

# Connections

NEWSLETTER OF THE DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER OF FAIRFIELD COUNTY

July - September 2011

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## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome to the 3rd edition of DRCFC's quarterly newsletter, *Connections*. Our goals with this newsletter are: 1. to make "connections" between individuals with disabilities and opportunities, and 2. to serve as a vehicle for people with disabilities to share their needs.

## CENTER HIGHLIGHTS

Third quarter (April - June) of the 2010-2011 fiscal year:

- 426 Information & Referral calls (1305 year-to-date)
- 205 Assistive Technology calls
- 182 active consumers
- 96 hours of Community Activities
- Staff participated in various **Networking, Trainings & Meetings**, including: CIL Suite training (new data system), CHOICES update training, Greater Bridgeport Disability Advocacy Collaborative meetings, Bridgeport Emergency Planning, Red Cross, Homeland Security, data/technology meetings, MS Society, SW CT Area Agency on Aging, Laurelwood Senior Apartment Fair, Fairfield Senior Center Wellness Fair, CES Transition Fair, Sagamore Place Wellness Fair, Bridgeport Rotary, MDA Support Group, Baldwin Senior Center, CT Association of Centers for Independent Living, Money Follows the Person, CT Disability Advocacy Collaborative, Statewide Independent Living Council, ADA Coalition of CT, CT Business Leadership Conference, job fairs

## DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER SERVICES

- *Peer Support* empowers by validating and recognizing the worth and dignity of the individual. This begins when a person becomes a consumer of DRCFC, meets with an advocate who is a peer, and sets a goal that is self-directed and not judged by an arbitrary medical or social standard.



- *Information and Referral* services are provided to the individual and to the community so that people with disabilities can make informed choices about their lives, and communities can address those barriers that restrict access to people with disabilities. Advocates knowledgeable about a wide range of issues including civil rights, anti-discrimination laws, housing, benefits, insurance, adaptive technology, employment, education, along with services and programs of interest to people with disabilities, are available to assist individuals as well as communities, organizations and businesses recognize the importance of including people with disabilities.
- *Independent Living Skills Training* empowers by giving people the tools necessary to live more independently. Peer advocates share their knowledge in all aspects of living and working, by informing their peers of resources in the community that are available to help them overcome barriers and live fuller, more productive lives.
- *Advocacy* services are provided both to individuals, to reach their personal goals, and the community at large. Many issues that people with disabilities face are not unique to their disabilities but require the removal of systemic barriers that affect the independence of many. The Greater Bridgeport Disability Advocates was begun by consumers of DRCFC and has already met with success by reestablishing the Disability Commission of the City of Bridgeport.

- ***MFP/Nursing Home Transition.*** DRCFC is a participant in Money Follows the Person (MFP), an innovative federal program that takes money that would normally go to expensive nursing home care and instead uses it for community-based supports, so that adults can live independently in the community. MFP is improving the quality of life for elders and people with physical, developmental and mental health disabilities. The program builds on current programs by offering enhanced community services and support to those who have resided in nursing facilities for at least six months.
- ***Ramp Programs.*** DRCFC administers ramp programs in the Town of Stratford and City of Bridgeport to help fund ramps for low income families.



- ***Pre-employment services.*** Employment is valued by society, and people with disabilities need to take their rightful place as employees and builders of society. A fully inclusive community means a fully integrated work force. People with disabilities are twice as likely to be unemployed. Some lack necessary skills to enter and remain in the workplace, while others are discouraged by perceived barriers to employment. DRCFC's pre-employment services are a new initiative to help people overcome these barriers to employment and develop the necessary skills to be valued workers.
- ***Ticket to Work at DRCFC.*** This program, administered by Social Security, assists individuals receiving Social Security Benefits to enter the workforce. As a new Ticket to Work Employment Network, DRCFC is beginning to help individuals who were considered too disabled to work by Social Security, develop and establish their careers.

- ***Emergency Personal Care Assistance.*** In the City of Bridgeport, funds are available to assist individuals who lack adequate personal assistance services to remain independent in their homes. Emergency Personal Assistance funds allow individuals to hire their own attendants on a time-limited basis to meet changing and unmet personal care needs. In addition, a registry of available personal care attendants and drivers is maintained to assist individuals who need to secure the services of a personal care attendant.
- ***Part B funding for removing barriers to independence.*** Consumers of DRCFC services who encounter barriers that limit or restrict their ability to continue living independently may be eligible for Part B services. Part B funds can be used toward goods and services that remove such barriers.

## **ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY & EQUIPMENT**

DRCFC is a New England Assistive Technology (NEAT) Satellite Office. The NEAT Equipment Restoration Center receives equipment through donations and provides consumers with gently used and reconditioned durable medical equipment at significant savings. In addition, the NEAT Demonstration Center provides a range of Assistive Technology devices such as low vision aids, switches, modified toys, hearing loss aids, aids for daily living and much more.



If your agency (senior center, support group, service club, etc.) would like a hands-on demonstration and presentation of available technologies, please contact Fran Sinish at [fsinish@drcfc.org](mailto:fsinish@drcfc.org) or 203.378.6977 ext. 111.

## RECEIVE OUR NEWSLETTER VIA EMAIL!

Did you receive a copy of our newsletter in the mail? Please opt to receive our newsletter via email to help us save on costs. Please email Stephanie Mastrolillo at [smastrolillo@drcfc.org](mailto:smastrolillo@drcfc.org).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **"COPING WITH LOW VISION"** event - Oct. 12, 2011 at the Baldwin Center in Stratford. For more information, please contact Fran Sinish at [fsinish@drcfc.org](mailto:fsinish@drcfc.org) or 203.378.6977 ext. 111.
- Please join us on **October 19, 2011** for the annual observance: **NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH!** It's time to celebrate the contributions and skills of Americans with disabilities! More information and a T-shirt order form can be found at the end of this newsletter.
- Upcoming meeting dates of the **GREATER BRIDGEPORT DISABILITY ADVOCACY COLLABORATIVE**: September 15, October 20, November 17, December 15. For more information, please contact Larry Robinson at [lrobinson@drcfc.org](mailto:lrobinson@drcfc.org) or 203.378.6977 ext. 115.
- **OUTREACHES** are being planned in the **Norwalk area**. Please contact Yohanna Williams at [ywilliams@drcfc.org](mailto:ywilliams@drcfc.org) or 203.378.6977 ext. 110 if you are in the Norwalk area and would like more information about the Center.
- If your agency (senior center, support group, service club, etc.) would like a hands-on demonstration and presentation of available **ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGIES**, please contact Fran Sinish at [fsinish@drcfc.org](mailto:fsinish@drcfc.org) or 203.378.6977 ext. 111.

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## CONTACT DRCFC

Phone: 203-378-6977

Fax: 203-375-2748

Email: [info@drcfc.org](mailto:info@drcfc.org)

Mail: 80 Ferry Blvd, suite 210

Stratford, CT 06615

## VISIT DRCFC ONLINE!

Visit DRCFC online at: [www.drcfc.org](http://www.drcfc.org) to access our

- Message Board
- Online newsletter
- The National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) Monitor
- and more!

DRCFC is on Facebook!

Please visit us at: <https://www.facebook.com/drcfc>

## GREATER BRIDGEPORT DISABILITY ADVOCATES

The Advocacy Group meets monthly from 12pm until 2pm, at Bridgeport City Hall, 45 Lyon Terrace, Bridgeport. For more information on participating in the Greater Bridgeport Disability Advocacy Collaborative, please contact Larry Robinson at [lrobinson@drcfc.org](mailto:lrobinson@drcfc.org) or 203.378.6977 ext. 115.

### UPCOMING 2011 MEETING DATES:

September 15, October 20, November 17, December 15

## CONSUMER CORNER

- Do you have a success story?
- Have you overcome a physical or attitudinal barrier?
- Has the Disability Resource Center assisted you in increasing your independence?

Please share your story with us! Please contact Leslie Dickerson at [ldickerson@drcfc.org](mailto:ldickerson@drcfc.org), or 203.378.6977 ext. 100.

## DONATIONS

*Making donations to the Center has never been easier!*

- **Mail** donations to: DRCFC, 80 Ferry Blvd, suite 210, Stratford, CT 06615
- **Online:** Visit our *Donations* page to make your secure online donation via PayPal. <http://www.drcfc.org/donations.htm>

## TICKET TO WORK PROGRAM AT DRCFC

DRCFC is now an Employment Network (EN) for Ticket-to-Work, an employment program for people with disabilities who are interested in going back to work. The Ticket to Work program is part of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999—legislation designed to remove many of the barriers that previously influenced people’s decisions about going to work because of the concerns over losing health care coverage.

The goal of the Ticket Program is to increase opportunities and choices for Social Security disability beneficiaries to obtain employment, vocational rehabilitation (VR), and other support services from public and private providers, employers, and other organizations.

**EMPLOYERS:** Are some of your most valued employees going to retire soon? Do you worry about finding the right employees in the future? There is a pool of people who want to work...you can give them the opportunity! The Disability Resource Center Employment Network can help you find the *right person* and *support your decision*. Please contact Sean Harris at [sharris@drcfc.org](mailto:sharris@drcfc.org) or 203.378.6977 ext. 113.

**TICKET HOLDERS:** For more information, or to assign your ticket to the DRC Employment Network, please contact Sean Harris at [sharris@drcfc.org](mailto:sharris@drcfc.org) or 203.378.6977 ext. 113.

**BECOME A FREE MEMBER**  
of the Disability Resource Center of Fairfield County

**2011 Membership**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Contribution: \$\_\_\_\_\_ (optional)

**PLEASE RETURN TO:** DRCFC, 80 Ferry Blvd, Suite 210, Stratford, CT  
06615

“I support the goals and programs of the Disability Resource Center of Fairfield County to promote dignity and independence for all people with disabilities.”

**SEEKING VOLUNTEERS**

Looking for volunteers to assist with: phones, mailings, updating information library, and general office work. **Days & hours flexible!!!** If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Stephanie Mastrolillo, at [smastrolillo@drcfc.org](mailto:smastrolillo@drcfc.org), or 203.378.6977 ext. 103.

# National Disability Employment Awareness Month!

Please join us on **October 19, 2011** for the annual observance!  
It's time to celebrate the contributions and skills of Americans with disabilities in addition to recognizing and supporting the work of the Centers for Independent Living!

## Purchase your Disability Resource Center T-shirts today!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ ext: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Adult T-shirts: \$12.00 each (2X-3X ADD \$1.00)**

S \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_ L \_\_\_\_\_ XL \_\_\_\_\_ 2X \_\_\_\_\_ 3X \_\_\_\_\_

**Youth T-shirts: \$10.00 each**

XS \_\_\_\_\_ S \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_ L \_\_\_\_\_ XL \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make checks payable to:  
Disability Resource Center  
80 Ferry Blvd., Stratford, CT 06615.  
For inquiry call (203) 378-6977 ext. 110**



- ❖ Visit the DRCFC from 10am-2pm
- ❖ Meet & greet disability advocates/Ticket to Work staff
- ❖ Support the Centers for Independent Living
- ❖ Find out how you can help by donation or advocacy

**D**ISABILITY  
**R**ESOURCE  
**C**ENTER

of Fairfield County, Inc.

80 Ferry Blvd, suite 210  
Stratford, CT 06615