

DISABILITY RIGHTS IN ACTION

A Newsletter of the Center for Disability Rights, Inc. / Winter 2019

CDR Hosts Independent Living Delegation from Japan

Our Summer 2018 issue highlighted Bruce Darling's trip to Japan, in his capacity as President of the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL). NCIL is a national organization that brings together Centers for Independent Living (CILs), Statewide Independent Living Councils (SILCs), and other entities involved in the Disability Rights Movement throughout the United States. Like CDR, it is run by people with disabilities, and actively advocates for our community participation.



The visiting delegation gives a presentation to CDR.

In July, an Independent Living delegation from Japan visited the United States. Among the seven individuals was the President of the Japan Council on Independent Living Centers; this is NCIL's counterpart in Japan, representing over one hundred independent living centers. This trip coincided with NCIL's Annual Conference in Washington D.C. It brought the presidents of the American and Japanese Independent Living Councils together for the first time in the United States.

They began their tour in Rochester, as visitors of CDR. Many employees met the delegation at Rochester International Airport, in spite of a five-hour flight delay on top of what was already a long trip. Over the next two days, CDR hosted a series of receptions that gave our staff, consumers, and board members the opportunity to represent their roles as leaders within the Independent Living Movement in the U.S. These events were mutual learning experiences between the delegation and our own advocates; incorporating both the disability field, and aspects of each respective culture.

Among the highlights of the visit was the ADA Gala and a disability rights action. CDR's gala is an annual opportunity to recognize and commemorate disability rights leaders, within our organization and the greater Rochester area. The Japanese delegation also conducted a presentation.

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Debbie Bonomo
Board Chair

Bruce E. Darling
President/CEO

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LEARN ABOUT OUR PROGRAMS



Center for Disability Rights works to ensure the full integration, independence and civil rights of people with disabilities and seniors in the community.

Dear Friends,

This summer we had the pleasure of welcoming seven delegates from Japan's Independent Living Movement. You may recall my travel to Japan in March, as the President of the National Council on Independent Living. The delegation decided to visit CDR after hosting my trip. We were thrilled at what became a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the CDR community to engage in international discourse on disability issues and organizations.

Many other things have been going on here at CDR. I invite you to catch up on our programs and services. Please contact us to learn more about CDR and how you can get involved. Stay tuned for more fun events and exciting news for next year!

Bruce E. Darling

Program Highlight: Outreach to Spanish Speakers

Our Bilingual Independent Living Specialists at CDR participated in an Open House at School #28 on September 20th. Many of the families who participated had children with disabilities, such as Autism and Multiple Sclerosis. Their role at the Open House was to provide families with bilingual information about the services offered at CDR.

A number of parents that participated in the Open House were displaced from Puerto Rico, due to Hurricane Maria, and were recently relocated to Rochester. Many of them also had children with disabilities, and did not know where services were available. Our Independent Living specialists also served as interpreters for the City School District teachers who were present. By providing the bilingual information, teachers and parents were informed about the services offered at CDR.



While at the Open House, parents and teachers that previously knew about CDR services had an opportunity to come to us for clarification, on the steps required to secure the needed services for their loved ones. There were also other Spanish speaking participants that had been living in Rochester for a while, but were not aware of our services. We encourage Spanish speakers to contact them for questions about our services.

CDR's Bilingual Independent Living Specialists, working hard to engage Spanish Speakers about our services.

Thanks to our sponsors

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for a fun, safe, & fully-accessible Halloween!

**MARK YOUR
CALENDAR!**

**We anticipate announcing
dates for major events
in January.**

**Stay tuned for
more information on
our spring ADAPT Fun Run,
our summer events,
and the Annual Gala.**

Updates From Advocacy Team

Budget season is here! It might be hard for many of us to get excited about “fiscals” or budgetary allocations, but budget season is something the Disability Community should take seriously. The state budget process influences the progress we make in fighting for disability rights.

The Advocacy Team works year-round on issues important to our Community; but from October to April, we advocate for specific items in the state budget. Without funding, some of our ideas cannot take shape. We even advocate for items that do not need funding to be included in the budget. Governor Cuomo is known for vetoing bills if they are not “in the budget.” This is why it is critical that advocates participate in CDR Lobby Days and contact district offices; legislators need to be reminded of what is important to us, so they can include these efforts in the budget they send to the Governor. We also fight measures which would harm our community – such as limitations on Medicaid that affect our freedom and choice. Too often, the value of our rights is confused with a price tag.

CDR is proud to be the only Independent Living Center in New York which has a rapid response to the Governor’s State of the State and proposed budget. However, we need advocates’ support to make our budget demands a reality. See you at our next Lobby Day!

Want to join us on our Advocacy Trips? Call us at 585.546.7510 or email us at advocacy@cdrnys.org to join our Advocacy Group!

Delegation From Japan

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Our Advocacy Team organized the action to demonstrate civil disobedience: activists from both countries protested together at a local restaurant that had a one-step entry and would not listen to repeated requests to install a ramp. After one hour of picketing, the demand was agreed upon.

This was an incredible visit for both Japanese and American disability rights leaders. It was a time for our staff to reflect upon the work that we do every day, and to come together as one entity. More importantly, it was an opportunity to compare the work the centers do in order to support community living, and to learn how the Japanese differentiate their disability-led organizations from other provider organizations. A key example is that in Japan, attendant services to help people live in the community are primarily coordinated and provided through their Centers for Independent Living. This looks to be a model that the U.S. could greatly benefit from.

Local & National Updates

After over ten years of pushing by the Advocacy Team, the City of Rochester released visitability requirements for city funded housing. The rules require a no-step entrance, accessible bathrooms, and wide entrances and pathways.

We are actively opposing plans by the State Department of Health to limit home care agencies and fiscal intermediaries, as well as against the federal move to implement Electronic Visit Verification (EVV).

Governments of all sizes are responding to the movement of banning plastic straws. Some disabled people need plastic straws to live. We want to hear your voices and demonstrate that our independence and lives are not disposable.

CDR worked diligently to inform voters about candidates’ stances on the Disability Integration Act and disability rights, through C4CI.org, the Candidate Forum, and public responses to disability rights questions.

Contact Advocacy



(585) 546-7510
Ask for Advocacy!



advocacy@cdrnys.org
Email Our Team!

**Get Involved
With Us Today!**

Upcoming Board Meeting

February 21, 2019
11:00am-1:00pm
497 State Street
Rochester, NY 14608

For dates of upcoming board meetings, please contact Linda Taylor:
Ltaylor@cdrnys.org

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FEATURES

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Christopher Harper's Story: Part 7 — "The Bus Stop"

When I see people at a "bus stop," I wonder where each person is heading. For me, I've been at many "bus stops," which can be new life changing experiences. However, not everyone is happy for one reason or another. For me, suffering from a brain injury creates tumultuous times. Four years of "missing the bus" leaves me confused due to a misdiagnosed TBI. It feels like a death grip on life; blurred with years of neglect and with being preoccupied with life; a coldness of the present and I am taking the "bus" in pursuit of the "wizard" to bring me back to my former self.

Interaction with others, without a TBI, empathizes the difficulties within a social context and how it affects social and interpersonal skills. It is that "bus stop" that symbolizes a journey that preserves each moment. The desire to be "normal," as defined by society has different meanings. The ability to eliminate the obstacles is complex when people, in general, do not look at your own framework. I have vanished in the pursuit of the "wizard" to bring me back to my former self. Although, some of the "inner banks" of my brain still seem whole and unscathed, despite the "helter-skelter."

The music to board the "bus" has fled with some reluctance because of the daily challenges. I suppose the fact that the medical society dismisses the reality of a TBI, is what made me weary soon after my accident. The purpose of this written word is to highlight that I am still human, even though part of me has departed. While attempting to figure out my destiny, death becomes a welcome reality. In the confines of a grave, I can finally be at peace.



Are you interested in getting involved with us?

You can help by:

- Volunteering
- Donating
- Attending Events

You can join our:

- Teams
- Advocacy Efforts
- Committees

Ask us how you can get involved!

We are not-for profit organizations working to keep people with disabilities living independently in the community, with help from services and support they may need.



Center for Disability Rights, Inc.
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