

# E-LIFELINES – FALL



## We are still here to help!

LIFE CIL's doors are not yet open to the public. Our staff is in the office to take your calls, respond to emails and schedule appointments via Zoom or in-person, if necessary.

Our equipment loan program is continuing via curbside pick-up and drop off. We are scheduling appointments between 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. If you need to borrow, return or donate equipment, please call to schedule an appointment **(309/663-5433)**.

We remain an ITAC Amplified Phone Selection Center. If you are hard of hearing and would like an amplified telephone or a cellular amplifier, contact us for more information. You may schedule an appointment to test the phones before selection, if desired at our Bloomington and Pontiac offices.



## September is National Preparedness Month



If you were facing an emergency or disaster situation, like a house fire, a prolonged power outage, a tornado, or even a pandemic similar to COVID-19, would you know how to respond? Would you be prepared and able to use the tools and resources to get you and your loved ones through it?

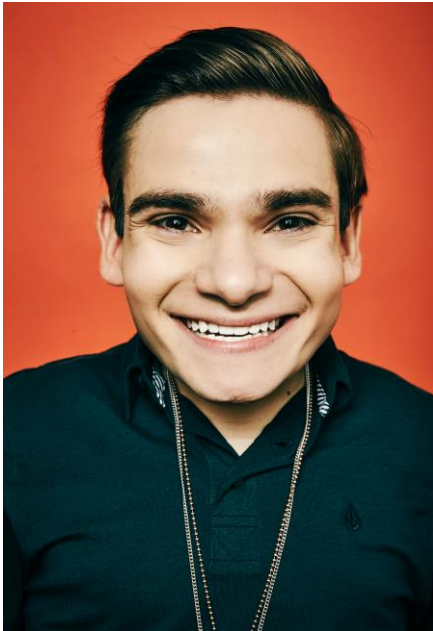
This year's theme of the National Preparedness Month is "Disasters Don't Wait. Make Your Plan Today." We encourage you to begin planning for emergencies if you have not already. If you already have a plan, take time to review it. Make sure your family or any one that lives with you knows about the plan.

Ready.gov is a helpful resource where you can learn about the different kinds of disasters, make a plan, get involved and learn about the resources available. We encourage you to visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) to learn more.

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# LIFE CIL ANNUAL MEETING

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Guest speaker: **Brandon Farbstein**

Thirty years after the ADA,  
where is the accessibility?

At just 18 years old, Brandon Farbstein is an internationally renowned empowerment speaker and thought innovator. He embarks on his mission to change the world one person at a time through his captivating talks. Brandon uses charismatic influence to inspire and motivate, while leaving his audience with a stirring desire to be a catalyst for change. Standing at 3' 9", you will quickly discover how Brandon has transformed the lives of so many individuals across the globe, with a shift in perspective about themselves and others. At the age of 2, Brandon was diagnosed with a rare form of dwarfism called metatropic dysplasia, resulting in his current height being that of the average seven year old. From day one of his journey, he quickly realized he would need to create solutions for the obstacles that would come his way.

**Tuesday, October 27, 2020 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. via Zoom**



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information.

[www.facebook.com/lifecil](https://www.facebook.com/lifecil)



\*save the date \* save the date \* save the date \* save the date \* save the date \*

## Meet Our Team: Put a Face with the Name



**Standing (from left to right):** Keith Adams, *Custodian*; Shannon Tarkowski, *Independent Living Advocate*; Conan Calhoun, *Disability Rights Advocate*; Vicky Hogan, *Community Living Advocate*; Andrea Kindseth, *Community Reintegration Advocate*; Kim Tarkowski, *Vision Access Advocate*; Jasmine Gibs, *Administrative Assistant*.

**Seated (from left to right):** Meri Helbig, *Program Director*; Rickielee Benecke, *Executive Director*; and Brianne Anderson, *Administrative Services Director*.

**Pictured separately at the right** is our newest member of the team, Melissa Melvin, *Independent Living Advocate* in our Pontiac office.

## Advocacy Matters

### Know your rights – Gain confidence – **SPEAK UP!**

Have you run into trouble with accessing a place of business, indoor or outdoor restaurant seating, or using a sidewalk? Are you worried about being able to use your polling place when you vote in November? Is there a business/company that you think could use education in disability etiquette?

Please, Speak up! Contact Conan Calhoun, Disability Rights Advocate, to learn how to advocate for yourself and others in your community. Advocacy can be as easy as a phone call to say “the sidewalk by my apartment is impassable in my wheelchair/with my walker, etc... and I’d like it to be fixed.” Conan has been working on many areas of advocacy in our communities including:

- Concerns around the accessibility of outdoor seating in Downtown Bloomington
- Helping the City of Bloomington and Town of Normal on updating their ADA Transition Plans (a mandated document all entities must have on record).
- Identifying areas of priority for sidewalk repairs, and much more!

# September 22, 2020 is National Register to Vote Day!

Are you registered?

If not, please register today. It is important to make your voice heard!



**The only way you can vote is to register.**

**What is required to register to vote?** To register in Illinois you must:

- be a citizen of the United States
- be a resident of Illinois and of your election precinct at least 30 days before the next election
- be at least 18 years old on or before the next election
- not be in jail for a felony conviction (but you can vote if you have completed your sentence)
- not claim the right to vote anywhere else

**How can I register to vote?**

- Go to [www.register2vote.org](http://www.register2vote.org) and complete the online registration process. You can actually use this site to check to make sure your voter registration information is correct and, if needed, update your information.
- Register online at <https://ova.elections.il.gov/Step0.aspx>
- Print the Illinois Voter Registration Form located at: <https://app.chicagoelections.com/documents/general/NVRA-Form275-English.pdf>. Fill out the form and mail it to the address listed on the form.
- Contact LIFE CIL at 309/663-5433 or 815/844-1132 and our staff will be happy to assist you in registering to vote.

## Dates and deadlines to register to vote:

- The deadline to **register online** to vote is Sunday, October 18, 2020.
- The deadline for **registering by mail** to vote is (postmarked by) Tuesday, October 6, 2020.

**After the regular voter registration deadline of Tuesday, October 6, 2020, you can register and vote in person during a grace period.** Contact your local election office for more information on grace period locations and hours.

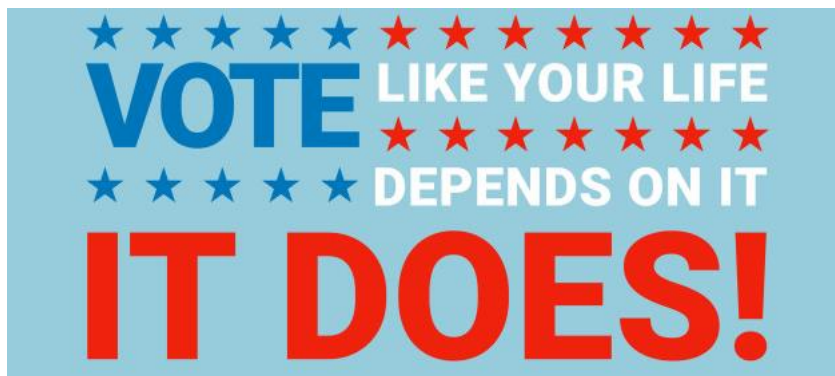
- The deadline to **request a ballot by mail** is (received by) Thursday, October 29, 2020.
- The deadline to **register in person** to vote is Tuesday, November 3, 2020.
- You can also **register and vote (in-person)** on Election Day, **Tuesday, November 3, 2020**

## People with Disabilities Need to Vote

One of the reasons individuals with disabilities give as to why they do not vote is because their polling place is not accessible. LIFE CIL recently worked with the Bloomington Election Commission (BEC) to make sure polling sites were accessible. If they were not, LIFE CIL staff gave recommendations on how to make them accessible. BEC has been working to make all polling sites accessible to voters.

If you find out your polling place is not accessible to you, contact Conan at 309/663-5433 or [conan@lifecil.org](mailto:conan@lifecil.org).

## Election Day is Tuesday, November 3, 2020



Remember! The first step to voting is to register.

### Ways you can Vote

- **VOTE BY MAIL** – Learn more about voting by mail here: <https://www.elections.il.gov/ElectionOperations/VotingByMail.aspx?MID=ELGeUv9wLSI%3d&T=637147679220323430>
- **EARLY VOTING** – learn more about early voting here: <https://www.elections.il.gov/DocDisplay.aspx?Doc=/Downloads/ElectionOperations/PDF/EarlyVoting.pdf&MID=10>
- **IN PERSON VOTING** – find your assigned polling place here: <https://ova.elections.il.gov/PollingPlaceLookup.aspx?Name=mmDgPiKx8aN9qemsCi1TOBk6iTw%2fA%2fJFYRiTsnf%2bltwWOcPGp74he9KCwA22BQhcznvZRCqCIA%2bWalykfFe1Zhqkk5u7TrVL&MID=PM%2f79mYAc0%3d>

## Learn More about Voting

### Additional resources include:

- Vote.org: [www.vote.org](http://www.vote.org)
- Illinois State Board of Elections: <https://www.elections.il.gov/Default.aspx>
- Rock the Vote: <https://www.rockthevote.org/>



- USAGov – the Official Guide to Government Information and Services:  
<https://www.usa.gov/election>
- Vote 411 – created by the 2020 League of Women Voters Education Fund:  
<https://www.vote411.org/illinois>

**Did you know? You will need to answer either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to a question about amending the 1970 Illinois Constitution when you vote.**

**Here is what you will see on the ballot:**

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*The proposed amendment grants the State authority to impose higher income tax rates on higher income levels, which is how the federal government and a majority of other states do it. The amendment would remove the portion of the Revenue Article of the Illinois Constitution that is sometimes referred to as the “flat tax,” that requires all taxes on income to be at the same rate. The amendment does not itself change tax rates. It gives the State the ability to impose higher tax rates on those with higher income levels and lower income tax rates on those with middle or lower income levels. You are asked to decide whether the proposed amendment should become a part of the Illinois Constitution.*

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You can find more information on this the amendment at <https://www.voteeyesforfairness.com/>

**Be counted! Complete your 2020 census!**



The more responses Illinois households provide, the more federal money our state receives for improved hospitals, stronger schools, and safer roads and bridges. we are asking you and your friends to do your part and complete the Census. It takes less than 10 minutes of your time!

It’s more important than ever to ensure that Illinois receives all of the federal funding that it needs. Help us make sure EVERY Illinoisan is counted. Go to [my2020census.gov](https://my2020census.gov) or call 1-844-330-2020. If you need assistance, call LIFE CIL at 309/663-5433 (Bloomington), or 815/844-1132 (Pontiac).

**Deadline is SEPTEMBER 30, 2020!**

## A “Quest” for Independence: A Success Story

In 2015, Bill Ehman first came to LIFE CIL in need of services due to his significant vision loss. Bill received various low vision aids and assistive devices: large print tools such as calendars with boxes big enough to write in and numbers printed large enough that he can actually use, and talking products like watches and clocks. Bill stated he was very pleased with our services and was surprised that they were provided at no charge.

In 2017, Bill informed Kim, our Vision Access Advocate, that his wheelchair had broken down and he did not know what he would do about it. Kim told him about the Patricia Tolan Cox Bequest and that he would qualify for services. Through the bequest, Bill received a new power wheelchair and a lift for his vehicle so he could travel independently to appointments and social outings. After receiving the wheelchair and lift, he told Kim, “Now I can go to Mass.” He was so thankful that again he would be able to go out on his own when his wife, Jackie, was working or busy. When Jackie is busy, Bill “drives” his wheelchair to the market and does some of the grocery shopping.

Several years later, Bill contacted Kim and indicated that the home they were renting would soon be sold, and they would have to move. The new house that they wanted to rent did not have an accessible entrance. LIFE CIL, through the Patricia Tolan Cox Bequest, was able to contract with a business to install a ramp so Bill could get in and out of his home. This was not just a need for independence, but it was also a safety need.

Kim continues to provide devices, as needed for Bill to remain independent, and he receives his large print calendar and 20/20 vision pens every year so he can keep track of the days and appointments.



**“..without LIFE CIL’s programs, I would not be as independent as I am.”**

**- Bill Ehman, Dwight, IL**

LIFE Center for Independent Living (LIFE CIL) receives a grant for Older Individuals who are Blind or have vision loss. Through this program, our Vision Access Advocate, Kim Tarkowski, can provide assistive devices to people 55 and older who have severe vision loss. The program provides free low vision aids such as magnifiers, large print items, and talking devices. We can also teach sighted-guide

techniques, and suggest small home adaptations for increased safety. LIFE CIL typically serves over 150 consumers each year through the low-vision program.

In January of 2013, LIFE CIL received the “Patricia Tolan Cox Bequest.” Mrs. Cox wanted a charitable organization to seek out and help people who are legally blind to receive guide dogs or assistance dogs. She also intended that people who are legally blind should be able to have wheelchairs repaired or replaced with this bequest. The bequest has allowed us to provide assistive technology, wheelchair replacement or repair, and assistance in acquiring a guide dog or trained service dog (including the training in navigating the community independently that is required prior to receiving the dog).

To learn more about these programs, please contact Kim at [kim@lifecil.org](mailto:kim@lifecil.org) or 309/663-5433.

## According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), you will want to follow these guidelines:

- Stay at least 6 feet (~2 arms’ length) from other people.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands.
- When in public, wear a face covering over your nose and mouth.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20+ seconds.

**Additional information about the virus is available on these websites:**

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](https://www.cdc.gov)
- [World Health Organization](https://www.who.int)





# What is an *IEP*? How do I plan for after High School?

Understood.org, states “IEPs are a part of public education. They’re given to eligible kids who attend public school. That includes charter schools.” IEP stands for Individualized Education Program (also sometimes referred to Individualized Education *Plan*.)” This is a written document that spells out where a child has challenges and details the specific types of help the child will get to help him/her succeed in school. Each student’s program is unique; what one student requires in order to succeed may not help the next.

<https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/ieps/what-is-an-iep>

IEPs begin with a detailed evaluation that helps identify the student’s strengths and challenges. It then describes their present level of educational performance, lists annual goals with objectives, explains how the IEP team will track the student’s progress on the goals, and lists out the accommodations and/or services the student should receive in order to be successful. Any extra aids or services will also be listed (does the student need a seat at the front of the room? Extra time on tests?) Once a student enters high school, a Transition Plan will also be included in the IEP. See Youth Transition below. *Check out this helpful outline of an IEP:*

[https://assets.ctfassets.net/p0qf7j048i0g/24s5adt3xYto4Ri8QwBJxo/3121f047b5e8882dd2dc706d40be17b2/Anatomy\\_of\\_an\\_IEP\\_Understood.pdf](https://assets.ctfassets.net/p0qf7j048i0g/24s5adt3xYto4Ri8QwBJxo/3121f047b5e8882dd2dc706d40be17b2/Anatomy_of_an_IEP_Understood.pdf), and this website for a look at the process:

*“IEP roadmap: How kids get special education”*

[https://assets.ctfassets.net/p0qf7j048i0g/4znp9r96cgmoHiEvYzVJMP/87a9fd6baf40c20b207e7e36be8824cd/IEP\\_Roadmap\\_Understood.pdf](https://assets.ctfassets.net/p0qf7j048i0g/4znp9r96cgmoHiEvYzVJMP/87a9fd6baf40c20b207e7e36be8824cd/IEP_Roadmap_Understood.pdf)

## **Make a plan for after High School: Youth Transition Services**

LIFE CIL is one of many community supports that are available to students with disabilities and their families, both during and after high school. We have partnerships with some area schools to provide education on Transition options through the “Fast Track Transition” program. If your child isn’t in these classes, we can also provide 1:1 or small group transition training “classes” outside of school. Students must be at least 14 years old and have an IEP or 504 plan. Additionally, they cannot be part of STEP (if you’re unsure if you’re in STEP, ask you IEP case manager).

Our goal is to help students with IEPs start thinking about life after high school. The program includes:

- Job Exploration: Career interest inventories, look at different jobs that match a student’s interests
- Educational opportunities after high school: Do you need more education for the job you want?
- Self-Advocacy: how do you figure out what you need, and how do you ask for it/get it? Should you disclose your disability in a post-secondary education setting or a job? Do you have to?
- Workplace Readiness Training: What does an employer want from their worker? What is a resume, and how to I make one? Practice filling out job applications and role-playing to improve interviewing skills, and more!
- Work-Based Learning Experiences: These might include conversations with real hiring managers, virtual workplace tours, and more.

**Interested in getting involved in Youth Transition Services? We’d love to hear from you!** Call or email Shannon Tarkowski, Independent Living Advocate, at 309/663-5433 or [shannon@lifecil.org](mailto:shannon@lifecil.org).

## Stay Tuned:

**LIFE CIL staff are still be available by phone, email and online during regular business hours.**

We are operating by appointment only, but are extremely limited in the in-person visits we can provide at this time. We are happy to discuss your needs over the phone or on a video call. You can still loan or return equipment, or select an ITAC Phone *by appointment only*. If you have any questions about services during this time, please reach out to us via phone, email, or message us on Facebook.

If a friend sent this newsletter to you and you'd like to be added to our email list, give us a call or email ([brianne@lifecil.org](mailto:brianne@lifecil.org)) We never sell or give away your information!

**Learn more about LIFE CIL, events, advocacy opportunities, & more at: [www.lifecil.org](http://www.lifecil.org) and <https://www.facebook.com/lifecil>**

## LOCATIONS

### **Bloomington**

Phone: (309) 663-5433  
Fax: (309) 663-7024  
Toll-Free: (888) 543-3245  
2201 Eastland Drive, Suite 1  
Bloomington, IL 61704

### **Pontiac**

Phone: (815) 844-1132  
601 North Ladd Street  
Pontiac, IL 61764

