



Finger Lakes **Independence** Center

*Opening Doors to Independence*

*Image Description: Finger Lakes Independence Center (FLiC) logo. FLiC in blue lettering with white background. The i in FLiC is an open door. Below FLiC it reads, "Finger Lakes Independence Center, Opening Doors to Independence."*

## March 2024

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### New ClearMark Voting Machine and Ballot Making Device--Try It out at FLiC on March 11th



*Image Description: Photo of new voting machine highlighting control pad and head phones.*

On Tuesday, February 20<sup>th</sup>, Jeff Boles, Advocacy Specialist, and Andrea Champlin, Statewide Systems Advocate, travelled to the Tompkins County Board of Elections voting machine facility to test out the new ClearMark Voting Machine and Ballot Marking Device. Jeff and Andrea both appreciated how easy it was to adjust the font size on the machine's screen and the number of options it had. For instance, the ClearMark Voting Machine is equipped with both a **touch screen, sip and puff, and a handheld keypad** for voters to use to mark their ballot. If you'd like

to learn more about the new machines, you can check out their website [here](#).

If you would like to try out the new ClearMark Voting Machine and Ballot Marking Device yourself – you are in luck! Our friends at the Tompkins County Board of Elections will be bringing the machine to FLIC on **Monday, March 11<sup>th</sup>. From 1:00 – 3:00pm**, we invite the community to visit us to check out the machines and practice casting your ballot. The Board of Elections also has several videos and resources available on their website if you're unable to make it out in person – you can find them [here](#). This is the first event in a series of voter engagement events that Jeff and Andrea are planning for 2024. If you'd like to find out more about these events, share ideas, or get involved, please contact them at [Andrea@FLIOnline.org](mailto:Andrea@FLIOnline.org) and [JEFF@FLIOnline.org](mailto:JEFF@FLIOnline.org).



*Image Description: Photo of FLIC staff, Jeff Boles, trying out the new voting machine.*



*image description: photo of the front entrance of McGraw House.*

On Wednesday, March 27, at 1:30 pm, FLIC staff will visit McGraw House to present our services and talk about our loan closet and try-it room. We will be joined by Cayuga Health Medical Equipment manager and an equipment technician to host a Walker Tune-up Clinic.

## FLIC Attends Advocacy Day in Albany





*Image Description: Photo of Senator Gustavo Rivera speaking to a crowd. He is a white man with a bald head, wearing glasses and a grey suit with a pink tie. Standing next to him is a female ASL interpreter. They are standing in front of a stone wall.*

In February, FLIC's Statewide System Advocate, Andrea Champlin, and Advocacy Specialist, Ila Rose, travelled to the Empire State Plaza in Albany, NY, to attend the NY Association of Independent Living and Consumer Directed Personal Assistance of NYS Budget Advocacy Day. FLIC staff participated in a rally with other advocates and a variety of speakers, including NYS Senator Gustavo Rivera, NYAIL's Blaise Bryant, and others. The rally helped to generate enthusiasm to fight for a budget that supports the rights of people with disabilities to live, work, and participate in their communities.

While in Albany, Andrea and Ila met with staff from NYS Senator Lea Webb's office. Staff also met with representatives from Assemblymember Anna Kelles' team virtually earlier in the month. During the legislative meetings, Andrea and Ila spoke about the 2024 NY Association on Independent Living's Disability Priority Agenda, which you can review [here](#). In addition to advocating for additional funding for Independent Living Centers like FLIC, they also advocated for increased funding for Access to Home, which provides much-needed accessibility modifications to homes and addresses the severe shortage of accessible housing. FLIC advocates spoke with legislators about how passing Fair Pay for Home Care, the Home Care Savings and Reinvestment Act, and expanding paratransit services throughout New York State, would benefit our consumers. At the meetings, advocates also voiced their ongoing concerns about the discriminatory Cuomo-era Medicaid Redesign Team II cuts to home care eligibility.

Andrea has been busy sending out Action Alerts to further advocate for these issues! If you are interested in joining the FLIC Volunteer Advocacy Team, please contact Andrea by emailing her at [Andrea@FLICOnline.org](mailto:Andrea@FLICOnline.org).

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## Administrative Change for Affordable Housing Management Company



*Image Description: Photo of The Overlook Apartments in Ithaca, a property previously-owned by Conifer Realty.*

Belveron Partners, a privately held investment firm focused on housing preservation, has closed on a deal that gives it controlling interest in Conifer Realty, one of the nation's largest affordable housing companies.

Belveron's investment marks one of several changes in control over Conifer's 45-year history, the latest being when founding member Richard Crossed named Timothy D. Fournier as president and CEO in 2012. The firms had announced earlier that Belveron would be making an investment in Rochester, New York-based Conifer.

The acquisition required support from more than four dozen federal, state, and local agencies, plus 70 general, limited, and nonprofit partners.

Read more about the change here: <https://www.housingfinance.com/management-operations/belveron>

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## Women's History Month: Meet Claudia Gordon

Claudia L. Gordon is a dedicated advocate for people with disabilities with nearly 30 years of versatile professional expertise, with a personal mission to level the playing field and ensure the same opportunities are provided for all. She currently serves as the Senior Accessibility Strategist with T-Mobile US, Inc. In this role, she drives strategies for a disability inclusive culture and an accessible plus equitable work environment. Gordon has held senior leadership positions with Sprint Corporation, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the National Council on Disability, and the National Association of the Deaf Law and Advocacy Center. During the Obama-Biden Administration, Gordon served as the Chief of Staff for the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs and the Associate Director of Public Engagement for the White House Office of Public Engagement. Adding to Gordon's professional expertise is her lived experience as an immigrant at the intersections of race, disability, and gender, which is the foundation for the strong emphasis on disabled individuals with multiple marginalized identities that she brings to her work. For her unrelenting commitment to advocacy, compliance, civic engagement, and mentoring, Gordon has been recognized by the American Association of People with Disabilities, Google, AT&T Humanity of Connection, National Disability Mentoring Coalition, National Association of the Deaf, National Black Deaf Advocates, and The Root 100. Gordon is a native of Jamaica, graduate of Howard University, and graduate of the American University's Washington College of Law.



Read her interview from 2010 here:

<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2010/08/30/meet-women-administration-claudia-gordon>

*Image Description: Photo of Claudia Gordon--she is an African American woman with close cut dark hair. She is wearing a dark suit jacket with a black and white blouse and is photographed in front of the American Flag and the Department of Labor flag. Picture was taken when she was serving in the White House.*

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## FEMA Releases Disaster Preparedness Guide for Caregivers

In recognition of caregivers' dedication and commitment to those in their care, FEMA and the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregivers (RCI) have created the Disaster Preparedness Guide for Caregivers to help them navigate unique challenges that may arise during disasters.



Caregivers are unsung heroes. This becomes especially true for those who carry out their duties before, during, and in the immediate aftermath of tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, and other extreme weather events. People with disabilities or other access and function needs, such as older adults, face a disproportionately higher likelihood of abandonment, additional injury, and death during disasters.

When forced to evacuate, relocate to emergency shelters, or find temporary housing, care recipients and caregivers require support and services that meet them where they are and account for unmet needs. FEMA is pleased to announce [The Disaster Preparedness Guide for Caregivers](#), a new guide that focuses on the lived experience of caregivers who often serve as a lifeline for others, whether the skies are blue or gray.

There are three essential steps that can help caregivers feel more prepared and in control when disaster strikes:

**Assessing needs** - Preparedness starts with considering the many tasks a caregiver performs as a matter of routine, such as hygiene care, meal preparation, routine medical assistance, and prescription drug management.

**Engaging a support network** - Caregivers also need care. Thinking through access to systems of support, especially if displaced, and the stress of keeping a care recipient safe and healthy are important.

**Creating a plan** - Recovering from a disaster begins with seeing preparedness as the first response to a disaster. By making an emergency plan, tracking alerts and updates, and keeping a checklist of everything a care recipient would need in the event a disaster disrupts the daily routine, caregivers become the true "first" responder.

I am committed to ensuring people with disabilities and other access and functional needs can recover from disasters. I thank our nation's caregivers for the role they play in helping FEMA meet that mission.

Regards,

[Sherman Gillums Jr.](#)

Director, [Office of Disability Integration and Coordination](#)



*Image Description: Photo of grass-covered yard. Image of a green alarm clock is superimposed over the grass next to text that reads: Daylight Saving Time Starts, March 10, 2024. Rememeber to set your clocks AHEAD one hour Saturday night or Sunday morning the weekend of March 11.*

**The American Red Cross**

Every March, the Red Cross honors people like you

## March Is Red Cross Month American Red Cross

*Image Description: With a white background, it reads, "March is Red Cross Month." March is in red letters, the rest is in black. This is followed by the red Red Cross cross and the words, "American Red Cross" in black.*

who make the lifesaving mission of the American Red Cross possible — the individuals across the country who turn compassion into action, helping others in times of crisis. Our Red Cross Month celebration has been an annual tradition since 1943, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued the first Red Cross Month proclamation. Learn more by clicking the button below.

[Click Here](#)



*Image Description: Green awareness ribbon with "brain injury" printed on it. Below is small icon of brain followed by the words, "Brain Injury Awareness."*

For more than three decades, the Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA) has proudly led the nation in observing Brain Injury Awareness Month by conducting an engaging public awareness campaign in March of each year.

Become more aware and learn about research, treatment and improving the quality of life for those with brain injuries.

[Visit the Website](#)



*Image Description: All in orange against a white background. Awareness ribbon with words: "March is Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month. With Awareness There is Hope. Surrounded by an orange border."*

Every day, people living with MS do whatever it takes to move their lives forward despite the challenges. By sharing their stories, we help people better understand life with MS and become inspired to do whatever it takes to change the world for people living with MS.

Learn more about what life with MS can be like and engage more people to do something about it. Follow the link below:

[Learn More](#)

## 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](mailto: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 Description: In purple lettering against a white background, it reads, "World Bipolar Day, March 30th." Includes logo-circle that transitions from pink to blue. Inside the circle is a small, white circle and two white half-circles that form a person.*

The vision of World Bipolar Day (WBD) on March 30th is to bring world awareness to bipolar disorders and to eliminate social stigma. Through international collaboration, the goal of World Bipolar Day is to bring the world population information about bipolar disorders that will educate and improve sensitivity towards the illness.

**Learn  
More**

Finger Lakes Independence Center | 215 Fifth Street, Ithaca, NY 14850

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