



# DAWN AWAKENINGS

## Awaken to Independence

Spring 2009

DAWNcil would like to take this opportunity to thank all our members for their financial support through the payment of their membership dues. It is through this support and other continuing financial support that helps sustain our programs.

We are extremely appreciative and wish to thank the following funders for without their assistance we would not be able to continue serving our catchment area of Morris, Sussex and Warren counties.

State of New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services - Independent Living Program and Promoting Self Advocacy Programs.

State of New Jersey Disability Services - Traumatic Brain Injury Fund.

United Way of Morris County - Recreational Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities; Information and Referral; and Self-advocacy Institute for Leadership.

County of Morris - Recreational Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities and the Care Management Program.

County of Warren - Recreational Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities; Resource Coordination and Case Management for Disabled Residents over 60; and the Personal Assistance Services Program.

County of Sussex - Recreational Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities.

Christopher Reeve Foundation - Living Well with a Disability.

Gannett Foundation - Living Well with a Disability .

Finally, thanks go out to our volunteers who have responded to our calls for assistance with: our mailings; helping to organize the resource room; who are always willing to be of assistance at recreation events; and especially for those folks who have shared professional expertise at our member meetings.

### **FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK** - Carmela Slivinski

Happy New Year to all! I hope that 2009 brings a year of health and happiness to all of DAWN's friends and families.

I am sure that it comes as no surprise to tell you that DAWN like many other organizations are concerned about how the economy will impact the people we help on a day to day basis.

Individuals are already struggling to make ends meet and it only seems to be getting worse. We are hearing from our colleagues and we are experiencing as well the increase in the volume of calls from people who are struggling to pay their mortgage or rent, their utility bills, buy food and buy medications. Unfortunately, there is no relief in sight. I want to take this opportunity to assure you that the staff and I will do our best to help in whatever way we can to help you identify and be connected to resources. We will all need to be patient and work together during

this difficult economy. We are hard at work advocating for additional resources for services and will keep you posted on how you can assist with those efforts.

On a positive note, one of our members has been working on updating our website and bringing a chat room to you. We will be rolling that out to all of you in the next few months. We are very excited to be able to make this available to our members. More details will be coming your way soon on the chat room as well as the annual calendar of events. Be Well and Stay Warm!

Best Regards  
Carmela

## **THISABLED.COM: WHERE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES HELP EACH OTHER**

Thisabled is built on the concept that in order for people with disabilities to be free they have to be politically and economically empowered. Did you know that currently people with disabilities make-up less than 1 percent of the Federal workforce. This is unacceptable. Log on to [www.Thisabled.com](http://www.Thisabled.com) to sign the petition calling for President of the United States Barrack Obama to employ people with disabilities at all levels of the Federal Government and to ensure that by 2013, no less than 5 percent of the workforce will be people with disabilities.

## **POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER**

Courage Community members will help vets with post-traumatic stress disorder by employing EMDR, eye movement desensitization and reprocessing, which has been an effective treatment for PTSD symptoms, including depression, anxiety, nighttime nightmares and daytime flashbacks of the traumatic event.

“You can’t get the trauma out of your head. What makes it a trauma is a neuro-physiological process that causes the memory to occur physically,” says Dr. Albert Zbick. Zbick explains that all events in our lives are stored and recorded three-dimensionally. “Memory records all bodily physical sensations, what you thought and what you felt while experiencing the event.”

Then, any part of that “record” of the event that occurs in your life — a scent, sight, sound, feeling — can trigger PTSD symptoms. EMDR neutralizes the event and breaks the connection between past and present. Once neutralized, the memory is no longer traumatic, just another memory.

### **Signs of PTSD:**

People who suffer from PTSD often suffer from nightmares, flashbacks, difficulty sleeping, and feeling emotionally numb. These symptoms can significantly impair a person’s daily life. PTSD is marked by clear physical and psychological symptoms. It often has symptoms like depression, substance abuse, problems of memory and cognition, and other physical and mental health problems.

The disorder is also associated with difficulties in social or family life, including occupational instability, marital problems, family discord, and difficulties in parenting.

The Courage Community - [www.couragecommunity.org](http://www.couragecommunity.org)

The Courage community is a non-profit, non-partisan, apolitical organization which provides support for our growing veteran population. Their web-site offers a fully-active, content-rich, user-generated online experience.

Anyone who has gone through a life-threatening event can develop PTSD. These events can include:

- combat or military exposure - child sexual or physical abuse
- terrorist attacks - sexual or physical assault
- serious accidents (i.e. car wreck) - natural disasters (fire, tornado, hurricane, Flood etc.)

For more information on this subject go to:

National Institute of Mental Health at <http://www.nimh.nih.gov> and enter a search for PTSD.  
US Dept of Veterans Affairs National center for PTSD [www.ncptsd.va.gov](http://www.ncptsd.va.gov)

## **REMOVAL OF SNOW & ICE FROM HANDICAPPED PARKING**

On January 13, 2008, Governor Jon Corzine amended the law (N.J.S.A. 39:4-207.9) which was originally passed in 1999 and requires that accessible areas are cleared of snow and ice within 24, rather than 48 hours, of the inclement weather or risk receiving a fine.

The “Snow Removal Law,” requires business owners and operators of parking lots to remove snow, ice and obstacles from handicapped parking spaces, curb cuts, ramps and other areas designed to provide accessibility for people with disabilities. The fines for violations have been increased from \$500 to \$1,000; from the original \$200 to \$500.

“The cooperation of New Jersey businesses and community members is essential for people with disabilities to be able to navigate access to business and community facilities,” said Department of Human Services’ Commissioner Jennifer Velez. “It is important for us all to be aware and remind others in our communities of the need for accessible accommodations for people with disabilities.”

NJ Dept of Human Services  
Press Release, February 11, 2008

## **RETIREMENT—MOVING TO A DIFFERENT STATE?**

If you are planning to move “to a different state to maximize your standard of living in retirement” and would like to know “Which states are more retirement friendly, have no state income tax, lower retirement taxes, lower real estate taxes, friendly sales taxes, etc.? To access an up-to-date list that would compare all this information and more?” L.J.Kotlikof, Prof. of Economics, B.U. recommends this web-site: [www.retirementliving.com](http://www.retirementliving.com)

## **2009 V.I.T.A.**

Once again Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) is available to residents in Morris County and some of Warren residents. (some sites are close enough for Hackettstown resident to avail themselves of this program).

For more information on VITA sites or to register for assistance contact:  
NORWESCAP RSVP, P O Box 563, Denville NJ 07834 (973) 784-4900 ext.103 or 101 Or e-mail: [konwisere@NORWESCAP.org](mailto:konwisere@NORWESCAP.org)

## **DAWN STAFF**

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome to Helen Bradfield. As you may know, Helen has replaced Sean Hardy as our Independent Living Transition Specialist. Helen came on board in September and immediately started visiting school districts within our catchment area. She now has a full schedule working with students in the schools

## **SAVE MONEY WITH THESE SIMPLE TIPS!**

With the escalating costs of heating and cooling your home, your energy bills could place a larger drain on your wallet than ever before. But, by following a few simple tips you can be on your way to saving energy as well as a few extra bucks for other necessities.

Let the sun in. The sun provides natural light and warmth open your curtains to take advantage. Be sure to close them in the evening for insulation.

Install a programmable thermostat. Set the temperature lower when you aren't in the house or when you go to bed at night and you won't even notice the difference.

Insulate your water heater. Buy an insulated blanket they're safe, inexpensive and the energy savings will pay for it in no time.

Stop the drafts. For about \$20-\$30 for weather stripping to stop drafts near windows and doors, you'll save that much in a month. [Draft dodgers for the base of doors and on windowsills also help.]

## **WEB-SITES**

<http://wrightslaw.com> For accurate, reliable information about special education law, education law, and advocacy for children with disabilities.

[www.deafdigest.com](http://www.deafdigest.com) Free subscription serving the deaf community since 1996. (Has a variety of information, but also a lot of advertising with associated links)

<http://www.swim-inc.org> A new self-directed water exercise program to assist Sussex county area adults with muscular impairment has begun at the Sussex county YMCA in Hardyston. Participants Are those people who have difficulty getting exercise on land because of mobility constraints due to stroke, MS, accident, surgery, MD, arthritis, cancer, polio or post polio syndrome or other reasons.. The Program is free for all participants. See web-site for more information on the program and to download application or contact Bob Hopkins at (973) 729-3686 or e-mail him at [swimsmart@yahoo.com](mailto:swimsmart@yahoo.com)

[www.uhccf.org](http://www.uhccf.org) Through United Healthcare Children's Foundation grants are available for families with children with special healthcare needs that have medical services that are not fully covered by health insurance. See web-site for more information.

[JobEnable.com](http://JobEnable.com) Is an online bank that helps people with disabilities find employment opportunities. (Free of charge.)

## **NEW LAWS AFFECTING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

### Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008

President Bush signed a new law, The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 , that will expand post-secondary education opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities, and promote the principles of Universal Design for Learning.

The bill allows students with intellectual disabilities to be eligible, for the first time, for Federal student loans, including Pell Grants, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants and the Federal Work-Study Program.

### Motor Vehicle Safety

In September ... Governor Jon Corzine signed ... legislation designed to enhance the safety and protections for people with disabilities.

[This] bill requires passengers who use wheelchairs to be secured with a Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards-approved securing device when traveling in a passenger car or other designated vehicle, and provides for fines of \$100 for failure to properly secure passengers in wheelchairs. Aside from important safety considerations for the individual with the wheelchair, sponsors of the bill also cited the need to protect others in the vehicle and nearby in the event of an accident.

## **SOCIAL SECURITY PLANS TO EXPEDITE CLAIMS**

Social Security administration recently launched a new initiative, Compassionate Allowances, which will expedite disability claims for applicants whose medical conditions are so severe that their conditions obviously meet SSA Standards.

A total of fifty conditions, which consist of twenty-five rare diseases and twenty-five cancers, will be covered under the new plan, and in time, more conditions will be added. For information visit [www.socialsecurity.gov/compassionateallowances](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/compassionateallowances)

## **NJ LIBRARIES —NEW REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTERS**

Effective December 1, 2008, Monmouth County Library, Shrewsbury, and Sussex County Library, Newton, are new Regional Resource Centers for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The Libraries offer closed-captioned videos, books and materials on deafness and hearing loss for parents, teachers, etc.

For more information, questions or comments, contact Christine Olsen at 888-671-6983 V/VP 877-882-5593 TTY/VP or [colsen@njstatelib.org](mailto:colsen@njstatelib.org)

## **WEB SEMINAR**

On February 25 there will be a 'Webinar' on Special Needs Planning from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m. at [www.epliveonline.com](http://www.epliveonline.com)