

ACCESS news

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Time to Take the Power Back

Douglas J. Usiak, Executive Director

In July, WNYIL and other organizations of, and for, people with disabilities decided to do something a bit different by having a **Disability Pride Day**, rather than just a picnic in the park, in honor of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

And that was a very good thing, I believe.

It was good because we, the people with disabilities, decided to take a day to bring attention to ourselves — as contributing, participating, members of our communities!

This Pride Day included a parade, showing off, well, *ourselves*, followed by information booths with pamphlets on services and programs we — or anyone — might be interested in. Oh, and food and drink, lots and lots of food! (Thank you, sponsors!)

Hold on, I know what you're thinking! No, this was NOT a fund raiser to collect money for any organization that wants to find a cure for something.

Nor was this a Memorial Day for the loss of someone or something else.

This was NOT a day to recognize anyone or anything BUT those of us **with disabilities**...and that we are as important, as responsible, and as concerned for the greater community as anyone else who lives, works and plays in Western New York.

Personally, I think it was about time that we citizens with disabilities stood up and shouted, “Hey! I am Proud to be an American, too”! Like any other subset of the population, we are people of many faiths, races, colors, ages, religions, lifestyle preferences, and so on.

While having our disabilities is what connects us to each other, it is our differences that make us individuals. Disabilities show no favoritism for any group or class of people...Disabilities have no respect for the young, nor for the old...Disabilities can, and do, happen to ALL of us sooner or later; it's just a matter of severity! So, since this disability, um, *thing* is a part of human existence, then we, as people with disabilities, need to learn how to deal with them, so we can wholeheartedly get into the game of life!

For instance, we need to look at the election in November. The U.S. President's job is on the line, and we, as people with disabilities, need to be concerned! And that's not only for all the typical policy issues, such as taxes, foreign trade, economics, employment, and so on. We need to look at our rights as people with disabilities, who fought for the enactment and enforcement of laws and regulations that bar discrimination against us, AS Americans with disabilities!

It is a shame that formal statutes were necessary to promote, facilitate and protect our equal access to employment, education, housing, public accommodation and transportation. However, the fact is, they had to be given the force of law, and those laws are now in place — but continually under attack by those who find them an inconvenience! We need to vigilantly protect them for ourselves and our brothers and sisters!

Come to think of it, this election year makes me recall what I've read about the 1930's and 40's, where isolation from the world was the principal desire of the country's citizens. A period in our history in which a nation of immigrants was very concerned about who came into our country; (conveniently forgetting that nobody ever asked the Native Americans whether WE could come in). A time in which people who had been here slightly longer pointed their fingers at people who were “different”, and decreed that *they* must be what's wrong with America! Well, since history seems to be repeating itself, maybe we, as people with disabilities, need to use OUR power.

What's “our power”, you ask? (I'm so glad you asked!) The Power of the Vote! We, the little people of this country, *collectively* have great power. We can vote, and thus give our power to person(s) who we feel are best to make our laws, fight for our cause, and lead us into the future. The vote is what empowers those leaders we see on TV, and only you can give it -- or grumble, sit back, and waste it!

I think that, as a person with a disability who is looking at retirement...as a person who has contributed to the growth of my community, State, and country...as a husband and father of three successful daughters, all of whom give back to the community...as a person who

has promoted jobs, observed what's wrong in the community, and has pushed for positive changes...I think that I will take my power of the Vote, (along with my Pride of being an American with a disability), and give it to the best person(s) to lead my community, State, and Country forward!

I will give my Vote to the person(s) who will fight to guarantee that ALL people in this country have a right to grow, work and play. I will give this power of the Vote to the person(s) who will insure that my differences are not made fun of, mocked, or used to discriminate, but, rather, who will enable my differences to be embraced and encouraged to be part of this great Country! AND, I ask each and every one of you reading this to do the same!

Give that power YOU have to the person who will best lead you into a brighter, better, more prosperous tomorrow, who offers a life of inclusion, and NOT delusion!

I Can't *HEAR* You!

Sue Ann Sehl

This topic is an 'oldie' but a 'goodie' to re-visit from time to time...

Speech-reading is a never dying, but most important, coping skills that we as hard of hearing people must use in our daily lives...Common sense plays a huge role in this.

You already know that communication is stressful when you have a hearing loss. Increased stress reduces speech-reading effectiveness. However, there are some things you can do to reduce stress and increase speech-reading efficiency.

First: Know the topic. Depending where you are: at a family gathering or speaking one on one with another person. Determine your situation will help define the topic.

Second: If you are unable to determine the topic, ask questions. Questions help define the topic, to enable you to speech-read more effectively. A short answer is best to help move the communication along.

Third: Confirm! Confirm! Confirm! Don't get 'lost' in lengthy communication. Get information in increments. The time to stop the communication is when you get lost rather than thinking you'll figure it out 'eventually'. By the time you get to the 'eventually' some of the important information will be lost and you'll need to start all over. So, it is only logical to stop just as soon as you miss something. You do not need to confirm every word you hear. Only confirm or repeat the gist or the critical points.

Fourth: Take a break: Walk away from others, get away from other people. A ten-minute break does wonders... Use pen and paper when communication gets more difficult.

You've just completed Hearing Strategy 101 class. Following these high-lighted strategies is 'self-help' in action. Good luck and enjoy your fellowship with others...

Until next time...

An Interesting Creation Story

Cynthia Printup-Harms

During a recent trip to South Dakota, I noticed a sign that read, "Pine Ridge Vocational Rehabilitation Project". I learned that they are funded through the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and specifically work with the Oglala Lakota Tribe. There is another office in Pine Ridge that specifically works with the Oglala Sioux Tribe. Both are affiliated with the Consortia of Administrators for Native American Rehabilitation (CANAR). This definitely inspired me to search further into what CANAR is all about. It was during this search that I found out about the CANAR Creation Story.

The CANAR Creation Story

After passage of the Rehabilitation Act Amendment of 1992, considerable actions were taken to enhance cultural competence in the delivery of rehabilitation services, increase outreach and services to persons with disabilities from diverse populations, and develop recruitment strategies of persons from diverse backgrounds to work in areas of rehabilitation. The Amendments required the RSA, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) with the U.S. Department of Education, to develop a national strategic plan, known as the Rehabilitation Cultural Diversity Initiative (RCDI) that would implement priority training on issues of cultural diversity to all programs funded under the Rehabilitation Act.

Between 1992 and 1993, several RCDI meetings were coordinated by the Region VIII Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program (RCEP) to address the current service delivery system within Section-121-funded American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services Projects. Issues and concerns were expressed in regards to initiating and improving culturally-centered vocational rehabilitation (VR) service provision on reservations nationwide as State VR services and administrative plans often conflicted with tribal norms. This eventually led to high rates of unsuccessful closures among Native American consumers. As a result, on January 22, 1993, the Consortia of Administrators

for Native American Rehabilitation (CANAR) was formed. The organization began to function as a national platform to advocate for effective rehabilitation service delivery to American Indian and Alaska Native individuals with disabilities. CANAR also began to serve as the official voice of Native American rehabilitation programs, which provided VR services to American Indians and Alaska Natives with disabilities residing on or near Federal or State reservations, Alaska Native villages, rancheros, and pueblos.

After CANAR met its first five-year initiative (1993 - 1998), their administrative offices relocated from Region VIII RCEP at the University of Northern Colorado to the American Indian Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (AIRRTC) located at the Institute for Human Development, an Arizona University Affiliated Program at Northern Arizona University.

After several years at AIRRTC, the CANAR office was moved to a new home in Louisiana and was incorporated there as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in 2003. As CANAR continued to grow, it became apparent that there was a need for full time staff. In 2010, CANAR set up a full time office in Louisiana with an Executive Director and an Administrative Assistant.

CANAR continues to grow and form collaborative working relationships with like organizations, such as the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR), the National Rehabilitation Association (NRA), the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL), the National Council on Disability (NCD) and other national organizations. In addition, CANAR partners with various state rehabilitation agencies, Technical Assistance and Continuing Education Centers (TACE), Capacity Building Projects, and federal service agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Labor, to improve the quality of life for American Indian and Alaska Native individuals with a disability.

According to a report from the U.S. Department of Education (US-ED), Charles Sleeper knows firsthand that one federal grant can change lives. Before becoming a counselor for the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes [on the Internet at <http://www.c-a-tribes.org>] of Oklahoma, he was a recipient of the services offered as a result of the “Vocational Rehabilitation Service Projects for American Indians with Disabilities” [<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/vramerind/index.html>] grant from US-ED. “This program changed my life by making me see that I could go beyond my disability and be better than anyone who might mock me,” he said.

This testimony is exactly why CANAR advocates for American Indians and Alaska Natives with a disability: to ensure they have a voice, as policies are developed at the state and federal legislative bodies. No other single American Indian or Alaska Native organization advocates harder than CANAR does on behalf of tribal members with a disability.

MHPC starts Critical Peer Response Team services for substance abuse dependents and family members going to hospital ERs under new \$250,000 State contract

New York State recognizes the vital roles that peers can play in recovery from addiction

As part of New York Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's \$1 million initiative to expand access to opioid addiction treatment services and family supports in four areas across the State, **Mental Health Peer Connection (MHPC)** is now providing on-call services to Emergency Rooms in Erie County. Since August 1st, MHPC staff in its Critical Peer Response Team (CPR Team) have been ready to report to hospital Emergency Departments, where the On-Call Outreach Peer/Family Support Specialists will point people and their families to appropriate substance use disorder treatments and support. The \$250,000 regional initiative was developed by the NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS), and implemented through the Erie County Department of Mental Health.

The Specialists, who are knowledgeable about the alcohol and substance abuse treatment system, work with hospital Emergency Department personnel, and in other settings, to help individuals and their families to establish connections to substance use treatment and support. These supports are critical to a person and family's start on the path to recovery, and can help prevent relapse and a potential overdose.

MHPC Director Maura Kelley said of this ground-breaking opportunity, "This on-call peer outreach and family support navigator service is unique because it is run and staffed by people who are in recovery, and who deal with their loved ones in addiction. The idea is to offer hope to those who have gone to the Emergency Room that they, too, can stop substance use by seeking help in both traditional and non-traditional ways. Family members and those in the ER will be able to get immediate services and direction on how to break the cycle of addiction by those who have been there themselves and who are now in recovery."

For more information on this exciting new program, contact Shannon Veiders of Mental Health PEER Connection at her office, (716) 836-0822, ext. 135, or by email at sveiders@wnyil.org. To reach the dedicated CPR Team phone line, call (716) 836-2726.

Nothing says "summer" like cooking outdoors on the grill – and as long as it's safe, it can be fun, too!

Some good advice for safe summer fun from our friends at the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD):

BARBEQUE GRILL SAFETY:

Barbeque grills must only be used outdoors. The heat created by a grill, and the process of burning any fuel poses both a fire hazard and the risk of carbon monoxide exposure. The following information is designed to encourage safe use of any type of grill:

- Never use a grill indoors, in a garage, breezeway, carport, porch, awning, or beneath an overhang or other surface that can catch fire or trap heat and carbon monoxide.
- Place the grill at least 10 feet away from any building, deck railings, eaves and overhead branches.
- Keep the grill a safe distance from sitting areas, recreation spaces, and pathways.
- Keep a three-foot “safe zone” around the grill that only the person using the grill can enter.
- Use long-handled grilling tools to give the chef plenty of clearance from heat and flames.
- Only use a grill the way it was intended. Never convert a gas grill to use with charcoal.
- Never leave a burning grill unattended!

GAS GRILL SAFETY:

Liquid petroleum (LP) gas or propane used in gas grills is highly flammable. Hazards increase when a grill has been left idle for a period of time, and just after refilling and reconnecting the tank. To avoid problems, it is important to check the gas tank hose for leaks, blockages or damage before using it for the first time each year.

A light soap and water solution applied to the hose will quickly reveal escaping propane by releasing bubbles. If you determine your grill has a gas leak, by smell or the soapy bubble test, and there is no flame, turn off the gas tank and grill. If the leak stops, get the grill serviced by a professional before using it again. If the leak does not stop, call the fire department.

Also check the tubes that lead into the burner for any blockage from insects, spiders, or food grease. A pipe cleaner or wire can be used to clear blockage by pushing them through to the main part of the burner. Check grill hoses for cracking, brittleness, holes, and leaks and make sure there are no sharp bends in the hose or tubing. Examine the fittings on the hose and replace any scratched or nicked connectors.

Additional safety considerations:

- Keep gas hoses as far away as possible from hot surfaces and dripping hot grease.
- Grills should be cleaned before and after each use
- Clean grease or fat buildup in trays below the grill.
- Open the barbecue lid before turning on the gas or lighting.
- When you have finished cooking with a gas barbecue, turn off the gas cylinder.
- Never leave a gas grill unattended; turn it off if you have to step away.

- Never use gas cylinders that are past their legal use date.
- Never store or use flammable liquids, like gasoline, near the grill.
- Use caution when storing liquid petroleum (LP) gas or propane containers. Never store gas tanks in buildings or garages. If you store a gas grill inside during the winter, disconnect the tank and leave it outside. Always keep containers upright.
- When transporting gas containers, secure them in the vehicle in an upright position.
- Never keep a tank in a hot car or car trunk.

CHARCOAL GRILL SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Remember that a charcoal grill cannot be turned off once lit; it needs to be constantly attended.
- Use only sufficient charcoal to cover the base of the barbecue to a depth of about 2 inches.
- Store extra charcoal in a metal container with a tight fitting lid to keep it dry: wet charcoal can spontaneously combust, and start a fire.
- If using a fluid to start the charcoal grill, use only starter fluid intended for this purpose. It is extremely dangerous to use any other combustible liquid to start the coals.
- Never apply charcoal lighter/ starter fluid after the charcoal has been lit.
- Store charcoal and starter fluid away from heat sources, and avoid storing large quantities.
- Make sure charcoal has been completely extinguished before disposing of the ashes and storing the grill; ashes may reignite 48 to 72 hours after use. Use a non-flammable container such as a metal bucket with a tight fitting cover to store ashes.

If a leak or uncontrolled fire should occur...

Following these safety guidelines is the first step in preventing grill related problems. In the event of a fire, or if a gas leak is discovered, remember the following:

- If you have a grill fire, immediately move a safe distance from the fire and call 911.
- If you smell gas while cooking, immediately get away from the grill and call the fire department.
- Do not attempt to move a grill which is on fire or leaking gas.

Additional information on grilling safety can be found by using the web link, below:

National Fire Protection Association:

<http://www.nfpa.org/safety-information/for-consumers/outdoors/grilling>

UPCOMING EVENTS

FREE

Mental Health PEER Connection

Kite Festival

Celebrating Mental Health



September 17th at Gratwick Park
in North Tonawanda
11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Free admission



Wednesday, September 21, 2016
Batavia Country Club
7909 Batavia-Byron Rd., Batavia, NY 14020
5:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
\$15.00 per ticket



Thursday, September 29, 2016
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
at the Buffalo Convention Center

ILNC Flapjack Fundraiser



Sunday, October 9th at Applebee's
5822 South Transit Road
Lockport, NY 14094
8:00 - 10:00 a.m.
Tickets are \$6 pre-sale
or \$7.50 at the door



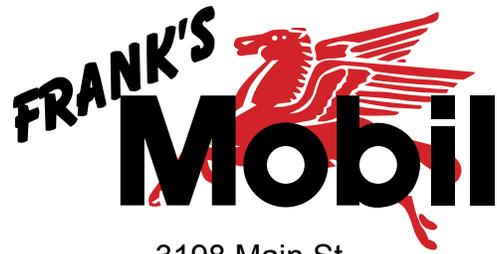
When you shop at AmazonSmile, Amazon donates 0.5% of the purchase price to Western New York Independent Living, Inc. Bookmark the link <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/22-2316065> and support us every time you shop.

For more information contact Heather at 716-836-0822, ext. 146 or hmattiuzzo@wnyil.org

Thank you to our Night for Independence Gala Sponsors!



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Gala

Western New York Independent Living, Inc.

To benefit Independence Express Transportation

Saturday, May 20, 2017

Salvatore's Italian Gardens

6461 Transit Rd., Depew, NY 14043

Save the Date!

Inclusion, Awareness, Visibility



Disability Pride

FREE!

Celebration & Parade

July 2017

Western New York Organizations invite you to join us to celebrate the Americans with Disabilities Act and Disability Pride with **FREE** food, fun, and games will be provided. We look forward to having you celebrate with us!

Thank you to our 2016 sponsors:



Office for People with Disabilities

