**Call us if you need any accommodations such as a sign language interpreter, Braille materials, etc.**

**March**

4. Adjustment to Disability - 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.
5. Purple Frog Restaurant, 3468 Blue Bonnet Circle, Fort Worth, TX 76109 – Lunch specials are $13 & under 1:00 - 2:15pm https://www.thepurplefrogrestaurant.com/lunch
11. Tastebuds Eatery, 7674 McCart Ave – Entrées are $13 & under 1:00 – 2:15 p.m. www.tastebudseatery.com/menu
18. Adjustment to Disability - 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.
19. Meet at the Center 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
25. Adjustment to Disability - 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.
26. Meet at the Center 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
31. Cooking Matters Course 10:00am - noon Must pre-register to participate

**April 2020**

1. Adjustment to Disability 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.
2. Button’s Restaurant, 4701 West Fwy., Lunch entrees are $13.00 & under, not including drink 1:00-2:15 p.m. https://www.buttonsofsw.com/menus-2
7. Cooking Matters - 10:00am - noon
8. Adjustment to Disability 12:30 - 3pm
9. Fort Worth Zoo 1969 Colonial Parkway, Prices - Adults $16, Children $12, Toddlers under 2 FREE, Seniors $12, Parking $5 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
10. CENTER CLOSED IN OBSERVANCE OF GOOD FRIDAY
14. Cooking Matters Course 10:00am - noon
15. Adjustment to Disability - 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.
16. Bingo 5701 Crowley Rd, Fort Worth, 76134, Bring $20, you can play multiple times 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. http://texasbingo.com/
18. African American Health Fair, William M. McDonald YMCA, 2701 Morey St., Fort Worth, 76105 10:00am - 2:00pm
21. COOKING MATTERS COURSE – 10:00 a.m. – noon  Must pre-register to participate.
22. Adjustment to Disability - 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.
23. No Support Group
28. COOKING MATTERS COURSE – 10:00 a.m. – noon Must pre-register to participate.
29. Adjustment to Disability 12:30 – 3:00pm
30. Meet at the Center 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

**May 2019**

5. COOKING MATTERS COURSE – 10:00 a.m. – noon Must pre-register to participate.
6. Adjustment to Disability - 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.
7. Red Robin, 4800 S Hulen St., Lunch prices are $10.00 and up. Bring money to shop. Lunch is 1:00 p.m. - 2:15 p.m. www.redrobin.com
13. Adjustment to Disability: 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.
14. Dixie House Café, 5401 S Hulen St., Lunch specials are $10 not including a drink 1:00 – 2:15 pm www.dixiehousecafes.com
20. Adjustment to Disability - 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.
21. Movie & popcorn at the center 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
27. Adjustment to Disability: 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.
28. Meet at the center 1:00 pm – 3:00 p.m.

**Closed on Memorial Day 5/25/20**
“23 Plus” Young People’s Group

REACH of Dallas is starting a new group aimed at young people who have aged out of the youth transition group. It’s a new year and a chance for a fresh start in 2020. I would like to invite all former members of the Dallas youth transition group to join me in having quarterly dinner meetings.

These meetings are a way for you to continue getting out into the community and socializing. We will meet at the same place quarterly for dinner. You will be responsible for the cost of your meal and transportation because REACH continues to encourage independence. If you are interested in coming to the events, please call me (Pamela Momon) at 214-630-4796 Ext. 107. I will need to get your email address so I can stay in touch with you with any updates or last-minute changes.

The new group is called “23 Plus”. We will meet at Dunston’s Steakhouse, 8526 Harry Hines Blvd., Dallas, 75235 for every meeting.

Dates:
- May 16, 2020 (6pm-8pm)
- August 8, 2020 (6pm-8pm)
- November 7, 2020 (4:30 pm – 7 pm)

Pam Momon, REACH of Dallas Youth Transition Specialist

THANK YOU

From the moment I was interviewed two years ago to now, I have poured my whole heart into REACH and Advocacy! I have loved every minute of it. Even the harder than most type of days were so worth the growth I attained and all the amazing people I have met. I have learned so much in my two years with REACH, Inc. that I will carry for the rest of my life. From my first day here at REACH, I have taken part in numerous trainings, watched about a million webinars, learned how to set up meetings, learned and succeeded in conducting community organizing, advocate for others, and so much more. I have networked with organizations from all over Texas, participated in a Legislative Advocacy Training program (Texas Partners in Policymaking), made significant connections with representatives with the Cities of Plano, Sachse, Allen, McKinney, Frisco, Austin, Houston, and Dallas.

I have had the privilege of attending over 100 meetings and conferences where I was given opportunities to learn, speak, and participate. I have been on my first panel (Disability Rights Summit) speaking about RevUp. RevUp used a photo of me on the cover of the Texas Disability Issues Forum booklet. I made significant changes in Plano for anyone with a hearing loss of any kind to be able to obtain an iPad with Live Captioning during any and all city public meetings with already prescheduled American Sign Language Interpreters to be in attendance regardless of anyone requesting them. This is just the surface of what I have accomplished because of the things I’ve learned, the skills I have acquired, and the flexibility I was given as a REACH, Inc. employee.

I am resigning as the Records Manager at the REACH of Plano, but not as the strong Advocate I have become. This isn’t goodbye! I will be moving forward to do even more great things for our wonderful Texas Communities and hope to work with all of you again in the future on projects and events as fellow community partners and Independent Living Philosophy believers!

Shawnett Viani

Call us if you need any accommodations such as a sign language interpreter, Braille materials, etc.

March 2020
2 Independence & Beyond @ the center 1:30 - 3:00 PM. In a group setting, topic discussions include self-esteem, family relationships, anxiety, medical stress, depression, setting boundaries & goal setting. Preregister with Kiowanda if this will be your 1st time attending.
7 Dallas Museum of Art - Youth Community Outing 11:30am - 2:30pm
10 Dallas ISD at REACH, Transitioning Youth IL Skills Training 11am-2:30pm
30 Dallas ISD at REACH, Transitioning Youth IL Skills Training 11am-2:30pm

Basic Computer IL Skills Training classes must be scheduled with Harvey Spears

April 2020
4 Perot Museum Youth Community Outing 10:00am - 1:30pm
6 Independence & Beyond @ the center 1:30 - 3:00 PM. Preregister with Kiowanda
10 REACH is closed in observance of Good Friday
13 Dallas ISD at REACH, Transitioning Youth Independent Living Skills Training 11am-2:30pm
27 Dallas ISD at REACH, Transitioning Youth Independent Living Skills Training 11am-2:30pm

May 2020
4 Independence & Beyond @ the center 1:30 - 3:00 PM. Preregister with Kiowanda
9 Lunch at Red Lobster Youth Community Outing 11am - 2pm
11 Dallas ISD at REACH, Transitioning Youth Independent Living Skills Training 11am-2:30pm
25 REACH is closed in observance of the Memorial Day holiday

REACH of Dallas 2020 Youth Summer Camp, Expected Dates June 8th – June 12th 9am-3pm
Pre-register with Pamela Momon 214-630-4796

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

REACHing Out - March 2020 - May 2020

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Call us if you need any accommodations such as a sign language interpreter, Braille materials, etc.

March 2020
4 Spring Storm Preparation @ the center 1:00-2:00 PM
11 Thunder and Lightening @ the center 1:00-2:00 PM
18 What Would You Say? @ the center 1:00-2:00 PM
25 In Like a Lion @ the center 1:00-2:00 PM

April 2020
1 April Fool! @ the center 1:00-2:00 PM
8 Hippity Hop @ the center 1:00-2:00 PM
10 REACH is closed in observance of Good Friday
15 Just What is the ADA? @ the center 1:00-2:00 PM
22 General Support Group @ the center 1:00-2:00 PM
29 No Group

May 2020
6 Changes @ the center 1:00-2:00 PM
13 General Support Group @ the center 1:00-2:00 PM
20 Getting Ready for the Heat @ the center 1:00-2:00 PM
25 REACH is closed in observance of the Memorial Day holiday
27 Make it Memorable @ the center 1:00-2:00 PM

You may bring & eat your lunch while we discuss the topic during our General Support Group meetings. Please pre-register for offered activities.

Call us if you need any accommodations such as a sign language interpreter, Braille materials, etc.

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You may bring & eat your lunch while we discuss the topic during our General Support Group meetings. Please pre-register for offered activities.

“TASTE of REACH” COOKBOOK

The deadline for submissions has been extended to May 31st.

My name is Sarah Stepp and I am the new REACH of Denton Office Manager. Here at the Denton center we are hosting a “Taste of REACH” activity with some of our consumers and staff. In conjunction with this event, I want to put together a cookbook with recipes from all four of the REACH locations. So, please send your top 3 recipes to sstepp@reachcils.org. Please include your initials and mention which REACH center you attend. I am really excited to see how many recipes I get in response to this request. Once I have the cookbook completed, I will email a copy to anyone that would like one.
FINDING YOUR SPARK

Sparks are the hidden flames inside of people that light their fire, get them excited, and tap into their true passions. Sparks come from the gut. They motivate and inspire. They’re real talents, assets, skills, and dreams. Sparks can be musical, athletic, intellectual, and relational—anything from playing the guitar to enjoying work with kids or senior citizens.

Sparks live inside your heart and not your head. That's why you find them more through feeling than through thinking. A lot of times, our minds talk us out of what our hearts are longing to do. Sparks are not something you learn. They come from inside a person and are found and fed through experience.

Everyone has one or more spark. Sometimes the spark is hidden or not being used, but it is there. Sparks can change. No one has to tell you to get excited about your spark. You want to talk about it and use it. You never get tired of your spark. A spark at 16 may look different from a spark at 12.

The true mark of a spark is not that it brings happiness or pleasure, but a passion. It is a person’s unique song. Trust your spark. Build your life around what you love.

Sparks put people on a positive path and away from negative energy. Sparks, when they are known and acted on, help people realize that their lives have a purpose.

Questions That Help to Define Your Spark

1. What one thing would you do if you knew you couldn’t fail?
2. What is one thing that always puts a smile on your face?
3. What is something that comes easy to you?
4. What is something you would do for free?
5. What is something you wish you could do all of the time?
6. What do you love to talk about most?
7. What is something you will regret if you don’t try?
8. Who feeds your spark?
9. What gets in the way of you living out your Spark?
10. How could you use your spark to make our world better?

Pamela Momon, REACH of Dallas
Youth Transition Specialist

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

972-398-1111

Call us if you need any accommodations such as a sign language interpreter, Braille materials, etc.

March 2020
3 10:00am - 3:00pm Youth Community Outing: Movie at the Dollar Theater in Plano.

April 2020
17 10:30am - 12:00pm Youth Workshop on Effective Communication.
25 REACH is closed in observance of Good Friday

May 2020
6 10:00am - 12:00pm Youth Transition Community Service Activity. Agency we are partnering with to be announced.
25 REACH is closed in observance of the Memorial Day holiday

Thanks

REACH of Plano staff have enjoyed working with Shawnett Viani as the center’s Records Manager for over 2 years. She has brought much to the disability community. She has worked with Texas Partners in Policy Making and various committees of the Coalition on Texans with Disabilities. She has served as a Miss Wheelchair Texas ambassador and a supporter of so many local advocacy groups. She has decided to leave REACH’s employ and focus on her advocacy projects. But she will always be a strong advocate in our community working with her former team at the Plano center. It is sad to see her go, but we are thrilled to see her growth as a leader as a result of her time with REACH. We expect great things to come from her advocacy work and know we have a strong partner in the community.

January 23rd was Ed Roberts day. Ed Roberts is known as the father of centers for independent living. We held a discussion group where we talked about his views on disability, advocacy in the role of centers for independent living. It was a great day for reflection in what has happened because of the advocacy of people with disabilities. The discussion helped bolster our own commitment to continue the mission.

REACH of Plano employees are asking for community feedback on topics and needs for future events that the center can host. Based on comments received so far, we see interest in continuing counseling groups, offering training on the 2020 Census process, the effects of substance abuse on independence, community awareness on autism, and more round table discussions on various topics. Please call Julie Espinoza at 972-398-1111 to share your ideas.

For individual peer counseling, skills training or advocacy assistance, please call the center to set up services. To join our event email notifications list, send your email address to: jespinoza@reachcils.org.

Anne Wallace has graciously provided art therapy and volunteered to facilitate art workshops at the center in the past. She has moved on to open her own counseling practice. Best of luck!

March 23rd will mark James Payne’s 5th anniversary as a REACH employee. Congratulations!
Avoid wrong “rights in the workplace”

Has a co-worker, family member or friend ever tried to explain employee or employer rights in the workplace? What a company can or cannot do to an employee? Did it sound right to you? Unfortunately, occasionally misinformation about employee rights are being shared by co-workers, employers, family and friends. Here are some myths to avoid about employee rights in the workplace.

Your employer must have a “good reason” to fire you. An employer can terminate your employment for any reason, whether it’s for a good reason, a bad reason or no reason at all. Most states in the country have an “at will” policy. Which means an employer can walk into the workplace and fire or terminate you “at will”. Your employer may not like you and can fire you. The only exception is for discrimination (i.e. disability, race, gender, orientation, religion, age, national origin). If you are part of a union, federal, state or local government, there may be some guidelines and procedures in place to prevent “at will”.

Your salary can’t be reduced. Typically, companies don’t decide to cut or reduce employees pay. However, there is no law prohibiting or preventing a company from taking such extreme steps, if the employer follows the laws for minimum wage and overtime for non-exempt and hourly workers. Again, there are some exceptions when companies attempt to reduce salaries for public workers and discrimination.

Your emails are private and belongs to you. You might feel violated or that there’s a lack of trust, from your employer, if you find out they are reviewing your emails. Just know, they might have the right to do so! Some companies have an email-use policy, that says, if you are using the company’s emails for chatter, they have the right to look at it. In the private sector, there is no constitutional right that prohibits companies from accessing their email system. The 4th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution applies only to the content of government. If you want to know your company policy, check the company employee handbook. Just be aware, that in most states, companies have the right to access their systems anytime, without your permission and acknowledgement.

If fired, I can receive unemployment. Don’t think that if you are terminated or fired, that you automatically will start getting unemployment checks. States have laws, requirements and procedures that must be met to receive unemployment benefits. Some states require a certain length of time on the job and other circumstances. Check your state laws requiring unemployment benefits.

Your employer can’t search through your desk or office. Just like with emails, companies have the right to access anything and check anywhere in an office, cubical or workstation. Your employer may investigate your work environment for business reasons. Again, exceptions may include public employment and constitutional rights. Just know your legal rights as an employee in a workplace. When confusion or uncertainty exists, consult reference/ sources such as state and federal laws, human resource professionals, company management, and employee handbooks. Know the facts and avoid the myths! Remember…take The Initiative!!!

Reference/ Sources & Citations:
Papandrea, Dawn. Six Ways People Get Employee Rights Wrong
Accessed January 9, 2020

The REACH Resource Centers on Independent Living are Fragrance Free facilities! Please do not wear scented products when visiting the centers or participating in any of our services or activities. Thank you!
REACH is Awarded a $5,000 Grant from Superior HealthPlan

The funds will be used to purchase four laptop computers with essential software in order to conduct basic computer skills training with interested individuals with disabilities and seniors who live in Dallas or Collin County assisted living facilities or retirement communities. Training sessions may also be offered at senior centers, libraries, schools, and community and recreation centers.

The goal of the project is to educate 50 individuals 18+ years of age over a 4-year period about computer basics, how to safely navigate the Internet, master using Microsoft office software, set up an email account, insure online privacy and security, etc.

Harvey Spears, Outreach, Advocacy & IL Skills Training Specialist at the REACH of Dallas center, will coordinate this project. Harvey has been a REACH employee for 10 years and one of his favorite job responsibilities has been conducting in-office basic computer skills training with consumers who’ve had little or no computer, Internet and/or email experience.

For more information about this project, please contact Harvey via phone at 214-630-4796 or email at hspears@reachcils.org.
CARING to HELP

Honor your loved ones with a gift to the REACH Resource Centers on Independent Living. Donations in memory of a loved one or to celebrate a birthday, anniversary, wedding, Christmas, Valentine’s Day, etc. will help REACH continue its work in providing an array of independent living services to North Texans with disabilities.

Enclosed is my contribution of $______________

In Memory or Honor of (Name):
Check one: Memorial _____ Birthday_____ Anniversary_____ Wedding_____ or Other (Explain)________________________

Send acknowledgement to (Name, Address, City, State & Zip Code):
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

From (Your Name, Address, City, State & Zip Code):

Make checks payable to REACH, Inc. and mail with this form to 1000 Macon Street, Suite 200, Fort Worth, TX 76102-4527. THANK YOU FOR YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT.

The contents of this newsletter were developed, in part, under grants from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). The contents of this newsletter do not, however, necessarily represent the policies of HHS or HHSC and you should not assume endorsement by either the federal or state government.

REACH receives a majority of its funding to operate the centers from grants from HHS and HHSC. REACH of Denton receives 100% of its funding ($249,631) from HHS; REACH of Fort Worth receives 100% of its funding ($262,280) from HHSC; REACH of Dallas receives 100% of its funding ($481,520) from HHS; and REACH of Plano receives 100% of its funding ($262,279) from HHSC.

JUST A REMINDER

REACH generates additional funds to enhance its mission by participating in the Tom Thumb, Kroger and Amazon Smile donor programs. Each company allows its customers to register so that donations go to a nonprofit organization that the customer supports. Then every time a purchase is made by the customer, the nonprofit receives credit for the total amount of the purchase. The Tom Thumb, Kroger and Amazon companies then periodically issue a donation check or make an automatic bank deposit to REACH for a percentage of the total of our supporters’ purchases.

If you and/or your family and friends shop at or online at any or all of these companies and would like to make sure that REACH is able to continue providing services to North Texans with disabilities, please call any of the REACH offices for more information on how to enroll in these no cost to you donor programs. Thank you.

From the Director’s Desk

Good News
Marilyn Rodriguez recently joined the REACH team and is working as the Records Manager at REACH of Plano. Her work objective is to empower individuals, model positive behavior and build rapport. She recently graduated with a Master’s degree in social work from Texas A&M University-Commerce.

Best Accessibility Inventions of 2019
Highlighted in the December 2-9, 2019 edition of TIME magazine was interesting information about several inventions that will make our lives as individuals with disabilities easier. For those who are visually impaired or blind, research online the WeWalk smart cane that detects objects above chest level to aid you in navigating your environment and the OcCam MyEye 2 “talking glasses” device that attaches to an eyeglass frame and can identify faces and currency, and reads information from bar codes aloud. For those who have physical disabilities, learn more about the Comcast Xfinity X1 Eye Control which is a web based remote control for computers, tablets and TVs. And, for those experiencing a hearing loss visit Stark-ey Hearing Technology for details about the Livio AI smarter hearing aid.

FYI
Did you know that the Supreme Court’s 1999 decision in Olmstead v. L.C. led to the relocation assistance programs that centers for independent living offer to institutionalized individuals with disabilities who want to transition back into community living?

The story begins with two women with mental health and developmental disabilities who resided voluntarily in the State-run Georgia Regional Hospital. After receiving medical treatment, they were ready to move to a community-based program. Unfortunately, they remained confined in the hospital for several years. Eventually, they decided to file a lawsuit under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in order to get released from the hospital. They were successful!

The Court’s decision stated that unjustified segregation of persons with disabilities constitutes discrimination in violation of Title II of the ADA. The court held that public entities must provide community-based services to individuals with disabilities, when such services are appropriate, the affected individuals do not oppose community-based treatment, and community-based services can be reasonably accommodated taking into account the resources available to the public entity and the needs of others who are receiving disability services from the entity.

The Court further explained that its holding “reflects two evident judgements.” First, institutional placement of individuals who can handle and benefit from community living.

Don’t Forget to Stop and Smell the Roses!
Charlotte Stewart

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