



AUGUST 2024

YOUR INDEPENDENCE IS OUR MISSION

A Letter From The Director

I am still excited and floating on air about the RCAL and Harambee Disability Awareness Parade. It was bigger and better than last year. Acting Commissioner Willow Baer from OPWDD marched with us. Esi Lewis, Ulster County Diversity Officer, Alderman Barbara Hill, Legislators Gina Hansut, Greg McCollough, Peter Criswell, and Megan Sperry all marched with us. OPWDD, Gateway, Wrap Around Services, Seeds of Love, and a dozen organizations all marched with us. Oh, and of course, Scooby Doo was there, strutting along. Our message was clear: we are here. We are living in Ulster County independently and demand inclusion in all aspects of community living. A special thank you to the Daily Freeman for covering the event and Radio Kingston, Keegan Ales, People, Inc., and of course People's Place, for providing everything that we needed: space, restrooms, and audio equipment. We at RCAL are so proud to bring this parade to the community. The resource fair afterward was fun with a bounce house, free Italian ice, and informational booths. If you weren't there, mark your calendar now for July 19th, 2025 for our next parade. Hope to see you there, or one of our other activities this year. Stop by our booth at the Italian Festival, the Caribbean Festival or the African Festival!

-Anthony Mignone, CEO

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A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

ADA CELEBRATION
ALONG THE WALKWAY

AUGUST IS SPINAL
MUSCULAR ATROPHY
MONTH

DINE TO DONATE
SEPTEMBER 25

PROTESTS AT
DISABILITY PRIDE
EVENT

SAVE THE DATE:
COMMUNITY
CONNECTIONS
SEPTEMBER 18

COMMUNITY SAFE
SPACE RETURNS TO
COUNTY FAIR

REP. RYAN CARES VAN
AUGUST 16

WE ARE HIRING

SPONSORS

DISABILITY
AWARENESS PARADE
HIGHLIGHTS

AND MORE!

YOUR INDEPENDENCE IS OUR MISSION



ADA Celebration Meets Controversy After Governor 's Remarks on State's Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program

On Monday, July 29th, Governor Kathy Hochul held a Disability Pride event at the Governor's Mansion where advocates from numerous Independent Living Centers protested against the Governor's remarks where she described the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP) as a "racket" in a July 22 Bloomberg interview.

A press release published by the New York Association on Independent Living before the day's events stated, "Citing social media rather than the facts, the Governor discussed a months-old TikTok video referencing 'babysitting Grandma' for \$37 per hour as her source. This is obviously an uninformed and misguided perception of home care. The actual facts are that these home health aides are grossly underpaid for the services and compassion they bring to thousands of elderly and disabled New Yorkers in their homes to keep them out of institutions. The wages homecare workers earn in the CDPAP program are only \$17.55 per hour for the rest of the state and \$18.55 downstate... By referring to the CDPAP as a 'racket,' Governor Hochul is insulting the people with disabilities who rely on the program, homecare workers, and the Fiscal Intermediaries who administer the program, ironically during Disability Pride Month.

The term 'racket' is a serious allegation, because it implies organized criminal behavior, which is far from the truth. Our member Independent Living Centers, along with long-standing Fiscal Intermediaries, have been operating the CDPAP ethically and legally with a consumer-first approach for decades under the watchful eyes of Federal and State government regulators. Governor Hochul must apologize, correct the record, and allow us as a disability-lead network to help preserve and protect the CDPAP. Nothing about us without us!"



5TH ANNUAL

2024

CARIBBEAN *Carnival*

EVENT
STARTS
AT NOON

Experience the Festive
Fun & Culture of
the Caribbean

Aug 17th , 2024
PARADE STARTS AT 2 PM

Cantine Field, saugerties, NY

Best Carnival
Costume Contest

Food Vendors
Live Performances
DJ • Face Painting
Arts & Crafts Vendors
Games and Family Fun!

FREE EVENT

Pictures

Pictures

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Reflecting on a Trip

Last week, I was able to bring to fruition an idea that I have had brewing for quite a while. My husband Matt and I went on a tour of Independent Living Centers across western and central New York. We were able to visit 9 Independent Living Centers: Cortland, Corning, Jamestown, Buffalo, Olean, Oneonta, Syracuse, Rochester, and Watertown. We saw some amazing things and were even able to get some ideas for RCAL.

Some highlights included a community computer lab for individuals in Cortland where most of the county doesn't have internet, an adaptive design program in Syracuse that builds motorized scooters for young kids, a telehealth section that provides mental health to individuals in a hybrid model, and even a kitchen for staff where a stove can be lowered by the push of a button and be accessible to individuals who need it.

It was interesting to see how some Centers had 2 story buildings with separate spaces for intake and offices for employees.

It was very clear that all of the Centers had friendly, hard-working staff as we toured the halls with the Executive Directors at our side. You could tell that each and every Director was proud of their Center.

Matt and I both enjoyed this experience. However, for me, as the chair of the New York Association on Independent Living (NYAIL), it was a wonderful opportunity to see first hand what a difference each of these Centers makes for all of the individuals we serve across the State. I hope to do this again as there are still many other Centers in New York that would love to share what they are doing.

-Anthony Mignone

5th Annual **Harambee**
The Coming Together of People

African American Festival

Food Culture Music Crafts Games

Free . Open To Public

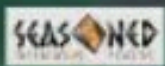
Sat. Aug. 24 .2024 12pm-7pm

The Strand Waterfront. Kingston, NY Bring A Chair

HarambeeKingstonNY.org



SCENIC
HUDSON
LOUIS



THROUGH



Ulster Savings

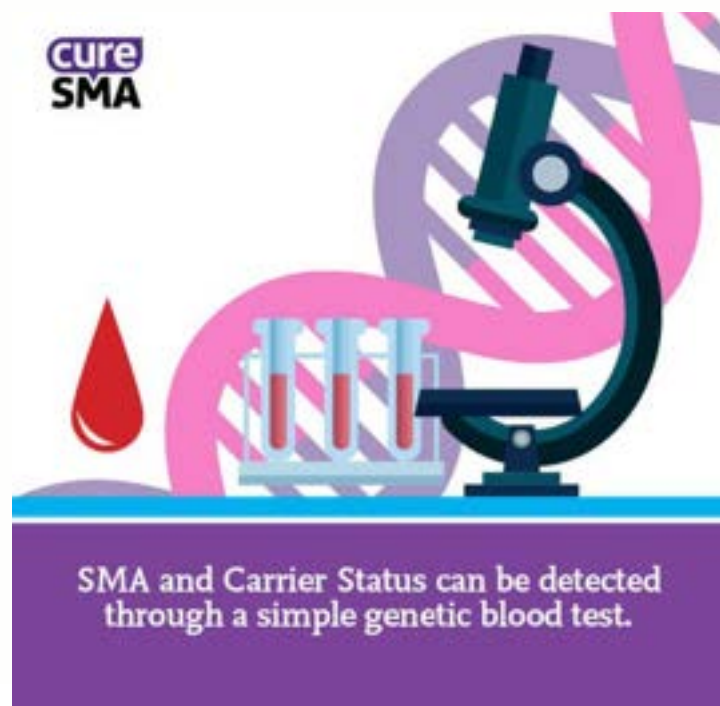
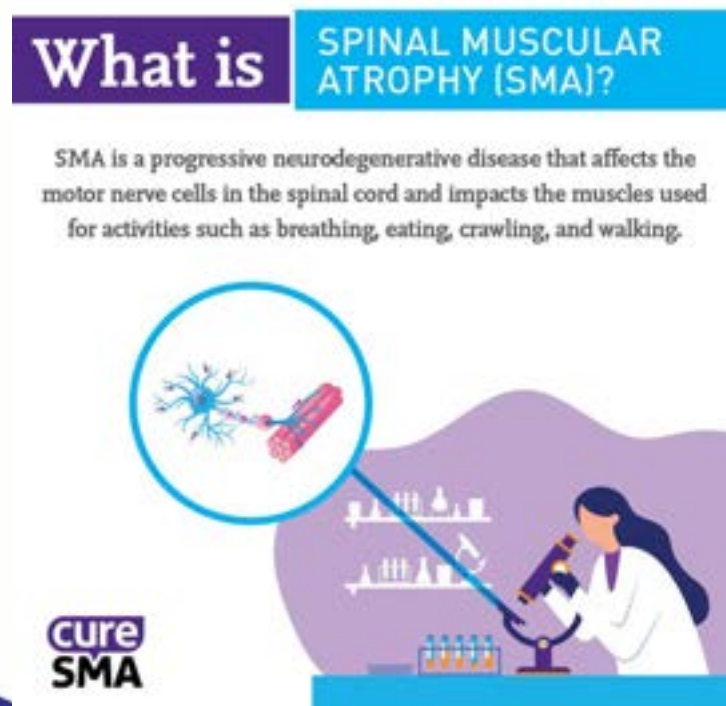


August is Spinal Muscular Atrophy Awareness Month

Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) is a genetic condition that causes worsening muscle weakness. There are five subtypes, which range in severity and age of onset. There's no cure for SMA, but certain therapies and medications can help manage symptoms. ([Source](#))

August is dedicated to raising awareness about SMA and maintaining a spotlight on priorities of individuals and families affected, including research and advocacy.

For more information about SMA visit the [National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke](#).





SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE C.A.R.E.S. VAN EVENT

Come visit
RCAL's table!

*Bringing direct assistance with Social Security,
Medicare, and more directly to you!*

FRIDAY, AUGUST 16
11:00AM to 2:00PM
Esopus Community Center
1 Town Hall Way
Ulster Park, NY 12487

Stay up to date! Sign up for Congressman Ryan's weekly newsletter by scanning the QR code!



For more information or if you need assistance, but cannot attend, please contact Congressman Ryan's office at:



(845) 443-2930



PatRyan.House.Gov



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Sensory Safe Space Returns to Ulster County Fair

NEW PALTZ, N.Y. — The Ulster County Fair’s sensory safe space return[ed] when the fair open[ed] on Tuesday, July 30. Ulster BOCES officials noted that the bustling environment of the Ulster County Fair is often overwhelming for families with children on the autism spectrum or individuals with sensory sensitivities and this designated room will offer families an opportunity to enjoy a sensory-friendly environment. The space, hosted by Ulster BOCES alongside the non-profit Resource Center for Accessible Living, debuted in 2023.

BOCES officials said the room will offer a respite from the bright lights, crowd, and summer heat. Officials added the space will feature bubble tubes, mats, seating, touch-and-feel books about animals, noise-canceling headphones, and a charging station for augmentative and alternative communication devices.

“The Fair is fun but can feel chaotic with the lights, sounds, and people all around,” Barbara Hastie, Ulster BOCES supervisor of instructional services and co-chairperson for the sensory safe space said in a press release. “People with autism or sensory processing issues may find the bright lights, loud sounds, and strong smells at the Fair overwhelming. We want to make it possible for these individuals to have a positive experience at the fair.”

BOCES officials said the Ulster County Fair’s sponsor the Ulster County Agricultural Society has donated \$2,000 towards supplies for this year’s sensory safe space, allowing for the purchase of new flooring for the space and a new swing outside the room.

“The UCAS board has shown incredible support for creating inclusive spaces with their donation toward supplies for our Sensory Safe Space,” Hastie said. “It’s important for this space to exist so that everyone can enjoy the fair, regardless of their sensory needs.”[Continue next page]

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AUGUST 2024
YOUR INDEPENDENCE IS OUR MISSION

Sensory Safe Space [continued]

“Last year, the Sensory Safe Space allowed for 342 visitors to enjoy the Ulster County Fair, knowing there was a space that was quiet, provided hands-on soothing sensory toys, and air conditioning for those moments when people needed a break,” RCAL Special Education Advocate and chairperson of sensory safe space, Renee Falanga-Brenner added. “One visitor borrowed one of the many noise-canceling headphones, stood in a line for 40 minutes, and was able to ride the Ferris Wheel for the first time.”

The fair [ran] through Sunday, Aug. 4. The Sensory Safe space [was] open throughout the fair’s operating hours...each day. The fair also [had] sensory-safe hours with no rides Wednesday to Sunday from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Rides [were] available without lights or music on Wednesday and Thursday, from 11 a.m. to noon.

Originally Published: July 29, 2024 at 1:26 p.m.

Source: [Daily Freeman](#)



We strive to help seniors stay independent and active through social exchange, mutual support, and advocacy for senior issues.

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phone: (845) 331-0155

website: ssip.info

SAVE THE DATE

September 18th, 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

ROSENDALE RECREATION CENTER, 1055 NY 32, ROSENDALE

DON'T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY TO CONNECT, LEARN, AND BE INSPIRED!

This event will include a series of panels moderated by community partners and presented by older adults, who will share their personal stories and experiences. Learn how reinventing themselves as seniors and finding purpose & connection with others has enhanced their lives and contributed to healthy aging.

Let's celebrate the vibrant senior community and discover new ways to thrive.



Science At Play!

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Check our website for daily, holiday, and summer hours.

mhdm.org | (845) 471-0589

75 North Water Street, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601



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Advocates Celebrate 34 Years of ADA Legislation

HIGHLAND -Friday [July 26th] marked the 34th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and advocacy organizations celebrated Saturday with an event on the Walkway Over the Hudson.

“The ADA brought a lot of freedom and a lot of equality to the individuals with disabilities population here in this country,” said Anthony Mignone, chief executive officer for Resource Center for Accessible Living in Kingston. The event included speakers, activities, and representatives from many organizations, like Mignone, to highlight their mission and services.

“We still have a long way to go, as many places where you go that are not accessible to everyone,” he said. “But the ADA does give us the ability to push forward with government and businesses to get what we need.” The ADA has teeth with binding laws for those who violate it because they would not accommodate people with disabilities.

“It’s been binding for 34 years, and we still have to remind people,” said Mignone. Mignone’s organization and others can use laws to help people with disabilities, and they help municipalities and businesses with architectural modification consultants on staff to help guide them to solutions under the ADA.

“Businesses can call for referrals,” said Mignone. “We’re not looking for you to spend money you don’t need to spend.”

Source: [Mid Hudson News](#)



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Letter: Home Care Assistance Program Works

In a recent interview, Gov. Kathy Hochul called the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program a racket. She claims that it is one of the most abused programs in the history of New York and is rife with fraud.

Statistics show that the managed long-term care plans that pass on Medicaid dollars commit more fraud than any personal assistant. The program has grown because the model works for the consumers who use the program, in my case traditional agencies are not allowed to do some of the care that I require (i.e., catheter changes, wound care) or even drive me to appointments, grocery shopping, or social activities.

By directing my own care I get a much better quality of care than I would through a traditional agency. A recent article points out that family caregivers were going unpaid because they have to stay at home to take care of their loved ones. This program allows them to get paid. It's not just family caregivers. I hire other wonderful individuals who keep me out of the nursing home, which would cost state taxpayers exponentially more.

The governor's push to make changes to the program is foolish, and will only lead to more disabled and elderly individuals being forced into institutionalized care while costing hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers their jobs. There are many elected officials and advocates doing our best to push back against her and her continued attacks on home care.

— Zachary Hilty

Published in the Daily Freeman August 1, 2024

[Zachary is also a Peer Advocate for the Open Doors Program at RCAL]

YOUR INDEPENDENCE IS OUR MISSION





DINE TO DONATE

⇒ *Support* ⇐

RCAL

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

4PM-9PM



10%
DONATION NIGHT

for **RCAL**.

Present this flyer at the Kingston location and Texas Roadhouse will donate **10%** of your total food purchases to **RCAL**!

845-336-7600
500 MIRON LANE
KINGSTON, NY



WE ARE HIRING

Part-Time Benefits Advisor: (21 hours) Assist individuals with their Social Security Benefits, Medicaid, Medicare, TANF, Section 8, and other low-income benefits. Social Security Retirement, Supplemental Income, and Social Security Disability.

QUALIFICATIONS: Associate's Degree or prior experience with benefits Advisement. Belief in the Independent Living Philosophy. Ability to learn fast and take online courses to expand knowledge. A valid NYS driver's license and automobile insurance that meets the requirements set by the program and our insurance company are also required. Ability to work on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.

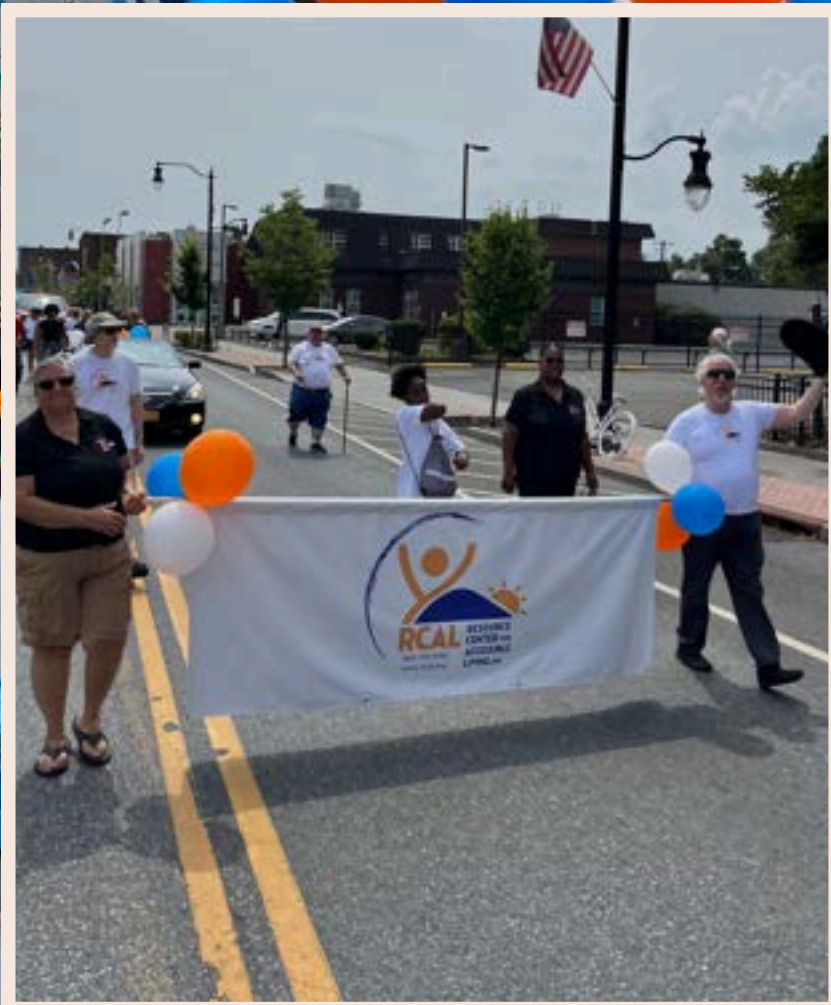
RESPONSIBILITIES: Assist individuals with obtaining, retaining, and re-certifying their benefits. Understand and explain the impact of working on an individual's benefits. Assist with management of needs and other tasks. Keep records. As a working part of the team, assist with Durable Medical Loan Closet and tasks around the office. Contact Robert Miraldi, at rmiraldi@rcal.org.

Respite: RCAL is seeking a compassionate and responsible individual to join our team as a Part-Time Respite Provider. In this role, you will provide care and support to individuals with disabilities, allowing their primary caregivers to take a break and recharge. The Respite Provider will assist clients with daily living activities, engage them in meaningful social interactions, and ensure their safety and well-being during the respite period. Salary is \$16.75/hour.

Com Hab: RCAL is seeking compassionate and dedicated individuals to join our team as Part-Time Community Habilitation Support Staff. In this role, you will provide direct assistance and support to individuals with developmental disabilities to help them achieve their goals, enhance their independence, and participate more fully in their communities. The Community Habilitation Support Staff will work closely with clients, their families, and other members of the support team to implement individualized plans and promote meaningful engagement and skill development. Salary range is \$16.50- \$18.50/hour (Clean driver's license and own transportation required.)

Please contact Leah Gherardi at lgherardi@rcal.org if interested

RCAL'S 2ND ANNUAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS PARADE

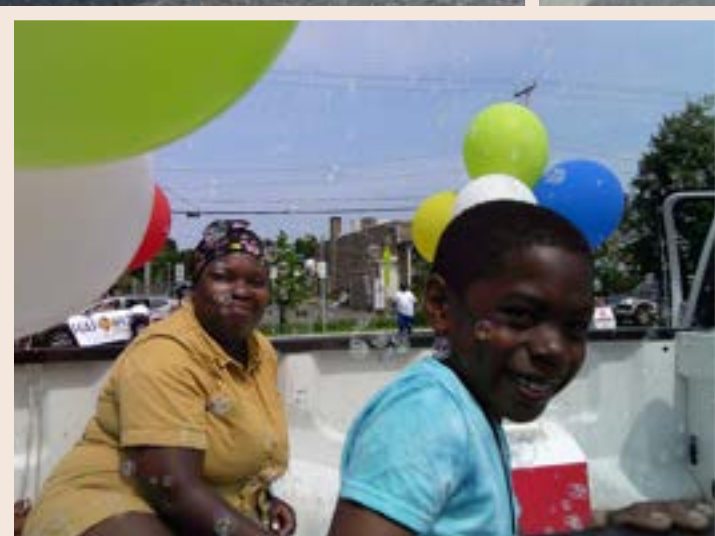












THANK YOU TO ALL INVOLVED!
SEE YOU NEXT YEAR





INDEPENDENT

AUGUST 2024

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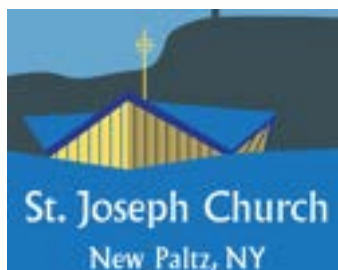
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