A New Year Full of Promise!

“Nothing About Us Without Us!” Alive & Well at ILR in 2013!

By Barry Fox-Quamme
ILR Executive Director

After consumer concerns over fires and fumes on TriMet Series 9200 Lift Buses, ILR advocacy resulted in the December retirement of the problem buses and replacement with new, safer vehicles for 2013!

In January/February, ILR convened three World Café Styled “Housing Forums” that brought together consumers residing in public housing with representatives from housing agencies and landlords to explore models for more accessible and affordable housing. Sitting together brought new ideas and partnerships!

This Spring ILR consumer advocates met in Salem to support House Bill 2971 in the Oregon Legislature. More than 50 IL Consumers, Staff and Advocates from around the State of Oregon filled the hearing room and many testified before the House Human Services & Housing Committee about the benefits that come from services provided through the seven Centers for Independent Living (CILs) in Oregon. The Bill was supported unanimously by the committee and is currently before the Joint Ways & Means Committee!

The “ILR Music Collective” debuted in February in a 90-minute performance at a benefit for ILR. The event celebrated ILR Board President Steve Weiss' 70th Birthday and his years of leadership and advocacy on behalf of people with disabilities!

ILR Consumers and Volunteers are bringing to life a next generation of the Independent Living Movement. Thanks and good luck to all ~ especially to the ILR Music Collective that is now off and running with multiple community performances scheduled for 2013!

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Cathy’s Corner
By Cathy Blahut, ILR Services Coordinator and Resources Guru!

Moving into Spring, there are opportunities to participate in more activities and enjoy fresh fruits and vegetables.

- Did you know if you qualify for food stamps you are eligible for low cost tickets to events as part of Portland music for all programs?

You can find out more about this program here: http://www.orsymphony.org/concerts/1011/promotion/mfa/index.aspx

- Also many local farmers markets now accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP—formerly Food Stamps), including the Portland Farmer’s Market. This is a wonderful chance to get outside and buy locally grown food.

You can find Portland Farmer’s Market locations and times on their website: http://www.portlandfarmersmarket.org/

Summer is also a great time to stay fit or get into better shape!

- Many Medicare Advantage Plans may provide a gym benefit that is low cost or free. Plans vary, so always check before signing up for any memberships and remember: you should always consult with your doctor before beginning any fitness plan.

If you have question about your Medicare or need help finding a plan, please call Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance. This is a free program for people who need assistance finding a Medicare plan to fit their needs.

In Multnomah County please call the aging and disability services help line at (503) 988-3646 or (800) 722-4134 for the SHIBA volunteer nearest you.
Cooking With Mike

By Mike Burwell, ILR volunteer

You will need these ingredients:

- 3-4 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and sliced
- 1 1/2 cups no-sugar added apple cider
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/3 cup Splenda, a brown sugar substitute
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup toasted pecans, chopped

Apple Glazed Sweet Potatoes
A fantastic year-round dish that you can prepare in advance!

Directions:

1) Preheat oven to 350
2) Grease or spray glass baking dish
3) Arrange potato slices in dish in slightly overlapping rows
4) Pour 1/2 cup of water over potatoes: cover tightly with foil
5) Bake 20-25 minutes, or until potatoes are slightly firm
6) Combine sugar, cider, salt and spices in pan over medium heat
7) Bring this to a boil, stirring often
8) Add sweet potatoes; cook until liquids reduce, about 15 minutes

Season to taste. Transfer to serving bowl and sprinkle with pecans

Steps 1-5 can be done ahead of time, so long as you keep the pre-cooked potatoes refrigerated and covered with foil or plastic wrap.

Work Incentives Network

- Do you receive public benefits such as SSI or SSDI, Oregon Health Plan, Food Stamps or Housing Subsidies?

- Are you interested in working but concerned how earned income will affect these benefits?

If so, the Work Incentives Network is a great resource to help you learn about the work incentives and work rules available for you. These incentives may assist you in getting ahead financially while you work.

The good news is that there are many work incentives and safety nets in place through Social Security and the State of Oregon that may help you get ahead financially when you work! The key is finding out how these work incentives may personally help you in your specific situation.

To find out more about the Work Incentives Network, you may visit www.win-oregon.com or call Josh, Barbara or Katie at (503) 232-7411.
LIFT Tips and Rent Well

By Lina Bensel, Independent Living and Housing Specialist

While Lina retired from ILR in January, her words of wisdom carry us all forward as we ride routes and rails into year!

Customer Service and LIFT

You can phone customer service at 503-802-8000 using option 2 on weekdays between 8 am and 5 pm. At other times, you may now email customer service at Liftcustomerservice@trimet.org any time.

Do you keep records of your rides? Keeping a record of how many times they are late or when something unexpected happens is a good way to get customer service issues resolved more quickly. You can also keep track of the good things, when drivers are nice or someone goes out of their way a bit to help you.

They are happy to take complaints AND commendations. Happy riding!

Your Donations to ILR Create Opportunities for All!

Please Remember ILR in Your Charitable Planning!

STEPS To Success With Your Home Care Worker

STEPS is a program for seniors and people with physical disabilities whose in-home services are provided by state programs. ILR provides the service for those who reside in Multnomah or Clackamas County.

STEPS Offers

Information - Fact sheets and discussions about topics such as rights and responsibilities, and what it means to be the employer

Tools - Checklists and customizable forms, as well as assistance with using the forms to help consumers:
  • structure the hiring process and the employer-employee relationship
  • develop back-up plans for coverage of services, assess home safety and prepare for emergencies

Support - Activities to help consumer/employers evaluate their hiring and management decisions; as well as modeling and coaching skills, such as interviewing and communicating with homecare workers.

For more information about the STEPS Program please contact:
Amy Camp, BSW
STEPS Program Coordinator
503-232-7411
Student Field Placements Full of Enthusiasm!

By May Altman, Associate Director

Thanks to the Field Work Liaison from Portland State University we are once again fortunate to have three excellent social work students with interesting prior experience. Tyler Slattery, a MSW student has a Bachelor’s degree in psychology, has worked with youth and did his placement at a LBGTQ resource center. Ashley Thompson who also has a Bachelor’s degree in psychology and is an MSW student, did her field work at Columbia River Mental Health. Eric Magalhaes is a BSW candidate who did a placement at an IBOD Brazilian Institute in Rio de Janeiro where he helped people with disabilities find health care, access transportation, use the food bank and resolve legal issues. All three bring skills and a willingness to learn and grow as professionals to ILR.

When ILR serves as a training program we benefit from their enthusiasm, new ideas and energy in developing and improving our services. In return we have a chance to make more people aware of the Independent Living Movement and learn how people with disabilities can work, live independently, have healthy relationships and give back to their communities. Plus, future professionals are more aware of the needs of people with disabilities and ways to help them achieve the goals they set for themselves.

Something the faculty advisor asked the students about is what they want to leave as their legacy to ILR. It got me thinking of the work done by previous students at ILR. Shane Evans helped revitalize our Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) support group by bringing in speakers and finding new activities. He then went on to a placement at the VA, specializing in TBI. Rachel Sontag worked with consumers, led groups, did I&R and has worked with us on our last two very successful Roll in the Park events. Margaret McConnell, who worked individually with consumers and designed curriculum for a successful women’s group, helped reorganize our I&R and trained our new students in doing the tasks needed to keep the process going. Margaret was back with us part time in the Winter after her second year placement at Providence, helping to convene our special housing forums to improve housing for people with disabilities and educate developers, funders, landlords and service providers on new ways to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

More recently, Adrianna Rickard’s legacy involved finding resources and working the various systems to help people get housing and other services. Dan Currin left the legacy of helping to start our music group. He started with the donation of a few instruments, including piano and drums and other help. That group is not only going strong but now has a second group of people getting ready to present that music to the community and let everyone know that people with disabilities can offer a great deal to the world.

Dan also arranged for the Oregon Food Bank to teach a session on canning and preserving foods and one on planting an edible garden. The connection he made with the food bank continued this Winter and Spring as ILR offered two different 6 week cooking classes where people not only learn to cook yummy things, but also get the groceries to make it on their own to take home afterwards.

So when you get to work with one of our current students, let them know how ILR benefits you and what you see as the future. Together we do make a difference.
My Alaskan Trip  
By Diana Keever

To celebrate my 50th Birthday, I decided to go with four of my closest friends on an Alaskan cruise adventure. One test in going on this cruise was to see how accessible everything would be for someone like me with a disability: I have cerebral palsy and I get around with a scooter. Pre-planning for this trip was essential and made everything so much smoother. For example, as part of my preparations, I needed to get a passport or passport card, because our cruise ship would be stopping in Victoria, BC. I opted for the passport card which took about 30 days to receive. Here is information about each portion of my trip that might be helpful to others!

I had very few limitations with my scooter. Since doorways on the cruise ship are narrow, though, they required that I provide measurements and weight information for my scooter to make sure I would have access to as many areas as possible. The doors to the handicap suite and all of the handicap restrooms on the ship were large enough for my scooter to drive through, but I could not go visit my other friends who were in a regular size room with a narrow door. They just came to our room to party, so it wasn’t a big deal!

To get to the boat, we took the train from Portland, OR to Seattle, WA. I was picked up by Tri-Met lift bus from my home and was delivered to the Amtrak train station in Portland. We had arranged in advance for handicap seating and travelled business class, which was only slightly higher in cost than coach class and well worth the extra cost. I travelled in comfort with plenty of legroom and space to park my scooter.

I was concerned about getting a cab from the train station to the ship. We were not able to pre-arrange for a lift cab, but I shouldn’t have worried because the cab companies have several lift vans available and when we arrived one was waiting for us. We got to the ship in no time and were ready for our adventure to begin.

I can’t say enough about how great the cruise was. We travelled on the Westerdam, a ship from the Holland America cruise line. The crew was wonderful and treated me like royalty. This cruise was mostly geared toward adults, so the décor of the ship was elegant with fresh flowers, beautiful artwork, crystal chandeliers and formal dinners.

We had pre-arranged (a year in advance) for a handicap suite with a balcony at the stern of the ship. I shared this room with two other women. The room had two twin beds and a couch that folded out to a bed. There was lots of closet space and room to park my scooter and for me to use my walker without being in the way.

(Continued on pg. 7)
The bathroom in our suite had a roll-in shower and also a regular tub with shower and lots of handrails all around. I had no trouble getting around by myself (until the ship starting rocking during hurricane force winds, but that’s another story!) There were also several handicap restrooms positioned in convenient locations around the ship and I was able to locate them fairly easily.

The view from our balcony was outstanding and I was able to maneuver my scooter outside without difficulty. I would recommend getting a room with a balcony and most definitely recommend a handicap room.

We had several options for meal locations. On several occasions, we opted for room service for breakfast, which was delightful. We also had the option to go to the dining room for a more formal meal or to a full buffet, or to the more casual taco bar by the pool. Plus there was a hamburger stand where you could get a burger & fries or a hot dog almost any time. Believe me there was more than enough food on this ship. There was even a dessert buffet going on late at night. Most of our dinners we chose to eat in the formal dining room where we had a reserved table at a pre-scheduled time with the same waiter every night. I arrived in my scooter and one of the dining crew would park it for me making “whoop-whoop” back up noises. The crew was a lot of fun and enjoyed giving us lots of attention. We also had two formal nights where we dressed up, received corsages, celebrated our friends’ 29th anniversary and just had an all-around good time.

The highlight of my cruise was getting to go on some of the excursions. We pre-arranged two excursions and just happened upon a third. We did have to contact the cruise line to fill out a questionnaire on my level of disability to determine what mode of transportation I would need to be able to go on the outings. The cruise line was most accommodating and the three excursions we went on all had some form of lift gate for my scooter. In Juneau, we travelled by bus to the Glacier Gardens which is at the entrance of the rain forest and then by golf cart through a section of the forest. The Glacier Gardens were beautiful with upside down trees and awe-inspiring landscaping. The bus then dropped us off at the Mendenhall glacier, which was truly a sight! We also saw a mama bear and her two cubs.

Our second excursion was not planned, but when we got to Ketchikan we were offered half price tickets (on a lift bus) to go to the Saxman Indian village of the Tlingit Indians and see and hear about their totem poles and their history. We also saw bald eagles and seals on this trip.

Our final excursion was in Canada with a bus tour of Victoria, B.C. and high tea at the beautiful, old Empress hotel. This area was so beautiful with wonderful landscaping, old buildings and a $40,000 outside urinal (You just have to trust me on this one.)

All in all I had a great time and hope to do it again very soon!
A Roll In The Park 2012

ILR celebrated A Roll In The Park on September 22nd and we were thrilled to see everyone! With expanded space and a street fair theme, we had information booths, food, a crafts section and music. This ARIP was bigger than ever and, despite the clouds in the sky, everyone had a great day!

People visited booths to collect information about transportation and other services, do crafts and even get a cup of coffee!

The music group warms up with a singing exercise.

The music group performed for over an hour at the end of our event, bringing liveliness and music to everyone!
Thank You

ILR wants to thank everyone of our sponsors for A Roll In The Park, who were very generous with their contributions. We couldn’t have put on this event without them.

Burgerville  Charmed Boutique  Danya’s Cakes
East Burn Restaurant  Fire On The Mountain  The Greek Deli

Gustav’s Restaurant  Happy Cup  Heart Café

Jewelry by Colleen  Jewelry by Sean  Massage Envy

Meats for Cats and Dogs  Oregon School of Massage  Sizzle Pie

Spunky Monkey

Thank you to our “A Roll In the Park” Artists!

Last Fall’s “A Roll In the Park” event included a new element to promote the talents of people with disabilities by having an Art Display! The Art Display included art work done by six very talented artists using various mediums such as oil paintings, drawings, ceramics, embroidery and painted rocks. We are very proud to say it was a huge success and want to thank our Artists that were involved including:

  Mark Bishop, Laura Campos, John Kelting, Leah Longfellow, Carrie Majhor and Nicki Sinner!

We are already looking forward to this next year’s event and have a goal of expanding the Art Display to include more artists and more possibilities! Please keep us in mind if you are interested in submitting your art work.. Thank you once again to all of our artists that made this year such a success!

Finally Thanks to Our Volunteers, who helped make this ARIP great for everyone!

Jaques B  Lynda K  Andrea S
Heidi T  Laura C  Donna C
Jan D  John S  Virginia H
Seamus K  John G  Karen M
Adrianna R  Carl K  Sandy B
Dan T  Mike B  Kathy S
Todd R  Jennifer D  Ann W
Randy R
Program Updates!

By Sarah Gerth, IL Specialist

Crossroads TBI Support Group

The Crossroads Traumatic Brain Injury Support Group meets twice a month at ILR. Survivors of brain injury, family members, and caregivers share their challenges and successes in coping with brain injury. Participants care about one another and there is a feeling of camaraderie and of belonging in the group. Many challenges are met with a good sense of humor. We have sharing and support for one hour, and a guest speaker for one hour. The speakers present on a range of topics related to recovery from brain injury.

The TBI Support Group meets twice a month on the 2nd and 4th Fridays from 1:00 to 3:00 pm. The group will meet on the following dates this Spring & Summer:

May 10th & 24th
June 14th & 28th
July 12th & 26th
August 9th & 23rd

Please contact Sarah Gerth or May Altman for more information on the TBI Group. Pre-registration is required before attending the group. We welcome new members.

Staff Updates!

Barbara Dirks and Katie Thompson have joined ILR during the past 9 months as members of the Work Incentive Network staff, while Jaime Head will be missed as she moves on to bigger and better things!

Barbara brings with her experience as a Community Work Incentive Coordinator at Disability Rights Oregon, as well as years of administrative experience in Human Resources. She enjoys benefits counseling and is excited at the opportunity to work at ILR. “Knowledge is empowering, knowing about work incentives and how working affects your benefits allows a person to make informed decisions about their employment goals”.

Katie comes to ILR after working with a disability benefits law firm and is excited to have just completed her training and certification in April. Welcome both Barbara and Katie!

Farewell Jaime!

After more than five years with ILR and the WIN Program, Jaime Head has moved on to a similar national position with Virginia Commonwealth University. Good luck!

We have also have three new student interns with us this school year! Eric Magalhaes, Tyler Slattery and Ashley Thompson are with us for a year of training and education until June. We’ve enjoyed the contributions they bring to the work we do with consumers at ILR!
ILR’s Upcoming Recreation Events

By Patricia Kepler, IL Specialist & ILR’s Recreation Maven!

Friday, May 3- Spring Party
Spring is back and its time to celebrate its return. Join us for an afternoon of fun, food, and friendship. RSVP to Patricia by April 26.

Tuesday May 07, 2013-Sights & Sounds of Nature
Kelsie Boam, an ornithologist who has conducted a couple of bird lovers workshops for ILR in the past has agreed to lead us once again in a workshop at the Tualatin River trail. After we learn about the birds that can be found at this beautiful site we will walk the trails and see which sounds we recognize. Space is limited and registration began April 1.

Thursday June 6-Portland Rose Festival
Join us once again as we experience the Rose Festival. Date and time subject to change dependent upon weather and schedule.

Friday July 11, 9AM-1 PM-A Trip to Zenger Farm
Friends of Zenger Farm is a non-profit farm and wetland in outer southeast Portland dedicated to promoting sustainable food systems through a working urban farm. Friends of Zenger Farm provide unique experiential learning opportunities for youth, farmers and families in subjects such as sustainable agriculture, wetland ecology, food security, healthy eating and local economic development. Registration will begin June 01

Wednesday, August 14, 11AM-2PM—Annual Summer Picnic
We will be returning to col. Summers Park. Located at 1001 SE 20th Ave Portland. Come join us for food, fun, and friendship. RSVP to Patricia.

Friday, September 27—A Roll in the Park Fall Street Fair
Details to come. Registration will begin August 1.

Do you have recreation ideas?
Please contact Patricia at (503) 232-7411 or by email patricia@ilr.org
Happy Spring & Summer from ILR

Save the Following Dates!

Consumer Picnic ~ Wednesday, August 14th
“A Roll in the Park” Festival ~ September 27th