



Welcome to our Super-Connections!

by Becky McGinnis

You have noticed that this issue is fatter. More postage. How come?

As we noted in the March issue of *Connections*, JACIL is developing our work plan, looking at our service area, our consumers, people with disabilities living in the service area, the needs of various individuals and groups. After the information-gathering, we will be sitting down to decide what we should focus on in the next three years. What are our strengths and our weaknesses. What needs do we address now, what services might we need to develop, where is our advocacy needed, etc. What opportunities should we be snatching and what things might threaten JACIL in the future. Several of you participated in listening sessions to provide your input.

Since we are looking at everything we do - our services, our support groups, our funding sources and more --it seemed like a good opportunity to share that information with you. What we found out as we worked on this issue is that there is a lot to tell!

Staff will be spending April 11 in retreat. We will all be out of the office all day (someone will be here to answer the phone), putting our heads together to come up with our thoughts about what JACIL should be doing in the next three years. Our recommended work plan will be presented to the JACIL Board who will responsible for reviewing it, modifying it, and approving the final plan.

So, we hope you enjoy this issue, and find out something new about us!



The JACIL Staff (from left): Roger Deem, Ron Price, Becky McGinnis, Derrick Walker, Kathy Price, Mary Shafer, Cyndy Benton, Larry Whewell, Barb Whewell, Paul Pyers, Susan Nolls. Absent from the picture is Lori Neill.



What is a CIL?

by Becky McGinnis, Executive Director

The Jacksonville Area Center for Independent Living (JACIL – we pronounce it Jay-sil) is one of 23 centers throughout the state, and one of hundreds around the nation. Our roots are from Berkeley, California, where Ed Roberts gathered with several other individuals with significant disabilities, and created the first CIL. There are federal standards that set the guidelines for Centers for Independent Living, but we each operate independently.

CILs are unique because we are consumer-controlled; the federal standards require that at least 51% of our Board, 51% of our staff and 51% of our management staff must be people who have disabilities. We are cross-disability (include all disabilities), community-based, not-for-profit corporations which are not residential – nobody lives in a CIL! In general, CILs are committed to the inclusion of diverse cultural and ethnic populations

CILs are required to offer the four core services of information and referral, systems and

individual advocacy, peer support and independent living skills training. Many consider community reintegration, helping people move from a nursing home back into their own residence in the community, to be a fifth core service.

JACIL was founded in 1996 when it first received state funding, and serves Morgan, Scott, Cass and Mason counties.

QUICK FACTS:

- Centers for Independent Living started in California by Ed Roberts
- Serve people with disabilities
- Teach people to make their own decisions
- Include all cultures & all disabilities
- Important services:
 - Information and referral
 - Individual advocacy
 - Peer support
 - Independent living skills training
 - Helping people move out of nursing home
- JACIL has 51% or more people with disabilities



JACIL's Jacksonville Office



JACIL's Mason County Office

So--How are we funded?

In FY97 JACIL received our first grant funding through the Independent Living Unit of the Division of Rehabilitation Services. At this time we receive three state grants: the original grant, one to provide training for consumers in managing their personal assistants and to maintain a referral list of personal assistants, and a third grant for individuals aged 55 and older who have vision disabilities.

We receive two federal independent living grants, one being time-limited through federal ARRA funding (includes our ASL classes, and home modifications, especially ramps, for individuals who qualify).

Prairieland United Way and the Mason County Community Chest grants support disability awareness in our service area. We also have a grant to provide legislative advocacy training. We sometimes receive memorials and some private contributions. For several years we have received the contributions of one individual and her

employer through an employee giving program.

In addition to smaller fund raisers, in the past five or six years we have developed two major annual events, a Wheelathon held in June, and a winter Festa Jaciliana.

Our most recent Festa earned over \$6,600 in discretionary income (income that isn't restricted the way the grants are), and we are into our heavy-duty planning for our 2012 Wheelathon to be held June 9.

We also have non-monetary "revenue" in the form of volunteers who do things for us we would need to pay someone to do. JACIL has been blessed over the years to have several students doing internships or work-study programs, as well as many individuals who step up to meet a need – disability awareness presentations, parades, getting out mailings, helping with support groups, teaching computer skills, etc.

It takes a number of sources of revenue to support JACIL's work!

Profoundly Ordinary - the Independent Living Philosophy

"We are profoundly ordinary people sharing the same need to feel included, recognized and loved." Dr. Adolf Ratzka

The Independent Living (IL) philosophy doesn't mean doing everything by yourself, and it doesn't mean living by yourself. Independent living has to do with choices. It stems from the idea that people with disabilities are the best experts on their own needs. It means having the same choices in every-day life that non-disabled siblings, neighbors and friends have learned to take for granted, and it means the right to make decisions for yourself.

What do non-disabled people do? They grow up in their families, ride to neighborhood schools with others from the neighborhood, work in jobs that are in line with their interests and education, raise families. They go to church, buy groceries, go to the movies or the ball game; they at-

tend their kid's school programs, they walk around the block. They choose what to eat for supper and when to go to bed. They vote, run for public office, and pay taxes. They decide what is best for them. They do ordinary things.

IL Philosophy is about self-determination, self respect and equal opportunities, and about people with disabilities living ordinary lives.

QUICK FACTS:

- People with disabilities want independence!
- People with disabilities want to feel included, recognized, loved
- People with disabilities want:
 - Choices
 - Jobs
 - Homes
 - To make our own decisions!
- JACIL believes in independent living!

Core Services Overview

JACIL is mandated by the state of Illinois to provide four core services: Information and Referral (I & R), Individual and Systems Advocacy, Independent Living Skills Training and Peer Mentoring.



Information and Referral Services

I & R is available to both people with disabilities and the general public. Information and referrals must also be documented and reported to the state on quarterly reports.

When JACIL receives a call requesting services the call is usually routed to Larry Whewell. He tries to solve the issue over the phone or if it takes more time he refers the potential consumer to an appropriate staff person.

Whatever the issue or question may be, the JACIL staff tries to resolve the issue. Many times it is giving out information or referring the individual(s) to another agency who has more expertise on the topic than we do.

There is no such thing as a dumb question and all requests are taken seriously. If it is a complex issue then the staff person will make an appointment with the person and work with that individual on a one on one basis.

The staff person and caller will determine if JACIL's consumer service record should be filled out and goals established. We provide the consumer with the proper tools and assist in accomplishing whatever goal the consumer sets.

Our philosophy is independence: therefore, the consumer will need to work on whatever the issue may be with assistance from JACIL staff.

JACIL's goal is to stimulate & promote a growing sense of personal dignity through individualized programs designed to provide the tools necessary for maximum independence and community participation.

We pride ourselves on providing information and if needed to refer you to another agency to address your issue.

QUICK FACTS:

- JACIL provides services
 - Advocacy
 - Counseling
 - Independent living training
 - Information
- JACIL will help you find more services
- JACIL helps you solve problems
- Questions? Call JACIL!
- JACIL can help with your goals!



Individual & Systems Advocacy

Speaking up for yourself to get the services you need as an individual is an important skill. JACIL strives to make every interaction with a person with a disability a teaching moment on self advocacy. In addition to individual advocacy, JACIL is responsible for "systems" advocacy. Systems advocacy is advocacy to make changes in our communities, things like public parking and laws which have an impact on the lives of people with disabilities. These are things which affect groups of people, rather than just one individual.

Our advocacy activities include accessibility audits and legislative/voter advocacy, as well as helping parents learn to advocate for their child at an IEP, and helping individuals to learn to advocate for themselves in a variety of situations.

QUICK FACTS:

- Important skill: Advocacy
- Learn how to access services
- Learn how to make positive changes
- Learn how to work for new laws!
- Learn to work with a group
- YOU can do it!
- JACIL can help!



Independent Living Skills Training

Budgeting and learning to manage money to get the bills paid are things that often adults DON'T do well. Knowing how to make good purchases, how to get the most out of your shopping dollar, and avoid debt are important skills we need to learn.

Other independent living skills include things like cooking, housekeeping, doing laundry and getting around town.

Not all of us come equipped with the skills we need to be independent and to manage the daily activities of our lives. Others of us have learned skills, but aren't able to do them the way we learned after we become disabled.

JACIL has several ways of assisting people with disabilities to learn independent living skills. We sometimes offer classes to provide training to several people at a time.

Often we work individually with a person to help them develop the specific skills that will enable them to maintain their living situation. Our staff can make a home visit to mark appliances for someone with vision loss, or we can provide coaching in check writing.

A little focused training can sometimes mean a lot of independence!

QUICK FACTS:

- Focus: independent living
- Learn to budget your money
- Learn other skills for daily life
- JACIL has training to help
- JACIL offers classes
- JACIL offers 1-to-1 assistance
- JACIL staff can visit your home and help
- If you have vision loss, contact JACIL
- Have a disability? Need help?
- Contact JACIL!



Peer Mentoring

One of our core services, peer mentoring refers to the development of peer relationships and peer role models. People who have experienced disability can share those experiences and be good support for someone else.

Some peer mentoring occurs when staff who have disabilities work with consumers with disabilities. JACIL offers a number of opportunities for peer relationships through various groups, also.

Vision support groups

We have four support groups to encourage persons who have a vision disability to help themselves as much as possible.

Each month we hold a series of meetings. The first Thursday of every month is our 20/20 Support Group meeting held at Knollwood Retirement Center in Jacksonville.

Every second Thursday each month is our VisAbility group which meets in our Jacksonville office.

The third Thursday of the month we hold a Visions Support Group at the JACIL office at 220 West Main Street in Havana.

The third Wednesday of every month the Laborers for Greater Vision Support Group is held at 1335 S. Diamond in Jacksonville.

Most of the people who attend the vision-based support groups are 55 or older but everyone is welcome who is experiencing vision difficulties. At each we talk about a topic of interest to group members. We may explore what sort of technology may be available to help people with disabilities live independently. We find out how vision loss has affected others and what they are doing to cope with the issue.

Now you know the schedule of all our support group meetings. Larry Whewell, and Ron Price hope to see you in the near future.

Autism and Parent Support Group

by Susan Nolls

The identification of Autism among children has increased significantly, leading to a need to become knowledgeable about resources for families.

Last spring we had a panel of Parents of Children with Autism who touched on the need for parents to find a place for information and support. This led to the development of the Parents of Children with Autism (PCA) support group. We have been meeting for almost a year. We meet once a month on the fourth Thursday of the month at 6:00 -7:30 at JACIL.

So far we have had a speaker present on the iPad and its application for school work. A clinician from The Autism Project talked about

behaviors of children with autism and some ways to address managing them. A teacher of children with autism will speak to us about sensory issues for a child.

Another planned presentation is a sibling panel to talk about autism and its impact on tr/e family.

There are other topics we will address as we can find the speakers.

QUICK FACTS:

- Autism Support
- Provides info
- Provides support
- Want more info? Contact JACIL

Deaf Silent Club

The Deaf Silent Club meets monthly on the third Thursday of the month.

Members of the group are highly visual deaf people. The group gathers primarily for social activities. They watch movies and have popcorn. The group enjoys a special combined Thanksgiv-

ing/Christmas dinner and once in a great while conduct a cookout.

New members and visitors attend this group by invitation only, so if you are interested in joining the group, please contact Paul Pyers at the Jacksonville office.

Action/Aktion Clubs

by Cyndy Benton

JACIL currently sponsors two Action Clubs. The action clubs are civic-minded groups that meet monthly to discuss disability related issues, plan civil and advocacy actions and decide what civic events they want to volunteer at. Members also attend state-wide advocacy and disability rights training events.

Each club uses parliamentary procedures (Roberts Rules of Order) when conducting meetings and deciding on community events to volunteer/participate in.

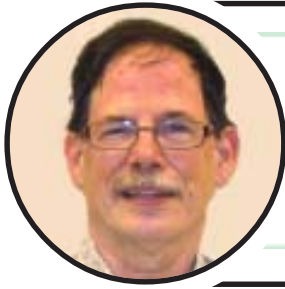
Most importantly, club members demonstrate through their ACTIONS that people with disabilities are contributing members of their communities.

The People First Aktion Club is located in Jacksonville and is co-sponsored by the local and international Kiwanis Clubs. People First Aktion Club meets the third Friday of each month and has been in existence since 2003. It has approximately 25 members.

The Friends Helping Friends Action Club is located in Beardstown and began meeting the third Thursday of each month in late 2010. It has approximately 15 members.

Anyone interested in joining Jacksonville's People First or Beardstown's Friends Helping Friends Action Clubs, contact Cyndy at JACIL. She may be reached by calling 245-8371 or toll free at 888-317-3287. Both numbers are V/TTY.





JACIL's Deaf Services

by Paul Pyers, Independent Living Advocate

There are about 500 deaf/hard of hearing people living around Morgan county, Jacksonville in particular. JACIL has a deaf Independent Living Advocate, Paul Pyers, who is able to focus on those who communicate using sign language. There are a number of ways in which JACIL provides independent living services to the deaf population:

A lot of people come here for cell phone (pager) information, mostly how to contact the service and how to use them. Many of them come here for help signing up with ATT's TextAccessibility Plans (TAP).

Several people have made use of our public access videophone, computer and TTY, as well as asking to fax things from the JACIL office.

Some individuals have had problems with Social Security and getting benefits. Others have had issues resolving hospital bills or other creditors, and we encourage them to contact the proper people through the video phone in our office.

We don't find jobs for anyone, but we do assist people with their resume and application, and can provide mock interviews; we also encourage contact with the Rehab Counselor for

the Deaf at the local DRS office, and with the Job Center.

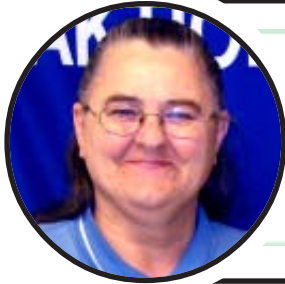
There are several other things we can help with. We help find funding for affordable housing and making application; we helped one individual get information to help him plan a funeral; we often help individuals secure information about interpreters through the IDHHC website.

We have services available for deaf blind individuals, but this is a growing area of need in our world, and JACIL is involved in advocacy efforts to improve the availability of services. If needed, Paul has acted as a communication assistant for specific settings. He has also worked with our JACIL BBS staff to find devices that meet the needs of a consumer.

QUICK FACTS:

- About 500 Deaf/hard of hearing live here
- JACIL can help:
 - Practice interviews
 - Write resumes
 - Fill out applications
 - Refer to DRS and Job Center
 - Teach use of pagers
 - Teach use of technology for Deaf
- You can use JACIL's:
 - Videophone (VP)
 - TTY
 - Computer
- We can help with problems:
 - With Soc Security
 - With getting benefits
 - Mail
 - Contacting services
 - Creditors
- Questions? Contact Paul at JACIL





The IEP & Schools

by Susan Nolls, Independent Living Advocate

As a Youth Advocate I do get involved with schools and students with disabilities. Often parents will call and sometimes school staff may call to help students get the services they need at school.

In order to be effective as an advocate it is important to understand the parents' perspective and understanding of their child's educational needs as well as what the school has recommended.

If there has never been an IEP made, then parents need to understand the process and follow the time line for requesting an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) which is regulated by law. Together we discuss how to go about making this

request. Because of prior experience with school IEPs and how to write them, I can make suggestions for goals.

I also rely on other programs for their expertise in identifying some of the details for an IEP as well as to create a larger team to support the student and the family.

QUICK FACTS:

- JACIL provides:
 - Youth advocacy
 - Help with school services
 - IEP process training
 - Support for the student and family
- Want more info? Contact JACIL



Wheelathon Kickoff:

Monday, April 2, at the JACIL Board Meeting

50/50 Raffle tickets & Sponsor packets will be available on April 2. Call JACIL for more information.

Introducing our 2012 Wheelathon "Spokes" Person: **MARK ARNOLD!**





Legislative & Voter Advocacy

by Cyndy Benton, Legislative/Voter Advocate

In March 2003 JACIL added a Legislative/Voter Advocate position and for the last nine years I have filled that role. As JACIL's Legislative/Voter Advocate, I have had the pleasure of watching JACIL's power in the policy arena grow.

During that time, four JACIL staff became statewide Deputy Registrars who have helped over 150 people with voter registration issues. We have held three "get out the disability vote" campaigns that have reached over 500 people. The Illinois Disability Vote (I'D Vote) project is a statewide, non-partisan, disability vote initiative held during General Elections that encourages people with disabilities to vote.

During the nine years JACIL has made over a thousand contacts to local, state and federal policymakers encouraging them to support policy that champions the needs of people with disabilities. Over the years, JACIL has also provided several advocacy development and disability rights learning opportunities for people with disabilities and has watched individuals grow and use these skills for systemic (policy & government) and self-advocacy (own needs).

JACIL is in the process of developing a

grassroots advocacy base of people living in Cass, Mason, Morgan and Scott Counties who are interested in taking action on policy that impacts the lives of people with disabilities. Individuals who are interested in being added to JACIL's grassroots advocacy list should contact Cyndy. She will ask for your name and contact information, including your e-mail address, so she can send you "policy action alerts" as she receives them. It will be your personal choice whether you take action or not on policy/issues that are directed your way. Cyndy may be reached at 245-8371 or toll free at 888-317-3287. Both numbers are V/TTY.

QUICK FACTS:

- JACIL has a legislative advocate
- Her name is Cyndy Benton
- Cyndy's job?
 - Teach us about laws
 - Support laws for people with disabilities
 - Contact our legislators
 - Teach us to contact our legislators
 - Teach us advocacy!
- Interested in helping? Contact Cyndy at JACIL





The ADA & Accessibility

by Derrick Walker, Associate Director

Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guarantees people with disabilities the “full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages or accommodations of any place of public accommodation”.

Do you comply to the ADA, that is the question? What does that mean to you the owner of a business? If I utilize a wheelchair would I be able to enter that door, is it wide enough. Wait a minute--what about the bathroom? Are there urinals? What about hand rails to hold on to while I transfer myself? Are the sinks the right height

for me to wash my hands? What about the water fountains and the clearance of the doors when they open?

These are just a few of the areas that a person with disabilities needs to think about when they go out into the public. Just to get down the street from my home are the curbs cut so I can travel without fear of falling off the curb.

JACIL can assist you with finding out what you need to do to bring your business into compliance with the ADA. Contact us to set up an appointment



JACIL’s BBS Program

by Ron Price, Independent Living Advocate

JACIL receives a grant from the Illinois Bureau of Blind Services to assist people who are 55 years or older and have a visual disability.

JACIL offers individualized training to those that qualify: 55 years or older, live in JACIL's service area and have a vision issue, for example, if you have difficulty reading the newspaper print.

Vision Disabilities can cover a wide range of areas: macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, cataracts, and glaucoma are a few of the major eye diseases that cause vision loss. Training can cover technology of all kinds from support canes, talking watches, magnifiers, kitchen tools, to computer based technologies. JACIL wants to help individuals remain independent at home.

As people with a disabilities we sometimes find ourselves wondering why our life has taken the path we are now embarking on. We need to accept the help offered to us and take advantage of the opportunities that are available.

For more information about the BBS program, contact Ron or Larry at (217)245-8371 vtty.

QUICK FACTS:

- BBS = Bureau of Blind Services
- JACIL has BBS services
- For people 55 and older
- Have vision loss?
- Want to be independent?
- Contact JACIL! We will help!



Personal Assistant Referral Process

*Barb Whewell & Lori Neill
Independent Living Advocates*

In JACIL's Personal Assistant (PA) services we hold an orientation once a month in Morgan, Scott, Cass, or Mason County.

Persons wanting to become a PA come to a four-hour session and learn the basics on working with people with disabilities. The orientation includes Independent Living Philosophy, individual service to a consumer, universal precautions, transfer techniques, the consumer's service plan, disability etiquette and reviews and a sample PA packet from DRS with the paperwork. At the end of the training they will receive a certificate.

This training makes individuals eligible to be put on JACIL's PA referral list. From that point the PA's name goes into a database on the computer; when a consumer calls and needs a PA we match the consumer's needs with information in the database.

Four or five names are selected and sent to the consumer and they can interview the names they choose. If they choose not to hire any of these people they can call JACIL back and we will send them out another list of people. It is totally up to the consumer who they interview and

who they hire. The consumer has control of interviewing, checking references, hiring and, if needed, firing. If they need assistance interviewing PA's we are available to sit in on the interviews or give them some tips on interviewing.

JACIL is only a referral program and the PAs are not employees of JACIL. They are supervised by the consumer and are paid from the DRS Office.

If you have any questions feel free to call Barb at the Jacksonville office at 217-245-8371 (v/tty) or toll free 888-317-3287 or email barb@jacil.org. Lori at the Havana office is 309-543-6680 (v/tty), toll-free 877-759-2187 or lori@jacil.org.

QUICK FACTS:

- JACIL provides training for personal assistants in 4 counties
- Training helps with skills for services to the consumer and paperwork for DRS PA packet
- Contact JACIL for training
- Need a PA? Contact JACIL for a list
- Need more PA info? Contact JACIL!

Community Reintegration

A quick word about community reintegration (CR): JACIL has voluntarily returned this grant to the State.

Statistics show that our four-county area is one of the two lowest in the state in number of people under age 60 with disabilities who live in nursing homes. Although we remain committed to the philosophy of CR, we believe that the state's funds can be better utilized if our grant is redistributed to other CILs who have more qualifying individuals living in their areas.

JACIL pledges to refer to other CILs, and to collaborate with them so people in our area can move to their own place in the community. We have already made three referrals!

QUICK FACTS:

- Community Reintegration \$
- Help people move out of nursing homes
- JACIL volunteered to return CR \$
- BUT we still refer to other CILs to help
- We continue to make CR referrals



Home Modification Program

by Janelle Romero, Intern

JACIL's Home Modification grant has been steadily growing over the past couple years. Some of you may have seen ramps being built or pictures in past newsletters.

This grant is often referred to as the "ramp program". It is worth mentioning that this grant can be used for other small modifications to a person's home, such as having grab bars made for the bathroom. To make our funds stretch further, the individual is asked to contribute to the cost of the ramp, if possible.

So what is the process for applying and obtaining a ramp or other small modifications?

1. Call and ask to speak with Janelle Romero about getting a modification.

2. Next there is a short and simple intake form Janelle will fill out. Often times this can be filled out within a few minutes, in person or over the phone.

3. In addition to things like name, birth date and address, we ask for a brief explanation of the condition or disability that makes the modification necessary.

4. Other information includes the financial resources of the family: employment and Social Security or other benefits. If the home is rented we need the name and number of the landlord so we can talk to them about the modification.

5. We then schedule a time to come out and take measurements and pictures of the area where the modification is expected to go.

6. We submit the paperwork and information collected and it is reviewed.

7. We secure a builder such as volunteer Ambucs or an interested contractor and one is selected from the bids they submit.

8. We notify the consumer about who will be

building the ramp and the time frame estimate.

9. After the work is completed, we take an "after" photo of the modification for our records.

This process usually takes several weeks, depending on the parties involved.

If you have any questions please call JACIL and ask for Janelle Romero at 217 - 245-8371

QUICK FACTS:

- JACIL helps get ramps
- JACIL can help with grab bars
- JACIL can help with access
- Want to learn more?
- Call Janelle at JACIL!



One of our ramp projects which was completed near the end of 2011.

Disability Awareness

by Larry Whewell

JACIL prides itself on conducting disability awareness activities and events. We provide disability awareness to individuals, groups, schools, colleges, adults, and basically anyone that requests our service. We travel throughout our four county service area. Activities can be designed for a short 15-minute presentation to an all-day event. For, example, each year, JACIL staff and many volunteers conduct an all day event at Turner Junior High School. Also annually we provide disability awareness to Our Saviour Grade School and several other schools and colleges.

To request JACIL to come to you or host a disability awareness event in our office all we need is a request that you or your organization, agency or school would like for JACIL to provide this service.

JACIL's philosophy is that the earlier children learn about people with disabilities and understand that people with disabilities are just like everyone else the easier it is to change attitudes.

The major issue that people with disabilities face is additudinal barriers. People with disabilities want to live a productive life just like anyone else. We may have to do things a little differently



A group of students learn how to use a white cane while blindfolded during an awareness event.

but in most cases anyone can be independent or at least as independent as much as possible. The Americans with Disability Act was signed into law on July 26, 1990, based on the fact that people with disabilities want the same and equal rights as anyone else.

If you or anyone you know would like JACIL to conduct some disability awareness activities, just contact Larry at (217)245-8371 v/tty and I am sure we could work something out to educate you on people with disabilities.

Knowledge Is Power

by Larry Whewell

JACIL hosts monthly workshops we call Knowledge Is Power (KIP). They are usually scheduled for the fourth Tuesday of each month. These workshops are designed to promote disability related topics and educate our consumers, staff, and the general public about current issues or programs.

There is always a sign language interpreter available, materials can be made in alternate formats and refreshments are provided as well. Where can you go and learn something about a new or current program with communication avail-

able for each individual's need, and enjoy a snack and something to drink?

I am using this article to formally invite anyone who is interested to contact JACIL for more information. Also, If anyone has a topic they would like for us to promote, please contact us. The date and information is always in JACIL Connections, public media, and normally we mail a card to our consumers to remind them of the workshop.

Hope to see you at our upcoming Knowledge Is Power workshops.

American Sign Language Classes

by Susan Nolls

We have been teaching American Sign Language (ASL) classes at JACIL since August of 2010. We use the Signing Naturally curriculum and have had nearly 100 students register for classes. We have provided both ASL I and II classes at JACIL as well as a class in the office of a local dentist. The basic class is eight weeks long and meets once a week.

We have served different age groups - adults, youth and children.

The class covers basic signs on common topics such as introductions, personal information, talking about where you live and



the local surroundings as well as your family and various activities.

Recently we began working with employers and agencies to create class schedules customized to fit the workplace needs. We can also tailor class content to the individual needs of your group. Call us to find out how we can help meet your needs.

QUICK FACTS:

- ASL classes
- Each class meets 8 times
- Learn basic signs
- More info? Contact JACIL

Byts & Bytes

by Larry Whewell

A monthly workshop is scheduled on the fourth Thursday of each month and is facilitated by Dan Thompson. Mr. Thompson is a retired Assistive Technology Instructor from the Illinois School for the Visually Impaired (ISVI).

Each month a different topic and related assistive devices are presented. Mr. Thompson is quite knowledgeable about both traditional and the newer assistive devices that are on the market for most all disabilities. He will take requests and plan a workshop for any subject or instruction on any device.

Mr. Thompson also provides computer training at JACIL on Monday and Thursdays. This training is done on an individual basis or in a group setting. There is no charge for this training.

Mr. Thompson specializes in screen readers, but has various skills on the average working of any computer.

If you are interested in learning more about computers and would like training to beef up your technology skills contact Larry at JACIL, (217)245-8371 v/tty.

This Month at Byts & Bytes

At the April Byts & Bytes meeting we will provide training with several GPS systems available for people who are blind or have low vision.

Trekker Breeze is an easy, all-in-one handheld talking GPS from Humanware. Imagine doing your neighborhood chores freely

without having to always depend on other people, without having to count your steps or always worrying about getting lost.

Byts & Bytes will meet in the conference room at JACIL's Jacksonville office, 15 Permac Road, on Thursday, April 26, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Citizens Advocating for Real Equality (CARE)

by Cyndy Benton

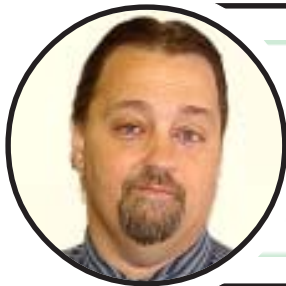
This winter JACIL held a multi-week training session that was developed to help citizens better understand how government works on local, state and federal levels--and how they can become more effective self-advocates.

Information about how government operates, how ideas become bills, how bills become law and voter rights and responsibilities were important aspects of the training. Participants also learned about the roles and responsibilities of the various levels of government and its elected officials. Effective communication skills, advocacy skill development and the components of successful grassroots advocacy were also emphasized. Participants attended eight class sessions, completed independent and class assignments and observed local or state government in action.

The final session of the CARE training is scheduled for April 17th. At that time, participants will go to the Illinois Capitol to advocate for

a law or issue that is near and dear to them. During the last two training sessions, participants identified a state-level issue or law that they would like to advocate for or against and received instruction on how to develop a position statement and subsequent one page document to give to legislators on April 17th as a "Leave Behind." A "Leave Behind" is a one page, informational document about an issue/law. A "Leave Behind" must be written in a clear and concise manner that states a position in a significant and powerful way and includes rationale for the position, with any previous information or laws in support of the position taken.

An additional CARE training series--geared more for the working professional--is being planned for later this year. Anyone interested in attending a future CARE training, please contact Cyndy at JACIL. She may be reached by calling 245-8371 or toll free at 888-317-3287. Both numbers are V/TTY.



Publications

by Roger Deem, Administrative Assistant

JACIL occasionally issues publications for the purpose of sharing information, publicizing events and in general keeping the public up to date in regards to disability advocacy, both in our four-county service area and nationally.

Chief among these efforts is our *JACIL Connections* newsletter which has been published monthly since July 1997. It typically includes articles about upcoming activities, reports on completed events, educational stories and a schedule of JACIL's plans for the coming month.

We often produce special publications such as our Sign Language for Business booklet or our Legislative Update newsletter series.

All our publications are made in alternative formats including electronic, Braille and large print where possible. We adhere to what we call our S.T.A.T.E. Policy - Same Time Availability To Everyone in that we do not distribute materials in any form until all formats are completed.

Are there any additional publications you would like to see? Give JACIL a call.



Consumer Communications Room

by Kathy Price, Custodian

JACIL has designated one of our offices as a consumer communications room. Let's take a tour, starting at the first door from the front of the reception area.

As you come in, to your left there are three desks.

The first is the VP or video phone, used by the deaf consumers to communicate with agencies, or other deaf people that have a VP themselves.

The second desk has a TTY, telephone, and braille writer. The TTY is used with the telephone, so deaf persons can communicate with agencies and other persons that may not have a VP phone.

The phone can be used by consumers for such things as calls related to their goals or to their disability needs. The braille writer is for office staff or blind consumers use.

The third desk has a computer with printer, and has JAWS screen reader on it for those who

can not read the screen, those with low vision or who are blind.

This room is all free for our consumers use

QUICK FACTS:

- JACIL has a communications room
- Videophone
- TTY
- Telephone
- Braille writer
- Computer & printer
- Special software programs
- Want to communicate? We know how!



by Kathy Price

Each issue Kathy will answer your questions about anything--from household hints to the price of tea in China.

Please e-mail your question to her at kathy@jacil.org.

This Month's Question: We have an overabundance of ice at our house. We can only use so much in our soda glasses. Is there any way I use extra cubes for anything besides sprained ankles and aching joints?

Kathy says: YES! You can water your plants by placing three or four ice cubes in your planter. You can also numb a child's mouth for taking medication and using them for skimming fat out the top of soups.



JACIL Board Member Michele Daniels demonstrates how to use the Video Relay apparatus in JACIL's Consumer room.



The American Dream

by Larry Whewell, Associate Director

I think for most people with disabilities the American Dream is sometimes forgotten and or seems out of reach. The American Dream can become reality with some assistance from the Home Ownership Coalition and hard work on the part of both parties.

The Home Ownership Coalition for People with Disabilities office is located in Springfield, IL. The Illinois Assistive Technology Program (IATP) offers assistance for people with disabilities to purchase a home.

There are specific guidelines, but it is designed for low income individuals and the main rule is that someone in the household must have a disability.

Prior to last September, the Coalition served six counties in west central Illinois and they acquired Morgan and Cass counties to make their

total up to eight. There are grants available to help with closing cost and down payments. If your credit is not the best, they will help with credit counseling and help get your credit score improved.



Sometimes the process is lengthy, but anything an individual wants badly enough takes time.

Robin Benson and Katie Reeves work on behalf of this program out of the IATP office in Springfield.

JACIL is a contact for people with disabilities who live in Morgan and Cass counties. We can provide you information along with

an application to get you started. Interested individuals can contact Larry at JACIL (217)245-8371 or Robin or Katie at (217) 522-7985. A dream can become a reality with perseverance and hard work.

JACIL has a loan closet

by Barb Whewell

Are you aware that JACIL has a loan closet containing devices available to help people with disabilities?

From of the kindness of many of our supporters we have often received donations of perfectly good materials and devices that we are then able to loan out to other people who might have need of them.

The items include wheelchairs (adult and children's) and occasionally electric wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, canes, bed riser legs, commodes, toilet stool risers and miscellaneous items.

The availability of the various items we have in stock changes from time to time. If you are in need of an item please call our office and we will check our closet to see if we have what you are looking for. Also, if you have items to donate please call, your generosity is appreciated.

Due to our limited storage space, we CAN-NOT take large items such as hospital beds or electric recliners.

If you have large items we can post them in our monthly newsletter. You can contact Barb at JACIL 217-245-8371.



Department on Aging's Circuit Breaker Program

by Mary Shafer, Support Services

The Illinois Department on Aging's Circuit Breaker program provides grants to senior citizens and persons with disabilities to help them reduce the impact of taxes and prescription medications on their lives.

When the costs of property taxes and prescription medicines begin to "overload" our seniors and persons with disabilities, this program steps in to help, just as a circuit breaker prevents overloads in an electrical system.

For those who qualify, Circuit Breaker provides:

1. Tax Grants – If you pay property taxes or mobile home taxes on your home, or if you

rent or live in a nursing, retirement, or shelter care home that was subject to property taxes, you may be able to receive a grant.

2. License Plate Discount – A \$75 discount on your license plate fee.

3. Prescription Drug Assistance

JACIL can help you file your 2011 circuit breaker on line. You will need your total income, SS number, birth date, property tax or rental information (name, address, phone number of your landlord and the monthly amount needed in rent).

Call JACIL at 217-245-8371 (Jacksonville) or 309-543-6680 (Havana) for an appointment.

Federal Lifeline Program

by Mary Shafer

Low-income households have been eligible for discounted telephone service for more than a decade through the federal "Lifeline" program funded by telecom companies.

Traditionally, services were only available as a discount on a consumer's landline telephone bill. Through SafeLink, this program is now available for wireless phones.

TracFone provides the wireless handset at the company's expense, and users receive a specific amount of free minutes each month for one year. The cell phone offers several features: voicemail, text, three-way calling, call waiting, caller ID and access to 911.

In general individuals qualify if they participate in a public assistance program such as food stamps, Medicaid, SSI, TANF, LIHEAP, and others or they may also qualify based on total household gross monthly income.

There are 3 different plans for the State of Illinois. On the 68 monthly minutes plan you are eligible for all local and national long distance calls, voice mail, texting, roaming at no additional cost, free 911, 411 directory assistance, carry-over minutes from month to month and 100+ international long distance destinations.

On the 125 minute plan you get everything on the 68 minutes plan except for the international long distance. On the 250 minutes plan, there are no carry-over minutes or any International long distance.

JACIL will be happy to help you fill out an application or to help you apply on line.

QUICK FACTS:

- Need help with phone prices?
- JACIL has info about options
- Low-income discounts

Our Community Food Center

by Mary Shafer

The Jacksonville Food Center was established in 1982 by some of the local churches for people in the Morgan County area who are in need of food. The Jacksonville Food Center is open from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Monday to Friday, and is located at 316 East State Street in Jacksonville.

Anyone in need of food who meets the income guidelines may receive food vouchers every 60 days or bakery and produce once a week (no voucher required) as available. JACIL is one of several agencies that have vouchers.

Come to JACIL and a staff member will fill out the voucher (you must show proof of income, date of birth, and the last six digits of the social security numbers for each member of the family); a referral voucher from an agency is required. Pick up your food at the Food Center.

QUICK FACTS:

- Need food? not enough money?
- Contact JACIL for a food voucher
- JACIL has the guidelines to help
- JACIL can sign a food voucher
- Jax Food Center is open Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm
- Need food? contact JACIL for info!



Jacksonville Area Food Center volunteer Carol Waldmire packs an order of food.



APRIL 2012 KIP: **Independent Living Family Tree**

JACIL is preparing to host the April edition of our Knowledge Is Power session on the subject The Independent Living Family Tree. Becky McGinnis, our executive director, will present the program.

Knowing about our ancestors and where we came from can be important to all of us. We like to know our own histories, and who went before us. Where did our family come from? What was their life like? Was anybody famous?

People with disabilities have a disability family tree, too. Come learn a little about the history of independent living - who went before us, what was their life like? And, yes - there were some important things that happened, and some people who are famous in the history of people with disabilities.

The program will take place at the JACIL offices, 15 Permac Road in Jacksonville on Tuesday, April 24, 2:00 -4:00 p.m. There will be an ASL interpreter and refreshments will be served.

QUICK FACTS:

- April 24 at 2:00
- Independent Living Family Tree
- Presenter Becky McGinnis
- Many famous people in history had disabilities
- Interpreter, refreshments
- Questions: Call JACIL



The JACIL Board (from left): President Vicki Mullis, Bill Tennill, Secretary Phil Foxworth, Vae Rose Fultz, Past President Terry Karsgaard, Treasurer Bill Norris, Mark Arnold, Michele Daniels, Vice President Brad Fellhauer, Ruth Linear and Matt Lakin. Not pictured is Wanda Tiffany.

JACIL's Board of Directors

by Roger Deem

JACIL is very blessed to be supported by an outstanding board of directors who oversee our agency's operation.

A CIL board is mandated by the state to be composed of a majority of persons who have some type of disability. Two thirds of our board has a disability.

JACIL's Directors are particularly effective in support of our two main fundraisers - the Wheelathon in June and the Festa Jaciliana in

January. Members contribute a great deal of effort in both planning and development of these activities as well as physical support at each of the events.

Members of the board also provide oversight for JACIL's programs as well as the financial health of the organization.

A hallmark of our JACIL board members is their dedication to people with disabilities and the community overall. JACIL is a strong and stable agency in large part due to the support of this outstanding group of men and women.

QUICK FACTS:

- JACIL has a GREAT Board
- Two-thirds of Board has a disability
- Board meets first Monday every month, 7:00
- Two big fund-raisers:
 - Wheelathon & Festa Jaciliana
- Board helps run JACIL and our policies
- Board supports people with disabilities!
- JACIL is strong, thanks to the Board!

Please note:

**Friday, April 6
Good Friday**

**JACIL will
Close at Noon
Happy Easter!**



JACIL seeking applications for Board of Directors

by *Becky McGinnis*

The JACIL Board is composed of 11-15 individuals, who are usually elected for three-year terms. A few current terms expire June 30. As the Nominating Committee prepares to meet, we are asking consumers and other interested persons to help us identify people who might make good Board members.

A good board member understands the responsibility to act on behalf of the entire center, and agrees to view situations from a cross-disability standpoint, but is also able to discuss policies and actions based on their own experience, or perhaps their own disability.

Our board needs to be cross-disability, representing not only a variety of disabilities but ages, ethnicities and genders. We would like to have representation from all four of our service counties, (Morgan, Scott, Cass and Mason).

Board packets are typically available several days ahead of the meeting, so Board members have a chance to prepare for the meeting. One of the Board's responsibilities is to see that JACIL has sufficient funds, so Board members are expected to participate in fund-raising activities.

Our Board meets on the first Monday of every month at 7 p.m. There are several standing committees, and Board members are each assigned to one or two committees as well.

If you have a suggestion to make, or if you are interested in being considered, please send an e-mail to becky@jacil.org or call her at 245-8371 (v/t) or toll-free 888-317-3287

QUICK FACTS:

- JACIL has a Board
- The Board has 11-15 members
- Members stay on the Board for 3 years
- We need new Board members
- Must live in Morgan, Scott, Cass, or Mason County
- Meet first Monday every month at 7:00 pm
- Interested? Contact JACIL today!

Shingles Shots

The Jacksonville Walgreen's at Main and Morton will be offering a Shingles Shot Clinic Day on Tuesday, April 10, from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Transportation is available at no charge upon request. Call Walgreen's at (217) 243-7818 for pricing and to schedule an appointment.

Volunteering at JACIL

JACIL is very fortunate to have some wonderful sources of volunteers as well as some wonderful volunteers, many of whom have volunteered for us a long time. Ann Lawton addresses and stamps our newsletter for us every month and has been doing it for YEARS! Stephany Dirksmeyer has been here nearly every Thursday morning for two years.

For many years we have had work study students from ISVI who have done everything from cleaning to putting together furniture to the telephone to writing articles for the newsletter.

Students from an Illinois College (IC) class with service learning requirements and MacMurray, IC and University of Illinois at Springfield have done semester-long internships, all getting course credit for their volunteer work.

We have had community members volunteer to answer the phone, make presentations for our Knowledge is Power (KIP) sessions, build ramps (THANK YOU, AMBUCS!), teach computer technology and participate in disability awareness activities. Action club members have marched in many a parade carrying JACIL's banner.

Members of staff families have coordinated our 50/50 raffles, fixed desk drawers, answered the phone, marched in parades and helped at our fund raisers. Our board members are volunteers and in addition to attending meetings and functions, they rope their families into helping, too. Retired Board member Liliana Costa chaired our Festa Jaciliana this year.

We may have missed a few volunteer sources and some terrific volunteers - but we cannot forget that they help us tick. THANKS to all of you!

“My Name is Jessica Motley”

I am a full time student at the Illinois school for the Visually Impaired. I am visually impaired, and have been all my life due to Retinitis Pigmentosa, which causes the cells of the retina to die.

The retina connects the eye to the optic nerve, carrying images to the brain . The amount of cells dying controls the amount of vision lost and what kind of vision loss occurs. The amount varies from person to person.

In my case the vision most lost was the field of vision, the peripheral vision, which is the vision on the sides and the top and bottom. I can now only see out of a hole as wide around as your pinky finger.

I grew up constantly losing my vision, re-learning how to do many things over and over again. My parents didn't know how to teach me things like household chores. My school district had a low budget and only one blind kid and didn't think they could teach me certain things in



Jessica Motley

my classes, and were not able to adapt materials for changing vision.

For these reasons I started attending the Illinois school for the visually impaired in the fall of 2010, and taking college prep classes and work experience in the jobs the school had on campus: which included working in the dining hall and cleaning in the dorms.

This year I came to school excited for the fact that I could get an off campus job, and I talked to Mr. Drake at my school and told him that I wanted an office job.

I get to help people with disabilities in the community get the services they need. I answer phone calls , and relay the calls to the right person to help them. I put together mailings and brochures to get information out about services .

When there is a meeting I help people get in to the appropriate room or office. I really enjoy my time here at JACIL and helping people, knowing my job is important.

QUICK FACTS:

- Jessica is a student at ISVI
- Jessica has RP
- RP causes vision loss
- Jessica helps people find services
- Jessica will go to college
- Will use what she has learned at JACIL

MORGAN COUNTY MOBILE PANTRY

Monday, April 9, 2012

5:00 p.m. (Rain or Shine)

**Spirit of Faith Ministries
105 E. Dunlap, Jacksonville**

This Mobile Pantry made possible by the Central Illinois Foodbank in conjunction with the Global Outreach Center.

Families and individuals in need of food assistance are encouraged to attend this mobile food pantry. Please bring an empty box or laundry basket to fill.

centralilfoodbank.org

APRIL CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 5 Knollwood 20/20 Support Group - 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.
- 6 Good Friday - JACIL closes at noon
- 12 VisAbility Support Group - 10:30 a.m. to Noon
- 13 Knollwood Senior Awareness Fair - 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- 19 Visions Support Group in Havana - 2:00 to 3:00 p.m.
- 19 Deaf Silent Club - 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
- 20 Take Charge Workshop offered by the Illinois Comptroller
Co-sponsored by JACIL and JCCD
6:00 to 8:00 p.m., Jacksonville Community Center for the Deaf
- 24 Knowledge is Power - 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.
Topic: *The Independent Living Family Tree*
Speaker: *Becky McGinnis*
- 25 Personal Assistant Training in Jacksonville - 12:00 to 4:00 p.m.
Pre-registration required
- 25 Laborer's for Greater Vision Support Group - 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.
Laborer's Home Development (in the meeting/craft room).
- 25 SEIU Independent Living Philosophy Training for PAs
JACIL Conference Room - 5:00 to 8:30 p.m.
Registration: 866-933-7348, press 3
- 26 Byts & Bytes - 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.
Trekker Breeze, other GPS systems for the blind & low vision
- 26 Parents of Children with Autism Support Group - 6:00 p.m.
- 27 Aktion Clubs Bowling outing - 1:30 p.m.

“JACIL Connections” is published by the Jacksonville Area Center for Independent Living. JACIL is organized to serve people with disabilities in Morgan, Scott, Cass and Mason Counties. JACIL is committed to serving persons with disabilities to gain control and direction of their lives in the home, workplace and community. JACIL’s goal is to stimulate and promote a growing sense of personal dignity through individualized services designed to provide the tools necessary for maximum independence and community participation. We invite your comments and suggestions.

JACKSONVILLE AREA CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

15 Permac Road, Jacksonville, IL 62650

Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

217-245-8371 Voice/TTY • 217-245-1872 Fax • 888-317-3287 Toll Free

866-790-5311 Deaf Advocate’s Toll Free Videophone Line

E-mail: info@jacil.org • Website: www.jacil.org

JACIL - MASON COUNTY OFFICE

220 West Main Street, Havana, IL 62644

Office Hours: Mondays & Thursdays, 8 a.m. to Noon

309-543-6680 Voice/TTY • 309-543-6711 Fax • 877-759-2187 Toll Free

E-mail: jacil@casscomm.com



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15 Permac Road
Jacksonville, Illinois 62650

