

Focusing on Job Opportunities in 2014



It's difficult to find a job in Michigan right now, but it's even tougher for people with disabilities. Fortunately, CLS has experienced people to help them find work!

CLS Wayne County Benefits and Employment Coordinator, Jessica Eason and CLS Oakland County Job Developer, Lorrain Johnson are working tirelessly to help people supported by CLS obtain employment.

"Everyone can work if they want to," said Jessica. "But each person has unique skill levels and supports. We give them the extra time and help they need so they can succeed in their jobs."

Jessica connects with potential employers who might be interested in hiring people with disabilities. She makes connections and creates relationships. Some of the companies she's talking with are; Biggby Coffee, Del Taco and Stathakis, an office cleaning and building maintenance company. (cont. page 4 see **EMPLOYMENT**)

New Livonia Restaurant Opens Its Doors to People with Disabilities



The Dave and Buster's restaurant chain claims to be "the most fun you can have under one roof!" Well, Thomas Matecki can attest to that and he isn't a customer...he's an employee!

"It's so fun to work there!" said Thomas. "I get to meet a lot of people and talk to a lot of kids. Everyone is so nice!"

Thomas found the job with the help of CLS Benefits and Employment Coordinator, Jessica Eason. "She helped me get the job at the new restaurant as a part-time greeter," said Thomas.

Manager Dave Rogan thinks Thomas is awesome. "He has taken ownership of his job, he works really hard and everyone here loves him."



"He worked hard to get this job," said Jessica. "It's an intense training process and he scored the highest out of his fellow co-workers on the first test! I'm very proud of him and am grateful to Dave Rogan."

IRS Offers Tax Credits

Did you know the IRS offers tax credits to businesses who hire people with disabilities? One is called the **Work Opportunity Credit** and provides employers with a tax credit up to 40% of the first \$6,000 of first-year wages of a new employee. The employee must be considered part of a "targeted group," for example an SSI recipient. The credit is available once the employee has worked at least 120 hours or 90 days. There is also a **Disabled Access Credit**. If an employer has to spend money to make the workplace accessible for a person with a disability (such as a wheelchair ramp) the employer can receive a credit. To find out more, visit www.irs.gov.



Excellence in Mental Health Bill Passes Committee



Michigan Senator Debbie Stabenow's modified Excellence in Mental Health Act was approved by the Senate Finance Committee late last month. The bill would establish a demonstration program in 10 states to strengthen and improve access to mental health care. This bipartisan proposal will improve quality and expand access to mental care though community mental health providers. For more information, visit www.stabenow.senate.gov.



Wayne County



A New Year, A New Authority

The new President and CEO of the Detroit Wayne Mental Health Authority, Tom Watkins, is looking forward to the new year.

“DWMHA is focused on becoming a consumer and community focused, data driven, evidence based organization in 2014,” said Watkins. “We are excited to collaborate with the MCPN’s and Provider network to assure the highest quality of care possible for persons with mental illness, intellectual and developmental disabilities and substance use disorders.”

As many of you know, in October 2013, the Detroit Wayne Community Mental Health Agency became an Authority. Its new name is the Detroit Wayne Mental Health Authority. During that time, Watkins was hired as the new President and CEO and a new Mental Health Authority Board was sworn in.

Mental Health Court Now Underway in City of Wayne

The 29th District Mental Health Treatment Court (MHC) is now in session. The mission is to provide appropriate services to and monitoring of misdemeanor adult defendants in Wayne County who have serious mental illnesses, developmental disabilities and/or co-occurring disorders.

Community Living Services, Community Housing Network and several other organizations, have been invited to be a part of the MHC Advisory Board, which will help promote the Mental Health Court and provide appropriate resources for people going through the system. Those resources include recovery options, housing, employment, treatment programs and others.

The purpose of the MHC is to reduce the burdens on the criminal justice system and reduce the costs of mental health treatment. The MHC is a collaboration between the 29th District Court and Hegira Programs, Inc., a community mental health agency which is funded through the Detroit Wayne Mental Health Authority. It was developed this past October, pursuant to a State Court Administrative Office grant.

Integrated Care Organizations Announced for Dual Eligible Project

The state completed its evaluation of responses from organizations interested in becoming Integrated Care Organizations (ICOs). This is related to Michigan’s demonstration project for better integrating care for people with Medicare and Medicaid. The recommendations include the following entities in the four Pre-paid Inpatient Health Plan (PIHP) regions included in the demonstration:

Region #1 – Upper Peninsula (NorthCare Network PIHP)

Upper Peninsula Health Plan, LLC

Region #4 – Southwest Michigan (SW MI Behavioral Health PIHP)

CoventryCares of Michigan, Inc.

Meridian Health Plan of Michigan

Region #7 – Wayne County (DWMHA PIHP)

UnitedHealthcare Community Plan, Inc.

Molina Healthcare of Michigan

CoventryCares of Michigan, Inc.

AmeriHealth Michigan, Inc..

Midwest Health Plan

Fidelis SecureCare of Michigan, Inc.

(Cont. page 4 see **ICO**)

SAVE THE DATE!
EMPLOYMENT
FAIR!

Wednesday, March 12, 2014
1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Location TBA
More details in the February
Issue of Freedom Press

Public Forum Announced Relating to Dual Eligible Project

A public forum will be held on Tuesday, January 28, 2014 at the Radisson Plaza and Hotel Suites in Kalamazoo. The event will be held from 10:00 a.m. to noon. This is the third forum being held by the Michigan Department of Community Health for individuals that have questions about the state’s plan to integrate health care for people who have Medicaid and Medicare. The MDCH is providing a conference line for those who would like to call in. Call the Integrated Care Division at 517-241-4293.

Local Leaders Get Involved with International Treaty

The promise of equal rights for disabled people around the world still remains an elusive goal as the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was not ratified in early December. The Senate treaty vote was 61, six less than the 67 needed for ratification. If the treaty were to be ratified, it would raise awareness and offer accessibility around the world, directly helping Americans with disabilities that live, work, study, or travel abroad. It would also allow the United States to join 126 other countries that are party to the treaty which was modeled after the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Prior to the vote, the CLS Peer Leadership group wrote letters to various legislators across the country in support of ratifying the Disability Treaty. “I am disappointed the treaty was not ratified,” said Peer Mentor Andre Robinson. “We want everyone with disabilities to be able to travel freely and receive the same kind of support and services they receive here in the U.S.”

This publication is written in part by people supported by CLS with the help of the Public Relations department. For more information visit www.comlivserv.com or contact Tiffany Devon at 734-722-7185.

Oakland County

New Resource and Crisis Center Opens in Oakland County

There are many things happening in the New Year for the Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority. One of them is the grand opening of a new Resource and Crisis Center on January 17th. Several services will be offered including a 24-Hour Resource and Crisis Helpline, Oakland Assessment and Crisis Intervention Service, ACCESS Services (currently located at Doctor's Hospital in Pontiac) and the Crisis Residential Unit (currently located at Hendrie in Royal Oak). The new facility is funded through the Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority. OCCMHA Executive Director Jeff Brown says he is excited about what the New Year will bring.

"OCCMHA looks forward to successful regional collaboration in 2014," says Brown. "As our service networks are redefined, refined, and refinanced, OCCMHA and its provider network remain committed to thriving partnerships and relationships that ensure the highest quality of care to those we serve."



A BIG congratulations goes out to Ashlee Jackson who was awarded the Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority's "Hero" Award. The awards were given out to one person every month last year honoring successes and contributions to their communities in celebration of OCCMHA's 50th anniversary. Ashlee said she was honored to receive the award. She currently has her own business called "Knit Me Up."

Talented Writer and Speaker Pens Her First Freedom Press Story



Sarah Palk is a talented writer and dynamic teacher. She provides training to direct care staff by giving a powerful presentation on how she wants to be treated by the people who care for her. Sarah is a guest columnist of *Freedom Press* and will be submitting articles on various topics. Enjoy!

My name is Sarah Palk and I have cerebral palsy. CP is a physical disability that develops when oxygen doesn't get to the brain for a long period of time. CP isn't an illness; it is a closed head injury. I developed it when I was born.

One of the ways I communicate is by using a computer. It is my lifeline. It allows me to talk with people and voice my opinion. I have used it most of my life, during school and while attending classes at Schoolcraft College. The computer is linked to an iPad so I can go on-line anywhere that has a wireless connection. I work my computer with a switch, placed on my headrest.

I use my computer as a way to communicate and teach people how I want to be treated. For the past several months I have been sharing my story with direct care staff. I enjoy giving presentations and voicing my opinion.

I am also an advocate and like getting involved in activities that will help people hear my voice. For example, there are many non-accessible buildings in many communities. So if a building has steps at the door which will not allow me to get in then as an advocate, I am compelled to speak up about it. So in the future, look for those types of stories from me. By writing these articles I will hopefully change how the community sees people with disabilities. Please read my articles with an open mind. Thank you. ~ Sarah Palk



If you would like to make a donation to Friends of CLS, please go to the website, www.comliveserv.com and click on "Friends of CLS." Donations allow grants to be given to people for college courses, start-up monies for small businesses, memberships to places in the community, etc.

Long Term Care

A Christmas Wish is Granted...and Then Some!

During the holidays, most people are worrying about shopping, baking, wrapping gifts, parties...but Timothy Henderson of Detroit was more concerned with the water in his basement and keeping his fourteen-year-old son Jamar warm.

Henderson's basement flooded in October and without the funds to have the water extracted, mold grew and the furnace and hot water tank failed. He contacted the CLS Long Term Care Division and he was able to get help .

Henderson did not want to leave his home for fear of vandals, so LTC provided blankets and space heaters while they searched for assistance. The estimate to remove the water and mold was a staggering \$12,000, but Johnny On the Spot , an emergency flood service, offered to do the work for free then worked with Roto-Rooter to find the source of the flooding.

Randazzo Mechanical Heating and Cooling donated a furnace, National Wide Furniture provided a bed and Christmas tree, Robinson Furniture donated a bed and St. Vincent DePaul gave them household items and clothing.

"We are humbled and grateful to these generous companies who donated their materials, services and time to help this family as well as the CLS employees who donated gifts," said LTC Manager Jennifer Burney. "It's a blessing."



Mr. Henderson and Jamar with representatives from Johnny on the Spot and Roto-Rooter.

SAVE THE DATE!



(ICO cont. from page 2)

Region #9 – Macomb County (Macomb County Mental Health Services PIHP)

UnitedHealthcare Community Plan, Inc.

Molina Healthcare of Michigan

CoventryCares of Michigan, Inc.

AmeriHealth Michigan, Inc.

Midwest Health Plan

Fidelis SecureCare of Michigan, Inc.

The first phase for Wayne and Macomb counties will include integrating long term care.

CLS MISSION

To assist and advocate for each person to have supports they want and need:

- To control and exercise authority over their own lives.
- To live a life of freedom, opportunity and relationships, as family, friends and neighbors.
- To share in full community membership and citizenship.

CLS VISION

People will fully participate in their communities and have a quality of life, which comes from freedom and its responsibilities, the authority to make their own life decisions and the financial resources to implement them.

(**EMPLOYMENT** cont. from page 1)

Lorrain partners with Michigan Works to place people in jobs. "It's so important to connect with employers who are willing to give people with disabilities a chance," said Lorrain. "With a little bit of coaching, these employees will give their best effort and employers will be pleased with their performance."

If you know someone supported by CLS who is interested in employment opportunities, have them contact their Supports Coordinator.