



HEIGHTENED INDEPENDENCE & PROGRESS

A CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Summer 2022

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Heightened Independence & Progress (*hip*)

hip's Mission Statement

Heightened Independence and Progress—empowering people with disabilities to achieve independent living through outreach, education, and advocacy.

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Heightened Independence and Progress, Inc. is not in any way affiliated with the Health Insurance Plan of Greater New York, HIP of New Jersey, Inc. or their affiliates.

From the Desk of the President:

As many of you know, Centers for Independent Living (CILs) came about as the result of federal legislation designed to offer people with disabilities a wider selection of lifestyle choices beyond a job. In 1980 *hip* was one of the first two centers to offer multiple options to people seeking full inclusion into their communities. Funding from the federal government was not always enough to meet the demands for services so each CIL became creative in pursuing government and foundation grants to expand services.

This past year as a result of a statewide campaign to raise awareness of the importance of these services the NJ Department Of Human Services through the Division of Disability Services was able to include the network of centers \$1M in the state budget. The 2022/2023 state budget included \$2.5M to be distributed throughout the state. The purpose of these funds is to enhance the core services of the Centers for Independent living and to expand access to programs that had not been available.

We have been able to create some necessary programs in both *hip* locations but one of our proudest achievements is our Durable Medical Equipment Donation Program. We blended the funds to rent two storage units and purchased a cargo van to pick up gently used equipment and supplies and deliver them to people in need.

Please contact your local *hip* office to inquire about these programs.



Sincerely, *Brian*

THE BRAIN HEALTH & COMMUNITY RESOURCE FAIR



Hip staff attended in photo:

Top Row Left to right: Jamie Rodriguez, Mariana Martinez, Marcelo Cazar

Bottom row left to right: Jennifer Preciado, Alejandro Paredes

Not seen: Marily Gonzalez

The Brain Health & Community Resource Fair was hosted by the Hudson County Department of Health & Human Services and the Act Now Foundation to provide workshops, free health screenings, free covid vaccines, and many more activities to the public. *hip* staff attended on Saturday, June 11, 2022, to provide over 500 Hudson County residents with information on *hip*'s mission statements, services, and contact information. Heightened Independence and Progress staff assisted with questions and concerns from individuals with disabilities, family members, as well as networking with other community organizations and vendors to improve the assistance we provide to our community.

Elder Abuse Walk

Some warning signs of elder abuse, per the elder abuse walk attended by our staff Pedro, Andrew and Jesse

- The Department of Justice estimates only 1 in 24 Cases of Elder Abuse in the US are ever reported
- Physical Elder Abuse: Can Include Hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, restraining, over or under medicating
- Emotional/Psychological Elder Abuse: Includes name calling, humiliating, threatening or intimidating



COLLEGE INITIATIVE

At the Bergen *hip* office we are working with local colleges to help students with disabilities transition to college life. At Ramapo College of New Jersey three of our members will be visiting the incoming freshman class with explanations of rights and resources, ideas for success with schoolwork and socializing, and generally useful information to set them up for a good semester.



Bergen County Caregiver Conference

Our very own Support Coordinator/ Care Manager Andrew explains our services and supports to the attendees of the Bergen County Caregiver Conference. We had over 30 people visit our table to ask us about our SCAP (Senior Caregiver Assistance Program), MAP (Modification Access Project) & SNAP (Special Needs Assistance Program) opportunities.



Food Collection

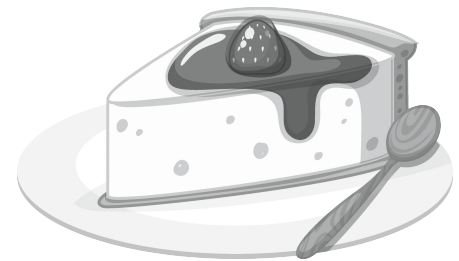
A complete food pantry list is available on the *hip* website, at hipcil.org

Special events!

Upcoming Events

The Annual Meeting is on November 16th, 2022

The Holiday Party will be on December 11th



Recipe Corner!

Want a fun, delicious and easy summer dessert? No bake cheesecakes!

- Graham Cracker Pie Crusts
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- 3/4 cup heavy cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- A squeeze of lemon juice

Beat cream cheese, cream, sugar, vanilla and lemon juice for 3 or so minutes; spoon into pie crusts. Serve with berries, chocolate sauce or by itself!

Delivery Time!



Our delivery van, taking donated goods to help those in need of them



Our New *hip* Friends



hip recently welcomed a new staff member! **Blagica Jankuloska** joined the Bergen office in March and is looking to make a positive impact with our consumers. Blagica started at *hip* as a DDD consumer and is now looking forward to assisting consumers anyway she can. She has a very good understanding of disabilities since she was born with Cerebral Palsy and spends her time reading about other disabilities. She graduated from Bergen Community College before graduating from Ramapo College in 2012 with a degree in Psychology. She is passionate about mental health and has assisted in coworker Jesse's journey with making connections with colleges within the Bergen and Hudson counties and is truly interested in helping people with disabilities be strong self-advocates. Her goal is to share her knowledge of the struggles she has encountered so that our consumers have an easier path to independence. In her free time Blagica is a freelance book reviewer and works out four days a week at Push to Walk and the Wyckoff family YMCA, both of which have programs willing to work for people with disabilities. We can't wait to see the positive impact she continues to bring into our office and to our consumers.

The *hip* Bergen office welcomes **MJ Velten** to the team! A graduate of Bergen Community College and of Ramapo College of New Jersey, MJ studied philosophy and political science, and began working with us in May of this year. She learned of the opportunity to work with *hip* through the Ramapo Office of Specialized Services, which brought her to the full circle of working with the office through *hip* to help incoming students with disabilities learn to transition to college life. MJ wants to apply creative thinking to problems that can be solved for the betterment of the *hip* community, and is happy to be learning in real time a variety of skills that can be applied to help serve the disability community. So far joining the Adjustment to Vision Loss group's drumming circle has been a highlight, and she is looking forward to more events and opportunities to help. Outside of *hip* MJ enjoys writing, fashion and clothes making, and baking.



Andrew Mboya joined *hip* in March of 2022 as a Support Coordinator. He has over 7 years experience in the area of Human Services delivery. Prior to joining *hip*, Andrew worked for Catholic Charities of Brooklyn and Queens as a Case Manager. He has a B.S. degree in Diplomacy and International Relations and a Minor in Asian Area Studies, Chinese, from Seton Hall University in New Jersey. Andrew studied Advanced Chinese Reading at the University of

International Business and Economic, Beijing, China. He holds a Master's degree in Public Administration from Norwich University, Vermont. In his spare time, Andrew likes to Volunteer in his community. He is an Alumnus of AmeriCorps and was awarded The President's Volunteer Service Award by President Barack Obama, 2008.



The *hip* Hudson office welcomes **Marcelo Cazar**. Marcelo is originally from Ecuador and has his bachelor's degree in Business Management. He identifies as a joyful person who loves to travel and enjoy life to its fullest with the people surrounding him because the present for him is the best moment. He's



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had many challenges and difficulties, but that taught him to be resilient and empathic. He believes that helping others is important to feel the way they do so then you can know what they are going through. He has volunteered with elderly people, listened to them, and made them feel loved. It is important to continue learning and growing professionally to better serve the community and meet their needs in the best way possible. For that reason, he is willing to continue studying to get his master's degree in HR Management, and strive for success.



Sioban Leahy, has joined the *hip* case management team as of July 2022. Sioban received her Master's degree in Social Work from NYU in 2009. Her career as a social worker has involved education, advocacy, employment coaching, as well as resource and information sharing within NJ's disability community. She believes that every person experiences struggles throughout life but assisting individuals about self-love, self-confidence and their abilities, goes a long way towards helping them to succeed. When Sioban is not working, she enjoys spending time with her six-year-old son James and the rest of her family. She loves to laugh and believes that humor is one of the best forms of medicine, along with chocolate of course! She also enjoys the companionship of many animals. She works with a four-

year-old black lab "Seeing Eye dog" named **Presley**, and her house is home to her husband's guide dog, a retired guide, and a rabbit.

Need Guidance? Help is Here

988
SUICIDE
& CRISIS
LIFELINE

Starting July 16, you can call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org if you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide or experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis. 988 will connect you to compassionate, confidential support for free.

Check out the updated *hip* website!

Thanks to our new website developer, Pedro Martin, the *hip* website is now available in 20 languages! In addition to that, there are also plenty of great updates! The website is now easier to navigate and includes testimonials from many *hip* consumers. Check it out at www.hipcil.org and let us know what you think!



New Arts Projects for MTS

By **Kathy Rohr**

Braille by Multimedia Transcription Services (MTS) has traditionally transcribed school texts into braille for students throughout the country. These have included everything from 1st grade learn-to-read books to high school physics textbooks. MTS has transcribers who specialize in math, science, and technology as well as in foreign languages. These braille books continue to be a very important aspect of MTS's services.

However, since the onset of the Covid pandemic, the arts have had to be more creative about their offerings, and this has included providing braille transcriptions of many kinds of texts. Lincoln Center in New York City has become one of MTS's new customers, and it has been very gratifying to have the opportunity to assist in the expansion of access to braille-readers. Lincoln Center includes under its umbrella the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, the Metropolitan Opera, the New York State Theater, and the Juilliard School. We have transcribed major cultural event programs, Juilliard student recital programs, opera summaries, and descriptions of the artists. This relationship has grown substantially over the past year, and MTS hopes to provide more of these braille transcriptions.

MTS also continues to transcribe programs for the Paper Mill Playhouse, one of our longstanding customers. But we have also created braille signage for outdoor museum and library exhibits as well as programs for professional conferences such as this year's New Jersey Bar Association conference.

Although the pandemic has made access more difficult for most of us, and especially so for the blind and visually impaired, it has also opened new areas of opportunity for the provision of braille texts to accompany programs for adults. MTS looks forward to continuing to work in these areas and hopefully to expand to new venues.



Special Events at Center of Modern Dance.

Pictured here is the drumming circle put on by the NJ Fund for the Blind so that people who are blind and visually impaired have available to them different, fun activities. Drum circles, which are both fun and soothing, and have been offered to and attended by many participants, who also brushed up on their public transport skills. Other fun happenings have included murder mystery Zoom events, where roles are given out to participants who have to work together to solve the murder. People dressed to the theme of a Masquerade Ball and had a blast at these ghoulish meetings. Some consumers got moving at any of six Zoom dance lessons that offered an hour of grooving a piece, put on by the Center of Modern Dance. It was so much fun to learn, and at the end, a finished dance was put on to perform in front of a group. How fun! Self defense classes were also taught by the wonderful people at Barr karate, and the participants from Adjustment to Vision Loss learned a lot. An open-air luncheon also happened and was attended by 33 sociable people who enjoyed the food, the atmosphere and their friends. If you have an interest in participating or just learning more, please contact Trisha Ebel at tebel@hipcil.org or 201-996-9100 Ext. 16 and she will be able to help you.

OUTREACH

We provide a wide range of services but they won't be effective unless we make people aware of how they can be of benefit to them. It's for this reason that we dedicate times during the year to remind our public about our resources.

- Colleges - We've contacted the colleges located in both counties and held informative Zoom calls to establish relationships with the Offices of Special Services of each institution. Our goal is to offer information sessions to groups of students with disabilities. Since the Independent Living movement started on college campuses, we thought that it would be a great opportunity for hip.

- Legislative Districts – Each State Senator and Assemblyperson maintains constituent relations offices within their district. hip staff sent literature to the offices and reached out to the Chief of Staff to establish a relationship to help solve problems as they are brought to the elected officials.

- Libraries and Senior Centers – Over the past two months we have contacted over 74 libraries and 58 senior centers providing them with program information. We are planning a telephone campaign later in the year.

- Outreach Month – As we roll into September the Hudson office will be conducting their annual outreach month. Each staff member is assigned an agency and/or resource to develop. They have done this for the past several years and find it to be an effective way to keep the county current on hip news.

Summer Word Scramble

GIMINIWMS

ACEBH LBAL

SNNCUREES

VWSAE

OAVTNCAI

NOCAE

LFPI POSLF

TELAISOF

LPECPSIO

MISSUTWI

(puzzle answers page 8)



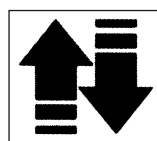
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We Mourn . . .

Our *hip* family lost the following people in recent months:

Jose Angel Sanabria & Paul Gaughran



Library Services for You

When was the last time you went to your local library? You may be surprised by what they have! Depending on your town, you could have free tickets to museums and shows, groups to join like book clubs, art clubs, and gaming clubs (mahjong, anyone?). There could be upcoming classes on painting or self defense, programs for all ages. The staff there could help you if assistance with computers, copying, printing, scanning or faxing is needed; they would also be happy to help you find materials like books and magazines. All BCCLS (Bergen County Cooperative Library System) library cards work at all 77 BCCLS libraries, in Bergen, Hudson and Essex counties, and you can request materials from other libraries that will be sent straight to you! Libraries are a great tool for all of us.

hip Offers Innovative Programs to Meet the Independent Living Needs of People with Disabilities in Bergen and Hudson Counties and Beyond

Founded in 1980, Heightened Independence & Progress (*hip*) is observing 42 years of service. *hip* not only continues to provide vital assistance through information, referral, advocacy, and peer support, but also offers a wide variety of programs to people with all types of disabilities in Bergen and Hudson Counties. Some programs have statewide, even national impact. The following is a summary of *hip* programs.

Adjustment to Vision Loss coordinates peer support groups. Contact: *Trisha Ebel (Bergen)*

Braille by Multimedia Transcription Service (MTS) transcribes textbooks and other materials into Braille. Contact: *Jayne Jacobs (Bergen)*

Community Advocacy and Outreach Program seeks to promote full inclusion through advocacy, education and legislation. Contact: *Hudson Staff or Bergen Staff*

Comprehensive Independent Living Support (CILS) provides care management assistance to residents of Hudson County to remain in the community. Contact: *Hudson Staff*

Division of Developmental Disabilities Support Coordination Program assists individuals from Bergen and Hudson Counties to discover their full potential. Contact: *Brian Fitzgibbons (Bergen)*, *Natalie Alave (Hudson)*

Empowering Women Support Group. Contact: *Nicole Clark (Bergen)*

Hispanic Outreach Program directs Independent Living services to individuals of Hispanic origin, in English and Spanish. Contact: *Maria Valentin (Bergen) or Hudson Staff (Hudson)*

Youth Transition Case Management assists high school students to plan for their future and for employment. Contact: *Jenny Paniagua (Hudson)*

Modification Access Project (MAP) assists with funding for barrier-free home renovation projects from concept to completion. Contact: *Maria Valentin (Bergen)*

Our New Journey provides financial and practical help to families newly impacted by the onset of illness or disability. Contact: *Anne Ciavaglia McMahon (201-288-2867)*

Senior and Caregiver Assistance Program provides care management to individuals over the age of 60 and/or adult family caregivers. Contact: *Care Management Staff (Bergen)*

Special Assistance for Independent Living (SAIL) provides funding to Hudson County residents for assistive devices or barrier-free home renovation projects. Contact: *Natalie Alave (Hudson)*

Special Needs Assistance Program (SNAP) provides funding and facilitates acquisition of services and adaptive devices such as wheelchairs, bathroom safety equipment, hearing aids and more. Contact: *Maria Valentin (Bergen)*

Support for Independent Living (SIL) provides ongoing care management services through assessment, linkage, and coordination for people with disabilities (18-59). Contact: *Tamara Clark (Bergen)*

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) is a state-funded case management program for New Jersey residents who have survived an acquired brain injury, for services and supports they need to live in the community. Contact: *Shoshana Stubin (Bergen)*

hipNews is the Newsletter of Heightened Independence and Progress. **hip** administers Centers for Independent Living in Bergen and Hudson Counties and offers services throughout New Jersey and beyond.

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(puzzle from page 5)

SWIMMING

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