Often times when I’m out in the community, I find myself having difficulty with many of the tasks that the general public sometimes takes for granted. One of these is opening doors to the businesses that I use on a regular basis.

That was the case with my local bank. When I moved into Project Freedom in Robbinsville I was happy to find an Investors Bank on Route 33, only a short distance from my apartment. The only problem was I couldn’t open the doors from my wheelchair.

Further, once I made it through the outside doors there was another set of even heavier doors in the lobby.

As a new Intern with PCIL, one of my first assignments was to address this challenge. I called the bank and was transferred to the Accessibility Department. I explained my
INVESTORS BANK OPENS DOORS TO GREATER ACCESSIBILITY

Concern and pointed out that in addition to Project Freedom there are several other disabled and senior complexes in the immediate area. The Investors Accessibility Coordinator was very understanding and said he would look into it.

Two days later he contacted me to say that they had identified the problem. The door closer was opening at 12-15 pounds of resistance and was therefore, not functioning at the specified resistant requirement of 7-10 pounds. He then told me that they would install automatic door openers, and within two weeks I was happy to find that they had been installed on both sets of doors.

Now when I go to the bank I don’t have to call someone inside or knock on the window to alert them to open the door for me. By being so responsive to the needs of the disabled and elderly in its community, Investors certainly lived up to its slogan of “Banking in your best interest.”

MEET JONATHAN

My name is Jonathan Buckley and I am currently a high school senior attending the Mercer County Technical School – Health Science Academy. Over the last year I have had the pleasure of interning at the Progressive Center for Independent Living. It has been an extremely interesting and rewarding experience for me and I am very thankful to have had the opportunity. I was able to gain new job related skills while working toward a very fulfilling goal, and while most of my responsibilities were office related I found most of my tasks enjoyable and it was very invigorating to get involved with the local community. Over my time at PCIL I was involved in many community events designed to raise awareness of their services and advocate for increased tolerance towards those with physical and mental disabilities, one such program was even held at my old elementary school. It was a lot of fun to participate at these events and assist a very good cause. This fall I will be attending Stevens Institute of Technology as a Civil Engineering student.
Hi, my name is Patrice Jetter, and I’m 52 years old. One of my passions is being a cheerleader on two teams—the World Cup Superstars and the South Jersey Storm Twisters. I’m kept pretty busy travelling to practice at World Cup in Freehold and travelling to practice at Rastelli’s Sports and More in Deptford.

Competitive Cheerleading means we compete against other cheer teams. It’s nothing like cheerleading when I was in school. We had a lot of things we have to learn; like stunting, tumbling, jump sequence, as well as cheer and dance moves. Stunting usually consists of five people—the back spotter, the front spotter, the bases, and the flyer. I’m a back spotter; I support the flyer from behind when we’re doing stunts. The front spotter supports the flyer from the front. The bases support the flyer from both the left and right sides. We have to work together so that we do the stunt properly and not drop the flyer.

We have to do all of our movements at the same time. We have to be loud when we say the cheer and we have to smile for the judges. My coaches are all extremely nice people. My coaches from World Cup are Coach Charlene, Coach Dawn, Coach Sue, and Coach Amie. My coaches from South Jersey Storm Twisters are Coach Shannon, Coach Erin, Coach Shelley, and Coach Lisa.

All of our hard work paid off when we got an opportunity to compete at the “Battle at the Capital” in National Harbor, MD. It was the first time ever at a national cheer competition that they allowed special needs cheer teams to compete. Wow, can you imagine…my team? At Worlds? If we won Worlds, I would just pass out on the floor! Everyone on my team wanted to win so badly.

Sixteen special needs teams came together from all over the country to be one of the first special needs teams in history to compete at a national competition. We went out there on that floor and did our best performance ever! In the end, my team ended up in 3rd Place. We each received individual medals and a Team Trophy to display in the gym!

I don’t know what team I’m going to be on next year, but no matter where I go, once a cheerleader, ALWAYS A CHEERLEADER!
On April 30th fifteen enthusiastic participants met at the Pennington Golf Center to play miniature golf. Pennington Golf Center is located on Route 31 and has an accessible miniature golf course as well as a driving range. The owners were very accommodating and explained the rules of miniature golf. Everyone, including some of the parents of participants, enjoyed moving around the course and showing off their putting style. Elizabeth even won a free game by getting a hole in one! It took about an hour for everyone to make their way around the course. Afterward we all enjoyed bagels that were generously donated by Pennington Bagel. We hope to do another recreational event there again. Keep your eyes open for the next PCIL/Mercer County Community Connections flyer and please tell us how you like to have fun. We are always open to planning new events.
MARK YOUR CALENDARS

JUNE 21 LEARN TO RIDE NJ TRANSIT BUS WITH PCIL

Join PCIL and learn to ride a NJ Transit bus and take a trip to the Quakerbridge Mall, 10am to 2pm. RSVP to (609)581-4500 by June 17.

JUNE 23 GIRLS DAY: PAINT YOUR NAILS AT PCIL

PCIL members have a chance to try a new beauty product. On June 23rd at 1:00 PM, we will be meeting in front of the PCIL office for a chance to try spray nail polish. We thought this would be a fun activity to kick off the summer! If you would be interested in participating call Renee or Suzanne at (609)581-4500.

JULY 13 CONGRESSIONAL RECEPTION

The Housing and Community Development Network along with Monarch Housing Associates and 25 cosponsors, including the Supportive Housing Association of NJ, will be traveling down to Washington DC on July 13th to a Congressional Reception. They will be urging lawmakers to protect housing for vulnerable populations with adequate federal funding which is currently in jeopardy. They hope to bring at least 300 NJ residents, approximately 25 from each of the 12 Congressional Districts. There will be buses available in various locations. If you are interested in joining them, call Monarch Housing Associates at (908) 272-5363.

JULY 18 ANNUAL PCIL PICNIC AND PONTOON BOAT RIDES

PCIL will be hosting their annual picnic and pontoon boat rides at Mercer County Park. Keep an eye out in your mailbox for the official flyer!

AUGUST 10 PCIL ANNUAL SOFTBALL GAME

Join us at YMCA Sawmill for the Annual PCIL Softball game. Call (609)581-4500 to join a team today!
CAREER GATEWAY CONTINUES, NEW PROGRAM ADDED

The PCIL Transition program is busy as ever this year with some new and exciting pilot programs currently running in our local schools.

Career Gateway is up and running again with a slightly different twist. This year under a grant through the Department of Labor, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, we are conducting sessions within the Ewing High School with a focus on high school seniors. This program offers sessions on independent living, budgeting, transportation and employment skills. In addition to the classroom sessions, each student will have the opportunity to job sample (3) sites based on their interest levels. The goal of this career exploration is for each student to leave with a sense of knowing what employment path to take upon graduation.

Incentives to Employment is our newest adventure. This program is funded through the Mercer County One-Stop and follows the guidelines of the Workforce Investment Opportunities Act (WIOA). We have partnered with high school seniors at Steinert and Nottingham High Schools and provide sessions on leadership, banking/budgeting, study skills, employment skills and student transition. The exciting initiative of this program is that PCIL will assist these students in obtaining summer employment or paid internships. PCIL will then provide ongoing assistance to these individuals a year past their high school graduation to support them with current employment and/or assist these students as many take on the challenging roles within post-secondary education. As the program name implies, Incentives are provided to the students as they accomplish several milestones within the program.

PCIL continues to look for additional opportunities to grow our transition program. Along with our programs directed to high school students, we can assist recent graduates with work readiness services within our A la Carte Menu that is available on our website under It’s All About Work.
SPECIAL OLYMPICS, NJ: Tyffany Sukiennik receives second place at Special Olympics for basketball.

SUPPORT COORDINATION UPDATES

ENRICH YOUR LIFE TODAY By Matt Daly

PCIL is involved in many different programs that provide services to people with disabilities living in Mercer and Hunterdon counties. One of the services I would like to highlight is our Support Coordination program. This program provides adults with developmental disabilities with supports that can enrich their lives. The most common example of individuals utilizing this service are young adults with disabilities who are exiting the school system and in need of services. These qualified individuals are assigned a budget based on level of need and these monies can be used to purchase services. Some examples include supported employment, day habilitation programs, individual support staff, gym memberships, and music lessons. These services are meant to fill the individual’s day with programs that are enriching the participant’s life and increasing their level of independence. If you are interested in finding out more about our Support Coordination services please call our office at 609-581-4500.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS, NEW JERSEY

By Tyffany Sukiennik

I was in Wildwood to play basketball games on Saturday, March 12 and Sunday the 13th with the SKOR team. On Saturday, we played the Montgomery team and won! On Sunday, we played Green Warriors, but our team lost. There was a big audience watching us play. After the basketball games were over, we went back to the hotel to get ready for the dinner and more fun. There was a DJ and more games to play with each other at the gym. Before going to bed, I hung out with the team, played cards, and colored. On Sunday after breakfast, there was an awards ceremony. That’s when we received our medals. I won a second place silver medal.
Advertise With Us!

Place your business ad in our newsletter. We have a mailing list of over 1,100 households within Mercer and Hunterdon counties.

Call us for more details and rates.
609-581-4500

ARE YOU A PCIL MEMBER?

A PCIL membership has many benefits that can be enjoyed throughout the year.

Join now and enjoy your benefits until the end of 2016. Members receive reduced rates on recreational events and are invited to a Members Only Dinner.

- Individual --- $15.00
- Couple- -- $25.00
- Family (Up to 5 living at same address) --- $40.00
- Organization --- $100.00

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