

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

Access to Independence of Cortland County, Inc.

ACCESS NEWS

Summer 2014

NUMBER XXXXI

Area Disability Advocates Rally in Washington, D. C.

On July 29, Access to Independence (ATI) sent a team of 14 disability advocates to Washington, D.C. to fight for the civil rights of people with disabilities in conjunction with the annual National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) Rally and Capitol Hill visits.

The team of 6 youth and 8 adults joined more than 1,000 others to celebrate the passage of the Workforce Innovation & Opportunities Act (WIOA) and the reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act within it. The new legislation created an Independent Living Administration within the Administration on Community Living.

The team also rallied to urge the Senate to ratify the international treaty, Convention for the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD).

After the ATI team marched and rallied in front of the Capitol, they

met with representatives of Senator Charles Schumer, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and Congressman Richard Hanna to speak about pressing disability policy issues that would effect our local community.

ATI's advocates spoke feverishly about Cortland's need for improved availability of accessible transportation system and access to accessible, affordable and integrated housing. The advocates offered dozens of examples of how the lack of both effected the ability of many to live independently in the community.

ATI's advocates encouraged the leaders to support legislation that would provide people with disabilities the same opportunities that exist for people without disabilities.

For more information, contact Aaron T. Baier by phone: 607-753-7363, or by email: abaier@aticortland.org.

ATI Awarded \$150,000 for Access to Home Program

New York State Homes and Community Renewal has awarded Access to Independence (ATI) \$150,000 to adapt homes for low- and moderate-income persons with disabilities in Cortland, Chenango and Broome counties.

ATI will use the funds to help 11 families continue to live safely and comfortably in their home, or to return to their home from an institutional setting.

Thanks to an additional \$5,500 committed by the City of Cortland, a minimum of five projects will benefit homeowners in the City of Cortland.

Since 2006, ATI has received \$1.5 million in Access to Home grants to help more than 85 families remain in their home and in the community. For more information, call Audrey Jones at 753-7363.



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Also Thanks To:

ATI Board Members, Cortland County Chamber of Commerce, Kory's Place, Walmart staff volunteers and WXHC (John Eves & Eric Mulvihill)



ATI Celebrates 24th Anniversary of the ADA!

On Saturday, July 26, Access to Independence (ATI) hosted the community to its annual picnic at Cortland's Courthouse Park in celebration of the 24th anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

More than 30 people with and without disabilities gathered at ATI offices to kick-off the celebration by participating in the annual "Stroll & Roll". The inclusive march down Cortland's Main Street aims to recognize local businesses that have made accessibility changes to promote full inclusion.

At the picnic, more than 120 attendees enjoyed picnic fare catered by the Kory's Place and music from WXHC 101.5 radio.

ATI CEO, Chad W. Underwood, welcomed guests, thanked sponsors and announced the creation of the Mary E. Ewing Scholarship Fund for Independent Living (see article on page 9). He said beginning in June 2015, ATI would award a scholarship to a graduating senior with a disability in each of the area's five high schools.

Cortland County Legislator Sandy Price read a 2014 Proclamation that recognized July 26, 2014 as the Americans with Disabilities Act Awareness Day. The Proclamation further recognized ATI's leadership and dedication to upholding the principles of the ADA.

Wendy Strobel-Gower, Director at Cornell University's Northeast ADA Center, delivered the keynote address. Wendy provided her perspective, 24 years post ADA, on the critical challenges facing the health care industry, employment and community involvement. She noted how important it was for each of us to participate in education, planning, or sometimes in legal action to move the civil rights of people with disabilities forward.

Next year, ATI will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the passage of the ADA. By that time, perhaps we will be closer to realizing a society where discrimination and barriers no longer exist for people with disabilities!

Many thanks to all of this year's ADA event sponsors!



2014 Starlight Gala

Saturday, November 8, 2014

6:00 - 9:00 pm

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Tickets are \$50.00 each.

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Access To Independence
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ATI Announces New Leadership

On Wednesday, June 18, the Access to Independence of Cortland County, Inc. (ATI) Board of Directors announced the promotion of Chad W. Underwood to ATI Chief Executive Officer, effective Monday, July 14. Longstanding Executive Director, Mary E. Ewing now serves as an agency Program Manager.

Mr. Underwood began at ATI in 2007 as a volunteer, followed shortly thereafter as an agency consultant. Since 2009, Mr. Underwood has served as ATI Chief Operating Officer. In that role, he oversaw the Agency's finances and operations and spearheaded initiatives that led to the doubling of ATI's staff, the tripling of ATI's budget to more than \$1.3 million last year, and a 300% increase in the number of consumers served each year.

As CEO, Mr. Underwood will continue to manage ATI's operations and finances, while simultaneously moving the agency forward with the ever-changing social, political and legal landscapes. In addition, the ATI Board has requested that Mr. Underwood lead new initiatives that aim to modernize ATI's current programming, while remaining consistent with its mission, vision and values.

Mr. Underwood currently serves as Chair of the New York State Independent Living Council (NYSILC) and as a member of the Executive Committee of the NYS ACCES-VR State Rehabilitation Council, both Governor-appointed positions.

Mr. Underwood received his Master of Public Administration degree from Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs. Prior to joining ATI, he served as Senior Project Manager for AMN Healthcare, a San Diego-based international healthcare organization. Before that, he served as Director of Government Affairs for the Albany-based national consulting firm of Mackin and Company.

My Volunteer Experience at ATI: By Sara Askew

My name is Sara Bonnie Jean Askew. I am 20 years old. I am currently a student at Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3), where I am taking office and business related courses in my college major, which is Office Management. In the fall of 2014 I will be starting my seventh semester at TC3.

When I was only three years old, I was diagnosed with Autism. As time went on, my symptoms decreased, and I was diagnosed with Asperger's, or, Autism Spectrum. In the past, I was ashamed of my condition and just wanted to live a normal life like other kids, but I soon found out that my Asperger's is a wonderful thing. I am always nice and caring toward everyone I meet and I am always positive and believe things will get better in the end. I have hopes to change the world and make it a better place. I have friends from both school and college, and I am still able to live my life normally despite my special needs.

In the Spring of 2013, I was feeling bored from the little amount of homework I had, so I decided to start volunteering once a week at Access to Independence (ATI) as a volunteer receptionist. During my time at ATI, I gained new office management skills that will be useful to being successful in an office management and secretary-related career, such as phone etiquette, recording data, as well as paper work.

I also enjoy spending time working at ATI and appreciate how understanding, kind and helpful the staff and volunteers at ATI are to me, one another, and, most importantly, to citizens with disabilities and their loved ones. Being a volunteer at ATI means so much to me because not only am I able to gain work experience for the future, but also, I get to help people with disabilities.

Even before I started working at ATI, I knew that though my Asperger's was not serious and has improved, there were many other citizens that live with disabilities and require special assistance and accommodations.

On February 11, 2014, I went on a road trip to Albany with my father and some of my co-workers at ATI to advocate on behalf of youth who live with mental health challenges. When I was there, I stopped by a booth of YOUTHPOWER!, an organization that fights for the rights of youth with disabilities.

As a person with a disability myself, it felt amazing to go with my co-workers to a place where different organizations come together as a part of their quest for the rights of people with disabilities.

Several weeks after the trip, I received a phone call from one of the members of YOUTHPOWER!, asking if I would be interested in becoming a member. I agreed to be a member, and after signing a membership form, I became an official member of YOUTHPOWER!. I feel very happy to be a member of YOUTHPOWER! because I have the chance to be a representative for people with disabilities.

After graduating from college, I hope to combine my office management skills and my passion for animals by working as a receptionist or secretary in an animal related career field, such as a no-kill animal shelter, a veterinary hospital or clinic, or a dog-grooming business.

I am so thankful to be a member of an organization that sees all people with disabilities as regular, normal and amazing people.

YOUTHPOWER!

Written by Amanda Park - A few months ago, I learned about YOUTHPOWER!, an organization that offers opportunities for young people to make a difference in their communities and in NYS. I am incredibly grateful that I got involved.

From July 28 to 31, I participated in the inaugural University of YOUTHPOWER! (UYP!) conference that was held at the College of Saint Rose in Albany.

UYP! was a continuation of several Statewide Youth Leadership Forums that were held across the state over the past year, but set up in a college experience format with dorms, classes, and events focused on peer and systems advocacy. While the event had me nervous, I was also excited to see just what the event was all about.

Now that UYP! is over, I must say I learned a lot about myself and other people at the event. An ongoing theme throughout the conference was that everyone has their own story to tell, and you can't underestimate the influence of anyone's story. Learning how to properly advocate for change with your own story is a powerful skill that I learned at UYP!.

Overall, I would recommend UYP! to any youth who feel disadvantaged or powerless in their own lives. The event was inclusive to all, a great way to make friends, inspiring, and an unforgettable experience for any youth interested in making a difference in the community.

Housing Roundtable and Consolidated Plan Update

On June 25, the Cortland County Housing Consortium met for their quarterly roundtable meeting. The meeting yielded updates on a new Healthy Neighborhoods Program grant through the County Department of Health, updates from the regional Continuum of Care and updates on progress with the Consolidated Plan for Housing initiative.

Over the past few months, much progress has been made toward realizing a new Consolidated Plan for Housing for Cortland County. Earlier this year the Cortland County Planning Department agreed to update the statistical and demographic data in the existing Consolidated Plan for Housing.

In May, the Cortland County Legislature's Agriculture / Planning / Environment (A/P/E) Committee authorized the County Planning Department to develop a Request for Proposal (RFP) for consultants to bid on the project of developing a new Consolidated Plan.

ATI staff worked closely with the Planning Department to ensure the RFP fully encompassed the desired scope of the project. In addition to many of the components that were in the last plan, there will be added focus on public and assisted housing, rental and owner-occupied housing, accessible housing, student housing and senior housing. The new Consolidated Plan will also include focus on strategies and an action plan.

In June, the County A/P/E approved the RFP for release. Consultants who are interested in sub-

mitting a proposal can download the RFP online at the County's website: <http://www.cortland-co.org/Legislature/BidsandRFPs.htm>

The County A/P/E Committee and full Legislature will begin the bid review process in September.

Although the County A/P/E Committee has agreed to request proposals for the project, it doesn't mean it will necessarily fund the project. That is why it is critical for stakeholders and community members to keep the pressure on the County Legislators over the next several months. We need to urge our County Legislators to follow-through and actually fund the project.

The Cortland County Housing Consortium will meet again on Wednesday, August 27, at 8:00 am at the SUNY Cortland Main Street Building. For more information, please contact Aaron T. Baier by phone at 607-753-7363, or by email at abaier@aticortland.org.



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Creating Systems Changes in Cortland's Healthcare Industry

According to the *World Report on Disability*, there are more than 1 billion persons currently living with disabilities worldwide; and these numbers are expected to rise with aging populations and growing numbers of persons with chronic, disabling health conditions.

In the United States alone, there are roughly 60 million people living with disabilities, representing 19% of the un-institutionalized population.

With this many people with disabilities in the world, you would think that doctors, hospitals and therapists would be acting like "kids in a candy store" seeking to help this growing population. Sadly, that is not the case.

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A study, entitled: "Training physicians about caring for persons with disabilities: Nothing about us without us!", found that the following reasons contributed to the lack of quality care and healthcare disparities for people with disabilities.

- Persistent societal stigma towards person with disabilities infiltrate patient-physician interactions with misconceptions and erroneous assumptions compromising patient care;
- Negative experiences with the healthcare system such as experiencing disrespect, insensitivity, and evaluation, may lead persons with disabilities to forgo seeking care and rely on self-diagnosis and treatment;
- Physicians lack the expertise and skills to distinguish clinical concerns arising from disability from those related to other health conditions; and
- Limited knowledge and understanding of disability seriously affects quality of care, contributing to delays in diagnosis and treatment, unsafe care and inequities in care.

Not only is the medical industry seriously lacking in training and communication, but it also has yet to become universally accessible in their facilities.

On July 31, 2013, the NYS Department of Health (DOH) issued a "Dear Administrator or CEO" notice reminding all medical facilities, including residential facilities and agencies that provide healthcare services, that they are subject to rules and regulations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the ADA and various New York State human rights laws.

The NYS DOH went further by advising all providers to evaluate

their facilities to ensure compliance with these laws and to develop plans to become compliant, as needed, to ensure that individuals with disabilities have full and equal access to programs and services.

Earlier this year, ATI launched local advocacy efforts to identify non-compliant medical facilities and to offer ATI assistance in removing persistent barriers. Such barriers include non-accessible doors, non-inclusive waiting areas, non-accessible examination tables, non-accessible mammogram machines, lack of wheelchair accessible scales, lack of patient lifts and lack of accessible restrooms in facilities, just to name a few.

ATI has mailed letters and made phone calls to nine different medical facilities in Cortland County to remind them of their legal obligation to comply with state and federal laws. In addition, ATI has offered its services in developing appropriate staff training and providing expertise in ADA accessibility guidelines and modifications.

So far, only one medical facility has responded back.

ATI will continue to follow-up with these nine entities in the coming months, as well as begin additional outreach to other facilities.

Beginning next year, ATI will begin filing complaints at the State and Federal level regarding non-compliant facilities that disregard ATI offers for assistance and that refuse to make changes to comply with the law, in effect perpetuating discrimination against people with disabilities.

For more information, contact Fran Pizzola, Community Education Coordinator, by phone: 607-753-7363, or by email: fpizzola@aticortland.org.

Expect. Employ. Empower.
ATI Announces 2014 DEAM Activities

Every October, Access to Independence (ATI) recognizes National Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM) with free employment-related events and activities open to the entire community. This year's national theme is: "Expect. Employ. Empower." The 2014 DEAM lineup in Cortland County will be our best one yet!

Save the date for these events!

2014 Disability Mentoring Day (DMD) - October 15th – Also known as Cortland County Mentoring Day, DMD is a day-long celebration of job shadowing and career exploration offered to area youth. DMD will provide more than 50 area youth an opportunity to choose a career to job shadow and get valuable hands-on experience. The day will close with a luncheon where attending youth will participate in innovative workshops and hear from empowering speakers who will share their experiences with leadership and in overcoming adversity. Youth exploring career options now will be a boon for their eventual careers!

2014 Employment Conference - October 22nd - The ATI Employment Conference is a community-wide staple of DEAM. The Conference will cater to job seekers with disabilities and the day-long event will offer tools, interactive workshops, networking, and speakers to help attendees enhance their job search and empower them for their future career.

This year's Conference will be held at the Cortland Works Career Center from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The Conference will feature a keynote presentation which focuses on advocacy, inclusion, and employee/employer accountability from a peer leader. The Conference will also include networking opportunities with local employers, interactive workshops that focus on skills such as leadership, work ethic, and professionalism, and a resource fair where participants can be informed of the array of employment services available throughout Cortland County. A well-informed job seeker is a more successful job seeker!

2014 Community Business Leader Luncheon - October 29th - ATI will host its third annual luncheon for local employers from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Main Street SUNY Cortland. The luncheon will feature guest speakers who will help local business representatives realize the benefits of an inclusive workforce. By creating more inclusive work environments and expanding job opportunities, commerce and quality of life will improve and everybody benefits!

For more information on ATI's 2014 DEAM events, please contact Aaron T. Baier by phone: 607-753-7363, or by email: abaier@ati.cortland.org.



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2014 Annual Employment Conference
"Expect. Employ. Empower."

When: Wednesday, October 22, 2014
9:00 am - 3:30 pm

Where: Cortland Works Career Center
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Location: Access to Independence

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Peer-Run Community Support Services

Hidden problems with some Medicaid Managed Long Term Care Programs

At least 26 states are now using privately-managed long-term care plans to serve people with Medicaid health care benefits and long-term care needs.

New York State has been rolling out these new plans for the last year for people who have Medicare and Medicaid, are over age 21, and will need more than 120 days of in-home services such as home health aides.

Until November, residents of Central New York (Cortland included) have had the option to switch. In November of this year, it will be mandatory to switch over to one of the privately owned plans for anyone who meets the criteria. There will be at least 2 options open for consumers to choose from for Cortland residents: Fidelus and iCircle.

If you are a person with Medicaid and Medicare and need at least 120 hours of in-home services, you

will be asked to sign up for one of these plans soon.

These plans are being put into place in an effort to contain Medicaid costs related to long-term care. Containing costs is a great idea, but the hope is that containing costs does not result in reduced services.

The private plans will receive a specific amount of Medicaid monies to provide services for each person in the plan. The plans will have a larger profit margin when a consumer does not need as many services. This may lead to denial of services so that the plan can still make a profit.

There have been incidences in other states of plans not accepting consumers with a higher level of care because their profit margin would be less. There have also been cases of plans dropping consumers when they need to move to assisted living arrangements because the costs would be much

higher and the plan's reimbursement rate does not increase.

These types of issues will have to be monitored very closely as consumers are being transitioned to Medicaid Managed Long Term care programs.

The goal of Managed long-term care is to keep people in their homes longer by offering them a "managed" group of health benefits and care management to assist in making sure the person receives the care they need.

Our hope is that the profit margins of these plans do not become more important than the people.

ATI encourages everyone that moves to Medicaid managed long-term care to know what the appeal process is and to use it, if necessary.

For more information, please contact Susan Lewis, Independent Living Coordinator, by phone: 607-753-7363, or by email: susan.lewis@aticortland.org.

ATI's Baier Runs 5K to "Ramp It Up"



On July 19, Aaron Baier, ATI Consumer & Systems Advocacy Coordinator, joined more than 35 runners from CNY for the Cortland United Methodist Church (UMC) first Annual "Ramp It Up" 5K.

Proceeds from the event will pay for lumber and supplies for the UMC's ramp building program which offers ramps to those in need at no cost. ATI actively supports the UMC and other local programs which offer these types of accessibility modifications.

"There is no better way to show our support for independent living and accessibility," Baier said. "Not only was the event accessible for me and other people with disabilities, but the UMC will be able to build more ramps with the money raised."

The only runner with a vision disability, Baier ran alongside Erika, an experienced runner, for support with navigating the course through the finish line.

Join ATI's Disability Advocacy Network!

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

Email Aaron Baier:
abaier@aticortland.org

Join ATI's Disability Advocacy Network!

ATI Thanks Community for Loan Closet Donations

Access to Independence (ATI) thanks all of the residents and organizations in Cortland and surrounding towns for their generosity in donating durable medical equipment to its loan closet.

ATI established its loan closet shortly after the agency opened 12 years ago. At the time of start-up, ATI purchased a limited amount of equipment with dedicated grant money, but there certainly wasn't enough equipment to fulfill the need throughout the community.

Over the years, and as word of ATI's loan closet spread, people started calling to see if they could donate pieces to our agency. They had a wheelchair, walker, commode or shower chair that they no longer needed. People did not want to throw the equipment away, but they did not have space to store it either; so they donated it to ATI.

In 2013, ATI utilized grant funds from the J. M. McDonald Foundation to purchase additional equipment and to secure dedicated loan closet space adjacent to its office to store unused items.

In 2013, more than 60 individuals from the community borrowed one or more pieces from ATI's

loan closet. So far in 2014, more than 50 individuals have done so.

ATI cannot accept every donation, primarily due to storage space constraints. But when this is the case, ATI staff will often be able to find a person in need to donate it to directly. This has been successful with items such as hospital beds and electric wheelchairs.

ATI's current Loan Closet inventory includes: 26 wheelchairs, 24 shower benches, 20 walkers, 9 portable ramps, 18 canes, 5 toilet risers, 7 commodes, 3 Hoyer lifts and a variety of smaller assistive technology pieces such as threshold ramps.

ATI's loan closet offers short term loans of items. These items are available to the public to use at no cost, though donations are always accepted.

If you might have a piece of durable medical equipment that you no longer need and you'd like to donate it to ATI, contact Susan Lewis, Independent Living Coordinator, by phone: 607-753-7363, or by email: susan.lewis@ati-cortland.org. Most donations are tax-deductible.

ATI Establishes "Mary E. Ewing Youth Scholarship Fund"

On Saturday, July 26, Access to Independence CEO, Chad W. Underwood, announced the creation of the *Mary E. Ewing Youth Scholarship Fund for Independent Living*. Mr. Underwood announced the new initiative during his opening remarks of ATI's 2014 ADA Celebration.

In July, ATI set-aside \$1,000 in unrestricted revenue to seed this fund. Beginning in June 2015, ATI will award five scholarships per school year to a graduating student with a disability in each of the County's five school districts.

"We hope this fund will grow in perpetuity and that it will promote increased awareness of the independent living philosophy by Cortland's youth with disabilities," said Mr. Underwood during the announcement.

ATI created the fund to honor Ms. Ewing, who served as ATI's Executive Director for 12 years. She transitioned into a new role in mid-July (*see article on page 4*).

Mr. Underwood said, "ATI staff and Board of Directors are honored and humbled that such a champion of independence remains with the Agency. Her role may have evolved, but her dedication and contributions are stronger than ever before."

ATI welcomes donations to the new scholarship fund from individuals, businesses and foundations.

For more information, please contact Chad W. Underwood by phone: 607-753-7363, or by email: cwunderwood@aticortland.org.

ATI is recruiting interested individuals with diverse backgrounds, with & without disabilities, to serve on its Board.

For more information, please contact:

**Mary E. Ewing, Program Manager, by phone: 607-753-7363;
or by email: mary.ewing@aticortland.org**

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ATI Service Coordination Diverts & Transitions People Out of Nursing Homes

One of the many services that Access to Independence (ATI) offers is Service Coordination for the TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury) and NHTD (Nursing Home Transition & Diversion) Medicaid Waiver programs.

What does a Service Coordinator (SC) do? He or she helps a consumer to obtain information, support, and resources that help them live more independently in the community.

The SC advocates for their client with other service providers (physicians, Department of Social Services, Social Security, and many others) to help them benefit from all available avenues of assistance. You may know the Service Coordinator better by the name of case manager or care manager.

ATI currently provides Service Coordination to 14 people in the Central New York area. This is a story about one of those people.

ATI first met Doug through his brother, who wanted help moving Doug into his home. Doug originally went into a nursing home back in 2012, after a series of hospitalizations. He expected to be in the nursing home for a short period of rehabilitation, in order to get his strength back. However, Doug lost his home during this time, and did not recover from his medical problems as expected. He ended up spending 18 months in the nursing home, and would still be there if his brother had not persisted in his efforts to get Doug home!

Getting Doug home required several months of preparation. Doug's SC helped him to schedule aide services for during the time when his brother was working. Doug's SC worked with him and his brother to prepare the home for inspection and approval by the home care agency. Doug and his SC applied to an Adult Day Program to supplement the time that he

needed aide services in the home. Since Doug had almost no personal belongings after 18 months at the nursing home, his SC helped him secure needed bedroom and bathroom furnishings and linens.

Doug has lived in the Central New York area for many years, and still has a lot of family in the region. He has three sisters and two brothers, and many nieces and nephews. He also has a daughter and one granddaughter. Although he isn't able to see them that often, family remains important to him. Since moving back into the community to live with his brother, Doug recently had the opportunity to travel out-of-state for the wedding of a family member.

Doug is now in his 50's and has a long work history. He was employed doing security work at several locations in the area, as well as working at a scrap yard. His SC is now helping him to secure earned Social Security benefits, based on his employment history.

Doug attends an Adult Day Program in the area so that he has an opportunity to get out of the house and to socialize with other people.

When asked what was the best thing about being out of the nursing home, Doug said it was being able to go outside whenever he wants to! He likes to go to the park, to go swimming and even to mow his lawn. Sometimes he plays baseball with his nephew when he comes to visit. He also enjoys fast food, and being able to order take-out again.

Over the past ten years, ATI has transitioned or diverted 71 individuals from nursing facilities!

For more information on how ATI can help you or a loved one transition or stay out of a nursing facility, call Mary E. Ewing, Program Manager, at 607-753-7363.

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



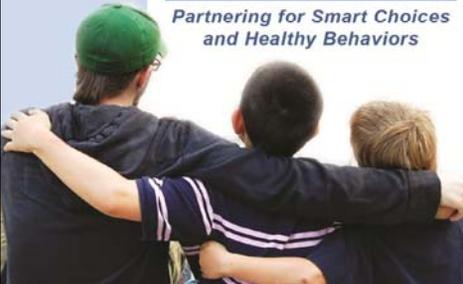
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Ph: 607-218-6001 or 888-228-9559
Fax: 607-218-6279

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Kelly Garrett
Intake Specialist/Work Incentives Practitioner
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CORTLAND COUNTY NEEDS A PLAN!

Tell Legislators to **FUND** Consolidated Plan for Housing

DEFINING A COMMUNITY BY ITS HOUSING

Nothing defines a community's Quality of Life better than the condition, variety, and affordability of its Housing stock. Housing defines the place we call home. It is an economic development attraction and retention tool. Municipalities and school districts rely heavily on the taxes generated by residential properties. It is incumbent, therefore, for a community to periodically assess the condition, marketability, accessibility, safety, and future development opportunities associated with its Housing in order to remain viable. In Cortland County, a 2002 Consolidated Plan was created to provide a vision for housing across the County. This Plan was highly successful in generating millions of dollars in grant-funded projects alone. Unfortunately, this Plan has become obsolete and needs to be updated.

WHAT IS A CONSOLIDATED PLAN?

A Consolidated Plan for Housing is an assessment of a community's housing and development needs based on existing and potential market conditions. More importantly, it provides a vision for a community's housing infrastructure. It is data-driven, place-based, and offers unique insight into future investment opportunities (public and private). The consolidated planning process serves as a framework for a community-wide dialogue to identify community housing and development priorities. A Consolidated Plan brings together essential, relevant, and up-to-date data from all municipalities, housing providers, organizations concerned with housing, and the community at-large into a single document. This document is an essential ingredient to municipal and community planning. It is something Cortland County needs.

HOW WILL A NEW CONSOLIDATED PLAN IMPACT CORTLAND COUNTY

- **Funding** - It would assist municipalities and organizations in securing funding for new or existing housing development projects, programs, and services. An up-to-date Plan opens doors to more opportunities through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), NYS Housing and Community Renewal, and other funding sources which require funding requests be in conformance with up-to-date community plans. Actual and projected Cortland County funding for housing related projects:
 - ★ Grant Revenue from Existing Plan ~\$41.7 Million (2003 - 2013)
 - ★ Potential Revenue from an Updated Plan ~\$60 Million (2014 - 2024)
- **Vision** - While a Consolidated Plan will not solve problems overnight, it creates a vision which the community can work toward. Developing the Plan requires various housing groups to work together to create the vision, and this collaboration, along with public awareness of the vision and plan, will create an environment which the community will support and invest and reinvest in.
- **Numbers** - A Consolidated Plan will contain significant data related to housing that are accessible to a variety of sources such as housing providers, realtors, housing developers, and other stakeholders who each contribute to the community's vision for housing.
- **Evaluation** - A Consolidated Plan, its data, and the programs and projects developed to achieve the community's vision, can each be evaluated periodically to ensure that efficiency and financial solvency is maintained and desired outcomes are reached.



26 North Main Street
Cortland, NY 13045
Phone: 607-753-7363
Email: info@aticortland.org

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN A CONSOLIDATED PLAN?

- Housing Demographics - population, housing units, rental versus owner-occupied housing, housing age, housing values, homes sales, home values, and rental costs.
- Substandard housing assessment
- Needs assessment for homelessness and other supportive housing needs
- Information regarding policies, regulations, and ordinances related to housing
- Assessment of special needs housing: people with disabilities, frail elderly, foster care, institutional homes
- Assessment of local market conditions / market analysis
- Assessment of lead-based paint and other housing hazards such as radon and asbestos
- Identification of impediments to increased affordable housing stock throughout Cortland County
- Development of short-term and long-term strategic plan to enhance housing options for people who want to live in Cortland County

WHAT IS THE COST OF A NEW/UPDATED CONSOLIDATED PLAN?

The cost to develop a new Consolidated Plan or to thoroughly update an existing Plan is approximately \$20,000. Ideally, a Consolidated Plan should be updated every 5-10 years. These costs are miniscule compared to the amount of revenue that can be obtained through grants and other funding streams.

COUNTY LEGISLATOR CONTACT INFORMATION

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LD 10 - Gordon Wheelock (R) 11 Nixon Ave Homer, NY 13077 gwheelock@cortland-co.org	LD 11 - Susan Briggs (R) 4032 Kinney Gulf Road Cortland, NY 13045 sbriggs@cortland-co.org	LD 12 - Joseph Steinhoff (R) 3215 W. River Road Cortland, NY 13045 jsteinhoff@cortland-co.org
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LD 16 - James Denkenberger (R) 7738 Shackham Road Tully, NY 13159 jdenkenberger@cortland-co.org	LD 17 - Charles Sudbrink (R) 1122 St. Route 4, P.O. Box 28 Willet, NY 13863 csudbrink@cortland-co.org	