



INDEPENDENT



NOVEMBER 2024

YOUR INDEPENDENCE IS OUR MISSION

A Letter From the Director

Thanksgiving is just around the bend, and it is the season to reflect on the positive and be thankful. We here at RCAL are thankful for all the wonderful individuals who come and utilize our services and give us purpose and pride. We are thankful for all the many volunteers and board members who dedicate time to assisting us manage an agency with so many working parts. We are thankful to our partners in the community and our local representatives who allow us to celebrate together with parades, provide opportunities to the community, and more. We are thankful to our business partners and sponsors and the Ulster County Chamber of Commerce.

Personally, as the leader of our group, I am especially grateful for the ongoing support I receive from our Board Members: Sheila Kilpatrick, Craig Lopez, Kathy McMahon, Alex Stier, Maureen Brivett, Rich Roman, Florence Staats, Emma Hambright, Stepanie Galinson, Jeff Woodard and Melissa Rappleyea our Board Chair. I am thankful for my parents and my husband Matt, who are always supportive and volunteer and donate to RCAL. I am grateful for Scooby Doo and all the places that allow him to come with me.

And... of course, I am beyond grateful for every single person here at RCAL. Our team works at 200% and does more than you could possibly imagine. Thank you Gerry, Betsy, Renee, Gilles, Keith, Ana, Qiwanna, Wanda, Miriam, Marge, John, Zoe, Christine, Robert, Leah, Katie, Stephanie, Donna, Zach, George, Jenny, Robin, Roxanne, Paul, Laura, Brooklyn, Tanisha, Elaine, Carla, Brianna, Theresa, Debbie D, Debbie R and all the Community Habilitation and Respite Staff.

Happy Thanksgiving to everyone. Be thankful for the things that you can be.

- With Love, Honor and Respect to All: Anthony

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WE ARE HIRING

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Jim Garvey Memorial Disability Resource Fair Highlights

The Jim Garvey Memorial Disabilities Resources Fair brought together caregivers with community support agencies, as well as in-depth workshops for the second time this year. The first event, held in April, was postponed from the fall of 2023. Going forward, this will remain an annual fall event.

RCAL's Special Education Advocate, Rene Falanga-Brenner, presented on Special Education Law and Parent's Rights and RCAL's Benefits Advisor, Debbie Denise presented on Pooled Trusts and was available for specific questions for folks. The Ulster County Sheriff's Department shared their Yellow Dot program that helps individuals with special needs communicate their needs in an emergency. Teaching staff from a local school district shared with parents and professionals how to accommodate students with Autism in the classroom, and create a consistent collaboration between home and school.

This event had a total of 24 local agencies on hand to meet with attendees to share how they can assist with visible as well as invisible disability needs. UCAT was on hand to help register folks for the paratransit, The Commission for the Blind, special needs camps, and support groups were on hand to connect and support our community. Bussani Mobility offered adapted van tours and Happy to Help Pantry was available for tours in their fully accessible food pantry downstairs in St. James Church where the event was held.

- Roxanne Ferber: Service Coordinator NHTD, HH, TBI



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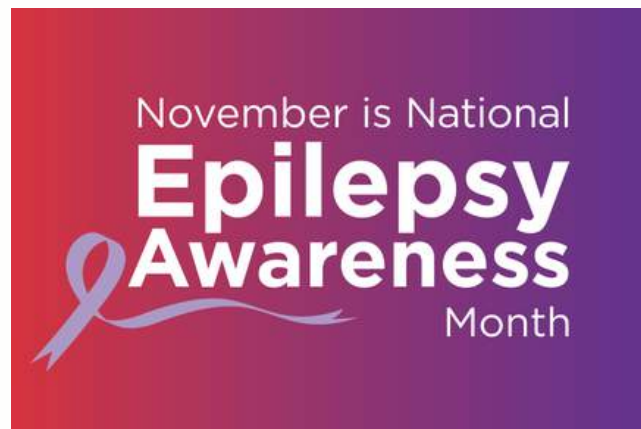


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November is National Epilepsy Awareness Month

Sharing facts about epilepsy helps raise awareness and stop the stigma surrounding seizures. By educating the public, we can promote understanding and encourage support for individuals living with epilepsy. Knowledge empowers communities to provide better care, offer assistance during seizures, and create a more inclusive and compassionate environment. We've compiled some facts about epilepsy and seizures for you to share on social media or with your friends and family to help them learn more.



Quick Facts About Epilepsy

- 1 in 10 people will have a seizure and 1 in 26 will develop epilepsy during their lifetime.
- There are 3.4 million people living with epilepsy in the United States; 470,000 of them are children.
- Epilepsy is a neurological disorder that can affect any one of us regardless of race, age, or gender.
- Seizures are a symptom of epilepsy. Not all seizures are the same. Many people with epilepsy have more than one type of seizure.
- Misunderstanding and misinformation about seizures contribute to continued feelings of stigmatization and negative outcomes for people with epilepsy.
- People with epilepsy may experience "felt" stigma, which leads to shame about their condition and fear of discrimination if they talk about it.
- Felt stigma was linked to higher seizure frequency, younger age at epilepsy onset or longer duration, lack of knowledge about epilepsy, and younger age.
- Felt stigma can reduce the quality of life even when seizures are well controlled.

Source : the Epilepsy Foundation

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JOIN OUR TEAM

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 your 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

JOIN OUR TEAM (continued)

Part-Time Systems Advocate

Description: As a member of the Statewide Systems Advocacy Network (SSAN), the Systems Advocate's primary role is to educate the public and elected officials about relevant policy priorities that support the Independent Living philosophy and advance the independence of individuals with disabilities in key areas including; healthcare, education, employment, transportation, election reform, and housing. The System's Advocate will work in coordination with other members of the network with guidance from a central coordinating body.

QUALIFICATIONS: Applicants should have the ability to communicate well, either through written word, orally, or both. Familiarity with social media platforms, PowerPoint, Excel spreadsheets and other modern means of communication is highly beneficial. Applicants should also have a comprehensive understanding of how local, state, and federal government work intersect.

RESPONSIBILITIES: the Systems Advocate is responsible for completing quarterly reports towards their progress in completing the required number of annual deliverables including: Building new local partnerships and coalitions, disseminating educational alerts to local volunteers, conducting publication education activities, participating in and planning grassroots community organizing activities and developing oral or written public testimonies on relevant current issues.

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

Community Working Together to Support and Honor our Veterans!

For the past two years, I have volunteered at the Hudson Valley National Center for Veteran Reintegration's VET2VET of Ulster County monthly luncheons. The food for these luncheons is generously provided by local restaurants on a rotating basis. The Ulster County Italian American Foundation's Community Care Committee sets up, serves, provides desserts and cleans up after the event. I have the best of both worlds, being an RCAL employee, where I can share information about our services and programs here at RCAL, as well as being a member of the UCIAF's Community Care Committee. I look forward to being surrounded by men and women who have served our country and helping to provide them, and their families, with a meal, a listening ear, sharing of information about RCAL and a heartfelt thank you for their service.

My co-worker, Betsy Albany has also volunteered on occasion. We feel it's important to be a presence in the community of people who may benefit from the services here at RCAL and to be a familiar face each month in case they have any questions.

- Anthony





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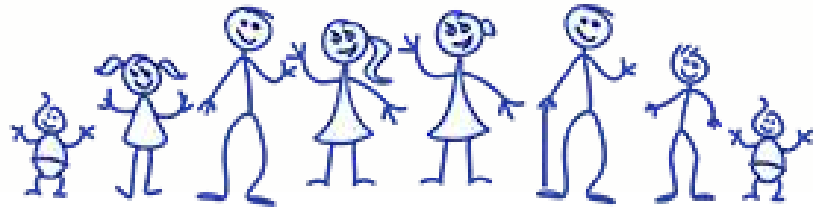
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Access For All!

from People's Place

On 10/10/24, the Ulster County Regional Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for us with members of our community, to celebrate the opening operation of our Lift. The installation of the lift enables anyone with mobility challenges to access the Wellness Empowerment Center on the second floor & participate in the classes that are offered year-round.

Go to <https://www.peoplesplace.org/wellness-empowerment-center/> to find a class that is right for you .



PEOPLE'S PLACE

YOUR INDEPENDENCE IS OUR MISSION



Become an RCAL Board Member

Do you have 5-8 hours a month? Do you have a commitment to living independently in the community regardless of disability?

Please consider becoming a part of our Oversight board. Call Robert at ext. 12 and he will arrange for you to come down and have a tour and meet and greet with our CEO Anthony. He will explain all of our programs and about our agency.

Without an oversight board, a non-for-profit cannot function. Don't worry, this is not a management board. You do not have to direct staff or manage programs on a day to day basis. Our meetings are hybrid so if you can't drive in the evening or if getting around is an issue, you can still participate. Give us a call for more information!

Holiday Closures

This is a friendly reminder that RCAL will be closed for Thanksgiving (11/28) and the day after (Friday 11/29). We will also be closed from December 23rd @ Noon until January 2nd.

PNA Checks will go out as normally scheduled.





THE RCAL

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