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# OIL Newsletter



A monthly publication of **THE OKLAHOMANS for INDEPENDENT LIVING**

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Heaven never helps the man  
who will not act.  
~Sophocles~



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If you are trying to go green and would like to help save trees, check out our newsletter at [oilnewsletter@oilok.org](mailto:oilnewsletter@oilok.org)

## SAVE THE DATE!

September 12<sup>th</sup>

OIL Anniversary

Join us for our Open House at OIL and a Celebration at the Meeting Place

### MEDICARE THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

The Affordable Care Act has changed Medicare slightly. Here are some things you need to know:

1) Your prescriptions if you have elected prescription drug coverage may be more

affordable.

2) Preventive tests may be free of charge.

3) If you have Medicare Part C (one of the Advantage plans) excess payments to private vendors may be reduced.

4) There is a ceiling on Medicare Advantage plans, so stay in network if you have one of these plans.

5) People who are eligible for Medicare and whose incomes are higher may pay more.

### AT FUNDING FOR VETERANS

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is the largest single medical care system in the United States and is one of the largest purchasers of assistive technology for people with disabilities. There are three broad areas under which a veteran can obtain support for AT needs: health, housing, and independent living.

Under the area of health, the VA's Prosthetics and Sensory Aids program may buy AT devices for veterans receiving VA care for any condition. Devices may include artificial limbs, orthopedic braces, wheelchairs, crutches and canes, and other durable medical equipment and supplies.

The VA also covers eye examination and audiology tests and writes eyeglass and hearing aid prescriptions for its eligible patients. Hearing aids and eyeglasses may also be directly provided to some veterans. Replacements may be allowed if a device is lost or broken and for new or changed prescriptions.

The VA has three (3) accessible-housing related grants programs.

1. The Specially Adapted Housing Grant may pay for 50% of the cost of an accessible home (up to \$50,000) for veterans with certain service connected permanent and total disabilities.

2. The Special Home Adaptations Grant will pay for up to \$10,000 for home modifications for veterans with service-related permanent and total disabilities.

3. Home Improvements and Structural Alterations (HISA) grants provide up to \$4,100 for service-connected veterans and up to \$1,200 for non service-connected veterans. The grants are for home modifications that are necessary for disability-related access to the home and lavatory/sanitary facilities or for

the continuation of medical treatment at home.

Independent Living services (IL services), including AT, are available through the VA and their Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment division to eligible veterans with service-connected disabilities. IL services are made available to eligible veterans who are not able to work as determined by an evaluation. Veterans pursuing IL services work with a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor to create a plan for achieving goals for independent living. For more information about funding locations for veterans in Oklahoma, visit <http://www1.va.gov/opa/fact/statsum/okss.asp>.

## **DEVICE USES SONAR TO ASSIST BLIND INDIVIDUALS TO NAVIGATE**

The "virtual cane" incorporates several sensors that estimate the distance between the user and the object it is pointed at.

People who are blind and visually impaired could be able to toss away the white canes or at least "see" better with them, thanks to a "virtual cane". The device emits a focused beam at objects around the user and transmits the visual information to him via a gentle vibration similar to a cell phone quiver. It is estimated that the lightweight device would eventually cost about \$100.

The highly intuitive electronic device, the size of a cell phone, incorporates several sensors that estimate the distance between the user and the object it is pointed at. This enables the person to assess the height and distance of

various objects, reconstruct an accurate image of the surroundings, and navigate safely. The "virtual cane" is accurate and can function for up to 12 hours between charges. Unlike a white stick that gives input from only a meter away, this can function at a much shorter distance and up to 10 meters in all directions.

## **COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY VIA IPAD APPS**

Teachers and doctors are using iPads as a tool to reach out to children with Autism or Asperger Syndrome and the results are remarkably great. *Autistic* children are showing **tremendous improvement** after playing fun-filled exercises on iPad which is less stressful and more fun for both the teachers and the students. Below is a list of some of the best iPad applications for *Autism*.

For those who don't know, *Autism* is a lifelong disability that affects the way a person communicates and relates to other people and the world around them. Those affected typically display major impairments in three areas: social interaction, communication and behavior (restricted interests and repetitive behaviors).

**AutismExpress** - People with autism have trouble interpreting emotions and understanding what different facial expressions may represent.



Autism Xpress helps autistic individuals to recognize and express their emotions through its fun and easy to use interface. The 'Autism Xpress' iPhone Application is available for **FREE!**

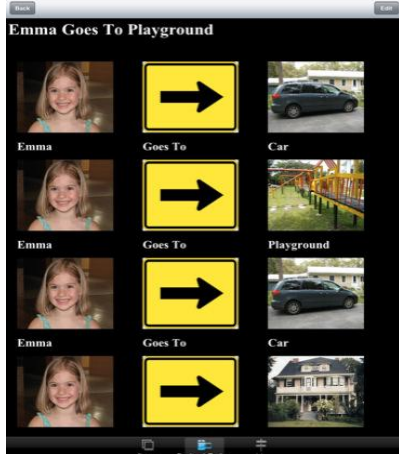
**TapToTalk** - It makes communication fun. Just tap a picture and TapToTalk speaks. Each picture can lead to another screen of pictures. It allows you to create your own AAC albums to meet the specific needs of autistic child. Currently, TapToTalk includes a library of over 2,000 pictures. You can add your own pictures, photos and sounds. The TapToTalk app is available for **FREE!**

**stories2learn** - Creates personalized social stories using photos, text, and audio messages for autistic kids having communication difficulties who need support with excursions, routings, or transitions. To create stories, just arrange the pictures in a sentence.

**Proloquo2Go** – Provides you with a full-featured augmentative and alternative communication solution for autistic children who have difficulty speaking. It contains text-to-speech voices, up-to-date symbols, powerful automatic conjugations, a default vocabulary and much more. Proloquo2Go is considered as a good alternative against buying an expensive AAC device. **Even SLPs, teachers and parents recommend it for children and adults with autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, developmental disabilities, apraxia, ALS, stroke or traumatic brain injury.**

**Grace** - Helps to communicate effectively by building sentences from relevant images to form sentences. You can easily customize the app by using picture and photo vocabulary of your choice. The application works in real time and allows the user to select their preferences, then (on iPhone) rotate the device to present a full-sized sentence to the listener – who will read it with them and respond to their request. You can currently have up to eight cards in a 'sentence'.

**iCommunicate for iPad** - It allows you to create pictures, flashcards, storyboards, routines, visual schedules and record custom audio in any language. iCommunicate for iPad comes packed with 100+ pictures (first 5 have audio) to get you started. You can even add pictures with your camera or use Google image search.



“A must have if your child has autism! I have a number of apps downloaded on my iPad for my autistic son, and iCommunicate is by far the most useful and easy to use. My son is only 26 months old, yet he is able to enjoy the program. It is so versatile that we could get a Google image of Itsy Bitsy Spider and all he has to do is touch the picture and he is rewarded with a song!”

**First Then Visual Schedule**

The app allows you to create visual schedules that provide positive behavior support through the use of images that show daily events (i.e. morning routine or therapy schedule) or steps needed to complete a specific activity, (i.e. using the restroom). First Then Visual Schedule is unique in that it is completely customizable to each user’s individual needs. Users can add personal voice recordings and images directly from their computer or iPhone camera (in addition to the images in the application’s stock library) to create a schedule. This personalization allows for schedules to be created and updated on the go, helping transition through unexpected changes in a daily routine.

**MOVIE NIGHT AT OIL**

We will meet on Tuesday August 23<sup>rd</sup> at 5:30 p.m. Bring your favorite movie and we will vote on which one to watch.

**GATOR’S WHARF LUNCHEON**

On Tuesday, August 2<sup>nd</sup>, the women’s group will be going to Eufaula for a nice relaxing lunch by the water. Gator’s Wharf overlooks the lake and you can feed the fish or ducks right off the deck of the restaurant so bring some bread if you would like. The transportation cost is \$2.50 and of course your meal is on you.

**WATER PARK TRIP**

On Friday, August 12<sup>th</sup>, we will be going to the River Country Family Water Park in Muskogee. The bus will leave OIL around 9:00 a.m. with the transportation cost being \$5. Please bring enough money for your lunch at a restaurant or for the food concession at the

Water Park. The entrance costs are; Adults \$6, Children aged 3-15 yrs., \$5, and 2 yrs. & under are free.

**SATURDAY TRANSPORTATION**

OIL will take individuals anywhere in the McAlester area whether to visit friends/family or just to go shopping. The cost is \$1 per stop. The dates are set for the 13<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Transportation**

OIL provides lift-equipped transportation in McAlester and the surrounding area, Monday – Friday, 8:00 – 4:30. A twenty-four hour minimum notice is required. The cost is \$1 per pick up in McAlester and \$2 for Krebs and Frink Chambers. Outside this area, fees are based on actual costs of gasoline needed to provide the service.

\*Prices are subject to change.



**Are you eligible for the ADVantage Program?**

Are you a person with a disability who is at least 21 years of age?

If you said “Yes” then answer the following:

Do you require assistance?

1. On a daily basis in order to live, such as eating, toileting, grooming, bathing, dressing, and moving about to accomplish the task
2. In order to maintain or support daily functioning such as taking medication, preparing meals, paying bills, shopping, laundry, transportation, etc.
3. Are you at risk for nursing home placement?

**The ADVantage Program may be able to help. Contact any OIL ADVantage case manager at 426-6220 V/TDD.**

\*Events are held at OIL unless otherwise noted

## AUGUST EVENTS

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	<b>1</b> <u>Mental Health Grp.</u> 1 pm	<b>2</b> <u>Women's Grp. Luncheon</u> Gator's Wharf	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> <u>Shopping</u> 7 – 10:45 am	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> <u>TBI Grp.</u> 1pm	<b>9</b> <u>Men's Grp.</u> 5 pm Adelita's	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> <u>OIL Social</u> 5:30 pm Angel's Diner	<b>12</b> <u>Water Park</u> 9 am M uskogee	<b>13</b> <u>Saturday Transportation</u>
<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> <u>Mental Health Grp.</u> 1 pm	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> <u>Shopping</u> 7 – 10:45 am	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> <u>TBI Grp.</u> 1pm	<b>23</b> <u>Movie Night</u> 5 pm	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> <u>Saturday Transportation</u>
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>			

\***Low Impact Exercise Class** meets Mon., Wed., & Fri., 10:00 a.m., Stipe Center \***Alzheimer's Support Group**, 3<sup>rd</sup> Wed., 12:00 p.m., Main & OK Church of Christ, 423-4743 \***Cancer Support Group**, 3<sup>rd</sup> Thur., 1:00 p.m., The Van Buren House, 426-5600 \***Diabetes Support Group**, 1<sup>st</sup> Tue., 6:00 p.m., MRHC Wellness Ctr. Conf. Room, 421-8656 \*For information on **Men's & Women's Grief Support Groups** – call Hospice of McAlester at 423-3911 \***Bariatric Support Group**, 2<sup>nd</sup> Tue., MRHC Wellness Ctr. Conf. Room, 5:30 p.m., 421-6600

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