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**Progressive
Center *for*
Independent
Living**

Wonderful News for Young Adults

by Scott Elliott

PCIL recently received great news from the NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. We were approved under their Innovation and Expansion Grant Program and now have the opportunity to offer our Career Gateway Program to young adults with disabilities for at least one year starting this spring.

The Career Gateway Program first started with a Kessler Foundation Grant in 2009. Since then, 36 individuals have participated in the program with very successful outcomes, 22 individuals were either working or going to school, while 4 participants were engaged with NJDVRs and job coaching. When the grant ran its course PCIL was still getting a lot of interest from parents, schools and DVRs counselors to offer the program which we did for a short time but not at full strength. This new funding will allow us to kick start the program at full strength and build a unique and sustainable long term fee for service model that will help many individuals to achieve their employment goals.

The ultimate goal of Career Gateway is for participants to be competitively employed after completion. PCIL will stay in touch with those individuals for a minimum of 90 days to check on their employment status and assist each person as needed along the way. For the longer term, this updated version of Career Gateway has a new component that offers participation in an ongoing job

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Ashley's Snowshoeing Adventure

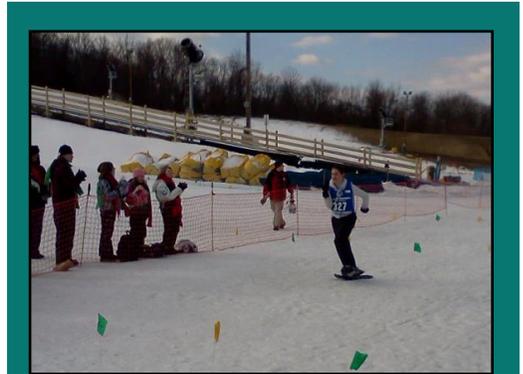
by Ashley DiMattia

Special Olympics is a world-wide organization that believes that people with special needs should be given the chance to participate in individual and team sports with necessary adaptations. Every year Special Olympics has two big events. One is the summer games, which happens in early June on the campus of TCNJ in Ewing, and the other is the winter games, which is held on the first week of February in Vernon, NJ. The events in the Winter Games are similar to the regular Olympic Games, but they are adapted to meet the abilities of the Special Olympic athlete.

Since 2010, I have been a part of the Winter Games, participating in the sport of Snowshoeing. For those who never heard of Snowshoeing, and don't know the sport, it is a sport where you wear special shoes that allow you to walk easily on the snow. The snowshoes are long and made from hard wood. My snowshoe is about two and a half feet long.

Of all the sports I like to play in, I am best at snowshoeing. In past years I have done very well and placed within the top three places in all of my races. I

strive to do my best every time I race and set high goals for myself. This will be my fourth year going up to Vernon for the Winter Games and I can't wait!



Ashley gets ready to participate in her event!

Last year I had just gotten over a cold and my body was not up to par to do anything athletic. This was making me very nervous and worried, causing me to over think how I would perform. This caused me anxiety from the time we left until the races began! In the first race that year, I remember I couldn't get myself to move as fast as I usually do because I

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Emergency Preparedness Update

by Scott Ellis

Every edition of our newsletter I usually give a performance update on what's been happening with PCIL's Emergency Prep Program. This time, I decided to write about an important topic, responsibility. Every person out there with a disability has a personal responsibility to make sure that they are prepared for an emergency or disaster at any time. Hurricane Sandy had been brewing in the Caribbean for 10 days before it made landfall in the North East.

Sandy was on the news every day until it hit us like a hammer. My

question regarding responsibility is: Why didn't those folks, who depend on that equipment, react, think, prepare, or plan ahead?

Typically there are five excuses people offer for not preparing for an emergency. They are; that could never happen here; even if it does happen here it won't happen to me; even if it does happen to me it won't be that bad; even if it is bad I can get supplies anytime; even if I can't get supplies then the government will save me. During the hurricane, and its immediate aftermath, people were calling emergency services needing oxygen bottles filled, concentrators re-charged, and replacement of other accessories that go along with oxygen systems.

This equipment is considered to be life-sustaining equipment. This means if a person does not have this they may die! My primary concern in these situations is that oxygen users who run out of oxygen or power for their concentrator become medical emergencies. In certain natural disasters it may be deemed impossible for medical personal to be immediately available because it may

be too dangerous for the responders.

Some municipalities, that run bigger and taller emergency responder vehicles, put restrictions on

those vehicles and their crews regarding weather. Therefore, the question becomes where are you supposed to obtain life sustaining assistance if resources are in high demand and short supply? The answer is: BE RESPONSIBLE, BE PREPARED! Don't become one of the negative statistics in a disaster. Purchase back up supplies and emergency power. Create a plan of action before the next disaster hits, because if Sandy can teach us anything is that, yes it can happen to you, it can be that bad, and no the government can not always save you right away. If you have any questions, or need assistance in making yourself responsible and prepared for a disaster, call Scott Ellis at PCIL, 609-581-4500 ext. 19.

“Be Responsible
Be Prepared!”

PCIL's Joe Valatka's Goals for 2013

by Joe Valatka

Hi everyone, my name is Joe Valatka and I have been working at the Progressive Center since October 2011. I wanted to introduce myself to you all, and share my goals for 2013.

I am originally from Concord, North Carolina and came up here with my mom due to a family illness. I joined PCIL as a consumer in the summer of 2010 and hoped to take advantage of everything they offered! After being in NJ for longer than I expected I realized I was in need of a job. I was able to obtain a job cleaning the office at PCIL. Even though this was a fun, part-time job, I was hoping to find something using my skills as a former firefighter. My wish came true and I was able to join Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, Scott Ellis, as an assistant on presentations and conventions. As an Assistant Coordinator, I handle emergency equipment, pass out materials, and educate people about Emergency Preparedness.

Although I have achieved some goals since being in New Jersey, there are many things I need to work on in order to be a more complete and confident person. I hope to do these things in 2013. Improving my health is my main concern this year. Quitting smoking would be a big

accomplishment. I have been smoking for the past eight years and I am tired of it. I have ordered an E-Cigarette, and look forward to starting it shortly.

Even though I have had some great work experience, I hope this year to find work in the field of cooking, my true love. Since I am a Southerner, I naturally love to grill. I enjoy working with all types of meats, but I even enjoy working in a traditional kitchen setting. Some of my favorite dishes to cook are lasagna, chicken, and steak. To increase my knowledge of cooking, I would like to go enroll at Mercer County Community College in their Culinary Program. My dream job is to one day own my own restaurant and be the Head Chef or Grill Master.

Accomplishing these goals will boost my confidence. I have had trouble sometimes with believing in myself, and talking to others when I need to communicate my ideas. I am nearly 30 years old and I feel it is the perfect time to work on these goals. I want to be as healthy and productive for as many years as I can. I will update all of you during the year on how I am doing with these goals. I look forward to meeting you all at PCIL events throughout the year.

“Accomplishing these goals will boost my confidence...”

Accessibility Friendly Eatery Shines in Lambertville

by Jerry Carbone & Drew Zimmerman

Located among historic churches, houses and landmark stores in Lambertville, rests a new dining option for people with disabilities and their family and friends. Caffe Galleria recently opened in a renovated house on 23 North Union St. During construction planning, owner Dawn Raia recognized the opportunity to better serve people with disabilities in Lambertville and the surrounding communities. She felt meeting the needs of people with disabilities in the community was going to be an essential component to Caffe Galleria's success. Making renovations to a historic building is very tricky in Lambertville. To her credit, Dawn made the necessary adjustments to make Caffe Galleria ADA compliant. The Caffe offers open and spacious entrance ways and ramps, a wide open flat interior,



and a suitable wheelchair accessible rest room.

Caffe Galleria serves a Mediterranean accented menu with a wide variety of tasty options. Some selections include thin crust pizza, assorted pastas, and salads. They also provide customers with a gelato and espresso bar. They are open from 7am-9:00pm Sunday thru Thursday, and on Friday and Saturday, they are open until 10:00pm. Progressive Center IL is proud to recognize area businesses and individuals who actively address the interests of people with disabilities. If you are interested in how to make your business more ADA compliant, please contact PCIL at 609-581-4500 or 908-782-1055.

Training Update for the New Year!

by Jerry Carbone

The Progressive Center has a great jump on the New Year. We will be starting off by returning to Rider University to work at the Center for the Development of Leadership. There we will be teaching an interactive disability sensitivity and etiquette class. This will be the 3rd year we have run type of class at Rider.

The Progressive Center is also looking forward to working with

Johnson & Johnson as well as other members of the community in the coming months.

Remember, if anyone you know would be interested in learning more about Disability Awareness Sensitivity Programs please tell them to contact Jerry Carbone at the PCIL office 609 581-4500 or Email jerry.carbone@pcil.com or visit www.pcil.org for updates on training we are offering.

Ashley's Snowshoeing Adventure

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couldn't dig into the snow. At the end of the race, I came in third place. I was very happy with that because I wasn't feeling well from the start. When I knew that I did not rank as high as I wanted to in the first place I became very scared about not being able to compete in the longer races. I got myself so nervous to the point that I could not get myself to calm down. Even with my sister and coach trying to convince me to race, I decided to scratch my name and not participate in the second event.

I am glad that I did not participate in the longer race, not because I am glad that I chickened out, but because it was a learning experience for me that I will use throughout my life. It is ok for me to want to do well in my races, but I should not be so hard on myself to the point that I take the fun out of

the event and experience. I will use last year to help me plan for this year and remember to keep calm. The Special Olympics has an oath that says, "Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt." As I plan for my races this year, I will have fun, be brave, and not get myself nervous because I might not do as well as I want to.

The Special Olympics, in my opinion, is probably one of the best programs that is offered to both children and adults with disabilities. It allows people with disabilities to pursue their goals and dreams in the area of sports. Due to my own disability and past experiences, I am a firm believer that you should set high goals for yourself, dream big, and don't let anyone tell you it can't be done.

Wonderful News

Continued from Front Page

peer support group to encourage advocacy, collaboration, and assistance among those involved.

This Innovation and Expansion funding from NJDVRS is certainly a great thing for PCIL, it provides us the resources to strengthen our current successful transition program for young adults and provide the seeds for sustainability.

HELP WANTED!

Social Service/Independent Living Specialist

Non-Profit seeks PT/FT person to provide IL and/or student transition services to people with disabilities.

Experience preferred but will consider recent graduates. Computer experience, excellent oral, written, organizational skills & ability to interact effectively with people a must! Time management, prioritization skills, collaboration, negotiation & mediation skills are helpful. Knowledge of community resources & various NJ State programs is helpful. Days/hours are flexible. Mercer & Hunterdon Counties travel required, will reimburse for mileage. People with disabilities encouraged to apply. Associates Degree or 2 years equivalent experience minimum. Email scott.elliott@pcil.org.

Career Gateway

by Renee Pfaff and Pamela Vernon



Are You...

- A young adult with various abilities ages 17-25?
- Out of school or soon to be?
- Looking for a job?
- In need of workplace and life skills training?
- Tired of sitting at home?

Your help is here!

The Career Gateway program will assist you in developing essential employment and life skills which will enable you to get and keep a job.

This program offers a combination of classroom structured learning and three different job shadowing opportunities within an estimated 18 week session.

The Career Gateway program promises to boost confidence. Through person-centered goals we work on subjects such as personal budgeting and banking, social etiquette in the workplace, transportation, independent living skills and employability skills.

You will leave this program with a better plan, a vocational assessment, a resume, information on community linkages, and access to a peer support group.

For more information or any questions, please contact: Renee Pfaff or Pamela Vernon.

This program is funded through the New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, as an Innovation and Expansion Grant.

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 or Pamela Vernon at 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!

Despite the cold weather and occasional flurries, the Community Connections Recreation Program continues to be red hot with activities. Late in 2012, Alan Jackson performed a memorable night of country western favorites with guest Jana Kramer. It was a great crowd, as PCIL welcomed many ticket holders to the event. At the Project Freedom Holiday Party 70 people and their families welcomed Santa and Mrs. Claus. The trivia contest was a blast, with everyone getting prizes and treats. The Trenton Titans Hockey Club has been entertaining Progressive Center participants so far this winter. Be on the lookout for tickets available to even more games over the next few months. The Grease Sing –A- Long at the Kelsey Theater is going to be a fun addition to our winter programming. The event has drawn tremendous interest from our participants and families.

There will be many Recreation events on the horizon for participants, members, their families and friends to enjoy. Besides the hockey games, you can attend Princeton men's basketball, a Social Club outing, Writer's Block meetings, a Movie Bunch and much more. There are sure to be exciting events at area venues as well. We welcome your

suggestions for events at PCIL. If you have a suggestion for an event you would like to attend, email me, Drew Zimmerman at drew.zimmerman@pcil.org. If you want to volunteer at some events through the year, reach out to Progressive Center to see if you can offer your assistance at an exciting recreation program.

Join us
for Princeton
Men's Basketball
on Feb. 2nd!



Don't forget to join as a PCIL MEMBER FOR 2013! All memberships expired at the end of 2012 regardless of when you joined. The rates have not changed at all, so take advantage of the tremendous savings all year and start your membership today. Besides saving money on all recreation events, all members who join are eligible to attend a mid-year catered Members only dinner. To learn more about membership, you may contact me by email or leave me a message at 609-581-4500 ext.21. I look forward to seeing you at events throughout the year. Let's have a fun 2013 providing recreation opportunities to individuals and families.

Celebrity Profile: Jets' Duo Ryan & Tebow Tackle Dyslexia

by Drew Zimmerman

Being football season, I thought it would be timely to do a celebrity profile on an NFL athlete or coach with a disability. Much to my surprise, it turns out that two of the New York Jets' most public and controversial figures, Head Coach Rex Ryan, and famed quarterback Tim Tebow, both deal with the same disability, dyslexia. Each of them has their own approach on how to overcome the associated obstacles in a sport that relies heavily on reading and comprehension of complex playbooks and schemes.

Head Coach Rex Ryan, now 49 years old, has been battling dyslexia since he was a boy. He grew up in a very prestigious household. His mother was the Vice President of a Canadian University and holds a Doctorate in Education, his father was a two time Academic All-American, and his older brother, Jim, has an MBA and law degree. As a child Ryan's grades suffered because he would often skip school to avoid being called on in class. He talked about this issue in an interview, "I was a terrible student. It wasn't like they had spell-check in those days. It was impossible. I never wanted to embarrass myself." It wasn't until 2009 that Mr. Ryan finally disclosed his dyslexia publicly in his book, "Play It Like Your Mean It". In this book he discusses how dyslexia had affected his career and how he has overcome his obstacles using special techniques to tackle his day-to-day job responsibilities. For example, he uses multiple colors to better distinguish the

letters on his charts helping him focus on the words, and he has, like most other coaches, color coordinated his playbook. During media spots, people read things to him and he repeats it until it's memorized stating, "If you talk to me, I can pick things up better than I can just off a white piece of paper with black letters." It is because of his adaptive techniques that Mr. Ryan has been able to work past his disability and lead a successful career.



Jets' Head Coach
Rex Ryan



Jets' Quarterback
Tim Tebow

Quarterback Tim Tebow has a different way of tackling the obstacles that come with having dyslexia. Both Tebow's father and brother had dyslexia so his mother had a lot of experience with the disability. Tebow's mother began to notice his dyslexia at age seven and immediately began helping him become comfortable with his disability. Tim was home-schooled until college when he enrolled at the University of Florida. At the University he was given extended time with tests, though he never used it, saying, "If I knew it, I knew it, if I didn't it wasn't just going to come to me." Impressively, Tebow graduated with a 3.7 GPA. For this NFL star, when it comes to the X's and O's of football, Tebow does not deny that he is a hands-on learner. Instead of trying to

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Disabilities Pride Parade

by Matthew Daly

On October 5th, the Progressive Center for Independent Living participated in the Second Annual Disability Pride Parade, an event organized by the Alliance Center for Independence. The purpose of the parade was to celebrate diversity and disability pride. The event was a short march in Trenton, beginning at the Statehouse and ending at a local park. The parade included a marching band and over five hundred participants. At the conclusion of the parade, a stage and seating area was set up for the participants in the parade. There was entertainment provided by performers and speakers with disabilities. Speeches were given by key political figures including US Senator Robert Menendez and Trenton Mayor Tony Mack.

As a participant in the parade I was impressed with the amount of people

the event attracted. Along with showing the prevalence of disability in the community, it was clear that disability issues reach across many different lines. At the parade were people of all races, ethnicities, age groups, and genders. It was great to see so many people banded together to support a common cause. The event was impressive and certainly achieved its goal. Hopefully the event will continue to grow and become a tradition for years to come.



PCIL
participates
in this year's
Disabilities
Pride
Parade!

Celebrity Profile

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memorize and read a playbook over and over, like most athletes, he uses a kinesthetic method of learning by walking through all his drills and assignments on the physical field. In other words, he learns by doing, not by reading. Some critics in the NFL have theorized that this may account for his inconsistent play. Tebow disagrees with this and welcomes his dyslexia as a positive influence for other kids who have dyslexia. Tebow states, "I've always looked at it like, if I can take this and help kids that might be shy about or insecure about it, or it's something that affects their self-esteem, then I'm glad I have dyslexia."

Find it refreshing that pro athletes and coaches can sometimes open themselves up to real issues that affect them, and share it with the world to try and help others. Clearly, Coach Ryan and Tim Tebow deal with the effects of dyslexia differently, but they both have confronted their condition, and have used their status to inspire others. Whether you are a football player, coach, or neither, being comfortable with your disability should be the goal of every person with a disability.

Work on Your Goals - Become a Consumer Today

by Drew Zimmerman

Progressive Center for Independent Living reaches hundreds of people with disabilities, their families, and agencies in Mercer and Hunterdon counties year round through mailings, phone conversation, trainings and meetings. Our main goal at PCIL is to work cooperatively alongside individuals with disabilities in order to achieve their life goals and further their independence. While we work with a multitude of people with disabilities, there are many individuals that can benefit from our services to improve one's quality of life.

Regardless of the severity of a person's disability, chances are PCIL can help you. Depending on your needs, you can meet our Independent Living Specialists or our Transition Coordinators to determine how PCIL can best serve you. As a non-profit agency, we do not charge for our services. When you want to become a consumer, you schedule a meeting with our staff to talk about your needs. It gives us a chance to get to know you as a person, and figure out the best way to help you. Transition Specialist Renee Pfaff feels that, "we help you develop a goal that is realistic to your needs, outline your options, and give the encouragement and support needed in reaching your life's ambitions. Many consumers stay in contact with us for years to come. We love having long term

relationships with our consumers."

We can help you in a number of ways. Referring you to appropriate agencies throughout the state to address your specific needs is one method. In

“We help you develop a goal that is realistic to your needs...”

addition, we as a staff may be able to help you directly obtain a particular skill in our offices.

PCIL even has volunteer opportunities for those looking to do meaningful work in a positive atmosphere. Independent Living Specialist Matt Daly says, "A person should become a consumer at PCIL because we can give you the tools you need to live a more independent and rewarding life."

Everyone in life has goals they would like to achieve. Whether they are big or small, let PCIL help you in obtaining the goals you set in life. Give us a call to set up an appointment today at either of our offices. Don't forget to learn about our other services, which include Disability Awareness Sensitivity Training, Emergency Preparedness and Recreation programs. Visit our website at www.pcil.org or call our offices - for Mercer County call 609-581-4500, and for Hunterdon County call 908-782-1055 to learn more.

An Introduction to Human Services Event

If you know of anyone who would like to be on our mailing list please have them call us.

If you are interested in stopping this mailing or switching to our digital newsletter, please call us.

609-581-4500

The Monday Morning Network of Hunterdon County presents: "An Introduction to Human Services in Hunterdon" by The Department of Human Services Administrator, Jennifer Shore. The meeting will be held on Monday, January 28th, from 11am-1pm in the main conference room in the RT 12 Library, Flemington, NJ 08822.

The Monday morning network regular meeting begins at 11am with the yearly planning committee followed by a speaker at 12 noon. This meeting is open to the public and all are welcome. There will be

light refreshments served, but you may bring a lunch if you wish.

For more information please contact: The Monday Morning Network of Hunterdon County Facilitator, Emily Anne Schaefer by calling 908-824-7063 or email emilyanneschaefer@earthlink.net.

The Monday Morning Network of Hunterdon is a county branch of the Monday Morning Project, a grass-roots advocacy effort with support from the New Jersey council on developmental disabilities njcdd.org.

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FREE MATTER FOR
THE BLIND AND
HANDICAPPED

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