

**Nothing More,
Nothing Less
For All People
With Disabilities**

Access to Independence of Cortland County, Inc.

ACCESS NEWS

Fall 2012

NUMBER XXXIV

ATI Board of Directors Elects New Members / Officers

The ATI Board of Directors unanimously elected a new slate of officers during its October 16, Board meeting. The new and returning Officers include: Lisa Perfetti, Chair; Larry Pfister, Vice Chair; Cynthia Schlenker, Treasurer; and Dr. Dan Pukstas, Secretary.

At the same meeting, the Board elected Cynthia Schlenker as a new Board Member. The Board re-elected Larry Pfister, Sandy Price, Dr. Dan Pukstas, Bill Siedenbug, John Suarez and Christina Taranto, to serve a second, two-year term.

Other returning Board Members include: Dr. Judy Bentley, Mary Betters, Gail Bundy, Kelly Colasurdo, Laura Eaton, Garra Lloyd-Lester and Lisa Perfetti.

The Board thanked departing Board Member, Dan Mullins for his dedicated four years of service.

Cortland Housing Roundtable

On November 7, Access to Independence and Seven Valleys Health Coalition co-sponsored a Housing Roundtable for stakeholders in Cortland County.

County Legislators, City Council Members, the Cortland Mayor, representatives of housing and human service agencies, and community members convened to talk about unmet housing needs in Cortland and strategies to overcome them. The group also learned about Cortland's new 2-1-1 system (see article on page 9).

The highlight of the event was a session led by Ann Hotchkin of Thoma Development Consultants. Anne led an effective needs assessment session which yielded a laundry list of ongoing issues, extensive brainstorming for solutions, and several actionable items which will be happening as we move into 2013.

For information on upcoming meetings of the Cortland County Housing Consortium, call ATI at (607) 753-7363.

ATI Announces 2013 Priorities

The Access to Independence Board of Directors approved its 2013 Priorities during its October meeting. They include:

1. Promote increased community awareness of disability issues, the lack of equal human and civil rights for people with disabilities, and the opportunities that exist to increase independent living .
2. Improve the Agency's ability to respond to the ever-changing and ongoing unmet needs of people with disabilities.
3. Expand the Agency's capacity to provide Medicaid Waiver services to people with a wide-variety of disabilities; Provide supports and resources to their families, caregivers and other service providers.
4. Expand the Agency's capacity to promote an increase of accessible, affordable and integrated housing for people with disabilities throughout Cortland County and beyond.

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Above: *Friends of ATI enjoyed a spirited night of fun, food and karaoke on Halloween.*

ATI Launches 2013 *Friends of the Center* Campaign

As the holiday season approaches, many of us consider it not only a time of family and good cheer, but also a time to help others. Please join me and the Access to Independence Board of Directors in efforts to help make our community a better place to live by sponsoring one of our events or making a donation to our 2013 *Friends of the Center* Campaign!

In 2013, Access to Independence (ATI) is launching a new awareness campaign themed: “*The Faces of Independence.*” The idea of independence has always been a cornerstone of what we do. But what does that mean to the people we serve and the community at large?

Independence means different things to different people. One individual may have the goal of living at home in the community, rather than in a nursing home. Another may see getting a job as the path to independence. A young person, who feels they have no place to go after high school, may find that mentoring from a peer helps them to find their way. Regardless of the many different paths people might take to secure their independence, a resounding note of accord relates to individual autonomy, self-determination and self-sufficiency.

Independence does not relate just to individuals, but to society as a whole. Increasing accessibility in our community (accessible parking, curb-cuts, automatic doors at businesses and public buildings, audible crosswalk signals, etc.) benefits us all. Your support will help ATI to continue to advocate for increased accessibility throughout the County. ATI will redouble efforts to educate consumers and the public about important legislation that will ensure the civil rights of people with disabilities, whether it is equality in the workplace, accessibility of public transportation, or the choice of where to live.

So, when I think of the *Faces of Independence*, it brings to mind the many people for whom ATI has built ramps, or installed lifts, or renovated bathrooms. I think of the success stories of individuals who have returned to school or secured jobs. I recall our grassroots efforts to effect policy change, by taking groups of advocates to rallies in Albany and Washington, D.C. These *Faces of Independence* are the reason that ATI’s staff and Board of Directors are dedicated to the work that we do.

Thank you for your generosity and support!

-- Mary E. Ewing, Executive Director

For more information on how you can become a friend to Access to Independence and support our 2013 efforts, please call (607) 753-7363, or email Mary E. Ewing, Executive Director (mary.ewing@aticortland.org), or Chad W. Underwood, Chief Operating Officer (cwunderwood@aticortland.org). ATI is a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3); therefore, your donation may be tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

2012 ATI Board / Staff Retreat

On Saturday, November 10, Access to Independence held its 2012 Annual Board / Staff Retreat. Seven Board Members and 12 Staff convened at the SUNY Cortland Beard Building to build momentum for a successful launch of 2013 initiatives.

ATI’s 2012 Retreat was themed “Faces of Independence.” As such, Board and staff began the day with a team building exercise that aimed to shed light on what independence meant to each individual.

Timothy Cronin of the Albany-based firm Communication Concepts, Inc., facilitated a 105-minute full group session on how to promote the vision of Access to Independence and the Independent Living philosophy in general. Cronin spoke about the importance of organizational branding and helped to develop the framework of a 2013 Agency Media Plan.

Ed McCormick of the Poughkeepsie-based firm McCormick Management Consulting Services, Inc., shared insight during a luncheon on how to advocate for systemic changes to systems. He then facilitated a full 90-minute session for staff on how to develop community relationships to effect systemic change.

Jim Doring, a Preble Town Supervisor, investment advisor, and a former Board Member of Campfire USA, spent 90 minutes with Board Members to share insight on intermediate Board responsibilities, including financial oversight, governance and managing a growing non-profit.

Many thanks go out to all Board and staff participants, as well as to each of the guest speakers.



Above: ATI Board and Staff assembled for its 2012 Annual Retreat at the SUNY Cortland Beard Building on Saturday, November 10.



Above: Erin Sember-Chase spoke with area business leaders during the October 25, ATI Business Leader Luncheon, on the benefits that workers with disabilities bring to the workforce.

ATI Employer Luncheon Promotes Inclusive Workforce

On October 25, ATI facilitated a Business Leader Luncheon for local employers at the SUNY Cortland Beard Building. The luncheon featured renowned advocate, Erin Sember-Chase from Cornell University’s Disability & Business Technical Assistance Center (DBTAC), who spoke with area business leaders about how “a strong workforce is an inclusive workforce” and how hiring people with disabilities can benefit the business and its customers.

“Accommodating employees doesn’t have to be difficult, said Carin Rouleau, Store Manager at the Cortland Wal-Mart. “In fact, it is usually quite simple and inexpensive.” The presentation from Ms. Sember-Chase reinforced employment equality through information on the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) and tax credits that local employers can take advantage of.

The 2012 Community Business Leader Luncheon was sponsored by the CNY Community Foundation, Inc. and the Triad Foundation, Inc.

2012 Masquerade Gala

On October 27, Access to Independence (ATI) held its inaugural Gala event, themed this year, Masquerade Gala. Proceeds benefit ATI advocacy efforts on behalf of people with disabilities.

More than 60 attendees enjoyed fabulous hors d’oeuvres, served by M&D Deli Central, along with a variety of beverages and desserts. Live entertainment was provided by virtuoso Will Sanders, who played the grand piano in the parlor of the Alumni House. Sanders’ music fostered dancing and further revelry. ATI Board and staff were well represented at the event.

One highlight of the evening was a Silent Auction with more than a dozen themed baskets of goods. The donated contents included: gift certificates for a massage, an overnight stay and brunch at a local bed & breakfast, a family photo session, restaurant gift cards, scarves and jewelry, among many other items. Each basket was valued at a minimum of \$100 – much more in some cases. Most bidders won their baskets at a substantial discount!

ATI’s Fund Development Committee is already at work considering the possibilities for next year’s event. Themed as the 2013 Harvest Gala, next year’s event is set for Saturday, November 2, 2013, at the SUNY Cortland Alumni House!



2012 Disability Employment Awareness Month: A Strong Workforce is an Inclusive Workforce

In October, Access to Independence recognized National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) with a series of employment-related events and activities for our community. You may have even heard one or more of our radio ads that aired throughout the month on WXHC Oldies 101.5! The theme this year was: "A Strong Workforce is an Inclusive Workforce."

On October 4, 11 and 18, ATI facilitated its 2012 Annual Employment Conference. The three-day event welcomed job seekers with disabilities and offered tools, skill development, networking, and empowerment to further their job search and chosen career.

"This was our best event ever," said Aaron Baier, Consumer & Systems Advocacy Coordinator for

ATI. "The attendees walked away with a great experience." The conference featured peer-keynote presentations from Greg Jones, Senior Attorney for the NYS Commission on Quality of Care and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities; Rachel Tanenhaus, State public health worker in Massachusetts; and Denise DiNoto, from the Albany-based Consumer Directed Choices.

Thank you to the keynotes, who not only shared their professional and employment expertise, but who brought their own disabilities and stories of overcoming barriers into the discussion.

Furthermore, the conference featured area employers who shared their perspectives on employment and disability. Thank you to Jamie Yaman from Yaman Real Estate, Lisa Hoeschele from Family Coun-

selling Services, Jeanette Martin from Franziska Racker Center, Carin Rouleau from Wal-Mart, Sharon Dovi from TC3, and Barbara French from Employment Connection, for their time and encouragement. Also, thank you to our workshop facilitators who provided some great tools and strategies for job seekers: Diane Wheaton from Cortland Works Career Center, Shammi Carr from Tompkins Workforce, Carla Plunkett from Employment Connection, Mary Ewing from Access to Independence, and Mickey Gibbons from SUNY Cortland.

A special thank you also goes to the CNY Community Foundation, Inc.; Triad Foundation, Inc.; and Wal-Mart for their generous financial contributions for this year's Employment Conference events.

Transportation Advocacy Continues - Trial Winter Route Launched

The Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council, and the Regional Transportation Planning Coalition, are doing a Transportation Study in a seven-county area: Cayuga, Chemung, Cortland, Schuyler, Seneca, Tioga and Tompkins. Their goal is to improve transportation services between counties. For example, many people who don't drive need to get to Syracuse, Ithaca or Binghamton for medical appointments, work, school or social activities. What are the opportunities to develop new transportation options in these scenarios?

A recent public forum provided area residents who don't drive an opportunity to voice their concerns about not being able to get around Cortland and neighboring areas. Representatives of Mobility Management System, Cortland Transit, the City of Cortland, SUNY Cortland, TC3 and the City Police Department attended to hear resident ideas. Voiced concerns included: security at bus shelters, missed connections (particularly at TC3),

the buses staying on schedule, sidewalk snow removal, and the need to travel by bus out-of-county. Suggestions included van pools to cross county lines, the possibility of getting a handicapped accessible taxi in Cortland, smoke-free taxis, and continuing the Cortland-Cornell route even if it means raising prices.

A new initiative that has already been put in place by Cortland Transit is a trial winter route that will run from December 1, 2012 to April 1, 2013. *Job Access and Reverse Commute* funds from a federal grant will be matched by Greek Peak to provide three runs Monday-Friday, and four runs on weekends from Cortland to Virgil, Hope Lake and Greek Peak. Bus fares are \$1.00 one-way; and \$.50 for youth under 18, senior citizens (60+), and people with disabilities with proper documentation. Exact change will be required and bus passes or tokens may not be used.

As part of the winter route, Cortland Transit will also provide evening and weekend service seven days a week. Service will go until 9:00 pm, Monday - Thursday and Sunday. Friday and Saturday service will extend until 10:00 pm. For more information contact: Way2Go-Cortland at (607) 756-4198, or contact Cortland Transit at (607) 758-3383.



Visit us online at:
www.aticortland.org
Like us on Facebook!

Cortland County Youth Experience Disability Mentoring Day

On October 17, Disability Mentoring Day (DMD) celebrated career exploration in Cortland County by offering job shadowing opportunities to nearly 40 youth with disabilities from Cortland and Homer High Schools. While Cortland students have participated for the past seven years, this was the first year for Homer students! Also known as Cortland County Mentoring Day, DMD participants choose to focus on their abilities rather than their disabilities. Each student chose the career field that they were most interested in and each made their experience unique.

Of course, career mentoring would not be possible without the employers who mentor the students. Thank you to the employees of Cortland Child Development

Center, Cortland City Police, Cortland Fire Department, Cortland Fitness Center, CNY SNAP, Crossroads Veterinary Clinic, Edgewart Farms, Frosted, Isaf-Merkur Studio, Lavish Salon, Oldies 101.5 WXHC, Plan First Technologies, Pomeroy Armstrong Castelano and Monty Law, Royal Motor Company, Sun Auto Warehouse, SUNY Cortland - Memorial Library, Walden Place, Wal-Mart, and Wright-Beard Funeral Home, for their time and commitment to Cortland area youth.

Disability Mentoring Day closed with a luncheon at the Cortland Works Career Center. Youth heard from Colleen Deitrich, Central Region Youth Partner for YOUTH POWER!, Inc. who talked about her life, leadership, and experiences overcoming adversity. Special

thanks also go to Cosimo's Italian Carry Out for a wonderful lunch and their continued support of youth mentoring. Disability Mentoring Day was also sponsored by the CNY Community Foundation, Inc.; Triad Foundation, Inc.; and Wal-Mart.

Lastly, but most importantly, Disability Mentoring Day would not be possible without the hard work of the planning committee. Thank you to: Cortland High School Staff Amy Bonawitz, Angela Harvey, and Maria DeRado; Homer High School Staff Erin Mahunik and Bob Harris; staff at the school bus garages; and our community partners Diane Wheaton of Cortland Works Career Center, Leslie Wilkins of Family Counseling Services, and Sara Earl of the Cortland YWCA.



“With Help From a Friend, You Can Reach the Stars!”

The Access to Independence (ATI) Peer Mentoring Program (PMP) empowers people with disabilities to be more independent and to take a proactive role in reaching their goals. Through one-on-one mentoring, group activities and community learning opportunities, participants gain valuable information and insight about not only the challenges they will face, but also learn from other’s experience to effectively deal with those challenges. Participants also learn practical skills and strategies that will help them reach whatever goals they set in life.

Devin, a 15 year old high school student, joined the PMP in early 2012 when he began having medical complications with his eyes. As a blind youth, his family thought he should seek counseling to deal with his emotions and lack of openness about his disability. Devin believed mentoring would be a better choice for him. Devin’s goal is to make it through high school and to attend college to study psychology. Devin wants to “help other people with similar problems” to overcome challenges by using his experiences and what he will learn in college. While Devin is determined and well on his way to achieving his goal, he views a mentor as a guide and support to help him along the way.

Devin’s mentor, Aaron, experienced a similar vision disability and also followed a career path similar to Devin’s interests. Most of the time, Devin and his mentor talked about the things that were going on in Devin’s life and the choices Devin was making. They shared their own personal philosophies on life, people, and how best to help those people. Devin was eager to learn anything he could about working with people and frequently asked how he could get involved now and gain experience.



“I was so excited to do things outside of school,” Devin said during a recent interview. “My mentor helped me find interesting opportunities that I didn’t know about.” Devin got involved in the YOUTH POWER! Central Region team and not only helped to plan a Youth Forum in Syracuse, but participated actively and recruited friends to attend. Devin even participated in Disability Mentoring Day in October. He visited Walden Place, an assisted living facility, where he spoke to staff and residents about their jobs and lives, and he learned about people, their needs, and how those needs will be met.

“Devin speaks with me frequently about each of his experiences,” Aaron explains. “Devin contemplates his decisions before he acts and actively seeks new things to engage his interests.” Through mentoring, Devin is not only encouraged to participate in new activities, but to reflect on those experiences to help him make choices in the future.

A mentoring relationship, in its simplest form, is a positive role model spending quality time with someone to enrich and enhance life. While Devin is quite self-determined, he often seeks unbiased and encouraging discussion through mentoring which help him to escape stifling situations in other parts of his life. Devin has great potential and an exciting journey ahead of him. Good luck Devin!

SUNY Students Volunteer

Five SUNY Cortland students have volunteered more than 150 hours since early September to assist with several ATI initiatives.

As part of their coursework, Jessica Andrianos, Jessica Tang, Nicole Becker, Sheryl Mathew, and Tara Romano worked individually and in teams with ATI staff on Housing Education and Systems Advocacy projects.

In one project, students laid-out much of the foundation for the ATI Housing Education Program by researching housing resources in Cortland, Broome, Chemung, Schuyler, Tioga and Tompkins counties. They then drafted resource maps for those resources which guided ATP’s incipient outreach efforts.

In another project, the students got involved in Systems Advocacy through an intensive community accessibility survey. After surveying several downtown streets, sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian safety, they developed reports which will be used to advocate with Cortland officials for improvements.

Many thanks to the SUNY students for their dedicated efforts!



Above: Devin has taken advantage of the benefits a mentor provides and is well on his way to achieving his goal of attending college after high school.

Medicaid Redesign Yields Funds to Support Housing

The Affordable Housing Workgroup of New York's Medicaid Redesign Initiative has recently announced the availability of \$75 million in funds to support a number of housing initiatives.

The NYS Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) is now accepting proposals for the creation of a rental subsidy/services program to support people in apartments with ISS rent subsidies and Community Habilitation, Consolidated Supports and Services, or use funds to support people in Supportive IRAs.

The NYS Homeless Housing and Assistance Corporation (HHAC) and the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) are accepting applications for funding under the Homeless Housing and Assistance Program (HHAP). The HHAC is authorized to provide grants and loans for the acquisition, construction and rehabilitation of properties in order to expand the supply of homeless housing for low income persons.

Governor Cuomo established the Medicaid Redesign Team (MRT) by Executive Order upon taking office in January 2011, bringing together stakeholders and experts from throughout the state to work cooperatively to reform the system and reduce costs.

Special Needs Registry

In conjunction with local human services agencies, the Cortland County Office of Emergency Management has created a volunteer registry to identify individuals in the County who may require special assistance during a public emergency or natural disaster. The registry intends to identify people who do not have someone who is within walking distance to assist them in the case of an emergency.

Consider these questions: What would you do if the roads were obstructed and impassable? What if the phone lines were down? What if there was a power outage that lasted for days and you could not get out of your home? Who would know where you were and what needs you had if Cortland County were to experience a catastrophe?

People who need assistance to get out of bed, who are oxygen dependent, who need help with medication administration are just a few examples of the folks that First Responders need to know about to prioritize rescue efforts. The Special Needs Registry lists individuals who are isolated and would be at serious risk in the case of a county-wide emergency or disaster.

For more information on the Special Needs Registry, or to be added to the list, contact Fran Pizzola, ATI Community Education Coordinator, by phone: (607) 753-7363, or by email: fpizzola@aticortland.org.

2013 SS Benefits Changes

Starting in January of 2013, Social Security beneficiaries will receive a 1.7% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) increase in their checks. This will result in a \$10 to \$20 increase per month depending on the amount of your check. Always remember to report this increase if you are receiving SNAP (formerly food stamps), HEAP, Section 8, or any other public benefit as it may change your benefits slightly.

By March 1, 2013, you will no longer be able to receive a paper check in the mail. You will have to either set up direct deposit or begin receiving the Direct Express debit card. If you choose the debit card, your monthly benefit will be added to the card each month. There may be fees associated with this card. If you have questions or concerns about this, contact Susan Lewis, Certified Benefits Counselor, by phone at (607) 753-7363.

For anyone who is currently working or who would like to try to work in 2013, there will also be changes. The Trial Work Period amount is changing from \$720 per month in earned income to \$750 per month. Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) is changing from \$1,010 per month to \$1,040. Contact Susan Lewis, Certified Benefits Counselor, by phone at (607) 753-7363, to learn more about Social Security work incentives, whether you receive SSDI, SSI, or both.

Join NY's Disability Advocacy Network!

- Keep current on pressing disability issues!
- Receive email alerts on policy and budget matters!
- Fight for the civil rights of people with disabilities!
- Join 1,000+ statewide advocates to fight for change!

For more information, or to join our advocacy network, email: abaier@aticortland.org

The Wishing Wellness Center

Hours of Operation

Monday – Friday 11:00am- 6:00pm

Call for Information about Activities and Appointments



24 Church Street
Cortland, NY 13045

(607) 423-7472

peers@wishingwellnesscenter.org

Peer-Run Community Support Services

Independent Living Centers Uniquely Positioned to Help Individuals Live in the Community

Independent Living Center's (ILCs) are cross-disability, consumer-led, community-based not-for-profit organizations. ILCs provide services in a variety of areas that could help to strengthen successful implementation of Medicaid Redesign initiatives by ensuring people with disabilities and older New Yorkers have the services and supports they need to live independently in the community.

ILCs assist individuals with disabilities in navigating all service systems, including health/long term care, housing, employment, education, transportation, voter access and civil rights. ILCs advocate to ensure people with disabilities have access to the services and supports they choose. Through work with individuals, ILCs identify and advocate for changes to disability service systems. Essential ILC services include, but are not limited to:

- **Institution transition and diversion:** ILCs have been transitioning and diverting people from institutions for more than 20 years and have played a critical role in implementing the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Nursing Home Transition and Diversion (NHTD) Medicaid Waiver programs. Five ILCs serve as the coordinators of the program on behalf of the NYS Department of Health and many others provide waiver services. In addition, eight ILCs are working with the State under the federal Money Follows the Person program to help identify and assist individuals in nursing facilities who wish to live in the community. The work of ILCs to transition and divert people with disabilities from costly institutional placements has saved the State more than \$1 billion between 2001 and 2011 as a result of avoided institutional care.
- **Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Programming (CDPAP).** Many ILCs serve as Fiscal Intermediaries under the Medicaid-funded CDPAP, offering people with disabilities a unique alternative to traditional attendant care. Under the CDPAP, the individual has the opportunity to hire and manage his or her own personal attendants. ILCs are the only consumer-controlled fiscal intermediaries, and they provide additional support to participants from a disability rights and peer perspective.
- **Housing assistance services and home modifications.** ILCs provide housing counseling services to assist people with disabilities in identifying housing options integrated in the community that are affordable and accessible based on the individual's needs.
- **Mental health and developmental disability services.** Many ILCs provide Medicaid and State-funded services under the Office of Mental Health and Office for People with Developmental Disabilities service systems, including recovery center services, peer counseling, life coaching, peer self-help groups, community integration skills, and community day habilitation services.
- **Employment services, including benefits counseling and supported employment.** ILCs provide a wide variety of employment-related services, including assistance with job searching, resume writing and job interviewing; services that assist youth with disabilities in making the transition from high school to employment, training and/or postsecondary education programs; assistance navigating benefit options and work incentives, including Social Security Disability, Supplemental Security Income, Medicaid, Food Stamps, and Public Assistance aimed at increasing independence; direct job placement and job development.

Questions about transportation?



SEVEN VALLEYS HEALTH COALITION

Contact:
Jan Dempsey
Mobility Management Coordinator
607-756-4198

www.way2gocortland.org

Bus Buddies
can help too!



We are now accepting referrals to our NHTD & TBI Medicaid Waiver programs for the following services:

- **SC (Service Coordination)**
- **ILST (Independent Living Skills Training)**
- **AT (Assistive Technology)**
- **CTS (Community Transitional Services)**
- **MA (Moving Assistance)**
- **EMODs (Environmental Modifications)**

For more information, please contact Mary E. Ewing, by phone: 607-753-7363; or by email: mewing@aticortland.org

CHECK OUT THESE WEB SITES!

If you are looking for some disability-specific information, check out these web sites:

careeronestop.org: This site allows you to search for jobs throughout New York using NYS Department of Labor data. The site also offers several online tools to assist you with a job search, training decisions, and even with questions on unemployment insurance.

thinkbeyondthelabel.com: A public-private partnership that delivers information, outreach and resources to businesses, job seekers and the public workforce system to ensure greater recruiting and hiring opportunities for job candidates with disabilities.

askjan.org: The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is the leading source of free, expert, and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues. JAN helps people with disabilities enhance their employability and helps employers to benefit from the talent that people with disabilities offer.

Youth In Power Offers Enrichment Opportunities for Cortland Youth

Take a moment and imagine a young man of 15 who struggles daily with his vision, chronic pain, and other physical limitations. Imagine his greatest dream is to use his experiences to help others. He is determined to go to college and reach his goals. It is other people's perceptions that hold him back. What can he do? What can you do? Here is what we at ATI are doing.

The Access to Independence's (ATI) Youth in Power (YIP) group aims to provide a fun and supportive peer-group for youth. YIP meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month from 4:00 - 5:00 pm at the City Youth Bureau Teen Center, 35 Port Watson Street, Cortland, to discuss topics relevant to youth and opportunities they can take advantage of.

The Cortland Youth in Power group not only aims to provide youth with peer support, but offers youth several opportunities to Lead, Empower, Advocate, Recreate, and Network (LEARN). Youth in Power is more than a group meeting each month, it's the idea that local youth in Cortland County can have a voice and participate in local activities, services, and government.

On November 28, YIP participants viewed and discussed a youth-made documentary entitled "The

Power of Music" which follows several youth as they explore the music that influences them the most in life and recovery. The YOUTH POWER!, Inc. film aimed to be a springboard for local youth to talk about the music in their lives, how it influences them in positive ways and how it helps them physically and emotionally.

Next year, YIP will kick off 2013 on January 16 with a focus on government awareness. Participants will talk about the importance of advocacy, activism, and creating positive change within the systems that serve them. Youth will be empowered to think independently and voice their opinions about systems in Cortland County and New York State.

ATI is seeking young advocates who want to get more involved in government and advocacy! ATI will be heading to Albany in February for a Legislative Awareness Day to meet with our State officials and rally for disability rights. Advocates from Cortland will join with more than 300 advocates from across the State to speak out about issues, including: housing, civil rights, mental health, education, employment, and transportation.

On February 20, YIP will change gears to talk about Mentoring. ATI's Peer Mentoring Program (PMP) aims to offer youth with dis-

abilities an opportunity to enhance their lives by helping them to identify and reach their goals.

Young people have the right to make choices, determine their future, and advocate for their advancement in life and the PMP is the bridge that can guide and support them. The PMP is free and open for youth to enroll! All mentors are peers with disabilities, screened, and matched with youth who share similar interests.

For more information on Access to Independence's Youth in Power and Peer Mentoring programs, or about the upcoming advocacy opportunity in Albany, please contact Aaron T. Baier by phone at 607-753-7363, or by email at abaier@aticortland.org.

Youth In Power!

Get empowered...

Use your abilities...

Advocate for what you want!

3rd Wednesday, Monthly

4:00 - 5:00 pm

CYB - Teen Center

35 Port Watson Street

**For more information,
contact Aaron Baier at:
607-753-7363**

New '2-1-1' Information & Referral Service Available to the Cortland Community

'2-1-1' Cortland is here! '2-1-1' Cortland connects callers with help before a problem becomes a crisis.

'2-1-1' is a free, confidential phone line that connects callers with health and human service resources. Callers speak directly with a community resource specialist who carefully listens to each person's story and helps callers to prioritize their top needs. '2-1-1' is available 24 hours a day.

The specialist searches the database of available programs to find the best resources for each caller. Community members may also browse the website-based database on their own, searching services by keyword or text search. The best way to find help, however, is to call the hotline or to use the online chat option on the website.

Need Help? Find Help.
2-1-1 Cortland connects callers with local services and information.



Dial 2-1-1 or 1-877-211-8667 to connect with a community services specialist. Search the online database or chat at 211cortland.org.

FREE! • Confidential • 24/7

Referrals available for emergency financial help, family education, fitness programs, and more.

Help is just a phone call away!

There is a wider variety of organization types available in the '2-1-1' database, ranging from food pantries to supports for local business owners. Anyone may call for referrals for themselves, a family member, a friend or a client.

In order to access the service from a phone line outside the county lines, call (877) 211-8667.

Interpreting services are available for speakers of languages other than English.

The online directory can be found at 211cortland.org, and the online chat is available from 8:30am -5pm, Monday through Friday.

'2-1-1' Cortland is a partnership between Seven Valleys Health Coalition, Cortland County Mental Health Department, and the Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County. The United Way for Cortland County includes '2-1-1' Cortland as a member program.

For more information, contact the Seven Valleys Health Coalition by calling (607) 756-4198.

ATI Computer Lab

Open Monday - Friday

9:00 am - 4:45 pm

For more information, call (607) 753-7363.



Accessibility Construction Services
26 North Main Street
Cortland, NY 13045



607-753-7363

We are your Accessibility Experts!

MAKING A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE LOCALLY

Providing Local Jobs

Marietta's products that are sold around the world are made right here in Cortland.

mariettagroup.com



Got rent?

The Cortland Housing Authority has a rental assistance program that may be able to help you!!

The Section 8 Housing Program helps qualified people meet their monthly rent bills by paying a portion of their rent directly to their landlord.

Interested persons may pick up applications at the Housing Authority offices located at 42 Church Street or 51 Port Watson Street Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm

or

Call 607-753-9364 or 607-753-1771 to request to have an application sent by mail



Cortland Prevention Resources
Pointing you in the right direction!
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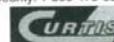
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The Cortland Housing Authority has 380 high quality apartments available in its senior/ disabled and family developments throughout Cortland County. A single person could earn up to \$32,400 and a family of five up to \$49,950 and still qualify to live in one of our apartments.



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Holiday Social Night

Date: December 12, 2012

Time: 5:00 — 8:00 pm

Location: Access to Independence
26 North Main Street
Cortland, NY 13045



Food
Games
Movie
Music
Crafts



Save your Spot
RSVP Call:
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Accommodations available upon request.



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2013 SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

- **6th Annual Access to Independence Bowl-a-Thon – March 2013**
More than 150 consumers, friends, and family enjoy a half-day of bowling, food and door prizes at this inclusive recreation event.
 - Yes, we would like to sponsor this event with \$100! (20 sponsors needed)
- **23rd Anniversary: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Celebration – July 27, 2013**
An annual event to celebrate the passage of the landmark 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
 - Yes, we would like to sponsor this event with \$100! (30 sponsors needed)
- **8th Annual Employment Conference – October 2013**
An annual, three-day event to provide independent living skills training and networking opportunities for individuals seeking community employment.
 - Yes, we would like to sponsor this event with \$100! (10 sponsors needed)
- **2nd Annual ‘Harvest’ Gala – November 2, 2013**
Our second annual Gala event will have a fitting theme of ‘Harvest’. It aims to be ATI’s premiere annual ‘friendraiser’. ATI will celebrate its accomplishments and look ahead to future endeavors with friends, family and caring community members, while enjoying exquisite food and live entertainment.
 - Yes, we would like to attend this event! Tickets are \$50 each. **Number of Tickets:** _____
- **Newsletter – Access News – February, May, August and November 2013**
Help us to distribute quarterly newsletters jam-packed with useful information to more than 3,500 people!
 - Yes, we would like to sponsor the newsletter (1/24 page ad) with \$100! (20 sponsors needed)
- **Website – www.aticortland.org – full year**
Help us to continue maintaining our website and Facebook pages.
 - Yes, we would like to sponsor the website with \$75! (10 sponsors needed)
- **Consumer Computer Lab – full year**
Help us to continue providing individuals from the community free access to state-of-the-art computer workstations with a wide variety of software, adaptive technology and internet access.
 - Yes, we would like to sponsor the ATI Computer Lab with \$150! (10 sponsors needed)
- **Community Room – full year**
Help us to continue offering free access to a large community room for functions or meetings.
 - Yes, we would like to sponsor the ATI Community Room with \$500! (5 sponsors needed)

CONTACT / PAYMENT INFORMATION: Payment Method: Check Enclosed Credit/Debit Please Bill Me

Name: _____ Organization: _____

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