



DIAL INSIDE LOOK



July 2019

ADA 29th Anniversary



July 26th 2019 marks the 29th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This significant piece of legislation, signed into law by President George H. W. Bush, has helped to remove many barriers so that people with disabilities can live independently.

The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in all areas of public life ensuring that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. Former Senator Tom Harkin, the chief sponsor of the ADA in Congress, referred to the law as the “20th century emancipation proclamation for people with disabilities.”

The ADA gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities similar to those provided to individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion. It is divided into five titles that relate to different areas of public life which guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, employment, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications.

The passage of the ADA marked an important milestone for people with disabilities. It is a culmination of disability specific legislation passed years prior and persistent advocacy and activism by people with and without disabilities.

In 2008, new amendments to the ADA (effective January 1, 2009) broadened the definition of a disability, extending protections to individuals with substantial limitations in a variety of major life activities as well as to those using a variety of supports such as cochlear implants, hearing aids and prosthetics. Because of the ADA’s broad mandates, people with disabilities enjoy increased opportunities to live, work, and play in their communities.

The passing of the ADA has significantly helped to improve the lives of people with disabilities, but there is still much to do as equity and inclusion are still out of reach for many Americans with disabilities.

The anniversary of the ADA is a time that we can reflect positively on a law that has made a great impact on the lives of people with disabilities over the past 29 years.

How do you intend to celebrate the ADA?





New Disability Inclusion Strategy

Disability inclusion is not only a fundamental human right, it is “central to the promise” of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, UN Secretary-General António Guterres told the annual conference on the Convention of Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which began on Tuesday, June 11th .

The United Nations Chief, Guterres believes, “Together, we can raise awareness and remove barriers.” He further explained, “When we fight to secure those rights, we move our world closer to upholding the core values and principles of the United Nations Charter. “When we remove policies or biases or obstacles to opportunity for

persons with disabilities, the whole world benefits.”

The UN chief said he was launching a new UN Disability Inclusion Strategy on Tuesday, “to raise the standards of the UN’s performance on disability inclusion across the board, and action to bring about the unified and transformative change we need.”

With an accountability framework to monitor progress and address challenges, the new strategy has clear benchmarks, and will encourage more persons with disabilities to work in, and be better supported by, the UN.

“I want the United Nations to be

an employer of choice for persons with disabilities”, he stressed. “I want the United Nations to be fully accessible for one and all”.

According to Mr. Guterres: “We can no longer be a platform for change when persons with disabilities cannot access that platform, to speak”.

“Realizing the rights of persons with disabilities is a matter of justice as well as a common-sense investment in our common future”, the UN chief said, but “we have a long way to go in changing mind-sets, laws and policies to ensure these rights.”

Broadway's First Step To Disability Inclusivity

Ali Stroker, who plays Ado Annie in “Oklahoma!”, had a historic moment during the awards ceremony on June 9th when she was named the best-featured actress in a musical, becoming the first performer in a wheelchair ever to receive a Tony.

But what the audience missed is that due to Radio City’s structural inaccessibility, Stroker had

to be seated backstage when her category was being announced. Since

there was no ramp front stage, Stroker was told to wait backstage in case she won the award.

Even during a monumental win, she could not be surrounded by her peers and supporters, nor relish in the same feeling as rest of the Tony winners when approaching the stage to accept their award. The failure to include a ramp front stage was essentially a slap in the face - a mere reminder that society still treats the rights and the needs of people with disabilities as an af-



terthought.

“For the [theatre] houses where all the audience comes in, that is all made accessible,” Stroker shared to the press in the media room later that night.”But the backstages are not. So I would ask theatre owners and producers to really look into how they can make the backstage accessible so that performers with disabilities can get around.”





Welcome Jodi!

DIAL would like to formally introduce Jodi as the newest member of our growing team! Jodi is our Independent Living Specialist/Social Recreation Program Assistant and she is eager to make a difference. Jodi was raised in Livingston, New Jersey but has lived in many places such as Worcester, Massachusetts and Tupper Lake, New York. Jodi graduated with honors from



Marlboro College in Marlboro, Vermont where she studied Sociology and Creative Writing. Ever since Jodi can remember she has always had two passions in life: helping others and writing. These two passions have helped shape her life in many ways. It has led her to volunteering at Daughter's Of Israel Nursing Home, working as a Dental Assistant, becoming a published Writer, and currently helping DIAL's consumers

achieve independence. Jodi is very excited that she has found a position and organization where she gets to help people as an Independent Living Specialist and use her creativity in planning activities for the social Recreation Program at DIAL. We cannot wait for you to meet her!



"I do not have a disability, I have a gift! Others may see it as a disability, but I see it as a challenge. This challenge is a gift because I have to become stronger to get around it, and smarter to figure out how to use it; others should be so lucky." — Shane E. Bryan



Vonzola Whittaker (pictured above)

Consumer of the Month!

Vonzola Whittaker has been involved with DIAL for more than 18 years. Vonzola first started as a participant at the DIAL Recreation Program and later became involved with the DIAL Peer Support Groups and IL Programs. You will always see her at the annual DIAL picnic in September!

Vonzola is active in other groups for the Visually Impaired/Blind in our area. She is involved with

the Visions Loss Alliance and participates in many of their groups and activities. She especially likes their exercise program and recommends it to everyone! In the summer, she attends the VISIONS summer camp in Spring Valley, New York. This is an event she looks forward to every year. Vonzola is also active with the Beyond the Eyes group where she sings alto in the choir and recently sang a solo at their annual

Spring concert.

Vonzola is an incredible woman who does not let her vision loss keep her from doing anything! She embodies the independent living principles and is a source of encouragement and inspiration to everyone!



DIAL Center for Independent Living

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Become a
DIAL Member!

What does DIAL do?

DIAL—Center for Independent Living is a non-residential, non-profit agency that services individuals with disabilities in Passaic and Essex Counties.

DIAL promotes the Independent Living Philosophy which states that people with disabilities should have the same civil rights, options and control over choices in their own lives as do people without disabilities.

DIAL provides an array of programs and services that inform and support individuals with disabilities. The purpose being to achieve the maximum level in independence and control of the decisions and direction of their own lives and promote their full inclusion in society.

Those services include:

- Information and Referral
- Advocacy
- Peer Support
- Independent Living Skills Program
- Deaf Outreach Service
- Student Transition Services
- Employment Access Services
- NJ Transit Access Link Assessments
- Recreation Program
- Community Transition Services

Welcome New Members!

- Howard G.
- Faith C.
- Sharon W.
- Rolando B.
- Vinny C.
- Cynthia T.

Independence Day Events

Passaic County

Little Falls—July 4, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Street Fair along Main Street and Stevens Avenue. Free admission.

Clifton—July 4, dusk. Clifton Stadium, located at 150 Park Slope. Tickets are \$3 per person. Ticket office opens at 7 p.m.

Paterson—July 6, 12 p.m. to 10 p.m.
Fireworks at 8:30 p.m. Downtown. (see flyer for more information)

Essex County

Belleville—July 4, 6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
Belleville High School. Fireworks at 9 p.m. Free admission.

Nutley—July 4, 6:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.
Franklin Avenue. Fireworks at 9 p.m. Free admission.

Newark—July 1, 7:30 p.m. Weequahic Park (Elizabeth Ave & Meeker Ave). Free concert with fireworks to follow.

