

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

Access to Independence of Cortland County, Inc.

ACCESS NEWS

Fall 2014

NUMBER XXXXII

ATI Board of Directors Elects New Members / Officers

On October 22, 2014, ATI's Board of Directors elected five new Members to serve their first two-year term. ATI welcomed Dr. Judy K. C. Bentley, Mary Ann Discenza, Beth Pittman, Chris Hyde and My'Shell Titus. The Board also re-elected Kim Collins and Cynthia Schlenker to serve a second, two-year term.

Following the election, the new Board elected new and returning Officers: Dr. Judy K. C. Bentley, Chair; Elizabeth Haskins, Vice Chair; Cynthia Schlenker, Treasurer; and Dan Mullins, Secretary.

Chad W. Underwood, ATI Chief Executive Officer, thanked outgoing Board Members for their dedicated service and presented each with a Certificate of Appreciation. Outgoing Board Members included: Larry Pfister, Sandy Price, Dr. Daniel Pukstas and William Siedenburgh.

ATI Announces 2015 Priorities

On October 22, 2014, ATI's Board of Directors adopted 2015 Strategic Imperatives & Goals. For each Strategic Imperative there is a series of four related goals. Strategic Imperatives included the following:

- Promote increased community awareness of disability issues, of the lack of equal human and civil rights for people with disabilities, and the opportunities that exist to increase independent living for all.
- Update the Agency's facilities to promote improved staff productivity and a more positive consumer experience.
- Expand the Agency's capacity to provide demanded services to people with a wide-variety of disabilities, their families and caregivers, and other service providers.
- Increase Agency's retained earnings by 100% to provide improved capacity to maintain operations during downturns.

ATI Awarded \$75,000 for Youth Programming

In October, the New York State Education Department awarded Access to Independence a \$75,000 grant to undertake capacity building efforts relating to services for youth with disabilities over the next three years and beyond.

ATI is set to launch this new initiative by working with regional consultants to execute a new comprehensive assessment on the unmet needs of youth with disabilities in Cortland County. This assessment will build off one completed a few years back with the guidance of SUNY Cortland Professor Dr. Judy Bentley.

Following completion of the assessment, ATI will develop and launch an extensive outreach plan that aims to inventory existing local resources and to target appropriate stakeholders using a variety of mediums. ATI plans to develop new strategic partnerships with local and regional organizations with common interests

At the same time, ATI will collaborate with additional statewide consultants and independent living center staff to develop and launch innovative programming that addresses the unmet needs of youth in our area.

ATI plans to conduct extensive grant and fund development efforts throughout the duration of the grant to sustain the outreach and service delivery beyond the scope of the project.

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ATI Launches 2015 *Friends of the Center* Campaign

As the holiday season is now upon us, we are writing to ask that you please remember Access to Independence of Cortland County, Inc. in your holiday giving plans this year. While preparing for joyous holiday celebration with your friends and family, we ask that you please consider setting aside part of your budget to support the work of Access to Independence with a tax-deductible charitable donation.

Access to Independence provides a number of greatly needed services to needy families and individuals in our community, including loans of durable medical equipment, accessibility construction and architectural barrier removal, peer counseling, independent living skills training and personal advocacy, to name just a few. Last year, we provided services to more than 400 community residents; people who wouldn't have had anyplace else to turn for help without Access to Independence.

Access to Independence also provides substantial systems advocacy efforts to fight for the civil rights of people with disabilities and to promote increased access to all aspects of our community. Unfortunately, barriers persist and needs are unmet for too many people with disabilities in our community. Whether it be the lack of accessible housing and transportation, the absence of inclusive social and recreation opportunities or the shortage of employment opportunities, ATI's mission, vision and values have never been so clear.

Your donation will help ATI continue to provide all of these unfunded services for people with disabilities in our community. It will support our efforts to increase awareness of disability issues, publicize the lack of equal human and civil rights for people with disabilities, and increase the opportunity for all people to live as independently as possible. Lastly, it will invest in our vision: "to lead the community towards an all-inclusive future where discrimination and physical barriers no longer exist".

Please call us with any questions, and thank you in advance for your generosity and support!

Happy holidays,

-- *Chad W. Underwood, Chief Executive Officer*

-- *Dr. Judy K. C. Bentley, Board Chair*

For more information on how you can become a friend to Access to Independence and support our 2015 efforts, please contact Chad W. Underwood, CEO, by phone: 607-753-7363; or by email: cwunderwood@aticortland.org. ATI is a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3); therefore, your donation may be tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

***Nothing more, nothing less,
For all people with disabilities!***

2014 ATI Board / Staff Retreat

On Saturday, November 1, Access to Independence held its 2014 Annual Board / Staff Retreat. Board Members and staff convened at the Main Street Main Street Building to build momentum for a successful launch of 2015 initiatives.

Joe Van De Loo, a senior member of the Albany, NY-based Association Development Group, Inc. spent the morning session working with Board Members and staff on developing and executing successful local advocacy campaigns. Mr. Van De Loo has helped organizations world-wide develop strategic advocacy plans, most recently in Africa.

Mr. Van De Loo's workshop provided a practical overview of the development and execution of a successful local advocacy campaign dealing with the employment of people with disabilities. Mr. Van De Loo reviewed unique features of local advocacy efforts, highlighted the five main elements of a successful advocacy campaign, discussed challenges and successes of past efforts and applied best practices to the employment issue.

During the afternoon session, Ed McCormick of the Albany, NY-based firm McCormick Consulting Services, conducted training and facilitated brainstorming on development of strategies to capitalize on various opportunities identified by Board Members and staff. Mr. McCormick also recapped seminars he conducted for Board and Staff at their 2012 and 2013 Board / Staff Retreats.

In addition to the workshops, staff and Board had ample opportunity to bond and team build. There were several icebreakers and mini-break out sessions that focused on staff job duties and Board Member experience.

Many thanks go out to all Board Members and staff participants, as well as to each of the guest speakers.

Advertise Here!

For more information,

call: 607-753-7363, or

email: info@aticortland.org.

2014 Starlight Gala

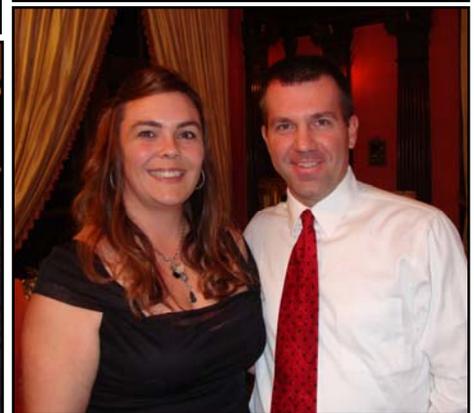
On November 8, Access to Independence (ATI) held its 3rd annual Starlight Gala event, at the SUNY Cortland Alumni House. The event netted nearly \$2,000 to benefit ATI advocacy efforts on behalf of people with disabilities who live or work in Cortland County.

Nearly 60 attendees enjoyed fabulous hors d'oeuvres, served by M&D Deli Central, along with a variety of beverages and desserts. Lonnie Park, of the famed Ten Man Push band and a Grammy-nominated musician and composer, studio and live musician, producer, business entrepreneur, and author, played the grand piano in the parlor of the Alumni House.

One highlight of the evening was a Silent Auction with more than a dozen themed baskets of goods. The donated contents included: dozens of gift certificates for local and regional stores, a camping package that included a tent, sleeping bags and one week at the Yellow Lantern Kampground, jewelry, clothing, tickets to the Adventure Park at Greek Peak, and tickets to see a Cortland Repertory Theatre Play in 2015, to name just a few. Most bidders won their baskets at a substantial discount!

Many thanks go out to the 60 attendees, myriad of event sponsors and the more than 40 area businesses and individuals that donated goods and services to the event. The event's success would not have been possible without your generosity!

ATI's Fund Development Committee is already at work considering the possibilities for next year's event. The 2015 Gala event is set for Saturday, December 5,



Open Enrollment for Health Insurance Marketplace Begins November 15, 2014

If you signed up for a health insurance plan through the Health Insurance Marketplace, now is the time to look at your existing plan and decide to stay with it or change to a different plan.

If you are in need of health insurance, you can look at what plan options there are and find out if you are eligible for tax credits to help pay the monthly premiums.

Individuals living in NY can go to www.healthbenefitexchange.ny.gov to find out what plans are currently available. When you input your financial information, you can also find out if you qualify for help paying the monthly premiums.

If you would like assistance finding a plan that will work for you, there are two different programs available in the Cortland area.

- The Cortland Chamber of Commerce has navigators that can help you through the process, and you can call them at 756-2814.
- Southern Tier Independence Center also has navigators that can assist you in finding a plan to fit

your needs: Penny Fox at 607-644-7843, and April Palmer at 607-644-6966.

If you don't have health insurance, you may have to pay a penalty each year until you get it. This penalty will increase each year you are not covered.

- November 15 – Open enrollment begins. Apply for, keep, or change your coverage
- December 15 – Enrollment deadline if you want new coverage that begins on January 1. If your plan is changing or you want to change plans, enroll by the 15th to avoid a lapse in coverage.
- December 31 – Coverage ends for 2014 plans. Coverage for 2015 plans can start as soon as January 1.
- February 15, 2015 – This is the last day you can apply for 2015 coverage before the end of open enrollment.

For more information, please contact Susan Lewis, ATI Independent Living Coordinator and Certified Benefits Counselor, by phone: 607-753-7363, or by email: susan.lewis@aticortland.org.



2014 NDEAM Community Business Leader Luncheon

On October 29, ATI facilitated its 3rd Annual Community Business Leader Luncheon for local employers at Main Street SUNY Cortland.

This year's luncheon featured Ruth Jones, Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for Adult Career & Continuing Education Services (ACCES-VR) and Rebekah Roth, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for the NYS Commission for the Blind (NYSCB). Ruth and Rebekah spoke with area business leaders and service providers about the possibilities and potential for growth when hiring people with disabilities. Each emphasized the importance of collaboration, creativity and community-mindedness when talking about employment.

While the employment market in NYS is changing rapidly, with Governor Cuomo's Employment First Commission (see page #8) and with "sheltered workshops" being phased-out, our community faces new challenges which demand collaboration from all stakeholders, including government, businesses, services providers, advocates, and most importantly, job seekers. Access to Independence hopes that with these changes comes an opportunity to create a new vision in Cortland County, one that meets the needs of all job seekers, current employees, business owners, and a wholly complete community.

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It's That Time of Year Again: Medicare Open Enrollment

If you have Medicare insurance coverage, your mailbox has probably been full lately with all kinds of advertising for all kinds of Medicare insurance options.

This avalanche of paper can be overwhelming at this time of year. That's because it is the start of the open enrollment period for Medicare. This includes regular Medicare, Medicare Advantage plans, and Medicare Part D prescription plans.

If you are satisfied with your Medicare coverage, you don't have to do anything with all that paper. Your benefit providers will stay the same for next year. But be aware that your monthly premiums can change from year to year.

If you want to change your Part D prescription plan, you can enroll in or change plans from October 15, to December 7, each year. If you receive both Medicare and Medicaid, you can change plans any time throughout the year.

It is a good idea to review your Part D prescription plan each year to make sure that your plan meets your needs and is cost effective for you. If you are age 60 or older and would like assistance reviewing your Part D plan, you can make an appointment with a representative of the Cortland County Area Agency on Aging by calling 607-753-5060.

If you are under 60 and would like to learn more about what options might be available to you, call Sue Lewis, ATI Certified Benefits Counselor, at 607-753-7363. You may also email Sue at susan.lewis@aticortland.org.

If you are looking to switch from regular Medicare into a Medicare Advantage plan, you can do this from October 15, to December 7, each year. A Medicare Advantage plan is run by an independent insurance company and will take the place of your Medicare Part A, Part B, and sometimes Part D plans.

For some Medicare recipients, Medicare Advantage plans are cost effective. But before making the switch, you should definitely do your homework. It is always a good idea to get advice from a non-interested third-party, such as a representative of the Cortland County Area Agency on Aging.

Medicare Advantage plans work like HMOs or PPOs and require you to go to a certain group of doctors that the plan chooses. It's important to know that your current doctor may not participate in a particular Medicare Advantage plan. If you are in a Medicare Advantage plan and want to switch back to regular Medicare, you can do this between January 1 and February 14, 2015.

Did you know that there are several programs that might be able to help with Medicare monthly premiums. If you are single, your income is below \$1,313 a month and your resources are below \$8660, you may be eligible for one of these cost saving programs. For more information, contact the Cortland County Area Agency on Aging at 607-753-5060. You may also contact Susan Lewis, ATI Certified Benefits Counselor at 607-753-7363.

Social Security Announces 1.7 Percent Benefit Increase for 2015

The Social Security Administration recently announced that Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for nearly 64 million Americans will increase 1.7 percent in 2015. Below is a list of other related rate information for 2015:

Part B premium: Most people pay \$104.90 each month. This amount won't change in 2015.

Part B deductible: \$147 per year. This amount won't change in 2015.

Part A premium: Most people don't pay a monthly premium for Part A. If you buy Part A, you'll pay up to \$426 each month. This rate is set to decrease to \$407 in 2015.

Part A hospital inpatient deductible:

- \$1,216 deductible for each benefit period (\$1,260 in 2015)
- Days 1-60: \$0 coinsurance for each benefit period (\$0 in 2015)
- Days 61-90: \$304 coinsurance per day of each benefit period (\$315 in 2015)
- Days 91 and beyond: \$608 coinsurance per each "lifetime reserve day" after day 90 for each benefit period (up to 60 days over your lifetime) (\$630 in 2015)

For more information call Sue Lewis, ATI Certified Benefits Counselor, at 607-753-7363.

Bariatric Support Group

Dates: November 5 & 19, 2014
December 3 & 17, 2014
January 7 & 21, 2015

Time: 5:00 — 6:00 pm

Location: Access to Independence
26 North Main Street
Cortland, NY 13045



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ATI Celebrates National Disability Employment Awareness Month

In October, Access to Independence recognized National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) with a series of employment-related events for youth, job seekers and employers in our community. The NDEAM theme this year was: "Expect, Employ, Empower!"

2014 Disability Mentoring Day

On October 15, ATI facilitated its 2014 Disability Mentoring Day for more than 25 area youth with disabilities. All youth who applied shared their career interests and goals with coordinators to have a fun and meaningful morning of on-the-job career exploration, combined with an afternoon of empowering presentations from peer leaders.

To start the day, youth convened at the Cortland Works Career Center to prepare for an engaging experience at their job sites. After the orientation, youth ventured to their job sites throughout the community. Job sites included: Access to Independence, Barry Elementary School, Cortland Child Development Center, Cortland City Police Department, CNY SNAP, Crossroads Veterinary Clinic, Edgewart Farms, Elizabeth Brewster House, Frosted Bakery, Nancy's Bridal Shop, Shaw & Boehler Florist, Sun Auto Warehouse, SUNY Cortland, Tops Friendly Market, Wright-Beard Funeral Home and WXHC.

After their work experiences, youth returned to the Cortland Works Career Center for a brief luncheon. Guest presenters from YOUTH POWER! Inc., Stephanie Orlando, Executive Director, and Katie Rushlo, Central Regional Youth Partner, spent some time talking with attendees about their own personal life experiences, disability, support systems, self-advocacy, and their path to success.

Stephanie and Katie engaged youth in interactive activities to make them think about their wants, needs

and about the importance of listening as well as communicating those wants and needs.

Youth left the event with certificates highlighting their accomplishments and smiles on their faces. Empowered for the next phase in their education and job search, the young people who participated agree, 2014 Disability Mentoring Day was a huge success!

2014 Employment Conference

On October 22, ATI facilitated its 2014 Annual Employment Conference for nearly 30 job seekers with disabilities. The event welcomed attendees and offered tools, skill development, networking, and peer empowerment to further their job search and inevitable career.

Centered on the NDEAM theme, this year's one-day Employment Conference presented new ideas and resources focused on expectations of job seekers and employers, employment resources and empowering conversations of self-advocacy and problem solving.

The day kicked off with a keynote from Zach Garafalo, Assistant Director of YOUTH POWER! Inc., who shared his story about growing up with a significant disability, struggling, finding and using his supports, and his journey to success. A young leader himself, Zach challenged attendees to think about their own lives and what they could do differently to become successful.

The Conference featured four interactive workshops that aimed to help job seekers recognize barriers to employment and to brainstorm new ways to overcome them. Michelina Gibbons, Career Resource Specialist at SUNY Cortland, shared insights into the interview process and how to build one's reputation to suit specific employment goals.

Gail Bundy, Project Getting Ahead Coordinator for CAPCO, shared an "Employer's Perspective" from her experiences as an employer for Temp. Services and discussed a unique problem solving strategy that left attendees with a personal vision for success.

Shammi Carr, Staffing Specialist for Challenge Workforce Solutions, discussed the civil rights of people with disabilities, and how those rights affect employability and protect people from discrimination.

Brianna Valesey, Youth Engagement consultant from YOUTH POWER! Inc., walked attendees through *Career Zone*, an online tool through the NYS Department of Labor which allow users to develop resumes, perform job searches, enhance their transferable skills, receive notifications of job postings, and so much more.

The Conference concluded with presentations from area providers of employment services. Presentations included, Jean Czarniak from Adult Career & Continuing Education Services (ACCES-VR), Heather Wineburg from Employment Connection, Amy Buggs from Cortland Works Career Center, Steve Duffy from OCM BOCES Center for New Careers, Laurie Gosse from Cortland County Personnel / Civil Service, Jan Dempsey from Way2Go Cortland, and Jason Harriott from Tompkins Workforce. Attendees walked away with information in-hand and had opportunities to network with many of the presenters throughout the day!

Thank You Lead Sponsors!

A special thank you goes out to this year's lead sponsors whose generous contributions supported this year's DEAM events: Triad Foundation, Inc., Allen Speiser Memorial Fund and Cortland Area Communities That Care coalition.



ATI Community Computer Lab
Open Monday - Friday
9:00 am - 4:45 pm
Computers are available for consumers only.
For more information, call (607) 753-7363.

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Join ATI's Disability Advocacy Network!

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Cuomo Signs Executive Order to Establish Commission to Create Employment First Policy in NYS

As a result of ardent advocacy by disability advocates, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo recently signed an executive order to establish the Employment First Commission, tasked with creating an Employment First policy for New York, which makes competitive, integrated employment the first option when considering supports and services for people with disabilities.

The initiative aims to increase the employment rate, and decrease the poverty rate, for New Yorkers who are receiving services from the State, as well as register 100 businesses as having formal policies to hire people with disabilities as part of their workforce strategy.

“Equality and inclusiveness play a central role in the history of NYS, and today we are continuing that legacy by standing up for the employment needs of people with disabilities,” Governor Cuomo said. “This Executive Order relays what we stand for as New Yorkers—it will help provide fair opportunities to all people, and I am proud to move our state forward by signing it.”

The Employment First policy is part of a national movement to support the employment of people with disabilities. The employment rate for a New Yorker with a disability (aged 18-64) is 31.2% compared to 72% for a person without a disability, resulting in a gap of 40.8 percentage points. In addition, the poverty rate for New Yorkers with disabilities aged 18-64 living in the community is 28.6%, which is more than twice that of people in New York State without disabilities (12.3%).

The Governor has set a tentative goal of a 5% increase in the employment rate and a 5% decrease in the poverty rate among this population.

The New York State Independent Living Council (NYSILC), the New York Association on Independent Living (NYAIL) and disability advocates from across the state have been rallying for the past year to urge the Governor to revamp New York’s employment policy for people with disabilities.

Lose Your Job? Health Insurance Coverage Options are Available!

If you lose your job and are no longer covered through your employer, you may be able to find affordable health coverage in New York State’s Health Insurance Marketplace. Here are some important things to know about job loss and health coverage:

Marketplace health coverage. If you lose your job-based insurance for any reason, you can buy a private health insurance plan in the Marketplace. This is true even if you leave your job outside of Open Enrollment. When you apply for Marketplace coverage, you’ll also learn if you qualify for Medicaid or the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

What Marketplace plans cover. Plans cover essential health benefits, pre-existing conditions, and preventive care. Most people who apply will qualify for lower costs. You can even preview plans with prices based on your income and household size.

COBRA coverage. If you have COBRA coverage you can keep it. In some cases, you can buy Marketplace coverage instead. If COBRA ends outside of Open Enrollment, you may qualify for a Special Enrollment Period.

Other situations. Learn about your options if you’re unemployed, self-employed, or a part-time worker.

For more information, or to find out what insurance options you might qualify for, visit the following website: nystateofhealth.ny.gov.

The Two Worlds of ATI Services: Resources & Advocacy for People with Disability

You have probably read or heard that Access to Independence of Cortland County, Inc. (ATI) is a community-based, cross-disability, non-profit organization that is designed and operated by people with disabilities. You have probably also read or heard that ATI is an Independent Living Center (ILC). As an ILC, ATI is unique in that it operates according to a strict philosophy of consumer control, wherein people with all types of disabilities directly govern and staff the organization.

ATI is also unique because every facet of its existence and operation is based on the independent living philosophy. That philosophy emphasizes consumer control, the idea that people with disabilities are the best experts on their own needs. We have crucial and valuable perspective to contribute and deserve equal opportunity to decide how to live, work and take part in our community, particularly in reference to services that powerfully affect our day-to-day lives and “access to independence”.

According to traditional thought, disabilities are impairments to be cured through medical intervention. In practice, people with significant disabilities are treated at best by the medical industry as diseases to be cured, and more often, since most disabilities cannot be cured, as incapable and undeserving of optimal and self-directed care. It is this significant underestimation of the abilities and the life quality of people with disabilities that has led to a state in which the evaluation of people with disabilities by medical professionals, so highly valued by society, has come to infringe on basic human and civil rights.

ATI and the more than 500 ILC's across our nation see things

differently. We understand disability as a construct of society, wherein the problem lies in the environment, not the individual. Though many people have physical, intellectual or mental attributes that deviate from the “norm,” disability is manifested in society through purposefully created and maintained physical, programmatic and attitudinal barriers.

People with disabilities do not see themselves as problems to be solved. We only ask for the same human and civil rights enjoyed by others. Remarkably, even 24 years after the signing of the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act, this viewpoint is not generally accepted in society today. That is why ATI exists in our community. That is what drives ATI's mission, vision and values.

Now that I hope you have a better understanding of why ATI continuously positions itself at the local, state and federal level of public policy debates and advocates for changes to systems, I'd like to share with you the other side of ATI...that is a brief description of the variety of services we offer our 400+ consumers.

As an ILC, ATI offers five core services:

Advocacy: ATI provides personal advocacy services in the areas of education, employment, healthcare, commerce, social and citizenship. ATI aims to increase individual access to equal opportunities in exercising social economic, educational and legal rights.

Independent Living Skills Training: ATI provides individuals with training on everyday life skills. ATI staff facilitates a variety of group and one-on-one training sessions that relate to budgeting, meal preparation, arranging transportation, medication management, per-

sonal assistance services, locating community resources, managing benefits, accessing healthcare and other social services, doing laundry, using a computer, etc.

Information & Referral: ATI provides individuals with resources and options that may be necessary in making informed choices about living, learning and working independently. Individuals of all ages, with and without disabilities, call upon ATI to provide information relating to disability rights and services, and to help them locate other needed resources locally and statewide.

Peer Counseling: Every ATI staff member offers peer counseling services to individuals with disabilities, sharing ideas and experiences about living with a disability. ATI aims to offer individuals greater awareness and control over their own life through application of the independent living philosophy.

Transition: ATI provides two different types of transition services. ATI provides a variety of services to help individuals divert or transition from nursing facilities or other institutional settings. ATI also provides youth transition services to help youth transition from high school on to employment or post-secondary education.

In addition to the five aforementioned core services, ATI provides a number of additional services and programs to consumers and the community, including: architectural barrier removal / home modification / accessibility construction, assistive technology, community computer lab, loan closet of durable medical equipment, vocational and work readiness, and NHTD and TBI Medicaid Waiver service coordination.

Governor Cuomo Signs Legislation Updating New York's Accessibility Signage and Logos

Over the summer, just before the Anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Governor Andrew M. Cuomo signed legislation that will further advance New York State as an advocate of rights for people with disabilities.

That legislation amends existing law to require the removal of the word “handicapped” from new or replaced state signage, as well as update and destigmatize the accessibility logo.

“New York has long been a leader when it comes to fighting discrimination to protect New Yorkers including people with disabilities,” Governor Cuomo said. “This bill is an important step toward correcting society’s understanding of accessibility and eliminating a stigma for more than one million New Yorkers, and I am proud to sign it into law.”

One of the largest concerns is that existing signage and language emphasizes the disability itself, rather than the person. The current universal symbol for a person with a disability represents an individual with a wheelchair, which will be updated on all new signage to portray a more active image. Additionally, the word “handicapped” will be removed from signs, or any other communication, now using only the word “accessible.”

One leading advocate for the change, Assemblywoman Sandy Galef, said, “A picture is worth a thousand words. The disability community is hindered by outdated language and symbols that stigmatize them and align them with a negative connotation or an image of immobility. These new signs and this new language call for businesses, schools, governments and organizations to help change negative to positive, static to mobile, and help to further incorporate our disability community into the mainstream. I have worked closely with community advocates to promote this ‘first in the nation’ legislation. I want to thank Governor Cuomo for signing this landmark bill into law.”

The New York Association on Independent Living (NYAIL) Executive Director Lindsay Miller said, “We applaud Governor Cuomo for signing this symbolic legislation, reaffirming New York as a national leader on disability rights. The change to the revamped ‘accessible’ sign is significant to the disability community as we mark the 24th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act and continue efforts to improve access to community based supports through Olmstead implementation.”

Another leading state disability advocate, Independent Living, Inc.’s Executive Director Douglas Hovey said, “As a person with a disability, I applaud Governor Cuomo and can say that the new access symbol is yet another great step toward the integration of people with disabilities into our society. The new symbol is more progressive and illustrates how we as people with disabilities are much more active at all levels including areas of employment, housing and recreation...it shows people with disabilities moving forward.”



MAKING A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE LOCALLY

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



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Ph: 607-218-6001 or 888-228-9559
Fax: 607-218-6279

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WE NEED ACCESS TO TRANSPORTATION!

Tell Legislators that Transportation is a Civil Right!

“Transportation is back as a major civil rights issue. Today’s focus is not on getting a seat at the front of the bus but on making sure the bus takes us where we need to go.”

~ Angela Glover Blackwell, Founder and CEO, PolicyLink

DEFINING A “COMPLETE COMMUNITY” BY ITS TRANSPORTATION

Nothing defines a community’s ability to integrate its citizens better than the quality, variety, and accessibility of its transportation options. Bus systems offer fixed, flexible and accessible route service for residents to move freely throughout the community to access jobs, school, commerce, and any events and activities that a community has to offer. Taxis fill the gap between the fixed routes of busses and the un-walkable distances in rural areas. For walkers and bicyclists, curb cuts, accessible crosswalk systems, and clean sidewalks ensure safe opportunities to move throughout a community. While a challenge, the vision of a “Complete Community” is not impossible for Cortland County.

WHAT DOES ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION MEAN?

Accessible does not always mean “for people with disabilities.” In fact, accessible simply means that ANYONE can access a service when they need it. Affordability, lifts / ramps, audible / tactile signals, and curb cuts are in fact accommodations for people with disabilities. However, those accommodations offer a more complete experience and benefit to everyone in a community, even people who do not have a disability.

CORTLAND COUNTY PUBLIC ACCESS NEEDS COST OF AN INACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY

<u>Bus System:</u> # #	<u>Taxi & Ride-Share Services:</u> # #	<u>Pedestrians & Bicyclists</u> # #
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Expand bus service to nights and weekends!<ul style="list-style-type: none">Expand the number and frequency of county-wide routes!Expand the number and frequency of inter-county routes!Increase reliability and timeliness of all bus routes!<ul style="list-style-type: none">Maintain affordable fares!# 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Broaden taxi oversight to the County level!Mandate companies to offer ADA compliant taxis!Increase company responsibility for reliable, timely, clean, safe and courteous service!Mandate affordable and fair rates for county-wide and inter-county trips! # 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Continue to upgrade deficient City and County curb cuts and crosswalk systems to achieve ADA compliance!Increase safe route options for pedestrians and bicyclists to travel without fear of injury!Implement new policies to keep sidewalks clear of unnecessary obstructions and obstacles!# 

- Lost quality of life for residents with no alternative transportation** - Not everyone in our community drives a car. Many people, including people with disabilities, seniors and veterans, rely on public transportation to go to work, school, go shopping at local businesses, and attend medical appointments!
 - Lost commerce with business** - It is a proven fact that communities with quality public transportation experience better commerce. People shop locally if they can get to their favorite stores!
- Lost employment opportunities** - Improved commerce leads to increased need for labor. By improving public transportation, we create new jobs. Public transportation also offers people a reliable way to get to their existing jobs, no matter what day or time they work!

CONTACT YOUR CITY AND COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIALS

It is important that our elected officials hear our voices loud and clear regarding transportation and access to a complete community! Use the information below to contact your City Alderperson and County Legislator and tell them about what you NEED in our community.

- Invest in our public transit system to expand service hours and develop inter-county routes!
- Move oversight of Taxi companies out of the city police department and into the County!
- Coordinate private (e.g. college and nursing facility) transportation with County efforts!
 - Update crosswalks and sidewalks so they are accessible for ALL pedestrians!

CITY OF CORTLAND COMMON COUNCIL CONTACT INFORMATION

Ward 1 - Julie E. Bird# 142 Madison Street# Cortland, NY 13045# ward1@cutland.org	Ward 2 - Kathryn Silliman# 30 Pleasant Street# Cortland, NY 13045# ward2@cutland.org	Ward 3 - Ken Dye# 13 Hamlin Street# Cortland, NY 13045# ward3@cutland.org
Ward 4 - John G. Bennett, Jr.# 199 Tompkins Street# Cortland, NY 13045# ward4@cutland.org	Ward 5 - Clifton Dutcher# 7 Kent Drive# Cortland, NY 13045# ward5@cutland.org	Ward 6 - Carlos Ferrer# 4 Euclid Avenue# Cortland, NY 13045# ward6@cutland.org
Ward 7 - Linda A. Ferguson# 10 Cleveland Avenue# Cortland, NY 13045# ward7@cutland.org	Ward 8 - Thomas Michales# 22 William Street# Cortland, NY 13045# ward8@cutland.org	

COUNTY LEGISLATOR CONTACT INFORMATION

LD 1 - John Troy (D) 21 Summit Street Cortland, NY 13045 jtroy@cutland-co.org	LD 2 - Amy Cobb (D) 3 Stevenson Street Cortland, NY 13045 acobb@cutland-co.org	LD 3 - Thomas Hartnett (D) 19 Pearl Street Cortland, NY 13045 thartnett@cutland-co.org
LD 4 - Richard Bushnell (D) 11 Owego Street Cortland, NY 13045 rbushnell@cutland-co.org	LD 5 - Luke Snyder (D) 5 Cedar Street Cortland, NY 13045 lsnyder@cutland-co.org	LD 6 - Mary Ann Discenza (D) 20 Pomeroy Street Cortland, NY 13045 mdiscenza@cutland-co.org
LD 7 - Raylynn Knolls (D) 10 Cleveland Street Cortland, NY 13045 rknolls@cutland-co.org	LD 8 - Donnell Boyden (R) 6460 Route 41 Homer, NY 13077 dboyden@cutland-co.org	LD 9 - Newell Wilcox (R) 5448 Rt 281 Homer, NY 13077 nwilcox@cutland-co.org
LD 10 - Gordon Wheelock (R) 11 Nixon Ave Homer, NY 13077 gwheelock@cutland-co.org	LD 11 - Susan Briggs (R) 4032 Kinney Gulf Road Cortland, NY 13045 sbriggs@cutland-co.org	LD 12 - Joseph Steinhoff (R) 3215 W. River Road Cortland, NY 13045 jsteinhoff@cutland-co.org
LD 13 - Kevin Whitney (R) 1204 Starr Road Cortland, NY 13045 kwhitney@cutland-co.org	LD 14 - Sandy Price (D) 1189 Church Street Cortland, NY 13045 sprice@cutland-co.org	LD 15 - George Wagner (R) 3310 Highland Road Marathon, NY 13803 gwagner@cutland-co.org
LD 16 - James Denkenberger (R) 7738 Shackham Road Tully, NY 13159 jdenkenberger@cutland-co.org	LD 17 - Charles Sudbrink (R) 1122 St. Route 4, P.O. Box 28 Willet, NY 13863 csudbrink@cutland-co.org	