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OIL Newsletter



A monthly publication of THE OKLAHOMANS for INDEPENDENT LIVING

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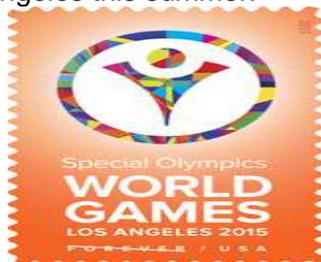
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SPECIAL OLYMPICS STATE SUMMER GAMES

The 2015 State Games was held recently in Stillwater. There were twelve OIL FreeSpirit athletes who competed in many track and field events and even bowling. Congratulations to all who placed!

STAMP TO HONOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS WORLD GAMES

The U.S. Postal Service is issuing a commemorative stamp in honor of the Special Olympics World Games in Los Angeles this summer.



The Forever stamp recently went on sale nationwide. It features the logo for this summer's competition, which will be held July 25 to August 2, 2015. Using these stamps on your cards, letters and packages is a great way to show your support for the athletes.

Special Olympics holds alternating winter and summer world games every two years in locations around the globe. The Los Angeles games are expected to draw over 7,000 athletes from 177 countries, including 344 competitors from across the United States.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to Ms. Darlene Chase for her win in the Oklahoma Department of Aging Services' statewide senior poetry contest. She wrote a poem entitled "The Little Orphan Boy" which OIL submitted to the state committee in Oklahoma City. The contestants were asked to reflect the theme "Celebrate, Discover, Embrace". She received first place for her work and was invited to read the poem and be recognized at the awards luncheon at the Embassy Suites Conference Center.

DHS ADDS FOSTER CARE OMBUDSMAN POSITION, NEW COMPLAINT PROCESS

The Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS) has created a new position to help resolve problems for foster parents. Lisa Buck, a former foster parent and a professional advocate, has been named as the foster care ombudsman.

DHS Director Ed Lake created this position within the Office of Client Advocacy (OCA) to track, address and resolve complaints and grievances of foster parents in order to improve their experiences with DHS and ultimately to improve recruitment and retention of foster parents. OCA is the independent investigative and advocacy office within DHS that promotes client safety and the fair, honest and professional delivery of services provided by the agency.

Buck and her husband became foster parents eight years ago as an answer to their call of faith. They have had eight foster children in their home, adopting two of them along the way. In addition to the children they adopted, the Bucks also have four biological daughters, and two other "sons" who have

become part of the family through church mentorship.

“Having been a foster parent, I understand that it is critically important that their needs be heard and addressed,” she said. Buck is passionate about systemic improvements for foster families. She is a tireless advocate for foster parent recruitment and retention, speaking all over the state to faith-based groups, support groups and conferences.

Senate Bill 1793 which went into effect November 1, 2014, mandated an entirely new grievance and complaint process for foster parents. Through this legislation an online complaint system has been established and can be accessed at www.okfosterparentvoices.org.

Foster parents are able to submit complaints at a neutral site. This process cultivates a systemic support system for foster parents and promotes communication among persons involved in providing services to children placed in foster care. The Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth (OCCY) supports the advocacy efforts for foster parents offered by the new foster care ombudsman.

The grievance procedures have been significantly modified for foster parents. The statute requires all grievances and complaints to be resolved within 60 days. However, initial responses to complaints or grievances are now answered within three business days and are tracked by the foster care ombudsman.

To submit a complaint or grievance, foster parents can use the online form located

at: <http://www.okfosterparentvoices.org/> or call 1-866-335-9288.

Foster parents have not had this opportunity before. The process will help them understand what their rights are, provide them with answers and closure, and allow their voices to be heard.

CLASS ACTION LAWSUIT AGAINST HOLLISTER COMPANY STORES

Notice of Class Action: A class action lawsuit is currently pending involving a challenge to the entrances at certain Hollister Company Stores; specifically, the case alleges that the raised porch entrances violated Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The following class was certified by the court on April 12, 2012:

*All people with disabilities who use wheelchairs for mobility who, during the two years prior to the filing of the Complaint in this case, were denied full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations of any Hollister Company Store in the United States on the basis of disability because of the presence of an Elevated Entrance.

Proposed Class Action Settlement Agreement:

*Defendants (a) have eliminated or, by January 31, 2016, will eliminate Elevated Entrances to create store entrances that have no changes in the level between the exterior and the interior of the store; or (b) have closed or will, by January 31, 2016, close the stores. The results of these actions will be that a total of

126 of the original 250 stores with steps will retain those steps.

Your Rights as a Class Member:

*If you are a person with a disability who uses a wheelchair or scooter and who, within two years prior to November 24, 2009, has experienced any problems with access at any Hollister Co. stores as a result of your Mobility Disability, you are a member of the proposed settlement Class. A Mobility Disability for purpose of this settlement means a disability or condition which substantially limits a person in the major life activity of walking.

The Settlement Agreement is also available on the Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition website www.ccdconline.org/case/615

NEARLY 40 PERCENT OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES DON'T GRADUATE

A new report is sounding alarm bells about lagging high school graduation rates among students with disabilities. Some 85 to 90 percent of kids with disabilities are estimated to be capable of completing the requirements for a high school diploma. Yet, just 6 in 10 of these students graduated in 2013, the most recent year for which figures are available.

With the overall graduation rate for American students at its highest ever — reaching 81.4 percent in 2013 — the report finds that some students are struggling to keep pace. “While progress is substantial in many areas of the country, the number of non-graduates remains disturbingly high for students of color, students from

low-income families and young people with disabilities,” wrote Gen. Colin Powell in a letter released as part of the report which their group, America’s Promise Alliance, helped produce.

Among children with disabilities, nearly 62 percent graduated in 2013. The figure reflects an increase over previous years, but still puts those in special education almost 20 points behind the general student population, the report found.

Significantly, graduation rates for students with disabilities varied dramatically across the states, with Arkansas reporting a high of just over 80 percent, while Mississippi came in last at 22.5 percent. The discrepancy is due at least in part to varying allowances for students in special education seeking a standard diploma, the analysis found. In some states, for example, there are fewer credit requirements, extensions or lower performance criteria allowed for these students. The report also notes that states differ in determining which students with disabilities are counted in this group. Misconceptions and low expectations as well as discipline disparities likely play a role in lower graduation rates among those with disabilities, the report said.

OIL HOT DOG PICNIC

The picnic will be at Chadick Park on Tuesday, June 2nd, at 5:30 p.m. OIL will provide the hot dogs & drinks but **attendees are asked to bring a Family Size package of potato chips or a packaged dessert to go with them.** Call for free, local, lift-equipped transportation.

RECREATIONAL SURVEY

The survey results are in. We took everyone’s suggestions and preferences into consideration when selecting the recreational activities. We thank those of you who gave us input. Please start saving now so that you will have the money necessary to attend. Below are some of the activities discussed. Stay tuned.....

TULSA ZOO

On Friday, June 12th, OIL will be going to the Tulsa Zoo. There will be a transportation fee of \$5. The zoo entrance fee is \$10 per person and you will need to bring enough money to eat lunch there. We will be leaving OIL at 7:15 a.m. Seats will fill fast so call now.



LAKE DAY

On Saturday, June 20th, OIL will have a day of fun at Lake Eufaula from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m. We will have fishing poles and bait for those wanting to fish. Bring your bathing suit if you want to swim and don’t forget your lawn chair or blanket. We will provide the weenies to roast, drinks, and S’mores for those who want them. We ask that you bring a Family Size package of Chips. Come join us by the Bonfire for an evening of summer fun!!! However, it will depend on the water level. Call for details.



Transportation

O.I.L. provides lift-equipped transportation in McAlester and the surrounding area.

Monday – Thursday, 8:00 – 4:30
Friday 8:00 – 1:00

A twenty-four hour minimum notice is required. The cost is \$2 per pick up in McAlester and \$3 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.*



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 Leah Medina for a referral to the Living Choice Project at (918) 426-6220v/tdd.

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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>							JUNE EVENTS						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 <u>Brain Injury Gp.</u> 1 pm	2 <u>OIL Picnic</u> Chadick Park 5:30 pm	3	4 <u>Shopping</u> 7:00-10:45am	5	6	7	8	9 <u>Men's Gp.</u> Mazzio's 5 pm	10	11	12 <u>Tulsa Zoo</u>	13 <u>Saturday Transportation</u> 8 am
14	15 <u>Brain Injury Gp.</u> 1 pm	16 <u>Women's Gp.</u> Wendy's 11 am	17	18 <u>Shopping</u> 7:00-10:45am	19	20 <u>Swimming/Fishing/Bonfire at the Lake</u>	21	22	23	24	25	26	27 <u>Saturday Transportation</u> 8 am
28	29	30											

**Low Impact Exercise Class for Sr.'s* meets Mon., Wed., & Fri., 10:00 a.m., Stipe Center *Alzheimer's Support Group, 3rd Wed., 12:30 p.m., Main & OK Church of Christ *Diabetes Support Group, 1st Tue., 6:00 p.m., McAlester Regional Health Center Wellness Conf. Room, call Kathy at 421-6812 *For information on Men's & Women's Grief Support Groups – call Hospice of McAlester at 423-3911 for their groups or for information on a 7 week Dealing with Grief Course call Heartland Hospice at 302-0700, *For information on the Stroke Support Group, call the McAlester Regional Hospital at 426-1800, *Parkinson's Support Group, 3rd Tues., 6:00 p.m., Pittsburg County Health Department, 423-1267

