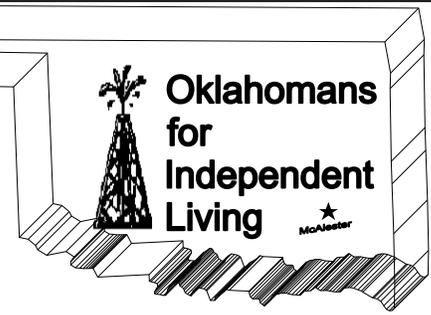


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OIL Newsletter



A monthly publication of THE OKLAHOMANS for INDEPENDENT LIVING

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF INDEPENDENT LIVING

WHAT IS IT?

The Independent Living (IL) Philosophy is based on the belief that persons with disabilities have the basic human rights as persons without disabilities to participate in and contribute to community life. It is about persons with disabilities having the right and seeking the opportunity to be self-determined in matters such as living arrangements, transportation, social life, employment, and physical care.

Independent Living is a drastic shift away from the view that disabled is equivalent to sick and dependent – that persons with disabilities need to be looked after, cared for, pitied, because they are disabled. IL's fundamental principal is empowerment rather than "care". It is about choice. And it respects each

person's understanding of what independence is for them.

WHAT IT ISN'T

Independent Living does NOT seek to define independence and then ask others to fit into that definition. And, Independent Living does NOT seek to ignore professionals.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Independent Living IS interested in having a person with a disability direct his/her own life and services. Independent Living IS interested in promoting better utilizations of services. Independent Living IS interested in a person with a disability's sense of self-esteem. Bottom line, Independent Living is BOTH a philosophy of life AND a philosophy for service provision.



Taken from the Disability Achievement Center

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AWARENESS DAY

On Tuesday, April 5th, we have a chance to make our voices heard at the state Capitol during the annual People with Disabilities Awareness Day.

This year, the theme has a super hero quality with "Empower the People." Those who have a disability or work with or love a person with a disability know very well of the power within. When we unite and stand together many great things can happen. If only one person learns about disabilities and issues important to those with disabilities - the day will have been successful.

THE STRATEGY

People with Disabilities Awareness Day at the state Capitol gives people with disabilities and advocates, like you, a chance to talk with decision-makers who can preserve or expand services that make a critical difference in the lives of Oklahomans with disabilities.

MANY EXHIBITS TOO

People with Disabilities Awareness Day always has

great exhibits with a vast assortment of information. With approximately 70 exhibit tables full of valuable information and key people to get to know, it is important not to miss the opportunity to network and learn what resources are out there.

In April, OIL will be taking the bus; so call now to save your spot and we will register you for the event. It will be from 12:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. in Oklahoma City. For more information on People with Disabilities Awareness Day go to www.okrehab.org. Taken from the Oklahoma Department of Visual Services.

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION SERVICES

What they do...

The Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) expands opportunities for employment, independent life and economic self-sufficiency by helping Oklahomans with disabilities bridge barriers to success in the workplace, school and at home.

To connect to the DRS office in your area call 800 487-4042. DRS is comprised of five program divisions, Vocational Rehabilitation, Visual Services, Disability Determination, Oklahoma School for the Blind and Oklahoma School for the Deaf. These divisions operate dozens of programs that help Oklahomans lead more independent and productive lives.

- Vocational Rehabilitation Division: Employment services for people with any disability, except blindness or diabetes.

- Visual Services Division: Employment and independent living services for people who are blind, visually impaired, or have diabetes.
- Disability Determination Division: Determines medical eligibility for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
- Oklahoma School for the Deaf: Educational programs for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Oklahoma School for the Blind: Educational programs for children who are blind or visually impaired.

ELIMINATING OFFENSIVE TERMS ABOUT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Places often treat the ADA as a mere suggestion despite its enactment 25 years ago. Integrating people with disabilities requires not only strictly enforcing the ADA but also changing the perception of those with disabilities. This begins with changing our language. When President Obama signed Rosa's Law eliminating the words "retarded" and "retardation" from government language, Rosa's 11-year old brother said so articulately "What you call people is how you treat them."

Certain words such as "retarded" are slowly being eliminated from our language, but there are far too many other words that appear to be entrenched in it. People may be offended when inappropriate language is brought to their attention. The perception is that the person complaining is acting as the "politically correct" police rather than that the term used just insulted a class of

people. We changed how we refer to people based on race, religion, gender, and sexual orientation, but somehow it appears acceptable to use outdated language to refer to people with disabilities.

The "H-word" or "handicapped" should be the first to go. It allegedly derives from a beggar with a cap in hand or "hand-cap." Using the label reinforces the antiquated perception that providing access to people with disabilities is charity for beggars rather than equal access or a human/civil right. Yet the label "handicapped" appears on parking signs throughout the country rather than "accessible." The word should describe the nature of the location and not the person.

"Hearing impaired" is another description that is offensive to many. Barbara Kelley, acting executive director of the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) says, " 'Hearing impaired' has a negative connotation. 'Hard of hearing' or 'deaf' are the preferred terms but both need to be used together to include the full group as 'people who are deaf or hard of hearing'."

Likewise, "wheelchair bound" implies that the person is tied to a wheelchair rather than using a wheelchair, and "suffers from" indicates that the person is a victim rather than that he or she has a disability.

These negative terms not only pervade conversational language but are also reinforced by the media. The press regularly uses "the disabled" as a noun rather than "people with disabilities," which shifts the disability to a descriptive adjective.

Person-first terminology acknowledges that the disability is an attribute, like hair or eye color, and not the whole of the person. New York State passed legislation requiring government agencies to use person-first terminology, but most of the government agencies are unaware of the ruling.

Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication developed the NCDJ Disability Language Guide (<http://ncdj.org/style-guide>) to aid journalists with the appropriate phrases to use when reporting on people with disabilities. They recommend a more neutral description of the disability such as "He is hard of hearing." Yet journalists often fail to update their language. The AP Stylebook is sorely out of date.

Full integration will not happen with legislation alone. We need to overhaul our outdated language if the goal is to truly change negative perceptions about people with disabilities.
Taken in part by Janice S. Lintz

WANTED: PARENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The Disabled Parenting Project is seeking parents with disabilities. Particularly, they desire parents who want to share their stories through video interviews that will be posted, in part or whole, on the disabled parenting project's website so that others can learn from them.

To volunteer, you must:

- *Be a parent with a disability
- *Have at least one child under 18 years of age
- *Live in the United States
- *Speak English
- *Be 18 or older

As a thank you for being interviewed, participants will be provided a \$50 Amazon gift card.

Interested? Please contact robyn powell at rpowell@brandeis.edu

Privacy: Participation is completely voluntary and a summary of the interview will be shared in their publications but will not identify you in any way. With your permission, your first name only will be published on the disabled parenting project's website along with the recorded interview. *Taken from the Disabled Parenting Project*

TARGET OFFERING CARTS FOR SHOPPERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Some children with disabilities cannot sit in a regular shopping cart because of health issues and developmental delays. That means shopping is a family affair with one parent pushing the medical stroller while the other pushes the shopping cart.

To alleviate the difficulties that parents like this face, by March 15th, the majority of stores will have at least one Caroline's Cart, and many will have more, depending on guests' needs.

Caroline's Cart looks like a traditional shopping cart, but with a large open seat with a five-point harness that faces the shopper. It eliminates the task of simultaneously pushing a wheelchair or stroller and a cart. *Taken from the Star Tribune*

BOWLING FUN

We will be going bowling at Great Balls of Fire on Wednesday, March 2nd at 11:30 a.m. Normally this would cost \$6.00

but we are getting a great deal at \$1.50 per game which includes the cost of your shoes. Thanks Great Balls of Fire!



MOVIE NIGHT AT OIL

We will meet on Tuesday, March 22nd at 5:30 p.m. at OIL. Bring your favorite movie and we will vote on which one to watch.



ST. PATRICK'S DAY BREAKFAST

On Thursday, March 17th, we will be having a get together for St. Patrick's Day. We will have breakfast at Boomerang Diner, 201 S. Main, at 8:30 a.m. Call for free, local transportation.



Transportation

O.I.L. provides lift-equipped transportation in McAlester and the surrounding area.

Monday – Thursday, 8:00 – 4:30
Friday 8:00 – Noon

A twenty-four hour minimum notice is required. The cost is \$2 per pick up in McAlester and \$3 for Krebs and Frink Chambers. Outside this area, fees are based on actual costs of gasoline needed to provide the service.

**Prices are subject to change.*

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The contents of this newsletter were developed under a grant from the Department of Education. However, these contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

<i>*Events are held at OIL unless otherwise noted</i>						
EVENTS						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2 Bowling Great Balls of Fire 11:30 am	3 Shopping 7:00-10:45am	4	5
	6	7 Brain Injury Gp. 1 pm	8 OIL Social Pizza Inn 5:30 pm 	9	10	11
13	14 Men's Gp. Taco Bell 4 pm	15 Women's Gp. Hunan's 11 am	16 Shopping 7:00-10:45am	17 St. Patrick's Day Breakfast Boomarang 8:30 am	18	19
20	21 Brain Injury Gp. 1 pm	22 Movie Night 5:30 pm	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		
<p>*Low Impact Exercise Class for Sr.'s meets Mon., Wed., & Fri., 10:00 a.m., Stipe Center *Alzheimer's Support Group, 3rd Wed., 12:30 p.m., Main & OK Church of Christ *Diabetes Support Group, 1st Tue., 6:00 p.m., McAlester Regional Health Center Wellness Conf. Room, call Kathy at 421-6812 *For information on Men's & Women's Grief Support Groups – call Hospice of McAlester at 423-3911 . For information on a 7 week Dealing with Grief Course, call Heartland Hospice, 3rd Tues., 6:00 p.m., Pittsburg County Health Dept., 423-1267</p>						

