

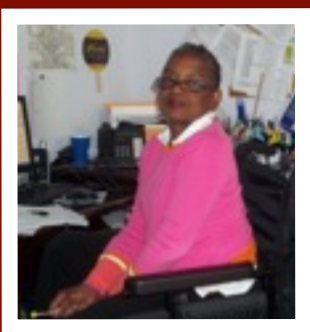
the ABILITY LINK



disABILITY
LINK
the center for rights & resources

WINTER 2011

VOL 2, ISSUE 4



IL Skills

Independent Living is all about being in control of the decisions that impact your life. Sometimes we need assistance with fine tuning some skills to have better control: whether it's finances, travel, support services or personal safety.

Margo Waters is our IL Skills Coordinator at disABILITY LINK, she works with consumers on a one on one basis to help them set goals and move towards a happy and independent life.



❖ Nothing About Us Without Us ❖

A phrase that lives at the heart of the of the Independent Living and Disability Rights movements. This means that we have the right to have control over services and issues that affect us.

OUR LIVES, OUR CHOICES

“Nothing About Us Without Us” is a concept that developed from the disability rights movement and the struggle for equality. Equal rights give empowerment, the ability to make decisions and the opportunity to live life to the fullest.

Yet, for many people with disabilities, someone else is deciding when we should get up, what we should eat, what we can do, who we should live with, and even how much of our own money we can spend. People living in nursing facilities and other institutions have little opportunity for self determination and live a life the very opposite to what most of us would choose for ourselves.

“Nothing About Us Without Us” is relevant to both personal and public policy issues. We don't want our hairdresser to decide on our hair cut without



being in consultation with us, we don't want our doctor to decide on our health treatment without being in consultation with us, neither do

we want our telephone company to decide on our phone and calling plan, or Medicaid to decide where people with disabilities should live without being in consultation with us. Self determination, that is, deciding for one's self, requires both self advocacy and systems advocacy.

Our Leaders: Max Starkloff

Max Starkloff was one of the pioneers of the Independent Living and Disability Rights movements. Fueled by powerful self-motivation and inspired by the work of Ed Roberts, Starkloff managed to get many important changes instituted in St Louis and lay the groundwork for change on a larger scale.

Max was paralyzed at the age of 21 in a car accident, after living with his mother for four years the financial strain became too great and he was forced to move, like others with severe disabilities at the time, into a nursing home. He stayed in this nursing facility for twelve years where he became increasingly frustrated. Frustrated by the doctors controlling and diagnosing him as dependent, frustrated by being labeled by his disability and frustrated by the attitude of the society in which he lived. Through this time Max was able to hold on to hope and found a way to escape his confinement: painting. Over time Max honed his artistic skill and felt that is was a way of imagining new possibilities and it became a source of satisfaction for him. He was angered, however, by the paternalistic attitude that many had in regards to his art, he was lauded with praise and encouraged to keep painting, but then professionals informed him that he was pretty good, for an amateur.



In 1970, Starkloff attended a rally in California led by Ed Roberts. Here, he saw a group of people, who were quadriplegic, being active and living independently. They were engaged in activities in their school and were working to eliminate barriers that would otherwise hold them back. This was exactly what Max needed to see; people with disabilities in control of their lives and deciding on the issues that affected them. Max took this inspiration back with him to St. Lois where he was determined to open a center similar to the one in Berkeley, California.



Max got out of the nursing home so that he could marry the woman he was engaged to, who just happened to be a physical therapist at St. Joseph's. After becoming married Max and his wife began Paraquad, a Center for Independent Living, which advocated for removal of physical and societal barriers so that people with disabilities would have full access to their community. Max also worked to found the National Council on

Independent Living (NCIL) in 1983. In 2003, the Starkloffs opened the Starkloff Disability Institute, a non-profit geared at changing public perceptions of disability and advocating for the full involvement of people with disabilities in society. They accomplish this through a combination of education and direct action.

Sadly, Max Starkloff died in December of 2010 from complications with the flu. His legacy will live on in the form of the organizations that he helped found and the lives that he changed with his tireless advocacy.

To learn more about the Paraquad Independent Living Center visit them on the web at: www.paraquad.org. The Starkloff Disability Institute can be found at www.starkloff.org.



advocacy CORNER

Georgia ADAPT

ADAPT has been working for decades to impact legislation and policy that keeps people with disabilities locked in nursing facilities and other institutions.

ADAPT advocates for people with disabilities to be supported in their homes and communities. ADAPT highlights the Medicaid bias, meaning it is much easier to find Medicaid money to pay for someone to live in an institution, than to support someone to live in the community.

Georgia ADAPT is a newly re-



formed group of grassroots activists from all over that state who are willing to use their time, energy and talents to draw attention to the serious issues of people with disabilities and make change for the better. In September 2011, over 20 Georgians participated in the My Medicaid Matters rally in Washington DC. Georgia ADAPT includes “old timers,”

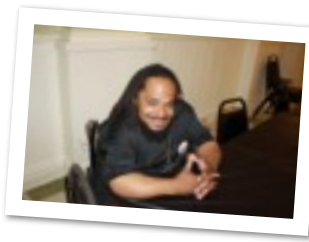
who have been active in ADAPT for years, and others who are relatively new to the ADAPT way of doing things, everyone is welcome! Learn more about Georgia ADAPT at www.gaadapt.org

Fighting for the Minimum?

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is often cited when discussing accessible transportation issues, at least for the limited time something regarding accessibility is up for discussion. Recently, a paratransit service reported an 86% compliance with the ADA, as if that were a great accomplishment. Superficially, this seems great! If you scored an 86% on a test you're a decent student, if you get 86% profits on the stock market you're a genius! But, what if you only came into work 86% of the time? What if you only completed 86% of your annual report? You'd be fired! So, why is it acceptable for transit services to only have 86% compliance with the ADA?

The important thing to remember is that the ADA is the *minimum* required by law not the maximum, and we should not be content with being offered only the bare-minimum. Although 86% seems great on the surface it is important to keep in mind that figure is still 14% away from the minimum. Meeting and exceeding customer expectations would be a better goal to strive for, customer services should not suffer because there are guidelines to be followed by the ADA.

For more information about the ADA or for questions regarding compliance call the ADA info line at: 404-657-7313. Ken Mitchell, Advocacy Coordinator for disability LINK, can be reached at 404-687-8890 ext. 103.



Empowering Our Youth

On October 22nd Empowering Our Youth (EOY) celebrated their one year anniversary at Sammiches N Stuff in Downtown Decatur. Entertainment was provided by Bernard Baker of ADAPT, People First and

disABILITY LINK, who volunteered to DJ for event. The leadership for EOY seized the opportunity to recognize some of the many volunteers who have helped them succeed in the previous year. Many local

advocates and supporters were honored at the celebration. Ken Mitchell, a supporter of EOY from the start, was the featured speaker for the event, sharing his views on advocacy and how

important it is for young people to speak up, be heard and take action. EOY is an organization for young people with disabilities aged 17-30. Meetings are on the 3rd Saturday of each month from 2:00pm-4:00pm at disABILITY LINK.

For more information about Empowering Our Youth, to join, or donate, please contact Rashidah Shariff, Youth Advocacy Coordinator, at 404-687-8890 ext 102 or by e-mail at rshariff@disABILITYLINK.org or Deontae Bowden, President, at 404-438-6600. Also, check them out at www.disABILITYLINK.org/EOY

Back in the Community: Leonard Walker's Story

One of the services disABILITY LINK offers is nursing home transition. We help eligible consumers to relocate from institutions back into their communities.

Leonard Walker
Leonard Walker was placed in a nursing institution to receive physical therapy and then was finding difficulty getting out.



From Golden Living

Mr Walker was in Golden Living Nursing Home before he contacted disABILITY LINK for assistance in moving out.

To Independent Living

Thanks to the efforts of our Nursing Home Transition team Mr Walker is now living in his own apartment.



Transitioning

For more information on our nursing home transition program contact Renee Shakir at disABILITY LINK at 404-687-8890 ext 116 or e-mail: info@disabilitylink.org



Our Community: GACHI

The Georgia Council for the Hearing Impaired (GACHI) is a resource for people that are deaf, deaf-blind or hard of hearing. GACHI fosters self-determination, empowerment and independence through support services, advocacy and education. GACHI has many resources that can benefit the whole community; there are resource rooms with videos, books and other material on deaf culture, the ADA and many other topics. There is an Assisted Listening Device (ALD) demo room where technology such as fm systems, captioned telephones and other ALDs can be sampled. GACHI also has a community center that can be used free of charge with prior approval.

GACHI is also part of the Georgia Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (GATEDP) which provides specialized telecommunication devices to individuals that qualify. The program is managed by the Public Service Commission with equipment distributions and training handled by GACHI. For more information on the GATEDP program and to check eligibility contact GACHI at: 404-297-9461 (TTY and voice) or visit them on the web at www.gachi.org/gatedp

Respect, trustworthiness, loyalty, confidentiality and fairness are the core values GACHI was founded upon and continue to embrace and express to the community through their programs. Learn more about GACHI by visiting them on the web at: www.gachi.org or calling them (TTY/voice) at: 404-292-5312.

Donating

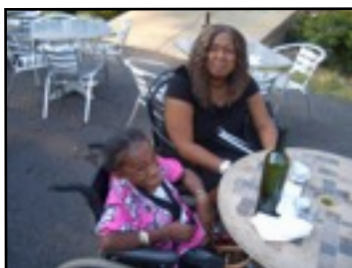
The work of disABILITY LINK is funded by grants and donations. We welcome donations of furniture, household goods and medical equipment, items that are often vital when helping people move out of nursing homes and other institutions. We accept financial donations that are used to support the work of disABILITY LINK. All donations are tax deductible.

If you have any items you wish to donate, please contact disABILITY LINK at: 404-687-8990 or by e-mail: info@disABILITYLINK.org.

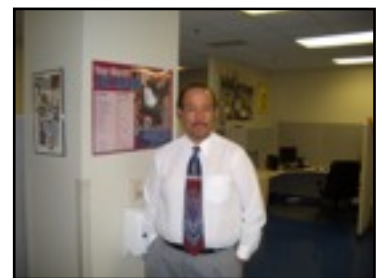
VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering is a great way to connect with your community and help your favorite organizations. Volunteers are instrumental in the IL Movement. We are grateful for the work of volunteers who undertake crucial roles in the work of disABILITY LINK. Please contact us if you are interested in volunteering; we are always happy to hear from you.

For more information about volunteering with us please contact Susan Hickey at 404-687-8890 or via e-mail at: shickey@disABILITYLINK.org.



Just a reminder that donations made are **tax deductible**. December 31st is the last day to donate and have it count for the current calendar year



A Look at Our Year

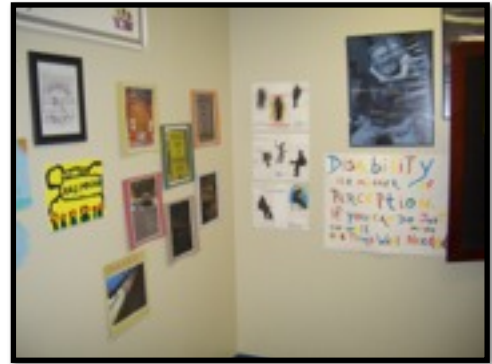
Disability Day at the Capitol



take ACTION!



Right Flank March!



disABILITY LINK in Action



MONTHLY EVENTS

First Saturday of each month: Metro Chapter of NFB Meeting. East Atlanta Library. Noon-2:30

Second Saturday of each month: Concerned Transit Riders for Equal Access (CTREA). Shepherd Center (Classroom C, 6th floor of the Marcus Building). 10am-Noon

Second Saturday of each month: Decatur Chapter of NFB meeting. Decatur Recreation Center. Noon-2:00

Third Monday of each month: Georgia ADAPT Conference Call. Dial: 1-805-360-1000 access code 291209#

Third Tuesday of each month: Atlanta ADAPT meeting. disABILITY LINK. 6:00pm-8:00.

Third Thursday of each month: People First of Atlanta chapter meeting. The Georgia Advocacy Office. 10:00am-12

Third Friday of each month: Georgia Council of the Blind. Locations vary. Contact Ann Sims, President, at 404-767-1792 for more information

Third Saturday of each month: Cobb Chapter NFB meeting. Marietta Main Library. For more information contact George O. Vickers at 678-982-2410

For a more detailed list of monthly events join the "Dates to Remember" mailing list. Contact Linda Pogue at disABILITY LINK:
greenpogue@disabilitylink.org

DISABILITY LINK

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