Volume 2 Issue 11 | November 2025

NEW YORK STATE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL, INC.

NYSILC

empowering new yorkers with disabilities

NYSILC News, November 2025

Profiles in Generosity

Meet our NYS Disability Rights Hall of Fame sponsors and other NYSILC donors and supporters. Their generosity enables our success!

This month, we're featuring the Disability EmpowHer Network:

DISABILITY EMPOWHER NETWORK

Disability EmpowHer Network empowers girls and women with disabilities through mentoring and transformational learning experiences. We recognize that disabled girls have significantly lower high school graduation rates and higher unemployment rates than their nondisabled peers. We also know that girls and women with disabilities are less likely to have successful disabled women mentors. Through multi-stage skill-building, empowerment, and mentoring programs, we address these issues while also empowering disabled young women to live to their fullest potential and have the confidence to lead.

Visit the Disability EmpowHer Network website to find out more!

Let Us Share Your News!

We'd love to help spread the news about your NYS Independent Living Center (ILC) or disability-related organization.

If you have information about a service, event, or news you would

like us to share, please email Amy Wink at awink@nysilc.org.

Thank you!

NAMI NYS 2025 Education Conference

Join the National Association on Mental Illness (NAMI) **November 14–16, 2025**, in Albany, NY for the NAMI NYS Annual Education Conference—a flagship event bringing together mental health advocates, families, peers, and professionals from across the state.

For more than 40 years, this conference has provided cutting-edge education, critical resources, and a platform to explore advancements and address challenges in mental health. This year's theme, **"Empowering Ourselves through Connection, Compassion, Coping, Community and Care,"** reflects our commitment to collective action, innovation, and building communities that support recovery.

Whether you're an individual with lived experience, a family member, provider, or policymaker, this event offers something for everyone involved in the mental health journey. Click here for more information:

https://naminys.org/get-involved/annual-events/annual-education-conference/

Spina Bifida Association of New York State Presents the 13th Annual Dare to Dream Gala

November 22, 2025, 5-9pm
Hilton Garden Inn, 235 Hoosick St. Troy, NY

EVENT FEATURES

- Live and silent auction baskets with exciting get-aways, restaurant gift cards, wine and spirits, home goods, baskets for the family and more!
- Entertainment including live music by Jeff Brisbin
- Ceremonies recognizing our You Make a Difference Awardee Dr. Nienke Dosa, and our to be announced Eric Crow Trailblazer Award and Volunteer of the Year recipients.
- Enjoy delicious appetizers, dinner and dessert.

Dare to Dream BIG with us this year by attending, donating, or sponsoring! For more information or to get your tickets, **visit us here.**

Join the Empower Hour

The **Empower Hour** is an inspirational talk show and podcast with special guests and experts in the field of life change. It's hosted by Don Wyckoff, co-host of the 2025 NYS Disability Rights Hall of Fame event, motivational speaker, and radio host on WIOX 91.3 FM.

Recent Episodes feature NYSILC's Executive Director, Laura Cardwell (October 8), and Doug Hovey, 2025 Hall of Fame Inductee (October 29)!

To listen to these and other Empower Hours, **visit this site on Spotify.**

The United Voice of Independent Living in Rural America

Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL) Fundraiser

Chance to Win an All-Inclusive Trip for Two!

Thanks to the generosity of APRIL Board VP, Scott Birkenbuel, you have the chance to win an all-inclusive trip for two to Camp Bullwheel in Montana—an unforgettable adaptive fly-fishing experience in one of the most beautiful parts of the country.

Tickets are $10 each (or 20 tickets for $100)
On Sale: September 5, 2025 – January 30, 2026
Winner Drawn: February 2026 with the trip occurring in June or July 2026

For more information or to purchase tickets, **visit APRIL here.**

NYSILC Council Members

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Executive Director:
Laura Cardwell
laurac@nysilc.org

Program Coordinator:
Amy Wink
awink@nysilc.org

DISABILITY EMPOWHER NETWORK

Leadership Retreat for Disabled Women

When: **Friday, March 20-Sunday, March 22, 2026**
Where: Rochester, NY - Strathallan
Cost: $375 Early Bird registration Due Nov. 15, 2025 ($475 Registration after Nov. 15, 2025)

*Registration fee includes most meals, two night hotel stay, welcome bag, and workshop materials.

The Leadership Retreat is an annual event empowering disabled women and feminine-aligned nonbinary leaders to develop their leadership skills , build connections, work towards professional

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and personal goals, and drive change in their communities.

This immersive retreat offers participants the opportunity to engage in dynamic workshops, interactive activities, and group challenges led by accomplished disabled women. Topics range from leadership development and goal setting to self advocacy and public speaking.

The retreat fosters a supportive and inclusive environment where participants can share experiences, exchange ideas, and forge lasting relationships. Attendees leave with renewed confidence, actionable plans for the future, and a strengthened sense of community, ready to lead with impact and inspire others.

Here's the link to learn more or register.

Gratitude in Action: Supporting Young Adults with Autism and/or Developmental Disabilities

If you know someone who:

- Is 16–27 years old
- Lives in New York State
- Has Autism and/or an intellectual or developmental disability
- Has not already participated in STEPS2

They may be eligible to participate in our free online health education program and can earn $100 in gift cards by completing interviews alongside the classes.

How It Works:
STEPS2 is a free online program for New York residents aged 16–27 with I/DD. Participants attend one-hour Zoom sessions for six weeks, covering either sexual health and socialization OR nutrition, exercise, and stress management. Each participant is randomly assigned to one of the two tracks and completes four online surveys, earning up to $100 in gift cards ($25 per survey).

Visit our website to register or learn more.

Attention Young Adults with Disabilities - We have $1,000 Scholarships available!

Our Pat Figueroa Scholarship program provides funding for young adults with disabilities to attend and participate in independent living related

conferences and/or national disability and leadership trainings.

Are you a Center for Independent Living (CIL)? Please share this information with your young adult consumers!

Learn more or apply here!

Upcoming NYSILC events/activities:

Next NYSILC Full Council Meeting - **Friday, November 21, 2025** from 9:30am to 2pm at the Wolf Road Marriott in Albany and remotely via Zoom.
Please visit https://nysilc.org/council/meetings-calendar for details.

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