

# DISABILITY RIGHTS IN ACTION

A Newsletter of the Center for Disability Rights, Inc. / Winter 2017

## CDR Travels to Boston to Advocate for Disability Rights

In October, 40 Disability Rights activists from the Rochester area travelled to Boston, Massachusetts to join National ADAPT in advocating for disability rights. ADAPT is a national grass-roots community that organizes disability rights activists to engage in nonviolent direct action, to assure the civil and human rights of people with disabilities to live in freedom. ADAPT has chapters across the nation, including one in Rochester, that come together to fight for disability rights.



Activists holding a sign that reads "Stop the Torture" outside the Judge Rotenberg Center

Boston was chosen by ADAPT as the location for an Action because Massachusetts segregates people with disabilities and seniors in institutions. ADAPT and CDR believe that people with disabilities and seniors should have the right to live and receive services in the community. This is why many members of CDR joined ADAPT in Boston – to fight for the rights of people with disabilities and seniors to live in freedom!

While in Boston, activists protested the Judge Rotenberg Center (JRC). JRC is the only facility in the nation that still shocks disabled people as a form of "therapy." The shock devices they use are made on site and the shocks are stronger than police tasers. 90% of the people in JRC are disabled people of color. Activists chose to protest the JRC because we will not sit quietly as people with disabilities are tortured!

Activists also marched to the Health and Human Services (HHS) building in Boston to demand a meeting with the Secretary of HHS to talk about the proposed capping of attendants' hours. Last year, CDR and ADAPT opposed the implementation of the U.S. Department of Labor Companionship Rule changes because we knew it would result in states capping

*Continued on Page 4*

**Roberta Wallach**  
*Board Chair*

**Bruce E. Darling**  
*President/CEO*

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*CDR works to ensure the full integration, independence and civil rights of people with disabilities and seniors in the community.*

Dear Friends,

As we kick off the New Year, Disability Rights in Action has so much exciting news to share. We are confident that 2017 will be another year of success and growth. Stay tuned for more information about what we have going on throughout the year!

Catch up on many of our programs and services on pages 4 - 6, and get a sneak peak of events we have planned in 2017 on page 3. Our cover story features all the hard work our advocates have been doing to fight for the rights of people with disabilities to live and receive services in the community. Please contact us to learn more about CDR and how you can get more involved with us. We look forward to celebrating 2017 with everyone!

*Bruce E. Darling*

## CDR's Interpreting Services

We are very pleased to announce that CDR now offers Interpreting Services. As of January 3, the Sign language Interpreting Service that was available to the Great Rochester community through Lifespan transitioned over to CDR! This service is now a component of our Deaf and Deaf-Blind Services and is under the supervision of Catherine Stutzman, manager of Deaf and Deaf - Blind Services.

We are able to provide interpreters for health care, social services, government agencies, legal, educational and employment situations and special events. Our Sign Language Interpreting Service is HIPPA compliant and adheres to the Registry for interpreters of the Deaf Code of Professional Conduct.

We also want to welcome to CDR the two schedulers/interpreters who are joining us from Lifespan. They are both interpreters and are well versed and knowledgeable about the scheduling software that Lifespan provided to us.

Staff at CDR, including our IT staff, worked very hard and in close collaboration with Lifespan staff to make this smooth and seamless a transition as possible. We are very excited to offer this new service!



The sign for Interpreter

# CDR's ADAPT FUN\*RUN

Join CDR for the ADAPT FUN\*RUN for Disability Rights!

*May 6, 2017*

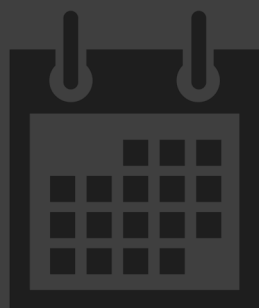
Run, Walk, Roll, or Cheer! Everyone is encouraged to participate and support Disability Rights!

Stay tuned for more information to come

Interested? Contact Kristin Cook, Director of Development at [kcook@cdrnys.org](mailto:kcook@cdrnys.org) or (585) 546-7510

It is with a heavy heart we announce the passing of Anthony Gamble and Linda Ostertag. Both Anthony and Linda played active roles in the disability community and the Center for Disability Rights. They both lived in a nursing home before transitioning out and utilizing CDR's services. They lived active lives in the community where they advocated for disability rights. They will be missed by the disability community and CDR.

## UPCOMING



## EVENTS

*May 14, 2017*

ADAPT trip kicked off by the 11th annual FUN\*RUN  
Washington D.C. / April 9 - April 14

*May 6, 2017*

CDR's FUN\*RUN For Disability Rights  
Rochester, NY / 1:00 PM until 3:00 PM

*July 20, 2017*

ADA Gala  
RMCS - 657 East Ave, Rochester, NY / 6:00 PM until 10:00 PM

## Updates From Rochester Office

This Fall, our Advocacy Team has worked hard to encourage people with disabilities to be active in the political process and to reach out to their legislators on important Disability Rights issues!



Audience members at the Candidate Forum

In October, CDR joined five partner organizations in hosting our annual Candidate Forum on Disability Issues. Over 50 people attended the Candidate Forum to ask candidates from different offices questions about disability issues that will impact their lives. WXXI's Hélène Biandudi Hofer did a fantastic job as our moderator, asking candidates initial questions and inviting audience members to ask questions that mattered to them.

In November, CDR helped individuals identify their polling places, helped to secure transportation for people with disabilities to get to their polling sites, and collected stories from disabled people about their voting experiences. We also sent out Action Alerts urging everyone to contact their legislators to support the Disability Integration Act (DIA) – a bill that would ensure people with disabilities and seniors who are eligible for nursing facility services would be able to receive those same services in their own homes.

We will continue to advocate for the passage of DIA so that people with disabilities have the right to live in the community!

## CDR in Boston Continued From Page 1

attendant hours which would harm both attendants and disabled people. Massachusetts wrote a brief to the Supreme Court supporting the rule and assuring the court that there would be no negative consequences. However, now that the rule has taken effect, Massachusetts was proposing to cap attendant hours at 40 hours per week. We wanted to make sure hours were not capped, so when the Secretary of HHS walked out of our negotiation meeting, activists blocked every door in the building and held the building for hours chanting "Just like a nursing home, you can't get out!" We did this to demonstrate that we took this matter very seriously and we would not tolerate disabled people being forced into nursing homes because their attendants hours would be capped. Many activists were physically removed by police.

Just weeks after we took over the HHS building, the Massachusetts State Government announced that the state would not cap attendants at 40 hours per week! We are thrilled that our action made a difference!

### What's New In Albany

- In December CDR's Policy Analyst went before the Assembly Committee on Transportation to give comments on the state of transportation in NYS
- The Albany team hired two new people!

### Local & National Updates

- CDR staff protested the film "Shut In" which negatively portrays people with disabilities, outside the Mall at Greece Ridge.
- Members from Advocacy went to D.C. to meet with legislators directly about the DIA and secured eight new cosponsors!

### Contact Advocacy



(585) 546-7510  
Ask for Advocacy!



advocacy@cdrnys.org  
Email Our Team!

Get Involved With Us Today!

## Christopher Harper's Success Story

My life took a turn on “unchartered” waters when “struck down” by a tractor trailer in January 2006. After the accident I experienced four years of nightmares, being undiagnosed for Brain Injury, PTSD, Sight Loss, and Anxiety. I went through three years of “boot camp” type therapies: occupational, neuro-therapy, and speech in Schenectady, NY.

When I moved to Corning, NY I had a therapist with a background in music. He started listening to my piano music which now and then, became improvisation. My piano music became different than what I was able to do before the accident. Before the accident, I was reading music for piano. I also connected with a pianist who worked with me on piano which continues today. The pianist has helped me “reinvent” myself on the piano with improvisation, creativity, and self-expression of music.

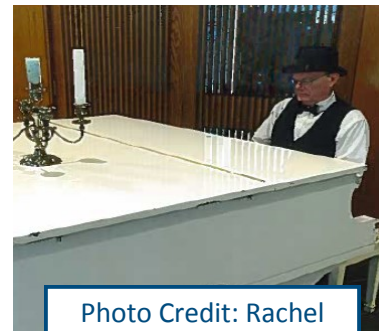


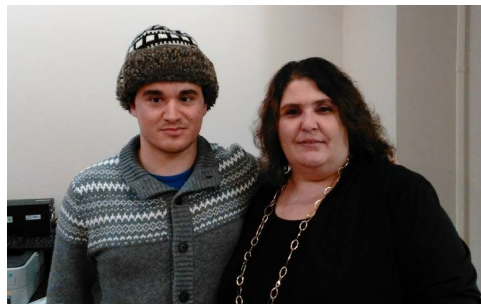
Photo Credit: Rachel Polter

The focus of my success story centers on my CDR Service Coordinator, Rita Maury, the GM at the Radisson Hotel, and staff at the Steuben County Library who have given me the opportunity to express myself through music, believe in me, and encourage me. I was able to produce a video of my piano playing for the Brain Injury Association Conference in Saratoga Springs last June. It was put on YouTube where the video went viral. Of recent, I had a CD of piano music published. It is available through the Southern Tier Library System and the Steuben County Library. I plan to continue expansion of my talent and to produce more improvisational music.

## Updates from the Corning and Geneva Office

Fall was a busy time for our Corning and Geneva office! The Geneva office celebrated Halloween with the annual Accessible Trick-or-Treat event. CDR, with the assistance of the Geneva High School GISEA program created a Harry Potter themed haunted house throughout the whole office. The Harry Potter haunted house was complete with our very own Knockturn Alley, Forbidden Forest and Chamber of Secrets. Over 100 community members turned out to walk through our haunted house and collect candy and other treats from our Hogwarts students.

The Corning office has been working hard to market our programs and get more involved in the Corning Community. On December 3, the Corning office participated in the 42nd annual Sparkle Event. The office was



Steve and Leah at the Sparkle Event in Corning!

decked out in white lights and holiday decorations to commemorate the holiday season, while joining all of the businesses located on Market Street to celebrate the holiday season. We welcomed visitors in from the cold and offered free hot chocolate, coffee, apple cider and cookies. We gave tours of the office to people who stopped by and were able to speak with them about the services that CDR offers. We look forward to being able to continue holding future events at the Corning office. The Sparkle event was a huge success and we were excited to welcome so many people into our office while celebrating the holiday season as a community.



## The New Year Brings Exciting Changes in AAY

As we begin the New Year, we are very excited to announce changes in AAY! With the New Year we have officially launched our new look. We will be adding the new logo to all of our materials over the upcoming months. It is fresh, inviting and inclusive and represents the forward direction we are taking as we head into the New Year. Big thanks to the Development Team for creating the new look!

AAY has recently hired a new Director of Nursing, Georgette "Shelley" Way-Miller. Shelley comes to us with a background in RN level case management and clinical nursing in hospital settings. She received her nursing degree from Finger Lakes Community College. AAY is excited to have a Director of Nursing who is familiar with the Finger Lakes area, as we continue to target the Ontario County region as an area of service expansion in 2017. Other staff changes in AAY include our new Billing and Payroll Specialist, Andrew Freeland, who was formerly one of our full-time schedulers and our new full time scheduler, Laquanna Lewis. Congratulations to Andrew and welcome Laquanna!

AAY held our Fall In Service in November and the training focus was on choking risks and aspiration. Participants also role played effectively responding to difficult situations they may encounter while on the job. In January we will be holding a training for Personal Care Aides (PCA) who are already certified. If you are interested in becoming a PCA or if you are currently a PCA who is interested in working with AAY, please stop by our office and pick up an application.

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2017 promises to be an exciting year and as we continue to provide HCSS and PCA services to our communities and solidify our services in the Ontario County area.



A woman holding up her prize from winning Bingo at the Canandaigua office

The Recreation Program and Day Services are ready for the New Year! We have fitness classes, games, arts and crafts, outings and many more exciting things planned in the New Year! We have openings at both the Rochester and Canandaigua locations, contact us to see if you are eligible!

*Stop In! 41 Backus St. Rochester, New York  
Contact: (585) 546-7510 / [moyer@cdrnys.org](mailto:moyer@cdrnys.org)*

RECREATION  
HIGHLIGHTS

## DONATE TO CDR: SUPPORT OUR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

CDR is always in need of donated items from the community to support individuals with disabilities living independently in the community! Please contact CDR's Development Department, at [kcook@cdrnys.org](mailto:kcook@cdrnys.org), to donate an item or gift to CDR, or inquire about specific items needed at this time. **All donations are truly appreciated! CDR is a 501(c)(3) organization. All gifts are tax deductible. Thank you for your generosity and support!**

## LEARN HOW TO GET INVOLVED WITH OUR COMMITTEES!

CDR has a variety of committees that support the organization. We are in need of enthusiastic and knowledgeable community members to join our various committees and support the overall mission of the organization. **Interested?** Contact Linda Taylor at [ltaylor@cdrnys.org](mailto:ltaylor@cdrnys.org) for more information about all of the different opportunities we have for you! Get Involved with CDR Today!

## START YOUR CAREER WITH CDR TODAY! JOIN OUR TEAM

*Interested in starting your career with Center for Disability Rights?* Visit our website at [www.cdrnys.org](http://www.cdrnys.org) for a complete list of our current job postings! Apply online, or stop into our State Street office in any of our four office locations and join the CDR family! All About You Homecare (AAY) provides PCA trainings, and are looking for talented individuals to join the AAY team! Contact us to learn more about both opportunities! Job postings for AAY can be found on CDR's website.

## INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING WITH CDR? LET US KNOW!

CDR has a variety of events and other volunteer opportunities throughout the year. Whether you are interested in a one time volunteer experience or an ongoing weekly/monthly opportunity; please contact us today and see what we have available! **CDR collaborates with the Regional Center for Independent Living, so there is always a need for volunteers on a variety of projects!**

## UPCOMING BOARD MEETING

**Contact Linda Taylor  
for date**

497 State Street  
Rochester, NY 14608

**Contact Linda Taylor:  
Questions & Info**  
[ltaylor@cdrnys.org](mailto:ltaylor@cdrnys.org)

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## ***PROTECT YOUR FREEDOM!***

**CDR works** for the full integration, independence, and civil rights of people with disabilities.

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**Membership year 9/1 - 8/31. Minimum contribution \$5 per year.**

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