

E-LIFELINES – Summer, 2020



WE ARE HERE TO HELP!

Out of an abundance of caution for the health and safety of our consumers and staff, **both our Bloomington and Pontiac offices remain closed to walk-ins until further notice.** However, staff **are** available to assist you during regular business hours via phone or email. A limited number of in-person appointments are available, and are required to enter the office. To keep us all safe and available to help, all consumers will be asked screening questions, and will be required to wear a mask if they are medically able to do so.

Equipment Loan: We continue to schedule appointments for our equipment loan closet of durable medical equipment items at our Bloomington office. Please call 309/663-5433 to schedule a reservation for curbside pick-up or drop-off.

ITAC Phones: We are now able to schedule individual appointments for testing of the ITAC amplified telephones.

- For our Bloomington office, please call 309/663-5433 to schedule a reservation.
- For our Pontiac office, please call 815/844-1132 to schedule a reservation.

Meetings: There will be no group meetings held onsite at LIFE CIL during our office closures.

While we hope to fully reopen our offices as soon as possible, you can follow our updates on our website www.lifecil.org and Facebook page www.facebook.com/lifecil.

We appreciate your patience and understanding during this global health crisis.

LIFE CIL hosts virtual Adult Peer Support Group

The Adult Peer Support Group is meeting via Zoom at this time. If you would like to connect with other adults with disabilities virtually, please reach out to Shannon.

WHO: Adults with any disability

WHERE: Virtual on ZOOM! We're happy to walk you through downloading this app, just call!

RSVP: Call or email Shannon at 309-663-5433 / shannon@lifecil.org if you would like to join the Adult Support Group email listing. We are using email to send Zoom links and communicate about days and times for meetings. Hope to see you soon!

THE ADA TURNS

30

ON JULY 26, 2020

ADA30 

Americans with Disabilities Act

Celebrate the ADA! July 26, 2020

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) became law in 1990. The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. The purpose of the law is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. The ADA is divided into five titles (or sections) that relate to different areas of public life. Learn more about the ADA in this fact sheet, [An Overview of the ADA](#), from the ADA National Network.

Want to learn more about the ADA?

ADA National Network offers free ADA Web based self-study courses:

- **ADA Building Blocks:** <http://www.adabasics.org>
 - A free introductory webcourse that explores the legal requirements and spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). The course takes 2-3 hours and includes quizzes and a Post Test. Presented by the Southeast ADA Center.
- **ADA Employment Course:** <http://www.adaemploymentcourse.org>
 - A free, self-paced webcourse available 24/7 on the employment requirements in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), including the important changes made to the ADA by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. The course takes approximately 2.5 hours and includes real life scenarios, quizzes and a final exam. Presented by the New England ADA Center.
- **Disability Rights Course:** <http://www.disabilityrightscourse.org>
 - A free, self-paced webcourse available 24/7 that provides an overview of federal disability rights laws. The course takes approximately 1.5 – 2 hours and includes real life scenarios, quizzes and a final exam. Presented by the New England ADA Center.

~ ADA National Network (www.adata.org)

Having Trouble Hearing on the Phone?

LIFE CIL and ITAC might be able to help!

LIFE Center for Independent Living (LIFE CIL) is a selection center for the Illinois Telecommunications Access Corporation (ITAC). That means we have amplified telephones for testing and also cellular devices to try to determine what works best for you.



There is an application process but once you get the necessary application and additional documents gathered, call us to make an appointment to test the devices available and we will be happy to help get yours ordered.

To be eligible you must:

1. Complete an application. You would complete the front, your doctor, audiologist or hearing aid facility must fill out the back of the application to certify your hearing loss. **Call us for an application ahead of time, we can mail it to you.**
2. Be a resident of the state of Illinois. To prove this, you will need to provide a copy of your driver's license, Illinois ID card or a piece of mail showing the same address as the application. **Bring this with you to your appointment and we can copy it for you, if you would like.**
3. You have to have landline and/or cellular telephone service. You will need to provide a copy of your phone bill for whichever device(s) you are wanting. If you only want a landline amplified phone, you will just need your landline phone bill. If you only want a cellular amplifier, you will just need a copy of your cellular phone bill. If you want both types of devices, you'd need a copy of both bills. **Again, we are happy to make copies, if you would like us to. Just be sure to bring this with you when you come in for your appointment at LIFE CIL.**
4. Make an appointment with LIFE CIL to see and test the devices to know which works best for you and we can help you get what you want ordered. **Call our Bloomington office at 309/663-5433 or Pontiac at 815/844-1132 to schedule.**

To learn more about the program or the devices available, please visit ITAC's website: www.itactty.org.

KEEP YOURSELF AND OTHERS AROUND YOU SAFE

We know that since learning about COVID-19, everything has been so different. We want to make sure you know what steps you can take to protect yourself and others.

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

- **Stay at least 6 feet (about 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 cloth face covering over your nose and mouth.**
- **Do not touch your eyes, nose, and mouth.**
- **Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.**
- **Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.**
- **Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.**

You can also learn more about COVID-19 from the CDC by visiting:

www.cdc.gov

Staff at LIFE CIL are following these guidelines and doing everything we can to all stay healthy and keep our office clean. We have procedures in place to keep everyone safe and healthy. We will be wearing our masks or shields and have Plexiglas shields in place to protect individuals we are meeting with.

Stop the Spread of Germs

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.



Stay at least 6 feet
(about 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
cloth face covering over
your nose and mouth.



Do not touch your
eyes, nose, and mouth.



Clean and disinfect
frequently touched
objects and surfaces.



Stay home when you are sick,
except to get medical care.



Wash your hands often with soap
and water for at least 20 seconds.



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

Support LIFE CIL

Our Community Relations Committee Chair, Wes Cowden and our Executive Director, Rickielee Benecke are reaching out to all of our friends for support. We have mailed letters to many of our friends, but are including the text of our letter here for those that prefer an electronic version.

Dear Friend,

While most of us celebrate Independence Day on July 4, there is another, less popular day, where independence is also celebrated. On July 26, 2020, persons with disabilities will be celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The ADA was supposed to end discrimination against people with disabilities in several areas (employment, transportation, public accommodations, communication and access to government programs and services). While the ADA has brought about many changes to help people with disabilities, there is still a lot of work yet to do.

This past year alone, LIFE CIL staff have spent over 400 hours advocating, educating and providing technical assistance. These hours have been addressing barriers to independent living such as:

- Addressing health care inequalities for individuals with disabilities
- Ensuring that all bus routes and stops are accessible
- Increasing accessible outdoor seating for restaurants and parks
- Ensuring housing stability before and after the COVID-19 pandemic
- Allowing SNAP recipients access to food via delivery service
- Decreasing institutionalization rates in long term care facilities

These are just a few examples of the issues individuals with disabilities continue to face that we have advocated to change.

Help us celebrate the 30th anniversary of the ADA by giving a donation to LIFE CIL that will support our mission and efforts. Thank you!

You can also support LIFE CIL via an on-line donation at

<http://www.lifecil.org/support/>



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Sincerely,



Wes Cowden
Community Relations
Committee Chair

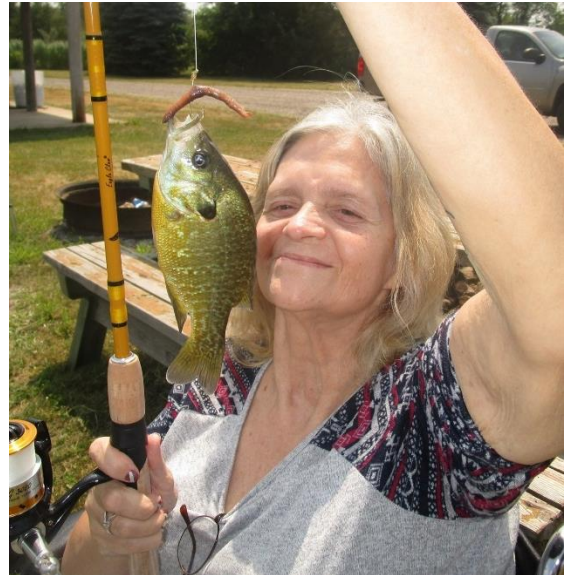


Rickielee Benecke
Executive Director

From Nursing Home to HER Home

Teresa's story: "Another shot at life and I'm not giving up"

In the Spring of 2019, Teresa Webb had been in the nursing home for almost 6 months when she ran across information that would change the direction of her life. She was getting close to the point of being strong enough to get back out on her own again, and her goal was to obtain an accessible apartment in the Champaign/Urbana area. Teresa was researching how to get out of the nursing home with limited financial resources and found information on LIFE CIL's Community Reintegration Program online. Teresa reached out to our Community Reintegration Advocate (CRA), Andrea Kindseth, to learn about the program, and became very excited about the opportunity.



Prior to her nursing home stay, Teresa struggled with homelessness and alcohol dependency for several years following some challenging times. One day, a friend found her unresponsive and took her to the ER. Tests indicated that she was in heart failure, and she soon fell into a coma for several days. After waking up, Teresa was weak, unable to walk, and had left-sided paralysis. Teresa worked with the therapy team at hospital and then transferred to Accolade Senior Living of Paxton.

Upon admission to the nursing facility, Teresa connected with dedicated therapy staff who supported her in achieving her goals. She has always said, "I'm not giving up and I'm going to keep going until something stops me." In the following months, she worked with therapy along with our Community Reintegration Advocate towards her goals. Eventually, she was able to make transfers independently and no longer had to use a Hoyer lift. By connecting with the CRA and using the team and supports around her, she became more independent and was ready for life back in the community.

After patiently waiting for a unit to become available, Teresa finally received word that an accessible one-bedroom apartment was ready for her. Teresa and the CRA were now able to do "the fun part." The Community Reintegration program provides funds to purchase furniture, household items, a security deposit, and one month's rent. Teresa was able to choose her own furniture (within a budget) and joined the CRA on a shopping trip where she was able to pick out household items matching her tastes. Our advocate worked with Teresa on coordinating the delivery of items and setting up her home the way she wanted it. In October 2019, our reintegration advocate was by Teresa's side for her discharge from the nursing facility. Teresa came home and cried tears of happiness. She was able to walk right in and make herself at home due to all of her hard work, patience, and preparation completed prior to her move.

Teresa continues to live an independent life in the community to this day. Even in the wake of COVID-19, she has stayed connected with all of her supports in the community. Teresa receives daily

Personal Assistant Services through the DRS Home Services Program, and continues to increase her strength and mobility through aquatic therapy. Teresa has enjoyed attending AA meetings via zoom and has started attending meetings in person again. She has stayed connected with providers via video chat and in-person meetings when necessary. Teresa states that she is extremely thankful for where she is at in life and for the relationships that she has been able to rebuild. She stays in frequent contact with friends and family and is grateful for all the time she has been able to spend with her grandchildren.

Teresa states that, “I am not sure how I could have gotten my life back” without the Reintegration Program. “I take it all as a blessing and am grateful for the life I have.” Teresa has such an amazing story to share and LIFE CIL staff are thankful that they were able to play a role in her achieving the independent life back in the community that she wanted. If you or someone you know is trying to move out of a nursing home and back into the community, but needs direction or support, please call LIFE CIL and ask about the Community Reintegration Program.

Advocacy!

A Place to eat, and a place to take a seat – Pontiac, IL

Covid-19 has brought to light many barriers to accessibility in our communities. LIFE CIL Advocates, Melissa and Conan, have been working with city officials to resolve issues and make our communities more accessible for everyone.

When tables started popping up outside restaurants in the City of Pontiac, it quickly became clear that people in wheelchairs would have a hard time accessing outside dining. There were no accessible picnic tables at our restaurants. LIFE CIL offered technical assistance to Pontiac Parks and Recreation Director, Taylor Baxter, who was quick to respond and implement accessible outdoor dining options that bring restaurants into compliance with the Illinois Accessibility Code and the ADA. Accessible picnic tables now available for public use as part of downtown Pontiac's outdoor seating arrangements at restaurants, and in the Chautauqua Park Pavilion.



Picnic tables with roll-under tops are accessible for wheelchair users.

Advocacy, Continued

In April, Corporate Walmart decided that removing all benches inside and outside of their stores would be a way to prevent people from sitting too closely together during the pandemic. However, this policy is also causing a lot of difficulty for those people who need a place to rest while they are shopping. Many people have expressed frustration with having to stand for long periods while waiting for public transportation, or not having a place to sit to try on shoes. LIFE CIL advocates have made multiple phone calls to Walmart management at the local and national levels. Pontiac Walmart heard our concerns and placed benches back outside the store for customers to use while they wait for the bus or a ride. LIFE CIL continues to communicate with Walmart at a national level on ways they can amend this policy to provide reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

ANYONE can be an advocate!

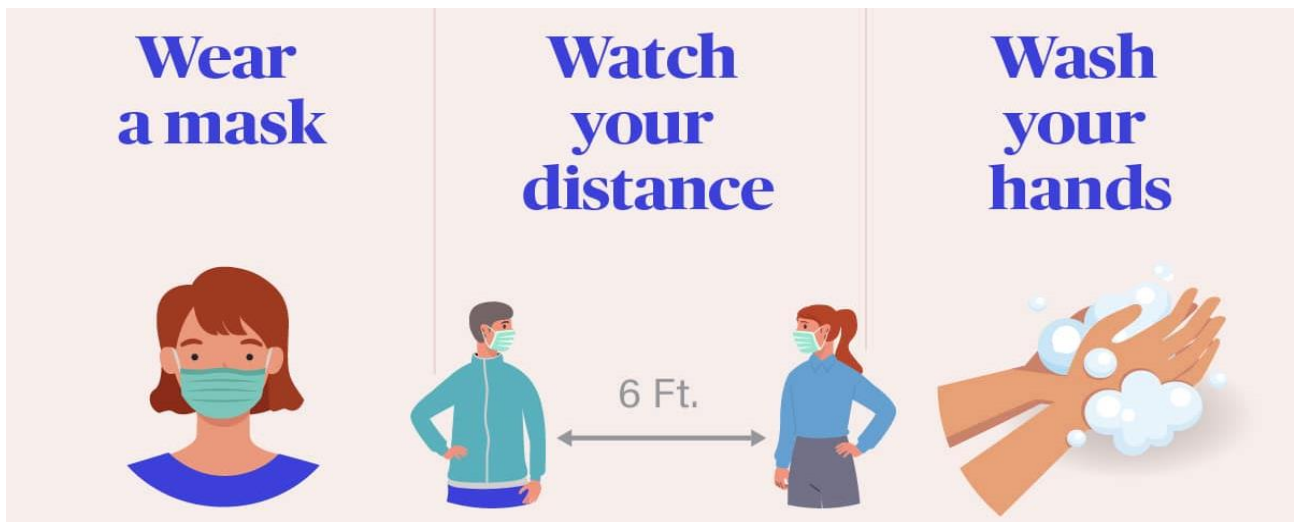
There are simple ways you can get involved – it can be as easy as clicking a link and adding your information to show your support or opposition of a given bill that’s going to the House or Senate.

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 never be sent information from these sources that you did not approve/request. conan@lifecil.org or 309-663-5433.

Have you seen or heard something in the community that just doesn’t seem right? Did you see or experience an action or event that is excluded someone with a disability from an activity that is open to the public? We hope you’ll let us know! We are here to assist people with disabilities and the communities they live in. Our goal is to help educate individuals, business owners, and town & city governments on what the ADA includes and how to accomplish compliance. Please give Conan a call!

Stay Tuned:

Please keep in touch! We hope to fully reopen our offices soon. In the meantime, be safe, stay healthy and practice your 3 Ws!



(image source: https://www.facebook.com/pg/IDPH.Illinois/posts/?ref=page_internal)

If a friend sent this newsletter to you and you would like to join our mailing list, call or email Brianne at 309-663-5433 / brianne@lifecil.org.

We never sell or give away your information!

Please visit our website or Facebook page for updates on meetings, trainings, and events. LIFE CIL will post updates on precautions and policies we are implementing to keep our consumers and our staff healthy.



www.lifecil.org and <https://www.facebook.com/lifecil>

LOCATIONS

Bloomington

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