




# *LIFE Connections*

March 2009 to May 2009

**LIFE/RUN Center for Independent Living**

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## **SPEAK UP—or SHUT UP!!**

It is that time again! You know--that time when our elected officials get together and make budgetary decisions that will either make our lives more difficult or a tad bit more manageable. Most of us would prefer the latter; however, we do very little to influence the final outcome. That is, people with disabilities often forgo participation in the legislative process, thinking that nothing they do or say could possibly make a difference. For those with such a defeatist attitude, I ask, "Have you ever made an effort to contact a local, state, or federal official to inform them about the impact a piece of legislation may have on your life or on the disability community as a whole?" If not, there is no better time than the present.

The 81<sup>st</sup> Texas Legislature is currently in Session and contrary to popular belief, many elected officials look to their local constituency for feedback on pending legislation. Disability issues such as long waiting lists for community based services, more rigid identification requirements to vote, as well as the need for more Centers for Independent Living throughout the state, are all among pieces of legislation under consideration this Session. Will your voice be heard?

Just imagine if the Americans with Disabilities Act or the Olmstead Act had never been signed into law. People with disabilities would not have equal access to employment, transportation, communication or the freedom to live in a community setting of their choice. Imagine being confined to your home or a nursing facility, because of the inability to access government services, schools, restaurants, movie theatres, or even voting sites. Reality is that the rights granted by these laws are constantly being challenged. For instance, did you know that Texas claims sovereign immunity from the ADA? Meaning that if a person with a disability experiences discrimination by the State of Texas; their rights are not protected by the ADA. Excuse my urban slang, "But ain't that a %!&@#!" The point is--disability advocates made their voices heard then, so that ours can be heard now.

What can you do to impact change? First and foremost, rid yourself of the defeatist attitude—it serves no purpose. Secondly, become educated about the issues that impact one's own life, as well as the disability community collectively. Visit [www.legis.state.tx.us/Resources/FAQ.aspx](http://www.legis.state.tx.us/Resources/FAQ.aspx) for information about local representatives, tracking Bills, and understanding Texas' legislative process. Additionally, individuals can access Issue Briefs prepared by the Disability Policy Consortium at [www.dpctexas.org](http://www.dpctexas.org). Lastly, and most importantly, make your voice heard—"Advocate like your life depends on it, because it does!"



## **Energy Assistance Available**

LIFE/RUN has been awarded funds to provide Energy assistance for people with disabilities under the age of 60 years old. You can call for an appointment for assistance on Friday Mornings, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. If you are currently a Consumer at LIFE/RUN, discuss your need for energy assistance with your case manager. LIFE/RUN anticipates ample funding to assist people all year. You can only access the CEAP program one time per calendar year. (January - December.)

We've been particularly lucky this year to receive more funds than usual. LIFE/RUN should have sufficient funds to help all eligible individuals who apply. If you have a LIFE/RUN case manager, please let them know you have a need for CEAP assistance. If not, please call during intake hours on Friday mornings.

If you are age 60 or over and have a disability, please call Neighborhood House for assistance @ 741-0459.

## **Medicaid Buy-In Opportunity**

On May 19<sup>th</sup>, from 10:30 – 12:00, LIFE/RUN is coordinating with Imagine Enterprises to provide additional information on the Medicaid Buy-In program. LIFE/RUN has presented this program before, but Imagine Enterprises representative, Stacey Sparks, informs us that she has even more information to share now.

The Medicaid Buy-In Program allows people who are planning to go back to work, to maintain their Medicaid coverage, even if SSI has been terminated. Loss of SSI medical benefits is a huge deterrent to people seeking employment. Following the presentation, Stacey will be available for individual

consultation on the Buy-In program, or other Social Security questions. Don't miss this opportunity to learn more about this important benefit.

## **Accessibility**



LIFE/RUN Center continues to take part with Hub City Access, by helping to make Lubbock more accessible to ALL of its citizens. To that end, we asked a staff member to relay back her experiences at various restaurants in Lubbock, to see how accessible it is for a person with a disability. These are her observations:

**Lujan's:** 10101 Slide Rd. #101



Judging from the consistent crowd at peak hours, Lujan's offers good food with fair prices. Open for lunch and dinner, they have great fajitas, and fried ice cream too.

There are no stairs to the restaurant and there is no automatic door. There is no booth seating and all seating is available for people who use wheelchairs. Maneuverability is only challenging when Lujan's is full. They have a full bar with standard high seating. Lighting is good, but not too bright, while the music is low enough to be able to carry on a conversation.

Lujan's has the standard men's and women's restrooms, but they also have a spacious companion restroom. There is accessible parking, however, during busy hours you will be hard pressed to find one. If you're in the mood for Mexican food, Lujan's could possibly become your next favorite place to go.

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.

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](http://www.liferun.org)



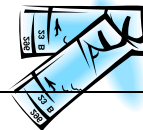
**Dignity U Wear!**

The LIFE/RUN Dignity U Wear Clothing Closet is available to assist people with disabilities to obtain new clothing. The clothing closet is open every Wednesday afternoon from 1:30 till 5:00 p.m. The clothing is new,



quality clothing donated by major retailers. The program is open to any person with a disability. You may receive clothing from the DUW program once every 90 days.

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 and ride the bus to qualify for a bus ticket.



**Emergency Preparedness**

Disasters can happen anytime of the year. It is important to be prepared in case you have to evacuate or are trapped in your home for a period of time. Planning ahead can help you to get through these situations. People with disabilities have additional concerns. Here are some tips for people with disabilities.

- Create a support network.
- Tell your support network where you keep your supplies.
- Wear a medical alert bracelet or necklace identifying your disability.
- Show others how to operate your assistive devices.
- Know the size and weight of your wheelchair.
- Keep a list of your medications and special dietary requirements.
- Keep a list of your Doctors and friends or relatives that can be notified if you are hurt.
- Create and keep a supply kit in the safest room of your home.



**LIFE/RUN** Center for Independent Living  
 Lifetime Independence for Everyone, Inc.  
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