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NEW YORK STATE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL, INC.

NYSILC

empowering new yorkers with disabilities

NYSILC News, February 2026

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
Westchester Disabled on the Move (WDOM):

wdom Westchester Disabled On the Move, Inc. *Live Independently*

WDOM is part of a national network of Independent Living Centers dedicated to independence and equal rights for individuals with disabilities. Westchester Disabled on the Move Inc., is staffed and governed primarily by people with disabilities. The programs and services of WDOM are free to consumers with disabilities and their families.

Visit their website for more information.

NYSILC Council Members

Executive Committee:

Chair
Yaw Appiadu

Vice Chair
Lindsay Miller

Secretary
Sonam Ben Willow

National Disability Leadership Series

May 2026 – February 2027
Apply by February 15th (see below)

This is a fully online program that lasts 10 months. It includes 100 people: young disabled adults, educators, professionals, and family members. The Series will help you grow as a leader through

Treasurer
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Member at Large
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presentations, community connections, mentorship, and group projects.

YOU ARE ELIGIBLE IF YOU ARE:
• A disabled young adult (age 18 - 30)
• A family member or legal guardian of a disabled youth/young adult (age birth to 30)
• An educator, transition professional, non-profit staff, or other professional who works with disabled youth/young adults.

WHAT YOU WILL GAIN:
• Powerful strategies for community organizing and policy change.
• Communications training from professional speakers, writers, influencers, and media makers.
• Groundbreaking resources and tools.
• Mentoring by trailblazers in inclusive education, transition, and disability justice.
• A Certificate of Completion to submit for professional development or educational credit.

Series staff will hold virtual meetups for graduates after the series ends.

VIRTUAL Training on disability advocacy and action for inclusion in school, work, and community

Fill out this form before February 15, 2026. Apply in the category that fits you best:

• Young disabled adult 18-30

• Family member/guardian of disabled youth age birth to 30

• Educator, transition specialist, or other professional (or aspiring professional)

Registration information

Learn more about the Series

Still have questions? Email Dan Habib, National Disability Leadership Series Director.

Come to the 2026 Ms. Wheelchair New York Competition!

Saturday, March 7th, 1-5pm

Hope Lutheran Church
470 Winter Street Extension
North Greenbush, NY 12180

Latavia Sturdivant of Yonkers is the reigning Ms. Wheelchair New York and achieved history by becoming the first New Yorker to win the national Ms. Wheelchair America 2026 title. She is a speech-language pathologist and advocate for disability rights, focusing on systemic change and, specifically,, improving access to medical equipment.

Learn more - call or email Shameka:
shameka@mswheelchairamerica.org
or 518-603-7941

Congratulations to Self-Initiated Living Options (SILO)!

Led by SWTCIE Director, Gregory Runfola, and SWTCIE Specialist, Gillean Gradney, SILO was one of five independent living centers chosen to participate in the NYS Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment (SWTCIE) pilot program. This initiative helps people with disabilities obtain competitive, integrated employment while reducing reliance on subminimum wage jobs.

Thanks to Gregory and Gillean's persistence and hard work, we are proud to share that SILO has successfully made the first competitive, integrated employment placement in all of New York State!

The individual is now working at a job they thoroughly enjoy and earning a salary above minimum wage.

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 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.

AAPD
American Association of People with Disabilities

The 2026 AAPD Fall Internship Program Application is now open!

AAPD's Internship Program places students and recent graduates with disabilities in paid internships. Interns build leadership skills, explore career opportunities, and connect with the disability community.
The 2026 AAPD Fall Internship Program will be fully virtual and part-time. **The program will run for 14 weeks from August 31 to December 4, 2026.**
Interns will:

- Attend a virtual kickoff call on April 8, 2026
- Work 15 hours a week at the internship placement site
- Attend an optional in-person gathering in Washington D.C. during the week of July 20, 2026
- Participate in a virtual orientation on Sunday, August 23, 2026 from 12 - 4 pm ET with breaks

- Attend weekly virtual community events on Fridays from 12 - 3 pm ET throughout the fall
- Connect one-on-one with a virtual mentor

APPLY HERE

If you have any questions or would like to ask for a disability accommodation, please email AAPD at info@aapd.com or call (202) 521-4316.

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) or other organization working with young adults? Please share this information with your young adult consumers!

Learn more and apply here!

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**.

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.

NYSILC | office 518-400-4210 | awink@nysilc.org | NYSILC.org

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