Ever thought about being a mentor?

Now is the perfect time to put those thoughts into action. Progressive Center is proud to introduce to Mercer County the Ready to Achieve Mentoring Program, RAMP, a career focused program that has brought a structured mentoring approach to many communities across the nation. RAMP uses a combination of group, peer, and
STUDENT TRANSITION CONTINUES MOVING FORWARD!

By Scott Elliott

Because of our excellent reputation, we were very proud that a nationally recognized organization, Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) came to us to see if we were interested in bringing their program to New Jersey. The program entitled Ready to Achieve Mentoring Program (RAMP) has started and we are excited to be able to not only work with more students with disabilities but also to develop additional relationships with schools and community partners.

RAMP will for the first time put us in position to recruit and utilize mentors as a key and essential ingredient for working with students, schools, and community partners. We are already in discussion with two schools and a few organizations regarding mentor candidates. We are also excited to announce the hiring of Antoine Nelson who came on board with previous mentor program experience to be the program coordinator to helping us lead RAMP!

On a couple other student transition fronts, we are getting close to additional program start-ups. These forthcoming programs were created in line with the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA). These programs will be funded by the New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, one through a grant and another as a fee-for-service. More detailed information to come once we get closer to start up.

PCIL has had its ups and downs over the years getting steady funding for our transition programs, but I will say that the downs had nothing to do with performance and quality. In fact the reason we are moving forward is due to the excellent reputation we have with the outside world that includes schools, families and other organizations!
RAMP ON
Continued from Front

one-on-one mentoring to help youth learn
about job options, post-secondary education,
setting goals, and accomplishing them.

Funded by a federal grant, RAMP is designed
to assist youth with learning and cognitive
disabilities, emotional and mental health
needs, court involved, physical impairments,
as well as other youth who may be at risk of
not making a successful transition to adult
life.

Progressive Center is looking for adult
volunteers to serve as a positive role model
to a young person for at least one year.
Mentors will be required to meet face to face
with mentees twice a month for one hour
sessions and communicate with them weekly
through call, email, or text. All mentors
will be provided with an orientation training
which will include details of the program
goals, agency philosophy and expectations
of the mentor role. Ongoing training will
also deliver the tools necessary to strengthen
mentor-mentee relationships and to allow the
mentor to grow in their role.

If you are interested in becoming a RAMP
mentor please contact Antoine Nelson,
Mentor Coordinator, at 609-581-4500 or
antoine.nelson@pcil.org.

MEET ANTOINE
By Antoine Nelson

Greetings, my name is Antoine Nelson. I began
working at PCIL in April 2017
as Mentoring Coordinator for
RAMP (Ready To Achieve
Mentoring Program). I am
a Rutgers University Alum
where I received my Bachelor
of Arts Degree in Criminal
Justice/Sociology. I have spent
the last decade working with
underprivileged individuals such
as at risk youth, mentally ill,
low income, developmentally
disabled, homeless, and
incarcerated populations. I
am currently in my third year
volunteering as executive
director of Sons of Someone, a
male youth mentoring program
based out of Elizabeth, NJ. I am
excited to be a part of PCIL and
carrying on the mission!
Yoga and relaxation were the focus of the February 27th event. Katie Rodriguez led a yoga session for about 14 individuals at Project Freedom, Hamilton. She brought soothing music and essential oils for the full yoga experience. It was a real treat that everyone enjoyed! We hope to do this event again.

Music appreciation, participation, ice cream and socializing were enjoyed on April 24th at Halo Pub in Hamilton Square. PCIL folks enjoyed the music of Reed Thomas of Mercer Arc and his band. Some people were inspired to participate with the band by singing, and shaking tambourines. We enjoyed ice cream. Halo Pub was great for making everyone feel welcome and free to express themselves!

UPCOMING REC EVENTS

**JUNE 29** - We will be going to the Arm & Hammer baseball stadium in Trenton to cheer Trenton Thunder as they verse the Flying Squirrels from Richmond, Virginia. There are 29 seats available, 6 of those seats are accessible. The game will begin at 7 PM. There will also be post game fireworks. Tickets will be available to members for $5 and non-members for $8.

**JULY** - Annual PCIL Picnic at Mercer County Park

**AUGUST** - Annual PCIL Softball game at YMCA/Sawmill Miracle League baseball field.
NEW FISCAL CHANGE WITH DDD’S SELF-DIRECTED EMPLOYEES

By Chelsea Martin

The Department of Human Services (DHS) recently announced the selection of Public Partnerships, LLC (PPL) as the new Fiscal Intermediary (FI) for the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), Division of Disability Services (DDS), and Division of Aging Services (DoAS). This means that the current FI for DDD will shift from Easter Seals to PPL.

Shifting to an F/EA service delivery model:
• Increases choice, control, and freedom for the participant
• Increases flexibility for the participant
• Supports and reflects person-centered planning and service model NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities / February 2017 1 of 4
• Enables participant to determine SDE pay rate (previously, SDE pay rate was capped at $15/hour)
• Enables participant to hire a family member (except for parent, legal guardian, or spouse)
• Allows a family member who resides in the home to become a paid SDE (except for parent, legal guardian, or spouse)

It is also important to note that this type of service delivery model has been very successfully used by the Division of Disability Services for its Personal Preference Program, a program accessed by many Division consumers. Many families whose loved one currently receives services from an SDE have shared that this model is more in line with true self-direction and have recommended this model for all self directed services.

Billing and payment for current SDEs will continue to be handled as it has been until the transition to the new Fiscal Management Service provider and the new Fiscal/ Employer Agent service delivery model occurs on June 1. If an individual needs/wishes to employ a new worker before May 1, the application and paperwork will be processed by Easter Seals. Beginning May 1, new SDE applications will be processed by PPL. Please note that an SDE who is employed through Easter Seals prior to May 1 will need to complete a new application with PPL in order to continue to provide services after June 1.

Please read more about PPL on their website www.publicpartnerships.com /programs/ Newjersey

To enroll a new SDE please call PPL’s enrollment number at: 1-877-908-1752
To speak with a PPL Customer Service Representative call: 1-844-842-5891

To speak with a Spanish speaking Customer Service Representative call: 1-844-842-5892
Last fall I heard about a program at the Hamilton Area YMCA for people with multiple sclerosis (MS) interested in stretching and modified exercise to improve range of motion and balance. Considering I had been paying membership fees to this Y and not using the facility, I knew this was a perfect opportunity to rectify lack of participation as well as my avoidance of exercise due to muscle spasticity, pain, and fatigue.

Janice Nastasi, Healthy Living Supervisor of Hamilton Area YMCA, informed me during 2014 that the YMCA programming coordinators had been interested in providing a supportive class for individuals with multiple sclerosis. During this same time period the National MS Society had been interested in approaching YMCA facilities to implement modified exercise classes for individuals with multiple sclerosis. The Hamilton Area YMCA at 1315 Whitehorse-Mercerville Road in Hamilton, New Jersey 08619 became the pilot program in New Jersey. The first classes started April 2015. This has led to three more classes offered day or evening as well as an aquatics class and has led to programs at five additional YMCA’s in New Jersey. You can contact your local National MS Society to find out if there is a MS One Step program near you. The staff are certified personal trainers that obtain additional training and certification through the National MS Society.

When an individual with MS registers for their first cycle, the course is no cost and utilizing the YMCA facility is included during the first cycle. If the individual enjoys the modified activity and camaraderie they have the option of joining the Y as a member and may register for the MS One Step second cycle at no cost. For specific information regarding registration and date of the next cycle please contact Janice Nastasi at jnastasi@hamiltonymca.org, or 609-581-9622 ext.114.

I am currently in my third cycle of attendance. When I first started I was a little intimidated by the camaraderie already developed by the group of individuals with MS that had been attending since the program had been implemented in 2015, what would be expected of me, as well as the evening instructor, Ernie Razzano. My anxieties were quickly alleviated when the group embraced me and Ernie modified stretching and the exercises for my abilities. Janice Nastasi and Nick Fuccello are personal trainers that work for the Hamilton Area YMCA that assist Ernie in the evening class that meets twice a week for one hour. I now utilize my membership outside of the class with Nick’s support. I am so grateful for their ongoing support, caring, kindness and humor.

The benefits have been more than increase in range of motion and balance. I have gained friends that understand with one
**MS ONE STEP**

Continued from PG 6

word what I am struggling with that day with the MS, parenting and/or work. I now walk into the Y and it feels like an episode of Cheers because staff and members know me by face and some even by name! I wish I had their memory for names! Although I have to admit I have experienced less brain fog since attending the MS One Step program. I haven’t had a debilitating flare since I started and my depression has decreased. I feel less isolated. Several members of my class have been engaged with the MS Walk at Veteran’s Park in Hamilton every year. This is my first MS Walk this year as I joined one of their teams. I am unsure I will be able to walk the entire trail; I will do what I can and let the volunteers help me. This is a big step for me. I am used to being the caretaker, the person offering help and assistance, the one to make sure everyone is okay. MS has taught me humility. I am grateful to Hamilton Area YMCA and the National MS Society for providing this opportunity. This has been made possible by individuals who support fundraising efforts of staff and members of the YMCA and the National MS Society. From my heart to yours, thank you.

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**SSI APPLY ONLINE**

The Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program pays benefits to disabled adults and children who have limited income and resources.

To be eligible to register online, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Be between the ages of 18 and 65
- Never married
- Not blind
- A US citizen residing in one of the fifty states, the District of Columbia or the Northern Mariana Islands.
- No prior application for or receipt of SSI benefits

Visit www.socialsecurity.gov to start the process. The Progressive Center would like to remind consumers to please use extreme caution when applying for benefits by this or any other methods. If there are questions, comments, or concerns please contact our office.
SAVE THE DATE
2nd Annual
A TASTE for Success
• CORK & KEG EDITION •
SEPTEMBER 23, 2017
TITUSVILLE, NJ
WANT TO SPONSOR?
EMAIL INFO@PCIL.ORG

We are proud to support the Progressive Center’s A Taste for Success.

Supporting and Empowering People With Disabilities
Robbinsville, Hamilton, Lawrenceville, Woodstown, Hopewell, Toms River and Westampton

www.projectfreedom.org
May is Older American’s Month and the federal Administration for Community Living (ACL) selects “Age Out Loud” as the 2017 theme. This theme encourages lending a positive voice about aging – that Older Americans continue to create, explore new things, continue their education and increase their commitment in giving back to their community.

Older adults are taking charge of their health decisions, focusing on remaining independent, staying physically and mentally engaged and being purposeful and productive in their daily lives.

One need not look any further than the Mercer County Council on Aging to find a group of older adults who are the epitome of Aging Out Loud! Our Council members maintain active lives – physically, mentally and spiritually! From Senior Olympics involvement and frequent travel escapades, to motorcycling and walking several miles every day – the importance of keeping physically active is a

Continued on page 11
PerformCare partners with the New Jersey Children’s System of Care (CSOC), a division of the Department of Children and Families, as the single point of entry for children, adolescents and young adults (ages 5-21) who need behavioral health services, are impacted by a developmental and/or intellectual disability, or need certain substance use treatment services.

The Children’s System of Care’s goal is to help keep children at home, in school, and in the community.

How PerformCare Helps - Starting with just one phone call to 1-877-652-7624, PerformCare can help a parent or guardian connect their child to the behavioral health, substance use, or developmental disability services they need to thrive.

Depending on the child’s unique needs, support may include: respite services; Mobile Crisis Response; summer camp tuition assistance; in-home counseling; family support services; habilitation services; substance use treatment; trauma informed care; behavioral supports; care management needs assessment; out-of-home treatment; partial hospitalization; functional family therapy, and/or assistance to obtain or customize assistive technology.

PerformCare and CSOC work together to administer the publicly funded developmental disability service delivery system for children and youth up to age 21. This is a significant step toward an integrated approach to improved care for all impacted youth.

Intellectual/Developmental Disability Eligibility

PerformCare is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to connect families to individualized care access for eligible children. To start the application process please call PerformCare at 1-877-652-7624. Once registered by phone, families can use PerformCare’s online portal at www.performcarenj.org to apply online to become eligible for developmental disability services.  

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Older American’s Month 2017
Continued from page 9

high priority when considering one’s well being.

Equally important is maintaining mental agility. Council members keep abreast of Office on Aging activities, involve themselves in other community organizations, i.e. on Boards, Commissions, volunteer at AARP, and continue with their education (one member graduates with her Bachelor’s degree this year!).

Spiritual and emotional health is essential to wellness. One member is an active member in a popular chorus that presents concerts throughout the year, and yet another is a leader at her church. Many members have expressed that the power of faith is a driving force in the lives they lead. Let’s hear it for being ambassadors to healthy aging!

All Council members take their tenure with the Office on Aging seriously realizing that, in an advisory capacity, whatever support they can lend the Office on Aging empowers them and their peers. Council members voice their concerns with local legislators and public officials. Their advisory capacity has resulted in assisting with funding decisions for services necessary for secure and independent community living.

Age Out Loud is a self-imposed motto for The Mercer County Council on Aging. Current members of the Council include Chairperson, Barbara Stoffels; Vice- Chairperson, Doris P. Hodges; Executive Committee members Milly K. Brown and Elizabeth Solan; Jacques Lebel; Kathy Fiery; and Sarita Wilson.

If you are interested in finding out how you can serve in an advisory capacity on the Council on Aging, kindly send a note of interest to edoremus@mercercounty.org. With a theme like Age Out Loud, we’d like to hear from you!

Helping Families Across New Jersey
Continued from page 10

Printable application forms to apply by mail are also available.

Please review the links for more information about services and support available to eligible youth with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities and how to apply.

Family support services - http://www.performcarenj.org/pdf/families/family-support-services-facts.pdf


TRADE Transportation is pleased to offer our services as a County agency that is a partner to the Mercer County Aging and Disability Resource Connection! TRADE Transportation provides non-emergency transportation to residents of Mercer County who are seniors (age 60+) and to adults with disabilities. Eligibility can be established over the phone. Service is available county-wide and up to 5 miles beyond the border of Mercer County. Our business hours are Monday through Friday, from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The following is general information about TRADE:

- TRADE employs 25 full-time drivers and 2 stand-by drivers. All drivers have a Commercial Driving License. All TRADE vehicles are accessible via passenger lifts. Transportation is provided free, while a donation of $1.00 is suggested for each trip.

- Reservations are provided on a first-come, first-served basis. Reservations can be made up to 14 days in advance. While some service requests can be made with less notice, advance notice is suggested. TRADE does maintain a waiting list for trip requests that exceed our capacity.

- Service is provided on a demand responsive (occasional) or subscription (repeating) basis. TRADE provides subscription service to customers traveling frequently to County Nutrition Centers, Dialysis Centers, shopping and work.

- Service is provided for a variety of trip purposes including medical, dialysis, nutrition centers, employment, recreation, education & shopping.

- TRADE does provide weekly shopping trips to residents of some senior housing sites.

Contact Information

For reservations, dial 609-530-1971 and press 1 for reservations. Reservation staff receives more calls than can be immediately answered. Please leave a message. We will return your call.

For dispatch, dial 609-530-1971 and press 2 for dispatch. Contact dispatch if you need to get an update on the vehicle assigned to provide your ride, if you wish to cancel, or if you are concerned that you may have missed your ride.

Residents who suffer from speech or hearing loss may access New Jersey Relay service by dialing 711. More information is available on the Mercer County website, www.mercercounty.org.
Hi, my name is David. I live in Hightstown, New Jersey and I am a freshman at Princeton University. I am 19 years old and I have Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD). Because of DMD, I am not able to stand or walk so I use a power wheelchair to get around. I also need physical assistance for many routine activities like bathing and dressing. I want to let you know how the Personal Assistance Services Program (PASP) has helped me fulfill my dream of going to college and living on campus!

I was thrilled when I was accepted to Princeton University. I then thought, “How am I going to do this? Both of my parents work.” My dad contacted our medical insurance company to ask about coverage for me living away at college but the insurance company said that the policy provided no personal aide coverage for me. My dad then called Mercer County and was directed to Pam Mazzucca of the PASP program. Pam was extremely helpful and encouraging and answered our questions about the program. A nurse came to meet with me for a physical evaluation, and after a little while, Pam called to say that I had been approved!

The PASP program provides the majority of the support I need for a personal aide. I do receive some support from Princeton University, as well as, Medicaid, and my parents round out my 24/7 support by staying over in the dorm several nights each week.

In addition to taking classes and studying, I am participating in several activities. My dream is to be a sports broadcaster. This fall, I did the commentary for the Men’s Water Polo games over the internet. I also joined the Princeton radio station, WPRB 103.3 FM and do a sports radio hour called “Rounding the Bases” on Monday evenings from 5pm to 6pm. I also do some broadcasting for the men’s and women’s home basketball games for WPRB online. It is a blast to sit courtside at the press table and broadcast the game! Hopefully my education and broadcasting experience will lead me to my dream job of broadcasting for the Philadelphia Eagles!

Because of the PASP program, I am able to have a full college experience. I am very thankful for the support of this great program.
Mercer County proudly announces the continued offering of Skills2Care a proven, evidenced-based program to support dementia caregivers. Designed to help caregivers successfully deal with the daily challenges of care giving, a specially trained occupational therapist is paired with a caregiver to create individual actions plans that will build skills to manage behaviors that can cause caregiver distress.

Participation in the program is free of charge to family members and is a service being provided through the Mercer County Office on Aging and their subcontracted agency, Independent Domain. Skills2Care is part of regularly offered services through Title III funding of the Older Americans Act.

Skills2Care is a home-based, caregiver-centered, problem-solving oriented program. After an extensive assessment of current home safety, functioning level of the person with dementia and the emotional well-being of the caregiver, plans are made for a series of 3-6 additional visits. Each additional session will re-emphasize practicing of learned skills, stress reduction techniques and ways to enhance caregiver well-being. On-going education about the dementia process is offered.

The end result? Caregivers will learn new and creative ways to communicate with the person with dementia, understand and respond to dementia-related behaviors, simplify the home environment, and simplify everyday tasks creating a safe, meaningful home atmosphere for all. These skills will enhance caregiver confidence and well-being, while reducing caregiver stress.

To learn more about Skills2Care or to learn how this program can help you, kindly direct all inquiries to the Mercer County Office on Aging by calling 609-989-6661 or by email at edoremus@mercercounty.org.
The Mercer County Office on Aging
Your Aging and Disability Resource Connection

The Mercer County Office on Aging, like all of New Jersey’s Area Agencies on Aging, is considered as your local Aging and Disability Connection (ADRC). The sole purpose of the ADRC is to connect older adults, those living with disabilities and their caregivers with the services they need to continue living independently in the community of their choice.

The ADRC:
- helps consumers find home and community-based services
- offers information about Medicare, Medicaid and other insurance options
- assists in planning for consumers’ care needs now and in the future
- supports caregivers throughout their caregiving journey
- promotes health and wellness and disease prevention programs
- helps consumers become eligible for programs and services

Mercer County’s Office on Aging/ADRC can be reached by calling 609-989-6661. The staff will listen to your concerns to help you determine what help you may need. If there is a need to come to the office, our staff will gladly arrange an appointment with you.

For a comprehensive statewide resource, go to www.adrcnj.gov.

20 Questions to Help Us Help You

The Mercer County Office on Aging/ADRC is required to assess the needs of the county’s older adults, those living with disabilities, and their caregivers. This allows the office to designate funding for supportive services for those most in need so they can live safely and securely in the community of their choice. From nutritional to medical needs, from transportation to in-home supports, knowing what YOU need is essential. A copy of the questionnaire is inserted with this issue of the newsletter. Either mail it to the address on the back, or scan and email your completed form to edoremus@mercercounty.org. You may also call our office at 609-989-6661 and someone can fill it out with you. Soon the questionnaire will be available for download on our website. It will appear under the Human Services Division and under the Aging and Disability Resource Connection at www.mercercounty.org.
FREE COMPUTER OPPORTUNITY

PCIL has two used Dell Desktop computers with monitors and keyboards to give away! We will offer these first come, first serve to two PCIL MEMBERS. Member must be able to come to the office and pick up their computer. Interested members should call us at 609-581-4500.

Progressive Center for Independent Living
3525 Quakerbridge Road
Suite 904
Hamilton, NJ 08619

Phone: 609-581-4500
Fax: 609-581-4555
E-mail: info@pcil.org
Site: www.pcil.org