Equal Access Denied in the State of the State

In January the Governor of New York delivers a State of the State Address to inform state residents on the current condition of New York. Once the date was announced for the 2014 Address, RCIL contacted the Cuomo administration requesting that a sign language interpreter be provided during the speech. This request for appropriate accommodations is submitted by RCIL so that Deaf and hard of hearing New York residents can be adequately informed of what our political leaders are doing and how it will affect them. RCIL did not receive a clear answer back regarding this request. The only mention came in a press release prior to the address, where the Governor’s office noted that online feed for the speech would be captioned.

On January 8, 2014 inadequate access to the State of the State Address resulted. Captioning of online feed was very inconsistent - certain sites

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Mark your calendar - This year’s ADAPT Fun*Run event is on Sunday, May 4, 2014 in Washington, DC, kicking off an entire week of protests and actions! For more info, or to get signed up to go, please contact our advocacy department at (585) 442-6470. Also, you can log onto www.adaptfunrun.net to register as a fun runner today!

RCIL would like to thank everyone who participated in ROC the Day and donated a gift to us on 12/11/13!
Dear Friends:

*Independent Times* provides our readers valuable information about RCIL programs and ongoing advocacy efforts – ensuring that people with disabilities can be independent and integrated in the community.

Our feature story discusses the Governor’s lack of equal access during the State of the State Address. RCIL’s advocacy department has been working to ensure interpreters are provided during major televised broadcasts and in crisis situations, so the Deaf community has appropriate access to information. This issue also identifies changes we are seeing in benefits and the Medicaid system as a result of the Affordable Care Act. We know these changes are complicated and people need good information to make informed decisions. RCIL benefits advisors are well versed in these changes, and ready to assist with any questions you have.

RCIL assists people of all ages and disabilities. Please contact us to learn how you can get involved!

Sincerely,

Bruce E. Darling
President/CEO

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**New Year, New Changes to Public Benefits**

The New Year has brought changes to many of the government programs in our country. Most programs we have at RCIL experienced the standard increases which are typically based on cost of living. However, the Medicaid system changed more dramatically due to the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. As of January 1st, 2014 the income limits to qualify for Medicaid have been increased. These new rules will allow for more people to qualify for Medicaid and have proper health care coverage.

We are here to help and walk you through all of these changes! RCIL’s benefits advisors are ready and willing to provide information and assistance to assure you maximize your benefits and minimize your stressors. Questions pertaining to Medicaid, Medicare, food stamps, public assistance, social security, SSI and work incentive benefits planning can all be answered by one of our benefits advisors! Please stop by our downtown Rochester office or contact us at (585) 442-6470 and ask for someone in our benefits department today.

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**Youth Own (YO!) Receives YAR Grant!**

Congratulations to student leaders from RCIL’s youth leadership group who received a $1,000 grant from YAR (Youth As Resources) - a program of the Rochester-Monroe County Youth Bureau! The award was presented on January 25 at a luncheon ceremony held at Monroe Community Hospital. YO! members Julian Hiler and Priya Penner put together the grant and were interviewed by a panel of other youth from YAR during the competition phase. According to Christina Coury, YAR program coordinator, the RCIL proposal “just stood out” among other competing groups. The YAR grant will enable RCIL youth to purchase a GoPro camera that can be adapted to varying physical abilities, and to film a promotional video for the group, shot in documentary style by youth videographers, to be titled “YO! – Youth Own – the Movie.” Stay tuned for news of when and where you can view the final production! For more information regarding YO! contact our youth services coordinator at (585) 442-6470.
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provided clear captioning while others were garbled or non-existent. Nonetheless, televised access through interpreter services, to the speech was not provided. This year was no different from last - the appropriate accommodations were not in place, which resulted in a formal complaint from RCIL to the Governor’s office.

With the resources the government has at its disposal, there is no excuse for the governor’s office or any level of state government, not to provide an interpreter during any major televised speech to residents of New York. RCIL will continue to address this issue at the state level to ensure that equal access to information is provided to all residents of New York. For more information regarding this issue or any of RCIL’s advocacy efforts please contact our advocacy department at (585) 442-6470. Ask how you can get involved!

RCIL’s Accessible Van Received a Makeover this Past Fall!

We can’t forget to mention that last fall we had the RCIL van wrapped to help better promote our services, and share our mission with people in the community! The wrap was completed by Unitech Applications based out of Leroy, NY! Thank you for all the hard work. Look to see us cruising around town, and please let our team know what you think!

Important News and Info:

Upcoming RCIL Board Meeting:
Thursday, February, 20, 2-4 pm, 497 State Street, Rochester, New York
Members are encouraged to attend! Not a member? Wish to speak with the board?
Contact Linda Taylor at (585) 442 - 6470 for assistance.

Problems with this newsletter?
Receiving too many copies? Have you changed your address?
Contact Kristin Salter at (585) 442– 6470 for assistance.

Visit us at www.rcil.org for more information on our services, and keep up-to-date on our advocacy efforts!

http://www.facebook.com/rcilnys
http://www.twitter.com/rcilny
http://www.youtube.com/rcilvideo
Minimum contribution $10 per year.
Membership year is November 1 – October 31.

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Enclosed is my contribution of $_________.

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All donations are tax deductible.