

Newsletter

September 2019

CAPITAL DISTRICT
Center for
Independence, Inc.



The Capital District Center for Independence, Inc.

The Capital District Center for Independence, Inc. (CDCI) is a non-residential, community based, Independent Living Center (ILC) which offers a wide variety of services to consumers with any and all disabilities, and their families.

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Meet the Staff

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The Path to Self-Reliance

By Reggie S.



For an individual with disabilities, the path to self-reliance can be a daunting and complicated one. On one hand, your disability limits your interaction with the world. On the other hand, strangers, your doctors, even your family and friends, may be telling you what you can and cannot do. More than anything, the latter, has been my biggest hurdle, since becoming disabled.

Five years ago, after I suffered a traumatic brain injury, I lived every day in fear my injury would eventually take my life. This anxiety was reinforced by my neurologist who told me I would eventually become a quadriplegic like Stephen Hawking. My family told me I should relax, collect Social Security Disability benefits and live the remainder of my life in leisure. I would be safe from the dangers of the world. Very soon afterward, I allowed myself to believe them. I spent the next four years watching Netflix, blindly consuming eleven medications several times a day while *LIFE* passed me by. My hair went gray and I gained eighty pounds. I became a recluse, as I succumbed to the side effects of my prescriptions and failing bodily functions. I was happy to be alive, but I was not *LIVING*. If it wasn't for my children, who kept reminding me of the outgoing confident person I used to be, I truly believe my situation would have been even more depressive than it already was. If, for no other reason, I had to get back on my feet for them.

Last Spring 2018, I made a conscience decision I was going to become the independent, confident man again. It did not matter if neuroscience would ever find a way to keep me from becoming Stephen Hawking. Hey, if he could overcome his disability to become a Nobel prize winning physicist, surely I could get my act together. My desire to want to re-enter the workforce, go back to school and find a better home for my children, led me to The Center for Independence. The peer advocates assisted me in moving out of my one-bedroom apartment into a three-bedroom one. They pointed me in the direction of numerous resources which could help my find employment and further my education. But more than anything else, they instilled in me the confidence to go out and find more resources **ON MY OWN**. Brain rehabilitation taught me to eat, dress and take care of my daily activities again. So I could function. The Center for Independence taught me to have a life again and to experience it more abundantly.

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Health Food Corner

Baked Turkey Meatballs

- 1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/3 cup Italian-seasoned breadcrumbs
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh herbs
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 pound ground turkey
- 1 large egg
- 1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil

1. Preheat your oven to 375 degrees F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil and coat with nonstick spray.
2. In a large mixing bowl, add the cheese, bread crumbs, herbs, salt, garlic powder, onion powder, oregano, pepper, and red pepper flakes and stir well to combine. Add the turkey. In a small bowl, beat the egg, then add it to the meat mixture. With a fork or your fingers, mix just until combined, being careful not to compact the meat.
- 3.
4. With a scoop or spoon, scoop the meat and shape into 1 1/2-inch meatballs. Arrange on the prepared baking sheet. You will have about 20 meatballs total. Brush the tops of the meatballs with the olive oil.
5. Bake for 15 minutes, or until the meatballs reach an internal temperature of 165F and cooked all the way through.

Medicaid Buy-In for Working People with Disabilities

I'm sure we can all agree, but The United States is in the middle of a healthcare crisis right now. Rising costs of proper medical, coupled with high deductibles and being underinsured is the reality of the situation for many people. There are options. We have Medicare, private insurance through employers and New York State of Health (aka The Marketplace). Some people with low incomes qualify for straight Medicaid. However, for some people, these options are totally unavailable. Understanding the need, The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) – basically the federal government, along with the help of participating states – created the Medicaid Buy-In for Working People with Disabilities. We called it MBI.

Just like other Medicaid programs, MBI availability and rules varies state by state. We're going to focus on New York State. There's a few things you need to know.

1. MBI is for people with disabilities ages 16 – 65 who are also working.
2. In order to qualify as being disabled, a person needs to be deemed by Social Security Administration as fitting their definition of disability or be assessed by the NYS Department of Health to being disabled.
3. A single person can have up to \$20,000 in resources (a couple can have \$30,000).
4. The income thresholds vary depending on how many hours you are working, if you are single or part of a couple and how you are categorized according to Department of Social Services (DSS).

If you were to lose your job by being laid off or the conditions of your disabilities were interfere with your ability to complete your job, MBI does offer a grace period. Basically, under these circumstances, you will not be cut off immediately. Instead, you will have six months to find new employment in order to keep your benefits. Make sure when this happens, you notify your local DSS office.

If you are about to turn 65, you will be receiving a letter in the mail stating you are no longer eligible after your birthday. However, Medicare starts for all individuals regardless of disability status or not at 65, so make sure to keep checking the mail for the letter from Medicare stating it is time to enroll.

If this is something you are interested in learning more about or are ready to apply, come check out our presentation in October about MBI.

You may also make an appointment at CDCI by calling (518) 459-6422.

CDCI's Upcoming Workshops

Tuesday, September 10th, 11a-12:30p
Rock Your Benefits
SSI and SSDI Work Incentives

Tuesday, October 8th, 11a-12:30p
Rock Your Benefits with John Dutcher
Medicaid Buy-In Program for
Working People with Disabilities



Emergency Preparedness

It's not something we like to think about, but emergencies do happen. There are things we can do to help ease optional suffering during personal emergencies. However, what happens when a weather disaster or widespread emergency occurs and the usual services are not available?

The Capital District can experience many kinds of emergencies including: floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, snow, heat waves, fires, chemical incidents or disease outbreaks. These types of things can be especially difficult for people with disabilities or special needs. There are concerns such as not being able to move or get around quickly, reliance on medication and medical equipment or on others. Some of us have communication needs so we can be as safe as possible. These are all additional things which should be considered to prevent optional suffering.

CDCI work with Albany County Department of Health and the Sheriff's Department to ensure people with disabilities needs are heard and addressed. In honor of National Emergency Preparedness Month, CDCI advocates are willing to help you come up with a plan in case of an emergency. Due to the kindness of the Sherriff's Department, we also have some great giveaways for those who make an appointment focused specifically on emergency preparedness.

We also would like to offer self-care handbook written by the Albany County Department of Health, donated by the Albany County Sheriff's Department to anyone interested in obtaining information about preparing for an emergency as a person with a disability. Call (518) 459-6422 or visit our office to pick up a copy today!



CDCI's Support Groups

All support groups meet once a week.

Monday

12p – 2p

Self-Advocacy Group

Practice and learn about self-advocacy skills, laws and other topics revolving around speaking up for yourself.

Monday

2p – 4p

Citizens for Public Transportation

Meet with like-minded people who are passionate about consistently clean, safe and accessible bus stops.

Thursday

2p – 4p

Circle's Edge Loneliness Group

Sometimes, we just need some hang out with people we hope to one-day call friends.

If you are interested in joining one of these support groups or work with a peer advocate to create your own, please call CDCI at (518) 459-6422.

Thanks!

Research Your Job Market

Do you know what jobs are available in your area? It's one thing to look up vacancies, but what happens if you don't even know where to begin or what you would like to do? There are so fields in which you can always find openings – human services being one of them. However, if this is not your calling, it's time to start researching. Let the internet be your friend. One resource to start with is New York State Department of Labor. They offer so many services including job fairs, vacancies, statistics, etc. Plus, they're accessible – there is an office in every county! On their website, you can also see what percentages of jobs are available in your area to see if your interest is represented.

September is National Suicide Awareness Month

There are many reasons why a person would ever want to commit suicide. While we will never be able to list or understand all the reasons, the most important thing we can do is listen to someone who is suffering. Sometimes, human connection is what a person needs to bring them back.

Know the Warning Signs

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) offers some warnings signs and behaviors to watch out.

Warning Signs:

- Increased alcohol and drug use
- Aggressive behavior
- Withdrawal from friends, family and community
- Dramatic mood swings
- Impulsive or reckless behavior

Suicidal *behaviors* are a psychiatric emergency. If you or a loved one starts to take any of these steps, seek immediate help from a health care provider or call 911:

- Collecting and saving pills or buying a weapon
- Giving away possessions
- Tying up loose ends, like organizing personal papers or paying off debts
- Saying goodbye to friends and family

September 10th is World Suicide Prevention Day. Take a moment and think of those who have been lost to suicide. #BeThe1To is the hashtag used to promote National Suicide Prevention Lifeline's message of remembrance and awareness.

Come See Us in the Community!!

CDCI is participating in the New Jerusalem Home of the Saved Church's
16th Annual

Community Block Party



Saturday, September 14, 2019
11am – 2pm

160 Sheridan Avenue, Albany, NY

Come and talk to staff to learn about our services, upcoming workshops, emergency preparedness information, etc.

Self-Advocacy Tips: #2

Know how to explain your disabilities!

You are the expert on yourself. Using the correct diagnoses while also explaining how it affects you is the best way to express your needs. It can assist you if you ever need to ask for help. Plus, it can be empowering and help you create boundaries!

Do I need a doctor's letter to make an appointment with CDCI advocates?

Nope! We do not need medical proof of your disability nor do we need health insurance. CDCI consumers self-report their disabilities and everything is funded through grants! We try to break down as many barriers as possible to help those in need.