



THE PATRIOTS' VISION

Winter 2016
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To receive this newsletter as a PDF in email, contact < chadu@tripil.com >.



The new accessible elevator will have foot-operated controls, like this one at the Ed Roberts Campus in Berkeley, CA, visited by staff in September.



The YWCA's main staircase is still a focal point

YWCA Building Renovation has an *UPside*

In December 2015, TRIPIL learned that the Washington County Commissioners granted \$400,000 to be used toward a state-of-the-art accessible elevator to be installed in TRIPIL's future headquarters building at 42 West Maiden Street. Washington Financial Bank is also supporting this endeavor with a \$10,000 grant.

In addition to the new elevator, the gymnasium floor and entrance area to the building was redone. Concrete was poured; new flooring will be installed soon. Also, the roof has been repaired.

Specifications have been released for bidding on the mechanical and engineering design work in the building; general construction bid specifications should be published around the end of March.

For more information or to offer your support, please call **Joann Naser**, Director of Development, at 724-223-5115 or look at our website at www.tripil.com.

Winter Advocacy Update

by Brenda Dare

Across the state, a group of advocates is hard at work trying to bring the *Community First Choice Option* to Pennsylvania. We are meeting with members of the Governor's staff on a regular basis to establish a course of action.

The *ABLE Act* would grant people with disabilities some financial freedom that we've never had before. It was referred to the Senate Committee on Finance in September of last year. Get in touch with TRIPIL staff for information on how you can influence lawmakers .

Our Spring Membership Meeting will be Thursday, April 14, from 11 AM to 3 PM.

This will be a great chance to learn about exciting changes throughout the organization and in our community. For more information, please contact us at 724-223-5115 and ask to speak to our new membership director, **Matt Taylor**.

Your Vote Counts



During the 2015 Washington County General Election, Harlan Shober briefly held a 38 vote lead in the polls. Only 38 votes!

The first step in having a voice in programs and services that impact your life is your vote. TRIPIL offers assistance with voter registration and the voting process. Here are some im-

portant dates for the 2016 elections:

Mar 28 – Last day to **REGISTER** before the primary.

Apr 19 – Last day to apply for a civilian absentee ballot.

Apr 22 – Last day for County Board of Elections to receive voted civilian absentee ballots.

Apr 26 – GENERAL PRIMARY.

Apr 27 – First day to **REGISTER** after primary.

Oct 11 – Last day to **REGISTER** before the November election.

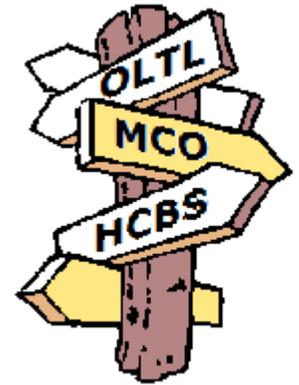
Nov 1 – Last day to apply for a civilian absentee ballot.

Nov 4 – Last day for County Boards of Elections to receive voted civilian absentee ballots.

Nov 8 – GENERAL ELECTION – Presidential Election.

Your Life is Changing – Your Voice is Needed

In January 2017, southwestern Pennsylvania will undergo a major overhaul of its Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) system. These services will be delivered under a managed-care system. This means that the state will contract with various Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) to provide all the services that are currently provided by the Office of Long Term Living waivers.



All adults using Medicaid for their primary care (hospitals and doctors) will now be using the same type of organization (an MCO) for their long-term care. All adults who receive long-term support waiver services and those who receive both Medicaid and Medicare (even if they don't use long-term supports and services) will be included in the new program, called ***Community Health Choices***. Also included are those who reside in nursing facilities.

Aetna, Gateway, United, and UPMC all intend to bid on the new HCBS contracts to be your attendant care/waiver provider.

What These Changes Mean to You

Changes will occur gradually over the first six months (180 days), possibly longer. This is when MCOs will be settling into the region and establishing their procedures. At the end of that period:

- ***Service Coordination will begin to change:*** MCOs will have some choice as to how they provide service coordination. They may choose to contract with existing service coordination entities, or create a new method for delivery of service coordination.
- ***You may have new providers for your waiver services:*** The MCOs that participate in Community Health Choices will be use providers of their choosing, so long as those providers meet established qualifications.
- ***A new standardized assessment tool will be used statewide:*** This new tool will be used to determine how much support a person needs, and what specific kinds of supports they will qualify for.

Find Out More & Get Involved!

Patriots Supervisor **Brenda Dare** serves on the Managed Long Term Services and Supports Subcommittee. Call her at 724-223-5115, ext 613, .



Taking Steps to Get Home Modifications

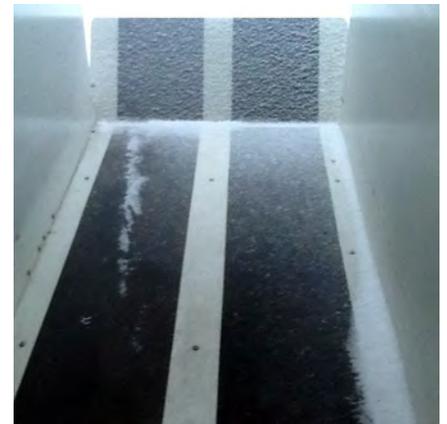
by Kate Blaker

Many people find the process of having a home modification difficult. **It doesn't have to be.** The process is easier when you break it down into small steps:

- ***Meet with your Service Coordinator to discuss your home modification, and understand what is involved.*** Think about what you need carefully in order to describe those needs clearly. Get to know contractors in your area. Meet with other people who have had a home modification recently – they can be your best resources for information. Potential obstacles (or even opportunities!) may not occur to you immediately. Therefore, discussing what you want and need is ***important***.
- ***Another good resource is your Center for Independent Living (CIL).*** Our staff can join the team that helps you advocate – after all, most of us have had our own experiences with home modifications! **Accessible Dreams** is part of our CIL. Their staff has the skills and resources to achieve a barrier-free home. They can get bids from different contractors or work with a contractor of your choice, and oversee all aspects of your project with your involvement.
- ***Request an initial meeting with the architect, contractor, and the workers who will be on the project.*** A good contractor has experience and skills in home modifications that can help meet your specific needs. If you're working with Accessible Dreams, they can help set up these meetings.
- ***Asking questions will prepare you for each step of the project.*** Getting approval for the modification could take several months or more. Also, there is the construction time required to complete the project. You need to be prepared for inconveniences during these periods (such as not having your usual entrance or bathroom available for an extended time). Find people that you can trust, who understand reading plans, to assist you in preparing questions. TRIPIL staff is ready to offer assistance at any stage.

MOST IMPORTANT: If you don't agree with or understand a proposed modification, ***ask questions!*** There could be an alternate approved modification that might meet your needs better.

Communicate your choices clearly.



Free Smoke Detectors & Installation

Smoke detectors save lives!

The Red Cross in southwestern Pennsylvania recognizes how important smoke detectors are to the overall health and safety of our communities. So they have made free equipment available to those in need. All you need to do is contact an approved volunteer agency (TRIPIL is one) to be sure you qualify. Then you can schedule a time for an installer to come out to the home and place the device – which is a free service.

The inclusive approach being taken by our local chapter of the Red Cross is exciting. Not only do they offer the standard equipment most people are familiar with, but they also have assistive technology for those in need. Do you know someone who could use a smoke detector unit with an attached bed-shaker device to wake those who may be deaf or hard of hearing?

So if you or someone you know could benefit from this resource, give **John Flaherty** a call at 724-223-5115 and get the process started.



Matt Taylor Takes on Membership

Since October of 2013, Matt Taylor has been a TRIPIL staff member. He has served multiple roles in TRIPIL Services, working closely with consumers to understand their needs and to assist them in maintaining their independence.

Starting in February of 2016, Matt will now use that experience to direct our Membership Program. **He wants to hear from you!** Your input will help guide his decisions on what members want.

*No amount of smiling at a flight of stairs
has ever turned it into a ramp.*

– Stella Young, Australian activist, 1982-2014



Beat the "Blues"

by Nan Sninsky

Down in the dumps? Feeling gloomy? Just plain crabby? You may have the blues! Fortunately, solutions exist if we make small choices that encourage positive self-care.

Feeling withdrawn? Talk with a friend for empathy and comfort. Keep a mood journal, and review it to find negative thought patterns; then, challenge those patterns and create a fresher perspective. (Example: If you find that you dwell on loneliness, remind yourself of all the people who are important to you. Make a list of people you appreciate.)

Tired but unable to sleep? Pay attention to the foods and drinks you consume. Avoid alcohol, caffeine, sweets, and white, starchy foods. Instead, enjoy brightly colored vegetables and satisfy your craving for sweetness by eating more fruit. People who reduced their intake of white rice, white bread, and potatoes noticed increased energy in as little as two weeks.

Feeling sad? Exercise increases happiness and improve sleep. Try to find a match for your abilities – even a little light housework can help get your blood pumping. Come to TRIPIL headquarters to work out with **Ray** in our "Little Gym with Big Results". Or, at home, look for television or DVDs that bring yoga, aerobics, zumba, and other fitness options directly to your living room.

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

Responding to Prejudice

by Chad Underkoffler

We all have stereotypes – or “mental shorthands” – because of things we hear, see, experience, or become aware of around us. As we’re growing up, often we pick up prejudices secondhand from the adults in our lives, the books we read, or the television and movies we watch. It’s unavoidable. We’re told *what to think* about whole groups of people when we’re too young to know that the world is more complicated and interesting than that.



Research shows that most prejudices are irrational, and that responding to them with logical argument or anger does no good. One of the best ways to work through prejudices is through a *self-distanced perspective*. This means we look at the same situation as if we were not directly involved, like a fly on the wall: “Why did that prejudiced comment bother *him* (or *her*, or *me*) so much?” Stepping outside ourselves helps stop our own emotions from overwhelming us.

**Despite our different outsides,
we aren’t really that different inside.**

Also remember to check our online Calendar at

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

or our Facebook page at

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

or call and ask Membership Coordinator **Matt Taylor** at

724-223-5115

for the latest TRIPIL happenings!

Coming Up Next Issue

- Fitness & secondary health conditions.
- General Primary Election.
- Making Art.
- More on Managed Care.
- The Little Gym with Big Results.
- TRIPIL Capital Campaign
5K Walk * Run * Roll at
Mingo Creek Park.
- Paint `n Sip Fundraiser.

Renew Your Membership!

Or join up if you haven't before!

Tri-County Patriots for Independent Living has a new Membership Coordinator: **Matt Taylor**. Come on in and talk to him to let him know what you'd like your Center for Independent Living (CIL) to be doing over the next few months — **what's important to you and your life**. Also, ask him about the exciting events we have coming up in the next few months!



www.tripil.com



*Give us a call at **724.223.5115**, and
tell us about how your membership has helped **you**
achieve **your goals** in independent living.*

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

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