

Hello Employment First Community of Practice!

Did you know that the poverty rate (ages 18-65) of individuals who have disabilities is 28%? This is 15% higher than the poverty rate for people who do not have disabilities. Additionally, research indicates 47% of households headed by working-age persons with a disability were significantly less likely to have a savings account compared to 73% of households headed by those without a disability.

**April is National Financial Literacy Month! April 21-28 is Money Smart Week.** Please find a way to build resources, share information and start conversations about financial literacy with the individuals you support! If you have resources or ideas you would like me to share with the Employment First Community of Practice please let me know 😊

I would like to present some potential activities for your consideration:

- Consider taking the Disable Poverty Pledge  
<https://disablepoverty.org/>
  - Help someone develop a budget, create a savings plan or open a saving account
- Check out activities and resources on the Econ Illinois website  
<http://econillinois.org/>
- Learn about Illinois ABLE accounts  
<https://savewithable.com/il/home.html>
- Explore the FDIC Money Smart Financial Education Program  
<https://www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/moneysmart/>
- Explore the Your Money, Your Goals resources from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the "Focus on People with Disabilities Companion Guide"  
<https://www.consumerfinance.gov/practitioner-resources/your-money-your-goals/>  
<https://www.consumerfinance.gov/practitioner-resources/your-money-your-goals/companion-guides/>
- Help individuals connect to WIPA, Work Incentives Planning and Assistance, services. Special rules make it possible for people with disabilities receiving Social Security or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to work and still receive monthly payments and Medicare or Medicaid. Social Security calls these rules "work incentives." Those SSA Disability Beneficiaries needing general information about going to work are encouraged to contact the WIPA Call Center at 866-968-7842. Contact the IATP WIPA Program toll free at (800) 852-5110(voice/tty), (217) 522-7985 or email us at [iatp@iltech.org](mailto:iatp@iltech.org)  
Statewide Resource (other than the city of Chicago):  
<http://www.iltech.org/wipa.html>

### **City of Chicago**

MOPD's ESU staff provides one-on-one comprehensive benefits analysis to SSI/SSDI recipients with disabilities on the effects of working and receiving benefits.

A benefits analysis can be scheduled by appointment. This service is provided for job seeking individuals with disabilities as well as youth in transition between the ages of 14-22.

For more information, please contact the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities Employment Services Unit at 312.746.5743 (voice) or 312.746.5739.



## EMPLOYMENT FIRST UPDATE 4/3/2018

### INDEX:

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### 1. FREE WINDMILLS TRAINING

You won't want to miss this amazing FREE professional development opportunity taking place April 10th in Bloomington!

#### Windmills Training: Navigating Education and the Workplace through Accessibility

This training is based on the "Windmills" curriculum and is designed to be a high-impact attitudinal training program that integrates disability into the spectrum of diversity awareness. Join ICSPS and SIPDC team members for an upbeat daylong workshop aimed at raising awareness of the limitations often imposed on people with disabilities due to a lack of knowledge or low expectations. Participants will leave with strategies for success in engaging employers and navigating the educational landscape and work place. The training focuses on attitudes and human factors, but it also concerns issues including legal requirements and accommodation.

#### Target Audience:

Career & Technical Administrators & Faculty  
ICAPS Team Teachers  
Early School Leaver Transitions Programs  
Adult Education Providers

**When:** April 10, 2018

**Where:** 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM (lunch will be provided)

Holiday Inn & Suites  
3202 East Empire Street  
Bloomington, IL 61704

There is no fee to attend but on-line registration is required.

REGISTER HERE: <https://icsps.illinoisstate.edu/2018/02/windmills-training/>

[Windmills Training: Navigating Education and the Workplace ...](#)

icsps.illinoisstate.edu

This training is based on the “Windmills” curriculum and is designed to be a high-impact attitudinal training program that integrates disability into the spectrum of diversity awareness.

## **2. SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT LISTENING AND LEARNING SESSIONS**

### **What Are Barriers to Gaining Employment?**

Individuals with Disabilities, Families and Staff, please join the Arc of Illinois, the Self-Advocacy Alliance, Sibling Leadership Network and Illinois Assistive Technology Program for:

#### **Supported Employment Listening and Learning Sessions**

**April 10, 2018**

**1-2:30 pm**

**Webinar**

*Register for the webinar [here](#).*

**April 11, 2018**

**9:30-11 am**

**Marcfirst, 1606 Hunt Dr #1A, Normal, IL 61761**

*Register for Bloomington [here](#).*

**April 18, 2018**

**9:30-11 am**

**Kreider Services, 500 Anchor Rd, Dixon, IL 61021**

*Register for Dixon [here](#).*

Participants will listen, learn and:

- Share your experience and talk about how to improve supported employment.
- Learn more about policy changes that could impact people with intellectual and developmental disabilities through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Illinois Employment First in Illinois.
- Get involved and advocate with a new project, the Supported Employment Action Team (SEAT).

1) Register for the webinar [here](#).

2) Register for Bloomington [here](#).

3) Register for Dixon [here](#).

4) Sessions in Chicago and Edwardsville to follow.

You can also email [meg@thearcofil.org](mailto:meg@thearcofil.org).

For more information, email Meg Cooch at [meg@thearcofil.org](mailto:meg@thearcofil.org) or 773-558-5136.

The SEAT Project is funded by the Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities.

### **Supported Employment Action Team (SEAT) Project**

*A partnership between the Arc of Illinois, Sibling Leadership Network, Illinois Self-Advocacy Alliance*

and the Illinois Assistive Technology Program

### **SEAT Goals**

- Increase the number of trained, engaged and empowered people with disabilities and families who will speak up to improve access to the supported employment system in Illinois.
- Address critical systems change issues at the state level which will improve access to supported employment help.

### **Activities**

Year 1

- Listening sessions and survey to understand the barriers to employment.
- Report and Summit to share findings

Year 2

- Trainings on accessing supported employment
- System change advocacy and engagement

### **Join Us!**

- Tell us about the barriers you see in employment for people with disabilities
- Join us for a listening session, the summit and trainings
- Advocate with us – sign up for advocacy emails, webinars, testimony and speaking to legislators

Email Meg Cooch at [meg@thearcofil.org](mailto:meg@thearcofil.org) or call at 773-558-5136 for more information.

## **3. WEBINARS**

### **• Webinar: Accessibility Issues in Rail Transportation**

The NIDILRR-funded [Mid-Atlantic ADA Regional Center](#) will host a webinar, [Accessibility Issues in Rail Transportation](#), April 3rd, 2-3:30 pm ET. Presenters from the [National Disability Rights Network \(NDRN\)](#) will discuss requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for different types of rail equipment and rail stations. Discussion will include examples from around the country of stations and rail cars made more accessible for people with disabilities. Presenters will also discuss some of the pending rail car procurements and the choices that transportation entities are contemplating regarding accessibility. Registration is free and required.

### **• Webinar: Supporting College Success for Youth and Young Adults with Lived Experiences in Foster Care**

The NIDILRR-funded [Rehabilitation Research and Training Center for Pathways to Positive Futures](#) will host a webinar, [Supporting College Success for Youth and Young Adults with Lived Experiences in Foster Care](#), April 3rd, 1-2pm ET. This webinar will focus on programs designed to support young adults with mental health stressors and foster care experience to succeed in college. Representatives from multiple programs will share details of their implementation successes and lessons learned, program sustainability, and what further questions need to be explored with research. Registration is free and required. This project is also supported by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

### **• Wednesday April 4th at 1pm EST, Autism Entrepreneurship Masterclass! The Autism Advantage Team**

This free webinar will cover *5 important keys that you need to build a successful autism business*. These were principles that we've used time and time again in building Rising Tide Car Wash, as well as what we've seen from other successful autism businesses like The Chocolate Spectrum, Poppin Joe's Kettle Korn, Katie's Snack Cart, Bitty & Beau's, Blue Star Recyclers, Miami Is Kind, and Brewability Labs.

You can register for free [here](#)

What you will discover on this online training:

- What the Autism Advantages are, and how they can be the best differentiators for some businesses.
- How to Test to see if people actually want what you're selling, and how to tell a compelling story
- Utilizing Skills and Strengths to broaden the scope of opportunities available
- How To Build a Network of partners and mentors, and how to enter a business you don't know anything about
- Where to look for Funding, and when to start this process

Tom D'Eri will be sticking around after the session to answer any questions that you have as well.

This training is jam packed with case studies and follow on resources to help you start to think about how to build a successful Autism business!

Spaces are limited to only the first 100 people who sign up!

[Register for free today](#)

- **WEBINAR SERIES**  
**AJC Certification & Section 188: A Window of Opportunity to Impact Equal Opportunity Policy & Practice for Individuals with Disabilities**

Registration for Parts 2 & 3 is now open.

**APRIL 4, 2018**  
**3:00 - 4:30 p.m. ET**

**State Workforce Systems  
That Are Making Equal  
Opportunity a Priority:  
Missouri, Virginia, California**

[REGISTER NOW](#)

**APRIL 30, 2018**  
**3:00 - 4:00 p.m. ET**

**Achieving 188 Compliance & AJC Certification: Key Strategies & Actions from Policy to  
Procedures**

[REGISTER NOW](#)

- **April 10, 2018, 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.**  
**Webcast: Ask the JAN Sensory Team**

In this live webcast, Job Accommodation Network (JAN) Sensory Team members Teresa Goddard and Brittany Lambert will talk about workplace accommodations for people with different types of sensory disabilities, including related to vision and hearing, and take questions from participants about specific situations and solutions. The webcast is free of charge, but registration is required and processed on a first come, first served basis. [Register for the JAN April 10 webcast.](#)

- **Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program**  
**April 11, 2018, 3:00-4:00 ET**  
<http://www.econsys.com/eflsm/copwebinar/>  
**Theme: Employment Supports Topic: Over reliance on job coaching? Learn multiple alternatives to one-on-one employment supports using simple alternatives, natural supports, and assistive technology other employees are finding helpful.**

In order for people do be as independent as possible in the workplace, we need to consider multiple types of support. This is especially important because having a job coach accompany someone around the clock is expensive. This can lead to an employee working for fewer hours than they desire. Additionally, having a coach can seem nonessential or stigmatizing, if there are other, less hands-on, options that can work for the individual. We will discuss creating the right supports before and after the work day, setting up work in a clarified manner, developing simple straightforward solutions, and numerous ways to create the work environment that supports employee job success and personal satisfaction through the use of technology and apps. This type of environment is known as a smart environment. Also, we will consider how to identify key people in the workplace and how to work with video models and social stories to create successful work environments.

#### **Webinar Objectives:**

- How can we support the employee to be centered and ready to do their best when they arrive at work?
- How can we set up the employee's work area to make it easy to perform the work?
- How can we teach once, and have employees set for independence?
- How can apps support the employee to be more independent, included, and communicative?
- How can simple solutions or smart phones assist the employee to understand what to do now, what to do when finished, and what to do next?
- How can the employee contact someone for information in a way that's simple and straightforward?
- How can the employee troubleshoot through issues?

**Special Guest: Marsha Threlkeld**



**Marsha Threlkeld** is a consultant, trainer, and presenter working in multiple sectors: Systems Change and Alignment, School-to-Work, Employment First Development and Implementation, Person Centered Career Planning, Employer Engagement and Assistive, Environment, and Information Technology Use in the Workplace. Marsha has worked on behalf of School-to-Work for the last 25 years and designed and implemented School-to-Work Projects in several states. She works with states to include technology efforts and runs Technology Learning Cohorts for providers and educators as well as Smart Environment Projects. Marsha has worked with states to develop Person Centered Planning facilitator training materials and run facilitator training boot camps. She has created materials to include: Person Centered Career Planning, Student Driven Career Planning, Envision Your Future, and See Yourself Working. Marsha worked with the Washington Initiative for Supported Employment (WISE) for 18 years before moving to her own consultancy business: Pivotal Consulting & Training.

**Action Required: Seeking Input in Advance**

We want to ensure that our speakers address your concerns. This is your opportunity to submit input in advance. Submit your questions or comments [here](#) no later than **April 2, 2018**.

**Webinar Procedures**

1. In advance of the webinar, we strongly recommend you test your connection and review the [Adobe Connect Instructions and Troubleshooting Tips](#).
2. On the day of the webinar, enter room here: <http://www.econsys.com/eflsmc/copwebinar/>.
3. In the GUEST field, enter your **first and last name followed by state abbreviation (i.e., Jeff, Smith, DC)**.
4. To connect your audio, follow the prompts to enter your phone number (direct line), and the system will immediately call you back (see [step-by-step instructions](#)).

If you are unfamiliar with Adobe Connect, please review these [tips](#) before participating.

- **WEBINAR: Advancing Financial Literacy for Individuals with Disabilities**



**Wednesday, April 18, 2018**  
1-3 p.m. ET

[\*\*REGISTER!\*\*](#)

Please join the LEAD Center, Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board (MSRB) and National Disability Institute (NDI) on April 18, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. ET, for a webinar on the financial capability of individuals with disabilities.

April is National Financial Capability Month. It is a time for public and private sector organizations to work together to improve the knowledge and skills of all Americans with and without disabilities to make more informed financial decisions, better manage their financial lives, set financial goals, build and preserve assets, reduce economic vulnerability and improve economic security.

To commemorate Financial Capability Month, and learn more about the challenges and opportunities to address the needs of Americans with disabilities to become more financially capable, please join us on April 18th for presentations and discussions with representatives from federal agencies, financial regulators, and leaders in the disability community.

Participants will learn about:

- The consumer protections provided by MSRB rules for ABLE tax-advantaged savings accounts
- New materials from the FDIC to build financial capability for adults with disabilities
- Favorable tax benefits for people with disabilities from the IRS
- Financial literacy requirements in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) from the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)
- The challenges and opportunities to improve financial capability and inclusion for individuals across the spectrum of disabilities from disability leaders



## Event Agenda

If you require additional information, assistance or an accommodation to participate in the event, please contact Hope Price at [hprice@ndi-inc.org](mailto:hprice@ndi-inc.org) or (202) 296-2040.

- **Center for Studying Disability Policy forum: “Transition Innovations: Promising Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Practices for Youth.”**

Join the Center for Studying Disability Policy as it hosts a live webinar to highlight effective VR service practices and the challenges that state VR agencies face in adhering to new federal mandates related to transition-age youth. The webinar will feature a panel of experts with extensive experience on issues related to transition, VR, and employment for people with disabilities.

Date: April 26, 2018

Time: Noon to 1:30 p.m. EST

Click [here](#) to view the registration page

- **Recovery-Oriented Engagement Practices  
Spring 2018 Series  
Wednesdays, 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm ET**

To register for a session, select the title from the list below. While this is a three-part series, you may **attend one or all** the sessions. Registration will be necessary for each session. A one-hour continuing education credit, through NAADAC, is available for each session and brief quiz completed. Each session will be recorded and archived for future viewing.

### **April 4, 2018:**

#### **Therapeutic Alliance and its Impact on Engagement**

Forrest (Rusty) Foster, M.S.W., Senior Implementation Specialist at the Center for Practice Innovations, Columbia University and Regina Shoen, Advocacy Specialist with the New York State Office of Mental Health, Office of Consumer Affairs will present clinical frameworks for strengthening engagement and alliance in therapeutic relationships, based on recovery oriented principles and practices.

### **May 2, 2018:**

#### **Engagement via a Crisis or Pre-crisis Tool within a Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP)**

Nev Jones, M.A., M.A., PhD, Assistant Professor, University of South Florida and Matthew R. Federici, M.S., C.P.R.P. Executive Director of The Copeland Center will draw from the tools and

resources in peer provided practices to identify respectful and meaningful approaches to engagement.

**May 23, 2018:**

**[Social Media/Technology for Outreach and Engagement](#)**

John Naslund, PhD, Harvard Medical School, Global Health and Social Medicine will share his research and experiences working alongside individuals living with serious mental illness and community mental health providers. He will discuss ways to use technology and social media to overcome engagement challenges in a 21<sup>st</sup> century world.

#### **4. RESOURCES**

- **See Me at Work:** [Current NIDILRR-funded research projects in employment](#) range from specific interventions, such as Project SEARCH, to understanding and implementing effective employment strategies to bring integrated employment to scale for all adults with I/DD. Check out webinars and publications from one of these projects – ThinkWork’s [Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Advancing Employment for Individuals with I/DD](#) – to learn about Employment First, the role of families in employment, financial well-being, and more.
  - **IRS Offers Accessible Forms, Publications, and Assistance for Taxpayers with Disabilities**  
The [US Internal Revenue Service \(IRS\)](#) offers free assistance to taxpayers who qualify through two programs: [the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program \(VITA\)](#) and [Tax Counseling for the Elderly \(TCE\)](#). Through these programs, volunteers assist people with disabilities, seniors, those who have low income, and others who may need special help in preparing their basic tax returns. The IRS also provides [accessible forms and publications and other resources for taxpayers with disabilities](#).
  - **Education - NCD Releases Five-Part Report Series on IDEA Implementation**  
The National Council on Disability (NCD) released a [five-part report series](#) on implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The last major report on IDEA Implementation from NCD was released in 2002, prior to the 2004 reauthorization. The five parts of the series are:
    - [Broken Promises: The Underfunding of IDEA](#)
    - [English Learners and Students from Low-Income Families](#)
    - [Federal Monitoring and Enforcement of IDEA Compliance](#)
    - [Every Student Succeeds Act and Students with Disabilities](#)
    - [The Segregation of Students with Disabilities](#)
  - NCD is an independent federal agency charged with advising the President, Congress, and other federal agencies regarding policies, programs, practices, and procedures that affect people with disabilities.
- Direct Support Professionals - PCPID Releases Report on DSP Workforce Crisis**  
The President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities (PCPID) recently released a [report](#) titled *America's Direct Support Workforce Crisis: Effects on People with Intellectual Disabilities, Families, Communities and the U.S. Economy*. The report notes that direct support professionals (DSPs) provide services that allow people with intellectual disability to live in their communities and enable family members to work. Additionally, the report

indicates that the average hourly DSP wage is \$10.72, most DSPs work two or three jobs, and the average annual turnover rate is 45%. For more information, see The Arc's [statement](#) on the report. A plain-language version of the report can be found [here](#).

- **VR Voices Video Booth**

The NIDILRR-funded project on [Vocational Rehabilitation and Developing Strategies to Meet Employer Needs in Changing Economic Environments \(Demand-Side RRTC\)](#) has created a series of videos, [VR Voices: Video Booth](#). Vocational rehabilitation (VR) practitioners, policy-makers, and researchers were asked about the future of VR, how to serve VR consumers and businesses effectively, and how partnering with businesses can improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities. The series was filmed during the August 2017 conference [Meeting Employer Demand in a Job-Driven Economy: Diversity, Inclusion, and VR's Evolving Role](#).

- **One-Size May Not Fit All: Wheelchair and Scooter Users Compare the Usability of Different Public Bus Layouts**

[Research In Focus](#), researchers tested three bus models with wheelchair and scooter users to see which designs made it easier to board, wheel into place, and disembark.

- **HCBS Guide: Supporting The Right To A Community Life**

This free resource prepares you to assist those you support to advocate for the community lives they want and share their experiences.

[Learn More](#)

- **HCBS Guide: Your Right To A Community Life**

This free guide prepares you for HCBS advocacy with information about the Rule and tools to share about your experience receiving services.

[Learn More](#)

- **Community, Independence and More: Exploring Aspects of HCBS**

In the video below, self-advocates talk about various aspects of the HCBS Settings Rule and share why those areas are important to them and their quality of life. They cover topics like relationships, employment, community inclusion and integration, independence, choice, and more.

<https://youtu.be/NhFMON-LRHQ>

- **Free Resource:  
Tips For Speakers Guide**

This guide is designed for self-advocates and allies to assist in making effective presentations to a wide range of audiences. It lays out a short list of tips on how to be an effective public speaker. Then for each of the tips, it provides more in-depth advice. At the end of the guide, a special section shares information that is helpful when meeting specifically with lawmakers.

The booklet was developed by Nicole LeBlanc as part of her work with CQL | The Council on Quality Leadership and through a grant with the Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities.

[Download Guide](#)

- **Caregiver Modules Added to Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Curriculum**

The [Health Resources & Services Administration \(HRSA\)](#) has added eleven supplemental modules to its [Training Curriculum: Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias](#). These

modules aim to train the primary care workforce about dementia caregiving and help family and other caregivers take care of their own health and understand and cope with the challenges of caregiving. Modules cover topics such as caregiving in general, shared decision-making, working with the healthcare team, assisted living and nursing home decisions, addressing behaviors, and self-care.

- **The HCBS Business Acumen Center is a resource center for community-based organizations (CBOs) that serve individuals with disabilities.** The resource center provides tools, resources and examples of promising practices that promote the sustainability of disability-focused CBOs.

<http://www.hcbsbusinessacumen.org/>

- **Moving Along to Employment Slide Shows**  
The NIDILRR-funded [Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Improving Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities](#) has published [Moving Along to Employment](#), a series of brief slide shows that introduce the benefits of employment for people with mental health conditions and the supports available for employment success. These slide shows are targeted to individuals in recovery, family members, and service providers and cover topics such as overcoming barriers, introducing work incentives, and building readiness for work. Each slide show includes a one-question quiz and links to resources for additional information. This project is also supported by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

- **The TU Collaborative Offers a Free Toolkit for “Promoting Participation in Community Life”**  
The Temple University Collaborative on Community Inclusion is offering a new publication entitled “Jump-Starting Community Inclusion: A Toolkit for Promoting Participation in Community Life.” “This toolkit contains 66 practical first steps that community mental health providers can take to more effectively support their service recipients’ participation in everyday community life,” the TU Collaborative writes. “This compendium of simple strategies—drawn from 15 years of research and training activities...—focuses on policy changes, programming shifts, and practice innovations that can quickly give new life and relevance to your agency’s operations. The Toolkit offers a set of do-able strategies, along with links to over 100 publications and products to support your work.” To download the toolkit, [click here](#). To register for a webinar about the toolkit on April 12 at 1 p.m. ET, [click here](#).

- **The National Empowerment Center Has Launched a New Website**  
The National Empowerment Center writes that they “are pleased to launch what is hopefully a more contemporary website, logo, and look that is much more accessible and easy to navigate via smart phones. Please take a look at [www.power2u.org](http://www.power2u.org).” The new Featured Video section of the Home Page—you have to scroll down—offers a link to a five-minute “Introduction to Emotional CPR” video. Or you can access the video directly if you [click here](#).

- **National Nutrition Month**, organized by the [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](#), was one of many national observances this March. Many of us aim for healthy food choices, from eating seasonally to meal planning and home cooking, but many people with disabilities may encounter additional challenges to meeting their wellness goals. We looked at some [programs and resources from the NIDILRR community and elsewhere designed to meet the](#)

[unique needs and challenges people with disabilities experience on the path to wellness](#) in our Spotlight Blog this week.

## 5. TRANSITIONS AGED YOUTH

- **A Parent's Perspective:**



### **Route to Independence: How My Daughter Learned to Take the CTA in Chicago**

Posted by [Tricia Luzadder](#) on March 28, 2018 - [0 Comments](#)

By Cheryl Bane, Parent

Last month I got a call telling me that my 20-year-old daughter, Quincy, was going to begin Chicago Public Schools' (CPS) Travel Training Program. Gulp. The thought of Quincy taking the city bus completely on her own made me nervous because Quincy had never ridden the bus alone *and* she has Down syndrome. Like most parents with a child with a disability, I am reluctant to let her travel around town on her own. I worry about her more than I do her typically-developing brother.



Quincy keeping track of bus with CTA's Transit App

Will she be O.K. crossing busy streets?

Will she get lost?

What if someone steals her phone?

However, I reassured myself that someone will show her how to use the system and that she'll learn what she needs to know.

After all, where else in life—so far—does Quincy have the opportunity to make mistakes? Or problem solve when things don't go as expected? Especially without a parent, teacher, or someone else jumping in to solve the problem?

On the first day, Kyle, Quincy's CPS Travel Trainer, began by having her download a Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) app onto her phone. He showed her how to map out a route to get to where she needed to go – in this case to and from school – and to see when the next bus or train was expected to arrive at her stop.

Then Kyle and Quincy began taking the bus together from school to home, and then from home to school. Kyle coached her on:

- How to navigate busy intersections;
- How to recognize the bus she needs;
- What sorts of conversations with strangers are appropriate and inappropriate;
- The importance to paying attention to what's going on around her, and
- Even how to handle her phone appropriately while on the bus.



Boarding the bus to school

Kyle always hopes that things go wrong during training so there are opportunities to work on problem solving. Sure enough, one morning the sign on the bus wasn't working and it wasn't apparent what route that bus was taking. Instead of telling Quincy what to do, Kyle simply asked, "We don't know if this is the right bus. What are we going to do?" Quincy answered "I'll ask the bus driver." Good answer.

Another day Quincy pulled the cord too late and missed her stop. With Kyle's support, she learned to navigate her way on foot. When the bus was packed, Quincy asked if she could have a seat. Each week she demonstrated more self-advocacy and problem solving skills!

Because of her success, it was time for "shadowing." Quincy would make the trip to school totally on her own, but Kyle would follow her in his car. Knowing Quincy's newfound independence was making me nervous; Kyle sent reassuring texts along the way:

"She's walking to the bus stop now."

"She's getting on the bus now."

"She's arrived at school."

Whew, made it.





On her way to first independent bus ride on CTA

Eventually, Kyle informed me that Quincy was capable of getting to school independently. Quincy was so excited! I, on the other hand, was more apprehensive. All the “what-ifs” parents are often plagued by were running through my head. But there was no way I was going to let this valuable training go to waste.

So, the next morning Quincy was off to school all by herself. I started getting on my coat so I could walk her to the bus stop and Quincy stopped me:

“Don’t embarrass me, Mom.”

OK, then. I reluctantly, but proudly watched her as she left the house.

Yes, she got to school and home fine that first day and every day since. Quincy loves the independence that riding the bus gives her. She insists on taking it every single day to and from school. With each bus trip, she continues to learn and build important life skills that will help her be as independent as possible for the rest of her life.



Cheryl Bane

It was a good lesson for me too. For the rest of my life, I will need to remind myself that I have to take a step back and let Quincy figure things out for herself.

Filed under [Down Syndrome](#), [Education](#), [Guest Blogger](#), [Hop on the Bus to Independence](#), [Inspiring People](#), [Transportation](#), [Uncategorized](#)

- **New Video Series from PACER –  
Preparing Students with Visual Impairments for Postsecondary Education**

PACER Center's new three-part video series is designed to help students and their families prepare for a successful transition to postsecondary education:

- [Off to College with a Visual Impairment: An Interview with Disability Services](#) (7 min)  
Meet Rakeb, a senior in high school who is blind and visiting potential colleges. Take a sneak peek at her visit to a disability service office where she learns about how to access needed accommodations.  
[View an audio-described version of this video](#)
- [Words of Wisdom for Students with Vision Loss from a Director of Disability Services](#) (5 min)  
Kathy McGillivray, Director of the Center for Learning and Accessible Student Services at Augsburg University, shares her expertise about the transition from high school to college for individuals with vision loss.  
[View an audio-described version of this video](#)
- [Words of Wisdom from Rakeb, a High School Senior with Vision Loss Preparing for College](#) (3 min)  
Rakeb, a high school senior who is blind, shares her insight into how she has prepared to make a successful transition to college.  
[View an audio-described version of this video](#)

A companion tip sheet, [Tips for College Students with Visual Impairments: Questions to Ask about Disability Services](#), can help you decide what questions to ask during your visit. Learn more about PACER's partnership with MN State Services for the Blind and watch for new content on the [State Services for the Blind Partnership](#) webpage!

#### **American Foundation for the Blind's FamilyConnect Program**

[FamilyConnect](#) was created so that "families of children who are blind or visually impaired could support each other, share stories and concerns, and find resources on raising their children from birth to adulthood." You can browse by age and learn more about [Parenting a Teenager Who is Blind or Visually Impaired](#), including discovering where he or she can work and live, navigating his or her social life, and finding appropriate role models and mentors.

#### **Resources for Living, Working, Learning, & Recreation**

The [National Federation of the Blind](#) (NFB) has resources for families and professionals organized into four categories: Living, Working, Learning, and Recreation. There are many other helpful publications to discover on NFB's website such as [Having the Transitions Conversation: Setting Goals for the Future](#).

#### **Accessing the Dream: Preparing Deaf-Blind Youth for a Self-Determined Life**

Transition planning and services are essential for success in adult life, especially for young adults who are deaf-blind. [Accessing the Dream: Preparing Deaf-Blind Youth for a Self-Determined Life](#), from the National Center on Deaf-Blindness, is a video series that offers insights and understanding of transition planning including student development, interagency collaboration, and family involvement.

#### **National Family Association for Deaf-Blind**

[The National Family Association for Deaf-Blind](#) is a nonprofit organization that serves families of individuals who are deaf-blind. It provides advocacy and support to families including networking and training opportunities, as well as ways to collaborate with other organizations. Discover the [Power of Families](#) who have made a difference in their own child's life, in the lives of other families, or within organizations or systems.

[Friend on Facebook](#) | [Visit our Website](#)

PACER's National Parent Center on Transition and Employment® provides quality information and resources for families of young adults with disabilities on transition planning, civil rights, work-based learning, career accommodations, higher education, financial aid, and much more! Whether just



starting the transition planning process or searching for information on a specific topic, PACER.org/transition is a comprehensive source of information designed to support families' varied needs.

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## 6.FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- **Blog Post Spotlights Disability and Poverty in Rural US**  
Researchers from the NIDILRR-funded [Research and Training Center on Disability in Rural Communities \(RTC: Rural\)](#) recently published a post, [Poverty and Disability: At the Intersection of Place and Policy](#), for the [National Disability Institute Blog](#). The post explores the relationship between disability and poverty, including such factors as the labor market, healthcare costs, and housing influences. The post includes graphics depicting poverty rates among people with disabilities by county, disability status, and county type. The post also includes a link to the [Rural Disability Resource Library](#), an online collection developed specifically for rural people with disabilities, their families, and service providers.
- **For People with Psychiatric Disabilities, Neighborhood Factors May Affect Acceptance and Community Involvement**  
This week's [Research In Focus](#) looks at attitudes toward people with psychiatric disabilities and the impact of stigma on their participation in the community.

- **Psychiatric Labels Can Do More Harm than Good, Researchers Say**

Labeling people with psychiatric diagnoses can lead to less effective treatments, according to researchers at the University of Bath in the UK. Tagging people with conditions such as schizophrenia or borderline personality disorder can create a self-fulfilling prophecy, which could exacerbate symptoms and impede recovery. Such labels can lead professionals to “wrongly judge a book by its cover”—offering treatments based on diagnoses without considering someone’s specific needs. The lead researcher urged treatment providers “to be extremely cautious both in the use of diagnostic labels to describe a patient and mindful of the influence that such labels can have on their own clinical judgments.” For more information, including a description of the research, [click here](#).

- **Peer Support After Burn Injury: People Healing People**

The NIDILRR-funded [Boston-Harvard Burn Injury Model System Center \(BHBIMS\)](#) has produced a video, [Peer Support After Burn Injury: People Healing People](#). The 15-minute informational video explains how peer support, or support from a fellow survivor, can enhance recovery and quality of life for burn survivors and their loved ones. The video features several burn survivors, family members, and clinicians who share their experiences with peer support and discuss the many resources available. The video was produced in collaboration with the NIDILRR-funded [Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center \(MSKTC\)](#) and the Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors.

- **Disability Employment in USA Today**

A recent article in *USA Today* explored the issue of disability employment in the context of the current low unemployment rate. In the article, several diverse companies, including CVS Health, Kwik

Trip, PwC and Microsoft, are quoted about their experiences partnering with disability service providers, including vocational rehabilitation agencies, to fill their workforce needs. The article also highlights strategies some are using to more effectively recruit and retain people with different types of disabilities, such as alternative interviewing approaches and flexible work arrangements. [Read the USA Today article.](#)

## 7. FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration for Community Living  
**Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRP) Program: Employment of Individuals with Disabilities (Development) Synopsis 1**  
<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=300074>

- **Funding Opportunity Available for Inclusive Transportation Planning Initiative**

A request for proposals has been released for [Inclusive Transportation Planning grants](#). The purpose of this funding opportunity is to facilitate development of local inclusive, coordinated transportation systems in which people with disabilities, older adults, and caregivers actively participate in both advisory and decision-making roles.

Applicants are invited to begin where they are, even if they have never been involved in inclusive planning or have made only minimal effort to engage older adults or people with disabilities in transportation planning.

Funded by ACL and managed in partnership with the Federal Transit Administration, the grants will be administered by the Community Transportation Association of America in partnership with the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, the Institute for Community Inclusion of the University of Massachusetts-Boston, and DJB Evaluation.

Grants of up to \$35,000 for a maximum of 20 organizations will be made for a six-month period. New grantees are expected to adopt inclusive strategies that fit their communities and build on learning from previous grant projects. It is anticipated that learning from the new grants will add to the knowledge gathered previously and help to build recognition and support for inclusive transportation planning nationwide.

A teleconference for interested applicants will be held on April 17, 2018. **Proposals are due by May 4, 2018.** [Learn more about the grant application details.](#)

For additional questions about the project, contact project director Charles Dickson at [dickson@ctaa.org](mailto:dickson@ctaa.org)

- **SAMHSA Solicits Applications for Statewide Consumer Network Grants**

SAMHSA has issued a request for proposals for statewide consumer network grants. "The goals of the SCN [Statewide Consumer Network] Program are [to] improve quality of and access to statewide peer support and recovery-oriented, integrated, and coordinated treatment, services, and supports; emphasize and build statewide consumer leadership within consumer-operated organizations and in the community; [and] build capacity and sustainability of statewide consumer networks." Up to nine grants will be awarded. "Eligibility is limited to domestic public and private non-profit entities, tribes, and Urban Indian organizations that are mental health consumer-operated organizations for at least two years and are not operating under the umbrella of another organization." The deadline to apply is April 23, 2018. For more information, [click here](#).

## 8. EMPLOYER CORNER

- **The Missing Link: Why Accessible Workplace Technology Matters**

A recent issue of the Disability Management Employer Coalition's *@Work* magazine featured an article co-authored by EARN's National Project Director, Brett Sheats, and the Partnership on Employment and Accessible Technology's (PEAT) Project Director, Josh Christianson. The article addresses the importance of accessible workplace technology to not only those seeking employment, but also employees who acquire disabilities through age, illness or injury. Like EARN, PEAT is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy. [Access the \*@Work\* magazine article](#)



**CVS Health**

*In a recent article, the Society for Human Resource Management explored CVS Health's innovative approaches to building a pipeline of talent to fill identified workforce needs, especially retail positions and pharmacy technicians. The efforts center on training centers opened and operated in partnership with state and local service providers and comprehensive rehabilitation centers and facilitated by the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation's cross-state National Employment Team. [Read the SHRM article.](#)*