

DAWN AWAKENINGS

Awaken to Independence

FALL 2020

Employment Increases Access and Opportunity for All

Inside this issue:

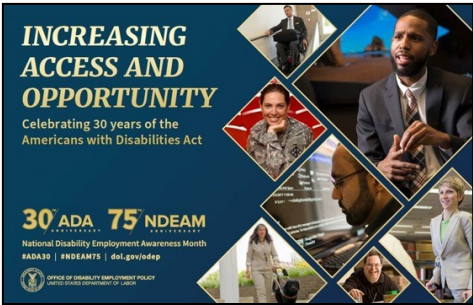
- 2 Call for Support Groups Giving Tuesday
- 3 From the Executive Director: The CARES Act Cares
- 4 DENS Goes to Work for Our Consumers
- 6 MAPS Is Going Your Way
- 7 IDPD Is for All of Us Family Caregivers

This year, 2020, marks two notable anniversaries in the world of disability awareness. July 26 marked the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and October saw the 75th anniversary of National Disabilities Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). Though the Civil Rights Act of 1964 forbids discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, or national origin in places of public accommodations, it took the ADA to enshrine *accessibility* in the law of the land for people with disabilities. The ADA “guarantees that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as everyone else to participate in the mainstream of American life.”

“Increasing Access and Opportunity” was the theme of this, the 2020 National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). Its purpose, according to the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), was to “educate about disability employment issues and celebrate the many and varied contributions of America’s workers with disabilities. “People with disabilities are experienced problem solvers with a proven ability to adapt,” says Jennifer Sheehy, ODEP Deputy Assistant Secretary. “Now, more than ever, flexibility is important for both workers and employers.”

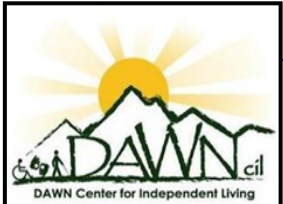
An important way in which people can live independently in the community is through employment. Generally speaking, many employers hiring people with disabilities, find that employees:

- Have an excellent work ethic
- Are more likely to stay with an employer than are most workers
- Bring about increased revenue; by including people with disabilities in the workforce, many businesses and organizations see an increase in customers with disabilities and their family members.



Yet, labor force participation among people with disabilities remains far below the national average. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2019 only 20.8 percent of Americans with disabilities were employed; the age group with the highest rate (25 to 34 years old) was still less than 50 percent.

On page 4, we shine our program spotlight on the DAWN Employment Network Services (DENS) program. Whether one is completing high school and about to enter the workplace for the first time or a Social Security recipient ready to roll off benefits and live independently, the It’s All About Work, Ticket to Work, and benefits counseling services are personalized to each individual’s needs. Independence through employment is an excellent way for people with disabilities to “achieve their highest level of independence in their community.”



Please join us for our virtual
Holiday Gala
Saturday, Dec. 5, 2020
9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.



Interested in a Support Group?

During these trying times of the COVID-19 pandemic, many people are isolated. Support groups are one way to increase social interaction and help one another. We encourage our members and consumers to help one another through peer-support groups! As peer support is a core service DAWNcil provides for the community, we are looking to host support groups. Here are some ideas:

- Parenting tips, to exchange ideas on the challenges of caring for children at home, remote instruction, or navigating the complex web of disability services in the school district
- Issue-specific topics, such as autism, accessibility, or the limits of in-person disability services
- Being a 55-or-over caregiver of an adult with a developmental disability.



Anyone interested should reach out to Kristen Carew, Assistant Executive Director, at 973-625-1940, ext. 303, kcarew@dawncil.org; or Carmela Slivinski, Executive Director, at 973-625-1940, ext. 216, cslivinski@dawncil.org

Giving Tuesday Is a Time to Giving Generously *And There Are Many Ways to Give*

Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, Diwali, Kwanzaa... The holiday season is one of giving. And so, in 2012, a global movement, Giving Tuesday, was started with the aim of “unleashing the power of people and organizations to transform their communities and the world.” Among organizations in Morris, Sussex, and Warren counties serving people with disabilities, DAWN stands out by serving individuals with all types of disabilities and addresses entire lifespan needs.

Often, generosity comes in the form of donating money. And donations are always much appreciated!

However, giving continues to inspire millions of people to “give, collaborate, and celebrate generosity” in many other ways. Everyone has a skill or area of knowledge. It could be fundraising, sharing on social media, fund-raising, advocacy, or any other act of generosity. To find out more, please visit our volunteer opportunities page, at <https://dawncil.org/volunteer-opportunities/>.





From the Executive Director

The CARES Act Cares for New Jerseyans with Disabilities

Nearly everyone has felt the extraordinary economic disruption the COVID-19 pandemic has wrought. So, it was with strong bipartisan support that Congress enacted a robust economic stimulus and relief package to address the challenge. Signed into law on March 27, 2020, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provides supplemental funding for programs and an array of resources. Included in the package is \$85 million for Centers for Independent Living to provide financial assistance to individuals with disabilities “experiencing disruptions to their independent, community-based living due to the COVID-19 pandemic,” according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Of that, \$1.95 million has been earmarked for New Jersey.

As a Center for Independent Living, DAWN has created a CARES Act Financial Assistance Program. Individuals needing money for food, essential household supplies, personal-care items, prescriptions, assistive technology or durable medical equipment, a care attendant, or transportation can apply for aid. The funds will assist these individuals in overcoming barriers they encountered as a result of the pandemic, and enable them to continue living independently in their homes in the community. Please note that these necessities must be related to COVID-19. We are here to assist you! To apply for this financial aid, please contact the DAWN office for a Request for Relief Form.

That COVID-19 affects persons with underlying health and medical conditions is well known. Less apparent is the effect on those with intellectual disabilities. They may find it difficult to adjust to new guidelines, such as social distancing, wearing a mask, and proper hand hygiene. These individuals may need the social supports of friends and family as part of living independently. In New Jersey, CARES funding hopes to address gaps in services people have encountered as a result of the pandemic. The CARES Act also provides financial assistance to those who cannot work because they must care for a family member with COVID-19.

If you or someone you know is in need of assistance, please contact us for further information.

Meanwhile, with safe remote connections, DAWN continues to serve the disability community with information and referral, employment and pre-employment, self-advocacy, peer support, and recreation services, along with support coordination.

Sincerely,

Carmela Slivinski

DAWN Employment Network Services Goes to Work for Our Consumers

Gainful employment can be an excellent way for an adult with a disability to gain greater independence. The adult employment programs at DAWNcil offer support, “increasing access and opportunity” in the world of competitive employment. Each service offered through DAWNcil’s adult employment programs is tailored to the consumer’s unique employment goals. One such program is DAWN Employment Network Services (DENS), which began in 2012 with a generous grant from the Kessler Foundation. Now, DENS is an integral part of DAWNcil and has grown to manage and facilitate the Social Security Administration’s (SSA) Ticket to Work program in Morris, Sussex, and Warren counties. As an agency that provides advocacy and support throughout every stage of life, this program, along with It’s All About Work and DAWNcil’s Benefits Planning program, provides comprehensive aid in one of the most meaningful areas of life—employment. Vocational services within each program include the following:

- Pre-employment activities, such as exploring strengths and interests
- Job search skills, including writing a résumé and preparing for an interview
- “Soft skills” such as workplace etiquette and communicating effectively
- Troubleshooting workplace matters, including disclosure, ADA accommodations, and advocacy
- Peer support.

“We believe everyone can work,” says Michelle Cap, Employment Specialist at DAWNcil. In addition, as part of its advocacy and outreach efforts, DAWNcil works with local employers to cultivate and support inclusion for people with disabilities in the workplace.



Michelle Cap is the DAWNcil Employment Specialist.

It’s All About Work

The New Jersey Association of Centers for Independent Living (NACIL) created It’s All About Work as an educational employment program for adults who have graduated high school. Many are at the beginning of their vocational journey; others are seeking to re-create or advance their careers. Topics include the following:

- Knowing how one’s disability affects daily life and which work settings are best suited one’s unique abilities
- Conducting a job search (building a résumé, completing an application, and interviewing)
- Practicing good communication and social skills in the workplace, along with habits and practices to retain employment (e.g., time management, conflict resolution, and workplace etiquette).
- Using assistive technology and requesting suitable accommodations
- Advocating for oneself with knowledge of disability employment policies and laws (including the Americans with Disabilities Act)
- Developing clear action plans for identified goals and researching resources needed to turn a plan into reality.

Interested persons should contact Michelle to obtain a copy of the It's All About Work course list and review all 12 courses offered through the program. The most frequently requested courses include: "Pre-employment Instructional Support," "Keys to Obtaining and Retaining Jobs and Enriching the Quality of Adult Life," and "Steps in Vocational Planning." Classes take place once a week, for six weeks, on average. The goal of this popular vocational program is to help each consumer develop and strengthen their employability.

Ticket to Work

The Ticket to Work program serves adults with a disability (ages 18 through 64) who receive SSA disability benefits, including Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and/or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). The program is geared toward those who are ready to pursue full- or part-time employment to become financially independent from SSA disability benefits. As an approved Employment Network, DAWNcil contracts with the SSA to provide free employment services to eligible beneficiaries. Along with being ready, willing, and able to work, the beneficiary must demonstrate milestones of "timely progress," as defined by the SSA.

Beneficiaries who are interested in learning more about Ticket to Work should contact Michelle, who will help determine whether the program is the best fit for the individual's current needs. Once eligibility for the program has been established, the Ticketholder will assign their Ticket to DAWNcil as their Employment Network. Michelle specializes in helping the individual navigate the transition to work and the process of rolling off SSA disability benefits.

Benefits Planning

Consumers and their families have access to free benefits planning and work incentives utilization services regarding their SSA disability benefits. Common benefits planning topics include: How returning to work may affect SSA benefits; identifying and exploring one's options regarding benefits, work incentives and insurance; and navigating conversations with local or national SSA offices and with local and state Medicaid agencies. Michelle is certified as a Benefits Practitioner through Cornell University's Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability.

"I spoke with a woman yesterday who is in the process of navigating benefit options for her son. She expressed that she felt overwhelmed and anxious to the point of experiencing 'decision paralysis,'" says Michelle. "After speaking with me, she shared that she felt a weight had been lifted and that she had gained clarity regarding how to move forward."

"One of my favorite aspects of my job is coming alongside families to simplify complex information, clarify options, and partner with them, so that they have what they need to take the 'next right step' that is best for them and their family," adds Michelle.

Advocating in the Community

At DAWNcil, we support our consumers toward achieving their highest level of independence in the community, so that each person can thrive personally, socially, economically, and emotionally. "The personalized employment services I provide through the DENS program is a direct pathway into this vision," says Michelle. "Through DENS, we'd like to see each person find a job that is a great fit for them, that helps them to accomplish their personal goals, and allows them to thrive in all areas of life."

Michelle Cap, Employment Specialist, can be reached by phone, at 973-625-1940, ext. 237 or 973-668-0031, or email, at mcap@dawncil.org.

Need a Ride to Shop for Groceries? MAPS Is Going Your Way!

For those for whom driving is not an option, the Morris Area Paratransit System (MAPS) is a valuable resource. However, to make this service work for all, MAPS has guidelines for grocery shopping trips.

These are as follows:

- Grocery shopping trips will be provided Monday to Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- Trips will be scheduled according to availability.
- Grocery shopping will be scheduled on demand. No subscriptions will be taken.
- All trip reservations, including grocery shopping, must be made one at least one business day in advance and can be made up to one month ahead.
- Grocery bags will be limited to three per rider. The rider must be able to lift and carry the bags.
- The grocery bags may not exceed the dimensions of 15 inches in width, 16 inches in height, and 8 inches in depth.
- No oversized bags, boxes, or items are permitted.
- The driver may assist with the loading and unloading of bags from the vehicle only. The driver cannot carry items to doorsteps.

To contact MAPS, call 973-829-8103. Another option is the New Jersey Transit paratransit, Access Link. They can be reached at 1-800-955-2321.

In Sussex or Warren County?

Persons with a disability needing a ride in Sussex County can call Skylands Ride, at 973-579-0480. In Warren County, there is Easton Coach, which can be reached at 908-454-4044.

CONTACT US

Call: (973) 829 8103
(888) 282 6277

Email: maps@co.morris.nj.us

MORRIS AREA PARATRANSIT SYSTEM

Shopping Guidelines

MORRIS AREA PARATRANSIT SYSTEM



(888) 282-6277

www.morrishumanservices.org
email: maps@co.morris.nj.us

- Funding provided by**
- Morris County Board of Chosen Freeholders
 - NJ TRANSIT
 - Federal Transit Administration
 - New Jersey Department of Military & Veterans' Affairs
 - Individual Contributions

Operated by
Morris County Department
of Human Services



IDPD Is for Persons with Disabilities... And All of Us

December 3 is an important day across the globe. While most disability awareness days and months are on a national scale, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) is worldwide. Celebrated on December 3, the day aims to “promote the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities.” According to the United Nations, which sponsors IDPD, “That entails self-determination—empowering people with disabilities themselves to bring about those changes that will enable them to participate fully in society.”

The theme this year is “Building Back Better: toward a disability-inclusive, accessible and sustainable post COVID-19 World.” The pandemic has made these often-vulnerable populations even more isolated, especially as they receive fewer services. Addressing the mental and emotional well-being of people with disabilities affected by the pandemic will be a major part of the fight against the coronavirus, a critical step in empowering them to take control of their lives.



Family Caregivers Deserve Recognition, Too!

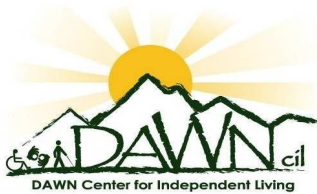
In addition to the hard-working nurses, home health aides, and direct-support professionals, there is another group of caregivers: compassionate unpaid individuals caring for a family member with a disability. Started by the Caregiver Action Network in 1994, Celebrating Family Caregivers during NFC month enables all of us to:

- Raise awareness of family caregiver issues
- Celebrate the efforts of family caregivers
- Educate family caregivers about self-identification
- Increase support for family caregivers.



The COVID-19 pandemic has added a great deal to the challenges these people face: the theme this year of National Family Caregivers Month is “Caregiving in Crisis.” According to the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Many caregivers work and also provide care, experiencing conflicts between competing responsibilities. Research indicates caregiving also takes a significant emotional, physical, and financial toll. With nearly half of all caregivers over age 50, many are vulnerable to a decline in their own health. The parents, guardians, and family members of our consumers certainly deserve recognition!

66 Ford Road
 Suite 121
 Denville NJ 07834

DAWNcil Mission Statement:

“Providing support to persons with disabilities throughout their lifespan so they can achieve their highest level of independence in their community.”

DAWNcil Vision Statement:

“People with disabilities will have equal opportunities to fully participate in all aspects of community life, to live independently and to achieve economic self-sufficiency.”

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

DAWNcil provides the following services:

- Information and Referral
- Independent Living Skills Training
- Nursing Home Transition
- Early Intervention Services
- Pre-Employment Transition Services
- DAWN Employment Network Services
- Aging and Disability Resource Connection
- Student Transition Empowerment Program – Unlimited Possibilities
- Next Chapter Book Club
- Franki’s Place
- Aktion Club (Young Adults)
- Advocacy
- DDD Support Coordination
- Care Management
- It’s All About Work
- Living Well with a Disability
- Working Well with a Disability
- Traumatic Brain Injury Program
- Peer Support
- Recreation
- Learn Earn Apply Progress (LEAP)

We are on the web!
www.dawncil.org