm**  
**ATI Community Room**  
**For more information, contact Aaron Baier**  
**by phone at: 607-753-7363,**  
**or by email at: [abaier@aticortland.org](mailto:abaier@aticortland.org).**



*Above: Glenn Everdyke, Cortland County Liaison for the CNY Developmental Services Office, presents a Proclamation declaring October as Disability Employment Awareness Month in New York State.*



### [Cortland Youth Power Group](#)

**Achieve more with  
your abilities...learn  
how to succeed with  
your disability!**

**Inaugural Meeting:**  
Wed., 11/25, 4:00 - 5:00 pm  
CYB - Teen Center  
35 Port Watson Street

For more information,  
call Aaron Baier at: (607) 753-7363, or  
email him at: [abaier@aticortland.org](mailto:abaier@aticortland.org)

## ATI's Architectural Barrier Programs Push Ahead

Access to Independence sadly brought to a close its *Access to Home* program this past September. Over the past four years, ATI completed 65 projects at 56 different homes in Cortland County, using \$700,000 from the Department of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR). Those projects included the installation of ramps and electric wheelchair lifts and the renovation of bathrooms, kitchens and bedrooms. The program also funded a variety of other accessibility modifications, including installation of grab bars, interior door modifications, windows, floors, and a fire alarm system for a person with a hearing impairment. ATI plans to apply for additional *Access to Home* funding in 2010.

While the *Access to Home* program has officially ended, ATI has pressed full steam ahead with its other architectural barrier programs. This year, ATI received a \$150,000 contract from the Central New York Developmental Disabilities Services Organization (DDSO) to provide assistive technology and environmental modification services for consumers of the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD). ATI has already completed seven projects and has another seven in the works. Funding for this program is renewable for the next five years.

Also this year, ATI was approved to provide environmental modification services for qualified participants in New York's Nursing Home Transition and Diversion (NHTD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Medicaid Waiver programs. Several projects are currently underway.

Over the past several years, ATI has utilized grant funds to install ramps and other accessibility modifications for individuals that do not meet the requirements of various state and federal programs. The agency most recently secured \$20,000 from the J. M. McDonald Foundation to continue these efforts. (See article on page 1.)

Over the past several years, ATI has offered fee-based accessibility construction services to individuals, businesses, and agencies. ATI continues to offer these services throughout the Central New York Region.

ATI's Architectural Barrier Programs aim to enable people who have disabilities to remain at home, independently, rather than have to move to a nursing facility.

For more information, please contact Rob Ferri, ATI Architectural Barrier Programs Coordinator, by phone at: 607-753-7363, or by email at: [rferri@aticortland.org](mailto:rferri@aticortland.org).



Access To Independence  
OF CORTLAND COUNTY, INC.




Accessibility Construction Services  
26 North Main Street  
Cortland, New York 13045  
Phone: (607) 753-7363

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ILR School  
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OF CORTLAND COUNTY, INC.

## The American's with Disabilities Act "ADA"

**Interactive Training Series:**

- Program 1:** Disability Awareness and ADA
- Program 2:** Getting Hired and Moving Ahead in a Job
- Program 3:** Tapping into Talent
- Program 4:** Serving Customers with Disabilities
- Program 5:** About Hidden Disabilities
- Program 6:** Accessibility in Federal, State and Municipal Entities
- Program 7:** Accessibility in Private or Commercial Business
- Program 8:** Accessible Technology In The Workplace
- Program 9:** Accessible Web Sites: Everyone Benefits

To request a training session, please contact Fran Pizzola, ATI Community Education Coordinator, by phone at: 607-753-7363, or by email at: [fpizzola@aticortland.org](mailto:fpizzola@aticortland.org).

## Barrier-Free + Accessible Design + Assistive Technology = Universal Design: Part I

There's a new buzz word in the air... *universal design*...have you heard it yet? Universal design is a relatively new concept that emerged from "barrier-free," "accessible *design*" and "assistive technology." Universal design relates to the idea that all products and environments should be usable by everyone, to the greatest extent possible, regardless of age, ability, or situation. It relates to people who are young or old, with excellent or limited abilities, and in ideal or difficult circumstances. Universal design accommodates limitations.

Let's apply the universal design concept to living space. There are four common aspects to universal design as it may apply to your home: **Flexibility** (making the home adaptable to your needs as they change over your lifetime); **Simplicity** (ensuring that everyday life remains accessible, whether it be housekeeping, storing things, entertaining or routine maintenance); **Stylish** (keeping the home both beautiful and comfortable while allowing for accessibility); and **Safety** (eliminating risk factors that most commonly lead to acci-

dents in the home).

In almost every home there are three common areas that routinely present barriers and inconveniences to people: the entrance, the bathroom and the kitchen. Let's start with the entrance.

As you may already know, outdoor steps are just a fall waiting to happen. They're also a daily hassle for yourself and your visitors, especially with our Central NY winters. In order to enter almost any house in Cortland, you must climb between three and five steps. To make things worse, many of those steps are narrow, slippery and have no railing. So what can you do?

Consider the following universal design techniques!

- Your door should be at least 36" wide, to allow a 34" clear opening when the door is open
- The porch floor and/or stairs should have a non-slippery coating to promote traction
- Door locks should be easy to operate (keyless/remote locks are ideal)
- Door handles should be lever style (not round knobs)

- There should be good lighting both inside and outside the entrance
- There should be no clutter around the entrance way, inside or out
- There should be a strong railing that is appropriately positioned (consider dual railings if necessary)
- Doorbell should be lighted
- There should be a shelf inside/outside the door to set down items while you open the door
- A gently sloping ramp can always replace any number of stairs

For more information, check out the following websites: Home Modification Action Project ([www.homemods.org](http://www.homemods.org)); Center for Universal Design ([www.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud](http://www.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud)); and Iowa COMPASS ([www.medicine.uiowa.edu/iowacompass](http://www.medicine.uiowa.edu/iowacompass)).

In our next newsletter we will talk about universal design in the bathroom. Until then, do not hesitate to contact our own Universal Design expert, Rob Ferri, ATI Architectural Barrier Programs Coordinator, by telephone at 753-7363.

### Got rent?

The Cortland Housing Authority has a rental assistance program that may be able to help you!!

*The Section 8 Housing Program helps qualified people meet their monthly rent bills by paying a portion of their rent directly to their landlord.*

Interested persons may pick up applications at the Housing Authority offices located at  
42 Church Street or 51 Port Watson Street  
Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm  
or

Call 607-753-9364 or 607-753-1771 to request to have an application sent by mail



### CORTLAND HOUSING AUTHORITY

The Cortland Housing Authority has 380 high quality apartments available in its senior/ disabled and family developments throughout Cortland County. A single person could earn up to \$31,800, and a family of five up to \$49,100 and still qualify to live in one of our apartments.



We have senior/disabled **efficiency** and **one bedroom** apartments located in the City of Cortland. We also have **one bedroom** senior/disabled units in Homer, McGraw, Marathon, Truxton and Cincinnatus.

Our large family apartments (**3, 4 and 5 bedrooms**) are located in the City of Cortland. We also have **two and three bedroom** family apartments scattered throughout the county in Homer, Truxton, McGraw, Cincinnatus and the City of Cortland.

There are short waiting lists for apartments in most of our developments.



Call 607-753-1771 today for an application.

**Cortland Housing Assistance Council, Inc.**

We construct permanent ramps and also install temporary ramps. All ramps comply with ADA / ANSI Codes, as well as all local building codes.



36 Taylor Street  
Cortland, NY 13045  
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Fax: (607) 756-6267

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