Special Olympic is Coming to Mercer County
Is your Business “Disability Friendly”?

By Anonymous

O
n June 14, nearly 4,500 athletes, 1,000 coaches, 10,000 volunteers and 90,000 spectators will descend upon Mercer County for the 2014 NJ Special Olympic games. Mercer has an abundance of facilities being utilized for the games, such as Princeton University, Mercer county park, the Trenton Mercer Airport, Lawrence Prep, TCNJ, Rider University and many more. MidJersey Center for Economic Development projects that these 16 Olympic-style team and individual games will generate over $306,000 in revenue for Central NJ Business including hotels, restaurants, retail, and tourist sites.

P
repare your staff and become a Disability Friendly Establishment. As a leader in Disability Awareness, the Progressive Center for Independent Living will help prepare your establishment to accommodate the thousands visitors and millions of dollars in revenue this event will bring to Mercer County, taking your business to the top of the preferred vendor list.

T
his unique class is offered year round and is given by people with disabilities. The class provides basic tips so you do not have to feel awkward when dealing with a person with a disability. You will

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ERA Central Realty Group’s YARD SALE for MDA a Great Success!

By Anonymous


Over 1,000 community members from near and far perused in excess of 10,000 items ranging from glassware, toys, tools and furniture to linens and vintage collectibles at the Yard Sale for MDA. The event raised more than $11,000, with 100% of the proceeds benefitting MDA Summer Camp.

The effort of the entire team at ERA Central Realty is nothing short of amazing,” said Erin Dresnick, NJ Area Director of the Muscular Dystrophy Association. “I am so impressed with the overwhelming support shown to MDA.”

The Yard Sale for MDA is one of hundreds of events organized by ERA Real Estate members nationwide to benefit MDA.
PCIL Remembers Peter Callas, Jr
Excerpts from The Times of Trenton, May 4, 2014 by Nicole Mulvaney

Peter George “Pete” Callas Jr., who won equal measures of respect for his leadership at The Times of Trenton, his civic involvement and a four-decade battle with muscular dystrophy, died May 3, 2014, at his Hamilton Township home.

Mr. Callas was born Aug. 4, 1959, in Hoboken, N.J., to Peter George Callas Sr. and Elizabeth Vasiliades Callas. In the eighth grade, while growing up in Cresskill, NJ, Mr. Callas was diagnosed with muscular dystrophy, a genetic disease that gradually weakens the musculoskeletal system and slowly limits locomotion.

Mr. Callas met the challenges of muscular dystrophy with an indomitable will and the untiring support of his family, always finding a path to fulfill his aspirations. Mr. Callas graduated Utica College at Syracuse University cum laude in 1981 with a bachelor’s degree in public relations and a minor in film.

His first newspaper job was as news editor at the Daily Advance in Roxbury. He began his 25-year career at The Times of Trenton in 1984 as a copy editor. He rose steadily to assistant night city editor, Princeton metro editor and city editor before taking over as metro editor in 1988 and managing editor at The Times in 1997, a position he held until he retired in 2009.

Following retirement, Mr. Callas started PGC Communications to assist businesses in the region connect effectively with media. He was a strong advocate for persons with disabilities, serving at various times on the board of the Progress Center for Independent Living, since 2009 and the Hamilton Township and Mercer County advisory committees on persons with disabilities.

Mr. Callas is survived by the love of his life and wife of nearly 12 years Antoinette “Toni” (Ford) Callas, brothers John and Alex, sister Hope, with whom he shared his birthday, and many nieces, nephews and cousins.

Donations can be made to the Peter G. Callas Memorial Golf Day for MDA, 11800 Sunrise Valley Dr., Suite 1210, Reston VA 20191. The golf outing, scheduled for June 25th this year, is a long-established Callas family tradition of fundraising for the Muscular Dystrophy Association, begun by Peter Callas Sr. immediately after his son was diagnosed and continued by Alex Callas.
Just Call Me Mom -  
*A perspective of being a mom with a disability.*

By Anonymous

The following article is written by a long time PCIL member who wishes to remain anonymous. It offers a unique insight from a mother and wife with a disability. It reveals how she is perceived, how she faces her parental environment every day, along with harsh realizations regarding her peers.

Being a parent with a moderate disability is a roller coaster ride of emotions, obstacles, and challenges. However, the rewards of raising a child are well worth the struggles and emotional low points that I encounter among my peers and in everyday life.

I can absolutely state that having a child is probably the most rewarding thing I have ever done as a women with a disability. I’m proud every day that I put my son on the school bus and that we are on time, while the other mothers wonder how I can do it with my obvious disabilities. It is a huge challenge every morning to make sure he is dressed well with neatly combed hair. It is also important to me that I am dressed neat and clean. Nobody is going to see us sloppy and blame it on my disability! While there are many obstacles in my home life, the outside world presents its many shares of frustrations and concerns.

When my child was an infant, many people did not believe that he was mine. Often when I was out in stores or restaurants, people would ask, “Whose baby is that?” That was frustrating and disheartening. Now these same people see us in the same places, and some of them praise the job I have done raising him. I appreciate their comments, but at the same time I wonder about why they are saying that. Did they question my capability when he was an infant? Or are they just amazed that it can be done?

My disability causes a gap between myself and other parents in the neighborhood or at school. No matter how well we look or how much I try to bridge that frustrating gap, it will continue to exist because of their ignorance, their fear, and their misunderstanding of people with disabilities. This is a sad commentary on our society.

When I’m in my son’s classroom for events, I almost always feel like an outsider because I cannot blend in with the other parents. The children are naturally curious, and that is fine. But with very little interaction with the other parents I constantly feel uneasy and out of place. Awkward, yes! But I’m there for my child who sees me as “Mom”. Yet because I have a child, these same people

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Recreation Update
by Drew Zimmerman

This spring many PCIL consumers, friends, and family came together to enjoy each other’s company. We went to the Ringling Brothers Circus at the Sun Bank Arena and, on May 8th, we attended The Trenton Thunder game, which was a total sellout complete with a postgame fireworks show!

Finally the warm weather is upon us, and that means we have a lot of cool recreation events lined up including several outdoor events! Be on the lookout for the yellow flyers in your mailbox, which will give you the full details. Here’s a look at some of the upcoming events we have planned for you!

UPCOMING SPRING RECREATION EVENTS

June 21 - Trenton Freedom Professional Indoor Football Game

June 26 – Bocce Ball and Cookout Activity Night

July 24 – Trenton Thunder Baseball Game with catered dinner.

August 6 – Annual Miracle League Softball Game

Remember to renew your 2014 membership to take advantage of all the savings on tickets throughout the year! Call Drew Zimmerman at 609-581-4500 ext 121 for more information.

Just Call Me Mom
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look at me differently.

Before being a mother, I faced a lot of patronizing comments. With a child, I get more respect, but I’m still not seen or treated as an equal. I’m the mother with a disability, someone to speculate about with amazement and curiosity, but never to be asked over for a quick cup of coffee and gossip. I wish this would change. I like coffee and conversation just as much as the next person.

Society as a whole still has a long way to go in its attitudes toward people with disabilities, and it has a longer way to go before parents with disabilities are accepted as parents. But in the end the only acceptance that really matters is from that child who calls us “Mom” or “Dad.”
News from the Transition Team
by Renee Pfaff and Pamela Vernon

The transition process continues to be a key focus for all of our staff and consumers at PCIL. No matter what stage of life one is in, the transition process takes planning. By helping in this process we strive to keep our students and consumers in line to reach their goals, which are crucial in planning for one’s future.

It’s All About Work, a statewide CIL program partnering with DVRS, is our newest transition program that assists and navigates expectations for work for individuals with varied abilities. The tiered High School courses enable students to begin DVR services prior to graduation and as early as age 16. This has never been done and is very important in the transition planning process. The adult programs are designed to assist post-high school individuals with varied abilities in identifying their life goals, especially work-related, and to help them plan for those goals. To date we have implemented the tiered programs to students in Mercer County at Rivera Middle School, Daylight Twilight High School, and Ewing High School. Hunterdon County is delivering both tiers to students in Hunterdon Central Regional High School. The adult services are referred to us through DVRS. Hunterdon has completed 2 cases, with more referrals on their way.

To view our recent webinar on “It’s All about Work” hosted by SPANNJ, please visit: http://www.spanadvocacy.org/content/its-all-about-work-webinar-5614

Career Gateway is a transition program near and dear to our hearts, provided to PCIL through a grant from DVRS. We are in the first term of our second year, with two more terms to go. Interested candidates should contact either Renee Pfaff at 609-581-4500 or Pamela Vernon at 908-782-1055. This is a fantastic way for an individual to acquire skills for employment and investigate real work experiences within our communities. We are proud to present testimonials from our Gateway Gang.

“I learned so many meaningful things in the Career Gateway Program that built my self-confidence. I truly believe that all the skills I learned in Career Gateway will play a major role in my future employment endeavors.”

- Victor, age 17

“The experience from Career Gateway taught me that I can do a lot of different jobs. Right now I am working 2 part-time jobs”

- Jessica, age 24

“The social interaction activities with the Career Gateway group were a lot of fun”

- Lauren, Age 21

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Life Skills is a program we offer to schools that are looking for a course that offers a curriculum detailing more comprehensive daily living skills. Progressive Center has been offering Ewing High this program for the past few years. This past summer Progressive Center set up a day to have students learn about accessing services through NJ Transit. Representatives of NJ Transit visited the school and provided videos and information on the services they offer. The session ended with the students having the opportunity to sit inside one of the transit buses.

A few weeks ago Ewing Life Skills teacher, Ms. Lewis, and Progressive Center took it a step further and planned for the seniors from this class to take their first trip on a NJ Transit bus. We traveled from the school down to a local strip mall and back. Students learned how to check the status of their ride by “texting in”, paying their fare, and watching for the correct stop. We had a great time and learned a lot.

IT’S ALL ABOUT WORK WEBINAR

http://www.spanadvocacy.org/content/its-all-about-work-webinar-5614

Pam (PCIL) conducting IAAW session at Hunterdon Central

Ewing High students taking a ride on NJ Transit.

Student presenters at the Dare to Dream Conference; Chelsea, Marisol, Quinten with Renee (PCIL) and Mike (Ewing)
As the newest member at PCIL, I am proud to serve for the Emergency Preparedness Program. During the last six months, I have been a trainer with the Emergency Preparedness team, and have enjoyed helping educate people with disabilities in personal emergency preparedness, as well as, various agencies, including human service providers, in emergency preparedness when involved with people with disabilities.

I am excited to report that the Emergency Preparedness Program is currently working on a new project from the Princeton Area Community Foundation (PACF) Grant. Through this grant we will be training 200 people with disabilities on personal emergency preparedness. Currently we have several sessions scheduled to take place in June. Anyone interested in becoming a “Community Liaison” or if you know of a group that would benefit from this training, please contact any of the PCIL Emergency Preparedness team members at 609-581-4500.

In addition to our PACF Grant project, we are collaborating with Project Freedom to conduct an Adaptive Equipment Demonstration at Project Freedom in Lawrence on Tuesday, June 24, 2014. The Adaptive Equipment Demo will help familiarize First Responders, who may encounter an automobile accident involving a modified vehicle, with the proper training on how to extricate occupants safely with minimal damage to the modified vehicle. This is very useful information that will help save money and time during rescue efforts. This is a nationally recognized program being offered throughout the region. If you are interested in finding out more information on this program, please contact any of the PCIL Emergency Preparedness team members at 609-581-4500.

OPEN HOUSE
Adapative Equipment Demonstration

June 24, 2014   10 AM - 4 PM
Demonstration at 2 PM

1 Freedom Blvd, Lawrenceville, NJ
PCIL Remembers Cynthia Martinez
by Anonymous

Progressive Center for Independent Living would like to remember the passing of our friend, Cynthia Martinez, who passed suddenly in April 2014, leaving behind the love of her life, son Christian, and many other relatives.

Ms. Martinez, who was legally blind, maintained strong involvement at the Progressive Center. Ms. Martinez was a gifted artist, whose work appeared at the art shows at Grounds for Sculpture. She was a permanent fixture at Writers Block meetings, picnics, theater outings, and various other events. She enjoyed spending her time with her son. She always kept her hands busy, by either knitting baby clothing for friends and family, or taking pencil to paper creating a delightful piece of art for all to enjoy. The PCIL staff wishes to express its deepest sympathies to Ms. Martinez’s family. We will miss her.

Training Opportunities
by Jerry Carbone

With warmer weather, and the Summer Special Olympics just around the corner, travel seems to be on everyone’s mind. As a person living with a disability, the thought of staying at an unfamiliar hotel can be stressful. However, if the hotel staff is friendly, amiable, and uses proper etiquette it makes the experience that much better.

So, how do you know what places can meet your expectations? Just look for the “Disability Friendly” seal of approval from PCIL. Progressive Center is now offering Disability Friendly Certifications to local hotels and restaurants. Entities that complete our Disability Friendly course receive a Disability Friendly certificate and an official Disability Friendly seal if more than 15 of their employees complete the training.

So far, there are three hotels in Mercer County that have earned our seal of approval, they are; Residence Inn Marriott at Carnegie Center; Element Hotel Ewing; and Courtyard Ewing Princeton. The staff and management of these hotels have been provided with basic information on best practices for interacting with persons with disabilities. You can find a complete list of disability friendly businesses on our website through our resources page (http://pcil.org/resources).

If your business is interested in finding out more about this class or other classes, we offer, call us, 609-581-4500, or visit our website, PCIL.org.
A very important part of a successful job search is having a resume that will catch the attention of an employer. Keeping a few simple tips in mind can improve the chances of getting an interview.

The first tip is to customize the resume for the position you are applying for. This means looking at the job description and creating a resume that will show your ability to do the job. Also, it is important to have a strong objective statement that is tailored specifically to the position you are applying for.

Some of the next tips may seem more obvious, but keeping them in mind will show you are both organized and detail oriented. This means having a resume with easy to read fonts and organized headings. Obviously, correct grammar and spelling are very important. Even one mistake is likely to result in the resume being disregarded. Lastly, it is important to double-check your contact information to make sure it is correct.

The final tip is to be specific when listing your responsibilities while on the job. Giving details will separate you from other applicants. This example is taken from an article on monster.com. Instead of saying, “Worked with employees in a restaurant setting” it would be better to say, “Recruited, hired, trained and supervised more than 20 employees in a restaurant with $2 million in annual sales.” These details are much more likely to impress an employer and increase your chances of being contacted.

Keeping these tips in mind will greatly increase your chances of getting a call from an interested employer. This is the first step in a journey that can lead to employment.
understand why being accessible makes good business sense. You will learn respectful and effective communication techniques, understand trends in disability and customer service, and feel confident about communicating and interacting with people with disabilities.

Special Olympic is coming to Mercer County - Is your Business “Disability Friendly”? continued from Front Page

Newly Added to Our Preferred Vendors List

The following businesses have recently completed our Disability Awareness Course.

- element™ by Westin
  1000 Sam Weinroth Rd
  Ewing

- Residence Inn® Marriott
  @ Carnegie Center
  Route 1, Princeton

- Courtyard® Marriott
  360 Scotch Road
  Ewing

Save the Date: August 6th
Pcil Annual Softball Game at Hamilton YMCA SawMill
Miracle League Field
Amazon in Robbinsville, NJ is now hiring.

For a list of positions available please visit:
www.amazonfulfillmentcareers.com/opportunities/warehouse-associate/

For daily information sessions on application helpful hints and tips, visit Mercer County One-Stop Career Center 26 Yard Ave., Trenton. No appointment needed.

Daily information sessions are now on Mon., Tues., Thurs. at 10am and on Fri. at 10:30 am.