On Tuesday, June 24, 2014, Progressive Center held an Adaptive Equipment Demonstration (AED) and open house. What a wonderful experience and turnout it was for all who attended. We would like to thank Mr. Tim Doherty, Director of Project Freedom in Lawrenceville, NJ, where the event took place, as well as, the PCIL staff and Career Gateway volunteers who helped in setting up the event.

The purpose of the AED and open house was to help First Responders familiarize with the need for proper training on safely extricating occupants in modified vehicles with minimal damage to the equipment. The fact that there are approximately 54 million modified vehicles registered across the country proves that this demonstration is full of useful information that will help save money and time during rescue efforts.

All modified vehicles are equipped differently according to the specific need of the driver. At the open house there was a static display of several different types of modified vehicles, from personal vehicles to public transportation vehicles (i.e. Access Link), to demonstrate the non-standardization that a First Responder would possibly encounter. Throughout the day we had groups of emergency personnel come through to view and observe these vehicles and

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On July 30th 2014, PCIL held their annual picnic in Mercer County Park. Consumers and staff came to hang out and have fun while enjoying one another’s company. The weather was great for an outdoor gathering since it was bright and sunny. There was not a cloud in the sky nor was it too hot to enjoy. I don’t think event coordinator, Drew Zimmerman, could of asked for a better day. The weather really made people relax. Everyone’s pleasant mood was contagious. The picnic brought together a diverse group of people and it’s safe to say people left the picnic with some new friends.

The food was served by Fred & Pete’s and it really felt like a home barbecue. They cooked hot dogs, burgers and sausages with the help of Ryan Hanley, a PCIL member that happened to be on a job site through the Career Gateway grant. Ryan loves cooking and stated that Career Gateway teaches skills that not many schools teach. He was grateful for the opportunity.

County Park’s boat ride was relaxing and surprisingly informative. People learned historical facts about the lake while riding on a pontoon boat. People on the boat tour saw wildlife such as Black Herons and snapper turtles. There was plenty of room on the boat so people felt comfortable and safe. Many said they would take the boat ride again if given the chance.

Pam Vernon has worked at the Progressive Center for Independent Living in Hunterdon County for many years, she noted how much PCIL has grown and commented on how many new faces came to the 2014 picnic. Andrew McGeady was also in attendance and he loved the picnic since he enjoys interacting and learning about new people. Andrew really enjoyed the boat ride. If this year’s picnic was anything to go by, then the PCIL annual picnics are fun and relaxing events that help people from many different backgrounds connect while making new friends and catching up with old ones.

There were plenty of games and activities for everyone. Picnic goers even got to take a ride on a pontoon boat. Mercer
Recreation Update

By Drew Zimmerman

We have had a very busy summer in the Community Connections Recreation Program. The Bocce Ball and cookout event at Project Freedom Hamilton were a big success. Over forty individuals and their families came out to enjoy hot dogs, hamburgers and outdoor fun. The catered dinner at Trenton Thunder was also nicely attended. Over twenty people came out to enjoy great food in perfect weather. Next up was the Mercer County picnic and pontoon boat ride event. This was our most successful event ever with over sixty people enjoying a beautiful day. Fred and Pete’s in Mercerville catered the event. One of our Career Gateway students, Ryan Hanley assisted in the cooking with the staff from Fred and Pete’s. Ryan had an amazing time cooking, and was even given a chef’s jacket for his efforts!

As the summer rolls on, PCIL events keep popping up on the calendar. Over the next few weeks, tickets are now available to several Trenton Thunder games. In addition, you can enjoy September baseball in Philadelphia with tickets to two different Phillies games. The Social Club will also be making a return over the next couple months. Please contact me at drew.zimmerman@pcil.org to suggest any places in the area to eat. Be on the lookout for plenty of new events over the early fall and keep an eye out for the bright yellow flyers in the mail. Don’t forget to obtain 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.

Keeping It Clean!

By Anonymous

In June our part-time office cleaner, Ramsey Liz, shared some exciting news. With the help of some leads through PCIL and his job coach, he landed a full-time job at Amazon! Ramsey took on the responsibility in showing the ropes to our new help, Francisco Quinones. So PCIL gets to congratulate both Ramsey for moving on to a fulfilling job and Francisco for getting his feet wet in his first paid employment.
They call these days, “The lazy, hazy days of summer.” We think that summer is the time to generate the heat towards your future. Take the time to request and register for “It’s All About Work,” an initiative for people with disabilities, ages 14 and up, designed to make the perfect connection to adult life and services.

You may request this initiative through your high school, the NJ Association of Centers for Independent Living, (NJACIL) and through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, (DVRS).

YES! Your children can receive DVRS prior to graduation, beginning at age 16. Completing the Tier I and/ or Tier II course work offered by the CILs in high school, initiates the eligibility process. In class, students identify and develop skills needed for planning their lives after school, complete with a strength-based student transition profile. We even offer a parent training to help with understanding the transition process.

Tier III was designed for non-transitioning adults with disabilities to clarify life goals and better equip them for employment. These sessions take place in a group setting and are usually referred through DVRS.

The A La Carte Menu of Services is for any and everyone in need of fine-tuning skills needed to obtain and retain employment. Course selection includes time management, organization, conflict resolution, assistive technology, and community based work experience, to name a few.

If you remain in that summer haze, please call Renee Pfaff at 609-581-4500 or Pamela Vernon at 908-782-1055.

Career Gateway Success!

PCIL takes great pride in the fact that we build relationships with our Career Gateway students, past or present. Here are some of the success stories where students have reached goals in areas of employment or independence;

- Cortez Range achieved employment on his own and is looking to continue his education in the technical field.
- Aaron Murray is working diligently on obtaining his license and has recently achieved employment.
- Lauren Jesson found a job at Marshalls in Princeton as a part-time store associate.

Continued on page 5
Career Gateway Success Continued
continued from page 4

• Tyffany Sukiennik obtained eligibility for Access Link and took her first ride to PCIL.

• Christopher Andalcio and Ramsey Liz were both recently hired by Amazon.

• Abby Lecato is working at Burlington Coat Factory and loves her job of maintaining the dressing rooms.

• Jess Lindenberger recently celebrated a step towards independence as she moved into her first apartment at Project Freedom, in Hopewell.

• Matt McCormick will be working as a gas attendant.

Adaptive Equipment Demo Continued
continued from front page

the challenges that they would possibly face when extracting the occupants. In addition, there was a live Adaptive Equipment Demonstration that was conducted at 2pm. PCIL also handed out DVDs outlining the nationally recognized program that we offer throughout the region to all First Responders and agencies.

We would like to thank the following who attended the open house and demonstration; West Trenton FD, Ewing Township Fire Rescue, Prospect Heights FD, Pennington Road FD, Lawrence Township FD, Burlington County Chiefs Assoc., Advancing Opportunities.

Special thanks to our technical advisors; Rich Mastriano, Hightstown FD, and Mr. Jim Krause.

If you are interested in finding out more on this nationally recognized program, please contact Peter Heredia at 609-581-4500 ext 112.
For the last two years the Progressive Center has been conducting a program called Career Gateway. This opportunity is for young adults with disabilities who are looking to become more independent. The beginning of the program consists of classroom instruction on independent living skills like budgeting, banking, paying bills, and transportation. The second part is lessons on employment skills like getting a job, interview skills, resume development, and job retention. The program concludes with the opportunity to participate in three sampling sites.

The experience begins with finding out the career interests of the participants in the program. The best part about the sampling sites is that they are tailored to the individual’s interests. Exploring sites based on the student’s interests gives each individual the opportunity to reinforce their current interests or redirect their interests. They also have the ability to explore career fields that they would like to learn more about.

Using the participant’s interests as a road map, our job coordinators find businesses that are interested in hosting the students for a one-day experience. During this experience our participants shadow a professional to learn more about a typical day in that profession. The businesses that host our participants receive many different benefits including community involvement, satisfaction, and in some extraordinary cases, new employees!

The students who participate in this program receive many benefits. These benefits include gaining valuable experience, better defining their career interests, and developing good work habits. At the conclusion of each site there are also evaluations. These evaluations are used by DVRS counselors to help to better define both the strengths and interests of the participants.

Sampling sites can certainly provide many benefits to all the parties involved. If you are interested in participating in this program please contact the Progressive Center at 609-581-4500 (Mercer) or 908-782-1055 (Hunterdon).
Career Gateway Sampling Sites

LEFT: Mike S. shadowed Trenton Thunder Broadcasters Adam and John.

RIGHT: Reggie W. was the press for PCIL’s annual Mercer County Picnic.

LEFT: Francisco Q. and Ramsey L. assist Board member Matt Panyko at PCIL’s Membership Dinner.

RIGHT: Rashida D. working in the secretarial field at Riviera Finance.

Ryan H. working with Tommy from Fred & Pete’s Deli.

Chris A, Anthony J, Jess L, and Virginia M. help out at PCIL’s Adapted Equipment Demo.
My Day with Kevin Maloney

By Michael Sasor, Guest Writer

This spring, Michael Sasor, a student with Career Gateway, was able to connect his passion for baseball with a possible career path. Michael lives and breathes baseball. He is interested in the players, stats, scores and the overall art of the game. This drove us to Kevin Maloney, sports writer for The Trenton Times. Mr. Maloney agreed enthusiastically to participate in the Career Gateway grant and have Michael shadow him for an afternoon.

Mr. Maloney’s caring nature inspired Michael to become a reporter himself. Below is the article Michael wrote about his afternoon with Mr. Maloney.

On May 27, 2014, Chelsea and I went to a Steinert High school baseball game being played at 4:00PM. Steinert’s baseball team was in the 4th round of New Jersey’s baseball playoffs. They were up-against Hopewell Valley. After we got to the game, Chelsea and I met the reporter who I was shadowing. The reporter’s name was Kevin Maloney. He was very friendly, kind, and made me feel comfortable. He welcomed me with open arms. Kevin was very interactive when I was asked him questions about the teams playing and taught me how to keep score on the scorecard.

Kevin Maloney, left. Michael Sasor, right

Follow Kevin on Twitter @ kevMaloney33
Like him on Facebook: Kevin Maloney

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Here are some highlights from the game.

In the 1st inning, Constantini flew a ball out to the center fielder. Next up was Plunkett. Plunkett grounded out to Hopewell Valley starting pitcher, Michael O’Donnell. The next batter was Anthony Peroni. Peroni and Scholey

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Special Olympics Host in our Hometown!

By Chelsea Martin

This year The Special Olympics was hosted in Mercer County New Jersey. PCIL is honored to have worked with an Olympian that has competed in the 2014 summer games. Gavin Rapport of Mercer County has been on the team for the last two years and dedicated many days practicing with the team. New Jersey’s baseball team made history this year, when they won against Rhode Island in Arm & Hammer stadium, and brought home the gold medal. Congratulations to Gavin Rapport for bringing home the gold in baseball!

The Special Olympics have been a staple in America since July 1968 when the first games were held at Soldier Field in Chicago. The mission behind the Special Olympics has been to provide year round sports training for children and adults. The Progressive Center is a proud supporter of the Special Olympics and is very proud of Gavin for his hard work and dedication.

Gavin Rapport helped bring home the gold medal for the NJ baseball team in the 2014 Special Olympics!

My Day with Kevin Maloney

Continued from page 8

I would like to thank Career Gateway and Kevin Maloney for giving me this opportunity to be a sports reporter for the day. I really enjoyed the game and Kevin’s company.

singled. Then the next batter brought a spark to the Steinert’s crowd. Up stepped infielder John Mastrangelo, with runners on 1st and 2nd. Mastrangelo singled in the first and only run of the game. Steinert’s pitcher Kyle Muller may have pitched the 2nd best game of his career to this point. He spun a complete game three-hitter. Steinert won the game 1-0.
2014 ANNUAL PCIL MIRACLE LEAGUE SOFTBALL GAME

The 2014 Annual PCIL Softball game was a huge success! Thank you to all the participants, volunteers, and fans for coming out to watch the games! It was an exciting match up that ended in a tie at 10 - 10! We hope to see you all out there on the field again next year! You can find more images on our facebook page at facebook.com/pages/Progressive-Center-for-Independent-Living-NJ.
On August 6, 2014, I announced the 6th annual PCIL (Progressive Center for Independent Living) softball game being played between the Hamilton Tan and the Hamilton Red. Before the game, the players and fans had hot dogs, chips, water and soda. There were 88 people in attendance. I was the Public Address Announcer. Public Address Announcers announce who is batting for the teams that are playing and if the teams score any runs or make any errors. It was my first experience ever announcing a game. Matt was announcing the game with me, giving me tips on what to say and what not to say about the batters and pitchers. The pitching match up was between Renee Pfaff and Drew Zimmerman. A great moment was when Darren hit a three-run home run to left field. However, the highlight of the game came at the bottom of the 4th inning. It was 10-5 and it looked like the Tan team was going to win the game. Red Team began to put up a fight and scored 3 runs. With 1 out, Ken stepped up to the plate and hit a home run to right field bringing in two runs to tie the game, marking the greatest comeback by the Red team in PCIL softball history!

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**Highlight of the Night!**

By Michael Sasor, Guest Writer

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**ANNUAL PCIL MIRACLE LEAGUE SOFTBALL 2014**

**FINAL SCORE: RED 10 TAN 10**

*PA Announcer: Michael Sasor*

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**RED TEAM LINE UP**

Peter #12  
Jaime #40  
Peter A #20  
Harrison #18  
Izir #22  
Kelly #4  
Matt #32  
Pitchers: Drew #2 & Peter H #16

**TAN TEAM LINE UP**

Janeen #19  
Bob #9  
Axel #37a  
Steve #37b  
Norman #41  
Josh #11  
Pitchers: Renee #43 & Sam #21
The 2014 Hurricane Season starts June 1 and runs until November 30th. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Climate Prediction Center has forecast a near-normal or below-normal 2014 Atlantic Hurricane Season. Although one might take comfort in such a forecast, history has demonstrated that it is not the frequency of storms that matters, but the severity of the storm, as it only takes one hurricane or tropical storm to severely impact our area.

If you do not already have one, you need to prepare your emergency kit, also called a GO bag. You’ve heard us talk about that at nauseam, now I want you to think about another type bag, I call it an “INCH” bag, meaning “I’m Not Coming Home” bag, which is different than a GO bag. A GO bag is for 5 to 7 days, whereas this bag has much more in it. An INCH Bag should include items that may be needed to sustain a person with disabilities for longer than a week in the case that you are relocated to somewhere other than your home. These items may be medical in nature including equipment, medicines, and hard or digital copies of all important papers including medical records.

You also need to plan ahead. Think about what you would do if a hurricane or another disaster struck near you. Think back to Hurricane Sandy and think about what you needed. Know your risks and understand the hazards that are associated with hurricanes. Hurricanes and tropical storms can bring storm surge and storm tide to coastal areas, as well as, high winds and heavy rainfall anywhere in the tri-state area. These hazards can cause property damage, widespread loss of power, and catastrophic flooding both inland and along the coast. Being prepared with a plan and a bag will help you make the best of a difficult situation.

History teaches us that a lack of hurricane awareness and preparation are common threads among all major hurricane disasters. By knowing the terminology, you will know your vulnerability and what actions you should take. Find the time to familiarize yourself with the different terms associated with natural disasters and like FEMA says, “Make a kit, make a plan, and stay informed.” For more information on getting prepared call The Progressive Center at 609.581.4500 and ask for someone on our Emergency Preparedness Team!
I have been living with cerebral palsy since birth. Having the diagnosis of CP has led me to experience life different than others. Some examples include delayed development in walking and talking, as well as, going to special education schools. As I got older my challenges began to decrease, I was no longer a girl who relied on my speech therapist but an independent woman living in her own condo.

On March 20, 2013, my sister and brother in-law welcomed into this world their first born, a healthy baby boy, Andrew John. Of course I was thrilled, being an aunt was something that I was looking forward to, but being an aunt with a disability was a little scary for me. I was scared of the unknown and I was nervous that my CP would hinder my role as Andrew’s Aunt. My family and I came up with ways to work around my CP that would allow me to take an active role in Andrew’s life. For example, I would hold Andrew sitting down because I’m more steady sitting then on my feet and use a pillow to help hold him up while feeding him.

My sister, being a teacher, was able to take off and be with Andrew for the reminder of the school year and all of the summer, but when September rolled around it was time for my sister to go back to work. My dad, who is retired, was able to watch Andrew during the day while my sister and brother-in-law were at work. My father saw my interest in baby sitting when I tagged along with him every day, so he then put me to work!

My dad appreciates the extra set of hands when he is baby sitting Andrew. I help prepare bottles and serve as an extra set of eyes for my father. This comes in handy for my father when he is picking up lunch. I am able to stay at the house with Andrew, so my dad doesn’t have to go through the hassle of putting Andrew in the car seat when he is just going up the street.

I always loved children. Watching them play and grow is the best feeling ever! Having Andrew in my life completely changed me for the better. I have never felt so much love for any person in my life. I now know what the true meaning of love is. My advice to anybody, disabled or not, is if you have a baby or child in your life, like I have Andrew, take the time to show that child how much you love them, teach them things that you think are important, show them that you will always be there for support and advice. Most importantly, even as a baby, tell them you love them. I know he doesn’t understand it yet, but I tell Andrew I love him all the time. It is the best feeling and will perhaps change you forever, I know it changed mine.

By Ashley DiMattia
Job Search Assistance
By Matthew Daly

For this article I wanted to pass on some information that could help individuals reading this newsletter who are searching for work.

Costco has just opened a new store on Route 1 in North Brunswick that is looking to fill many positions. They are looking to fill a multitude of positions. These positions include but are not limited to: baker, cashier, forklift driver, cashier assistant, maintenance assistant, payroll clerk, skilled maintenance, and stocker. Please check out the website if you are interested.

Amazon warehouse is opening in Robbinsville. This is an opportunity that we have been spreading the word about for a while and I don’t want to miss the opportunity to mention it again. The organization is currently hiring fulfillment associates for the warehouse. The link to their career page is: amazonfulfillmentcareers.com/

A common inquiry we have received regarding the Amazon opportunity is transportation to the warehouse. The Z Line is a free bus service that runs from the Hamilton Marketplace to the Amazon Warehouse. This is a useful service to consider, as it would make the commute much easier.

I also wanted to make the readers aware of a career website, www.gettinghired.com, that is designed specifically to help individuals with disabilities to find employment. They have a listing of partners, or businesses, that support the effort to hire individuals with disabilities. It may be worthwhile to create a profile, check out the partners that are local to the area, and apply to these organizations.

Hopefully these leads will help to provide some results in your job search.

SIBS NJ Chapter is Born!
By Jaime McGeady

Sisters, Kara and Katie Selix have taken on the task of creating SIBS (Supportive Initiatives for Brothers and Sisters) NJ. SIBS NJ is the NJ Chapter of the Sibling Leadership Network (siblingleadership.org).

SIB NJ aims to “provide a nurturing environment for siblings of individuals with special needs and mental health challenges to come together to support one another and advocate for their siblings and themselves.” The New Jersey Chapter is having their first meeting on September 7, 2014 at the Wayne public library. All siblings 13 and above are encouraged to attend. Subsequent meetings will be scheduled throughout the state. Please keep your eyes and ears open for that!
At the Progressive Center, we rely on agencies to support us by serving as job sampling sites for our students who are a part of our Career Gateway program. Career Gateway is an employment readiness program, tailored to students that are in the transition from school to college and/or the work force. A job sampling is an opportunity for our students to see what it is like to work at a certain business and/or industry for a day. The businesses that we use are an integral part of what we do. Our program could not be as successful as it is without the support of local businesses. In our effort to give back to these agencies who give so much we will now be featuring, “Businesses of the Month”, which will highlight one business from Mercer and one from Hunterdon County. We ask that you make it a point to frequent these establishments and thank them on our behalf while you are there. It is through their kindness, open-minded nature, and cooperation that the Career Gateway program continues to be such a success.

**AUGUST BUSINESSES OF THE MONTH**

**Riverview Studios in Bordentown**

Jim Parker, owner and operator at Riverview, is a phenomenal and natural teacher. Jim has hosted as a sampling site for us three times now. Jim takes time out of his busy day to work with our students one on one. William, a Career Gateway student, remarked after working alongside Jim on a film, that he never realized “how much independent knowledge” was necessary in the filming industry. This is exactly what the sampling sites are all about – allowing students to see what their particular career goals truly entail.

**Fred & Pete’s in Mercerville**

PCIL’s annual picnic was a hit this year, thanks in part to the fabulous food from Fred & Pete’s, who played a double role as a caterer and a Career Gateway sample site. Our student, Ryan Hanley, and Tommy, of Fred & Pete’s, cooked up delicious hot dogs, hamburgers, sausage and peppers, and numerous sides. Ryan had a fabulous hands-on opportunity to see what it is like to host a catered event, from set up to break down.
THANK YOU PCIL GRANTORS

PCIL would like to recognize the following grantors for continuing to support our wonderful programs.

United States Department of Education/rehabilitation Services Administration: Independent Living

Division Vocational Rehabilitation Services: Career Gateway

Community Connection and Campership Programs: Mercer County Office of the Disabled

Princeton Area Community Foundation: Preparing Makes Sense for People with Disabilities.

Trenton Thunder Community Grant Program: Building Social Capital Among Youths with Disabilities

Kessler Foundation Special Initiative Grant: Emergency Preparedness Initiative: Adapted Equipment