

BY PROGRESSIVE CENTER *Forward*

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QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER | SERVING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 1996.

GET A JOB... NOT SO FAST

Why the WorkAbility Bill Passage Will Matter

STEVE GRUZLOVIC

Throughout the course of a person's life people may ask, what do you do for a living? It is a common question that society uses as a measuring stick to make a judgment of success. For people with disabilities, this question may not be asked because of the common misconception that they cannot work. True, it is often difficult to obtain employment because of barriers, but people with disabilities can and do work.

Yet even when people with disabilities find employment, they often have an extra barrier of maintaining Medicaid eligibility. This is vital so that they can continue to receive support services that assist them with everyday life.

Recently legislation was introduced to aid in the breaking down of this barrier. Bills A5262 in the Assembly and its companion S3455 in the Senate were created to eliminate certain regulations that prevent people with disabilities from qualifying for this employment waiver.

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



“Reach out to committee members and urge them to pass this bill....”

- The passage of this legislation will allow individuals with disabilities greater opportunities to succeed and contribute to the competitive workforce as well as the ability to lessen their need for assistance programs such as SNAP, LIHEAP, and housing assistance vouchers

Some of the regulations that this bill aims to change are:

- The addition of a grace period of continued eligibility following a job loss
- Removal of the earned and unearned income cap for workability eligibility
- The exclusion of spousal earnings and resources from a workability applicant’s financial eligibility determination
- The removal of the upper age limit for the WorkAbility and Personal Assistance Service Program (PASP)

During the pandemic, many have also realized that remote work is now a possibility more now than ever. This also gives individuals with disabilities greater options when it comes to obtaining employment. Also, it will create additional tax revenue for the state, which will help with our current budget deficit.

At present, A5262 is being reviewed in the Human Services Committee, and S3455 is being reviewed in the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee. We encourage everyone to reach out to members of those committees to get the members to vote it to move forward and pass the bill.

This is an important measure not only for the present time but for future generations to come.

If you have questions, you can contact the PCIL office or Steve Gruzlovic at sgruzlovic@gmail.com.



Older Americans Month: Strength in Communities



▪ *By Erica Saganowski*

In tough times, communities find strength in people—and people find strength in their communities. In the past year, we’ve seen this time and again in Mercer County as friends, neighbors, and businesses have found new ways to support each other.

In our community, older adults are a key source of this strength. Through their experiences, successes, and difficulties, they have built resilience that helps them face new challenges. When communities tap into this, they become stronger too.

Each May, the Administration for Community Living leads the celebration of Older Americans Month (OAM). This year’s theme is “Communities of Strength,” recognizing the important role older adults play in fostering the connection and

engagement that build strong, resilient communities.

Strength is built and shown not only by bold acts, but also small ones of day-to-day life, such as a conversation shared with a friend, working in the garden, trying a new recipe, or taking time for a cup of tea on a busy day. And when we share these activities with others—even virtually or by telling about the experience later—we help them build resilience too.

This year, the Mercer County Office on Aging/Aging & Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) will celebrate Older Americans Month by encouraging community members to share their experiences. Together, we can find strength—and create a stronger future.

OLDER AMERICANS MONTH: Strength in Communities

Here are some ways to share and connect:

- **Look for joy in the everyday:** Celebrate small moments and ordinary pleasures by taking time to recognize them. Start a gratitude journal and share it with others via social media, or call a friend or family member to share a happy moment or to say thank you.
- **Reach out to neighbors:** Even if you can't get together in person, you can still connect with your neighbors. Leave a small gift on their doorstep, offer to help with outdoor chores, or deliver a home cooked meal.
- **Build new skills:** Learning something new allows us to practice overcoming challenges. Take an art course online or try a physically distanced outdoor movement class to enjoy learning with others in your community. Have a skill to share? Find an opportunity to teach someone, even casually.
- **Share your story:** There's a reason storytelling is a time-honored activity. Hearing how others experience the world helps us grow. Interviewing family, friends, and neighbors can open new conversations and strengthen our connections.

When people of different ages, backgrounds, abilities, and talents share experiences—through action, story, or service—we

help build strong communities. And that's something to celebrate! Please join Mercer County in strengthening our community – take advantage of the programming at your local library such as “Monday Meditation,” “Conversation Café,” or one of the many virtual programs offered by the Mercer County Library System (for information on their programs, visit www.mcl.org). Explore the parks and outdoor spaces in your community. Invite friends or neighbors for physically distant walks as the weather continues to warm. Organize a contactless game such as charades with family, friends, and/or neighbors. Stay connected to others and to your community, lend an ear and your strength to others, and borrow from their strengths as well. Regardless of age, ability, or background, we are all stronger together.

If you need resources or ideas on how to share and connect, you can contact the Mercer County Office on Aging/ADRC at 609-989-6661 or ADRC@mercercounty.org, visit the Administration for Community Living's website at www.acl.gov/oam, or join the conversation on Facebook or Twitter by using the hashtag #OlderAmericansMonth.





The Mercer County ADRC Needs to Hear From You!

• REED THOMAS

In 1973, the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) were added to the Older Americans Act (OAA) to be the “on-the-ground” organizations charged with helping older adults live with independence and dignity in their homes and communities. It is this addition to that landmark piece of legislation that not only financially supports the Mercer County Office on Aging and the Aging & Disability Resource Connection (ADRC), but also makes us responsible for developing comprehensive, coordinated systems of community-based services for older adults. The legislation also established us as the primary advocate, planning, and coordinating agency for Mercer County’s older adult population, ensuring seniors, adults with disabilities, and their caregivers have easy access to information and long-term services and supports. The Office on Aging

accomplishes this largely through the Area Plan on Aging, a three-year plan that includes an analysis of the needs and existing services within the county and a comprehensive plan for the delivery of services to older adults, individuals with disabilities, and their caregivers. It is time to update Mercer County’s plan, and we need to hear from you to ensure its effectiveness!

Hearing directly from those for whom the programs and services are intended is crucial to the success of this planning process. No one knows the needs of the older members of our community, or those who are living with disabilities, better than they do, so this provides an opportunity to have their voices be heard and contribute to the efforts that directly affect the programs and services available. The way to contribute is to complete the

The Mercer County ADRC Needs to Hear From You

ADRC's "20 Questions" survey. This information gathering tool asks questions such as "Has anyone helped answer your questions about local services, benefits, or your general health and well-being?" and "Would you use free local medical services like health screenings and assessments or attend educational workshops or exercise programs?" In addition to the 20 "yes or no" questions, there is opportunity for explanations and additional comments about anything not included on the questionnaire.

If you or a loved one require assistance from local programs, be they for older adults, people living with disabilities, caregivers, or any or all of the above, you have the right to provide input on how they are designed and implemented. Please take this opportunity to lend your vital insight into our planning process.

The "20 Questions" survey can be completed and submitted online by visiting www.mercercounty.org/departments/human-services/aging-disability-resource-connection/office-on-aging/20-questions. Or simply go to www.mercercounty.org and enter "20 questions" into the search feature; the survey will be the first result.

If you are unable to access the survey online, please call 609-989-6661, and someone will assist you in acquiring a copy by mail. To have your responses considered for the next Area Plan, please complete your 20 Questions survey by July 1, 2021.



WHY I WAS INSPIRED TO LEARN ASL

■ Richard Ni

There were many fun virtual activities that I have attended during the pandemic thanks to the people at PCIL. My favorite activity would be the American Sign Language (ASL) activities for several reasons.

The first reason I was inspired to learn ASL is because of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Right before President George H. W. Bush signed the ADA into law, Iowa's US Senator Tom Harkin, the author and sponsor of the final version of the ADA, gave part of his introduction speech in ASL so his brother who is deaf could understand the advantages of ADA. This partially inspired me to learn ASL because it is important to understand the needs and wants of people with disabilities so you can figure out how to help them improve their lives.

The second reason is the benefits of learning another language. Recent studies indicate that learning a new language makes you smarter and improves your mental health. I am lucky to have learned Chinese as my second language at both Mercer County Community College and Rider University but unfortunately, I was not able to learn a third language in school. I was too busy, and I regret that because I missed out on a lot of opportunities. I realized that if I could attend the ASL activities with PCIL, I could make up for the opportunities I missed out on. ASL was helpful for me to learn

because it improved my patience and visual memory.

The final reason that I was inspired to learn ASL is because of some leaders who use ASL translators to help their constituents understand current events and policies better. President Joe Biden is the first president to have an ASL interpreter for his administration's press briefings, and several U.S. governors also use them for press briefings. This is a major step for improving disability rights and inclusiveness.

There are many benefits of learning ASL. One is that you can communicate with those who are deaf and hard of hearing especially when masks prevent them from reading other people's lips. Another advantage about ASL is that it teaches you patience and helps improve your visual memory since you need to know what each hand gesture means and translate it. And finally, ASL helps create a more inclusive environment because ASL translators help people understand important information which will help them understand how their lives are being affected by current events and policies. I would like to thank Peyton from the Career & Community Studies Program program at The College of NJ who instructed us on ASL and for Reed Thomas at PCIL for all the wonderful Friday Zoom events!

RECREATION CORNER

▪ REED THOMAS

Spring is finally here, and the warm weather, longer days, and sense of hope and renewal are a more welcome sight this year than perhaps they have ever been. Despite a difficult winter, the Community Connections Recreation Program has been able to provide welcome distractions from the issues we have all been dealing with for over a year now.

Continuing the weekly Zoom meeting format, the last several months have seen the return of some great activities, as well as the introduction of exciting new ones! We were pleased to welcome back the Mercer County Parks Commission for a fascinating look at the owls that migrate to our community each winter, Jim from Key of Awesome Music came back to look at the power of music to overcome and inspire, and artist Ken Wilkie taught us art for Valentine's Day. These are just a few of the awesome organizations that have become regulars in the program over the last year.

New additions included some interesting topics, spurred some great conversations, introduced us to new organizations, and taught us new skills! The new Jersey State Museum provided an awesome presentation on the prehistoric life in our state. Paleontologist Dr. Ehret shared his passion for exploring the past and taught us not just what sort of creatures once inhabited the places we call home, but also how and where fossil evidence can be found today.

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We also connected with the Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities for a peer discussion on personal rights, not just what they are, but how to protect them, support one another, and understand our personal responsibilities. Finally, we had a new presenter who was completing her senior internship at The College of New Jersey's Career and Community Studies program give us a series of lessons on basic American Sign Language.

As the warming continues, PCIL is monitoring the happenings in the community, as well as the feelings of those who participate in the Community Connections Recreation Program. It is the ultimate goal to return to in-person, in-community activities, but only when doing so is safe, and people feel secure in meeting that way again. As we consider whether much-loved events like the PCIL picnic and boat rides, or the annual softball game are possible in 2021, we are committed to continuing to bring fun and engaging virtual activities. On the horizon are a variety of presentations including art projects, crafting, music, circus skills, nature, and science!

Do you have suggestions on what you would like to see in the program? Need more information, or want to sign up for the mailing list? If so, please feel free to contact us anytime: (609) 581-4500 / reservations@pcil.org.



VACCINE Information

ACCESS CHECKLIST FOR VACCINE SITES IN NJ

Ensuring Vaccine Sites are Accessible to New Jerseyans with Disabilities

Edison, New Jersey – The Alliance Center for Independence (ACI) and the NJ Statewide Independent Living Council (NJSILC) recently released the “Access Checklist for Vaccination in New Jersey” to give COVID-19 vaccine sites a tool to ensure sites are physically accessible for people with all types of disabilities.

“The checklist is very comprehensive and will make a big impact on the smaller vaccination sites,” said Carole Tonks, Executive Director of ACI.

“Since the roll-out of the vaccines, it has been obvious that the accessibility needs of people with disabilities at vaccine distribution

sites were not being anticipated—especially at smaller sites,” said Norman A. Smith, Chair of the NJSILC.

The checklist was developed in collaboration with the Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies (The Partnership) to ensure that vaccination sites in New Jersey are accessible to people with disabilities.

With input from ACI and the NJSILC, The Partnership created an accessibility checklist as well as an hour-long webinar to assist vaccination sites in creating an inclusive environment for disabled New Jerseyans.

“The Disability Access Checklist is a critical

▪ *Continued on next page.*

vehicle by which vaccination sites can assess if they are in compliance with the law and are able to provide equal vaccine access to people with disabilities,” said Germán Parodi and Shaylin Sluzalis, Co-Directors of the Partnership.

ACI and the NJSILC are planning for the checklist to be distributed to the NJ Department of Health, Office of Emergency Management, and vaccination sites throughout the state as well as offering one-hour training sessions.

The Disability Access Checklist can also serve as a tool by which registration websites can assess themselves as well as collect information about the types of accommodations people with disabilities will need, Luke Koppisch, ACI Deputy Director added “This survey will help ensure that vaccination sites are welcoming and inclusive environments for those with disabilities and seniors.”

The Partnership is the only U.S. disability-led 501(c)(3) nonprofit with a focused mission on equal access, disability rights and full inclusion of people with disabilities, older adults, and people with access and functional needs before, during, and after disasters and emergencies.

The Alliance Center for Independence is a non-profit community-based organization in Edison, NJ. Founded in 1986, ACI recognizes disability as a natural and beautiful part of human diversity. ACI supports and

promotes independent living for people with disabilities in Middlesex, Union, and Somerset counties in New Jersey.

The New Jersey Statewide Independent Living Council (NJSILC) is a federally mandated council whose members are appointed by the governor. The NJSILC works with Centers for Independent Living such as ACI to advocate on issues impacting people with all types of disabilities. The NJSILC’s membership is made up of people with disabilities and representation from disability agencies.

For more information about the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) please contact via e-mail through nsmith@njsilc.org or visit their website at www.njsilc.org.

For more information about the Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies contact: (215) 971-0660 or (570) 777-0268 or visit their website at www.disasterstrategies.org.

If interested in the Access Checklist for Vaccination in New Jersey please contact Carole Tonks at ctonks@adacil.org. For COVID-19 related information, or if you require assistance in transportation to/ from your scheduled vaccination site, please contact Progressive Center for Independent Living at 609-581-4500.

- Co-authored by;
Carole Tonks, Executive Director, ACI
& Norman Smith, Chair, NJSILC



COVID-19 Vaccine Appointments for Seniors in NJ

Individuals in New Jersey ages 65 or older can call a special senior hotline set up by the State of New Jersey at 856-249-7007 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. for COVID-19 vaccination scheduling support. Dedicated appointment slots are reserved for those age 65 or older. Appointment availability and scheduling varies by location. Please note this is a phone number specifically for those who are 65 or older.

In addition, the State is conducting phone outreach to residents ages 65 or older and scheduling COVID-19 vaccine appointments. Seniors may receive calls or messages from the NJ COVID Vaccine Call Center to schedule dedicated appointments at Walmart locations, where 60 sites were being activated as of March 2021. Seniors can access the phone numbers to these sites at <https://www.walmart.com/store/directory/nj> and call stores directly. These

sites may have dedicated appointments for those 65 or older.

Seniors 65 or older also may be able to access dedicated appointments at certain hospitals as well as the following retail pharmacies across the state:

- CVS: 800-746-7287 <https://www.cvs.com/immunizations/covid-19-vaccine>
- Rite Aid: 800-748-3243 <http://riteaid.com/newjersey>
- Walgreens: 800-9254-73367 (1-800-WALGREENS) <https://www.walgreens.com/findcare/vaccination/covid-19/>. This is for Walgreens account holders only, but the website allows you to create an account.

The State also is increasing vaccine allocations to mega-sites specifically for those 65 or older.

GOODWILL HOME MEDICAL

Goodwill Home Medical Equipment is a division of Goodwill Industries of Southern New Jersey and Philadelphia. We sell gently-used medical equipment and unopened medical supplies that are accepted at all Goodwill retail stores and independent donation centers throughout Central and Southern New Jersey and Philadelphia.

Goodwill Home Medical Equipment's vast inventory includes hospital beds, scooters, electric and manual wheelchairs, patient lifts, bath and shower items, two-wheeled and four-wheeled walkers, pediatric equipment, crutches, canes and medical supplies that include personal protective equipment (PPE) and adult incontinence products. A knowledgeable and trained staff of durable medical equipment experts is always on site to assist customers with choosing appropriate equipment and sizes

With more than \$49 billion in sales, the U.S. durable home medical equipment industry is forecasted to continue to grow. This is due to the increase in prevalence of chronic disease, rapid technological advancements, and a rising aging population. Goodwill Home Medical is ready to meet consumer demand at the most competitive pricing possible.

At Goodwill, we realize that not every piece of home medical equipment will be covered by insurance. With a vast inventory and competitive pricing, we are thrilled to be able to help improve the quality of life for individuals living in our local communities.

As a service, we provide a drop-off service for Mercer County residents who are unable to come to our warehouse location in Camden County. The item(s) purchased must total more \$50 and be pre-paid over the phone utilizing a credit card. The items are then dropped off free of charge for the customer to pick up at our Lawrenceville donation center located at 2901 Brunswick Pike.

A non-profit, community-based organization, Goodwill's mission is to provide job training and career services that help individuals with disabilities and disadvantages get to work. For example, at Goodwill's Helms Academy, adults 18 or older can earn their high school diploma tuition free while simultaneously earning college credits. Programs like this are funded by the mass collection and resale of donated items.

Goodwill Home Medical is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. We also provide a live chat option on our website during business hours for your convenience.

For more information, please contact Goodwill Home Medical at 609-396-1513. You also can visit our website at www.goodwillhomemedical.org and our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/goodwillhomemedical. Goodwill Home Medical is located at located at 300 Benigno Blvd. in Bellmawr, N.J.

- Lynn Tighe, Vice President,
Goodwill Home Medical

Welcome

MARLENE BROCKINGTON



Hi, I am Marlene Brockington, a liberal arts student at Mercer County Community College who lives with Cerebral Palsy. When I graduate, I would like to continue on my path of helping improving the lives of others, and that's also why I wanted to join the board. Being a part of the Progressive Center is an excellent way for me to share my ideas for improving people's lives with disabilities on my journey of helping people obtain a better quality of life. I graduated from Partners in Policymaking in 2020 to help with my advocating skills. This led me to start assisting The Boggs Center with projects that I enjoy. I also serve as a Stakeholder in LifeCourse New Jersey which uses a versatile set of tools including a trajectory line, integrated support star, support buckets, and other tools to assist a person with planning and achieving what they want for their lives. LifeCourse believes all people have the right to live, love, work, play, and pursue their life aspirations. Another stop on my journey was creating the Respite Reader for Mercer Arc's respite program, for which I received the Rising Star Award for writing. In my spare time, I enjoy music and coming up with recipes. I hope my journey with the Progressive Center for Independent Living is as fulfilling as my journey before it.

TO PCIL'S BOARD!

AXEL MCNAMARA

My name is Axel McNamara and I have just become a PCIL Board member in January, 2021 after attending some virtual board meetings on Zoom. I am a Graduate Student at The College of New Jersey (TCNJ), and I'm currently in the Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) certification program. I have volunteered at the PCIL office for a few years doing peer support. I wanted to join the PCIL board because I thought it would be a good way for me to continue to help PCIL. I enjoyed volunteering at PCIL office and made some friends there. I'm looking forward to working on the PCIL board, and hope to help PCIL continue to reach out to organizations that can use their help such as the Miracle League of Mercer County (MLMC) (which is a baseball league for children with disabilities) and local schools and colleges.

I have coached at the Miracle League (MLMC) for about ten years, and I used to play there before that. I enjoy coaching there because it combines my interests in baseball with helping people with disabilities. I would love to see PCIL become more involved with the MLMC. I have attended and enjoyed the annual PCIL softball games that are held at the beautiful MLMC field at the YMCA Sawmill in Hamilton. I also enjoy watching other sports on TV such as football, soccer, hockey, and basketball, and I like to read books and magazines. I also like to watch movies and TV as well as listen to music. I hope to become a college professor someday, and be able to help more disabled people go to colleges (especially local colleges like TCNJ).



Transition Program

SELF ADVOCACY EXPLORATION

Within our Pre-Employment Transition Services programs (Pre-ETS) PCIL staff have been working with youth from various schools on the importance of advocacy skills. Recently, students took part in creating a word-cloud with definitions that for them, reflected the meaning of the word Self-Advocacy. To the right are the outcomes of that activity by students from Trenton Central, Hightstown, Princeton and Hamilton High Schools.





Advocacy

Acrostic Poem on Advocacy created by sophomore students attending the Career and Community Studies Program @ The College of New Jersey

Our Board President Steve Gruzlovic and Director, Scott Elliott have had the pleasure of partaking as guest-lecturers for the Career and Community Studies program at The College of New Jersey, within their College to Career course. In this course, both Steve and Scott are offering personal and professional experiences on the concept of self-advocacy after college. As part of their teachings, they assisted the students in the development of an acrostic poem focusing on the advocacy concept. This poem is featured below.

Asking for help
Determine points of interest
using a good tone of Voice
Offering your opinion
Caring for one another & being helpful
being Adventurous
Communication
speaking up for Yourself

Calling All High School Graduates!

■ Kim Such

Graduating at age 21? Need Support Coordination?

Progressive Center for Independent Living (PCIL) offers Support Coordination under the Division of Developmental Disabilities for individuals in Mercer, Hunterdon and Somerset Counties. We pride ourselves for being available to those we serve, assisting our consumers to be educated self-advocates, ensuring quality system navigation, and connecting our consumers to any and all available services.

*We take a team approach to support services

*Part of our independent living philosophy to connect those we serve to community resources

*Since 1996, PCIL has been developing partnerships with local service providers

*PCIL offers many other services such as recreation, pre-employment, and peer support, among others

To start the conversation, call Kim Such, SC Supervisor, at 609-581-4500 ext. 118



FROM THE OF THE *Desk* MERCER COUNTY ADRC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

■ Erica Saganowski

As we embark upon the spring season, a time of new life and new beginnings, I find it a fitting task to introduce myself as the new Executive Director of the Mercer County Office on Aging/Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC). Although I am new to this title, I am proud to say that my career at the County of Mercer began here in the Office on Aging. As I transitioned from my former role as the Associate Executive Director of the Office on Aging in 2017 to assume the directorship of the Department of Human Services Contract Unit, my heart remained committed to ensuring that program funding remained available for our vast provider network.

I am fortunate to have had many years of working closely with the community of aging network providers and again look forward to helping support the needs of older adults, those living with disabilities, and their caregivers in the greater Mercer County area.

As you have read through this issue, you have

learned about the Older Americans Act, its guiding principles, and the funding we receive in the Office on Aging that helps to support vital programs and services offered throughout Mercer County. You have also learned about how you can help impact the allocation of those dollars by lending your voice through a brief needs assessment, and the Office on Aging eagerly anticipates hearing from you!

The Office on Aging/ADRC remains committed to its goals of providing information, referral, and financial screening for entitlement programs and assisting consumers of all ages and abilities in navigating access to the systems and programs that may benefit them socially, emotionally, and financially. As always, you can call the Mercer County ADRC to find out what programs and services are available to you, a friend or neighbor, and/or a loved one.

I look forward to contributing to this newsletter and furthering new and existing partnerships in the community.

THIS IS WHAT **COMMUNITY** LOOKS LIKE



HAMILTON AREA YMCA OFFERS PROGRAMS FOR ALL

At the Hamilton Area YMCA, we offer various programs for those with diverse abilities. Our programs provide quality programming for individuals with intellectual, physical, and/or emotional disabilities with a focus on personal goals and individual achievement. They also promote peer and family interaction in a fun, healthy, and safe environment. Participants ages 5 or older can enjoy instructional, social, and sports programs designed to meet their individual needs, interests, and capabilities.

One of our most popular programs is our Zumba Class that runs every Tuesday night at 7:15. These high-energy classes are packed with specially choreographed, friendly routines and a variety of music, including hits from the 80s and 90s and current favorites. The positive effects of these classes include increasing focus and self-confidence, boosting metabolism, and enhancing coordination. We also offer our Diverse Abilities Swim Program, which has three levels: Teen, Swim Strokes, and Swim Basics.

At our Sawmill Summer Camp, we encourage

and support the participation of individuals with disabilities in all programs and services. During the camp day, opportunities are created for children to enhance their self-esteem, build friendship skills, develop greater independence, and give them a sense of their creative potential in a safe, fun, and nurturing environment.

The Hamilton Area YMCA is committed to an inclusive environment. For more information regarding our inclusive program offerings and accommodations, please contact Tyler Koerber at 609-581-9622 ext. 121 or tkoerber@hamiltonymca.org.

For information about all of the Hamilton Area YMCA's programs, please visit us online at www.hamiltonymca.org.

Diverse abilities programming is funded in part by the Mercer County Aging & Disability Resource Connection (ADRC).

- Tyler Koerber, Director of Youth Development and Health Initiatives, Hamilton Area YMCA

Grateful

■ REED THOMAS

Hello, many of you reading this may know me or have interacted with me over the past four years as an Independent Living Specialist for Progressive Center for Independent Living (PCIL). I am writing today to introduce myself as one of the newest members of the team at the Mercer County Office on Aging/Aging & Disability Resource Connection (ADRC). As I considered how I would write about this transition, it was the word “grateful” that came to mind more strongly than any other. I am truly grateful for the opportunities that my time at PCIL offered. I was afforded the opportunity to learn about the people in our community and to meet so many amazing people at PCIL and the community at large. There have been opportunities to challenge myself and take on expanding programs and better meet the needs of people in our community living with disabilities. And perhaps most importantly, I have been given opportunities to be part of a team of passionate professionals who are dedicated to the organization’s mission and core values, as well as to partner with other community organizations that share that passion and dedication.

It was not an easy decision to move on from my time with PCIL, but I am grateful for the opportunity that awaits me as part of Mercer County’s team. As a member of the Mercer County ADRC, I’ll be coordinating the Personal Assistance Service Program (PASP) for the County’s participants, providing information and assistance to the community on disability issues, working with partners who are providing services to members of the community who are living with disabilities, and assisting with other projects aimed at helping older adults and those who have disabilities live with independence and dignity. It has been my time with PCIL in large part that has prepared me to take on the challenges that lie ahead, but I am committed to not only applying the lessons learned there in this new role, but also continuing to learn and grow both professionally and personally. For those of you who know me, you may know that human services was not the field I set out to work in many years ago; however, I’ve found it is the one that feels right. I am grateful for the opportunity to go to work feeling like I am on the right path, and I look forward to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
Personal Assistance Services Program (PASP)
Grants for the services you need!



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

CONTACT US NOW!



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

ESTADO DE NJ DEPARTAMENTO
DE SERVICIOS HUMANOS
Programa De Servicios De Asistencia Personal
Subvenciones para los servicios que necesita!



PASP ofrece a los consumidores opciones, flexibilidad, control y la oportunidad de administrar sus servicios de cuidado personal a través del recibo de una asignación en efectivo.

CONTACTANOS AHORA!



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

**2021
MUST
HAVE**



STOP DROPPING YOUR MASK

**MAKE MASK
WEARING
EASIER.**

**Perfect for caregivers,
students, essential workers,
educators, and persons living
with disabilities**

**Each set comes with two breakaway
mask lanyards for safety and an
easy to clean mask storage bag.**

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**THIS PUBLICATION IS A COLLABORATION BETWEEN
TWO AGENCIES TO BRING YOU MORE INFORMATION!**

Articles and photos in this issue have been curated by both the Progressive Center for Independent Living and Mercer County Aging and Disability Resource Connection.



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MERCER COUNTY AGING & DISABILITY RESOURCE CONNECTION

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Syed Azhir

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Denise Knighton

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***PASP Coordinator/Analyst
Trainee***

Reed Thomas

NUTRITION STAFF

Nutrition Program

Director

Jenifer Williams

One place, many services.

CAMPERSHIP PROGRAM 2021

PCIL once again is disseminating funds for the Mercer County Summer Campership Program.

Depending on household income, \$85 to \$400 will be awarded and available to be used towards any type of enrichment activity for the applicant which take place between 5/31 to 9/6.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Youth ages 4-25;
Living in Mercer County;
Living with a disability

Act fast to take advantage of our Campership Funds. Call Lisa Duran at 609-581-4500 for questions. Please visit our website for applications www.pcil.org/campership.

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Progressive Center for Independent Living
3635 Quakerbridge Road
Suite 40
Hamilton, NJ 08619

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THE BLIND AND
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