

**MAY  
2014**

Vol. 27  
No. 5

# **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](http://www.oilok.org)), [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com))**

If you are trying to go green and would like to help save trees, check out our newsletter at [www.oilok.org](http://www.oilok.org) or call us and we will send it via e-mail.

If you are receiving this newsletter in error or no longer wish to receive it, call and we will remove you from our mailing list.

## **DISABILITY WORDS**

### **Independent Living Skills**

Independent Living Skills refers to the basic skills needed by people with disabilities to function on their own, with as little help as possible. Skills include self-help (e.g., bathing, dressing), housekeeping, community living (e.g., shopping, using public transportation), etc.

Independent living is a philosophy regarding persons with disabilities. It does not mean that disabled people should necessarily be able to do everything for themselves, as some might think of independence. But rather, their opportunities should not be limited by their disabilities and that they should be allowed control over every aspect of their own lives. The independent living movement

advocates for this control and hopes to eliminate the stigma that some people with disabilities now face.

### **Challenges**

There are many challenges facing people with disabilities that vary from person to person.

Some people with disabilities may have physical limitations, while others have mental or emotional challenges. Some of the limits on people with disabilities are imposed by others. For example, there are inaccessible buildings and employers who choose not to hire people with disabilities based on preconceived ideas.

Parents often find themselves advocating for better and earlier diagnoses and intervention for their children with disabilities. Sometimes the biggest hurdle for the disabled and their families is that aids and services are too costly.

### **Tools**

Many tools have been developed to foster independent living among people with disabilities who use them. For example, deaf persons can install doorbells or phones that flash lights to get

attention, there are audio books for the visually impaired, and cars adapted with hand controls for those who need them.

### **Skills**

Persons with disabilities may also choose to learn adaptive skills, like lip-reading or Braille. Children with learning disabilities are given Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) to address their specific needs in school. Life skills classes offered to disabled students who desire them, including classes and coaches tailored to specific disabilities. For instance, an individual with Asperger's syndrome might enroll in a class on social cues and interactions.

### **Community**

A goal of the independent living movement is to allow persons with disabilities the rights and opportunities to fully participate in society. The Americans with Disabilities Act, passed by the U.S. government in 1990, was an important step toward reducing discrimination. The National Council on Independent Living continues to advocate for improvements on the cultural attitudes toward people with physical or mental challenges. Also, a

disproportionate number of people with disabilities are living in poverty in America.

Better employment opportunities are needed to change this statistic and allow independent living to more of the disabled population.

## **UN: PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES FREE TO MAKE OWN DECISIONS**

People with even the most severe disabilities have the right to make decisions, no matter if their choices are risky or ultimately turn out to be mistakes, a United Nations panel says in new guidelines to nations. The comments come from the U.N. Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities — an Eighteen member group charged with monitoring the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities — in a statement designed to dispel misunderstandings about the international treaty.

Under the convention, nations commit to “recognize that persons with disabilities enjoy legal capacity on an equal basis with others in all aspects of life.” In practice, however, many people with disabilities around the world are denied fundamental rights including the **opportunity to vote, marry, and start a family based solely on their level of mental capacity**, the U.N. committee said.

Rather than make choices on behalf of those with special needs, the panel clarifies in its new guidelines that the convention calls on nations to recognize the importance of

supported decision-making where individuals are aided in fulfilling their own wishes. In cases where it’s not reasonable to know what an individual wants, decisions should be based on the “best interpretation of their will and preference,” the committee said.

“Respect for the freedom to make choices should be accorded to all persons with disabilities, no matter how much support they need,” said Theresia Degener, a member of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. People with disabilities, including those with psychosocial or cognitive impairments, must be supported in making decisions, and not have decisions made for them, even when it is thought to be in their ‘best interests.’”

At present, 145 countries have ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which calls for greater community access and a better standard of living for people with disabilities around the world. The United States signed the treaty in 2009, but efforts to ratify it have so far been unsuccessful.

## **JUSTICE DEPARTMENT URGES SHIFT AWAY FROM SHELTERED WORKSHOPS**

In a first-of-its-kind settlement, the U.S. Department of Justice says a state has committed to overhaul its system of sheltered workshops and day programs for people with developmental disabilities.

The agreement announced with the state of Rhode Island

comes after a Justice Department investigation found systematic violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act in the state’s approach to transition and employment for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Students in the state were often funneled from school to sheltered workshops, the Justice Department found. Once there, they typically lingered for years in segregated environments earning an average of \$2.21 per hour.

Under the settlement, Rhode Island is pledging to offer supported employment placements that pay at least minimum wage in addition to community-based educational, leisure or volunteer activities for individuals with disabilities when they are not working. What’s more, the state will offer transition services for students age fourteen and older that include internships, visits to job sites and mentoring.

The state plans to redirect “significant” funds over a ten year period that was used for segregated settings in order to provide the integrated offerings. Federal officials said the deal with Rhode Island is the first-ever statewide settlement to address the rights of people with disabilities to receive community-based, state-funded employment and daytime services.

With an estimated 450,000 people with developmental disabilities nationwide currently spending their days in sheltered workshops and other segregated programs, officials said the agreement sets the bar for every other state in the country.

“The agreement will make Rhode Island a national leader in the movement to bring people with disabilities out of segregated work settings and into typical jobs in the community at competitive pay,” said Jocelyn Samuels, acting assistant attorney general for the Civil Rights Division at the Justice Department. “We believe that Rhode Island will be a model for the nation with respect to integrated employment for people with disabilities.”

Despite the push toward community-based offerings, Samuels said individuals with developmental disabilities will be able to remain in segregated environments if they choose. “To ensure informed choice, individuals with I/DD may also remain in sheltered programs if they request a variance after they have received a vocational assessment, a trial work experience, outreach information and benefits counseling” Samuels said.

### **BEST STATES FOR DISABILITY SERVICES**

An annual ranking of states offering the best services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities reveals a familiar but evolving landscape. The analysis of disability services in all 50 states and the District of Columbia released by United Cerebral Palsy finds top performers spanning the map. In previous years, the best services were largely clustered in the Northeast and West. Arizona claimed the number one slot in the ranking for the third year in a row. Also rounding out the 10 best on this year’s list are Michigan, Hawaii, Georgia, New York, South Carolina, Maine,

Massachusetts, Ohio and Missouri.

The analysis factors each state’s approach to promoting independence and productivity, ensuring quality and safety, keeping families together and reaching people in need. Nationally, almost 317,000 people remain on waiting lists for home and community-based services, according to the report, which is largely based on data from 2012, the most recent year available.

Some 38 states serve at least 80 percent of people with developmental disabilities in the community. Meanwhile, just 10 states have one-third or more of their residents with developmental disabilities working in competitive employment, the report found.

As in past years, top-tier services were found in both big and small states, those with rich and poor demographics, jurisdictions with high and low taxes as well as those with varying levels of per-person spending on disability services. The report flags Arkansas, Illinois, Texas and Mississippi — which ranked last for the eighth year in a row — for repeatedly coming in at or near the bottom of the list.

### **SOCIAL SECURITY CHANGES**

Beginning August 2014 the Social Security field offices will no longer issue Social Security number printouts. Individuals who need proof of their Social Security number and cannot find their card, will need to apply for a replacement card.

In addition, beginning October 2014, the Social Security field offices will stop providing

benefit verification letters, except in emergency situations. Benefit verifications are available online, and can be obtained anytime by registering for a my Social Security account located at: [www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccoun](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccoun), or requested through their national toll free number: 1-800-772-1213 or TTY 1-800-325-0778, Monday-Friday 7am-7pm.

### **SPECIAL OLYMPICS STATE SUMMER GAMES**

The 2014 State Games will be held in Stillwater on May 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 16<sup>th</sup>. The OIL FreeSpirits competed in the area games in March. The athletes that finished in first, second, or third place qualified to attend the state games. We wish you all luck!

### **OIL HOT DOG PICNIC**

The picnic will be at Chadick Park on Tuesday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, at 5:30 p.m. OIL will provide the hot dogs and drinks but **you are asked to bring potato chips or a packaged dessert to go with them.** Call for free, local, lift-equipped transportation.

### **GAME DAY AT THE PARK**

We will be playing board games at Chadick Park on Tuesday, May 27<sup>th</sup>. We will gather at 12:00 noon so if you would like to bring a sack lunch, we will begin play afterwards. If you have a favorite game, bring it with you.

### **OIL CLOSED**

OIL will be closed on Monday, May 26<sup>th</sup> for observance of Memorial Day.

Oklahomans for Independent Living  
 601 E. Carl Albert Prkwy.  
 McAlester, OK 74501  
 918-426-6220 Main  
 800-568-6821 Toll Free  
 918-426-3245 Fax  
 918-426-6220 V/TTY  
[www.oilok.org](http://www.oilok.org)



Non-Profit Org.  
 U.S. Postage  
 PAID  
 Permit No. 290



Return Service Requested

**All donations to OIL are tax deductible.**

The contents of this newsletter were developed under a grant from the Department of Education. However, these contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

<i>*Events are held at OIL unless otherwise noted</i>						
<b>MAY EVENTS</b>						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				<b>1</b> <u>Shopping</u> 7:00-10:45am	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> <u>Armed Forces Day Parade &amp; Celebrations</u>
<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> <u>Men's Gp.</u> Adelita's 5 pm	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> <u>Saturday Transportation</u> 8 am
<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> <u>Brain Injury Gp.</u> 1 pm	<b>13</b> <u>Shopping</u> 7:00-10:45am <u>Women's Gp.</u> TBA 11am	<b>14</b> <u>Special Olympics</u> Stillwater	<b>15</b> <u>Special Olympics</u> Stillwater	<b>16</b> <u>Special Olympics</u> Stillwater	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> <u>OIL PICNIC</u> Chadick Park 5:30 pm	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> <u>Saturday Transportation</u> 8 am
<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> OIL CLOSED	<b>27</b> <u>Game Day</u> Chadick Park Noon	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>
<p><i>*Low Impact Exercise Class for Sr.'s</i> meets Mon., Wed., &amp; Fri., 10:00 a.m., Stipe Center    <i>*Alzheimer's Support Group</i>, 3<sup>rd</sup> Wed., 12:30 p.m., Main &amp; OK Church of Christ, call Glenda at 916-1210    <i>*Diabetes Support Group</i>, 1<sup>st</sup> Tue., 6:00 p.m., McAlester Regional Health Center Wellness Conf. Room, contact Kathy at 421-6812    <i>*For information on Men's &amp; Women's Grief Support Groups</i> – call Hospice of McAlester at 423-3911 for their groups or for information on a 7 week <u>Dealing with Grief Course</u> – call Heartland Hospice. at 302-0700,    <i>*For information on the Stroke Support Group</i>, call the McAlester Regional Health Center at 426-1800</p>						

