



### in this issue

- Bike Riding PG 2
- Volunteerism and PG 3  
Emergency Prep.
- Sydney's Dad PG 4
- Meet Suzanne PG 5
- Career Gateway PG 6
- Couple Denied PG 6  
Housing
- REACT Updated PG 7
- Recreation Update PG 8
- Sampling Sites PG 9
- Celebrity Profile PG 10
- Training Update PG 10
- Suzanne's Recipes PG 11



## Progressive Center *for* Independent Living

### Dispelling Stereotypes, on Stage and Off

Original by HENRY HOLDEN, Published: April 27, 2013

**I**f the unemployment statistics still seem disappointing for those hoping to join or rejoin the work force, consider this: The unemployment rate for Americans with disabilities is 75 percent higher than for those with no disabilities, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

**H**enry Holden, who was left walking with crutches since the polio epidemic of 1952 knows firsthand about the difficulties finding employment. “Often, we’re fighting against negative stereotypes foisted on society by the powerful influences of film, television and other media. Just as often, we’re our own worst enemies, internalizing these self-defeating stereotypes,” says Holden.

**H**olden held many jobs — as an insurance salesman, a teacher, a stand-up comedian, a motivational speaker and a stage, film and TV actor — suffering humiliating rejections, but those rejections helped to develop some successful job search strategies. In 1970, fresh out of college, he applied to get a teaching certificate. Admissions told him: “Children can be cruel. We do not think you should teach.” He continued earning a teaching certificate and did teach first graders, finding they weren’t cruel; in fact, “they were more inspiring to me than I was to them.” Later he interviewed for special sales agent for an insurance company. The interviewer, reluctant to hire Holden said, “People with disabilities are not perceived as

*continued on page 3*

PHOTO CREDIT: J. Emilio Flores for The New York Times

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## Rolling with a Disability

by Ashley DiMattia

**A**s Spring and warmer weather approaches us, we start thinking about all the fun we can have that we weren't able to in the cold wintery months. There are a lot of activities you can do when the weather changes. You can go for walks, swim in the pool, go to the beach, or ride a bike.

**B**iking is a great way to get outside in nice weather and to get some exercise. It is easy for people with disabilities to get involved in biking. There are all kinds of adaptable bikes to help people who have trouble riding a "regular bike" due to how their disability affects their motor skills. A very popular way for a person with a disability to ride a bike is a tricycle. It looks like a regular bike but has one big wheel in the front and two little wheels in the back. The two wheels in the back are to help aid in balance while the person is riding. They make tricycles with a handle attached so that while the person with the disability is riding they can have someone help them steer.

**I**am a person with Cerebral Palsy, which makes it hard for my brain to react to things as quickly as the average person. I have accepted that my disability gives me these obstacles. My

counselor was always talking about how I needed to find something that would help me be independent and have more control of my life. She would talk to me about getting a tricycle so that I can ride around and get myself to places. She was right! From the moment I got my trike I loved it! As long as the weather was nice, I would get on my trike and ride from my house to the park every day. I would even ride it to my counseling sessions sometimes.

**I**f you are interested in riding or buying a bike, there are plenty of bike shops and bike trails around the county. For all of our Hunterdon County consumers who are interest in riding around here I would recommend the bike trail called HART TMA. There are also several trails located around Mercer County such as the Delaware River Canal, and there are trails all throughout Mercer County Park on Hughes Drive.

**B**iking can be a lot of fun and can even change your life. If you have a disability and want to do something fun and rewarding such as riding a bike, I ask you to follow your dream and try it, whatever activity your heart desires.

## Volunteerism and Emergency Preparedness

by Scott Ellis

The past few years I've been involved with various volunteer organizations that help out in times of emergencies or disasters. In 2009, Progressive Center, and a few of our friends, became the second integrated CERT team in NJ. Over the years we've helped during different emergencies and disasters, and have even become CERT certified trainers. Recently I've had the privilege of becoming a Medical Reserve Corporation (MRC) instructor. As a MRC instructor I teach disability awareness and emergency preparedness. A few nights ago I got to attend the 2013 MRC graduation where 29 students, of all ages, races, and abilities, walked across the stage in front of family and

friends after completing a year's worth of training and classroom time. As I sat there watching, I wondered if those 29 people truly understood what may lie ahead of them in this ever-changing world of natural disasters and terrorism. I thought about the 200 MRC members at this year's Boston Marathon who were there, at first to simply help re-hydrate and offer assistance to the runners as they finished the race, but instead, turned into first responders helping take care of the bombing victims. We never know when we might have to kick in action and volunteer. I am grateful for these 29 graduating students and their training, and congratulate them for being the first graduating class of the Mercer MRC.

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## Dispelling Stereotypes, on Stage and Off

continued from Front Page

good advertisements for life insurance.” Holden convince them he was more than capable and became one of the company's top salesmen in his first year.

Early job searches taught Holden that when one door closes in your face, you should knock on another. Chasing his high school passion, Holden began the uphill struggle pursuing an acting career. Studying method acting he learned confidence and security with himself. Confidence is not so easy to achieve, but in an acting class Holden learned, “If you don't feel positive, just act it.” While African-Americans, gays

and women have broken the glass ceiling of diversity in TV and films, roles for people with disabilities remain the last frontier.

Henry Holden is currently awaiting the role that earns him an Oscar for best supporting actor, where, as he declares, “I'll walk up to the stage without anyone's support. But thank you for offering.”

*A version of this article appeared in print on April 28, 2013, of the New York edition. Visit [pcil.org](http://pcil.org) for the full version.*

## Sydney's Dad-

### *A Year in Review of Parenting with a Disability*

by Drew Zimmerman

**N**ine months ago I wrote an article about my daughter Sydney Jaye discussing what it was like to be a new parent with Cerebral Palsy. I received many compliments from people who enjoyed reading about my experiences. It has been quite an adventure over the last 300 plus days and I thought I would share with the community a follow up article on what the past year has been like.

**I**n the last article I revealed that I had struggled with some of the everyday activities involved with caring for a newborn such as feeding, holding her pacifier, and changing her diapers effectively. Over the past 12 months Sydney's level of dependence has changed, easing the physical demand on me. She has now developed coordination to hold and remove her own pacifier, she able to hold her own bottles, and feeding her with a regular baby spoon has become easier.

**E**ven though I have gotten used to many things relating to the care of Sydney, it still surprises me how quickly my left hands tires. With my Cerebral Palsy, I am left hand dominant, and before Sydney, I was used to putting it through a reasonable amount of strain and fatigue. My arm can tolerate virtually any activity I ask from it. Adding Sydney to my daily routine



Drew Zimmerman  
& daughter,  
Sydney Jaye.

however, adds whole different set of circumstances and strains. Sydney now tips the scale at 24 pounds. I often support her body weight with my right arm or brace her using both arms. She likes snuggles and hugs, and I am often picking her up to move her to or away from something. After a while, those 24 pounds start to get heavy, not to mention the added weight of bulky car seats and strollers. A car seat with Sydney checks in at over 30 pounds. I am excited for the day she walks independently.

**B**y the time the day is done including meal prep, cleaning, changing diapers, playing, transporting, and feeding - I am exhausted! Child proof locks, small containers that snap very tight, and changing her diapers or clothes are all things that are very challenging for me. In order to access my own kitchen cabinet I need to push a green button, and simultaneously push a button underneath the lock itself. They are designed to be hard to get into for children, but it is also virtually impossible for a person with only one hand capable of fine motor control. They should call the locks, "child and PWD

continued on page 5

## Meet Suzanne Peins

by Suzanne Peins

After resigning eleven years ago, I have returned to PCIL. I was one of the founding board members and then was employed as one of PCIL's original employees for three years. I decided to try some new adventures as a full time advocate, cooking instructor, driving teacher, resume writer, job finder, laundry instructor and dog walking instructor to my son. Then this April, I was rehired at PCIL as a part time Independent Living

Specialist at the Mercer County office. Wow has PCIL grown since I left in 2002!

I look forward to meeting new consumers and joining the PCIL "team" again. I also plan to include a simple, healthful recipe in each newsletter (see page 11) as well as on our Facebook page. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I'm excited to be back!

## Sydney's Dad Continued

continued from page 4

proof". However, I have finally adapted a way to circumvent the lock through a series of moves. Changing Sydney is sometimes a comedy routine. With as much as she moves, getting her head through a small hole in her shirt can take forever. She flips and flops and knocks the shirt away with her hands. Once the shirt is on, I am impressed if I get both legs in the correct holes. As much as she swings her legs and twists her torso, both legs often end up in the same pant leg hole the first couple times. It usually takes me about 5-10 minutes to get her fully dressed depending on her mood. That's a long time if you are in a hurry.

As much as I am thrilled by her accomplishments, I am aware that with accomplishments come new worries for me. She is very adept at opening cabinets and pulling on items that she reaches. She covers a lot of ground quickly and keeping up with her as she

gets older will be a challenge for sure.

I look forward to teaching Sydney so much as her life develops. It will be interesting to see how I will adapt to teach her life's lessons. Sure, I have my doubts as to how my body will hold up physically with my condition. I can only hope that as Sydney ages I do not acquire new issues that will limit my physical abilities even further. I will be very hurt if my body betrays me, after all, I will be nearly 60 when she graduates high school and I know that one day I will be having difficulties with my Cerebral Palsy, whether it be the way I walk, atrophy, or my scoliosis. In truth, I don't really care about the side effects or pain that may be awaiting me in the future. I just care that, despite whatever awaits me, I am still able to be the best dad and family man I can be. In the end that is all I can ever ask.

## Career Gateway Update

by Renee Pfaff and Pamela Vernon

**P**CIL is very proud to announce that “Career Gateway” has made a comeback! We leapt into action this spring in both Mercer and Hunterdon Counties, thanks to a grant from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Career Gateway is specifically designed to help individuals with varied abilities, ages 17 through 25 years, prepare, enter, and retain the career of their choice. This 16-18 week course will:

- Decrease the time span between leaving High School and entering adult services
- Provide basic work readiness and life skills
- Promote career choice with 3 separate internships, based on interests and skill-sets

- Introduce new people and perspectives
- Link services with career objectives
- Instill direction and self-esteem

**C**areer Gateway is unique because we focus is on the individual participant. We help the individual recognize their talents and gifts. The next step is to provide the tools for them to make good decisions and solid choices. He or she will leave Career Gateway, a confident and prepared job candidate, ready to navigate the world!

**C**onsider this an invitation for our next Career Gateway session. For more information please contact PCIL’s Hunterdon or Mercer office, and visit our web site.

## Disabled Married Couple Being Denied Housing

by Suzanne Peins

**P**eople in love look forward to planning their wedding, marrying and sharing their lives together. For 35 year old Hava Samuels and 29 year old Paul Forziano, living together as husband and wife hasn’t been possible. Both were born with developmental disabilities and live in separate group homes in Long Island, New York. They met, fell in love and married in April, but now neither facility will allow the couple to live together. The couple’s parents hired an attorney and a federal lawsuit

has been filed. The attorney states the two homes, which receive state money, are discriminating against the couple based on their disabilities. The families’ attorney said there are at least two other group homes in that part of Suffolk County that do make provisions for married residents.

**W**e at PCIL believe that marriage is a civil right, a human right, one that needs to be defended.

## News from the Transition Team - REACT

by Renee Pfaff and Pamela Vernon

The PCIL REACT Program is alive and well in Hunterdon and Mercer Counties. The grant through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and The Department of Education, Special Education, lasted eight years. This is five more years than anticipated and we are thankful for that. It is because of this success that we were urged to continue the program therefore we have transitioned to providing the program for a minimal fee.

“We keep the material real and current.”

REACT is short for Readiness for Employment using Advocacy and Choices in Transition. The mission of the program remains the same; REACT is a program which builds skills of High School students in order to prepare them to successfully transition out of High School. We tailor our classes to meet the individual needs of the specific student we are serving. We keep the material real and current.

“We tailor our classes to meet the individual needs of the specific student....”

The following topics are covered with each student with special emphasis on the soft social skills linked to life after high school:

- Self-Advocacy and Determination
- Identifying Personal Strengths
- Disability Awareness and Sensitivity
- Post-Secondary Options
- Employment Readiness
- Community Links

Renee and Pam would like to sincerely thank the schools involved with REACT for their

continued support. We are pleased to be in Hunterdon Central Regional

High School, Delaware Valley Regional, Marie Katzenbach School for the Deaf, Ewing, and Trenton Daylight –Twilight. We remain devoted to a smooth transition plan and life after high school.

### ABOUT OUR TRANSITION TEAM

PCIL offers several different Transition Services for students with disabilities to help make the transition from school to college or work easier.

If you are interested in finding out more information on these programs please contact Renee Pfaff at [renee.pfaff@pcil.org](mailto:renee.pfaff@pcil.org) or Pamela Vernon at [pamela.vernon@pcil.org](mailto:pamela.vernon@pcil.org).

## Recreation Update

by Drew Zimmerman

### ABOUT Community Connections Program

Community Connections participants have the benefits of enjoying a wide variety of activities out in the community with the community.

Funding for the Community Connections Program is provided by the Mercer County Office for the Disabled

### ABOUT Social Club

This program gives PCIL consumers the opportunity to get out into the community together for food, fun, and laughs.

E-mail Drew Zimmerman to find out more!

The Community Connections Recreation Program has been very busy over the last few months. “Grease” and “Legally Blonde” at the Kelsey Theater were both total sell outs, and “Disney Music Concert” at the Theater at Madison Square Garden was enjoyed by several of our consumers and their families. We also cheered on the Trenton Titans Hockey Club at seven thrilling Trenton Titan home games and flocked to see the Harlem Globetrotters and the Princeton men’s basketball team.

The Movie Bunch, Social Club, and Writer’s Block all had events recently. The Writer’s Block will be meeting often over the next several months in order to bring together artists and their new creations to prepare for our upcoming art exhibits later in the year. New artists are always welcome.

Now that the warmer weather is upon us, the Community Connection Program is headed outdoors for many upcoming events. The Annual Miracle League Softball Game is all set for later in the summer, as is the catered picnic at a Trenton Thunder game. Speaking of picnic! Be on the lookout for our annual cookout at Project Freedom.

Additionally PCIL will be offering discounted tickets to see the World Series Champion Philadelphia Phillies. All tickets are wheelchair accessible and will be available at a tremendous savings.



Friends of PCIL enjoy a fun afternoon at the stadium!

These events are just a sampling of the great events that PCIL and Community Connections will provide over the next several months. Be sure to check your mailboxes for the bright yellow flyers that announce the next exciting event. To take advantage of the best prices available for all our recreation events, be sure to become a 2013 PCIL member. It is not too late to take advantage of all the benefits having a membership has to offer. If you have any questions regarding membership or any of our recreation events, please feel free to contact Drew Zimmerman at 609-581-4500 ext. 21. Enjoy the warm weather. See you soon.



## Career Gateway Sampling Sites

by Matthew Daly

The purpose of the Career Gateway program is to teach youth with disabilities independent living skills. Of all the independent living skills that are taught during this program, I believe the most important one is acquiring and maintaining employment. An individual who wants to live independently must have a source of income to support themselves to become an autonomous person. That is why a portion of the Career Gateway program focuses on job development, interviewing practice, and soft skills at work. The program concludes with job sampling sites. The job sampling portion of the program gives the students an opportunity to volunteer for six hours at local businesses that align with their potential career interests. For the student, these experiences provide exposure to the working world, and resume builders that can be used as talking points with potential employers during an interview.

The students who participate in the class present a variety of career interests. Some of

these career interests include performing arts, clerical work, restoration, social service, food service, childcare, animal care, and careers in the automotive industry. Many local businesses have already agreed to allow students to sample at their

“...job sampling gives the students an opportunity to volunteer at a local business that aligns with their potential career interests.”

business. These local businesses include the Kelsey Theatre, Trenton Thunder, Rise, Vito’s Restaurant, Habitat Restore, Kid’s Kottage, DiBenedetto’s Automotive, Allentown Presbyterian Church, and the Upper Freehold Regional School District. These places have kindly opened their doors to our students and we appreciate their willingness to host our students for the day.

The Career Gateway program will hold multiple sessions throughout the year. Our organization is always looking for businesses that would be willing to participate as sampling sites. If you are interested in hosting a student please contact Matthew Daly at 609-581-4500 x14.

PCIL  
offers  
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Improve your business, grow your customer base, and expand your talent pool.

Contact Jerry Carbone to find out how our training programs can help your business advance.

## Celebrity Profile: Neil Young

Written by Matthew Daly, Research by Anthony Jones

Neil Young has been recognized in popular culture for his talent as a musician. However, what many people don't realize is that Neil Young is a person with epilepsy. In addition to being a person with a disability, Neil Young has two children with disabilities.

Neil founded the Bridge School, a non-profit organization that helps individuals with severe physical and speech disabilities achieve full participation in their communities. His annual concert, called the Bridge School Benefit, has a history of over 25 years

and the proceeds from the event are used to support the organization. The Bridge School has had a tremendous impact upon the community.

Neil Young wanted to have an impact on the world and he has certainly made his mark. His music made people think about important social issues and he used his fame to benefit more than just himself through his benefit concerts. His life shows that one person can make a difference if they are focused on the world around them.

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## PCIL Training Update

by Jerry Carbone

The PCIL Training team has been very busy in the last few weeks. We have completed three trainings at very well know venues; Rider University, Grounds for Sculpture, and Campbell's Soup.

The first training was given to Rider's Leadership Development Program and their newest group of campus leaders. The topic of discussion was disability etiquette. Next on the list was Campbell Soup Company in Camden. The Progressive Center presented a program on Hiring People with Disability. A primary concern that the companies had about hiring people with disability was that they believed the costs of hiring a person that is disabled outweighed the benefits. Over the training we provided a lot of evidence to show how hiring a

person with a disability is really quite a big benefit. At Grounds for Sculptures we provided our annual training to all their staff and volunteers. The training this year was unique because we took participants on a tour of their own park using manual wheelchairs as their only mode of transportation. This gave them a hands-on experience. We pointed out which exhibits were not accessible and explained to them how they can improve these. Everyone left with a new understanding of wheelchair user's perspective of the park.

If you are interested in our programs or know of any of business that can use one of our customs trainings please feel free to contact Jerry Carbone at 609-581-4500 or [jerry.carbone@pcil.org](mailto:jerry.carbone@pcil.org).

## SUZANNE'S RECIPE CORNER

### Chicken & Summer Vegetable Tostadas

Taken from Cooking Light Magazine, Nov. 2012,  
adapted by Suzanne Peins



Ingredients: 2 teaspoons canola oil  
 1 teaspoon ground cumin  
 ¼ teaspoon kosher salt  
 ¼ teaspoon black pepper  
 12 ounces chicken tenders  
 1 cup pre-diced fresh or frozen red or white onion  
 1 cup frozen corn kernels  
 1 cup pre chopped fresh or frozen zucchini  
 ½ cup salsa verde (green salsa)  
 3 tablespoons pre-chopped fresh cilantro , divided  
 4 (8 inch) fat free (or gluten free) flour tortillas  
 Cooking spray  
 3 ounces Monterey Jack cheese, pre-shredded (about 1/3 cup)

#### Directions:

1. Heat oil in a large non-stick skillet over medium high heat.
2. Sprinkle a mixture of cumin and kosher salt over chicken, add chicken to the pan, and sauté for 3 minutes.
3. Add onion, corn, and zucchini to pan, sauté for 2 minutes or until chicken is done. (Chicken is done when fork tender)
4. Stir in salsa and 2 tablespoons cilantro into the pan and cook for 2 minutes or until liquid almost evaporates, stirring frequently.
5. Spoon about ¾ cup chicken mixture in the center of each tortilla, sprinkle each serving with cheese.
6. Broil around 2 minutes or until cheese melts. Sprinkle with remaining cilantro. Serve immediately.

**\*\*The tostadas can easily become soft tacos if you skip broiling the tortillas.\*\***  
 Serve with black beans.

### One by One.

Follow the band, **One by One**, by liking them on Facebook or following them on Twitter by typing in One by One The Band. The band page provides a variety of information on the band & upcoming show dates.

### PRIVATE GUITAR LESSONS!

Private guitar lessons by lead guitarist, Anthony Jones!  
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Phone: 609-581-4500  
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