HELPING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES REACH FOR INDEPENDENCE

September * October * November 2016  Vol. XIX No. 4  Editor: Becky S. Teal

REACHing Out is published four times a year in December, March, June, & September at REACH of Dallas, 8625 King George Drive, Suite 210, Dallas, Texas 75235-2275

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We can enhance our programs with your generous donation.
Independent Living Skills Training
Information and Referral Assistance
Individual and Systems Advocacy
Nursing Home to Community Living Transition Assistance
Employment Assistance
Youth Transition Assistance from High School to Adult Life
Ramp Building Assistance

https://northtexasgivingday.org/npo/reach-resource-centers-on-independent-living

REACH makes a difference changing lives daily

NORTH TEXAS GIVING DAY 2016
9.22.16

Thank you so much for your support!

REACHING OUT - SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER 2016
**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

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

### September 2016

1. **Dallas Aquarium** - We'll meet at the ITC and take the bus to Dallas and then the bus or light rail to the Aquarium. ITC address: 1000 Jones, Fort Worth, 76102. The Aquarium entrance fee is $20 and lunch at the Aquarium's restaurant will also cost $20.

2. **Adjustment to Disability Training** @ the center 10:00-11:00 AM

3. **Esperanza's** - 1601 Park Place, Fort Worth, 76110. Bring $20 and be sure to tip your waitress.

4. **Adjustment to Disability Training** @ the center 10:00-11:00 AM

5. **Office Closed** (Labor Day)

6. **Adjustment to Disability Training** @ the center 10:00-11:00 AM

7. **Movie Day** @ the center 1:00-3:00 PM

8. **Adjustment to Disability Training** @ the center 10:00-11:00 AM

9. **Chicken Foot** @ the center 1:00-3:00 PM

### October 2016

5. **Adjustment to Disability Training** @ the center 10:00-11:00 AM

6. **Pie Five Pizza** (Build a pizza), 2600 W 7th, Fort Worth, 76107.

10. **Office Closed** (Columbus Day)

12. **Adjustment to Disability Training** @ the center 10:00-11:00 AM

15. **Adjustment to Disability Training** @ the center 10:00-11:00 AM

19. **Games and refreshments** @ center 1:00-3:00 PM

20. **Adjustment to Disability Training** @ the center 10:00-11:00 AM

26. **Adjustment to Disability Training** @ the center 10:00-11:00 AM

29. **Halloween Pizza Party** - Bring $5 to pitch in for pizza. 1:00-3:00 PM

### November 2016

2. **Adjustment to Disability Training** @ the center 10:00-11:00 AM

3. **Dallas Zoo** - Taking the train to Dallas. Call Karen for time of train ride.

9. **Adjustment to Disability Training** @ the center 10:00-11:00 AM

10. **Office Closed** (Veterans Day)

16. **Adjustment to Disability Training** @ the center 10:00-11:00 AM

23. **Adjustment to Disability Training** @ the center 10:00-11:00 AM

24-25 **Office Closed** (Thanksgiving)

30. **Adjustment to Disability Training** @ the center 10:00-11:00 AM

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**WEB WORLD**

- [www.dogsforthedeaf.org](http://www.dogsforthedeaf.org) - Information about the Dogs for the Deaf program.

- [www.stutteringhelp.org](http://www.stutteringhelp.org) - Information about the Stuttering Foundation.

- [www.ability.com/](http://www.ability.com/) - This site offers easy access to a wide range of information, resources, services and products of interest to people with disabilities, their families and caregivers, health professionals and service providers.

- [www.healthyhearing.com](http://www.healthyhearing.com) - Hearing aids and hearing loss help.

- [www.disabilityresources.org](http://www.disabilityresources.org) - A nonprofit organization established to promote and improve awareness, availability and accessibility of information that can help people with disabilities live, learn, love, work and play independently.

- [www.brainbashers.com](http://www.brainbashers.com) - A fun website that provides brain teasers, puzzles, riddles, games and optical illusions.

- [www.sleepapnea.org](http://www.sleepapnea.org) - A nonprofit organization dedicated to reducing injury, disability, and death from sleep apnea and enhancing the well-being of those affected by this common disorder.

**Effective August 1, 2016**

In an effort to make accessible laptops more affordable to students and others, Computers for the Blind is dropping the price from $160 to $130. These laptops come loaded with powerful software that will enhance the education, employability, independence and quality of life of those who can least afford them. No age or income requirements. We also honor this price for organizations. Join the 9,000 consumers who have benefited from our computers. Talking Typing Teacher is still available on CFTB computers for $10 (90% of retail) through Marvelsoft.

Contact: 214-340-6328, info@computersfortheblind.net, or [www.computersfortheblind.net](http://www.computersfortheblind.net).
PROJECT RAMP - Fort Worth
Do you or someone you know need a ramp built and/or handrails and/or grab bars installed?

The REACH of Fort Worth Resource Center on Independent Living offers accessible home modifications for low income individuals with mobility impairments who live in the City of Fort Worth. If you meet the following guidelines, you may be eligible for assistance in making these accessibility modifications.

- You must be a person with a mobility impairment.
- You can be any age.
- You must be a homeowner, live with the homeowner or have a letter from the landlord giving permission to make the accessible modifications to the home. (No apartments.)
- Must provide proof of total household income and must meet federal guidelines for low-income households. (You must provide a copy of income verification and a Social Security number from each family member living in the household who is 18+ years of age.)
- Your property taxes must be current.

*FUNDS WILL BE USED ON A FIRST REQUESTED, FIRST SERVED BASIS*

If you need more information about this program, please call Alma Hernandez, Project Ramp Coordinator, at 817-870-9082.

CALANDER OF EVENTS

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

September 2016
5 Office Closed (Labor Day)
6 Peer Support Training @ the center 1:00 - 2:00 PM (Preregister with Harvey Spears)
6 Adjustment to Disability Training @ the center 1:30 - 3:00 PM. In a group setting, discuss self-esteem issues, family relationships, anxiety, medical stress, depression, boundaries and goal setting. Preregister with Kiowanda.
8 Housing Spotlight 2016 @ the center 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM
12 Youth Employment Training @ the center 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM. Call Pam to preregister by 9/2.
13 Youth Employment Training @ the center 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM. Call Pam to preregister by 9/2.
19 Adjustment to Disability Training @ the center 1:30 - 3:00 PM. Preregister with Kiowanda.
20 Register for One-on-one Computer Training @ the center 1:00 - 2:00 PM. Preregister with Harvey.
24 Youth Group meets at the Dallas Zoo.

October 2016
3 Adjustment to Disability Training @ the center 1:30 - 3:00 PM. Preregister with Kiowanda.
4 Photography Class Registration. @ the center 1:00 - 2:00 PM. Preregister with Harvey Spears.
10 Office Closed (Columbus Day)
17 Adjustment to Disability Training @ the center 1:30 - 3:00 PM. Preregister with Kiowanda.
18 Register for One-on-one Computer Training @ the center 1:00 - 2:00 PM. Preregister with Harvey Spears.
22 Youth Group “Learning How to Use a First Aid Kit & Health and Safety Skills” @ the center 1:00 – 2:00 PM
29 Youth Group Costume Get Together @ center 6:00 - 8:30 PM

November 2016
1 Peer Support Training @ the center 1:00 - 2:00 PM. Preregister with Harvey Spears
5 Youth Group “Self Direction” IL skills training @ the center 1:00 - 3:00 PM
7 Adjustment to Disability Training @ the center 1:30 - 3:00 PM. Preregister with Kiowanda
11 Office closed (Veterans Day)
15 Register for One-on-one Computer Training @ the center 1:00 - 2:00 PM. Preregister with Harvey Spears
19 Youth Thanksgiving Potluck @ the center 4:30 - 7:00 PM
21 Adjustment to Disability Training @ the center 1:30 - 3:00 PM. Preregister with Kiowanda
24-25 Office Closed (thanksgiving)

Dallas ISD and DARS-Division for Blind Services for a wonderful collaborative youth summer camp session held June 13 - 23
Call us if you need any accommodations such as a sign language interpreter, Braille materials, etc.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 2016
5 Office Closed (Labor Day)
7 No General Support Group
13 No General Support Group
20 No General Support Group
27 No General Support Group
October 2016
5 “Do You Want It?” General Support Group @ the center 1:00-2:00 PM
12 “Self Advocacy Training” General Support Group @ the center 1:00-2:00 PM
19 General Support Group @ the center 1:00-2:00 PM
26 “BOO” General Support Group @ the center 1:00-2:00 PM
November 2016
2 “Vote” General Support Group @ the center 1:00-2:00 PM
9 “Thanksgiving Day Ready” General Support Group @ the center 1:00-2:00 PM
16 Craft @ the center 1:00-2:00 PM
23 No General Support Group
24-25 Office Closed (Thanksgiving)
30 No General Support Group

Hello Readers,

Allow me to invite you to another wonderful article in THE INITIATIVE.

I’m no meteorologist, but the summer’s rising temperatures may be due to global warming, which is not a good thing! But, there is something to feel good about. Employment opportunities are on the rise. Unemployment has been declining over the past year and is expected to peak at a low of 4.9%. There are many different reasons why the unemployment rate is low. Without getting into specifics, let’s discuss what employers are doing to assist in the decline of unemployment. Employers are advertising vacant positions on job boards, in store locations, websites, and more. More importantly, many employers are hosting and participating in career fairs. I know that many shake their heads when they hear or read the words “career fair” or they say “no one cared enough to take the time to speak to me, they just kept referring me to their website.” I’m hoping that after you read this article, you’ll have a different perspective, approach and outcome to your career fair experience.

Here are 10 tips to improve your employment chances. (1) To attend or not to attend? It’s important to know that NOT ALL types of employers participate in career fairs, but many industries are represented so it is worthwhile to attend if you are job-seeking. (2) Visit the career fair website to read about the participating companies. Here is also a way to learn what you can expect at the event. (3) Determine if any employers match your career interests. If there is one company that does, you may want to attend. Once you’ve decided to attend, present yourself as a participant if required by the website. (4) Make a list of employers and research them. This provides you with information about the employer to discuss at the career fair. (5) Apply for jobs in advance and have plenty of resumes for distribution at the career fair. While at the career fair, if you are prompted to visit a website to apply, don’t take it personally. Some employers may not be able accept hard copies of resumes because they must comply with federal regulations about how they receive, store and manage applicant data. (6) Dress appropriately in professional attire. There are several local community organizations that assist people with acquiring professional attire if there is a need. (7) Shake hands with the employer and introduce yourself. Prepare a 20-30 second verbal promotion that positively highlights you to employers. Practice so you don’t sound robotic. The introduction should be short, personable and effective. (8) Ask employers for business cards. This is an easy way to remember who you visited at the event. (9) Network with fellow job-seekers. Share information about job leads, companies, and recruiting strategies. (10) Follow-up with recruiters. It’s important to contact employers after career fairs. This extra step with recruiters could potentially provide you with an edge over other job-seekers.

I’ll leave you with some final reminders. Career fairs occur year round. October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month and the Dallas Mayors Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities will again be hosting a career fair, EmployAbility, for individuals with disabilities on October 11, 2016 at the Sheraton Hotel, 400 N. Olive St, Dallas, Texas 75201. I hope you decide to participate and apply these helpful tips to your experience. When you take these extra steps and add it to your ordinary, you become extraordinary. Remember…take The Initiative!!!

REACH of Denton would like to say Thank You to Hank Dickenson with UNT for the donation of backpacks and Amy St. Peter, owner of Hypnotic Donuts, for the donuts.

Thank You to our youth summer camp speakers: Lorraine, Pat and Crystal with Denton County Transit Authority, Rebecca and John with the University of North Texas, Officers Kizer and Hinojosa with the Denton Police Department, Jared, Hunter and Mike with the Denton Fire Department, Ryan with Denton Parks and Recreation, Courtney and Hannah with Texas Agrilife Extension Service, and Kevan with REACH of Dallas.

REMEMBER to schedule a demonstration in the REACH of Dallas Assistive Technology Lab when visiting the center. Devices such as the Unitu are on display. This device facilitates face-to-face communication between a person who is deaf or hard of hearing and a person who can hear. Software such as Magic, JAWS are Dragon Naturally Speaking are available to test. Schedule your demonstration with Harvey at 214-479-6610.
Applying for a PASS or Using the Ticket to Work Program

Social Security disability benefits are a great safety net for thousands of families. They allow people of all ages to receive financial assistance when they need it due to unexpected or long-term medical costs.

The Social Security Administration (SSA) offers two programs to help people in need. Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) provides financial assistance to people who have some work history in their life, but are currently unable to work due to injury or illness. A person whose career is interrupted by a sudden illness would be a prime candidate for SSDI.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) offers similar benefits, but is intended for people of low income who have never worked, or worked very little. Most people with developmental or intellectual disabilities may be candidates for SSI benefits.

If you or a family member are receiving benefits from either program, then you might already understand the feelings of frustration that can result in not being able to work. Fortunately, the SSA has established two additional programs to help disability recipients work if they want to.

PASS – Plan to Achieve Self-Support

The PASS, or Plan to Achieve Self-Support, is the SSA's program to help individuals with disabilities begin or return to work. Both SSI and SSDI recipients are eligible for the PASS program. Contrary to the belief of some, PASS is not intended to deny disability benefits. Enrollment in the program is strictly voluntary, and is meant to help people who want to work. Signing up for a PASS will not affect your existing benefits. Essentially, PASS lets you set aside part of your income or assets to spend on achieving career goals. Money you set aside in this way is not counted towards your “earned income” against SS benefits. The income can be any kind of money you receive other than SS benefits. It can include wages and disability benefits. The items you spend it on can be anything that helps you achieve a defined goal, including training, classes, and equipment like a wheelchair or computer. In other words, the PASS lets you receive and use money in service of returning to work without fear of endangering your existing disability benefits.

To enroll in the PASS program, you need to design a clear and feasible plan. You need to set a realistic work goal, such as a job you would like to learn and obtain, and present a plan to achieve it. This should include all of your expenses, like classes, licenses, or supplies, and a timeframe in which you will execute the plan. It might be a good idea to get some help in creating your PASS plan. Local disability service agencies such as Texas Workforce Solutions Vocational Rehabilitation Services and your local Social Security office are available to provide this type of assistance. Any friend or family member is also allowed to help you. There are no restrictions on who can help you create your PASS plan. To get started, download the PASS form from the SSA's website. After you submit your plan, you will be contacted by a Social Security employee to discuss your plan and its feasibility. You may need to explain items on the plan, and you may be asked to make changes before the plan is approved. If your plan is denied, you have the right to appeal the decision by contacting your Social Security office.

Ticket to Work

Ticket to Work is a plan offered by the SSA to help disability benefit recipients find work. The plan is structured somewhat differently than PASS. Where PASS is self-directed and asks applicants to define their own goals and the means to achieve them, Ticket to Work offers a list of nonprofits and vocational training services called Employment Networks (ENs). ENs exist to help you find a plan that suits you. They will train you, help you write a resume, and ultimately help you find a job. They are intended as a replacement for government-run vocational rehabilitation departments, and can often be much more effective. Like the PASS program, Ticket to Work does not endanger or reduce your existing benefits. The program is entirely optional, and you are never required to enroll in order to keep your benefits. To get started with Ticket to Work, visit www.ssa.gov/work.

You can find information on ENs in your area by visiting www.younitsktowork.com. Each EN may have their own requirements for participants and they have the right to accept or deny your application. If denied, you can try other ENs, or check with the state vocational rehabilitation department.

Both PASS and Ticket to Work are great programs to help people become self-sufficient. Although every recipient of disability benefits is encouraged to learn about them, nobody is ever required to enroll in them. They are there to help you if you want to work and feel able. They provide a foothold to help you into a new career, which can be very welcome in a time of need.
FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

AT
What is AT? AT stands for Assistive Technology. AT is an umbrella term for any device, piece of equipment, or software program that is used to increase, maintain and/or improve the functional capabilities of people with disabilities. At the REACH centers, we have AT to loan (manual wheelchairs), donated AT to give away (walkers, bath benches, bedside commodes, walkers and canes), and AT to demonstrate in the Dallas center’s new Assistive Technology Lab. Contact Harvey Spears at REACH of Dallas (214-630-4796) if you want to schedule a tour and/or demonstrations of the various AT on display in the lab.

Visitors from Russia
On April 12, REACH of Dallas, in collaboration with the Big Dream’s Children’s Foundation, hosted a meeting and tour of the center’s new Assistive Technology Lab for a group of five youth with disabilities, their chaperones and interpreter visiting from Dmitrov, Russia. The youth were fascinated with the many different AT computer software programs and devices/equipment that were demonstrated for them. According to the youth, not much AT is available for people with disabilities living in Russia.

4 Low Vision
The American Foundation for the Blind Center on Vision Loss recently opened a store featuring items for home, school, work or on-the-go that are designed for people experiencing vision loss. The store is located at AFB’s Center for Vision Loss, 11030 Ables Ln. in Dallas. Call 469-522-1803 or email 4lowvisionstore@gmail.com.

North Texas Fair Housing Center
The North Texas Fair Housing Center’s mission is to actively support and promote fair housing through education and advocacy to ensure that all people have the opportunity to secure the housing they desire and can afford, without discrimination based on their race, color, religion, gender, national origin, familial status, disability or other characteristics protected by law.

The Center provides housing counseling services free of charge to residents living in the following counties: Collin, Dallas, Delta, Denton, Ellis, Hunt, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Rockwall, Tarrant and Wise. The center’s staff will provide you with information about your rights and responsibilities related to your housing issue and if they find that your housing issue may involve discrimination, they will conduct an investigation. For more information, visit www.northtexasfairhousing.org or call 469-941-0375 or 1-877-471-1022.

Charlotte Stewart

JUST A REMINDER

REACH generates additional funds to enhance our mission by participating in the AmazonSmile and Tom Thumb, Kroger, and Albertsons grocery store donor programs. Amazon and each grocery store chain allows you, its customer, to register so that donations go to the nonprofit organization you support, which in this case is Rehabilitation, Education and Advocacy for Citizens with Handicaps. Every time you make a purchase, REACH receives credit. On a periodic basis depending on the company involved, REACH receives a donation.

To insure 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 get involved in these no cost to you donor programs.

Thank you.
The company’s Mesquite store has moved to a bigger and better location!

4150 I-30
Mesquite, TX 75150
1-866-211-8267

Words to Live by!!!

There are Tall ships and Small ships, but the best ships are Friendships.

Author Unknown

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<tr>
<th>Rates for Advertising in REACH Newsletter</th>
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<tr>
<td>Below are the prices for placing an advertisement in the REACHing Out newsletter. The newsletter is published quarterly in December, March, June, and September. The newsletter is sent/distributed to 2,500+ readers living primarily in Tarrant, Dallas, Denton &amp; Collin Counties and is available online at <a href="http://www.reachcils.org">www.reachcils.org</a>.</td>
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If you have any questions, please call Becky Teal, newsletter editor, at REACH of Denton 940-383-1062 or contact her by email at reachden@reachcils.org.

These advertising rates may change without prior notice.

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The REACH Resource Centers on Independent Living are members of the Texas Association of Centers for Independent Living, the National Council on Independent Living, and the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities.

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Plans are underway to save money by e-mailing this newsletter to interested readers rather than continuing to send it via U.S. mail. If you’d like to get the newsletter via e-mail, please send Janie Peachee, Administrative Assistant, your e-mail address. You can reach Janie at jpeachee@reachcils.org.

Thank You!
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 & 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 administer the four centers from grants awarded by HHS and/or HHSC. REACH of Denton received 100% of its Fiscal Year 2017 operating budget of $206,626 from HHS; REACH of Fort Worth received 100% of its FY17 operating budget of $250,000 from HHSC; REACH of Dallas received 94% of its FY17 operating budget of $398,570 from HHS and 6%, $24,559, from HHSC; and REACH of Plano received 100% of its FY17 operating budget of $250,000 from HHSC.

Deadlines for Future REACHing Out Newsletters

October 7, 2016 - December 2016 - February 2017
January 9, 2017 - March - May 2017
April 7, 2017 - June - August 2017

The REACH Resource Centers on Independent Living are Fragrance Free facilities! Please DO NOT use or wear scented products when visiting the centers or participating in any of our services or activities.

Thank you!