

Fall 2019

PRESIDENT/CEO

Brian Fitzgibbons, MPA, CRC

*hip*News **EDITOR**

hip Staff

*hip*News **FOUNDING EDITOR**

Jean Fox Csaposs

WEBSITE

www.hipcil.org

BERGEN COUNTY

131 Main Street, Suite 120
Hackensack, NJ 07601

201-996-9100 • Fax 201-996-9422
TDD 201-996-9424

HUDSON COUNTY

35 Journal Square, Suite 703
Jersey City, NJ 07306

201-533-4407 • Fax 201-533-4421
TDD 201-533-4409

hip's Mission Statement

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

IN THIS ISSUE

AVL Update	2
Mourning Tom Bengaff	4
Bassmasters Event	4
SNAP & MAP	5
Project Lifesaver	5
Eileen Goff Tributes	Centerfold
Calendar of Events	7

NEWSLETTER DESIGN BY
Barbara Conklin
Hackensack, NJ
PRINTED BY
The Print Group
S. Hackensack, NJ

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.

Eileen Goff

IN LOVING MEMORY



By now many of you have heard that *hip's* beloved founder and former President/CEO Eileen Goff passed away on August 3, 2019. The opening paragraph of her obituary stated that she was a woman of remarkable warmth, generosity, dignity and accomplishment. The funeral service was a wonderful tribute to her with the chapel filled with family, friends and local dignitaries all recounting how Eileen touched their lives in so many positive ways.

I first met Eileen when I was working as a Rehabilitation Counselor and we went for a visit to see this new program called Independent Living run out of Englewood. I was not only happy to see this new service starting in the community, but I was totally impressed by this dynamic woman who was filled with ideas on how to reach a forgotten segment of society: people with disabilities.

Over the years we spent time together at many statewide events, seminars and meetings and she was always the person you'd want to sit with because she asked the best and most challenging questions. She also had great stories about her travels and escapades on the slopes and hiking trails.

Though she had been retired from *hip* for the past two years she kept in touch with the Board and staff members and shared several celebrations of her achievements like the Russ Berrie, Michael Lione and Celia Weisman awards in addition to being named a *hip* All-Star.

In this edition of the *hip* newsletter we have created a special section featuring the recollections of the many people who were privileged to have known this dynamic woman.

Memorial contributions can be made to *hip* for the Eileen Goff Legacy Fund in care of Trish Carney.

Brian Fitzgibbons, MPA, CRC
President/CEO



***hip* ANNUAL MEETING NOVEMBER 14 at the
WESTY SELF STORAGE EVENT CENTER – HACKENSACK 7– 9 PM**

Computer Upgrade to Enhance Services at hip

hip is entering the 21st century with new Dell computers. Although hip is a small office, we believe that this upgrade will enhance our ability to provide the services that our customers deserve. The new technology will be faster and increase the ability of staff members to interact on an electronic network. We will also be able to assure the safety and privacy of our documents with cloud computing.

This upgrade is made possible through incredible discounts offered by TechSoup, an online tech marketplace that provides discounts to nonprofits for all things technical. TechSoup's mission is "to build a dynamic bridge that enables civil society organizations and social change agents around the world to gain effective access to the resources they need to design and implement technology solutions for a more equitable planet."

It is our hope that this upgrade will make a big difference in our productivity and efficiency as we continue to provide services.

We Mourn . . .

the passing of Gilbert Benson on August 19th. Gilbert, a Life Member of hip, was an active participant at all of our parties, picnics, and meetings for almost 30 years, and was Trish Carney's regular dance partner.

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.

"Adjustment to Vision Loss" Program Update

by Trisha Ebel

I am so very proud to report that our AVL program is expanding immensely and is really thriving! There have been many accomplishments so that now all AVL support groups are up and running facilitated by Trisha Ebel, Marie Sawyer and Joanna Mallard.

Our hip participants who are attending the meetings have gained so much information and a wealth of resources in all areas. For example:

- assistive technology
- transportation resources
- state & county services
- Library of Congress services
- social skills
- orientation and mobility skills

Our program has also benefited from a wonderful grant to hip from The Fund for The New Jersey Blind. With this grant hip was able to start a program, "Stepping Out with hip," a series of ballroom dance lessons offered to our AVL members. Ralph, one of hip's participants, offered to donate his time and instruct a total of five 3-hour lessons at a venue in Secaucus. On June 5 we finished the ballroom dance lessons with a big "Tea Party," where all dancers showcased what they learned!

Through our AVL program we are able to provide our members with the knowledge and skills to feel comfortable, get back into society, and live a complete and full life! Even though we are visually impaired or blind, with these resources we are empowered to do just about everything a sighted person does.



Hudson hip News

hip Picks and Bingo

The Hudson consumer meeting was held at the Secaucus Library and hosted by Brian Fitzgibbons, our CEO, and the Hudson staff. Consumers enjoyed lunch and a day out for interesting conversations about "What's next at hip?" and "What can hip do for our consumers?"

We had a fun-filled afternoon of bingo with great prizes! This event gave consumers an opportunity to voice their opinions and needs and make hip staff aware of areas of interest in an effort to expand and meet the needs of our community. Consumers were delighted by the event!



Bingo with braille bingo cards is a hit at the Hudson consumer meeting.

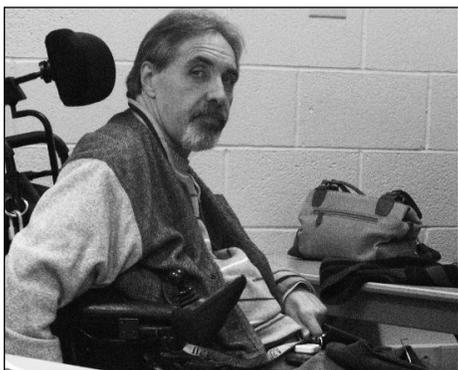
Wellness Workshop

by Hudson Intern Zarish Shahid

Health is a combination of your physical, mental and social well-being. Health affects everything about a person: how one feels, thinks, looks and acts. We conducted an informative workshop focused on enhancing health and wellness for consumers. The workshop addressed lifestyle diseases, unhealthy diet, the importance of water, and exercise. We learned how small changes and setting a few health goals can make a big difference.

Consumers enjoyed a nutritional lunch with a variety of fruits to encourage the beginning of a new healthier lifestyle.

We also mourn the loss of Tom Bengaff. . .



Thomas John Bengaff, who passed away on April 26, was an advocate for the rights of individuals with disabilities and a longtime *hip* board member. A celebration of his life was held on July 13 at the State Line Lookout in Alpine, NJ. Family, friends and *hip* representatives spoke about his many contributions to disability advocacy and, above all, his personal inspiration to all who knew him.

I'M FREE

Don't grieve for me, for now I'm free;
I followed the path God laid for me;
I took His hand when I heard Him call;
I turned my back and left it all;
I could not stay another day;
to laugh, to love, to work or play;
tasks left undone must stay that way;
I found that peace at the close of day;
If my parting has left a void;
then fill it with remembered joy.
My life's been full, I savored much;
good friends, good times,
a loved one's touch,
A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss;
ah yes, these things, I too, will miss.
Perhaps my time seemed all too brief;
don't lengthen it now with undue grief.
Lift up your hearts and share with me;
God wanted me now, He set me free.

The poem, "I'm Free" that appeared on Tom's memorial card tells us a lot about him. Tom was injured in a diving accident on the day of his senior prom but that didn't stop him from graduating from Northern Highlands Regional HS and earning degrees in Mathematics/Physics and Business Administration from Ramapo College. He went on to become a Program Analyst with the United States Army

Corps of Engineers working at Picatinny Arsenal.

Tom's advocacy for people with disabilities took him in many directions. He was active in Big Wheels offering access to the beaches for wheelchair users, he led a boy scout troop and developed a computerized bulletin board to encourage communication and to connect to the community. He was committed to voter rights and the removal of architectural barriers going so far as to examine the accessibility of shopping districts in some Bergen County communities. He was also a charter member of the Monday Morning Project which later became People First New Jersey. In addition to *hip* Tom served on the Board of Bergen County Community Transportation.

At the memorial service two of Tom's friends discussed their lifelong friendship which started over peanut butter sandwiches in the first grade. They started a Foundation to assist Tom with some equipment and other needs not covered by insurance. They surprised the crowd of sixty at the service by donating the remaining funds from the Foundation to *hip* where a special award will be established in Tom's name.

What is an Advance Directive?

"What kind of medical care would you want if you were too ill or hurt to express your wishes? Advance directives are legal documents that allow you to spell out your decisions about end-of-life care ahead of time. They give you a way to tell your wishes to family, friends, and health care professionals and to avoid confusion later on."*

New Jersey has two kinds of directives. The first is a "proxy directive." This is also known as a "Durable Power of Attorney." The "proxy directive" is a legal document in which you appoint a person(s) to make healthcare decisions for you in the event you are unable to make these decisions for yourself. The "proxy directive" can be temporary because of an accident or permanent because of a disease. The person you appoint becomes known as your "healthcare representative."

The second kind of directive is an "instruction directive." This is also

sometimes known as a "Living Will." A living will is a written, legal document that spells out medical treatments you would and would not want to be used to keep you alive, as well as your preferences for other medical decisions, such as pain management or organ donation. You can also include information about your values and treatment preferences in the event you are unable to make your own healthcare decisions.

The New Jersey Dept. of Health provides a great deal of information and answers many of the questions you may have. The Department's website also links to standard forms for advance directives provided by The New Jersey Commission on Legal and Ethical Problems in the Delivery of Health Care. The information and forms can be found at:

<https://www.state.nj.us/health/advancedirective>.

*<https://medlineplus.gov/advancedirectives.html>



My Wonderful Experience with Bergen Bassmasters at Darlington County Park

by Kathy Moore

I want to start by thanking Brian Mahoney of Bergen Bassmasters, Heightened Independence and Progress (*hip*), the Bergen County Parks Department, Bergen County Community Transportation, and all the wonderful people who volunteered their time and energy to make this event possible.

Saturday, June 8, 2019, was a very beautiful, sunny day in Mahwah, NJ. A lot of us traveled by Bergen County Community Transportation to Darlington County Park to go fishing. When we arrived, we could see that Brian Mahoney was on top of everything needed for the event. There were t-shirts for all whether you were a volunteer or a participant. Umbrellas were available for people who either burn easily or are not very mobile. Whatever the case was, everything was nicely done.

The Bergen Bassmasters was formed in 1986 and has since grown into one of the most respected bass fishing clubs in the state of New Jersey. The Bergen Bassmasters is more than just a fishing club. It is an organization where bass anglers can meet new friends, learn new techniques, be aware of environmental issues, and give something back to those less fortunate.

This event was the 31st Annual Norm Trass Outing for the Disabled. The organizations participating in this



Kathy Moore shows off her fishing skills at Darlington Park.

event were Heightened Independence and Progress (*hip*), The ARC of Bergen and Passaic Counties, Spectrum for Living, Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey and Boy Scouts of America.

Everyone was a winner! Chris Gagliardi, Ryan Roy and Larry Pagano were the biggest winners at *hip* for catching the most fish, along with Susan Lee who received a trophy for the most unusual catch of the day: yikes! a snake. The rest of us received medals, too.

We had a DJ who played good music and the volunteers were able to get some of the attendees dancing. We ate well, too – hamburgers and hot dogs straight from a BBQ grill!

So, if you didn't come this time, remember to put this event on your calendar for next year!

Enabled

by Thanasis Aspras, Bergen *hip* Intern

Being consumed by self-doubt is a common part of the human experience and more often than not we let self-doubt dictate what we can and can't do. In turn, we sometimes give up on dreams that we think are unrealistic. However, by denying yourself the chance of achieving your goals you may never truly know where your limits lie. Derrick L. Coleman, Jr. is the first legally deaf offensive player in the NFL. Derrick was legally deaf by age three, but that didn't stop him from pursuing his dream of playing football. He had humble beginnings as a college football star but eventually he was able to garner the attention of the NFL. In 2012 Derrick was drafted by the Seattle Seahawks, and the very next year he played in Super Bowl XLVIII where they took home the Vince Lombardi Trophy.

Derrick Coleman is an inspiration to an innumerable amount of people as well as being a compassionate advocate for people with disabilities. Derrick wrote the book *No Excuses* which describes his life and how he was able to overcome his disability. He also started the non-profit organization known as No Excuse Foundation with the goal of building confidence and acceptance for the deaf community. They help by providing scholarships for deaf students, donating money to fund the development of hearing aids, promoting self-advocacy for deaf students and a good deal more. By going to their website at www.noexcusefoundation.com, you can help them achieve their goal of empowering those who have a hearing disability.

Derrick Coleman was not consumed by self-doubt on his journey, and he was able to help a multitude of people on the way. He didn't treat his disability as a roadblock that would impede his progress. Instead he kept moving forward with confidence. Everyone has the potential to achieve greatness so take that potential and stride with conviction.

National Disability Institute's Assistive Technology Loan Program

The National Disability Institute is a non-profit organization that provides low-interest loans to people with disabilities, seniors, and veterans who live in New York and New Jersey. The purpose of the loans is to help people locate and purchase assistive technology devices and services to meet the individual's needs. These loans are serviced by participating banks and credit unions.

Assistive technology includes home and vehicle modifications, ramps, smartphones and apps, computers, hearing aids, and other equipment and devices that will help improve a person's quality of life. Assistive technology resource guides to help New Jersey residents try devices and borrow and locate funding, including grants, to purchase assistive technology, can be found on the National Disability Institute website: assistivetechloans.com.

Loans are available from \$500 - \$30,000. The interest rate is 4%. Repayment terms are from 12-120 months, based on the life of the device and the ability of the applicant to pay. Payments are due each month.

An "Assistive Technology Guide for New Jersey," which lists many programs and agencies that provide assistive technology devices and demonstration services for these devices, is located on the website.

The loan application process includes, faxing a loan application with ID and proof of income and monthly expenses to (202)449-9521. You will then review your credit report and application with the NDI staff. Pre-qualified loan applications are transmitted to a participating bank or credit union for a final determination. For much more information and details about the loans, go to the website, assistivetechloans.com, email Laurie Schaller at lschaller@ndi-inc.org or call at (202)449-9521.

What Are Invisible Disabilities?

by Diomayra Ramos

We usually associate a disability with a visible physical and/or mental condition – something we can see. In fact, many disabilities are not apparent to others but are no less challenging. These are the invisible disabilities. Approximately ten percent of the American population has some form of invisible disability according to the Disabled World website. A large number of individuals are suffering in silence from such conditions because there is no visible evidence to alert us. We tend to recognize a person with a disability based on his or her appearance and overlook many internal limiting factors that may be at least as challenging.

It's surprising how quick we are to characterize people and their disabilities based solely on external appearances, but there is a lot more to disabilities than meets the eye. It's estimated that a greater number of people are living with an invisible disability than a visible one. Chronic conditions, for example, are the most common type of invisible disability. We may not even consider many of these conditions disabilities because they range from something as common as allergies to more severe conditions such as anxiety disorders.

These types of illnesses can have the same impact on someone's life though usually in a very different way. For example, someone in a wheelchair might not be able to ride the bus due to inaccessibility, yet a person with anxiety might be unable to ride the bus because of a crippling fear of having to sit next to strangers. Both struggle with boarding the bus, the only difference is that the cause of one struggle is readily apparent to us, while the other is "invisible."

We all know people with invisible disabilities. Some common examples are migraine headaches, rheumatoid arthritis, asthma, and irritable bowel syndrome. These can be debilitating conditions that prevent the people who suffer from them from experiencing a complete and fulfilling life. We just don't see it.

As we become more aware of the world of disabilities and the many forms that a disability may take, government and

other private organizations are beginning to take steps to assist people with invisible disabilities. Identifying these individuals and their disabilities may be the first step toward the implementation of helpful accommodations.

Much more information can be obtained from the Disabled World website: <https://www.disabled-world.com/disability/types/invisible>

SNAP & MAP

The Special Needs Assistance Program (SNAP) assists with the acquisition of adaptive equipment and devices. SNAP funding can be used to purchase items and to obtain services intended to enhance independent living. Bath benches, walkers, hearing aids, automobile hand controls, and wheelchair rentals are a sampling of the assistive technology SNAP covers. SNAP is funded up to \$300 through the Bergen County Department of Human Services.

The Modification Access Project (MAP) provides partial funding to improve access in the homes of Bergen County residents with disabilities. Renovation projects may include ramps, widening of doorways, roll-in showers, lifts, and automatic door openers. MAP can help pay for professional evaluations, material and labor. MAP is funded up to \$1800 through the Bergen County Department of Human Services.

More information about both programs can be obtained by contacting Maria Valentin at *hip*. Tel. # (201)996-9100 ext. 18.

Project Lifesaver International

The Bergen County Sheriff's Office is a participant in Project Lifesaver International whose mission is to provide rapid response for adults and children who wander due to Alzheimer's Disease, Autism, Down Syndrome, and forms of dementia. The Bergen County Sheriff's Office has trained and equipped its members to assist local police departments in locating these individuals.

Participants in the program are fitted with a small battery-operated radio wrist transmitter that emits a tracking signal 24 hours a day. Each wristband has a unique frequency, so the Project Lifesaver team can locate and identify a missing person.

If a participant wanders, the caregiver contacts the local police, who initiate a

local search while contacting the Sheriff's Office to begin a search with the tracking equipment. The team is trained in methods to communicate with and approach persons with these disorders.

There is a one-time equipment fee of \$300 and a monthly maintenance fee of \$13. Income-eligible participants may qualify for a waiver of the initial equipment fee.

More information and details of the program may be obtained by contacting the Bergen County Sheriff's Office's Outreach Unit at telephone 201-336-3540.

FIGHT LEAD WITH NUTRITION

Feeding your family healthy food rich in Iron, Vitamin C and Calcium can help limit the absorption of lead.

- Iron – lean red meats, beans, peanut butter, and cereals
- Vitamin C – oranges, green and red peppers, and juices
- Calcium – milk, yogurt, cheese, and green leafy vegetables like spinach

NJ SNAP can help you buy nutritious foods that can help fight lead.

New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (NJ SNAP)

Provides individuals and families with low incomes money to purchase nutritious foods that can help fight lead. To apply for NJSNAP online visit njhelps.org. or call 1-800-687- 9512 and visit www.NJSNAP-Ed.gov for information about healthy food.

NJ Department of Human Services
Phil Murphy, Governor
Sheila Oliver, Lt. Governor
Carole Johnson, Commissioner





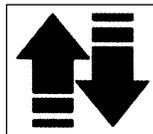
DECLARE YOUR INDEPENDENCE FROM STAIRS FOR GOOD WITH A DEPENDABLE, QUIET, EASY-TO-USE STAIRWAY LIFT FROM MOBILITY

Absolute:

- Safety
- Security and
- Freedom of Movement

& More Affordable Than You Think!

WE OFFER TOP-QUALITY STAIRWAY LIFTS,
WHEELCHAIR LIFTS AND ELEVATORS, ALL CUSTOMIZED
TO YOUR NEEDS, LIFESTYLES AND DECORS.



Mobility
ELEVATOR & LIFT CO.

4 York Avenue, West Caldwell, NJ 07006
www.mobilityelevator.com

Call or fax for a free, no-obligation, in-home consultation and estimate.

1-800-441-4181 • 973-618-9545 • Fax: 973-618-9638

Expert Sales, Installations,
Maintenance and 24-hour service.

NJ Reg #13VH02226400

CONCORD
Innovation in Mobility

Calendar of Events

BERGEN

Empowering Women Support Group

October 17 11am – 1pm Bergen *hip* Office
November 21
December 19

Book Club

October 4 11am – 1pm Bergen *hip* Office
November 1
December 6

HUDSON

Voter Registration

September 17 – 18

Halloween Art Workshop

October 31

Grammy Museum Trip

October 16

Youth Transition Meeting

November TBA

Hudson County Meeting for HIP

December 11

AVL PEER SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

hip Bergen

October 8 December 10
November 12

North Arlington

October 8 December 10
November 12

Washington Township

October 16 December 18
November 20

Jersey City

October 24 December cancelled
November 21

Secaucus

October 3 December 5
November 14

Telephone Support Group

Young Adult Peer Conference Call

Ages 18 – 30 7:30 pm
October 17 December 12
December 12

Older Adult Peer Conference Call

Ages 31 – 50 7:30 pm
October 3 December 5
November 14

BOARD MEETING

October 30

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

November 14 7 – 9 pm
Westy Self Storage Event Center, Hackensack

hip HOLIDAY PARTY

December 15

Please call the *hip* Office to confirm that the meetings will take place.

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 39 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)*

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: *Mary Mulvaney (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 Angela Arboleda (Hudson)*

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



**HEIGHTENED
INDEPENDENCE & PROGRESS**

131 Main Street, Suite 120
Hackensack, NJ 07601

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Hackensack, NJ
Permit No. 481

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.



**1980
to
2020**

**SAVE
THE DATE
MAY 1, 2020**

PLEASE JOIN *hip*
AS WE CELEBRATE 40 YEARS
OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY