



THE PATRIOTS' VISION

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In This Issue:

PA Statewide Plan for Independent Living...	2
HCBS Changing	3
ABLE Act	3
ADA 25 March.....	4
New TRIPIL Website .	5
AT Swap Day	5
Walk*Run*Roll.....	6
Wellness.....	6
Register to Vote	7



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To receive this newsletter as a PDF in email, contact < chadu@tripil.com >.

Disability Justice: A Call to Action

The *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)* is 25 years old. We've gotten our disability **rights**... but what about our disability **justice**?



Take an example: suppose you live in an apartment building without an emergency plan. People could die if there's a tornado or earthquake or fire and they can't get out. Folks would be justifiably worried and angry about such a situation — everyone has the right to feel reasonably safe in their homes.

But... what if people are nervous or scared about demanding their rights because there is a long waiting list of people ready to take their apartment? Maybe the squeaky wheel doesn't get the grease; the squeaky wheel could just get replaced on the wagon! That's not fair. That's not **justice**.

Disability justice allows you to have a voice in everyday life issues that affect you.

TRIPIL is here to help remind you of the rights you have as a citizen with a disability, and to fight alongside you in getting the justice you deserve.

Come in. See us. Call us. Email us. Share your concerns. We can help you move your comments forward. You can make a difference in your life and the lives of others.

**You have your RIGHTS —
Where is your JUSTICE?**



Tri-County Patriots for Independent Living (TRIPIL) is a constant force in creating opportunities for people with disabilities. Our members get involved and their voices are heard. Together, sharing the challenge, we all keep our community moving forward.

Every three years, the Pennsylvania Statewide Independent Living Council (PA SILC) must create a **Statewide Plan for Independent Living (SPIL)**. The Plan identifies issues that should be priorities, so money from the federal government targets the needs of people with disabilities.

PA SILC, in partnership with Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), wants to hear directly from **you!**

Do these questions reflect your concerns:

- Do you know about all state-related options available to you for in-home services?
- Is it easy to understand your personal attendant care service plan, what it covers, and when any changes made to it?
- Do you have enough support to obtain safe, affordable, and accessible housing in the communities of your choice?
- Are you able to access, acquire, and use technology that you need?
- Does local and state public transportation meet your needs?

Save the date of December 9 on your calendar and come with us to share your story in person at a public hearing in Pittsburgh. Limited transportation will be available; RSVP to Nan at 723.223.5115 as soon as possible.

It is our responsibility — and our right as people with disabilities in the Commonwealth — to make our priorities known to help determine the direction of independent living in Pennsylvania.

You can also submit your comments to PA SILC by December 31, 2015 by:

- **MAIL:** PA SILC, 207 House Avenue, Suite 107, Camp Hill, PA 17011
- **PHONE:** 717-364-1732
- **FAX:** 717-236-8800
- **EMAIL:** info@pasilc.org
- **ANONYMOUS EMAIL:** pastateplan15@gmail.com
- **FACEBOOK:** <https://www.facebook.com/PASILCPublicForums2015>

Home and Community Based Services Are Changing in Pennsylvania

Starting in January 2017, the state is changing the way it manages waiver services for people with disabilities. Southwest Pennsylvania will be the first region to experience these changes. The Office of Long Term Living is moving to a managed care system where insurance companies will begin providing the waiver services currently provided by Service Coordination Agencies and PAS providers.



Here at Tri County Patriots for Independent Living, we have some serious concerns about what these changes might mean to consumers. We think you might have some concerns as well.

Please join our efforts. Together, we can help the state build a system that educates insurance companies on the importance of individualized plans that meet consumer needs.

We can't do this without you; call Brenda Dare at 724-223-5115 to learn more and find out how you can become involved

Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act

Paying for things to live independently can be hard for most people with disabilities. The ABLE Act is a new way for people with disabilities to save money (tax-free) to cover disability-related costs. Individuals and families can use their savings for housing, transportation, and education **without** losing their SSI, Medicaid, or other public benefits.

People whose disability occurred before turning 26 years of age are eligible. Individuals, family members, and friends can contribute to the savings account.

Each state is responsible for establishing an ABLE Act program. The bill passed in December of 2014, but in Pennsylvania it is moving along slowly. If you could benefit from tax-free savings for your expenses, please contact Kate at 724.223.5115 so we can work together to get the program up and running in Pennsylvania.



Ask about the pig.

Americans with Disabilities Act March to the U.S. Capitol

In July 2015, your CIL and Services teams (as well as other marchers) walked, rode, and wheeled just over a mile across the District of Columbia to a stage in front of the Capitol Building. Participants assembled this summer in Washington, DC, for the 25th anniversary of the passing of the ADA. The rally featured speakers from the IL Movement and elected officials.

TRIPIL staff made in-person visits with our elected officials to discuss disability-related concerns important here in Southwestern Pennsylvania. Staff presented each with a prepared packet of print materials and emphasized issues related to transportation, housing, employment, and CIL funding.



Mark Derry



Japanese delegation



Matt



John & Andrea



Nan



Larry



Representative Tammy Duckworth (D-IL)



Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT)

Get involved in politics if your life depended on it... because it does.
— Justin Dart



New TRIPIL Website!

Over the last few months, TRIPIL staff have been working on a newer, cleaner look for our website at www.tripil.com. Content has been updated and reorganized for better ease of use, so that members, consumers, and the community can find the information they need quicker and easier.

You now have an easy communication path with us! Just click on the email links at the bottom of the various program or services pages, or go to the **Contact Us** page from the sidebar, to connect with TRIPIL staff right at their desks!



Check it out, and let us know what you think!

Also remember to check our online Calendar at

<http://www.tripil.com/calendar>

or our Facebook page at

<https://www.facebook.com/TriCountyPatriotsforIndependentLiving>

for the latest TRIPIL happenings!



We're gearing up to do a **Spring Cleaning Swap Day** for assistive equipment this spring since our first Swap Day was such a success. (Date and time to be determined; see our next newsletter for more details!) The first **TRIPIL Assistive Equipment Swap Day** (October 9, 2015) distributed durable medical equipment (DME) and supplies valued at over \$20,000 back into the community, raised \$100 for our EquipAbility program, reached a number of people who had previously known nothing about TRIPIL or what we do, and freed up more space in our maintenance Annex on West Railroad Street.

Check out the following link for the Swap Day Guidelines & Responsibilities:

<http://www.tripil.com/main.calendar.swapday.swaprules>



Get Ready... Mark Your Calendars!

Come out to beautiful Mingo Creek Park in Finleyville, PA, for the first annual **Tri-County Patriots for Independent Living (TRIPIL) Capital Campaign 5k Walk*Run*Roll** on Saturday, April 23, 2016, from 8 am to 1 pm.

Online registration is \$20, and registration at the event is \$25. Participants who register online before the 5K will receive an event t-shirt.

More details will be announced as we get closer to the race date, like a course map and likely weather conditions. For all the up-to-date info, please check <http://www.tripil.com/main/calendar/walkrunroll2016> or contact Ray Pittman (rayp@tripil.com) at 724.223.5115.

Funds collected from registration fees and sponsorships will help contribute to the renovation of the YWCA building on West Maiden Street, Washington, into TRIPIL's updated and more accessible headquarters. **Every dollar helps!** For sponsorship opportunities for this event, please contact Joann Naser (jnaser@tripil.com) or Chad Underkoffler (chadu@tripil.com), both at 724.223.5115.

Wellness Programs Each Week @ TRIPIL



Members should stop by our "Little Gym with Big Results" at TRIPIL HQ to take advantage of individualized personal training and support (by appointment or walk-in) for strength or flexibility, nutrition, circuit training, prevention of secondary conditions, etc.

Call Ray at 724.223.5115 for more information, or to begin training for the 5K Walk*Run*Roll.

Get to the Polls!

With the upcoming spring primaries and next fall's Presidential election, it's very important that all people — but especially people with disabilities — exercise their rights as citizens to have their voices heard by casting their ballot.

Plan ahead, and be prepared! Voting is a right, but it's also a responsibility.



Register to Vote

Pennsylvania now allows online voter registration! Remember, however: it will still take time to process your registration. **DEADLINE ALERT: March 28, 2016, is the last day to register before the April 26th election.**

To register to vote online, see the **PA Online Voter Registration** webpage at [http://www.votespa.com/portal/server.pt/community/home/13514!](http://www.votespa.com/portal/server.pt/community/home/13514)

Will Your Polling Place Be Accessible?

Surveying polling places is something TRIPIL does on an ongoing basis. If your polling place was inaccessible this past election (steps, a ramp that's too steep, inaccessible booths, etc.), **we can help you right these wrongs.**

Save the Date

Since actual primary and election dates vary from year to year, you can call your Voter Registration Office for more information:

- Washington County: 724.228.6750
- Fayette County: 724.430.1289
- Greene County: 724.852.5230

Check out the **Election Day Survival Kit for Voters with Disabilities** at <https://www.drnpa.org/election-day-survival-kit-for-voters-with-disabilities/> for helpful information to cast your vote and have it counted.

Coming Up Next Issue

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|---|---------------------------------------|
| • Ways to beat the winter blues. | • Emergency Preparedness . |
| • Confronting ridicule and prejudices. | • Nurse delegation. |
| • Disability justice in home modifications. | • The upcoming Presidential election. |

Tell Your Story!

The obstacles you've faced, the lessons you've learned, and the opportunities you've utilized are all valuable knowledge. Modifying a home, going on vacation, talking to your local legislator, buying a new piece of assistive equipment, managing an attendant, going back to school... Share your experience and know-how with your peers – in person, in print, or in a YouTube video.



www.tripil.com



Call **Tri-County Patriots for Independent Living** at 724.223.5115, let us know that you want to tell your story, and support your peers!

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

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