



DAWN AWAKENINGS

Awaken to Independence

Winter 2011

OBAMA SIGNS HISTORIC TECHNOLOGY ACCESS BILL

President Barack Obama, joined by disability-rights advocates and technology industry representatives, signed into law the 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act. Signed into law during National Disability Employment Awareness Month, this legislation is expected to create more opportunities in the workplace, the classroom and everyday life. It requires smart phones, television programs, the internet, menus on DVD players, program guides on cable television and other modern communication technologies to be accessible to people with vision or hearing loss.

“Now earlier this year, we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) right here in the White House. And it was a moment for every American to reflect not just on one of the most comprehensive civil rights bills in our history, but what that bill meant to so many people,” said Obama. “The 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act will make it easier for people who are deaf, blind or live with a visual impairment to do what many of us take for granted – from navigating a TV or DVD menu, to sending an email on a smart phone. It sets new standards so that Americans with disabilities can take advantage of the technology our economy depends on. And that’s especially important in today’s economy when every worker needs the necessary skills to compete for the jobs of the future.”

Some specifics in the legislation include mandating mobile phone companies to make web browsers, text messaging and email on smart phones fully accessible; expanding requirements for video description, program guides and selection menus for television to be fully accessible to people with vision loss; ensuring people with vision loss have access to emergency broadcast information; providing \$10 million in funding each year for assistive technology for deaf-blind individuals; and ensuring that internet enabled mobile phones are hearing-aid compatible.

“This legislation is a victory for civil rights on our increasingly digital world,” said Andrew Imparato, AAPD’s president. “The bill makes clear that it is not okay for people with sensory disabilities to be second class citizens in 21st century America.”

“This law is life-changing for the millions of us with disabilities who are often unable to take advantage of new technologies,” said Paul Schroder, vice president of programs and policy at the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB).

NEW SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICE NUMBER

The new telephone number for the Social Security office on Route 10, in Parsippany, NJ is 866-964-0992.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Happy New year to all. 2011 is sure to be an exciting and eventful year for DAWN Center for Independent Living. As most of you know, we were fortunate to be awarded federal funds to create a branch office in Hackettstown which will enable us to better meet the needs of individuals residing in Warren and Sussex counties. We will be opening that branch office in the early part of the Spring and plan to have an Open House to promote the opening. I hope that many of our colleagues, members and consumers will join us in celebrating the agency's growth. As a result of the organizations continued expansion, we have hired several new staff.

- Ountra Grier—F/t Independent Living Specialist. Ountra will be providing information, assistance and advocacy to individuals with a focus on those with Hearing Impairments. Ountra is fluent in American Sign Language and comes to us with experience working with both adults and children with hearing impairments. She will be working out of the Denville office and will travel to the Hackettstown office as needed.
- Helena “Nina” Matava - P/t Independent Living Specialist. Nina will be working out of our Hackettstown office providing information, assistance and advocacy to consumers in Sussex and Warren Counties. Nina holds a bachelor's degree in Social Work and is familiar with the adult disability service system.
- Toni Russo - Barrett, LSW - PASP Enrollment Coordinator - Warren County; Care Manager, CRPD Waiver. Toni will identify and assist individuals with enrollment for PASP in Warren county. Toni will also serve as a care manager for individuals enrolled in the Community Resources for Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) Medicaid Waiver.

Please join me in welcoming them.

I would like to share some information with you about upcoming events through DAWN as well as our partners in the community.

- SAIL: (Self Advocacy Institute for Leadership) classes now forming for March and April. Sail, an after school program, provides self-advocacy training in an interactive group setting that incorporates peer support for youth with disabilities ages 13-21. Utilizing hands-on activities, participants engage in self-awareness, goal setting and confidence building projects. Students develop a personalized goal and monitor progress towards that goal over a two month time period. The program is open to students that either have an IEP or a 504 plan. SAIL runs for 9 weeks with weekly 2 hour sessions. This program, funded by United Way of Morris County is open to Morris County residents only. Please call Helen Bradfield at 973-625-1940 X 214 or hbradfield@dawancil.org to sign up.
- Frankie's Fund sessions are scheduled to begin in March and May. Franki's fund is a creative arts program for young adults with special needs ages 14-25 which provides an opportunity to explore artistic and vocational pursuits that would enrich their lives and expand their horizons. The next series will focus on painting and participants will have an opportunity to create murals. Please contact the office if you are interested in further information.
- Cooking Classes are now forming through the Rose House. Classes consist of three 2 hour sessions. Small groups are being formed to help individuals learn how to plan and cook healthier meals and cook for specific diets. Cost is \$95/per person. Contact the Rose House at 973-984-0006 for further information.

- Caregivers Conference 2011: The Caregiver Coalition of United Way of Northern New Jersey, Morris County is hosting their annual conference for Caregivers across the lifespan. This free event will be held at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum on March 12, 2011 from 8:30am—2:00pm. Please contact Lori Rubin at Lori.Rubin@UnitedWayNNJ.org for further information or go to www.uwmorris.org

MUSIC IS THE KEY BY PETER GIMBEL

“What you will hear today” the conductor said, “are 300 of the most angelic voices I have ever heard.” Those were the words that introduced the 1993 All-County of Nassau County to an audience of parents, siblings and educators. I was one of the ten and eleven year olds fidgeting on the stage, waiting to start singing.

To the people in the audience, there was one key difference between me and the other kids on stage: I was sitting down. I’m sure there was a stuffy old music teacher somewhere in the audience grumbling that standing is the best position for singing. That may be for most people, but for a ten-year-old with Duchenne muscular dystrophy it most certainly is not.

At 10 years old I was barely able to walk. I fell down constantly and could not get back up without assistance. I wasn’t able to stand up out of a chair, let alone off the ground. Contractures in my calf muscles and Achilles tendons forced me to stand on tiptoe, with my hips thrust forward and my shoulders thrown backward for balance. If I had to stand, I would have been straining to stay upright and wearing myself out, which wouldn’t have allowed me to sing as well. On top of that, I would have to worry about falling down in the middle of a performance.

The conductor’s willingness to include me despite my limitations provided me with an early opportunity to pursue my interest in music.

While sports were off-limits to me, music created a level playing field where I could work with my friends as peers. Whether writing songs with a guitar-playing friend in high school, singing with a cappella group in college or joining a chorus in a new city I moved to as an adult, my early experience with music has paved the way for me to meet new people and form new friendships.

Programs like Franki’s Fund here at DAWN provide young people with opportunities to get involved in music. Ultimately, such programs may allow people with physical or developmental disabilities the chance to learn about a great form of art, forge new friendships, and have a good time.

DISABILITIES ACT LOOKS TO EXPAND INTO WORLD OF CYBERSPACE

Emergency call centers could be equipped to communicate by text message. Websites might need to be programmed to speak to users who are blind and visually impaired. Movie theaters might have to install technology to allow deaf and hearing impaired to read captions on small screens mounted to their seats.

These and other proposals will be on the agenda this week as federal officials begin seeking ideas for expanding the Americans with Disabilities Act (A.D.A.) of 1990.

Twenty years after the law was adopted, the government wants to move the regulations beyond wheelchair ramps and accessible elevators into cyberspace and personal technology. The updated regulations could mean sweeping changes across many industries and cost hundreds of millions of dollars.

An estimated 40 million Americans who are blind and deaf in the state of New Jersey would gain the greatest benefit. New rules could take effect as soon as 2012.

WEB SITES, ETC.

- <http://www.morrishumanservices.org> – Contact information for Morris County Human Services.
- <http://www.sussex.nj.us> – Contact information for the Sussex County Department of Human Services
- <http://www.co.Warren.nj.us/humanservices> - Contact information for the Warren County Department of Human Services.
- <http://www.njhelps.org> – Online screening tool for Medicaid, low-income energy assistance, New Jersey Family Care and Child Care Assistance.

STATE ANNOUNCES LIFELINE CREDIT PROGRAM FOR 2010-2011

The State of New Jersey's Lifeline Credit Program will provide an annual benefit for 2010 – 2011 in the amount of **\$225 total** credit per household. In order to receive the Lifeline credit, you **must** apply.

Eligible applicants who receive both natural gas (not bottled or propane) and electric bills will be credited \$112.50 on each account. Households with only one utility service, either natural gas or electric, will receive the full \$225.00 on that account. In addition to receiving natural gas and/or electric bills for your principal residence in your name or the name of your spouse, you must also meet one of the following requirements:

- **Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged Disabled (PAAD)** – You must be enrolled or found eligible for the state's PAAD Program. If you're currently enrolled in PAAD, you will be sent a combined PAAD/Lifeline renewal application. The Lifeline benefit will be issued approximately two months after receiving your new PAAD card. New PAAD applicants will apply for Lifeline at the same time they apply for PAAD. **Applications for Lifeline can be made throughout the year.**
- **Certain Medicaid Programs** – You must be receiving or found eligible for Medicaid assistance only, Medical Assistance to the Aged or the New Jersey Care Special Medicaid Program. Lifeline applications will be mailed directly to those currently enrolled. New beneficiaries will be sent applications shortly after they are enrolled.
- **Lifeline Only** – If you're **not** enrolled in one of the above programs, you may still apply for the Lifeline Credit Program if you are at least 65 years of age at the time of application or receiving disability benefits under the Federal Social Security Act, are a resident of the State of New Jersey and your income in 2010 is less than \$24,432 if single or less than \$29,956 if married. It's anticipated that the income limits will be increased each January 1st by the Social Security Cost-of-Living Adjustment.

The Lifeline Program is administered by the State of New Jersey's Department of Health and Senior Services. Lifeline Credit Program applications are reviewed for eligibility in the Universal Service Fund, a statewide program based on income and utility costs. To request an application or receive additional

information on Lifeline or PAAD please call toll free at 1-800-792-9745.

DAWN HOLIDAY GALA - A HUGE SUCCESS

BY ALAN LEVINE

On Saturday December 12, 2010, from 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM, 103 people attended DAWN Center for Independent Living's annual Holiday Gala. The gala, which was held at *The Skylands at Randolph*, was a huge success.

The event included a buffet lunch, soda, coffee and a dessert table. Music was provided by DJ Michael Scalisi from Disc Jockey World in Kenil, NJ. Everyone at the event had a very good time eating, dancing and socializing.

The 20 poinsettias planters used as centerpieces, donated by the Elefante Nursery located in Lincoln Park, were given to one guest at each table who had a raffle ticket hidden underneath their bread dish.

In attendance were DAWN consumers, staff, sign language interpreters, and attendants to assist consumers as needed.

DAWN CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING OFFERS HOME MODIFICATION PROGRAM FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH SPINAL CORD INJURIES LIVING IN MORRIS, SUSSEX AND WARREN COUNTIES

DAWN Center for Independent Living is pleased to announce the availability of funds made possible through a grant from the Craig H. Neilsen Foundation. The grant will provide home modifications to people with spinal cord injuries living in Morris, Sussex and Warren Counties. Priority will be given to persons at risk of institutionalization, if modifications are not made to their home. Medical and financial need must be demonstrated. Types of modifications may include but not limited to ramps, widening of doorways, raising countertops, grab bars, floor level showers and stair glides. Applicants must provide two cost estimates of the work to be done as well as before and after photos. The amount available per recipient will average \$2,000 - \$4,000 on a first come, first serve basis.

Established in 2002, the Craig H. Neilsen Foundation is a private foundation dedicated to supporting cutting-edge research to find a cure for paralysis due to spinal cord injury (SCI) and innovative rehabilitation programs to improve the quality of life for those living with SCI. Mr. Nielsen, himself a quadriplegic for 21 years until his death in 2006, recruited experts in the SCI community to peer review all grant requests for scientific and clinical research, post-doctoral fellowships, and quality of life program grants.

If someone you know is interested in the Home Modification Program or other DAWN services contact Marc Moldé at (973) 625-1940 or e-mail him at info@dawncil.org. Funds are limited and may expire soon.

HUD PROVIDES HOUSING ASSISTANCE

Thousands of Americans with disabilities will receive rental assistance from Housing and Urban Development (HUD), as public housing authorities across the country will distribute approximately 4,300 rental assistance vouchers.

HUD is awarding nearly \$33 million to fund these vouchers through its Rental Assistance for Non-Elderly Persons with Disabilities Program. HUD and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) launched this program last year as part of President Barack Obama's "Year of Community Living Initiative." The interagency collaboration is intended to allow people with disabilities to live in their communities rather than in institutional settings. In its latest distribution, New Jersey will be receiving \$2,315,888 worth of vouchers.

For more information please call HUD at their toll free number at 1-800-955-2232.

STATE ARGUES THAT OLMSTEAD PLAN IS TOO EXPENSIVE

Appearing before a federal judge, attorneys for the State of New Jersey argued that the recent budget crisis has made it impossible for the state to carry out its own plan to move 1,850 people with developmental disabilities out of state institutions.

The 2007 Olmstead plan, "Path to Progress" details how the New Jersey Department of Human Services (D.H.S.) will comply with the Supreme Court Olmstead decision. The 1999 ruling, based on the Americans with Disabilities Act (A.D.A.), affirmed the right of individuals with disabilities to live outside of institutions and required states to serve people with disabilities in community settings when appropriate.

According to Deputy Attorney General Gerard Hughes, who represented the D.H.S. in federal court, it would be financially devastating to the state to proceed with the plan.

Attorneys for Disability Rights, New Jersey (D.R.N.J) which brought the suit, say that lack of money is not an excuse, and argue that the state would actually save money by closing institutions. According to D.H.S. data, it is \$70,000 cheaper to serve a person in the community than in an institution. D.R.N.J. and many advocates have testified that the state would save even more money over time, as facilities or parts of facilities are phased out.

Citing D.H.S. data, attorneys for D.R.N.J. say that, since 2008, the state has relocated only 63 people out of developmental centers. New Jersey has the third highest rate of institutionalization for people with developmental disabilities – behind Louisiana and Mississippi.

The Olmstead Plan calls for placing 100 people in the first year and 250 people every year after that until 2015. The plan would cost about \$1.3 billion in state and federal funds, with more than \$500 million coming from downsized developmental centers.

The case is expected to go to trial.

STATE OF NEW JERSEY, DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS, WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Many homes and apartments have high heating costs because of heat loss due to poor insulation or inefficient heating systems. If you meet the annual income guidelines below, help may be available to make your home more comfortable and lower your heating costs.

2010 Weatherization Income Guidelines:

<u>Family Size</u>	<u>Yearly Gross Income</u>
1	\$21,566
2	\$29,140
3	\$36,290
4	\$44,100
5	\$51,580
6	\$59,060
7	\$66,540
8	\$74,020

- For family units of more than 8 members, add \$3,740 for each member.
To apply you must meet the annual income guidelines above, be a renter or homeowner and not have received this weatherization service within the last ten years.

Where to apply:

Morris, County:

Morris County Organization for Hispanic Affairs, Inc.,
97 Bassett Highway, Dover NJ 07801
Telephone: (973) 366-1131
Hours of Service: 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday

Sussex and Warren Counties:

NORWESCAP - Action Program, Inc.,
350 Marshall Street, Phillipsburg, NJ 08865
Telephone: (908) 454-7000
Hours of Service: 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday

After an Energy Audit is completed, you may be eligible to receive one or more of the following services:

- Insulation
- Caulking and Weather stripping
- Compact Florescent Lighting
- Refrigerator Replacement
- Heating System Repair, Retrofit, or Replacement
- Hot Water Heater Repair or Replacement
- Window and/or Door Repair or Replacement

For more information on the Weatherization Assistance Program call 1-800-510-3102.

NEW JERSEY SHARE HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP) AND UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND (USF) ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

New Jersey Shares (NJS) Inc. is a non-profit organization charged with the mission to provide assistance to individuals and families living in New Jersey who are in need of temporary help of paying their energy bills. Consumers can receive between \$300 and \$700 toward their electric and energy bill.

LIHEAP is an energy assistance program for consumers who have a household income at or below income guidelines. In this program, customers can receive an average of \$400 toward their energy bill. The program is open from November 1st to April 30th.

Universal Service Fund (USF) is a third energy program that consumers can apply for. Customers can receive \$5 to \$150 per month toward their energy bill as long as they qualify according to USF income guidelines.

The guidelines for each program is as follows for 2011:

Yearly Gross Income:

Household Size	LIHEAP 200% FPL	USF 175% FPL	NJS 400% FPL
1	\$1,804	\$1,580	\$3,160
2	\$2,429	\$2,125	\$4,857
3	\$3,052	\$2,670	\$6,103
4	\$3,675	\$3,216	\$7,350
5	\$4,299	\$3,762	\$8,630
6	\$4,922	\$4,307	\$9,843
7	\$5,545	\$4,852	\$11,090
8	\$6,169	\$5,398	\$12,337

To apply or receive more information regarding each program please call the following numbers or go to the websites provided:

LIHEAP - 1-800-510-3102

NJS – 1-866- NJSHARES (657-4273) or you can apply at the DAWN office. Also visit www.njshares.org for more information

USF - 1-800-510-3102

THANK YOU

DAWNcil would like to thank the following for their sponsorship and support during the past year: NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; NJ Department of Human Services; NJ Department of Health and Senior Services, Morris County Department of Human Services, Warren County Department of Human Services; NJ Allies, Inc; Cornell University; Hyde & Watson Foundation; Kessler Foundation; Craig H. Neilson Foundation; and the United Way of Morris County. In addition, we would like to thank all our members for their continued support and our volunteers who donated their time and effort to make this organization a success.

REMINDER

Game night is every 4th Thursday of the month. For more Information contact: Jason Alvarado at (973) 625-1940, ext. 226 or e-mail him at jalvarado@dawncil.org



Phone: 973-625-1940
Fax: 973-625-1942
TTY: 973-625-1932
Email: info@dawncil.org

We are on the web!

www.dawncil.org

Follow us on

Twitter@DAWNcil

DAWN MISSION STATEMENT

DAWN Center for Independent Living empowers people with disabilities to strive for equality and to take control of their own lives by:

- Providing the tools that encourage independence and self-advocacy.
- Promoting public awareness of the needs, desires and rights of individuals living with disabilities.
- Offering community activities that create new experiences and opportunities.
- Creating informed communities that advance the Independent Living Philosophy.

DAWN PROVIDES THE FOLLOWING SERVICES:

- Information and Referral
- Living Well with a Disability
- Next Chapter Book Club
- Aktion Club (Morris County only)
- Nursing Facility Transition
- Independent Living Skills Training
- School to Adult Life (*STEP-UP* Program)
- Advocacy
- Peer Support
- Recreation
- SAIL
- Care Management