

# The Patriots' Vision



This summer, a very important piece of legislation will be submitted to Congress. The Rehabilitation Act is the legislation that pays for vocational rehabilitation, supported employment, client assistance, and Independent Living.

There are many important issues in the Disability Community, but Independent Living, the philosophy that we know what is best for ourselves and should be able to make our own choices, is the most significant. Right behind that is employment—we cannot be full and productive members of our communities if we are denied meaningful jobs and living wages.

It has been nearly 15 years since Congress reauthorized the Rehabilitation Act. Reauthorization means that Congress reviews the laws and changes them to reflect current needs. Right now, we are operating under the same set of guidelines as in 2003. A lot has changed in ten years, and we need our Government to catch up! (continues inside)



# Rehabilitation Act (continued from cover)

(continued from cover) It is very important that we make our voices **heard. If we don't speak up for ourselves, no one else will. We need to** contact Senators Toomey and Casey and tell them that we want the **Rehabilitation Act reauthorized! We can't wait another ten years for** Congress to renew its support for People with Disabilities.

You can visit our website at [www.tripil.com](http://www.tripil.com) to read a sample letter and learn how to send an email to our Senators, or you can come to our office and we will assist you in writing and mailing a letter. Call us at 724-223-5115 if you need help or have any questions at all. Remember, nothing about us without us!

## Canine Companions for Independence

On Thursday, August 29, 2013, Carolyn Hrach will be presenting on Canine Companions for Independence. She will be at the TRIPIL office at 69 E. Beau Street in Washington from 2 pm – 3 pm.

Founded in 1975, Canine Companions for Independence (CCI) is a non-profit organization that enhances the lives of people with disabilities by providing highly trained assistance dogs and ongoing support to ensure quality partnerships. Headquartered in Santa Rosa, CA, CCI is the largest non-profit provider of assistance dogs, and is recognized world-wide for the excellence of its dogs, and the quality and longevity of the matches it makes between dogs and people. The result is a life full of increased independence and loving companionship.

They train four types of assistance dogs to master over 40 specialized commands: Service Dogs (for adults with physical disabilities), Skilled Companions (who assist children with disabilities), Hearing Dogs and Facility Dogs. After completing training, the dogs are teamed with a graduate during an intensive two week training period, [Team Training](#). There is no cost to obtain a Canine Companion.

# Edith L. Trees Charitable Trust Awards Improve Quality of Life for Three Families

Thanks to Accessible Dreams' 2013 Edith L. Trees Charitable Trust grant, three families will be better able to care for their children.

Each family has a child who has outgrown their parents' ability to provide their activities of daily living. Using the money provided by Edith L. Trees Charitable Trust, Accessible Dreams remodeled all three bathrooms to make them accessible. By providing these modifications, the quality of life for Jacob, Gabe, and Christian has significantly improved.

The criteria for being award include a financial qualification as well as a household member with BOTH physical and cognitive disabilities.

**Applications for next year's grant will be accepted and placed on a waiting list.** If funds are received for 2014, we will determine which applications qualify. For more information, please contact Lucy Rooth at 724-223-5115.

**ACHIEVA** is seeking pediatricians, family medicine physicians, general medicine physicians and internists in private practice willing to serve on a one-time focus group to discuss healthcare transition issues for individuals with disabilities and chronic/special healthcare needs. We are seeking to learn about best practices and barriers that occur when youth transition out of pediatric care into adult medical practices. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Melissa Allen with the Disability Healthcare Initiative at ACHIEVA (The Arc of Greater Pittsburgh) at [mallen@achieva.info](mailto:mallen@achieva.info).

## Advertise with TRIPIL

Each quarter, this newsletter reaches more than a thousand individuals and businesses in the tri-county area. Advertising with us is simple and cost-effective. A quarter page ad is \$50, a half page is \$100, and a full page ad is \$200. If you are interested in reaching an audience concerned with education, health, employment, and every other aspect of living with a disability, call Sarah at 724-223-5115 x139, or email her at [scollier@tripil.com](mailto:scollier@tripil.com).

# New For You at the Gym

We have some great new equipment here at the gym to help make it even easier to meet your summertime fitness goals. Remember, unlimited use of the gym and sessions with our personal trainer are included in your \$2 membership!

The Ab Sizer attaches to any wheelchair and allows the user to complete 4 exercises, without leaving the chair!



Triceps kick backs



Chest presses



Ab-cizers



Rows



Weak grip but strong arms? These grip gloves go over your hands and hold the weights for you!



## SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Date/Time	Event	Other information
July 28 11am-1pm	<b>Adaptive Rowing</b>	Rowing and paddling for people of all abilities.
August 13 5:30-6:30pm	<b>Parents of Children with Disabilities Group</b>	Kid-friendly activities happen during the meeting.
August 15 11am-3pm	<b>Membership Meeting at the Candlelight Room</b>	RSVP to Sarah at 724-223-5115 x139 by 8/9!
August 20 11am-12pm	<b>Achieva Family Trust Presentation</b>	Learn how a Trust can work for you and your assets.
August 21 11am-12pm	<b>Membership Advisory Committee</b>	Our guiding group. Help plan activities and outings!
August 29 2-3pm	<b>Canine Companions Presentation</b>	Learn if a service dog is right for you.
September 9 4-5pm	<b>Parents with Disabilities Group</b>	First meeting!
<b>All events are free for members.</b>		

Funding for this program comes in part from Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), PA Dept. of Labor and Industry; US Dept. of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration; and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

Tri-County Patriots for  
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# Low-Cost Assistive Technology Programs

If you know someone in need of lower-cost assistive technology or equipment, or have equipment that you no longer need, you may be interested in these programs:

- **TRIPIL's EquipAbility Program** has a variety of DME available to meet consumer's needs. Examples of the equipment available are walkers, wheelchairs, Hoyer lifts, shower benches, and more.
- **Into New Hands** is an equipment recycling program for individuals who need home medical equipment and who have limited insurance coverage and/or financial resources. Contact Information: TRCIL at (412)371-7700, TTY (412) 371-6230 or contact Thom Gressman at [tgressman@trcil.org](mailto:tgressman@trcil.org).
- **REEP (Recycled Equipment Exchange Program)** is a listing for individuals who wish to find, buy, sell, or donate previously owned assistive technology. Contact Information: TRCIL 800-633-4588 (or the following website) [www.temple.edu/instituteondisabilities/programs/assistive/reep](http://www.temple.edu/instituteondisabilities/programs/assistive/reep).

TRIPIL is an Assistive Technology Resource Center. If you have questions, or would like more information, please feel free to contact Michelle ([michelle@tripil.com](mailto:michelle@tripil.com)) at 724-223-5115.



## Support Group Reminders

The Veteran's Peer Group meets on the first Tuesday of every month from 1pm-3pm. The Brain Injury Group meets on the third Wednesday of every month from 5pm-7pm. Each group meets at TRIPIL's office at 69 E. Beau Street in Washington. Call Sarah at 724-223-5115 with questions.

# TRIPIL's Youth and Family Services

The TRIPIL Youth program is at it again. We will be hosting our annual Youth Summer Camp. This camp gives youth with disabilities the skills needed to have fun and gain independence in a summer camp setting. This camp is open to youth with disabilities ages 12-



17 who live in Washington, Fayette, or Greene county. The summer camp is being held at the Vernon C. Neal Sportsplex located in Washington, Pa. The dates are August 13, 14, 15 & 20, 21, 22 from 10am to 3pm. There will be no cost to attend. Activities will be centered on healthy communication, informed decision making, and self-advocacy. Youth will also take a trip to Washington and Jefferson College, spend a day at the park, and have the opportunity to try a variety of inclusive sports.

TRIPIL Youth would like to thank The Darden Foundation Team for their generosity and support of our summer camp. For more info or to sign-up please contact Matt Berwick, 724-223-5115 Ext. 179 or [Mberwick@tripil.com](mailto:Mberwick@tripil.com).

TRIPIL now hosts a Parent Group which meets at our headquarters in Washington. This group is open to all families who have children with disabilities and live in Washington, Fayette, or Greene County. This Group is held on the second Tuesday of the month from 5:30-6:30pm. **Children's** activities are provided during the meeting.

Are you a parent with a disability? Would you like to hear others talk about being a mom or dad with a disability? Join our new Peer Support group. The first meeting is September 9 and future meetings will be scheduled with input from the group. Please call Michelle Loar at extension 178 or email her at [michelle@tripil.com](mailto:michelle@tripil.com) with questions and to RSVP.

# Moving Toward Independence

*Matt Berwick is TRIPIL's Youth Independent Living Specialist.*

## **Why did you decide to move out?**

First off, I'm driving 40 minutes each way to work every day. I'm tired of doing that! I'm 26 and I think it's time that I got my own place and started doing things when and how I want. Many of my friends live around Washington, and a lot of the social stuff that I do happens here in town, so it'd be a lot easier to be closer.

## **What are some of the concerns that you had about leaving your parents?**

I was injured when I was 15, so I've never known anything but having my parents right there to support me with whatever. Being really alone for the first time is a little daunting.

## **How did your parents react when you told them?**

They were a little shaken. They were supportive but they're my parents, so they're worried about me. They asked a lot of 'what if' questions-- 'what if your attendant doesn't show up for work?' was a big one. I think it was also hard for them to understand why I wanted to move out. I get along really well with my parents, and I'm close with my whole family, so it's a little weird. But it isn't about leaving my parents, it's about becoming more independent.

## **What challenges have you encountered?**

Getting enrolled on the Waiver is a long process. It isn't hard, but it's a lot of waiting. I'm ready to do this now, but I have to wait for the enrollment agency to do their stuff. Dealing with my parents' constant questioning is hard too. Finding an accessible, affordable apartment in an area that I want to live is REALLY difficult. I'm probably going to have to compromise on some of the things that I'd like to have in order to get what I have to have.

## **What steps have you taken toward this goal?**

Once I decided that I wanted to move, I had to tell my parents. Then I talked with some coworkers who had done this before to find out what the process entailed. I found out that my best plan would be to enroll on the Independence waiver in order to get my services. While I was working on that with Maximus, I was also working on building my informal support system—the people nearby who I could count on to assist me in an emergency.

## **What are you most excited about?**

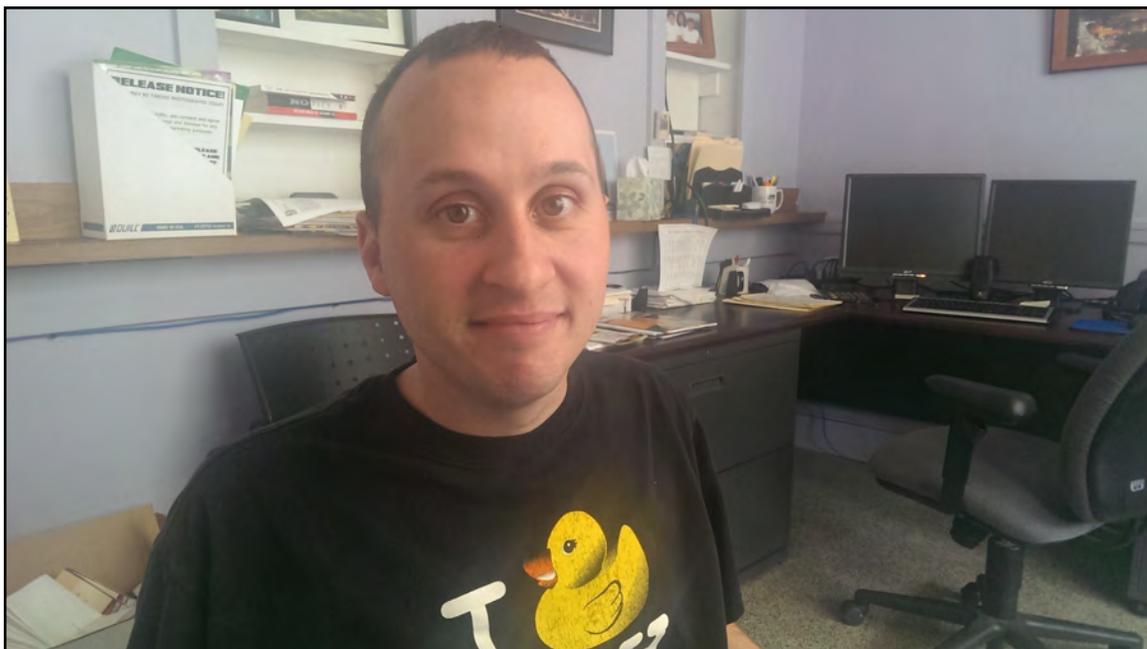
Being able to come home in the middle of the night without having to wake my parents.

## **What are you most nervous about?**

This will be the first time I have had to live on a budget. Not only will I have to pay rent, but I have to eat and put gas in the car and all that.

## **Any advice?**

**Don't expect it to be easy. Find people who have already done this and talk to them about it, and listen to what they have to say. Just remember to persevere.**



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**TRI COUNTY PATRIOTS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING AFFIRMS  
LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

