A September to Remember!

ILR Welcomes World Guests
By Barry Fox-Quamme
ILR Executive Director

ILR was pleased to host a variety of guests during the late summer. We kicked off September with a Youth Peer Mentoring Exchange sponsored by The Association of Rural Programs for Independent Living (APRIL). Mike Beers and Mary Olson from Missoula helped ILR’s staff explore new and creative ways to reach out to youth and young adults. A few days later, ILR welcomed a delegation from Sapporo, Japan that opened our eyes to how independent living values are being expressed across the Pacific. The next week The National Council for Independent Living (NCIL) held a national training in Portland and ILR had a chance to present our center’s accomplishments to NCIL’s board of directors.

To top it all off, on September 26th staff from ILR with the assistance of Mountain View Christian Church accompanied thirteen consumers to a Seattle Mariners game. We arrived in the late afternoon at the Seattle Residence Inn, where we had dinner before heading out to the ball game. The ballpark staff was exceptional. Usher Larry provided a tour for a few hardcore fans, snapping their photo at the Dave Niehaus statue. Everyone at Safeco was ready to help and the day was made perfect by a Mariner’s win!

Seattle Road Trip!
By Patricia Kepler
ILR Staff Member

The next day our group split into groups; some explored the Space Needle or took the monorail to go shopping, others travelled on to The Pike Place Market or the Experience Music Project museum. We then all met for lunch and headed back to Portland.

This overnight trip was a new experience for ILR’s recreation program, as we planned a truly independent overnight trip. Feedback was extremely positive and we hope to do it again.

We thank the Mariners for the tickets, the Residence Inn for discounting the suites, Ride Connection for the buses, Pastor Craig for being the driver, guide, and photographer, and the Woodmen Of The World Foundation for a donation that made the event possible.

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Healthy Connections

By May Altman, Associate Director

Last week I helped lead the Healthy Lifestyles Workshop and enjoyed reviewing the important information about nutrition and things we can do to make our lives healthier. Meeting our needs on a fixed income has become increasingly challenging in these economic times, and it got me brainstorming about the ways people living on a fixed income could go about achieving these goals. In order to manage these days, we need to be creative and resourceful in finding support and getting what we need.

The workshop stressed the value of social interaction and meaningful activity, and this can be combined with food preparation. For example, how about getting together with friends or neighbors to cook meals? Each of you could provide something different for the meal or you could shop together and split the cost. Then you can enjoy a meal together and each person could bring home leftovers ready for the next day or the freezer. Soups and stews are especially economical for home made TV dinners. If you need menu ideas, ILR would be glad to help you find recipes.

And did you know that many of the local Farmer’s markets accept SNAP (formerly known as food stamps). One person could shop for all of the vegetables, or even better you can make it a fun outing with a friend and get your exercise in too. Taking walks together is another great way to mix friendship and healthy activity. If you can’t arrange the time together, agree to call someone else and report your exercise activity to them and have them do the same. You are then having a good time connecting with someone else.

Portland has lots of resources and free activities. ILR can help you find them but we also learn a lot from what our consumers tell us. For example, did you know that there is a pet food bank? Many consumers have been great about sharing new resources with ILR and it is so helpful when people share their experiences about various resources so we can know which provides the best service etc. Share your knowledge with your IL specialist and other consumers. You can also e-mail ideas to me to add to our resource material and list on our Facebook page. Just e-mail me at may@ilr.org.
What is the 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 that may assist you in getting ahead financially while you work.

The Work Incentives Network is a State-wide grant-funded project that provides certified Work Incentives Coordinators to help guide you in knowing how work will affect your benefits. We can assist you with this information at any point in your career planning from just beginning to think about work to having a specific work goal while you work or look to increase your hours or wages.

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 financially get ahead 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](http://www.win-oregon.com) or call us at (503) 232-7411.

Cooking with Mike

By Mike Burwell, ILR Volunteer

I teach a cooking class monthly, which you can find more information about on our Ongoing Events page. Today, I’d like to share the recipe for Insanely Easy Aztec Casserole, which serves 4-6, takes about 20 minutes and can cost as little as $10!

**Ingredients:**
- 15 oz can black beans, drained
- 1 cup salsa
- 15 oz can diced tomatoes
- 1 cup frozen corn kernels
- 1 1/2 cup shredded cheese
- 8 to 12 tortillas

**Salt to taste**

**Instructions:** Preheat oven to 400. Using cooking spray, spray a medium sized casserole dish. In a large bowl, combine beans, tomatoes, salsa, corn and salt. Place a layer of tortillas to cover the bottom of the casserole dish, overlapping the edges. Cover the tortilla layer with half of the beans and half of the cheese. Repeat. Sprinkle extra cheese on top if desired, then bake for about 20 minutes. Remove casserole, cover, and let cool for at least 15 minutes before serving. You can also add hamburger, vegetables or other seasonings in the layers of beans and cheese if you’d like to mix it up a little!
Housing information everyone should know

By Lina Bensel, Independent Living and Housing Specialist

We get a lot of requests for housing services at ILR. Many of the people requesting them are literally homeless: camping, living in a car, spending nights in a place unfit for human habitation or in a shelter. Other people are couch surfing or living with family members or friends temporarily. In some cases there is a real or imposed deadline on how long they can be there.

We are here to assist you in a housing search. If you are eligible for services from an agency that does have or administer housing, we will do our best to find that and recommend you. We have the Rent Well class for those who want it and are willing to do some work. We can write reasonable accommodation letters for your use in housing, and we have been known to talk to landlords about reasonable accommodation and other needs. We have even gone to hearings and appeals and at one time, eviction court, as support.

There is very little available low rent housing in the Portland area. The three county Housing Authorities: Housing Authority of Clackamas County, Washington County Division of Housing Services, and Multnomah County’s Home Forward, maintain the inventory of public housing and a Section 8 voucher program. Home Forward also has some temporary subsidized housing and a program called Shelter Plus Care.

All these programs are wait listed and the lists are long. Sometimes they will be closed for a lengthy period and open for only a few days at a time. The requirements tend to be strict for acceptance as well due to the benefits. For example, the person or family who qualifies pays only a small percentage of income as rent, usually 30 per cent.

This is a very nice program, but what if you are homeless now or have a felony record—even if you have done the time and paid your “debt to society?”

Remember to be realistic. Do you have an income, even a small one? What are the rents being asked for the apartments of the size you want? Do you have to live in a specific area or can you branch out a bit if you are near transportation? Honest answers to these questions will help you narrow your search.

If you have barriers to housing, such as addiction problems, felonies and misdemeanors or previous housing that did not work out, what have you done to resolve those issues?

Sometimes a tenant class like Rent Well can be helpful in learning how to work around barriers. Participants make a portfolio that shows ID, a cover letter why they would be a good tenant, a budget, info about where they get their money, references, and any other info they want to add. But this class is not an immediate fix all. It takes seven weeks and people are expected to do a lot of work.

Even without such a class a person with housing barriers may be able to help themselves get a place. If money, income or credit is the major problem, sometimes a cosigner can help. A cosigner has to have better credit than the tenant, and has to agree to pay the rent when the tenant cannot.
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One fee people are often surprised by is putting money down as a deposit and a person with barriers will be expected to pay at least one month’s rent as deposit, sometimes more. ILR doesn’t have a deposit fund but renters may save, borrow, or obtain it from another agency; St Vincent de Paul is an organization that sometimes has money for such things on a first come, first served basis. You may request to divide the deposit into three payments to make it less difficult to pay. Not all landlords will do this but enough will that it is worth asking.

Getting references is always helpful- the best ones are not related to you and have known you six months or more. Some references people do not often think of are babysitters, veterinarians, and medical providers. These people see you often and can vouch that you have paid them.

**How to keep your name on the waiting list**

If you are on a wait list and you wish to stay on it, it is important that you update your information if you:

- Have a Different Mailing Address
- Go to the Hospital
- Move
- Change your Name (eg, marriage or divorce)
- Go to Jail

The best way to give them these changes is in person, followed by in writing. Telephoning a housing authority or other wait list can cause your changes to be lost. Losing new addresses is the number one reason people get dropped from wait lists. If you notify them in writing or in person the likelihood that you will keep your place on the waiting list until your number comes up is much higher.

**Some types of housing for low income**

There are the public housing and the Section 8 voucher which we have already mentioned, and there are Section 8 buildings in which the building carries with it the program for Section 8 and the person pays about 30 per cent of their income as rent, instead of the person having a voucher and finding an amicable landlord.

There are HUD buildings, administered the same way but through a property management company. HUD is somewhat stricter than the housing authorities for tenant screening.

There are Section 42 landlord tax break buildings, in which the landlord gets a tax break for renting to low income people. The rent is usually a little lower than the market rate.

There is Section 811 housing, specific to certain disabilities. Usually these carry a subsidy as well.

There are simply cheap apartments, often small, often in less desirable locations but for many people having a door to close and an address to use are all they need.

Finally some people make the rent by having a roommate or roommates. This is workable with some people, with others it is not. It is desirable to make a contract with roommates to have in writing who will pay what, who will do what cleaning, or other activities. The worst housing situations often happen not because roommates are not compatible, but because they do not have a clear understanding of what is to be done by whom.

Through these methods we hope to give access to safe housing for our consumers.
Beginning in October, agencies with low income energy assistance programs will be taking applications for people who need assistance with their energy bill during the winter months. People who own their own home or are in a rental can qualify but payment levels may vary based on utility company/landlord agreements. This program has experienced significant budget cuts, so it is important to make payment arrangements with your utility company in case you do not get assistance.

Participating agencies do send out fliers to remind people to apply but you do not have to get one to be eligible to participate. If you need assistance filling out the application the participating agencies will provide it. While this program will help offset your heating bill, it does not pay them in full. Due to Oregon’s mild winter climate power companies can turn off your utility in the winter, so it is important to pay your bill.

You may contact the following agencies to apply:
Clackamas County: Social Services Division (503) 650-5640.
Multnomah County: Community Service Division of the Department of County Human Services (503) 988-6295.
Washington County: Hillsboro (503) 615-0771 or Beaverton (503) 615-0772

For additional information or contact information for other counties please visit http://www.oregon.gov/OHCS/SOS_Low_Income_Energy_Assistance_Oregon.shtml.

Another frequent topic is about Emergency Medical Certificates for people who have medical conditions for which a utility shut off would be life threatening. This certificate may be used for electric, gas and telephone, and allows for more flexible payment arrangements with your utility company, but nonpayment of the bill may lead to a shut off. The Certificate can be authorized by a doctor, nurse practitioner or a physician’s assistant. The certificate does not require a special form and can be called into a utility company by the medical provider, but the written form must be provided within 14 days. You do not have to be the account holder to request a certificate but must live with the account holder, to apply. The Certificate Verification must include the following according to the public utilities commission:

- It must include the name of the person the certificate is for and relationship to customer
- Complete description of health conditions
- Explanation of how person’s health will be significantly endangered by terminating service
- How long condition is expected to last
- Type of service required
- Signature of the qualified medical professional

If you have questions about this program, call the Oregon Public Utility Commission, Consumer Section at 1-800-522-2404, or your utility company. You may also visit the website at http://www.oregon.gov/PUC/consumer/emcinfo.shtml.
So much is online these days; even ILR does a great deal of communication through our website, Facebook and email connections. While the internet has been around for over a decade now, it is still a very new technology that some people may be unfamiliar with, so let us go over some of the basic terms and help readers get a better understanding of just what the internet is.

**Browser:** a browser is a piece of software that lets you view the internet. Think of it like a window in a house: you open the window to see outside, just as you open a browser to see web pages. But just as a window isn't the outside world, neither is a browser the internet: it is merely the device you may be using for access. What may cause some confusion is when the software names, such as IE (Internet Explorer), Opera or Firefox are used in place of the word browser.

**Application (or apps):** a shorthand term for programs, frequently smaller programs, that are used to augment a device, such as a smart phone, or a software program, such as a browser.

**URL or Universal Resource Locator:** this is also known as a web address. Essentially, what a user types into a browser when they want to go to a certain web site. For example: the URL for Google is www.google.com.

**Search Engine:** a search engine is a program, usually located at a web site (google.com being the most well known) that is there to help users find what they want online. Users can go to a search engine, type in subjects that they want information on, and then sort through the answers to find the one that suits them best. It can take some time to find the right answer, so be patient.

**Email or Electronic Mail:** most people are familiar with this and it may be the reason many got online to begin with. This is an application that allows people to send messages, photos, and even short pieces of music or video to other people through the internet. There are two basic kinds of email, cloud-side email and on-premise email.

**On-premise email** means that your email software program downloads that email from the internet to your personal computer. Once that email is on your computer, the only place you will have access to it is at the computer you downloaded the email on. Outlook is a common example of this type of email system.

**Cloud-side email** means that your email is stored online usually at no cost to you. Yahoo, Gmail, and Hotmail are all examples of this kind of service. What it means is that you can access your email from any computer that has a connection to the internet. The drawback is that if you have no access to the internet, you cannot read any email at all, even older ones.

**Attachments:** This is a general term for any kind of document that can be added to an email. This can be a text document, a song, a picture or even a video clip. Most email services have limits on how big an attachment can be, to keep download times reasonable.
A Roll In The Park 2011!

With the canopies, tables and tarps finally in place, we converted our parking lot to an event space and kicked off A Roll in The Park, 2011 on a hot Saturday! People came from all over to celebrate ILR and the Americans With Disabilities Act.

There was music, poetry readings and educational booths, as people conversed, ate and learned about ILR and other services in their area. ILR staff and volunteers were kept hopping throughout the day, offering people cake, t-shirts and tours around the ARIP’s booths and wares.

Music for the masses!

Everybody loves a clown

Lunchtime!
Thank you!

Many people and businesses contributed to ARIP and the success of our event. We would like to give our thanks to everyone who donated their time, food and prizes to A Roll In The Park and especially to thank our fine sponsors:

Ambrosia Smoothies          Back T Pack
Bemused                     East Burn
Fire on the Mountain        Gossamer Fiber Arts & Crafts
The Greek Deli               Gustav’s Restaurant
Meats for Cats and Dogs     Poppets by Jan
Safeway                     Spunky Monkey
Subway                      Voodoo Doughnuts

ILR Summer Picnic

On August 31st, ILR got everyone together for our annual Summer picnic! We gathered in at the lovely Clackamette Park on the river, where clouds kept the sun off our backs and DJ Lamar kept the tunes hopping! Afterward, we played games and visited on a great summer day.
Program Updates!

By Sarah Gerth, IL Specialist

Crossroads Traumatic Brain Injury Support Group

Crossroads is a support group for individuals living with brain injury and their family members and caregivers. We typically meet twice a month, except in November and December. Each group offers participants an opportunity to learn from one another and to share in their recovery. The program invites speakers on a wide variety of topics. The following speakers will be presenting in the next few months:

Friday November 18: Jacek Haciak Psyc D: Brain structure and effects on behavior
Friday December 2: Planning session and talk about the Holidays
Friday December 9: NO TBI Group: ILR Holiday Party from 11am to 2 pm.

We welcome new members and meet the second and fourth Fridays of the month from 1pm to 3pm. Please contact Sarah Gerth at sarah@ilr.org or 503-232-7411 if you wish to attend.

Ongoing events

Cooking With Mike
On the third Thursday of each month ILR’s own Mike Burwell leads a cooking class. Below is this season’s schedule:

Thursday, October 20—Pumpkin bread
Thursday, November 17—Diabetic friendly sweet potato casserole
December-no class. Classes will resume in January

Classes begin at 9:30 and end at noon. Workshop includes instruction of proper preparation and clean-up of work area. RSVP to Patricia as space is limited.

Assertiveness Training
ILR recently completed two Assertiveness Trainings for women. The six-week program looks at the differences between assertive, aggressive and non-assertive behaviors. Consumers explore cultural myths behind non-assertive behavior choices and the role of self-esteem in using an assertive voice. Curriculum includes journaling, art projects, situational role plays, and peer support.

Please contact Sarah Gerth at 503 232-7411, x-325 or sarah@ilr.org if you’d like to sign up for the next Assertiveness Class starting sometime in October.

All Things Music
Come to the weekly group dedicated to music! Starting Nov 7th from 1-3 pm, we will jam together, learn and share skills, listen to and discuss our favorite music and even enjoy an occasional guest musician. No talent or experience necessary. Call or email Dan Currin for more information, 503-232-7411 ext. 305 or danc@ilr.org.
ILR’s Upcoming Recreation Events

By Patricia Kepler, IL Specialist & Recreation Maven!

Tuesday November 29—the Singing Christmas Tree
Once again the Singing Christmas tree has provided us passes to their dress rehearsal. Please join us for this unforgettable evening of music and laughter.

Thursday December 1—Christmas Revels
There will be singing, dancing and a lot of laughter. Tickets are limited so register early for this wonderful holiday celebration.

Friday December 9—ILR Holiday Party, 11 am -3 pm
ILR’s annual holiday party where you can sing holiday carols, play games and enjoy some holiday food. RSVP by December 2.

One of the highlights of Portland during the holiday season is the many concerts and plays. ILR has been blessed over the years to receive complimentary tickets to a wide variety of holiday productions. Stay tuned for announcements as event tickets become available.

Thursday January 19, 2012— Portland Art Museum
Join us for an accessible tour of the Portland Art Museum. This interactive tour will allow for discussion and adaptive viewing of exhibits.

Tuesday February 14—Valentines soap making.
What better way to spend Valentines then with ILR making soap? Design your soap with your favorite scent or color. Create for yourself or as a gift for your favorite sweetheart. RSVP by February 7.

Thursday, March 15—ILR Movie Night.
Time for an evening of socialization and cinema with a great movie on our own big screen. Our evening begins at 5 pm, ends at 8:30 and we ask you to bring $5 for pizza.

Do you have recreation ideas? Please contact Patricia. (503) 232-7411 ext: 312 or by email patricia@ilr.org.
ILR Men’s Group

Starting Wednesday, Nov. 2nd from 12-1pm

Hey guys, are you interested in a group just for men? We’ll be talking about what it means to be a male, including the issues and challenges for men with disabilities. We’ll get to know and support each other, share information and learn new things. Come for an introduction session and help plan the group! Coffee and cookies provided but you must bring your own lunch. Feel free to call or email Dan Currin with any questions, 503-232-7411 ext. 305 or danc@ilr.org.