

THE INDEPENDENCE TIMES

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION FROM THE INDEPENDENCE CENTER

SPRING 2016

Adaptive Skiing Carves Through Mental Barriers

Ty Smith never slowed down as an active adult in his early twenties. Then in November of 2011, life as he knew it came to a crashing halt. Ty lost control of his vehicle and crashed into a ditch. The impact smashed the 4th, 5th, and 6th vertebrae in his neck; the diagnosis was Incomplete Quadriplegia. Ty retained some sensation, mostly continuous pain. He now uses a wheelchair and relies on morphine throughout the day.

“Since my accident I haven’t been able to do any of the things I enjoy,” Ty explains. “But one of the best ways to disrupt the pain is to keep my mind busy and active and to have fun.”

When The Independence Center’s Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Group sponsored a skiing retreat with Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center in December 2015, Ty agreed to go.

“Tim (SCI group leader) invited me, encouraged me to try it and it blew my mind how easy it was,” Ty describes doing something he couldn’t have imagined was physically possible. “Now I know there’s got to be other things that are just as easy. The next thing I want to do is bicycle.”

Read the complete story at bit.ly/tysmith.



Ty Smith and his adaptive ski experience with the Spinal Cord Injury group.



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In the spring, nature starts sending up signs of life as plants start to sprout. Where there was seemingly nothing going on over the winter, now suddenly a garden is starting to take shape. This year a number of initiatives are starting to take on a life of their own!

1. Spouses of people with disabilities can now be hired by home health agencies of choice to provide Home and Community Based Services (HCBS). HCBS Services are available to Medicaid waiver clients to allow daily living services to be provided in the home. In the past, one could use Consumer Directed Services (CDASS) and get paid directly. However, spouses could not provide the care. Now they can! This is because regulations within a state bill passed in 2014 have now become final. We are hiring spouses who prefer the perks of employment: paid healthcare, vacation, retirement benefits, and access to respite services as needed.

2. Local health care taking a step toward accessibility. Did you know El Paso County Health Department runs a Reproductive Health Clinic that is accessible to people with disabilities? Clinical Services include health and cancer screenings for women, including Pap tests, pelvic and breast exams, pregnancy tests, counseling, and birth control including Long Acting Reversible Contraceptives (LARC). Additionally they offer education, exams, and treatment for sexually transmitted illnesses (STIs/STDs). Same-day appointments are often available. Please call them at (719) 578-3199 to find out more.



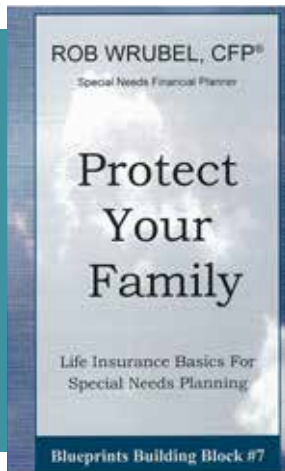
3. The IC is getting the Veteran in Charge Home and Community Based Services Program off the ground. After a year of planning and submitting documents, The IC was approved by the VA to provide care coordinator services and coordination services for the veterans' version of Home and Community Based Services that helps keep vets with disabilities in the community. We have one consumer now and are taking it slow until we learn the administrative ropes but soon you will be hearing much more about this program for vets.

4. ASL Interpreters for health care appointments are available to deaf individuals enrolled in Community Care program. Deaf individuals who have Medicaid and Medicare and are enrolled in Colorado's Community Care program can ask their doctor's office to request an interpreter for their healthcare appointment through the service center. To confirm if an interpreter has been ordered, call the service center at (719) 314-2560. Now deaf individuals can have equal access to healthcare!

Author of Financial Planning Book for Families With a Member Who Has a Disability



Rob Wrubel



Colorado Springs Financial Advisor Rob Wrubel, with Cascade Investment Group, recently released his book *Protect Your Family: Life Insurance Basics for Special Needs Planning*, the first publication in the “Blueprints for Special Needs Families” series. The book is available on Amazon.com. The Independence Center recently sat down with Rob to find out how his book can help families with a member with a disability.

Q. What motivated you to write this book?

A. My daughter was born with Down syndrome in 2003. At that time, there was very little information available about what families with a member who has special needs should do differently when it comes to comprehensive financial planning. Even today, it’s difficult to parse out what is good information and what is just sales information.

Q. What is your basic philosophy behind planning for families with a member with a disability?

A. Quality of life. All of the planning work I do for families takes their vision for the future into account. What quality of life do they hope to achieve for their family member with a disability?

Q. What do you see in your practice that families commonly miss?

A. Mostly, families do not put any plans in place. Specifically, too many families do not have correct beneficiary designations on their 401ks or IRAs when a beneficiary has a disability and relies on government benefits.

Q. Beyond the need for education, what do you find are the most common barriers to taking legal action to protect assets for family members with disabilities?

A. First is fear, because when people start to think about this stuff they actually are forced to think about the future and this can naturally bring an element of uncertainty. Second is that the

issue tends to be perceived as complex and people feel overwhelmed. Third is the issue of time. In planning, we have to think about the worst-case scenario, in which they don’t have any more time.

Q. What is the next step for a family that wants more information after reading the book?

A. We hold regular meetings for families who have a member with a disability. The events are free, but registration is required. Contact Scott Rethi to find out when the next meeting is scheduled and to register at (719) 632-0818.

For more info go to <http://bit.ly/2016financialplanning>

Front Range Nurse Aide
Training Program is now

THE INDEPENDENCE CENTER CNA SCHOOL

Celebrating Our Purchase of Front Range Nurse Aide Training Program

Newly renamed, The Independence Center CNA School had its Open House February 19, 2016 to say farewell to Front Range Nurse Aide Training Program founders William and Nancy Whatley and to celebrate The IC's acquisition.

Now We Can Train Our Own Certified Nurse Aides (CNAs)

The Home Health division of The Independence Center (The IC) has experienced a continual shortage of quality CNA caregivers to serve The IC clients with both physician-directed and client-directed care options.



Left (left to right): Tom Reiter, CEO and President of Rocky Mountain Health Care Services, converses with Patricia Yeager (CEO, The IC) and Nancy Whatley (AKA Nurse Nancy).

Below:
Open House attendees.



“The Home Health industry has great difficulty finding CNAs to serve consumers. We hope by offering state-certified training ourselves we will retain some of the graduates as well as offer training to non-traditional groups such as people who are Deaf or speak other languages and want to work in their community.”

Patricia Yeager, CEO

Be on Your Way to a New Career in 4 Weeks

Demand for CNAs in Colorado has doubled over the past decade. The Colorado Board of Nursing, which provides certification for CNAs showed 24,816 active CNAs in 2016 and 49,734 active CNAs in 2016.

Want a Job as a CNA With The IC?

The IC hires qualified graduates from our CNA School. We offer tuition reimbursement and sign-on bonuses, as well as tuition assistance for current employees.

CNA jobs are expected to grow nationally by **21%** over the next decade, according to *nursejournal.org*

For more information, contact Katey Castilla, Director of The IC CNA School, at 719-471-8181 ext. 136.

The IC CNA School offers day and evening courses in four week rotations.



Visit www.theindependencecenter.org/cna

The Independence Center thanks Rep. Terri Carver of Colorado Springs House District 20 for her vote “no” on Senate Bill 11 (SB11). SB11 would terminate the use of \$15 million worth of funding from FASTER fees for transit and reallocate it towards road safety projects. Without this funding, Bustang and other statewide transit services and maintenance would

have been threatened. SB11 was postponed indefinitely on February 18, 2016 on a 7-6 party-line vote. Thank you to Community Transit Coalition members who reached out to Rep. Carver and the 6 other representatives from House districts across Colorado who voted “no” on cutting necessary funding for transit.

Rep. Terri Carver

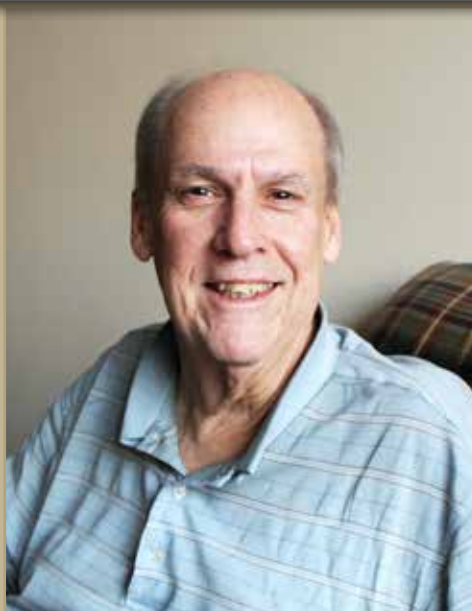


Professor Regains Independence After Two Years in a Nursing Home

Dr. Jeffrey Burkhart sits casually in his living room discussing his thirty year career that encompasses teaching in four universities and two private schools. The walker next to him is the only indicator of his partial disability.

A retired French professor, Dr. Burkhart moved to Colorado Springs in 2007. A series of catastrophic events caused a sudden, unexpected eviction from his residence. Several days later Dr. Burkhart found himself being dropped off by cab at the doorstep of a local shelter. Because he didn't even have enough money for cab fare, the cab driver kept his two boxes of belongings that held his only clothing, family photos and favorite books amassed throughout his career. Dr. Burkhart walked into the shelter with only the clothes on his back.

Health issues led to hospitalization, multiple surgeries and over two years in a health care facility. He kept his spirits up, socialized with other residents, and got his exercise with daily corridor walks. Walking the halls of the facility is where he met LaTasha, Community



Dr. Jeffrey Burkhart

Transition Coordinator from The Independence Center (The IC). The rest is history, as they say, but it's a history that's still being written as Dr. Burkhart is regaining his independence through the Community Transition Services of The Independence Center.

LaTasha and the Community Transition Services team from The IC came alongside Dr. Burkhart and moved him into his own apartment in July of 2015. By choice, his new apartment is just down the street from the health care center. He still gets his

exercise going next door to walk the corridors and visit his neighbors in the health care center. But now instead of retiring to a small room he goes home to his comfortable first floor one-bedroom apartment.

Transitioning from life in a health care facility to independent living on his own hasn't been easy. Dr. Burkhart's advice to others going through similar transitions is, "Be true to yourself and maintain the ties." He's even doing some of what he did for thirty years: giving French lessons in his apartment. He smiles and says, "It's getting back to where I feel like I am part of society again."

THERE'S MORE!

Please check our website for a complete list of events and classes at bit.ly/theic2016springcalendar

SNOW DAYS!

If District 11 is closed, please call 719-471-8181 to find out if your group or class is cancelled.

Living with Multiple Sclerosis?

Are you a person who identifies as living with multiple sclerosis? Are you looking for a place to share your experiences? If so, please join us for our new MS Support Group.

Wednesdays
2:30 pm - 3:30 pm
at The IC

For more information or to request accommodations, contact Carol Johnson at ext. 116

PEER SUPPORT



INDEPENDENT LIVING

Tip:

While you are in the process of learning independence it is important to remember not to panic when skills don't come quickly. It takes time and patience to learn new skills. Learn to have fun with the process!

For information on employment classes visit, <http://bit.ly/theic2016springcalendar>

Tip:

You just received a call to schedule your interview with a perspective company. Test drive the route that you will be taking on the day of the interview. The last thing you want to do is to arrive late for the interview.

For information on employment classes visit, bit.ly/theic2016springcalendar

EMPLOYMENT



Community Transition Success After 11 Years in Nursing Home

After over a decade in a nursing home, Judy doesn't take anything for granted; she appreciates the seemingly small things, such as the freedom to help herself to her own food in her own kitchen. She loves being able to get up any time of day or night to fix herself a sandwich.

These are new freedoms since The Independence Center Community Transitions Services program enabled Judy to move out into an independent apartment in 2015.

"The biggest highlight about Judy's story is that we transitioned her out of the nursing home into the community after eleven years in the facility," LaTasha Kearney, Community Transition Coordinator at The Independence Center explains. Judy laughs good-naturedly about the day that staff and volunteers from The Independence Center moved her out of the nursing facility. It was a big day for her and one she remembers clearly.

Judy gets a sparkle in her eyes when she talks about her neighborhood and her favorite pub. She'll easily take a new friend around her apartment and point out her new furniture and décor, with which she has been establishing her new home.

Since the move, services set up by The Independence Center have helped sustain her independence. Judy receives regular visits each week from a nurse for medication monitoring and a CNA for help with personal care. She beams happily when she talks about her new situation. She says, "I love it."

Judy transitioned out of a nursing home after 11 years with the help of Community Transition Services at The IC.



Role Model Behavior



After learning that a customer with a mobility disability was unable to get into their front door, Discount Tire at Woodmen and Powers had inaccessible stairs and curbs jack hammered out and replaced with a beautiful accessible entrance.

