

THE Colorado Independent

March/April 2007

This newsletter is published by the Provider Relations Unit of the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and edited by Judy Neal, Independent Living Program Coordinator. The goal is to share information among the ten Colorado Centers for Independent Living, the Statewide Independent Living Council, and DVR staff. The submission of information or articles from all affiliated with these organizations is both encouraged and welcomed. Please e-mail any articles of interest to judy.neal@state.co.us If you have questions, please phone me at (303) 866-4645.

Organizing for Change



Patricia Yeager, SILC Training Consultant

The disability community knows that there is power in numbers, power in just “showing up.” We need to learn how to reach, teach, and motivate enough people to make a significant impact on public

policy. Then, we must organize ourselves to keep the information flowing and keep the “buzz” alive.

As part of our state plan’s directive to provide training for each Colorado CIL, Patricia Yeager, SILC Training Consultant, gave CPWD a lesson in Community Organizing. The training pointed out that organizing can create systems change, influencing the lives of many more people than what we accomplish with individual advocacy.

Patricia helped us understand the difference between a problem and an issue; between a personal goal and a systems change. She also emphasized the importance of developing new leaders.

“You’re not a success until you aren’t the one standing up there,” she said.

Continued on p.3



From the Director

**By
Nancy Smith**

It is my pleasure to write this column for the first edition of the ***Colorado Independent***. I hope in this space to tell you about things that are important to both the Independent Living Centers and to the entire Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

My own experience with and support of the IL movement goes back to the early 1970s. I saw at that time that the ILCs were doing things that no one else was even attempting. From helping people get out of nursing homes to creating personal assistance agencies, to building accessible transportation options, IL was in front of all the curves in knowing what people with disabilities need to be truly independent. I served on the board for a number of years for the ILC located in St. Paul, Minnesota.

As you may have heard, both IL and VR are in the process of evaluating the IL/VR

Collaborative. This pilot project was a creative idea implemented

to see if IL Centers could offer VR customers some of the same skill building opportunities VR had purchased from outside vendors in the past. After a year of operation, what we all need to determine is how effective this project is at using the skills and resources of the ILCs to help customers of VR build the skills they need to be fully employable.

Although it is never easy to start something new, find the right staff and offer the right menu of opportunities that are needed by the customers, the centers who are participating overcame those hurdles and are now delivering service to VR customers.

Since this project was previewed to the Joint Budget Committee (JBC), I think it is even more critical that we carefully evaluate what it has accomplished and what still needs to be improved or changed. The JBC looks at things concretely like return on investment, efficient utilization of resources and long-term viability. What can we share with them about those issues? Are we spending the money well? What is the ratio of persons moving into competitive employment versus

expenditures per person? Given the amount of funds provided to the centers, what can we say about how efficient the ILCs have been at serving a number of people consistent with the population base around them?

From the VR perspective, counselors and other staff in field offices will be looking at similar things. Can they get what they need from the ILCs for their customers in a timely and cost-effective manner? What kind of customer service are the VR Field Offices getting from the ILCs?

Ultimately, I would like to see the participating ILCs and a representative sampling of supervisors from the VR field offices sit down together to craft the future of this project. I will have more to tell you about this in some future issue of this newsletter.

WELCOME
New SILC Members

Georgeanna Chapman
Amy Jo Denning
Debra Petersen

Kristie Braaten
(Pending)

Organizing – from page 1

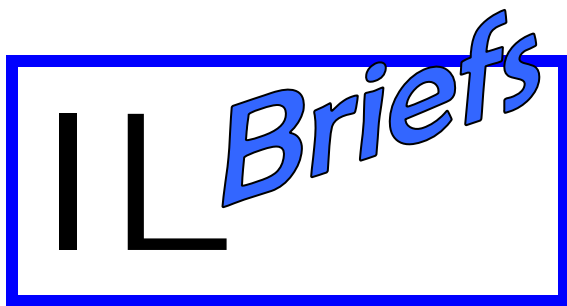
Other key elements in community organizing include: setting long-term and short-term goals, creating self-directed work groups, mentoring new leaders, and using technology to keep the stakeholders informed. A call to action must include a well-informed community, a real understanding of the issue, and a unified presentation of the proposed outcome.

CPWD is preparing to set up a community organizing network in their catchment area. DRS in Fort Collins is planning to follow suit. As the new State Plan for Independent Living

“You’re not a success until you aren’t the one standing up there.”

(SPIL) is being developed, community organizing is likely to be presented as a goal for the entire state. The power has always been in our people. It’s up to our centers to organize and unleash that power on systems and policies that discriminate against people with disabilities.

Ten years ago, Patricia Yeager helped develop a community organizing/systems change network in California that is still experiencing success.



Independent Life Center, Craig

David Foster reports that ILC has begun doing outreach with the Homeless Youth Coalition. They have found that many young people with disabilities are “couch surfing” and not getting the services that they need.

Center for Independence, Grand Junction

As on March 1, CFI is ready to charter their 24 ft. accessible pontoon boat. The boat has a wheelchair ramp, tie downs for four wheelchairs. Fishing gear, and a fish finder. The \$100 per day charter fee includes a captain. No fishing license necessary on the boat. For details contact Jane Newton at the CFI office.

Linda Taylor also want to remind us that the Palisades Peach Blossom Week, April 15-22, is just about the best time to see Grand Junction.

Southwest Center for Independence, Durango

SWCI reports that things are going well in their Section 8 program. One consumer is in the final phase of purchasing a home using the voucher program. Another consumer is relinquishing her voucher because she has steady, gainful employment.

Center for People With Disabilities, Boulder

CPWD now has two traveling Independent Living Specialists to cover Adams County and nearby rural and mountain areas. They are also adjusting some of their programs to meet the needs of younger consumers. The Relationship Class and Yoga in Chairs seem to be big hits.

Disability Center for Independent Living, Denver

DCIL hope to be moved to their new quarters within the month. The new office will be just down the block at 4821 38th. An Open House will be announced soon.

IL Briefs, continued

Atlantis, Denver

Atlantis invites everyone to be a sponsor of the **Fun Run for Disability Rights** to be held in Washington D. C. on April 29th. For details, visit www.adaptfunrun.org.

Colorado Springs Independence Center

CSIC has issued a call to action to improve the cities snow removal policies. They would like to hear how other cities (and disability organizations) are dealing with the problem. There was no such thing as equal access this winter.

Connections for Independent Living, Greeley

Connections has been awarded a community initiative grant from United Way of Weld County. People with disabilities who have goals of increasing self-sufficiency and decreasing their reliance on emergency services in the community may be eligible for this intense "Champions Program". Call Connections for application information.

Disabled Resource Services, Fort Collins

Save the Date! On May 25, DRS will hold it's 25th annual Wine Fest. The day will also mark Nancy Jackson's 25th year as the DRS executive director. Tickets are \$40. Call DRS for details.

Center for Disabilities, Pueblo

Housing and Employment are still the hot topics in Pueblo. The SILC has been keeping Larry Williams busy with the SPIL committee, and one of the public hearings will be hosted by CFD.

Colorado IL Websites

www.atlantiscommunity.net

www.cfigj.org

www.cpwd-ilc.org

www.fortnet.org/drs

www.swcidur.org

If your center has a website that is not listed, please e-mail the link to me at judy.neal@state.co.us.

Statewide Independent Living Council

The Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) is on track and moving forward. The new fiscal year, beginning July 1, will usher in a new State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL), and the SILC is excited to share the new plan with our stakeholders.

The SPIL committee is nearing the completion of the proposed goals and objectives that will guide and support independent living in Colorado for the next three years.

Public hearings have been scheduled as follows:

April 18, 2007, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.
Colorado History Museum
Auditorium
1300 Broadway, Denver

April 25, 2007, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.
4616 S. Shields., Fort Collins

May 2, 2007, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.
Center for Disabilities
1304 Berkeley Ave., Pueblo

May 9, 2007, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.
Center for Independence
1600 Ute Ave., Grand Junction

You may speak at the hearing. Please bring written comments,

also. If you are unable to attend, you may send written comments to: Judy Neal, DVR, 1575 Sherman Street, 4th Floor, Denver, CO 80203 or fax to (303) 866-4905 before 5:00 p.m., on May 9, 2007. The text of the new SPIL will be posted at www.cpwd-ilc.org after April 1, 2007

SILC ROSTER

Terrance Turner, Chair, Denver
Dr. Larry Williams, Vice-Chair,
Pueblo

Pat Going, Treasurer, C. Springs
Brent Belisle, Past Chair, Denver
William Aceves II, Parker

Amy Allred, Durango
Kristie Braaten (pending), Denver

Georgeanna Chapman, Denver
Amy Jo Denning, Denver

David Foster, Craig

Faith Gross, Denver

Clarence Miller, Denver

Debra Petersen, Broomfield

Carol Jean Reynolds, Denver

Michael Rooney, Littleton

Judy Neal, ex-officio

Patricia Yeager,
Training Consultant

Legislative Update

Voter Accessibility and Senate Bill 07-083

By David Bolin, CPWD Boulder

Senate Bill 07-083 is a bill concerning statutory provisions under the "UNIFORM ELECTION CODE OF 1992" governing the manner in which elections are conducted. As originally introduced, this bill was designed to clean up the election code and was written at the request of and with the assistance of the Secretary of State. While the bill was debated on the Senate floor, an amendment was made to allow the State to certify one particular ballot-marking machine, the AutoMARK by ES&S. The wording of the amendment is as follows:

FOR PURPOSES OF THIS SUBSECTION (1), THE FINAL STEP OF CASTING A BALLOT MEANS CAUSING A BALLOT TO BE PLACED INTO ANY DEVICE THAT PROTECTS THE PRIVACY AND INTEGRITY OF THE ELECTOR'S CHOICE.

This amendment would make it possible to certify the AutoMARK while taking away the rights of

people with disabilities to vote and cast their ballot independently and privately. This wording allows for a machine that places the ballot in a privacy sleeve that would then be cast by an election judge, attendant, family member or someone else. Why is this an issue?

Under current Colorado statute, we, as people with disabilities, have the right to vote privately and independently on accessible voting machines provided in each voting site. Voting includes making the choices on an accessible machine, reviewing those choices and currently pressing the "CAST" button on the accessible machine to privately cast our ballot without assistance from another person. This is a right that we just received for the 2006 election. For many in our community, it was the first time we had cast a ballot independently and privately since acquiring our disabilities. Previously, we had to trust a family member, friend, election official, or another person to vote in the manner we chose and then to cast our ballot. 2006 was a landmark election for people with disabilities because we were free from being forced to

Voter. . . continued

vote in a manner that was not private or independent.

What does this amendment do? The amendment changes the legal definition of casting a ballot to allow the Secretary of State to certify the AutoMARK accessible voting machine. The AutoMARK currently requires the voter to place the marked ballot into the ballot box in order to cast the vote so that it is ready to be counted. The ballot is in a privacy sleeve to protect the secrecy of the vote; however some voters with manual dexterity disabilities and blindness will need assistance to complete their voting by casting the ballot. Direct Record Electronic voting machines (DRE), used in Colorado in 2006, allow us to “cast” our votes onto a memory card with a paper audit trail in a locked printing canister. This is accomplished by simply pushing a button on the voting machine. With adaptive technology nearly every voter with a disability can complete the entire voting process vote privately and independently on a DRE.

This amendment does not comply with the federal Help America Vote Act which applies to federal elections and requires that voters with disabilities be provided the opportunity to vote in private and without assistance including casting the ballot.

If the amendment as written stays in the bill, the disability community will be relegated to second-class citizenship once again. For counties that choose to purchase the machine, some voters with disabilities will be forced to have actual assistance to cast their ballot in the ballot box. The amendment uses the words “causing a ballot to be placed into any device that protects the privacy and integrity of the elector’s choice”. The device that is being referred to in this wording is a privacy sleeve, a mere envelope. To me a device is a printer, a ballot box, a computer, a respirator, a wheelchair, a hearing aid, and other items but an envelope is not a device. It is just an envelope.

What can the disability community do? Learn more about this bill, it is available on the internet at http://www.leg.state.co.us/clics/clics2007a/csl.nsf/fsbillcont3/3BEB2FCE7EF9D03187257251007A4B33?open&file=083_eng.pdf. Ask questions. Faith Gross with the Legal Center for People with Disabilities and Older People is our state PAVA (Protection and Advocacy for Voting Access) coordinator. She can be reached at 303-722-0300. Contact your local center for independent living and work with them to ensure your voice is heard.

Listen to This!

*By Evelyn Tileston
Independent Life Center
Craig, Colorado*

While attending a conference in Atlanta sponsored by the Center for Disease Control and the Helen Keller National Center, we learned of low-cost FM listening devices. The conference focused on the dual disabilities of vision and hearing loss. The number of people affected by both of these conditions is reaching epidemic proportions.

The FM systems are designed for either groups or individuals. They allow the person to hear amplified voices directly into their headsets. The systems are set up to focus on the decibel range of the human voice. We purchased a wireless system for our group meetings using OIB funds. It turned out that some of our consumers were only getting partial information because they could not hear us.

One of our OIB consumers asked us to locate a system for individual use. We researched the systems and found a personal FM System at a reasonable price. The consumer immediately ordered it. She is so happy with the system that she has encouraged six other people to try one. Most of these people have bought one, or are in the process of getting one. The consumer has not only become more independent because of the FM System, she has become an advocate for all those with hearing loss.

Helpful Web Addresses

ILRU webcast schedule
<http://ilru.org/html/training/webcasts/calendar.html>

AAPD Calendar of events
<http://www.aapd-dc.org/calendar/calendar.php>

Disability Conference list
<http://www.starlingweb.com/adp/as00029e.htm#apr>

Let us know about other websites that you find helpful.

DON'T FORGET

2007 REGION 8 INDEPENDENT LIVING CONFERENCE
Rising Above, Reaching Beyond...

What Does the Future Hold?

Casper, Wyoming
June 26 – 28, 2007

1-800-682-1240 or (303) 636-5600
Wendy Sain, CTAT
WSain@denveroptions.org

Integration

How do I integrate
but the same

How do I determine
& which go?

to bring the two together
to form the sum which
is greater than
the two individual
parts?

the two that are different
in part?

which parts stay
Is it possible

Yes, it is possible!

The possibilities are endless—
The compassion from before
enhanced by the understanding
dearly bought by this experience
have prepared me for greater
things than I could have ever
imagined!

Written by Sharon Mehesy August 6, 2005 contemplating how to integrate the “pre-injury Sharon” with the “post-injury Sharon.” She is now on staff at SWCI in Durango.