

LIFE Connections

December 2007 – February 2008

LIFE/RUN Center for Independent Living

Not Without Us!

The LIFE/RUN Center for Independent Living is proud to announce that it was recently notified by the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), of a \$500,000 grant to open a Center for Independent Living (CIL) in Abilene, Texas. The 80th Legislature approved funding for the establishment of two new Centers for Independent Living to address the needs of Texans with disabilities. This is significant, because Abilene is located in the only Region in Texas that does not have a CIL. We are excited at the opportunity to further advance the Independent Living Philosophy, as well as expand the network of CILs in Texas.

LIFE/RUN is currently celebrating its 20th anniversary. In that time, the Center has grown from a small grassroots agency with one basic program, to providing numerous programs that are responsive to the needs of people with disabilities in Lubbock and the surrounding area. It is LIFE/RUN's intention to provide the same quality of services to the Abilene community. Services will include:

- Independent Living Services (IL Skills Training, Advocacy, Information & Referral, Youth Transition, and Peer Support)
- Payee Services
- Nursing Home Transition Services
- ASL Interpreting
- Housing
- New Clothing from Dignity U Wear

How are CILs different from other agencies? CILs demand substantial involvement of people with disabilities, making policy decisions and delivering services. The basic idea behind independent living is that the ones who know best what services people with disabilities need, are people with disabilities themselves. CILs are run by people with disabilities, who have been successful in establishing independent lifestyles. These individuals also have a deep commitment to assisting their peers in achieving their full potential in becoming more independent.

LIFE/RUN would like to offer its congratulations to the Valley Association for Independent Living in Pharr, Texas, for being chosen to receive the grant award for the other new Texas CIL, in Laredo.

Texans with disabilities will want to recognize State Senators, Zaffirini and Lucio, for their commitment to the disability community. It is through their hard work that these Centers, that will benefit so many people, were funded. In response, LIFE/RUN pledges to make the new Center in Abilene, "Not Without Us!" a valuable resource for people with disabilities in Eastland, Shackelford, Jones, Callahan, Taylor and Stephens Counties.

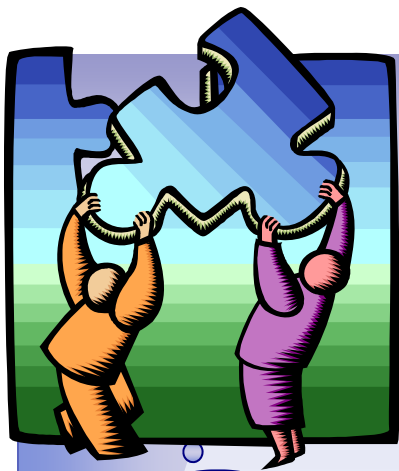



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VOTE!



In November of 2008, this country will be voting for a new President of the United States. In addition, elections for U.S. Congress and state and local elections will be held. It can be confusing to sort out the candidates and issues, but it is worth the effort. Non-biased information can be found on the Easy Voter Guide website, comparing the candidates stances on different issues. You can peruse the information and make your own choices at:

<http://www.easyvoter.org/s5.html>

This year has been called one of the most important general election years in our lifetime. It is an exciting time for our country, politically. If you are anxious for a change and want to have a say in the direction you want your country to go, be part of the process.

Lubbock has accessible voting machines available to assist people with disabilities to vote. If you have dexterity, hearing, or visual disabilities, you may still cast your ballot privately. If you feel you need assistance that will also be an option for you. The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) mandates:

Accessibility - State law requires all polling places meet strict accessibility standards.

Private Ballot - It is your right to cast a private and independent ballot. Every polling place must have at least one accessible voting device, which assists individuals with disabilities to cast a private ballot.

Voting Assistance - You have the right to assistance from any person you choose when registering to vote or voting if you cannot read or mark the ballot or application. You have the right to an interpreter. It is illegal for the person assisting you to try and influence your vote.

Curbside Voting - If you are physically unable to enter a polling place or to stand in line to vote, you can ask an election official to bring your ballot to your car or the entrance of the polling place. This applies to both early voting and Election Day. If you have any questions, follow the link below to obtain more information:

<http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/pamphlets/services.shtml>

Election officials will be available to help answer your questions about procedures. The important thing is to vote! "It's a duty, it's a privilege, and it's a responsibility!"

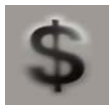
Your donation to the LIFE/RUN Center for Independent Living is tax deductible. It will be used to further enhance the quality of services offered to Consumers, and to promote equality, dignity, independence and the full inclusion of people with disabilities into every aspect of their communities. To give, please clip this and mail it with your donation to:

**LIFE/RUN Center
4902 34th Street, Suite #5,
Lubbock, TX 79410**

I would like to donate:
\$5___ \$10___ \$25___ \$50___
\$100___ \$1,000___

Or go to www.liferun.org

U.S. Stimulus Benefit



The following information is from the IRS website (irs.gov) regarding the rebate incentives that will be sent to eligible individuals, beginning in May. For those who do not normally file, because they receive Social Security Benefits, you should be aware that the stimulus benefits (rebates) will only be sent to those who file a 2007 tax return.

Individuals who might not otherwise be required to file a 2007 tax return will need to file a return this year to receive the stimulus payment. The return must show at least \$3,000 in qualifying income. Unfortunately, people who receive SSI only, are not eligible for the rebate.

In other words, low-income workers who had at least \$3,000 in earned income in 2007, but do not otherwise earn enough to be required to file a federal tax return, need to file a return in order to get the stimulus payment. Likewise, Social Security recipients, veterans and retired railroad workers, who might not otherwise need to file a tax return, must do so to receive the economic stimulus payment.

If you have already filed, showing at least \$3,000 in qualifying income, you should receive your stimulus payment in the coming months.

Heads Up

As some of you know, Heads Up is a group of people with various disabilities who get together to learn and support each other. Each month, Heads Up gets together and decides all the activities for the following month. Activities such as crafts, going to the movies, the museum, and concerts are frequently on the agenda. The group recently attended The Ten Tenors concert at the City Bank

Auditorium. This spring and summer, Heads Up will be planning more activities outside, such as going on picnics in the park, trips to the arboretum, and concerts at the gazebo downtown.

Heads Up is in the process of planning fundraisers for a trip in the fall. If you have any ideas for fundraisers or activities, come join us! If you have any questions or ideas, please feel free to contact Darlene Leadingham, at LIFE/RUN Center-795-5433.

The LIFE/RUN Dignity U Wear Clothing Closet will be open every 3rd Wednesday of each month, starting in April. Watch your calendars for times to obtain new clothing.

Soul Food Luncheon

In honor of Black History Month, LIFE/RUN hosted our 7th Annual Soul Food Luncheon on Thursday, February 28th. Forty-two people attended the event. We had good music, good food and a great turn-out. A special thanks to Shunn Harvey, who provided the entertainment. Shunn is the son of a Consumer and LIFE/RUN's Office Manager, Irean Harvey. He has a beautiful voice and has been generous in donating his talent to this agency.

The Annual Soul Food Luncheon is a wonderful time to acknowledge and respect our differences and embrace our similarities. Thank you to all Consumers and businesses that donated to the activity and thanks to our staff who worked hard to make it a success.



Diversity



Each one of us is part of one race, the human race. This big human race puzzle is made of many sections in a variety of colors. Yes, every human being has in common the ability to smell, feel, hear, see and taste; and, we all dream and hope, sing and dance, work and play. Each race has its own skin, hair and eye colors, language, and ethnicities. Each culture has its own way of cooking, dressing, singing and dancing, etc.

However, for years, races and people with disabilities were segregated, and we could not share with each other. Thanks to leaders who have fought to remove barriers – Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Ed Roberts, Judy Heumann, Justin Dart, Wade Blank, Bob Kafka and many more leaders, we can come together and share music, foods, ideas, stories, workplaces, schools, churches and other life experiences. Diversity is being welcomed everywhere. We at LIFE/RUN BELIEVE IN DIVERSITY. The more that people of different races blend cultures and beliefs, and people with disabilities and without disabilities mesh together, the closer we move to a society of full inclusion.

LIFE/RUN programs are free and open to anyone with a disability. If you need help to participate (interpreters, etc.), please let us know 24 hours in advance, so that we can provide these services. Also, let us know if you need help with transportation.

Voter Registration



Remember to register to vote! Voter registration cards are offered at your local Center for Independent Living. If you need help in filling out forms, someone on staff is available to assist you. You can't vote if you don't register! The last day to register to vote in the November General Election is October 6, 2008.

Did you know that people with disabilities are the largest minority in this country? That means there is power in your vote. Find out where the candidates stand on important issues, such as reduction in waiting lists, Medicaid funding and community integration. Then, make your informed choice.

This is an important election, so make your voice heard!

SILC Conference

This year marks the 9th Annual Conference for the Texas State Independent Living Council (SILC). The 2008 Conference was held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel on March 3-4, in Houston, Texas.

As usual, LIFE/RUN traveled with a large group of Consumers, Board Members and staff, all of whom enjoyed the various workshops and activities. One of our staff members was the recipient of a new Dell laptop that was raffled at the banquet and donated by ARCIL in Austin.

We commend the SILC staff and Board members as well as the Houston Center for Independent Living for co-hosting another successful and informative conference. See you in Austin next year!

Introducing New Staff



Hello, my name is Andy Kochis. I have recently been hired as the new Coordinator for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services at LIFE/RUN. I am a certified Level 1 sign language interpreter and have been an interpreter for the Lubbock Independent School District for about 10 years. I also worked with agencies to provide ASL interpreting to the Lubbock community.

I am married and have three children. My wife's name is Shannon and she works for the Lubbock State School. My Daughter, Elizabeth, is 11 years old; my oldest son, Trey, is 5; and my youngest son, Zachary, is 2 ½.

I enjoy the new responsibilities that are contained in my new position at LIFE/RUN. I hope to learn something new every day. I look forward to meeting you and learning more about you as well.

Your Responsibility to Yourself

The mission of an Independent Living Center is to promote independence for the people with disabilities who access the Center. LIFE/RUN Staff knows that every individual is different and that people require different levels of assistance to be independent. The Center's goal is to provide the Consumer with information and options so they can make informed choices. With an independent life comes responsibility. Being responsible always requires us to take action. The where, when, why and how depends on several factors. Keeping track of your money and your personal documents are an

important part of being independent. It is very difficult to live on a limited income, which is why it is all the more important that you learn good money management. Making sure you have a Texas ID and a Social Security card will allow you to apply for resources when they are available and appropriate.

It is LIFE/RUN's goal to provide our Consumers with the tools, knowledge and awareness to do for themselves. I feel that I have done my job if I have empowered a Consumer to take control of their own life. Consumers can be their own best advocates.

Transitions

Life is full of transitions whether it is from one job to another, or from school to work. There are tools out there to assist you in making these types of transitions.



Searching for work can be difficult if you cannot decide what you do best. There are websites that can point you in the right direction. One informational website is:

<http://www.ioscar.org/tx/>.

The OSCAR website explores your preferences and work values and gives a detailed explanation of what jobs might be suitable for you, based on the answers given.

The transition from school to adult life can be difficult, but being prepared helps. Join the Center's youth group, Life Transitions, meeting every second Saturday at LIFE/RUN, to learn how to be prepared.

Professional Ethics for Interpreters

As professional Interpreters, there are three main concepts to which we must adhere. These are set forth to protect not only the consumer, but the interpreter as well. The concepts that are associated with the ethical behavior of the interpreter are:



- Confidentiality
- Impartiality
- Integrity

An example of a potential ethical question follows:

A Deaf person discloses to the interpreter in the waiting room of a Doctor's office that he or she has not been taking their medication as prescribed, but does not want to tell the Doctor because they are afraid that he may get upset. What is an interpreter to do in this situation? The interpreter should have integrity in this situation and try to persuade the Consumer that they should be honest with the Doctor, because he may be prescribed a stronger medication, which could be fatal. It is then the Deaf person's responsibility to inform the Doctor, using the interpreter as a means of facilitating communication.

Professional interpreters do their best to adhere to the code of ethics and principles set forth to insure qualified professional services.



In order to make it easier for Consumers to attend activities at the Center, LIFE/RUN will now provide a round-trip bus pass to a Center-sponsored activity. You must attend the activity to qualify for a bus pass.



Disability Awareness

Many of you may have watched with horror, the YouTube video of the Florida citizen with quadriplegia being dumped out of a wheelchair at a Tampa Police station. This incident really demonstrates the need for education of disability awareness to be provided to police stations, businesses and emergency response units in every town. The man had been arrested on a traffic violation and was ordered to stand and submit to a search. When he said he could not, he was dumped out of the chair and searched as he lay on the ground.

Acknowledging that no citizen, being arrested for a traffic violation should ever be treated with disrespect, this situation was greatly compounded by the absolute ignorance and callousness of the staff at that office.

We, as advocates, must make that effort to meet with our local departments and emergency service providers to educate them so this shameful treatment does not happen to another citizen with a disability.



Accessibility



LIFE/RUN Center is taking part in a new endeavor in Lubbock called Hub City Access. Hub City Access" is a new non-profit, formed by advocates, health care providers and citizens to lead the way in making Lubbock, Texas more accessible to ALL of its citizens.

To that end, LIFE/RUN decided to send a staff person out to restaurants in Lubbock, to see how accessible it is for a person using a wheelchair. These are her observations:

Saigon Café - 4515 50th Street

Family owned, fresh, delicious and reasonably-priced Vietnamese food. Excellent dishes include (but are not limited to) curry chicken with rice, Pho' (traditional clear soup with beef and rice vermicelli, bean sprouts, jalapenos), and shrimp with lobster sauce. Orders come out from the kitchen in minutes and piping hot. There is wheelchair friendly access to most tables with ease of maneuverability. There is one spacious, accessible restroom suitable for companion assistance. Other accessibility features are:

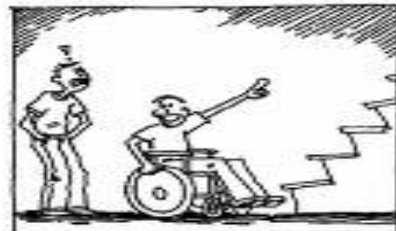
- Accessible parking: 2 spaces
- No automatic doors
- Nearly all tables accessible for wheelchairs
- Companion restroom
- One parking lot ramp
- Close proximity to public transportation
- No Braille menus
- Front entrance

Spanky's Sandwich Shop - 811 University

If you want great hamburgers, chicken salad and simply fabulous fried cheese, by all means go to Spanky's. However, be forewarned that people in wheelchairs will be hard pressed to get into the building. After speaking with a manager and sending two letters with suggestions on how to make their restaurant more accessible, Spanky's continues to disappoint.

Most of the seating is located upstairs. The narrow ramp from parking to the narrow walk in front of the door is steep. The door opens the wrong direction for anyone attempting to enter from the direction of the wheelchair ramp. That door also does not open enough for a person in a wheelchair to pass from the ramp to the entrance. Seating in the downstairs area is limited and crowded areas on either side of a narrow ramp. It is difficult, nay, hazardous navigation for people with mobility issues. Other accessibility features are rated below:

- Accessible parking: 2 spaces
- No automatic doors (sharp turns, virtually requires wheelchair acrobatics to get in)
- Crowded spaces hamper wheelchair movement between tables
- Narrow restroom doors
- Narrow ramps
- Close proximity to public transportation
- No Braille menus



LIFE/RUN Center for Independent Living
Lifetime Independence for Everyone, Inc.
4902 34th Street, Suite #5
Lubbock, TX 79410

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In the event of inclement weather,
please call the Center before
attending activities. Activities may
be postponed or canceled for
Consumer safety.

LIFE/RUN Center for Independent Living Staff

Michelle Crain	Executive Director
Nancy Penland	Director of Programs
Irean Harvey	Office Manager/Volunteer Coordinator
Darlene Leadingham	Administrative Assistant
Monica Pratt	Special Projects Coordinator
Aaron Mann	Relocation Specialist (Lubbock)
Annabell Mendoza	Relocation Specialist (Midland/Odessa)
Kim Sorrells	Relocation Specialist (Amarillo)
Alice Gonzales	Relocation Specialist (Wichita Falls)
Terri Baize	Relocation Specialist (Abilene)
Kimberlee Scott	Community Integration Specialist
John Hobgood	Advocacy Specialist
Rosa Trevino	Advocacy Specialist
Sheryl Young	Computer Trainer/Advocacy Specialist
Andrew Kochis	Coordinator of Deaf & H H Services/Certified Interpreter
Ruby Icenhour	Certified ASL Staff Interpreter

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