

**Catholic Charities** of Cortland County

◆ Emergency Food Pantry, Medications & Basic Needs  
 ◆ Community Mental Health & Recovery Services  
 ◆ Adolescent Support Services

33-35 Central Avenue Cortland, New York 13045  
 Tel: 607-756-5992 Fax: 607-756-5999

**Cortland Regional MEDICAL CENTER**  
*The Center of Your Care*

Acute Care      Outpatient Services  
 Emergency Services      Home Health Services  
 Prompt Care      Long Term Care

Visit us at:  
[www.cortlandregional.org](http://www.cortlandregional.org)

**Cortland Community Reentry Program, Inc.**  
 A CMRF Accredited Brain Injury Program

*Specializing in Brain Injury Rehabilitation Services*

149 South Main Street      Phone: 607-753-8241  
 Cortland, New York 13045      1-888-498-2958  
 Web: [www.ccrp.net](http://www.ccrp.net)      Fax: 607-753-0768

**EC EMPLOYMENT CONNECTION**

*"Serving People with Barriers to Employment"*

**607-756-0246**  
 Ask for Brianna Goff  
 Email: [briannag@jmmurray.com](mailto:briannag@jmmurray.com)  
 4059 Route 281 Cortland, NY 13045

**CAPCO – Energy Services**  
 Did you know that weatherization can reduce home energy costs by up to 30%.

**RESTORE Program**  
 If you are 60+ and own your home, you may be eligible for emergency repairs.

HEAP Income Eligibility.  
**CALL 753-6781**

**RACKER CENTERS**  
*Celebrating Sixty*  
 Creating Opportunities for People with Special Needs... since 1948  
[www.rackercenters.org](http://www.rackercenters.org) • 866-408-9263

Offering a Complete Range of **Home Medical Equipment & Supplies**  
 Delivery • Set-Up • Maintenance

*We Are Your Local Provider For:*  
 CPAP & BiPAP  
 Oxygen Concentrators  
 Portable Oxygen Nebulizers  
 Power Chairs, Scooters & Lift Chairs  
 Wheelchairs  
 Hospital Beds  
 Walkers & Canes

**Home Health Services**  
*"We're Here for You"*

**HAVE A QUESTION?**  
 Call us at **756-3880**  
 160 Homer Ave., Cortland  
[www.ccrhomehealthservices.com](http://www.ccrhomehealthservices.com)

**Cortland Housing Assistance Council, Inc.**

We construct permanent ramps and also install temporary ramps. All ramps comply with ADA / ANSI Codes, as well as all local building codes.

**CHAC**  
 Established 1973

36 Taylor Street  
 Cortland, NY 13045  
 Phone: (607) 753-8271  
 Fax: (607) 756-6267

**A.V.R.E.**  
 SERVING THE TWIN TIERS SINCE 1926

*Seeing Things Differently*

Association for Vision Rehabilitation & Employment, Inc.  
 174 Court St., Binghamton, NY 13901  
 607-724-2428 [www.avreus.org](http://www.avreus.org)

**JL CORTLAND ENT & SLEEP LAB**

*Specializing in:*  
 - General ENT  
 - Sleep Disorders  
 - Comprehensive Thyroid Care  
 - Head and Neck Surgery

1104 Commons Ave.  
 Cortland, NY 13045  
 Phone: 607-753-6560  
 Fax: 607-753-6566

**Access to Independence of Cortland County, Inc.**

**ACCESS NEWS**

Summer 2008 NUMBER XVII

**Local Disability Advocates Storm State Capitol - Protest State ILC Funding Cuts**

"Don't be a zero; Restore the cuts; Be our hero!" These words reverberated throughout the State Capitol on August 19, as seven ATI disability advocates joined more than 200 others from across the state to convene in a large rotunda that sits down the hall from Governor Paterson's Administrative Offices. The group represented New York's 40 Independent Living Centers (ILCs) and rallied to support disability services that are facing severe cuts due to the impending state budget deficit.

In early August, the governor proposed immediate cuts to ILCs by 6% on remaining disbursements this year. The cut would carry over into Fiscal Year 2009 and beyond. The cut would be in addition to a 2% cut that ILCs already received.

"We who believe in freedom will not rest until we stop the cuts, stop the cuts, stop the cuts, we won't rest until we stop the cuts." Almost seamlessly, the group's barks turned into a melodic mantra. ILCs provide guidance and advocacy to people with disabilities in all areas that affect their choice to fully participate in society as independent persons.

"Who do we want? Governor Paterson! When do we want him? Now!" In the early afternoon, a new chant raised the Capitol louder than any other before it. In response to an offer to meet with the governor's senior staff, the advocates recalled the fruits of their prior discussions with the same staff. Those discussions yielded the very cuts that the group was there to protest.

"Save our programs; Save our wages; Stop the cuts now!" With no response from the Governor, the mounting group stormed the hallway leading to the administrative offices. News crews arrived, state troopers multiplied and Senate and Assembly leaders appeared; some even joined in the protest.

The demonstration continued tirelessly until three of the group's leading advocates finally gained access to the Governor's offices. Unfortunately, the efforts were to no avail, as later in the evening state leaders had reached consensus; the cuts would remain.

Independent Living Centers (ILCs) are cost-effective, peer-run organizations that provide information, advocacy, training and peer support for people with disabilities. ILCs are critical to the state's efforts to transition and divert people from placement in a nursing facility or other institution. They also are leaders in assisting youth with disabilities who are transitioning out of the educational system. Even though these centers offer a more cost-effective, non-medical model approach to meeting the needs of people with disabilities, they are facing the possibility of being cut twice in the same year!

Dan Mullins, ATI Board Member, said "it was great to participate in government and to see the results of your efforts first-hand." He said he "encourages everyone to take part in this sort of opportunity," after all, "it makes you a stronger advocate and a more knowledgeable Board member."



*Above: Laura Eaton, Mary Ewing, Steve Potts, Karen Sanford and Fran Pizzola rally to restore cuts.*



**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Employment Conference ..... 2  
 October is NDEAM..... 2  
 ATI UCS Eligible..... 2  
 Staff Trainings..... 3  
 Parks Access Pass ..... 3  
 Accessible Currency Myths .... 3  
 Lewis Earns FDC..... 4  
 New ADA Regs Proposed ..... 4  
 ATI Awarded \$300,000 ..... 4  
 ADA Celebration..... 4  
 ATI Lands Chief Architect ..... 5  
 Accessibility Experts..... 5  
 Psychological First Aid ..... 6  
 Arthritis Support ..... 6  
 Cutting Edge Technology ..... 6  
 ADA Celebration Pics ..... 7

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

26 North Main Street  
 Cortland, New York 13045



NON-PROFIT ORG.  
 U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
 CORTLAND, NY  
 PERMIT NO. 49



**October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month**

Each October, Cortland County joins the nation to recognize the month of October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). This annual recognition aims to honor and celebrate the accomplishments of local employees with disabilities who have achieved success in the workplace, as well as to acknowledge the local businesses that have provided career opportunities to (and benefited from the outstanding contributions of) employees with disabilities.

Nominations for business and employee awards will be accepted until Friday, August 29. Nomination forms are available at ATI.

This year, employee and employer awards will be presented in the Cortland Ramada Ballroom during a recognition breakfast on October 1, 2008, from 8:00 to 10:00 am.

**ATI Spring Employment Conference Offers Participants a Bridge to Employment Awareness**

One of the premiere components to the ATI Peer Mentoring Program (PMP) is its semi-annual Employment Conference. Last May, ATI's Spring 2008 Conference was the agency's most successful ever. Each of the three four-hour sessions aimed to: (1) serve individuals with disabilities who are seeking community employment; (2) build collaboration among and awareness of all local workforce development partners; and (3) reduce the stigma that exists relating to disability issues.

First, ATI's Spring 2008 Employment Conference offered a plethora of information and hands-on activities to participants. In addition to covering their employment rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act, participants learned about work incentives, the variety of services that are available throughout the community and how to navigate them, and how to apply the independent living philosophy to their work readiness and job search processes. Participants also heard from four local employers about job opportunities that existed in the community, how to apply, and what would be expected of them as employees. The conference featured a job-search

clinic that was facilitated by a local employment agency and an interviewing clinic that was facilitated by the SUNY Cortland Career Services Department.

Second, ATI's Spring 2008 Employment Conference aimed to bring local workforce development agencies and service providers together to build awareness about each others' programs and services, as well as to provide a forum for dialogue on ways to collaborate and identify ways to improve services and opportunities for mutual consumers.

Third, ATI's Spring 2008 Employment Conference aimed to educate businesses on the abilities that individuals with disabilities have and to reduce any stigma that might be associated with a person that has a disability. In addition to introducing businesses to our agency and the others in the community that offer disability services, business presenters left the conference with increased awareness of accessibility issues all around, whether it be a better understanding of needs their own customers might have, or a willingness to develop job shadowing experiences for individuals in the PMP.

**2008 ADA Celebration**



**ATI Eligible To Provide VESID Unified Contract Services**

On August 14, ATI received word from the State Education Department that it would be placed into a pool of eligible providers for consideration of awarding a Unified Contract Services (UCS) service contract. While ATI already offers many of the services, it would become eligible to receive fees from VESID to provide those services to qualified individuals.

ATI received PASS ratings to provide the following VESID services: Entry Services Level I, II and III; Work Readiness Services Level I, II and III; Work Experience Development; Job Retention Services; Work and Benefits Community Information Sessions; Short Term and Long Term Benefits Advisement; and Coaching Supports.

ATI anticipates a final decision regarding specific contract awards in the early fall.

**JOHN L. BARDSLEY**  
ATTORNEY AT LAW  
HSBC BANK BUILDING, 2ND FLOOR  
36 MAIN STREET, P.O. BOX 166  
CORTLAND, NEW YORK 13045  
Telephone: (607) 758-9116 Fax: (607) 758-9062  
Email: bardsleylaw1@verizon.net

**SHERIDAN'S**  
Fine Jewelry  
Estate Jewelry Bought & Sold Irish Giftware & Jewelry  
607.753.7003  
6 MAIN STREET, CORTLAND, NEW YORK 13045

Support Access to Independence!  
Advertise your business here!  
For more information, call:  
607-753-7363

**G.E.M.S.**  
Glamorous Expressions Multi-Cultural Salon  
Cassandra Morse, Owner/Stylist  
26 North Main Street  
Cortland, NY 13045  
(607) 662-4140  
Making you look and feel glamorous!

Maria R. Mucaria  
Flutes and Recorders  
Make your day special  
Now accepting students; All ages and levels  
Music reading skills and more.  
Performances for weddings, corporate events, educational, and more.  
607-283-6267 or 516-459-5098  
LibrasMuse101@aol.com  
http://www.myspace.com/mariarmucaria

**CORTLAND EYE CENTER**  
Jacqueline Ferguson, MD  
Michele Barno, OD  
1160 Tompkins Street  
Cortland, NY 13045  
Tel 607-753-7528  
FAX 607-756-8163

### Cutting Edge Technology

In this edition of *Cutting Edge Technology* ATI welcomes the newest addition to its array of available adaptive technology, the Sorenson Videophone (VP-200). The VP-200 makes it possible for individuals with and without hearing impairments to easily communicate with each other using videophone technology. The VP-200 includes new deaf-friendly features such as a LightRing for visual caller ID, a pan/tilt/zoom camera that works with a click of a button, and a new user interface and remote control.



The videophone will work in two ways. First, it facilitates direct communication between two American Sign Language (ASL) users via video. Second, it facilitates communication between one ASL user and one non-ASL user through a video relay service by way of an interpreter. Sorenson Video Relay Service (VRS) is a free service provided by Sorenson Communications that enables individuals with and without hearing impairments to conduct video relay calls with family, friends, and business associates through a certified sign language interpreter, Sorenson videophone, TV, and a high-speed Internet connection. The deaf user sees an interpreter on their TV and signs to the interpreter, who then contacts the hearing user by way of a standard phone line and relays the conversation between the two parties. Hearing customers can also place video relay calls by simply dialing the DirectVP™ number of the deaf person or by dialing Sorenson's toll-free number. Sorenson VRS is available 24 hours a day.

For more information on Sorenson Video Phones go to [www.sorenson.com](http://www.sorenson.com) or contact us via email at [info@aticortland.org](mailto:info@aticortland.org). The VP-200 will be available for public use in early September. Stop by and check it out!

employees of local service agencies who work directly with consumers in a direct-care, para-professional, helping role.

### ATI to Host Free Psychological First Aid Training

The training aims to provide participants with a basic understanding of disaster behavioral health, the key concepts of Psychological First Aid, when and how to refer people to other professionals or organizations, and an overview of Cortland County Emergency response procedures.

This training is a collaborative effort between Access to Independence, Franziska Racker Centers and Cortland County Mental Health. For more information, or to reserve your spot, contact Fran Pizzola at 753-7363.

The free workshop is open to

This Year on Election Day, all Cortland County Polling Sites will feature Accessible Ballot Marking Machines!

Stop by ATI to learn how to use it ahead of time! For more information, call 753-7363.

It is both your right and responsibility to vote and have your say in government. New York State's deadline to register to vote in the 2008 election is Friday, October 10. Forms are available at Access to Independence! For more information, call us at 753-7363.

I have a disability and I vote

ARTHRITIS SUPPORT GROUP  
Tuesday's 1:00 to 2:30 pm  
ATI Community Room

- 9/09 - Workplace Accommodations
- 9/23 - Immune System
- 10/14 - Medications & Nutrition
- 10/28 - Tai Chi
- 11/11 - Alternative Treatments
- 11/25 - Kinesio Taping Therapy

For more information, call 753-7363.

Visit our website at:  
[www.aticortland.org](http://www.aticortland.org)

Email us at:  
[info@aticortland.org](mailto:info@aticortland.org)

### ATI Staff Builds Stronger Access to Independence

ATI has pressed full speed ahead to strengthen staff ability to provide new, high quality, and innovative programming to individuals with disabilities. Since January 2008, ATI staff has participated in more than a dozen training opportunities that relate to agency endeavors in the areas of resource development and programming.

Two ATI staff attended the NY Association on Independent Living (NYAIL) *Targeted Tailored Technical Assistance & Training* workshop and the 2008 Council of Community Service for NYS (CCSNYS) *Money for Mission: Connecting Cause to Impact* conference. Both trainings aimed to train staff on how to jump-start new and innovative strategic plans and fund development initiatives geared towards increasing the diversity of funding streams and development resources.

In line with ATI's goal to provide quality health and wellness programming to consumers, staff attended several different NYS Department of Health workshops that related to living well with a disability, self-help arthritis support and overcoming stigma across cultures in the community. Other trainings related to developing disaster and emergency preparedness plans.

Two ATI staff attended a series of Medicaid Waiver workshops relating to Traumatic Brain Injury and Nursing Home Transition & Diversion services. In addition to providing staff with knowledge on Medicaid Waiver operations, the trainings featured discussions on best practices and the provision of services specific to each Waiver.

In line with ATI's efforts to expand its highly successful Peer Mentoring Program (PMP) to become more focused on work-readiness skills, staff attended the Rehabilitation Research & Training Institute (RRTI) *Job Readiness Train-the-Trainer* workshop and the VESID *Tools for the Trade* regional training. Both workshops provided staff with an expanded skill-set to facilitate employment-focused consumer programming.

ATI staff attended the Cornell University *Conference on Transitioning School Age Students with Disabilities*. The conference, which focused on building community collaboration, vocational rehabilitation best practices and developing self-determined youth, aimed to provide staff with resources to expand ATI's Youth Transition Program to all youth in Cortland County.

### ACCESSIBLE CURRENCY: MYTH OR FACT?

Q: Making paper currency accessible to persons that are blind or visually impaired is an extreme and an unheard-of accommodation. A: **MYTH!** Almost 200 countries that issue paper currency have made it accessible (from Canada and the European Union to Barbados, Namibia and Uruguay), leaving the United States as the only industrialized nation that prints bills in all denominations that are identical in size and color.

Q: Making paper currency accessible isn't really necessary because it only affects a small group of people. A: **MYTH!** Making paper currency accessible will impact a much larger group of individuals than just those who are blind and visually impaired. By 2020, roughly 1 in 250 people will have some sort of visual impairment, many caused by cataracts, diabetes, macular degeneration and glaucoma. An increased ease in differentiating money would benefit seniors, individuals with cognitive disabilities and even people without disabilities in environments where there is low lighting such as in restaurants, taxicabs, and bars.

For more information, contact Day Al-Mohamed, Director of Advocacy and Governmental Affairs; American Council of the Blind; 1155 15th St. NW; Washington DC 20005; 202- 467-5081; [dalmohamed@acb.org](mailto:dalmohamed@acb.org)

### NYS Parks Offers Free Access to Residents with Disabilities

Did you know that New York State residents with permanent disabilities are eligible to access certain state parks and recreational areas for free?

Eligible individuals may use an Access Pass to enter parks, historic sites, and recreational facilities operated by New York State Department of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), as well as forest preserves, wildlife management areas, and programs on public lands that are operated by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

To qualify for an Access Pass, you must be a New York State resident and you must have proof of your disability. Applicants must also provide a recent photo with complete applications (photo will be affixed to your Access Pass).

If you have internet access, visit: [www.nysparks.state.ny.us](http://www.nysparks.state.ny.us) and click on the Admission Programs link to learn more about the Access Pass or to print an application form.

For more information, or to obtain an Access Pass application, please contact Sue Lewis by phone at (607) 753-7363, or by email at [slewis@aticortland.org](mailto:slewis@aticortland.org).

**Lewis Earns Family Development Credential**

This past spring, Ms. Susan Lewis, ATI Independent Living Advocate, completed intensive training to earn a New York State Family Development Credential from Cornell University. Over a span of 32 weeks, Ms. Lewis completed more than 90 hours of interactive training, based on *Empowerment Skills for Family Workers*, a strengths-based, family support and empowerment curriculum developed by Cornell University.

The Cornell curriculum includes topics, such as family development, communicating with skill and heart, diversity, strength-based assessment, facilitation, collaboration, helping families set and reach goals and helping families access specialized services.

Ms. Lewis remarked that she had completed the training to allow her to work more effectively with families using empowerment and family support principles. "These principles nicely complement the independent living philosophy, which emphasizes personal choice and personal responsibility," Ms. Lewis said at a recent staff meeting.

In addition to completing bi-weekly training sessions, Ms. Lewis developed a portfolio that documented her newly acquired knowledge and skills, and successfully passed a standardized exam.

**U.S. Justice Department Proposes Vast Changes to ADA Regulations**

On June 17<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) issued major proposed revisions to its regulations that implement Titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The DOJ is calling for new or revised provisions concerning removal of barriers in existing facilities, accommodation of service animals, maintenance of accessible features, policies and practices governing various services, including hotel reservations, ticket sales and accessible seating, and provision of auxiliary aids, services, and effective communication, including captioning, narrative description, and video interpreting services.

Under the ADA, the DOJ is responsible for maintaining standards for new construction and alterations that are consistent with the Accessibility Board's guidelines. DOJ's standards apply to the construction and alteration of all facilities covered by the ADA, except transportation facilities. The new standards would apply to state and local government facilities subject to Title II of the ADA and to places of public accommodation and commercial facilities covered by Title III of the law.

**ATI Awarded \$300,000 More For Access to Home Projects**

On June 30, Governor David Patterson announced that ATI would receive \$300,000 in grant funding through 2012 from the NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR).

The latest round of funding will aim to provide an additional 20 low-income households with funds to complete accessibility modifications to their homes. Mary E. Ewing, ATI's Executive Director, said the money will be used for accessibility modifications to households that include persons with physical, mental and developmental disabilities, as well as "frail" elderly. Rob Ferri, ATI's Architectural Barrier Specialist, manages the agency's *Access to Home* program. He said the funding would provide for environmental modifications, including ramps, outdoor lifts, and structural changes to make bathrooms and other interior rooms accessible.

This is ATI's third grant from the state in three years. The DHCR has previously awarded ATI two grants of \$200,000 each through its *Access to Home* program.

With past grants, ATI has provided assistance to about 35 households throughout Cortland County. All *Access to Home* funding is targeted toward low-income families at or below 80 percent of the county's median income level.

**ATI Poised to Expand Accessibility Expertise**

ATI is dedicated to providing expert-level accessibility construction services to consumers. In line with that commitment, ATI is poised to secure the status of Certified Renovation Firm from the Environmental Protection Agency. Staff has already completed training on lead-based paint and aims to complete future trainings to gain Certified Risk Assessor and Certified Clearance Technician status. Staff plan to secure Certifications for Safe Work Practices and Aging in Place, as well.



*Above: Before picture.*



*Right: After picture of a house with a ramp modification.*



*Far Left: Before picture.*



*Left: After picture of a porch with an accessible electric lift.*

**ATI Lands Chief Architect**

In mid-July, the Chief Architect Foundation awarded ATI's *Accessibility Construction Services* (ACS) and *Access to Home* programs a \$3,990 grant to purchase its state-of-the-art architectural design software, training videos and two user licenses.

*Chief Architect* is professional three-dimensional architectural design and drafting software that aims to save time and money for contractors and provide consumers with a better experience with design and implementation of home modifications.

"Having access to this program is going to improve our ability to provide top-notch services to our consumers and the community at-large," said Rob Ferri, the ATI Architectural Barrier Specialist.

Mr. Ferri noted that ATI had completed 6 ACS projects since ATI started the program in December 2007, and that another five projects were out to bid. "The software is going to improve our ability to serve more consumers with disabilities and to help them lead more independent lives in their homes."

ATI will use the new software to facilitate project design, to communicate specifications with contractors, suppliers, code enforcement, architects and consumers, and to improve project cost and time estimations.

**ADA Celebrates 18<sup>th</sup> Birthday!**

On July 11, ATI celebrated the 18<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the American's with Disabilities Act. More than 100 community supporters gathered at the Suggett Park Rotary Shelter to commemorate the landmark legislation that opened doors for all individuals with disabilities. The event featured the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Watermelon Eating Contest, a live broadcast of Oldies 101.5 WXHC, and food and drinks for everyone.

Madison/Cortland ARC, Cortland Community Re-entry Program (CCRP), SUNY Cortland's Institute for Disability Studies (IDS) and First Niagara Bank were financial co-sponsors of the event. Anderson's Farm Market donated the watermelons; and Price Chopper and Grand Rental Station made in-kind contributions.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the success of this fun-filled event! Be sure to check out pictures from the picnic on page seven of this newsletter!

Access To  Independence  
OF CORTLAND COUNTY, INC.



**Accessibility Construction Services**

26 North Main Street  
Cortland, New York 13045  
Phone: (607) 753-7363

- Planning a home remodel?**
- Having difficulty with daily activities?**
- Concerned for the safety of a parent?**
- History of falls? / Fear of falls?**

**Call us for a free estimate (607) 753-7363**

*We are your Local Accessibility Experts!*

