

# Forward

BY PROGRESSIVE CENTER

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER | SERVING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 1996.

SPRING 2023  
VOLUME 81



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*This publication is brought to you by staff of Progressive Center for Independent Living and Mercer County ADRC*

## THE MOTHER OF THE DISABILITY RIGHTS MOVEMENT

■ NORMAN SMITH

Judy Heuman, my friend, was a lifelong advocate for the rights of disabled people. Sadly, this kind and wonderful lady passed away suddenly in March leaving a gaping hole in our hearts. She was known as “The Mother of the Disability Rights Movement” for good reasons, and our paths seemed to be mystically intertwined.

Judy was a leader in the historical 1977 Section 504 Sit-In and instrumental in the development and implementation of other legislation, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Rehabilitation Act, and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

I met Judy in the 1980s, probably at a conference in Washington, D.C., but I knew her by reputation before then. Judy had preceded me by a few years

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## THE MOTHER OF THE DISABILITY RIGHTS MOVEMENT

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at Long Island University (LIU), and she had left her mark there as a pathfinder for others to blaze the trail. LIU changed my life's path as an advocate and writer. As fate would have it, the Section 504 Sit-In that Judy led in San Francisco led to those powerful regulations being implemented (and resisted) at LIU during my tenure as president of the Disabled Students Committee.

Later in our history, Judy served in the Clinton and Obama Administrations and was a Senior Fellow at the Ford Foundation. Our paths would cross many times in DC. We were probably on the White House lawn together when President Obama signed the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments into law in 2010.

Judy's story was featured in the Oscar-nominated documentary *Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution*. As I watched that film, I had haunting memories of my years at another "Crip Camp" that changed my life as well. Those powerfully warm memories were so strong that I had to stop watching for fear of losing that excitement of newly found freedom, kinship, and friendship. I have yet to finish the film.

I last saw Judy in person in 2017 at the annual conference of the National Council for Independent Living, which Judy helped

create and probably ran. The next day Judy was again arrested on Capitol Hill in protest to efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act. Many political observers agree that the constant protests by people with disabilities resulting in many arrests stopped the repeal effort.

Like all great mothers, Judy taught her offspring well. The rights we gain and maintain stand as Judy's legacy and as a testament to her drive for inclusion, equity, and equality. It was an honor to know Judy personally and to be a small part of her life and legacy.



■ *Judy Heuman and Norman Smith at a Revolution Event.*

# ONE STEP CLOSER TO INDEPENDENCE

## ■ STEPHANIE WILMOT & YANIRA MEDINA

The newly revamped Driver's Preparatory Course offered here at PCIL has been having quite the success. With hopes to assist individuals in preparing for passing the written state exam for New Jersey, our dreams are continuously coming true. Our most recent class so far has had 5 students successfully pass the written exam and obtain their NJ driving permit. We wanted to take the time to congratulate each individual on achieving a recent goal of theirs. The students deserving a round of applause are Myiesha McGovern, Ariana Towns, Matthew Welborn, Victoria McNear and Thomas Stone. The Progressive

Center for Independent Living wishes you all the best as you hit the roadways and encourages you to always be cautious drivers!

We are continuing the course at our Mercer office for those interested in participating in the upcoming months. The course is free for individuals living with a disability ages 16 and older. For more information about course details, please contact Stephanie Wilmot or Yanira Medina at our office number, 609-581-4500. We are looking forward to having you join our DMV Prep family.

*Ready, Set, Drive!* 



*Ariana  
Towns*



*Matthew  
Welborn*



*Myiesha  
McGovern*



*Thomas  
Stone*



*Victoria  
McNear*



## NETWORKING IS LIKE BUILDING A BRIDGE THROUGH PCIL

■ PATTY STAUSS, SUPPORT COORDINATOR

A bridge requires several different types of strong sturdy equipment to build the structure for it to be used, and those using it feel reassured it will hold them as they cross.

Networking is like building a bridge. It requires many different types of agencies/people to successfully work together so everyone feels assured each is doing their part to keep the networking strong enough to successfully reach the individual's goals. Successful networking requires one to:

- Build a team;
- Build rapport;

- Build trust;
- Build to strengthen support;
- Build connections, and
- Maintain the network.

Once the networking is constructed, it should be beneficial to everyone. This group of networking can be defined as your personal support network, and it reflects your personal interests, gifts, abilities, and needs. The individuals in a network will vary and they may change over time. Some networks will be large, while others may include only a few people. Personal support networks are

■ *Continued on next page.*

important because they keep us connected to our communities. Also, being in supportive relationships builds a strong foundation for a good life.

Things to remember:

- Creating or building a personal support network requires focused attention to identify support people to connect with you.
- We all have a network of some kind—a group of people we depend on for companionship and support such as family, friends, neighbors, and professionals such as counselors or support agencies.

However, by being connected to a group of people who care, you are more likely to be safe and secure in your community. The best way to start building a personal support network is to focus on what you must contribute to people around you. Relationships are not created by need; they are created based on sharing mutual skills, gifts, interests, and experiences.

When a group of people are connected to each other, the power and potential of the group is increased. If you have a network, there are so many benefits to consider, including:

- Staying on track for needed services,
- Networking in the community to help work toward your dreams,

- Providing help in decision-making,
- Problem-solving and dealing with the unexpected,
- Receiving assistance in finding employment or volunteer work,
- Finding a good place to live,
- Helping to prevent being vulnerable or taken advantage of by others,
- Ensuring that your wishes are respected when planning for the future, and
- Providing support to trusts, such as executors and trustees or advisors.
- Building a network does not stop there. After you build the strongest networking system possible, you need to maintain it.

Some suggestions to maintaining an effective network:

- Periodically stay in contact with those in the network,
- Share ideas and thoughts,
- Ask questions to clarify what you are being told,
- Brainstorm often and “kick around” ideas how to deal with a concern,
- Ask others for their opinion or suggestions,
- Check in just to say hi or ask how someone is doing,
- Treat everyone with respect, and
- Be approachable and the type of person anyone would want to talk to.

Networking can benefit everyone if everyone networks together.

## RESOURCE SHARING



### ACCESS LINK RIDERS' CHOICE PILOT

Access Link has launched a new program known as the Access Link Riders' Choice Pilot (ALRC Pilot). The program offers Access Link customers the opportunity to allow Access Link to move some of their rides to transportation network companies. Access Link is starting with Lyft and Uber Spring of 2023.

Here's how it works:

The Access Link customer continues to call and reserve rides as they normally do. Access Link will make a decision to move you to one of the ALRC providers or remain with Access Link. If they do use a provider company, you will receive a text message and/or phone call from the ALRC pilot provider. If the ride remains on Access Link, you will receive the normal Access Link reminder call. The fare remains the same either way and best yet, the customer may even get to enjoy a faster, more direct ride to their destination. For more information about Access Link Riders' Choice Pilot, contact Customer Service by emailing [adaservices@njtransit.com](mailto:adaservices@njtransit.com) or calling 973-491-4224, option 5.

### MERCER COUNTY 911 NOW HAS TEXTING CAPABILITIES

The Mercer County commissioners have approved a contract to move to a new 911 system, and residents will now be able to text to 911. This is great news for individuals that have difficulty verbally asking for assistance in an emergency.



For more information on utilizing this system go to; <https://www.nj.gov/911/home/textto911v2.html>.



### NEED AN UBER AND DON'T HAVE A SMART PHONE? NO PROBLEM

Uber has rolled out a new service where clients are able to call in to schedule their rides and no longer need an app. By dialing 1-833-USE-UBER (1-833-873-8237) from your cell phone, you can talk to an Uber team member to create an account and schedule rides. You will then receive a text message to confirm your ride which will include the driver's name and picture, car type, license plate number, and estimated time of arrival. For more information on how to begin, visit: <https://www.uber.com/en-US/blog/1-833-use-uber/>.

# RECREATION CORNER

▪ RUTH ROBERSON

As we move into spring, the Community Connections Recreation Program will continue to host a wide range of fun activities for you to enjoy! We still offer in-person events as well as virtual events once a month.

In January, we held a Blue Light Digital Sound Virtual Event hosted by Nick and Stella from Blue Light Digital. Consumers were asked to choose musical instruments which helped to create the background. Next step was to create vocal recordings to blend in with the music. Blue Light then utilized their online tools to create a high-quality recording of their new song.

We then hosted a new event, the PCIL Winter Wonderland Ball at the Hibernian with an amazing DJ. Our consumers were very excited to dress up and experience the event. We had people calling the office just to tell us they were going to wear a dress or a suit! The caterer said they have never seen so many people on the dance floor and a parent stated they couldn't tell the difference between staff and the consumers because everyone was having such a great time.

In February, we hosted a Virtual One Yoga event led by Tracey Ulshafer, where participants had fun exercising and performing different poses while

strengthening their core and upper bodies. We then hosted our first ever Karaoke Night. This was highly requested from our consumers, and everyone was ecstatic to hear that we were listening to feedback and adding this event. It built confidence within everyone to get up in front of the room and sing.

In March, we hosted Virtual Music Trivia which was again led by Jim Gavin, Key of Awesome Music. Consumers had a blast singing along and playing NAME THAT TUNE! Jim played a list of songs with different instruments to get the consumers to participate in the quiz that would pop up as the song changed.

We then wrapped it up with an Art Workshop Event hosted by April Zay from Hummingbird Studios. Participants created a painting on a canvas using tape and different colors of paint of their choosing. April instructed everyone on how to put tape on a canvas to make a pattern, shape, or even an object and then paint over it to reveal a cool design at the end!

We continue to utilize our partnership with United Presbyterian Church in Yardville as they have been very accommodating to PCIL with the use of their Fellowship Hall.

# Wonderful WINTER Memories

PCIL Recreation Events



Best Karaoke Night!



SING!



OH YEA!



A Duet to Remember!

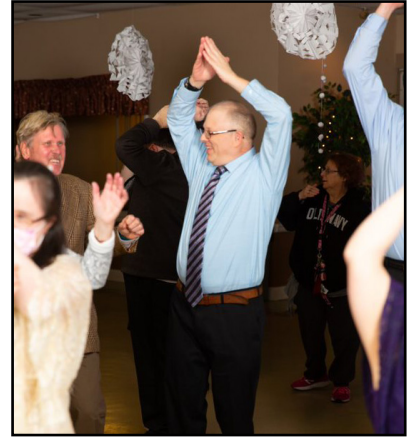




Epic Dance Party!



Bust a Move!



Y-M-C-A

# WINTER WONDERLAND BALL



Getting Silly.



Making Memories



To The Beat Now!

# MEET WHO'S

## MEET ALEXANDRA



Hi everyone! My name is Alexandra Wolinski, and I am one of the new Case Manager Resource Specialists here at the Progressive Center. I graduated from Rutgers-NB in May of 2022 with a degree in public health and psychology. In my free time I enjoy watching my favorite shows – Big Brother and The Challenge. I also like listening to music, planning trips, and adventuring with friends. Here at the Progressive Center, I conduct Access Link assessments, answer IL phone calls, and help organize our recreation events. My favorite part of being a PCIL team member is being able to meet and work with so many wonderful people!

## MEET KENDAL



Hi! My name is Kendal Fletcher. I am a new arrival at PCIL. I am the Public Health Educator here, recently joining the PCIL team in January. After graduating with a degree in Public Health at Montclair State University, I decided to become a Certified Health Coach and Certified Health Education Specialist. I have a genuine interest in helping individuals and groups of people achieve their health and life goals. I enjoy the work I do and the field of Public Health because it gives me a chance to give back to others, educate, and create new relationships with people. During my free time I enjoy playing video games with friends, playing basketball with my dad, and trying new restaurants!

# NEW AT PCIL

## MEET RUTH



Hi! My name is Ruth Roberson, and I just recently joined the PCIL team in early January. I am a Case Manager Resource Specialist, and I also assist in our Recreation events as well as coordinate the Campership Program. When I am not working, I enjoy painting, being outside, seeing my family, and hanging out with friends. I look forward to working at PCIL and am happy to be able to support and advocate for those living with a disability. I am thankful for everyone who has been so welcoming thus far.

“To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment.”

~Ralph Waldo Emerson

## MEET WEEDOR



My name is Weedor Blamo. I am a Support Coordinator at PCIL. I've earned my Bachelor's in Psychology, with a Social Advocacy Minor, from Fairleigh Dickinson University. Prior to PCIL, I've worked in the Behavioral Health/Social Services field and Medicaid Insurance. My knowledge of social supports, direct client assistance, and my genuine interest to better the lives of others, has prepared me to excel in the role as Support Coordinator.

Outside of PCIL, I am a mother to a beautiful little girl. I love spending quality time with my family and close friends. We go to different restaurants, entertainment centers, and travel together. Also, I enjoy taking part in self-care, which includes writing, social outings, and fashion. I value having a healthy home and work life balance, because 'life isn't always perfect, but your outfit can be.'



# Inspirational Poems

## WELCOME TO HOLLAND

*by Emily Perl Kingsley*

I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child with a disability - to try to help people who have not shared that unique experience to understand it, to imagine how it would feel. It's like this.....

When you're going to have a baby, it's like planning a fabulous vacation trip - to Italy. You buy a bunch of guide books and make your wonderful plans. The Coliseum. The Michelangelo David. The gondolas in Venice. You may learn some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very exciting.

After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off you go. Several hours later, the plane lands. The flight attendant comes in and says, "Welcome to Holland."

"Holland?!?" you say. "What do you mean Holland?? I signed up for Italy! I'm supposed to be in Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy."

But there's been a change in the flight plan. They've landed in Holland and there you must stay.

The important thing is that they haven't taken you to a horrible, disgusting, filthy place, full of pestilence, famine and disease. It's just a different place.

So you must go out and buy new guide books. And you must learn a whole new language. And you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met.

It's just a different place. It's slower-paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around.... and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills.... and Holland has tulips. Holland even has Rembrandts.

But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy... and they're all bragging about what a wonderful time they had there. And for the rest of your life, you will say "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned."

And the pain of that will never, ever, ever, ever go away... because the loss of that dream is a very very significant loss.

But... if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things ... about Holland.

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## THE SPECIAL MOTHER

*by Erma Bombeck, American humorist who achieved great popularity for describing suburban home life. (1927-1996)*

Most women become mothers by accident, some by choice, a few by social pressures, and a couple by habit.

This year nearly 100,000 women will become mothers of handicapped children. Did you ever wonder how mothers of handicapped children are chosen?

Somehow, I visualize God hovering over earth selecting his instruments for propagation with great care and deliberation. As He observes, He instructs His angels to make notes in a giant ledger.

“Armstrong, Beth; son. Patron saint...give her Gerard. He’s used to profanity.”

“Forrest, Marjorie; daughter. Patron saint, Cecelia.”

“Rutledge, Carrie; twins. Patron saint, Matthew.”

Finally, He passes a name to an angel and smiles, “Give her a handicapped child.”

The angel is curious. “Why this one God? She’s so happy.”

“Exactly,” smiles God, “Could I give a handicapped child to a mother who does not know laughter? That would be cruel.”

“But has she patience?” asks the angel.

“I don’t want her to have too much patience, or she will drown in a sea of self-pity and

despair. Once the shock and resentment wear off, she’ll handle it.”

“I watched her today. She has that feeling of self and independence that is so rare and so necessary in a mother. You see, the child I’m going to give her has her own world. She has to make her live in her world and that’s not going to be easy.”

“But, Lord, I don’t think she even believes in you.” God smiles, “No matter, I can fix that. This one is perfect - she has just enough selfishness.” The angel gasps - “selfishness? is that a virtue?”

God nods. “If she can’t separate herself from the child occasionally, she’ll never survive. Yes, here is a woman whom I will bless with a child less than perfect. She doesn’t realize it yet, but she is to be envied. She will never take for granted a ‘spoken word’”. She will never consider a “step” ordinary. When her child says ‘Momma’ for the first time, she will be present at a miracle, and will know it!”

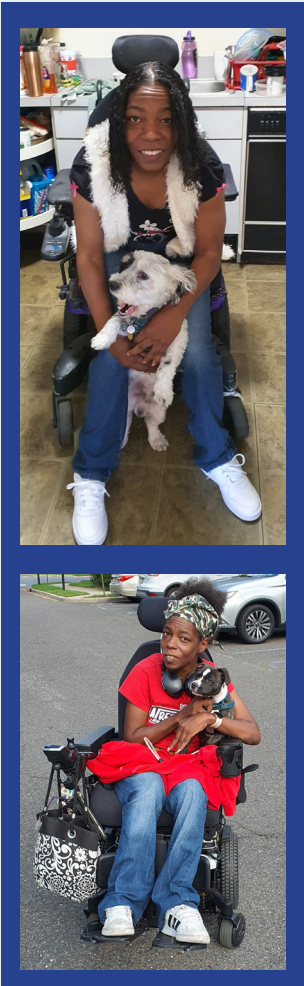
“I will permit her to see clearly the things I see...ignorance, cruelty, prejudice....and allow her to rise above them. She will never be alone. I will be at her side every minute of every day of her life because she is doing My work as surely as if she is here by My side”.

“And what about her Patron saint?” asks the angel, his pen poised in mid-air.

God smiles, “A mirror will suffice.”

# TIMIKA AND HER FUTURE GOALS

■ TIMIKA CHEEK, PCIL CONSUMER



*Timika with her dogs Prince and Midnight.*

My name is Timika Cheek, I'm 45 years old and I have cerebral palsy.

My goal is to train my dog to be a service dog. I'm looking for a dog trainer who can come once a weekend to volunteer. I need help with walking my dog and teaching commands. I enjoy spending time with friends at Project Freedom and I also enjoy advocating for them. I enjoy going to the gym at Robert Wood Johnson to increase my health and wellbeing.

At the end of 2020, I was lucky enough to receive a donated van that needed some repairs with advocacy help from Progressive

Center for Independent Living. I'm looking forward to getting the van fixed and ready for my transportation needs. I can use the van for going out to recreational events, activities, attending the gym and appointments. I truly appreciate the support of PCIL and the staff.

I'm proud to be living at Project Freedom. I have built great relationships with my supporters and individuals I consider friends. We look out for each other, and we stick together. I'm glad to have great people around me that I can count on. Together we are strong, and we can achieve many great things.

## DON'T FORGET YOUR 2023 PCIL MEMBERSHIPS

As a PCIL member, you can enjoy benefits throughout the year. Membership runs from January 1st through December 31st. Members receive reduced rates on recreational events.

### PCIL MEMBERSHIP PRICING

Individual --- \$15.00  
Couple --- \$25.00  
Family --- \$50.00  
Organization --- \$100.00

## 2023 CAMBERSHIP PROGRAM

The Summer Campership program provides supplemental funding towards summer activities for Mercer County youth ages 4-25. These activities can be anything from a summer camp, or a day at six flags! Just recently, we put in place a new coordinator to facilitate the program, Ruth Roberson. We are collecting and providing information on local summer activities for our consumers and others interested in the program. We continue to utilize our Youth with Disabilities Transition Resource Sharing: NJ & Beyond Facebook page to advertise our campership program in addition to our main PCIL Facebook page. Brochures can always be sent in the mail or picked up at the Progressive Center's office in Mercer County. They will also be available at our next three outreach events coming up this month, with one event specifically focused on summer camp activities for youth.

# 2023 SUMMER CAMBERSHIP PROGRAM

SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING  
FOR SUMMER ACTIVITIES

Applications now available.

PROGRESSIVE CENTER  FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

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#### *Support Coordinator*

Christine Hanneken

**VOLUME 81**  
**SPRING**  
**2023**



# **your DOORWAY**

**QUARTERLY**

**A quarterly publication written by the Mercer County Office on Aging/Aging & Disability Resource Connection to help support older adults, those living with disabilities, and their caregivers**

## **ARTICLES BY ADRC**

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### **Mercer County Office on Aging/ ADRC**

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640 South Broad St.  
P.O. Box 8068  
Trenton, NJ 08650-0068



ADRC	(609) 989-6661
Nutrition	(609) 989-6650
TOLL FREE	(877) 222-3737





## Celebrating Older Americans This May

Established in 1963, Older Americans Month (OAM) is celebrated every May. Led by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Community Living (ACL), Older Americans Month is a time for us to acknowledge the contributions and achievements of older Americans, highlight important trends, and strengthen our commitment to honoring our older citizens.

This year's theme, "Aging Unbound," offers an opportunity to explore a wide range of aging experiences and to promote the importance of enjoying independence and fulfillment by paving our own paths as we age.

This May, join us as we recognize the 60th anniversary of Older Americans Month and challenge the narrative on aging. Here are some ways we can all participate in "Aging Unbound":

- **Embrace the opportunity to change.** Find a new passion, go on an adventure, and push boundaries by not letting age define your limits. Invite creativity and purpose into your life by trying new activities in your community to bring in more growth, joy, and energy.
- **Explore the rewards of growing older.** With age comes knowledge, which provides insight and confidence to understand and experience the world more deeply. Continue to grow that knowledge through reading, listening, classes, and creative activities.

- **Stay engaged in your community.** Everyone benefits when everyone is connected and involved. Stay active by volunteering, working, mentoring, participating in social clubs, and taking part in activities at your local senior center or elsewhere in the community.
- **Form relationships.** As an essential ingredient of well-being, relationships can enhance your quality of life by introducing new ideas and unique perspectives. Invest time with people to discover deeper connections with family, friends, and community members.

The Mercer County Office on Aging/Aging & Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) is available as a resource to residents aged 60 or older, their caregivers, and loved ones. We can be reached by phone 609-989-6661, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., by email at [adrc@mercercounty.org](mailto:adrc@mercercounty.org), or by visiting our website, <https://www.mercercounty.org/departments/human-services/aging-disability-resource-connection>.

For more information about the national celebration, visit the official Older Americans Month website, <https://acl.gov/oam/2023/older-americans-month-2023>; follow the Administration for Community Living on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/ACLgov>) and/or Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/aclgov>), and/or join the conversation on social media using #OlderAmericansMonth.

## The Richard West Assistive Technology Advocacy Center (ATAC)

*By Payton Williams, Assistive Technology Social Supports Specialist*

If you don't know what assistive technology (AT) is or whether it will be useful to you, consider these questions: Do you wear glasses? Use a ramp as opposed to steps? Do you rely on GPS for directions? If so, you are using assistive technology. In simple terms, a challenging task that was impossible or difficult to do is now possible because of assistive technology. If you think assistive technology can benefit you, then The Richard West Assistive Technology Advocacy Center (ATAC) of Disability Rights New Jersey can help you explore your many options and find a possible solution.

The Richard West Assistive Technology Advocacy Center (ATAC) serves as New Jersey's federally funded assistive technology project through a sub-contract with New Jersey's Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Its purpose is to assist individuals across New Jersey in overcoming barriers in the system and making assistive technology more accessible to individuals with disabilities throughout the state.

The Richard West Assistive Technology Advocacy Center offers consumers services related to assistive technology including

aging in place, assistive technology device loans, accessibility tips, webinars, and conferences. It is our mission at The Richard West Assistive Technology Advocacy Center to provide New Jersey residents with assistive technology device demonstrations, device loans, and device reutilization. We are able to provide these services through sub-contracts with Advancing Opportunities for device demonstrations and loans; Adam Krass Consulting, LLC for device demonstrations; and our sub-contract with Goodwill Home Medical Equipment that supports device reutilization.

Our newest initiative focuses on bringing assistive technology to adults 60 years of age or older. We are working to produce a master list of resources as well as webinars that will provide insight into assistive devices and how they can be used in everyday life. This initiative aims to provide older adults with resources to remain connected to their communities.

“For people without disabilities, technology makes things easier. For people with disabilities, technology makes things possible.”



## 2023 Mercer County Senior Art Show

Mercer County Executive Brian M. Hughes, along with the Office on Aging and Division of Culture and Heritage, is pleased to present the 2023 Mercer County Senior Art Show from July 28 through August 15 at The Conference Center at Mercer at Mercer County Community College.

Any Mercer County resident age 60 or older may submit one entry that has been completed in the past three years. Artwork must be the original work of the applicant and must not have been previously entered into the County show. The categories included in the 2023 Mercer County Senior Art Show are acrylic, craft, digital art, mixed media, oil, pastel, photography, print, sculpture, watercolor, and works on paper (drawing).

First-place winners automatically advance to the State's New Jersey Senior Citizen Art Show in the fall. One professional and one non-professional first-place winner are

accepted into the State show in each of the aforementioned categories.

Registration through the Office on Aging begins June 1 and ends July 17. Artwork should be delivered to The Conference Center at Mercer on July 24 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Hours for viewing the exhibit at the conference center are Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. In-person viewing at The Conference Center at Mercer begins Friday, July 28, and the online viewing begins Tuesday, August 1, on the Office on Aging's web page.

For more information on the art show, including guidelines or a registration form, please contact Karina Turek from the Office on Aging at [kturek@mercercounty.org](mailto:kturek@mercercounty.org) or 609-989-6661.



# We Need Your Input

Please join the Mercer County Office on Aging/Aging and Disability Resource Connection at its

## Annual Public Hearing

**Tuesday, July 11, at 10:30 a.m.**



**Mercer County Connection**

**957 Highway 33, Hamilton**

**Hamilton Square Shopping Center**

This is an opportunity to share your concerns and needs of Mercer County's older adult community and their caregivers.

Please call the Mercer County Office on Aging/ADRC at (609) 989-6661 with any questions.



## Let Your Voice Be Heard

*By Lauri Harbison*

Each year, the Mercer County Office on Aging/Aging & Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) convenes a public hearing to present information on the role of the agency and programs available and to gather information from everyone who is, cares for, works with, or is concerned about Mercer County residents age 60 or older. This year, the public hearing will take place Tuesday, July 11, beginning at 10:30 a.m. at the Mercer County Connection at 957 Highway 33 in Hamilton.

In addition to the public hearing, the Mercer County Office on Aging/Aging & Disability Resource Connection invites residents to answer its Needs Assessment Survey (formerly known as the “20 Questions Survey”) to help better serve the aging community. Through this assessment, we can assist our older adult community with their needs today and plan and advocate for resources to cover unmet needs going forward. The survey, which is open to older adults residing in Mercer County and those who care for and about them, should take between eight minutes to 12 minutes to complete. For easy access to the survey, go to [www.mercercounty.org/OOASurvey](http://www.mercercounty.org/OOASurvey) or use your mobile phone camera app to scan the QR code to the right.

If you cannot access the website or QR code, a copy of the Needs Assessment Survey can be requested by calling 609-989-6661 or emailing [adrc@mercercounty.org](mailto:adrc@mercercounty.org).

We look forward to hearing from you at the public hearing and/or through our Needs Assessment Survey!

### SCAN ME!

Scan the QR code below to access the OOA Survey. Open the camera app on your phone and point it at the QR picture code below. Tap the QR code on your screen to focus the camera and activate the website scanner. Once the website button appears on your screen, tap the icon to go the website.



## The Senior's Farmers Market Nutrition Program Returns in June

*By Karina Turek*

Starting June 1, the Mercer County Office on Aging/Aging & Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) will accept applications for the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program! This program provides funding for the purchase of fresh, nutritious, unprepared foods like fruits, vegetables, and herbs to low-income older adults. With foods provided from authorized farmers, the program not only helps increase the nutritional health of our communities, but also increases the demand for locally grown produce and boosts the income of farmers who produce and sell locally grown products.

To qualify for this program, you must be able to verify that:

- You are 60 years of age or older
- You live in Mercer County
- Your income does not exceed \$26,973 per year (\$2,248 a month) if you are a single person or \$36,482 per year (\$3,041 a month) if you are a couple\*

Those eligible will receive \$50 to spend for use at participating vendors at area farmers markets. Instead of paper vouchers that were distributed in previous years, seniors will now be assigned a QR code that will be easily accessible from their smartphones. Simply show the code (on a digital device or

printed on paper from the Office on Aging/Aging & Disability Resource Connection) to the farm market vendor, who will scan it – that's how easy the new QR codes are to use!

Funds will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. When you receive your QR code, you also will get a listing of participating markets and vendors. If you are taking a trip to a market, make sure to call ahead, as market days may change due to weather and produce availability.



If you, a family member, or friend could benefit from this program, please call the Office on Aging/Aging & Disability Resource Connection at 609-989-6661 or email [adrc@mercercounty.org](mailto:adrc@mercercounty.org) or [kturek@mercercounty.org](mailto:kturek@mercercounty.org) for more information or to apply.

*\*Income guidelines vary for household sizes of 3 or more, so please contact us for more details.*



## GRANTS for the SERVICES YOU NEED

PASP offers consumers choice, flexibility, control and the opportunity to manage their personal care services through a cash allowance.

**CONTACT US NOW!**

Mercer County ADRC  
Reed Thomas 609-989-6459  
rthomas@mercercounty.org  
640 South Broad St.  
P.O. Box 8068  
Trenton, NJ 08650-0068



**DDS**  
NJ DIVISION OF  
DISABILITY SERVICES

## Statewide Respite Care Program



Let us give you *a Hand*



Caring for anyone is a huge job. The Statewide Respite Care Program offers services to the person who needs care so that you, the caregiver, has respite - that much needed break.

To learn more or start the application process, please contact the Mercer County Office on Aging / Aging and Disability Resource Connection at (609) 989-6661 or [ADRC@mercercounty.org](mailto:ADRC@mercercounty.org).



### ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

*Executive Director*  
Erica Saganowski

*Senior Accountant*  
Tiffany Hunter

*Administration Support Staff*  
Karina Turek

*Planner*  
Lauri Harbison

### NUTRITION STAFF

*Nutrition Program Director*  
Jenifer Williams

### ADRC STAFF

*Bilingual Community Service Aide*  
Monica Maldonado

*Health Insurance Benefits Clerk*  
Tina Spoto

*ADRC Receptionist*  
Denise Knighton

*PASP Coordinator/Program Monitor*  
Reed Thomas

# VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Volunteer Advocate Program Needs Your Help!



**TRAIN TO BECOME A LTCO  
VOLUNTEER ADVOCATE  
TO HELP NURSING HOME RESIDENTS**

## WE NEED YOUR HELP

Volunteers are needed to advocate for people living in long-term care facilities by investigating and resolving complaints to ensure that they are being treated with dignity and respect.

Each Volunteer Advocate undergoes 36 hours of training and is required to pass a certification exam.

If you are interested in having a direct impact on the lives of vulnerable New Jersey citizens living in nursing homes, please call **877-582-6995**, option #3, or email at [volunteer@ltco.nj.gov](mailto:volunteer@ltco.nj.gov).

**VOL 81 SPRING 2023**

*One place, many services.*

Progressive Center for Independent Living  
3635 Quakerbridge Road  
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FREE MATTER FOR  
THE BLIND AND  
HANDICAPPED

Phone: 609-581-4500  
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