

# E-LIFELINES – Spring, 2020



## COVID-19 Update:

**LIFE Center for Independent Living (LIFE CIL)  
Employees to Work from Home March 17-March 31; Offices Closed**

Due to the current COVID-19 health crisis, both our Bloomington and Pontiac offices will be closed from Tuesday, March 17 through Tuesday, March 31. LIFE CIL employees will work from home during that time. There will be no meetings held onsite at LIFE CIL during our office closures. LIFE CIL staff will still be available by phone and online (email and Facebook) to the greatest extent possible. If you have any questions about services during this time, please don't hesitate to reach out to us via phone, email or message us on Facebook.

LIFE CIL's wheelchair basketball event featuring the University of Illinois wheelchair basketball team on April 4 has been cancelled.

If you have borrowed equipment from our loan closet, please note that all returns due during this time have automatically been extended. You may return the equipment after our offices reopen.

While we plan to reopen both offices on Wednesday, April 1, we are monitoring the situation daily as it evolves and will update our website accordingly. Thank you for your patience and understanding. Our top priority is the well-being of our consumers and staff members.

Please visit our Facebook page or website for more information on how you can protect yourself from the new coronavirus and stay healthy.

**[www.lifecil.org](http://www.lifecil.org) and <https://www.facebook.com/lifecil>**

## Welcome, spring!

**In this issue**, we give you some resources for getting your taxes done, explain why you should participate in the Census, provide an update on some advocacy issues and opportunities, and provide some great health tips for managing asthma all year round.

**Spring Awareness Months** The months of spring (March, April, and May), are recognized as awareness months for many disabilities and causes that affect people with disabilities. Here are just a few:

**March** is the awareness month for Brain Injury, Cerebral Palsy, Colorectal Cancer, Developmental Disabilities, Kidney health, Multiple Sclerosis, and Trisomy.

**April** is the awareness month for Autism and Parkinson's disease. It's also Deaf History Month (Mar 13-Apr 15), Celebrate Diversity Month, and National Fair Housing Month.

**May** is the awareness month for Allergy/asthma, Arthritis, Borderline Personality Disorders, Brain Tumor & Cancer, Fibromyalgia, Mental Health, and Stroke. Get information on keeping healthy this allergy season on page 11

### Upcoming Events

#### MARCH:

Monday 3/16 – Low Vision Support Group @ Friendship Center, Clinton 10-11 a.m. **cancelled**

– Low Vision Support Group @ Martin Health Center, Bloomington 1-2p.m. **cancelled**

Friday 3/20 – Adult Peer Group/CEFT, LIFE CIL 12-1:30 p.m.; RSVP: [shannon@lifecil.org](mailto:shannon@lifecil.org) by 3/19 **cancelled**

Thursday 3/26 – Personal Assistant Orientation; contact Andrea for info [andrea@lifecil.org](mailto:andrea@lifecil.org) **cancelled**

March-April 13 – Free Tax Assistance is available – see page 8 **suspended through March 29**

#### APRIL:

Saturday 4/4 – Wheelchair Basketball Game – See pages 3-4 **cancelled**

Tuesday 4/7 – CAT Class (Community Advocacy Training) Starts – See page 5

Wednesday 4/8 – Youth Peer group, LIFE CIL 5-6:30 p.m. RSVP: [conan@lifecil.org](mailto:conan@lifecil.org) **cancelled**

Friday 4/17 – Adult Peer Group/CEFT, LIFE CIL 12-1:30 p.m. RSVP: [shannon@lifecil.org](mailto:shannon@lifecil.org) **TBD**

Wednesday 4/15 – TAX DAY!!!

## May:

Wednesday 5/13 – Youth Peer group, LIFE CIL 5-6:30 p.m. RSVP: [conan@lifecil.org](mailto:conan@lifecil.org) **TBD**

Thursday 5/14 – Low Vision Fair @ Martin Health Center/Westminster Village – See page 7 **TBD**

Friday 5/15 – Adult Peer Group/CEFT, LIFE CIL 12-1:30 p.m. RSVP: [shannon@lifecil.org](mailto:shannon@lifecil.org) **TBD**

NOTE: Many of our events happen each month. Please contact these staff for more information:

- Low Vision Support Groups – contact Kim [kim@lifecil.org](mailto:kim@lifecil.org)
- Personal Assistant Orientations – [andrea@lifecil.org](mailto:andrea@lifecil.org)
- Adult Peer Groups – [shannon@lifecil.org](mailto:shannon@lifecil.org) and Youth Peer Groups – [conan@lifecil.org](mailto:conan@lifecil.org) (page 6)

## Support LIFE CIL



**Monday, May 11:** Between 4:00 and 8:00 p.m. If you eat at Gill Street Sports Bar and Restaurant, located at 3002 Gill Street in Bloomington, LIFE CIL will receive 20% of the proceeds. Please RSVP: <https://www.groupraise.com/events/134264>

**Sunday, June 28:** Between 2:00 and 6:00 p.m. If you eat at IHOP, located at 2109 East Empire Street in Bloomington, LIFE CIL will receive 20% of the proceeds. Please RSVP:

<https://www.groupraise.com/events/134267>



## LIFE CIL Welcomes New Staff Member in Pontiac Office

### **Melissa Melvin, Independent Living Advocate**

This March, Melissa joined LIFE CIL's staff as the Independent Living Advocate in our Pontiac office. Melissa has extensive volunteer, family, and personal experience with disability. Melissa began volunteering for international mission trips in 2004. She has made nine trips to date. Her primary focus in volunteering is children: orphans and children with special needs. Melissa has also worked stateside to make churches and their programs more accessible to people with disabilities. She directed Community Vacation Bible School for 8 years and had a 3-month internship with *Joni and Friends* in Plano, Texas where she helped to equip churches to serve people with disabilities in all areas. She has been able to increase physical access and recommend changes to programs and curricula to be more inclusive. Melissa is a Pontiac, Illinois native and is excited to join LIFE CIL.



## Wheelchair Basketball, 2020

- **DUE TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS OF NOT HAVING LARGE GATHERINGS, WE REGRET TO INFORM YOU THAT THE WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL EVENT SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 4<sup>TH</sup> HAS BEEN CANCELLED.**

## Having Trouble Hearing on the Phone?

### **LIFE CIL and ITAC might be able to help!**

ITAC is the Illinois Telecommunications Access Corporation, a non-profit that provides amplified telephones to people in need, FREE of charge.

There are currently five (5) amplified landline telephones to choose from, and two (2) cellular phone amplifier options! So come in and test them to find which phone works best for you.



### **WHAT YOU WILL NEED TO QUALIFY:**

1. You must be a resident of the State of Illinois and provide proof of residency (copy of driver's license, state ID card, OR piece of mail showing same address as application)
2. You must provide a copy of your telephone bill for a landline amplified phone and/or a copy of your cellular phone bill for a cell phone amplifier
3. An ITAC amplified phone application; you'll need to have your audiologist, physician, certified DRS counselor or hearing aid provider complete the back of the application to certify you have a hearing loss

To receive an application or for more information, contact Brianne at LIFE CIL at 309/663-5433, toll free at 888/543-3245 or by email at [brianne@lifecil.org](mailto:brianne@lifecil.org).

# Advocacy: to 'summon, call to one's aid'

## Advocacy Alerts

What's Advocacy?            ad · vo · ca · cy            /'advəkəsē/

*noun*

1. Public support for or recommendation of a particular cause or policy.

From: late Middle English: via Old French from Medieval Latin *advocatia*,  
from *advocare* 'summon, call to one's aid'

There are simple ways you can get involved – it can be as easy as clicking a link and adding your information to show your support or opposition of a given bill that's going to the House or Senate.

Let Conan know if you'd like to receive e-mails for Advocacy Alerts and he can send you information so you can sign up to receive them. You will not be sent information from any sources that you did not approve/request. [conan@lifecil.org](mailto:conan@lifecil.org) or 309-663-5433.

## Community Advocacy Training (CAT) - TBD

**A determination about whether to hold, postpone or cancel CAT class will be made before April 7<sup>th</sup>. Please let Conan know if you are interested in the class. He will add you to the class. If classes are postponed or canceled, you will be notified.**

Learn how to positively affect change in your communities about the issues you care about.

- **WHO:** Persons with disabilities residing in McLean, Livingston, Ford, or DeWitt counties.
- **WHAT:** Program involves seven weekly classes at LIFE Center for Independent Living (LIFE CIL) in Bloomington, and two separate one-day trips to Springfield.
- **WHEN:** Tuesdays 2:00 – 3:45 pm, April 7<sup>th</sup> through May 26<sup>th</sup>. Classes will include sessions on affecting community change; meeting and communicating with a legislator; how to actively participate in the legislative process; advocacy, disability rights and the disability rights movement. **Deadline 03/31/2020**
- **COST = FREE:** All transportation, trips, meals, and accommodations provided.

Anyone interested in this opportunity may call Conan at LIFE Center for Independent Living (LIFE CIL): Voice/TTY: 309-663-5433 or 888-543-3245 or email: [conan@lifecil.org](mailto:conan@lifecil.org)



# LIFE CIL hosts Peer Support Groups for Youth & Adults

## **Youth Peer Support Group, LIFE'S LEADERS – April meeting is canceled.**

The Youth Peer Support Group meets at LIFE CIL on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month from 5:00 - 6:30 p.m.

Meet new people! Have fun! Gain confidence and leadership skills! Take charge of your life!

**WHO:** Individuals with disabilities ages 14 – 24 and you can bring one guest with you!

**WHEN:** Wednesday, April 10 **CANCELED** and Wednesday May 8 **TBD**

**TIME:** 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** LIFE Center for Independent Living (LIFE CIL)  
2201 Eastland Drive, Suite 1, Bloomington

**RSVP:** Call Conan at 309-663-5433 or email him at [conan@lifecil.org](mailto:conan@lifecil.org) no later than the day before the meeting to make sure we have enough food for everyone.



*\*When you RSVP, please let Conan know if you need any accommodations, such as sign language interpreter, foreign language interpreter, or alternative formats.*

## **Adult Peer Support Group March meeting is CANCELED.**

The Adult Peer Support Group meets at LIFE CIL on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday each month from 12:00-1:30 p.m.

Join us for a free lunch and stay to meet new people, have fun, get support, and gain confidence, leadership, and advocacy skills!

**WHO:** Adults with any disability

**WHEN:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of the Month

**TIME:** 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** LIFE Center for Independent Living (LIFE CIL)  
2201 Eastland Drive, Suite 1, Bloomington

**RSVP:** Call Shannon at 309-663-5433 or email [shannon@lifecil.org](mailto:shannon@lifecil.org) no later than the day before the meeting to make sure there will be enough food for everyone\*



*\*When you RSVP, please let Shannon know if you need any accommodations, such as sign language interpreter, foreign language interpreter, or alternative formats.*

**Please check on Facebook or our website for updates regarding future meetings.**

# Low Vision Services for Adults 55+

## Low-Vision Support Groups

**Canceled in March, and canceled through 4/14. Additional Cancellations will be announced as decisions are made.**

**BLOOMINGTON:** LIFE CIL's Vision Access Advocate, Kim Tarkowski, travels to Westminster Village/Martin Health Center each month for a low vision support group. This group is open to anyone in the community aged 55+ with severe vision loss. Join us to learn about eye health, types of vision loss, and how Kim's program can provide FREE low-vision aids to help you keep your independence. Please contact Kim with any questions: [kim@lifecil.org](mailto:kim@lifecil.org).

**CLINTON:** Kim also travels to Clinton each month for a monthly Low Vision Support group at the DeWitt County Friendship Center. Please contact Kim for upcoming dates! [kim@lifecil.org](mailto:kim@lifecil.org).

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Low Vision Fair TBD – please check on Facebook or our Website for updates**

**WHAT:** An opportunity to learn about and try assistive devices for people that have low vision or no vision. Assistive Technology Vendors will display their devices designed for persons with low vision. Come and try the different devices that aid in remaining independent! These professionals will be able to answer your questions and guide you towards solutions for your vision loss issues.

The low vision fair is open to all people with vision loss, regardless of age. There will be door prizes and refreshments.

- Judith West, Rehabilitation Instructor will speak on Diabetic Management Skills for those with Low Vision and Blindness. She will discuss "Talking Meters" and continuous blood glucose monitoring systems and accessibility.
- An Ophthalmologist will speak on age related eye disorders.

**WHEN:** May 14, 2020 from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** Westminster Village, 2025 E Lincoln Ave. Bloomington, Illinois

**RSVP:** RSVPs required for those who wish to eat.  
Email [kim@lifecil.org](mailto:kim@lifecil.org) or call 309-663-5433 by May 1, 2020.

# VITA: Volunteer Income Tax Assistance

**Please call individual locations to determine if they are still hosting VITA before visiting.**

**Taxes are confusing! But, there's help available.**

VITA is the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program. Through it, IRS-certified volunteers provide free basic income tax return preparation with electronic filing to qualified individuals. Eligibility is income based unless otherwise noted.

The following list and information is from the PATH website and is accurate per their notations.

<http://www.navigateresources.net/path/MatchList.aspx?k;;0;;N;0;0;Tax%20Preparation%20Assistance;TopServices;All>

**Eligibility:** Single individuals with no dependents and income \$35,000 or less.

- Single with dependents or Married and income \$56,000 or less.

**Hours:** 2020 Tax Preparation services will run until April 13th, 2020, and each site will have days and times listed below.

**Documents needed:** Tax information (W-2, 1099, etc.) and Proof of health insurance information/form 1095A, Social Security cards (or ITINs) for all persons on the return, Government issued picture ID (taxpayer and spouse if married filing jointly), Copy of your 2018 Federal Tax Return.

<b>MCLEAN COUNTY LOCATIONS</b>	
<b>Bloomington Housing Authority Wood Hill Towers</b> 104 E. Wood Street Mon 5:00 pm-8:00 pm. & Sat 9:00 am-12:00 pm.	<b>Heartland Community College</b> 1500 W. Raab Road, Normal Workforce Development Center, Room 3601 Tues and Thurs 5:00-8:00 pm.
<b>Township Activity and Rec Center (ARC)</b> 600 E. Willow Street, Normal <b>by appointment only</b> - Call 309-888-9099, press 2 Fri 9:00a-2:00p	<b>Western Avenue Community Center</b> 600 N. Western Street, Bloomington. Fri 10:00a-2:00 p
<b>Bloomington Public Library</b> 205 E. Olive Street Bloomington, IL 61701 9:15a-1:15p February-April (Check website for dates); last return starts no later than 12:15 pm. Help is provided on a first-come, first-served basis. <b>Documents needed:</b> W-2, Social Security card, Social Security statements, and tax forms. A Social Security card or statement is required for anyone whose name appears on the tax return. NOTE: <b><i>There are no age or income restrictions to receive assistance.</i></b>	
<b>DEWITT COUNTY LOCATIONS</b>	
<b>Vespasian Warner Public Library District</b> 310 N. Quincy Street Clinton, IL 61727 <b>Call for an appointment: 217-935-5174</b> Thurs 1:30p - 5:45p Sat 9:00a-12:45p	



# The 2020 Census

**WHAT:** A count of every person in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and five U.S. territories (Puerto Rico, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands).

**YEP, YOUR ROOMMATE COUNTS.**

**YOUR NEWBORN COUNTS. YOUR KIDS COUNT.**

**IF THEY LIVE IN YOUR HOME, THEY NEED TO BE COUNTED!**

**WHEN:** Each home will receive an invitation to respond to a short questionnaire—online, by phone, or by mail no later than April 1, 2020.

**DO I HAVE TO? YES!** Participating in the census is required by law. A complete and accurate count is critical for you and your community, because the results of the 2020 Census will affect community funding, congressional representation, and more.

**WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?**

**The results of the 2020 Census will help determine how hundreds of billions of dollars in federal funding flow into communities every year for the next decade.** That funding shapes many different aspects of every community, no matter the size, no matter the location.

Think of your morning commute: Census results influence highway planning and construction, as well as grants for buses, subways, and other public transit systems.

On the other hand, think of your local schools: Census results help determine how money is allocated to the Head Start program and for grants that support teachers and special education.

The list goes on, including programs to support rural areas, to restore wildlife, to prevent child abuse, to prepare for wildfires, and to provide housing assistance for older adults.

The census provides critical data that lawmakers, business owners, teachers, and many others use to provide daily services, products, and support for you and your community. Every year, billions of dollars in federal funding go to hospitals, fire departments, schools, roads, and other resources based on census data.

**The results of the census also determine the number of seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives. Additionally, congressional and state legislative districts are drawn from the census results. Make sure that you are counted!**

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*Curious about what other programs are impacted by census data?  
[Download this report to see a full list.](#)*

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All Census information from <https://2020census.gov/en>

# **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

## **Volunteer Receptionist – Bloomington Office**

**Nature of Work:** Provides receptionist, switchboard, clerical, or other Center support as assigned by the Administrative Services Director.

Specific Duties May Include:

- Answer calls, screen and transfer calls, and possibly take messages.
- Greet visitors to the Center and alert staff regarding visitors.
- Assist with our Equipment Loan Program
- Accompany visitors to the warehouse and assist them with finding needed equipment from the equipment loan program.
- Assist in completing necessary paperwork for equipment loan program and making changes on existing paperwork on file.
- Provide general correspondence, reports and other documents using Microsoft Office software as requested. Proofread to assure accuracy.
- Photocopy and compile materials as assigned.
- Assemble, fold, and sort large mailings.
- Maintain confidentiality of all consumer interactions and data.

Volunteer Duty Specifications (as needed for assigned duties):

- Ability to operate multi-line phone system, transfer calls, and record accurate telephone messages in clear English.
- Ability to proofread documents, collate multi-page and multi-document materials in the correct order, and alphabetize and file documents.
- Ability to operate standard office machines.
- Must maintain confidentiality of all consumer interactions and data.
- Must be able to work with moderate supervision.
- Must have dependable attendance.
- Must have reliable transportation to the Center.

If you are interested in applying to be a volunteer for LIFE CIL, please download and complete the application: <http://www.lifecil.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Volunteer-Application-2019.pdf> or come by our office to get an application to complete. Thank you for your consideration.

# Detecting and Managing Asthma

By Dr. Emeka Eze



Asthma is a chronic disease that affects the airways in your lungs. When you have an asthma attack, your airways swell, which makes it hard to breathe.

Some of the signs and symptoms of asthma may include: Difficulty breathing, wheezing, and/or coughing

**Triggers such as exercise, cold air, and exposure to allergens may bring on asthma.** Diagnosis of asthma requires a history or presence of respiratory asthma symptoms with the demonstration of airflow obstruction.

## **Asthma may be diagnosed by your doctor using:**

Personal/family history, physical exam, pulmonary function testing, and/or other laboratory tests

## **Can Asthma affect my body?**

Yes. Not being able to breathe for a short or long time may lead to decreased oxygen to the body. This can affect every part of the body including your heart and brain and can lead you to fall or pass out. Breathing problems could also lead to the need for supplemental oxygen. It is important to see your doctor if you experience trouble breathing.

## **How can I control Asthma?**

To help manage your asthma you should:

- Regularly monitor your symptoms and breathing. If you have concerns, contact your doctor.
- Work with your doctor to educate yourself on asthma and your triggers.
- Do your best to control outside factors (dust, pollen, mold, pet dander, some types of exercise, tobacco use, foods). You should also monitor other medical issues that may contribute to your asthma.
- Take your asthma medication(s) properly. This may include controller and rescue medications.

**Keeping your asthma under control requires you to be active in your treatment.** Do your best to prevent asthma problems before an attack occurs.

People with asthma should schedule follow-up visits with their doctor every 1-6 months. People with more severe asthma should schedule follow-up visits more frequently.

At your follow-up visits, you should talk with your doctor about the aspects of your asthma. This includes discussing signs and symptoms, lung function, triggers, treatment, medication and side effects. You can also talk about any questions or concerns you may have. You should also discuss steps to take to help or stop asthma attacks. This is sometimes called an asthma "action plan."

It is important to talk with your doctor about your treatment plan. Inform your doctor on how your treatment has been going. You and your doctor can work together to avoid triggers and help keep your asthma under control.

*Dr. Emeka Eze, M.D., M.B.A., is the Medical Director for Molina Healthcare of Illinois. Dr. Eze has also worked many years as a Board Certified Physician in Internal Medicine. Dr. Eze and his team seek to improve the care of their members.*

## Stay Tuned:

Even though our in-person group meetings are cancelled and our building will be closed until April 1, LIFE CIL staff will still be available by phone and online to the greatest extent possible. If you have any questions about services during this time, please don't hesitate to reach out to us via phone, email or message us on Facebook.

Some general reminders:

- If you feel ill, or have symptoms such as a fever, fatigue or a consistent cough, please stay home.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Avoid sharing food.

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/)

If a friend sent this newsletter to you, give us a call or email ([brianne@lifecil.org](mailto:brianne@lifecil.org)) if you'd like to be added to our email list. 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