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NEW YORK STATE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL, INC.

NYSILC

empowering new yorkers with disabilities

NYSILC News, December 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 **Vancro Integrated Interpreting Services**:

Vancro Integrated Interpreting Services is a unique service-disabled veteran-owned small business led by American Sign Language interpreters and Deaf individuals.

Vancro takes pride in providing exceptional ASL interpreting services. Visit their website for more information!

Disability Rights Movement Forum: Past, Present, and Future

Save the date: January 10, 2026

Please join the Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled (BCID) for a presentation and discussion on the history of the Disability Rights Movement and the threats to Social Security, food stamps, and Medicaid today.

Hear from Bernard Carabello, survivor of the Willowbrook Institution for People with Disabilities on Staten Island, and Anthony Phillips, co-founding member of NAN Disabilities Committee.

Get information from benefits counselors on Social Security, food stamps, and Medicaid; find out what is going on with these systems and what we can do to protect them.

For more information, please email Evan Yankey at eyankey@bcid.org.

Join Team SBANYS in the 2026 NYC Half Marathon!

Are you interested in running the 2026 United Airlines New York City Half Marathon?

The Spina Bifida Association of New York State (SBANYS) has been granted five bibs for this exciting race on Sunday, March 15, 2026 at 7am.

Join Team SBANYS and help support the programs and advocacy for individuals and families affected by Spina Bifida across New York State. You can apply in one of two ways:

Apply directly by completing and submitting the attached application below to julia.duff@sbanys.org.

Application Form
You can apply via the link below and Julia will send you the full application to complete.

Register Here!
First come first serve – apply soon to secure your bib and race for a cause that matters!

Durable Medical Equipment (DME) Loan Closets

and Access to Assistive Technology

DME is Durable Medical Equipment, medical devices used in the home for mobility and activities of daily living. Equipment is borrowed to enable people to remain at home, or upon transition from a nursing or medical care facilities. Contact your local Independent Living Center to see what they have available - DMEs may include things like:

• Hospital beds

- Temporary ramps
- Commodes
- Elevated toilet sears
- Incontinence supplies
- Shower chairs/benches
- Manual wheelchairs
- Manual transport chairs
- Knee scooters
- Rollator
- Walkers

Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities (TRAID) Program TRIAD Program

The Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities (TRAID) Program provides access to assistive technology to any New Yorker with a disability through Regional TRAID Centers.

What is Assistive Technology? An assistive technology device is any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. Devices can be as simple and low-tech as a modified toothbrush handle to something as complex and high-tech as a voice-activated computer system and software.

Regional TRAID Centers provide device loans and hands-on training to people with disabilities. To access equipment, locate the Regional TRAID Center overseeing your county from the list on their website.

The Justice Center administers TRAID through grants from the US Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Community Living (ACL), the NYS Department of Health and ACCES-VR. A variety of devices are loaned out for use in different settings such as at home, school, or work.

Learn more by visiting the TRIAD program website.

Accessible Food Pantries and Resources in New York State

This holiday season, we're sharing some information about accessible food pantries and other food resources throughout New York State, organized by region.

Find the list on the NYSILC website..

This is part of an ongoing project to build a comprehensive resource aimed at helping people identify which food pantries, kitchens, and other

resources in their region are accessible.

If you know of a resource in your area not listed, please email Amy at **awink@nysilc.org**.

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.

To listen to 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 for $100) on sale until 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

Executive Committee

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Stephanie Woodward

Member at Large
John Zick

DISABILITY EMPOWHER NETWORK

Leadership Retreat for Disabled Women

When: **Friday, March 20-Sunday, March 22, 2026**
Where: Rochester, NY - Strathallan
Cost: $475 Registration

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

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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 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.

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!

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!

Upcoming NYSILC events/activities:

Next NYSILC Full Council Meeting - **Friday, March 27, 2026** 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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