

CDR celebrates ADA birthday

...Yet disabled citizens must still remain vigilant

By Patricia Villers

It's not every day you can laugh while you learn. But such was the case at a Center for Disability Rights' party in July that celebrated the 22nd anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act.



The event featured food and friends but it also was enlightening. CDR Executive Director Marc Anthony Gallucci hosted a true or false session that focused on the ADA. Despite the massive thunderstorms pummeling the New Haven area this evening, many of the 20 of us there were embarrassed to discover the questions were not easy, even though we had a 50-50 chance of being right

Those who responded/guessed correctly earned an ADA buck to be used toward "purchasing" prizes ranging from salad dressing and gourmet pasta to stationery. The competition was fierce, and lucky guesses were running rampant. Gallucci launched the session with an interesting fact when he posed the following true/false question:

Q: There are 43 million people with disabilities in the U.S.?

A: The answer is false; according to the 2000 Census there were 53 million people with disabilities in the United States

And it's safe to assume with the millions of Baby Boomers now heading toward their retirement years, it's inevitable there will be more Americans facing age-related disabilities *(Continued on P.3)*

Executive Director's Corner

Welcome to the newest incarnation of the CDR Newsletter. Over the years, the Center has had different names for its newsletter: "The Activist"; "CIA Notes"; "News from the Center"; "CDR Organizer", and "The Communicator". You will note that this issue is called "Rolling Along..." We would like your feedback about our new newsletter and the name. So, e-mail us at info@cdr-ct.org if you would like to share your thoughts.

Now it is time for me to share my thoughts... so many thoughts; yet, so little space here.

I will tell you what has been on my mind more than anything else lately - how our community of folks has changed over the years. Times change, and certainly the activities and services of the Center for Disability Rights have changed. Consequently, we should expect change and embrace it.



No doubt, you have heard that CDR now has an expanded Money Follows the Person Nursing Home Transition Project; a Community Choices Aging & Disability Resource Center (in partnership with AASCC); and we are building a new satellite Center in Clinton, CT that will serve the Shoreline and Estuary regions of our State. That's a lot of change.

Throughout all the changes and evolution, however, we must never lose our identity as a Center for Independent Living. As a CIL we must always be vigilant that we remain community based, non-residential, cross-disability, and consumer controlled. We also should hold and practice the Independent Living principles of self-help and self-reliance; peer support; community inclusion; and respect for personal choice and autonomy. *(Continued on P.2)*

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Ask the ADA Person

Dear ADA Person: I recently applied for a job and received a call from the company asking me to be available for a phone interview. I have a speech impairment and am afraid that I won't make a good impression over the phone. Can't they interview me in person? **Stanley**

Dear Stanley: I find that more and more companies are doing phone or video interviews in place of face-to-face interviews. For large companies this may reduce costs and be more efficient. But as you have experienced, this does not work for everyone.

Under Title I of the ADA, which covers employment, it is clear that non-discrimination against people with disabilities extends to every stage of the employment process from the application, to the interview, the hire, on the job conditions, promotions and even terminations.

You may request as a "reasonable accommodation" that they conduct the interview in person or in some other way that would accommodate your disability. Of course, you would then have to disclose your disability in order to ask for the accommodation. But if you feel your disability will be obvious and noticed in a telephone interview, you will be disclosing anyway.

If you decide to do this, then understand that there may be genuine reasons why the company may not be able to grant you your requests – called an "undue hardship". You don't say what kind of job you are applying for, but it may also be the case that having clear communication abilities over the phone is an "essential function" of the job. In that case, you probably won't convince them that you are the candidate for the job unless you can demonstrate how you will ensure clear communication.

Executive Director's Corner (continued)

As a community of folks who are part of the civil rights movement for people with disabilities, we must never, ever forget that what binds us together is much greater than our differences with one another.

And we must always remember that IL calls us to honor the sacrifices of those who came before us, and to continue to advocate, advocate, and advocate and to continue to Ed Roberts, the Father of IL used to say that "there are three things that all CILs must do, and they are 1) advocacy, 2) advocacy, and 3) advocacy – and in that order".

Justin Dart, the Grandfather of the Americans with Disabilities Act used to urge us to always "advocate as if your life depends on it, because it does".

I challenge you to think about what you have done to advocate for the rights of people with disabilities and to fight against discrimination and exclusion. Are you engaged with the Center and our movement? Are you doing what you can to build relationships with your fellow members and consumers and to work together to achieve our goals?

In the next issue of our Newsletter, I will share with you some of the ways that you can become more engaged, and ways in which, together, we can make the Center stronger and be all the change that we wish for in our world. Until then, may you always be blessed with good health, a happy heart, and inspiring dreams.

Marc Anthony Gallucci, Esq.

What's New in Assistive Technology Siri and Iris make things easy for all

The US Dept. of Education defines of an assistive technology device as: "Any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities"...

Being involved in the disability means that we may be viewing assistive technology as some esoteric and very specialized equipment meant as aid for specific challenges only. Yet off-the-shelf apps for mobile phones and tablets to make life easier for those with limited sight and mobility, and that with voice-command software.

The Apple devices can be paired with *Sari* and Android operating systems may be paired with *Iris* now and perhaps soon with the *IBM Watson*...Granted, the technology allows for searching for information but as with all technology, the competitive impulses will allow for more functionality such as locking/unlocking doors and turning lights on and off – very convenient for the not-so-disabled but with more ease for many disabled users. Universal design shows no bias toward its users. If only society at-large that pure of heart...

Ralph Villers

Membership, News and Information

ADA Birthday Party (Continued from Page1)

I became a part of the disability scene many years ago when my husband, Ralph, with MD from childhood, started using a power wheelchair. That was in late 1995 after a fall that fractured his ankle in three places. So although I'm able-bodied, I have some understanding of what it's like to not be. Gallucci posed the following true or false question:

Q: The ADA stands for the American Dental Association; American Dental Association; American Democratic Alliance; Americans with Disabilities Act; American Diabetes Association

A: It stands for all of the above, "but we are focused here on the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability."

President George H. Walker Bush signed the ADA into law on July 26, 1990 in a ceremony at the White House with more than 40,000 people in attendance.

I learned at the celebration that the father of the Americans With Disabilities Act was Justin Dart, a man who had raised millions of dollars for Ronald Reagan and Republican causes. Gallucci said Dart, who died in 2002, had visited CDR three times.



The event taught us that just because someone claims to have a disability does not mean they are protected by the ADA. The ADA protects people with disabilities, but it also offers protection from disability-based discrimination for people who had a disability in the past, who are treated as if they have a disability, or who associate with people with disabilities. In this way, the law recognizes that prejudice plays an important role in disability discrimination and that anyone can be vulnerable.

Patricia Villers is a writer, Ansonia resident, and CDR member. Contact her at pmcv29@sbcglobal.net #

Helping Each Other Succeed Support Group

The Helping Each Other Succeed Support Group meets the second Friday of each month from 1:30 to 3 PM at CDR in West Haven. Our theme: **Reaching Out to Others with Disabilities**

We are a cross-disability support group that offers speakers, group discussions and other social activities for people regardless of age or the type of disability.

Contact Roger Kamm at: FourWheelKamm@sbcglobal.net

Candidates Forum on Disability Issues

The Developmental Disabilities is presenting a candidates forum on Disability Issues. It will be on Friday October 12 from 3-7 PM and is being held at Manchester Community College. Congressional and Senatorial candidates have been invited to present their platforms on disability issues.

The keynote speaker is John Kemp, Esq., a national leader on employment for people with disabilities, having a disability himself. Mr. Kemp will be presenting "Jobs, jobs, jobs for People With Disabilities". Light refreshments will be served and sign language interpreters will be provided.

Hosted by the Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities, The Connecticut State Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities, and UConn.

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To advise and consent in CDR operations

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Welcome to Community Choices — your aging and disability resource



Community Choices is a single point of entry for both folks with disabilities of all ages and older adults, and is your *one-stop* information gateway for:

- Community resources
- Options counseling
- Referrals for employment assistance
- Referrals for care management
- Planning for the future
- Advocacy

In CT Call 1-800-994-9422 or visit www.aopartnerships.org or www.cdr-ct.org

Schedule of Events

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| Sun Sep 9 | 7th Annual CDR Wheel-A-Thon | Savin Rock Conference Ctr |
| Wed Sep 12 | Emergency Preparedness Training | New Park Conference Ctr, Hartford |
| Fri Sep 14 | Helping Each Other Succeed | CDR, W.Haven |
| Wed Sep 19 | CDR Board of Directors | CDR, W.Haven |
| Wed Sep 26 | SILC Annual Meeting–2012 | TBD |
| Wed Oct 3 | Membership Committee | CDR, W.Haven |
| Fri Oct 12 | Helping Each Other Succeed | CDR, W.Haven |
| Fri Oct 12 | Candidates' Forum, Disability Issues | Manchester Community Tech College |

About us: CDR is a consumer-controlled and community based organization that is a single point of access to resources for all people regardless of the nature or type of disability.

Center for Disability Rights
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