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OIL Newsletter



A monthly publication of THE OKLAHOMANS for INDEPENDENT LIVING

601 East Carl Albert Parkway, McAlester, OK 74501, (918) 426-6220 or (800) 568-6821, Fax (918) 426-3245
(918) 426-6263 V/TDD, OIL Web Page URL (www.oilok.org), www.facebook.com)

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MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY



Make a Difference Day is the most encompassing national day of helping others. The annual event takes place each year on the fourth Saturday in October. This year it will be on the 26th. McAlester's project will once again be a minor home repair/maintenance project. The project will help those with physical disabilities, senior citizens, and single, working mothers. Skilled and unskilled volunteers are NEEDED! Everyone can help in some way. Even if it's as simple as climbing a ladder to change a light bulb, you are helping

someone who is unable to do so. Come alone or bring your child/children and make it a family giving day. You are sure to get a blessing through helping others! Call Leanna at 426-6220 Ext. 110 to volunteer or just show up on the day of the event. The event headquarters is at the McAlester Boys and Girls Club, 301 East Chadick and things begin at 7:30 a.m.

PITTSBURG COUNTY FREE FAIR



The county fair was recently held at the Exposition Center in McAlester. OIL would like to congratulate participants Shanna Langley, Kathie Roberts, and Earl Roberts on their wins.

SUBMINIMUM WAGE PLAN DIVIDES DISABILITY ADVOCATES

Disability advocates are split over a proposal in the U.S. Senate that would establish limits on people with disabilities working for less than minimum wage. The Senate's Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee is expected to take

up a reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act. Within the legislation is a plan to establish first-ever requirements that must be met before individuals with disabilities could be allowed to work for less than the federal minimum of \$7.25 per hour.

Currently, many with disabilities leave high school and are referred directly to sheltered workshop environments. That would change under what's known as section 511 of the bill. Those with disabilities could only be placed in subminimum-wage jobs if they meet certain age-related requirements and while receiving job training services to prepare them for competitive employment. What's more, individuals age 24 or younger would be required to pursue vocational rehabilitation services first.

"I believe it is critically important that every young person with a disability have an opportunity to experience competitive, integrated employment as they transition from school to adult life," said Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, one of the bill's chief sponsors, in a statement to Disability Scoop.

“Without section 511 in the bill, I am very concerned that another generation of young people with significant disabilities will end up getting tracked directly from school to sheltered settings,” said Harkin who chairs the committee where the bill is slated to be considered.

Advocates with the National Down Syndrome Society and the National Federation of the Blind, however, say the bill does little more than provide a checklist for vocational rehabilitation agencies that could ultimately put more individuals at risk for low-wage employment.

“This provision purports to introduce protections to limit the number of youth with disabilities who are placed in subminimum-wage employment, but will have the unintended effect of trapping people with disabilities in dead-end, segregated, subminimum-wage jobs with the blessing of the rehabilitation system,” said Marc Maurer, president of the National Federation of the Blind, which is calling for the provision to be dropped from the bill.

Groups supporting the proposal include The Arc, Easter Seals, the National Council on Independent Living, the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities and the National Disability Rights Network.

FIRE SAFETY

Nearly 2,500 people die in home fires each year. Eighty-two percent of all fire deaths and 76 percent of all fire injuries in our country occur in the home – the very place we should feel most safe.

It is important to protect

yourself and your loved ones by installing smoke alarms on every level of your home, including inside and outside sleeping areas. Traditional smoke alarms, however, do not always meet the needs of people with disabilities.

If you are hard-of-hearing, you may not respond to the traditional smoke alarm alert. This is because most hearing loss begins with high frequencies, the same frequencies that smoke alarms use. You may use hearing aids during the day, but when you remove them at night, you may be unable to hear the smoke alarm alert.

However, there are smoke alarms and alert devices, called accessories, available for people who are hard-of-hearing. When the smoke alarm is activated, strobe lights throughout the home are also activated to warn of smoke and possible fire. These same alarms also have pillow or bed shakers that will alert you while you are sleeping when the alarm has been activated.

You can purchase these alarms at your local home improvement store or on their websites. Just search for “strobe light smoke alarms.”

Remember, in the event of fire, every second counts! Everyone should make and practice a home escape plan. If you have decreased mobility or a visual or hearing impairment, talk with your family members, building manager or neighbors about your fire safety plan and practice it.

*Arrange to have a first floor unit or bedroom if you live in an apartment building or multi-

story home.

*Make sure that your house number is clearly visible from the street using numbers that are at least 4-inch high.

*Have at least two exits from every room and know how to open locked or barred doors and windows.

*Contact your local fire department. Most fire departments will provide a courtesy home inspection, review your escape plan, install smoke alarms and assist with locating a home safety modification service if it is needed.

*If you encounter smoke, stay near the ground or crawl low to exit. Once out, stay out and call 9-1-1 from a neighbor’s house.

*If you are trapped in a room or do not feel that you can escape safely, close the door between you and the fire. Use a blanket or sheet to fill the gaps around the door to keep smoke out. Then, signal out the window using a blanket or sheet.

MORE ON ADD/ADHD...

IS IT REALLY ADD/ADHD?

Just because a child has symptoms of inattention, impulsivity, or hyperactivity does not mean that he or she has ADD or ADHD. Certain medical conditions, psychological disorders, and stressful life events can cause symptoms that look like ADD / ADHD.

Before an accurate diagnosis of ADD / ADHD can be made, it is important that you see a mental health professional to explore and rule out the following possibilities:

Learning disabilities or problems with reading, writing, motor skills, or language.

Major life events or traumatic experiences (e.g. a recent

move, death of a loved one, bullying, divorce).

Psychological disorders including anxiety, depression, and bipolar disorder.

Behavioral disorders such as conduct disorder and oppositional defiant disorder.

Medical conditions, including thyroid problems, neurological conditions, epilepsy, and sleep disorders.

A learning disability may be mistaken for ADHD



Think your child has attention deficit disorder? Sometimes, kids who are having trouble in school are incorrectly diagnosed with ADD/ADHD, when what they really have is a learning disability. Furthermore, many kids struggle with both ADD/ADHD and a learning disability.

POSITIVE EFFECTS OF ADD/ADHD IN CHILDREN

In addition to the challenges, there are also positive traits associated with people who have attention deficit disorder:

Creativity – Children who have ADD/ADHD can be marvelously creative and imaginative. The child who daydreams and has ten different thoughts at once can become a master problem-solver, a fountain of ideas, or an inventive artist. Children with ADD/ADHD may be easily distracted, but sometimes they notice what others don't see.

Flexibility – Because children with ADD/ADHD consider a lot of options at once, they don't become set on one alternative

early on and are more open to different ideas.

Enthusiasm and spontaneity – Children with ADD/ADHD are rarely boring! They're interested in a lot of different things and have lively personalities. In short, if they're not exasperating you (and sometimes even when they are), they're a lot of fun to be with.

Energy and drive – When kids with ADD/ADHD are motivated, they work or play hard and strive to succeed. It actually may be difficult to distract them from a task that interests them, especially if the activity is interactive or hands-on.

Keep in mind, too, that ADD/ADHD has nothing to do with intelligence or talent. Many children with ADD/ADHD are intellectually or artistically gifted. More to come...

ROCK RIDGE APARTMENTS UPDATE

Rock Ridge Apartments is being built by Accessible Spaces Incorporated and is a fifteen unit, accessible, affordable apartment building for adults with disabilities in McAlester. Rock Ridge Apartments is being developed in cooperation with OIL.

All cabinetry, showers, and sinks are installed. The phone system is being installed and duck work is being completed through the common areas. Concrete work for the parking lot is in progress. It is estimated that the apartments will be finished late October or early November 2013. If you are interested in housing at Rock Ridge, any OIL staff can now assist you with the application process. Stay tuned to the OIL Newsletter for more updates!

SPECIAL OLYMPICS BOWLING

The area bowling competition will be held on Wednesday, October 23rd beginning at 9:00 a.m. at Great Balls of Fire.

OIL SOCIAL

The last picnic for the year will be on Tuesday, October 1st, Chadick Park, at 5:30 p.m. OIL will provide the hot dogs and drinks but **you are asked to bring a bag of chips or a packaged dessert.**

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.



You can have the freedom that comes with living at home even though you have a long-term illness or disability. The Oklahoma Living Choice Project can help you move out of a nursing home and back into the community.

This project gives Oklahomans like you or your loved one more options to manage health care needs and adds more balance to the state's long-term care system.

If you live in a nursing home and qualify for SoonerCare, then Living Choice may be able to help.

Contact any O.I.L. Case Manager for a referral to the Living Choice Project at (918) 426.6220v/tdd.

*Events are held at OIL unless otherwise noted						
OCTOBER EVENTS						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 <u>OIL Social</u> Chadick Park 5:30 pm	2	3 <u>Shopping</u> 7:00-10:45am	4	5
6	7	8 <u>Women's Gp.</u> TBA 11am <u>Men's Gp.</u> Steak 'n Shake 5 pm	9	10	11	12 <u>Saturday</u> <u>Transportation</u> 8 am
13	14 <u>Brain Injury Gp.</u> 1 pm	15	16	17 <u>Shopping</u> 7:00-10:45am	18  Stipe Center 7:00 - 10:00 pm	19
20	21	22	23 <u>Special Olympics</u> <u>Bowling</u> Great Balls of Fire 9 am	24	25	26 <u>Saturday</u> <u>Transportation</u> 8 am
27	28 <u>Brain Injury Gp.</u> 1 pm	29	30	31		
<p>*Low Impact Exercise Class meets Mon., Wed., & Fri., 10:00 a.m., Stipe Center *Alzheimer's Support Group, 3rd Wed., 12:00 p.m., Main & OK Church of Christ, 423-4743 *Cancer Support Group, 3rd Thur., 1:00 p.m., The Van Buren House, 426-5600 *Diabetes Support Group, 1st 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, 2nd Tue., MRHC Wellness Ctr. Conf. Room, 5:30 p.m., 421-6600</p>						

Oklahomans for Independent Living
601 E. Carl Albert Parkway
McAlester, OK 74501
918-426-6220 Main
800-568-6821 Toll Free
918-426-3245 Fax
918-426-6220 V/TTY

www.oilok.org



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