



Finger Lakes **Independence** Center

Opening Doors to Independence

Image Description: Finger Lakes Independence Center--FLiC--Logo: The letters: F-L-I-C and the letter I looks like an open door. Finger Lakes Independence Center Opening Doors to Independence

January 2024

HAPPY NEW YEAR



Image Description: White background with 2024 in rainbow colors in the center. Above the year, in black letters, it reads, "Happy New Year."

The FLIC office will be closed on Monday, January 15 in honor of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service Holiday.

FLIC Supports Ithaca Rotary Club in Sending Mobility Equipment to Ukraine



Image Description: Photo take outside of the FLIC office of pick-up truck pulling an open trailer. Both the pick-up truck bed and the trailer are full of crutches, walkers and wheelchairs.

The Finger Lakes Independence Center filled a trailer and truck with mobility equipment on December 8th in support of the work of Crutches 4 Africa through the Ithaca Rotary Club. This is yet another way in which the generosity of those who donate equipment 'pay it forward' to those in deperate need of mobility assistance. Thanks to the wonderful generosity of all our donors, we often cannot hold in our facility all the medical equipment we receive. We were thankful for the opportunity to share the abundance where it is very much needed. Crutches 4 Africa works with Rotary Clubs across the nation to collect, ship and distribute mobility devices free-of-charge to people with physical mobility challenges regardless of race, gender, tribe, age or religion. The shipment pictured above will go to people in need in Ukraine.

To learn more about Crutches 4 Africa, visit: <https://www.crutches4africa.org/>

Navigating an Inaccessible World

Ensuring Access to Physical Spaces Is a Matter of Doing Things Differently

By **Jennifer Chassman Browne**
Sun Dec 03, 2023



Image Description: Photo of an individual in a wheelchair beginning to use an outdoor ramp to access a building.

While I have had juvenile rheumatoid arthritis since I was 6 years old, I was a mostly able child. I worked hard to make sure that my illness was as invisible as possible, as I didn't want to be seen as different from the other kids. As I got older, my body changed and my arthritis was more evident in the way that I walk and in the degeneration of my hands.

As a result of my disability becoming visible, I began to get stares and comments daily as I navigated the world. It's one thing to face physical barriers, and to have to struggle to move about the world and to be able to go, and be comfortable in, the spaces that I want to inhabit. It's a completely different challenge to know how to respond to the uncomfortable glances and comments. Let's start with the first challenge of navigating the physical world.

Until you can't climb stairs and sit comfortably in folding chairs or on picnic benches, you won't be able to understand how many barriers people with disabilities face. This was even the case for me. I wasn't prepared for how limiting I would find the world as my disability impacted my mobility.

Continue reading the article: <https://molinaro.house.gov/forms/form/?ID=21>

The Coalition for Snow-Free Crosswalks and Sidewalks: Moving Forward in 2024



Image Description: Photo of an Ithaca sidewalk in winter with snow piled on either side of a pedestrian sidewalk. Sidewalk has some clear areas and some covered with snow, and the curbcut to the crosswalk is completely blocked with snow and ice.

As many of you know, FLIC is a member of the Snow Removal Coalition in Ithaca. The coalition did not meet in December but will go back to regular meetings in 2024. The Coalition is still working to at least get crosswalks cleared in the city. We have renewed hope of being understood with the changes in leadership of Common Council and the Mayor. If you want to be involved in the Coalition in some way that works for you, please email me at jan@fliconline.org. Also in 2024, we plan to ask for general support from the community, including you, in the form of letters, emails, and public comment to the city's elected representatives. Even if you don't live in the city, if you work, shop, visit, or do business in the city, you are affected by the build up of snow and ice at the crosswalks. . We believe everyone has the right to traverse the city with freedom from barriers created by snow and ice. Feel free to email me with any questions, concerns, or your snow and ice stories of inaccessibility.

Remembering Andrés Gallegos, Chairman of the National Council on Disability



Image Description: Photo of Andrés Gallegos, seated in his wheelchair at a black table. He has very short white-grey hair and goatee, black-framed glasses. He is wearing a white, button-up shirt, blue suit jacket, and a blue and maroon plaid bow-tie.

The Disability Community is mourning the loss of Andrés Gallegos, Chairman of the National Council on Disability (NCD), who passed away on December 1st at the age of 62 years. The Administration for Community Living shared the following:

Andrés was one of our nation's most important legal minds on disability rights, a fierce champion of true inclusion and equal opportunities for disabled people, and a leader in the independent living movement. In addition, Andrés was a critical partner in the work of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to end disability discrimination in medical care and to address the health disparities experienced by people with disabilities. For decades, he provided advice and counsel on the implementation of the most consequential health care and disability rights laws - including the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, as well as state and local civil rights laws – to ensure equal access to care and services for disabled people. His impact can be seen across HHS – from the designation of people with disabilities as a population that experiences health disparities to the anti-discrimination provisions in our proposed update to the regulations implementing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

To read more, visit:

<https://acl.gov/news-and-events/announcements/hhs-mourns-loss-ncd-chairman-andres-gallego>

<https://ncd.gov/newsroom/2023/ncd-colleagues-remember-andr%C3%A9s-gallegos>

**Honor the Legacy of the
Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
on Monday, January 15**



Image Description: Poster of theme for 2024 Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Background is a mosaic of triangles in rainbow colors. Painted image of the Rev. Dr. King is on the right side of the poster. The poster reads, "2024 King Holiday, January 4th-January 15th. It Starts With Me: Shifting the Culture Climate Through the Study and Practice of Kingian Nonviolence." The logo for The King Center is in the bottom right corner of the poster, a green circle framed by a yellow circle. In the green circle are intertwining open circles and dots that resemble interlocking arms of people. Surround the green circle, in the yellow frame, it reads "The King Center, founded 1968."

Click the link to read more about The King Center and see how they are honoring The Rev. Dr. King for 2024: <https://thekingcenter.org/king-holiday-2024/>

Here are some ways to honor the holiday: [CLICK HERE](#).

Cornell University's Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Lecture:
<https://scl.cornell.edu/MLKLecture>

Kinship Caregiver & Respite Vouchers

Are you a Kinship Caregiver for a child under 18, or a caregiver for a relative who has a disability or chronic condition? Learn how to apply for up to \$600 in reimbursement for respite services.

The New York State Caregiving and Respite Coalition, managed by Lifespan of Greater Rochester, Inc., is offering respite vouchers for up to \$600. *Kinship Caregivers and caregivers of persons with a disability or chronic condition who are not receiving respite from another organization are eligible for this funding. Caregivers may use the voucher for respite services that include:

- An in-home program
- A center-based program, where a facility provides the care
- A summer or weekend camp
- Assisted living or nursing home programs

You must be a New York State resident and the primary caregiver of a child or an adult. You must provide a referral — a doctor, social worker, or other professional who knows you and your family. Emergency respite will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

You may not use voucher funds to reimburse household expenses, like rent or food. Funds cannot be used so the applicant can go to work. Vouchers are good for 90 days. For more information and how to apply, visit www.nyscr.org, call (585) 287-6391 or send an email to rhyde@lifespan-roch.org

*Kinship Caregivers who are responsible for more than one child may be eligible for more than \$600.

This project was supported, in part by grant #90LRLI0043, from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings

Vaccine Information for Everyone!

Right now, there is lots of information being shared about contagious illnesses, including COVID-19 and Mpox. It can be overwhelming to keep up with new information as it becomes available. This can make it hard to understand what choices we should make to keep ourselves and each other from getting sick.



The Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN) has new toolkits to help you understand more about what's going on, and how to protect yourselves and your loved ones. Read on for links to resources about Mpox, vaccines, differences in access to the COVID vaccine, and what getting an updated COVID vaccine looks like for children.

Our toolkit in partnership with the WITH Foundation and Catalent ADAPT ERG, "What do I need to know about Mpox?" can help you learn more about Mpox virus. It answers questions like:

- What is Mpox? What are the signs of Mpox?
- How can I protect myself from getting Mpox?
- What should I do if I get Mpox?

The toolkit is available in Easy Read, plain language, and video formats [here](#), in both English and Spanish.

"What you need to know about COVID-19 vaccines for children" can help you learn about up-to-date COVID-19 vaccine information for children. It answers questions like:

- Why is it important for children to get vaccinated?
- Can kids mix and match types of vaccine for their new shot?
- What are the guidelines for immunocompromised children?

The toolkit is available in Easy Read, plain language and video [here](#), in both English and Spanish.

"What are global disparities in COVID-19 vaccination and why do they matter?" can help you learn more about global disparities in COVID-19 vaccination. It answers questions like:

- What are COVID-19 vaccine disparities?
- What are imperialism and colonialism? Why do they matter today?
- What are charity models? Why do they matter in vaccination?

The toolkit is available in Easy Read, plain language and video [here](#), in both English and Spanish.

Our new toolkit, "What you need to know about vaccines" can help you learn more about vaccines. It answers questions like:

- What is a vaccine? How do vaccines work?
- Who should get vaccinated?
- What are boosters, and why do some vaccines need them?

And more, including explaining what vaccine misinformation is and how to avoid it.

The toolkit is available in Easy Read, plain language and video [here](#), in both English and Spanish.

Now more than ever, it's critical that we take steps to keep each other safe. Please share these resources with anyone you know that needs the information, and continue taking care of yourself.

Rep. Marc Molinaro Launches "Think Differently" Campaign

On October 23, 2023, Rep. Marc Molinaro launched the 'Think Differently: Stories' campaign. In 2015, Rep. Molinaro launched the ['Think DIFFERENTLY'](#) initiative, which aims to break down barriers for individuals with intellectual, developmental, and physical disabilities. ['Think DIFFERENTLY: Stories'](#) will build off this nationally recognized initiative by compiling stories that bring awareness to the challenges faced by the disability community. It will also be a forum in which constituents can share feedback and ideas for supporting individuals with disabilities.

Rep. Molinaro said, "The experiences of families with disabilities can be isolating. As the father of four children, one of whom is on the autism spectrum, I know this feeling. The more I have talked about my own family's experiences, the more I've come to realize we are not alone. Families with disabilities face tremendous barriers to navigate bureaucracies, access support services, get quality education, and find meaningful job opportunities. My goal with 'Think DIFFERENTLY: Stories' is to share stories of hope, optimism, and to shed light on the many challenges still facing families with disabilities. With this, we can bring more awareness, gather useful feedback, and encourage families with disabilities to keep moving forward."

If you have a story to share, visit <https://molinaro.house.gov/forms/form/?ID=21>



The Registry Referral Program

The Finger Lakes Independence Center administers the Registry Referral Program. This is a free referral service linking individuals seeking independent employment to people who need care in their home. Opportunities include: elder companion, housekeeper, run errands, cook, personal care aide, home care aide, LPN, RN. People looking for help can call and receive names of people willing to provide those services. If you either need assistance or if you would be interested in listing your name as a caregiver, please call FLIC at 272-2433 or email: info@fliconline.org. If you have experience caring for a friend or loved one, please consider sharing your compassion with others. This program is made possible through funding from the Tompkins County Office for the Aging.

Need a Public Notary?

Contact Cheryl Baker at FLIC at 607-272-2433 to make an appointment.

Services are free!

Image left: gold star with the words "Notary Public" in black, bold letters in the center. Double circle surrounds these words. In the circle at the top it reads "Official" and, at the bottom, "Duly Commissioned."





Image Above: Photo of hands reading braille from a white paper resting on a flat surface. Overtop of the photo, in white lettering, it reads: "World Braille Day, 4 January."

Louis Braille was born on January 4, 1809 in France and invented the reading system of raised dots in 1824. World Braille Day reminds us of the importance of accessibility and independence for those who are blind or visually impaired.

Read this article from the United Nations:

[Read the Article](#)

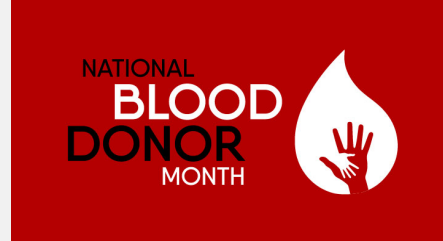


Image Above: Red background with words in black and white letter reading: "National Blood Donor Month." Next to words is a white tear-drop shape to represent a drop of blood. Within the drop-shape is a red hand with a white hand inside it.

Give the gift of life in the New Year! January is National Blood Donor Month. Visit the American Red Cross website, click below, to find a Blood Drive near you.

[Red Cross](#)

**JANUARY IS
GLAUCOMA**
AWARENESS MONTH

Image Above: Close-up photo of the right side of a woman's face, focusing on her brown eye. Next to her face it reads, "January is Glaucoma Awareness Month." All words are in black except "Glaucoma," which is in Green.

More than 3 million people in the United States have glaucoma. The National Eye Institute projects this number will reach 4.2 million by 2030, a 58 percent increase.

Glaucoma is called "the sneak thief of sight" since there are no symptoms and once vision is lost, it's permanent. As much as 40% of vision can be lost without a person noticing.

[Continue Reading](#)



Image Above: Photo of a baby, in a diaper only, laying on their stomach and pushing themselves up with their arms to look toward the camera. Next to the baby it reads, "January is Birth Defect Prevention Month." The word "January" is in rainbow letters and "prevention" is in green.

CDC recognizes January as National Birth Defects Awareness Month. This is a time to raise awareness about birth defects and highlight efforts to improve the health of people living with these conditions across their lifespan. Join the nationwide effort to raise awareness of birth defects and their impact on individuals, parents, and families.

[Read More](#)

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