

**Fall 2017**

October - December

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***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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**PHOTOS**

Jayne Jacobs  
and Maria Valentin

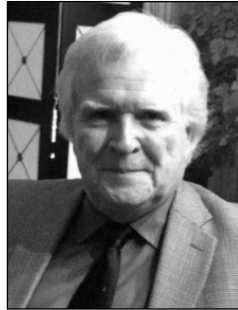
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*Brian Fitzgibbons*

Greetings,

Like many baby boomers I have decided to follow the advice outlined in the Sedlar-Miners book, “*Don’t Retire...Rewire.*” So I’ve decided to remain in the workforce with some modifications. In my case it meant switching from public service to the non-profit world and trading my 3 hour round-trip commute for a short trip from the next town.

Believe it or not I’m not new to *hip*. In 1980 as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor working in the area, I was one of the first visitors to the Center for Independent Living and encouraged the consumers with whom I worked to participate in the social and recreational activities they offered. I later spent a short time on the Board of Trustees, but the best thing that I did was to convince the top brass at the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) to allow two staffers from the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI) to have free space in the Jersey City office to start *hip's* Hudson branch. Throughout it all I maintained a good friendship with *hip's* founding CEO, Eileen Goff, and I’ve been able to stay current on the tremendous growth of the CIL.

So, when it came time to retire from DVRS I looked around for opportunities that would combine my knowledge of people with disabilities, my interest in the progress of the disability movement and my commitment to the full inclusion of people with disabilities in their communities. What better place to land than as President and CEO of *hip*. At DVRS my focus was on training and employment, so this transition allows me to expand my view and add outreach, education and advocacy to complete the service model.

We’re working on redeveloping the website, improving our imprint on social media and creating ways to respond to the needs of our consumers. I’m looking forward to this adventure and I want to share it with all of the friends and members of the *hip* community, so I encourage you to contact me by using your favorite method of communication; e-mail [bfitzgibbons.ber@hipcil.org](mailto:bfitzgibbons.ber@hipcil.org), phone (201) 996-9100 ext. 14 or arrange a visit.

Best regards,

*Brian Fitzgibbons*

***hip's Annual Meeting***

Join us at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, November 15th at the Fort Lee Recreation Center for our Annual Meeting! Attendees will mingle, enjoy a light supper, and learn about all the *hip* accomplishments this past year from President/CEO Brian Fitzgibbons. The evening will also include election and re-election to the Board of Trustees.

Our keynote speaker this year is Victor Muniz, an athlete who was injured in 2008 by a falling tree during a lightning storm, which ultimately caused quadriplegia and permanent use of a wheelchair. After months of rehab, Victor was determined to make all modifications to prevent his injury from limiting his potential. He completed his Associate’s degree from Bergen Community College in Hospitality Management in December 2014 and is currently employed with the Hudson County Department of Corrections. He is also a newlywed after marrying his long-time girlfriend Laura this past March. We look forward to hearing more of Victor’s experiences and how he overcame challenges to succeed in his goals.

The staff members from both Bergen and Hudson CILs will meet and greet attendees. We look forward to seeing everyone there!

## 2018 Medicare Enrollment/Change Period is Here!

It is open enrollment time for all individuals that would like to make changes to their Medicare coverage.

For 2018 Medicare coverage, open enrollment is from **October 15th to December 7th.** (You can switch your Part D or **Medicare Advantage** plan.)

If you're already enrolled in a Medicare Part D prescription plan or a Medicare Advantage Plan and you don't want to make changes to your coverage for 2018, you don't need to do anything during open enrollment, assuming your current plan will still be available in 2018. If your plan is being discontinued and isn't eligible for renewal, you will receive a non-renewal notice from your carrier prior to open enrollment. If you don't, it means you can keep your plan without doing anything during open enrollment.

Be aware that your benefits and premium could be changing for **2018.** So even if you're confident that you want to keep your current coverage for the coming year, it's important to make sure you understand any changes that may apply, and that you've double checked to make sure that your current plan is still the best available option. The available plans and what they cover changes from one year to the next, so even if the plan you have now was the best option when you shopped last year, it's important to verify that again before you lock yourself in for another year.

For assistance please contact the Bergen or Hudson CILs. Our case managers are here to help!

## Heightened Independence and Progress

*hip* is partially funded through grants from foundations, as well as the Bergen County Department of Human Services, Hudson County Department of Health & Human Services, Bergen County Community Development, NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and the US Dept of Health and Human Services – Administration for Community Living.

*hipNews* is available on audio tape.

## We Mourn . . .

Margot Aronsohn and Patti Aronsohn, beloved mother and sister of Board Member Paul Aronsohn, both of whom passed away in June.

John Fox, beloved brother of Board Member Jean Csaposs, who passed away in August.

Nicole Dautruche, beloved mother of staff member Van Dautruche, who passed away in September.

Barbara Rivlin, longtime member and friend of *hip* who passed away in September.

Richard Fellingner, *hip* member and father of *hip* member William, who passed away in September.

## Community Alert!

If you have any unneeded adult disposable briefs (in all sizes) please drop them off at the Bergen CIL office – they could be of great use to some of our consumers. Thank you!

## Modification Access Project (MAP) Success!

This past summer, Ronald, an 83-year old veteran from Wood-Ridge, was in need of a ramp for his home. He uses a wheelchair on a daily basis and was unable to leave his home safely. With financial assistance from *hip's* MAP program and collaboration with the Inmate Labor Program from the Bergen County Sheriff Department, Ronald now has an accessible way to enter and leave his home. He says, "I'm very happy with the ramp, they did a beautiful job." Thanks to everyone involved in this project!



## Welcome to hip!



Victoria Robbins

Victoria Robbins joined the *hip* staff in June as a Care Manager at the Bergen CIL. She is a graduate of Morgan State University in Baltimore. Victoria has worked with the disability community for over 12 years

and has spent much of her time as a day program manager.

A resident of Paterson, Victoria enjoys spending time with her boyfriend and family (including her cats), watching horror movies and traveling.

## hip Thanks...

*hip* receives many contributions from individuals and the community throughout the year. We thank the following for their recent exceptional generosity:

Barbara Duffy

The Kaplen Foundation

Leonia Lions Club

All of those who made generous contributions in memory of Margot and Patti Aronsohn.

Special thanks go to Eileen Goff for her significant contribution in honor of her retirement.

We also thank all those who contributed a total of \$16,146 to *The Eileen Goff Legacy Fund* which was established by *hip's* Board of Trustees in honor of Eileen's 37 years of dedicated service and announced at Eileen's retirement party on June 28th. Eileen was totally surprised and is thrilled that these funds will be available to assist consumers who have compelling financial needs that cannot be met through any other funding sources.

Special recognition goes to Yahya Sadigh for his extraordinary contribution to *The Eileen Goff Legacy Fund*.

"No act of kindness,  
no matter how small,  
is ever wasted"



AESOP

## 66 \$unny Day\$ of \$ummer Calendar Raffle Recap

The sunny days of summer have come to an end! We had a great time watching the list of raffle winners grow each week and seeing many of our *hip* friends and family win! Thank you to everyone who supported our effort and congratulations again to all our winners!

This year's calendar raffle included (1) three-time winner, (3) two-time winners, and ticket holders from all over the country! Our Grand Prize Winner was longtime *hip* friend and Director of the DAWN CIL, Carmela Slivinski!

We're already looking forward to next year's raffle – maybe we'll change it up a bit and have it in the fall!



*Bergen CIL staff member Jayne Jacobs' son Cole Jacobs did the honor of picking the raffles one week!*

*hip's new President/CEO Brian Fitzgibbons picked the Grand Prize Winner!*



## hip hip Hooray!

*hip's* founder and former President/CEO, Eileen Goff, was honored with the Dr. Celia Weisman Memorial Award at the Bergen County Human Services Advisory Council Annual Meeting on Tuesday, September 26th. Congratulations to Eileen on this very prestigious and well-deserved award!

Congratulations to Ryan Roy for his role as the grand marshal of the 2017 NJ Disability Pride Parade! The parade took place on Saturday, October 7th in Trenton.

*hip* staff member Natalie Alave welcomed a baby girl into her family on October 4th. Congratulations to the new mom and dad!



*Alexandra Acosta, Chief of Staff for Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttle, Freeholders Mary Amoroso and Germaine Ortiz, Award Recipient Eileen Goff, Jane Linter, Director of the Bergen County Department of Human Services, and James Tedesco, Bergen County Executive.*

## SAVE THE DATE...

For the Holiday Party on Sunday, December 17th, 12 – 4 p.m., at the DoubleTree Hotel in Fort Lee. Join us for a festive celebration of the season!

## Cooking Corner

The autumn season is here! Try this recipe from Delish for muffins that are fall in a cupcake liner.

### Pumpkin Butterscotch Muffins

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 1½ c. flour
- ¾ c. sugar
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- ½ tsp. kosher salt
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. ground nutmeg
- 1½ c. butterscotch chips, divided
- 1 c. canned pumpkin
- 2 eggs
- 6 tbsp. butter, melted and cooled
- ¼ c. sour cream
- 1 tbsp. vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl, mix together flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon and nutmeg. Add in 1¼ cups butterscotch chips, and toss until well-coated with flour mixture (this will keep them from sinking to the bottom of the batter).

Add pumpkin, eggs, butter, sour cream, and vanilla, and mix until well-combined.

Line a muffin tin with liners, and use an ice cream scoop to fill each with batter. Top each muffin with remaining butterscotch chips.

Bake until toothpick comes out clean, about 20 minutes.

<http://www.delish.com/cooking/recipes/a49207/pumpkin-butterscotch-muffins/>



# Remembering Paula Walsh

Paula Walsh, longtime *hip* staff member and friend passed away suddenly on August 7th. Paula was an amazing woman – a loving wife, mother, grandmother and someone who was beyond dedicated to advocating for people with disabilities. The number of people whose lives were changed

“I first met Paula Walsh in 1985 when she came to *hip* for a job interview. She had acquired a spinal cord injury during her adolescence, completed high school and went on to Ramapo College. Her career at *hip* began as an information and referral specialist and then expanded to include other responsibilities. I attended her wedding to Larry Walsh which was followed by the birth of their daughter Kelly, who came to work for six months with Paula and received lots of attention in her playpen.

We, her coworkers, knew Paula as someone who shared her real life experiences in humorous ways. Her “private” life was always “public” for the entire world to know. She was dedicated to *hip* and the agency’s consumers. She loved coordinating our fishing outings, enjoyed staffing tables at exhibits (even if no one came to her table) and thought it was fun to travel for hours via bus and train to events held in far-reaching areas of the state. I never heard Paula complain although her disability became more troublesome as time passed. Farewell Paula, you left this world too early and everyone will be thinking of you the next time they bait their fishing hook.”

– EILEEN GOFF

“Paula Walsh died suddenly today  
In a very unexpected way.  
She died in her house on her street  
And now with the angels God she will meet.  
She was the program director of *hip*  
And never a negative word did she let slip.  
She always tried to help everyone  
She worked day and night until a job was done.  
It’s a shame to see her go  
For she was not our foe.  
Soon she will meet God in heaven  
And not be found at Seven Eleven.”

By Doreen Kovach

*“Paula was a good, caring, loving and sweet Person I got to know of. She advocated and fought for the Lives of Residents with Disabilities State-Wide, never gave up hope, always continued to pave the way when it comes to getting accessibility of going places.*

*I will miss her sense of wisdom in how she shares with me when coming to the office of *hip* every Tuesdays and even Thursdays when facilitating the BRAN Meeting for People First through NJ Council on Developmental Disabilities. God bless her Soul, will miss her dearly from the bottom of my heart.”*

**Ryan Roy**  
*Autism Advocate*

In the mid-1970’s a good friend invited me to visit Ramapo College. During that visit, I met Paula Westbrook. I was interested in attending Ramapo but at that time I was not sure if I could. Talking with Paula and other people with different abilities made an impression on me. Throughout the years, some people make more of an impact than others and are there for you. I can’t believe that Paula and I have known each other for 45 years. Paula made a difference in people’s lives – I was certainly not the only person she positively impacted. No matter the problem, she tried to find a reasonable solution. Sometimes it wasn’t ideal but it helped to motivate that individual to the next stage. Paula was a people person. She enjoyed conversation, which helped her in her work. Paula will be missed! She was a true role model and friend.

– AUSTIN EPSTEIN



# Walsh 11/9/54 – 8/7/17

by Paula's work over her 33 years at *hip* is immeasurable. She cared about all of us as family and we loved her so much.

We will miss you more than words can say, Paula. *May you rest in peace.*

"It was wonderful to know a person like Paula who gave help in many situations and had the memory of an elephant! Paula devoted herself to helping others no matter what shape they were in. Paula's sense of humor really got laughter in the *hip* office. Being with Paula was an enjoyable experience. You always felt included with Paula on the scene! Memories of Paula will always be on people's minds and really, nobody can take her place."

– **Stephanie Thomas**

"Paula dedicated her life to placing the needs of others above her own. When I was suffering from a job loss in 1991 and dealing with physical challenges related to my disability after working for the Defense department, I didn't know what kind of job to pursue because it was so difficult for me to make phone calls with my hearing loss. Paula got me started with the PASP program which lead to a Job working for DIAL (another CIL) at 15/hr which was a respectable income. She also encouraged me to give talks to VR counselors and Police officers how to dispel myths about the hearing impaired client or motorist not to be seen as "uncooperative." She has been my friend, advocate, and teacher. Although working with my disability has been a lifelong challenge, Paula never got bored or tired of wanting to help me find innovative solutions – not just for correcting my hearing, but in all affected aspects of my life that are impacted by my disability. She was an endless source of inspiration and courage and I will miss her during the journey of the rest of my life, always."

– **Marc Ecker**



"How can I find the words to say what I feel at this moment, what words are adequate to pay tribute to a hero who gave so much of herself and upon others to make them feel free to live their life regardless of what challenges we all had? The answer is I just don't know. What I do know is this, Paula Walsh wasn't just a person who's challenges did not keep her down, instead, she rose above them! I am honored to be among them who made me aware of what my voice can do to inspire others. I always believed that Paula had a purpose for being on this Earth and that was to teach us how to be a voice for others. And also in addition, to make us celebrate our life and enjoy every bit of it and every moment of it until our last breath upon this Earth.

I treasured her friendship, and her support for whatever I endured and whatever I did to stand up for the voiceless. I know, she always told me about Great events to always have fun with and to forget about your challenges for even a short while. Among the things that I treasured was whenever she called me for the annual Bergen Bassmasters fishing competition at Darlington Lake in Ramsey and I always enjoyed the humor of a certain Master of Ceremonies Brian Mahoney, Paula always asked me during the time of my fishing, "Are you enjoying yourself?" and I would always reply, "I sure am. It is quite fun." It was Paula who introduced me to the Wonders of being able to fish and enjoy the wondrous Beauty of what the universe can provide, there is life around that lake. But sometimes, whenever I fish with people, it reminds me of something that I heard so long ago. I was taught that sometimes the lake may be quiet, but there's always life under the water and I knew that my time to be emerging and full of that energy would soon arrive. And now, that I am involved further in the fight for progress, equality, compassion, love, and a whole lot more, I absolutely can not enough thank a hero among Heroes, who in her own way, taught us to catch our own falling star and put it in our pocket and Never Let It Fade Away for real. The star always shines bright and helps us guide us even in the darkest of times. Even at the picnic or at the annual Christmas party, Paula loved life fully and taught me how to love life fully as well and celebrate it!

My friend Paula, on behalf of a Grateful Nation, no, a grateful planet, you're amazing six decades upon the Earth on behalf of a grateful planet, I thank you for not just your six decades upon this Earth, but thank you for always being a champion of change, a soldier on the front line 4 ending discrimination, bigotry, and more, I thank you for teaching me the greatest gift of all...

Paying it forward and giving back to others.

I may be crying today that you are no longer going to be there for me or for any of us when we fish next season with the Bergen Bassmasters, or at the annual Christmas party or at our picnic, but I know you will always be there with us, in spirit, and always celebrating with us in our heart forever.

Good night my friend Paula. May flights of Angels Sing thee to thy rest good and faithful servant. I Rejoice at your spiritual promotion, and I Rejoice that you are now Among the Stars shining down upon us. Rest in peace."

– **Christopher Gagliardi**



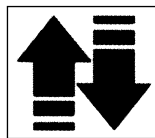
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# We welcome the following new and renewing members of hip for 2017!

Annie Been\*  
Anne Burton Walsh\*  
Susan Stiles  
Janice Willett\*  
Cindy Zirkin

\*Life Member

## Calendar of Events

### BERGEN

#### Support Group Meetings

November 9 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. Empowering Women – Support  
December 14 Group meets every month on the second Thursday at the Bergen hip office.

#### Technology Demonstrations

November 8 1 – 5 p.m. Adam Krass, assistive  
December 20 technology consultant, meets with individuals one-on-one to demonstrate devices and discuss applications. Call the Bergen CIL for an appointment.

#### Book Club

November 3 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. The Book Club meets each  
December 1 month at the Bergen hip office to socialize while discussing books previously chosen and offering ideas for future reading choices.

### hip Meetings

November 15 7 p.m. Annual Meeting  
December 17 12 Noon Holiday Party  
Fort Lee DoubleTree Hotel

#### Adjustment to Vision Loss Support Groups

##### Fort Lee Group 10 a.m. – Noon

November 21  
December 19

##### Washington Township 10 a.m. – Noon

November 15  
December 20

In case of inclement weather, call the hip office to see if the event/meeting will be held.

## 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 37 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: *Maria Valentin (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: *Angela Arboleda (Hudson)*

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

**Empowering Women Support Group.** Contact: *Bergen Staff*

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

**It's All About Work** assists high school students and adults to plan for their future and for employment. Contact: *Brian Fitzgibbons or Marily Gonzalez-Vazquez (Hudson)*

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

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

**Polio Network of New Jersey – The Ruprecht Fund.** hip administers this fund for PNNJ to help polio survivors in New Jersey finance necessary products and services. Contact: *Maria Valentin (Bergen)*

**Senior and Caregiver Assistance Program** provides care management to individuals over the age of 60 and/or adult family caregivers. Contact: *Mary Mulvaney, Victoria Robbins or Shoshana Stubin (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 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: *Mary Mulvaney, Victoria Robbins or Shoshana Stubin (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: *Brian Fitzgibbons (Bergen) or Jennifer Pimentel (Hudson)*



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