



## **PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

**The Disability Resource Center of Fairfield County, Inc. is a nonprofit and nonresidential agency, serving coastal Fairfield County since 1981.**

### **Our Vision**

People with disabilities take part in all facets of community living. They dwell in a world that emphasizes possibility, not limitation, and is free of barriers, both physical and attitudinal. Communities recognize and use the unique gifts and talents of all people with disabilities.

### **Our Values**

We embrace the values of Independent Living, including consumer control, peer support, barrier removal, community inclusion, independence, and empowerment.

### **Our Mission**

We seek to empower persons with disabilities and the community at large through information and referral to resources; advocacy; skills training; peer support; and awareness.

### **What Is Independent Living?**

Independent Living is a movement, a philosophy, and a unique way of providing services. Its focus lies in the belief that issues of dependence and access lie not with the individual, but with the community's attitudinal and architectural barriers. Its aim is to remove those barriers to allow persons with disabilities to be included in all aspects of life.

## **Independent Living Philosophy**

Regardless of disability, people have the capacity to:

- Make their own decisions.
- Direct their own lives.
- Live where they choose.
- Gain access to all the opportunities available in their communities.

***For people with disabilities, separate is not equal.***

## ***Independent Living Services***

Better than anyone else, people with disabilities know what they want and what services they need to achieve their goals. Therefore, all Independent Living services are

- Consumer controlled - directed, managed, and staffed primarily by qualified persons with disabilities;
- Community based - located within the community in which consumers reside, not in large institutions; and
- Community responsive - designed to address the disability related needs of a specific community by identifying service gaps and barriers that limit independence.

## **Who We Serve**

DRCFC serves youth and adults with any disability living in coastal Fairfield County, as well as family members, schools, businesses, and community groups. Coastal Fairfield County includes: Stratford, Bridgeport, Fairfield, Westport, Norwalk, Darien, Stamford, Greenwich, New Canaan, Wilton, Weston, Easton, Trumbull, and Monroe.

## How We Serve

Our services include:

- Independent living skills training
- Help to locate personal assistance, benefits, housing, and assistive technology
- Peer counseling and mentoring
- Counseling for transition from nursing home to community
- Job training
- Technical assistance
- Disability awareness programs and training
- Advocacy in the community and with state and national government
- Accessibility education for employers and others
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) education and guidance

## About Our Services

*"DRCFC provides a unique, invaluable service to individuals, many of whom are learning to live with a physical and/or mental disability in the community for the first time."*

*- Joseph M Carbone,  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
The Workplace, Inc.*

- **Independent living skills training** provides the skills needed for integration and full participation in the community. Individualized for each person, training can run from learning how to board a bus to operating a computer.

- **Peer Advocates** provide support for people with disabilities, especially those transitioning from nursing facilities, by drawing on their own life experiences with disability.
- **Peer Mentors** work with youth with disabilities, showing them that their disabilities are not barriers to a full life. Mentors help with career or education goals and problem-solving, and join in recreational activities.
- DRCFC provides opportunities for people with disabilities to **meet with state legislators**, both in Hartford and in the Stratford office, to make their voices heard about the support and services needed to maximize independence.
- Identifying, acquiring, and learning how to effectively use assistive devices significantly contribute to successful independent living for many with disabilities. Items from **New England Assistive Technology (NEAT) Marketplace** are available at the DRCFC Stratford office.

***DRCFC is one major link in the chain of many partners that are committed to assist individuals with significant disabilities to reach their goal towards independence."***

***- Brenda L. Moore  
Bureau Director  
CT Bureau of Rehabilitation Services  
Hartford***

- DRCFC and its members work to effect changes in society through **advocacy** for laws and for removal of barriers to people with disabilities. The organization also provides specialized disability awareness and sensitivity programs to the public, schools, civic groups, and businesses.
- The Center offers assistance to employers and others to comply with the **Americans with Disabilities Act**, locate adaptive technology, and achieve accessibility. Its staff and its collaborative partners will conduct onsite evaluations and employee training to build awareness of disability issues in the workplace.

- The award-winning **Ramp Program** is just one way DRCFC helps people with disabilities achieve accessible housing. Counselors also help locate transitional and permanent accessible housing and suggest ways to adapt existing homes.

***"The ramp is helpful. I can go out by myself instead of waiting for someone to help me. I don't have to think about trying to get up the steps."***

***-Emilee, a consumer  
Stratford, Connecticut***

### **For More Information**

Disability Resource Center of Fairfield County, Inc.  
80 Ferry Blvd., Suite 210  
Stratford, CT 06615

Phone: (203) 378-6977  
TDD: (203) 378-3248  
Fax: (203) 375-2748  
E-mail: [info@drcfc.org](mailto:info@drcfc.org)  
Web: [www.drcfc.org](http://www.drcfc.org)

*Empowering persons with disabilities ...  
Creating a world free of barriers*

*\* Original brochure produced with the support of GE, Fairfield, CT  
5/06*