

THE INDEPENDENCE TIMES

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION FROM THE INDEPENDENCE CENTER

SUMMER 2016

Spouse Hired as Caregiver for Husband After Stroke

Ralph Molinar was at work one morning in February 2015 when his right hand lost strength. He reached out to his wife. "He called me and said, 'my right hand isn't working. I can't even grip a pen. I don't know what is going on, but I need you to come and get me.'" Kim Molinar recalls.

Ralph progressively grew worse. Kim remembers: "They just couldn't find that he had had a stroke, because it was in the brainstem area. There is so much bone in that area that they couldn't see it." Ralph remained in the hospital for months. Eventually, he was discharged to a skilled nursing facility.

"If you really care about your loved one, having them in a skilled nursing facility is torture. The goal was always to get him home."

Recently, federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services approved a change to Colorado law affecting In Home Support Services (IHSS). A spouse is now allowed to be hired by an In-Home Support Services (IHSS) agency, such as The Independence Center, to provide care for his or her disabled spouse. As an employee of the IHSS agency, a caregiving spouse can receive all the perks and benefits of being an employee, just like at any other job.

"The Independence Center notified me when changes to the law went into effect and we were able to start the paperwork. I love my husband. I'm so thankful he's home," Kim says.

If you or someone you know is caring for a spouse or loved one with a disability, find out if you can qualify as a paid caregiver by calling The Independence Center home health department at 719- 471-8181 x 130.



The Molinar family at home



THIS ISSUE

Spouse Hired

CEO Corner

Art Class

The IC Fund

Advocacy Update

Upcoming Events

Awards

CEO CORNER

Patricia Yeager, Ph.D., CEO

In 2017, there is a marriage about to happen that will affect health care for persons on Medicare or Medicaid, or both Medicare/Medicaid in Colorado. It is a marriage that could create more barriers to physical and mental healthcare for persons with disabilities or it could create a collaborative system with better outcomes.

I am talking about Colorado's Medicaid program's desire, by 2018, to combine into one organization, the physical health services provided by the fee for service Regional Care Collaborative Organizations (Community Health Partners/RCCO7 in the Pikes Peak area) and the managed care Behavioral Health Organization (Aspen Pointe). A fee for service practice means one gets paid for the number of services delivered to the people who are served. A managed care organization means that individual services are to be managed so that they are effective and efficient...no duplicate or unneeded services. Regardless of how you experience one or the other, neither really achieve accessible and usable services for persons with disabilities in the Pikes Peak area. Both systems have **physical access problems** (are you getting your physical exams sitting up in your chair or without a sign language interpreter?). Both have **program access problems** (are you getting your prescriptions in a format you can read as a person who is blind or has a reading disability? Do you have an interpreter for counseling sessions or a loop system for those who are hard of hearing?). Both have **cultural competency issues** (no room for you in the waiting room? Healthcare professionals who roll their eyes when you come in because you take too much time?).

Communities of persons with disabilities have to speak up! Otherwise we die prematurely because of a lack of access to, in, and through the entire medical experience. Colorado's Medicaid Program is slow to wake up to the needs of its participants with disabilities. There is a reason why we consume more health care services than most...we dread going to any healthcare provider because of the poor service and attitudes so we put it off. Many of us wait until we are very sick



and take a ride in an ambulance to the Emergency Department-both are some of the most expensive health care services around. If we can get to the clinic/doctor's office in a timely manner, receive good preventive care and feel good about the experience, we can live productive lives rather than spending our lives in the ER!

People with disabilities have to speak up! There are several ways to do so. 1) Take part in a survey about your healthcare experiences at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FS3Y899>. You can do so anonymously if you like. 2) Ask your healthcare professional for access. Do they have an exam table you can get onto? How about interpreters for the Deaf? Prescriptions in a format you can understand? Let them know you need this in order to work toward being healthy. Or, 3) you can read and comment on the draft Request for Proposals for a new, local, combined healthcare system in October of this year. The IC will post a link on our website and on our Facebook account; please read and comment to make sure disability access to services, programs, and culturally competent health care professionals are included in the requirements for those who will bid on our healthcare system in 2018. If there is no mention of disability access, we will not have access to medical/mental health services that meet our needs.

Having a disability does not mean you are sick but you do need access to healthcare like everyone else to live your best life. Speak up because your life depends on it!

ART CLASS



Art class instructor Edgar Morales shows his volcano as inspiration for the class.



Sabrina Gonzales shows off her awesome cartooning skills.



Melissa Mansourian smiles at how her watercolor butterfly turned out.



Kassie Scott displays her cheerful-looking volcano.



Tamika McDuffie enjoyed finishing her cool volcano art.



Brandon Busby's volcano displays his bold strokes of color.

ART EXPRESSIONS

Join us for this fun leisurely class that meets every **Monday** **11:30 am -1:30 pm**

We use watercolors, oil pastels, and tempura paints. No art experience is necessary. All materials are provided.

Grant Funds Facilitate Ongoing Accessibility in Recreation and Jobs

Reports are in! The 2014 grant cycle of The IC Fund saw nearly \$75,000 awarded to five organizations. Funds were given to support community projects in line with The IC Fund goal of increasing independence for people with disabilities.

Community members will benefit from these projects through ongoing accessibility in recreation, transportation, and jobs. Additionally, veterans with a disability who are living in a substance abuse treatment facility will now have the dignity of showering in nicely remodeled and accessible showers.

A brief description of the impact of each award is described below.



AMBLICAB

received \$25,000 towards funding their new “Engage and Explore” program. This program aims to regularly transport people with disabilities to fun, recreational activities. Specifically, a wheelchair accessible minivan was purchased and is being used to get people to birthday parties, karaoke, religious services, concerts, and more.



BLUE STAR RECYCLERS,

an award winning social enterprise that employs staff almost entirely made up of people with disabilities, used their award of \$20,200 to purchase a hard disk drive shredding system. The new system allowed for employment of two new staff members with disabilities. This hard disk drive shredding system is the only local solution for data destruction in the Pikes Peak region.

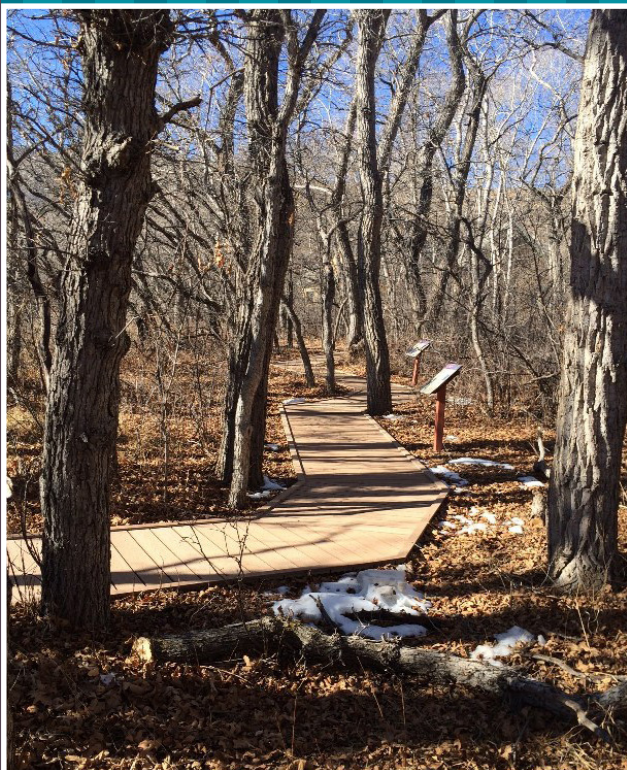
COLORADO VETERANS RESOURCE COALITION

utilized their \$5,000 award, coupled with an additional \$10,000 from The Independence Center home modification fund, to fix five showers in disrepair at The CVRC's Health Care for Homeless Veterans and Substance Abuse Treatment Program. The grant paid for the showers on the first level to be made more accessible for those with physical disabilities.



LAKE GEORGE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

used their \$3,875 award to install an ADA accessible family picnic pavilion, which has made Lake George Community Park picnic area now accessible to wheelchair users.



FRIENDS OF EL PASO COUNTY NATURE CENTERS

was awarded \$20,000 to repair the boardwalk of the popular Songbird Trail located at the Bear Creek Nature Center. The new Trex planks, railing and signage made the trail easily accessible to wheelchair users, seniors, and low vision visitors.

The IC Helps Keep Colorado Telephone Communications Accessible

Kudos are due for legislative work that ensures that people who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or deaf-blind will have access to accessible telephone communications in coming years.

The Independence Center was instrumental in lobbying for HB 1414, the Disabled Telephone Users Fund, which was signed into law by the Governor at a signing ceremony on Wednesday, May 4, 2016. In addition, HB 1414 includes new program funds requested by the Colorado Deaf Blind Task Force for additional services for people who are deaf-blind.

Our hats are off to The Independence Center Board of Directors. Our board supported the vision for change to engage in the political

process to keep telecommunications accessible across the entire state. We'd like to acknowledge the hard work of our lobbyist, Edie Busam; Senator Pat Steadman and Representative Bob Rankin, bill sponsors; and the entire Joint Budget Committee for working to put a funding structure in place that keeps pace with changing technology and telecommunication trends. The telecom industry also deserves a big "thank you" for working with the bill sponsors in support of the community.

If you'd like to read more about the issue The Independence Center worked on, read our issue brief here:

<http://bit.ly/telephonecommunications>

The IC Receives Award for Deaf & Hard of Hearing Advocacy and Programs

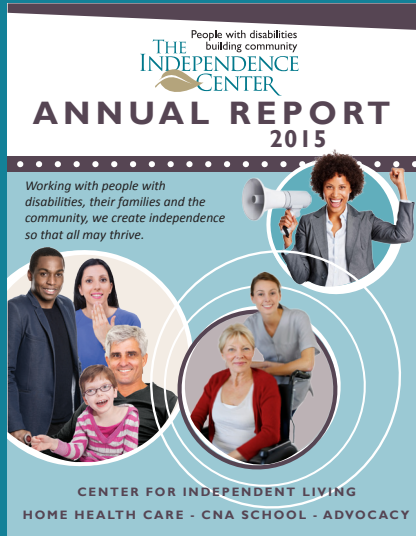
Angie Tenorio, Coordinator for our Deaf & Hard of Hearing Department, and Billy Allen, Board Chair for The Independence Center, accepted the Susan J. Elliott award for Outstanding Service from the Colorado Commission for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing on June 2nd.



CHECK IT OUT!

The Independence Center's
2015 Annual Report is now available.

View it online at
bit.ly/theic2015annualreport



TOUR OF THE 21C LIBRARY

July 22nd, 11:00 am

Come join us as we take a tour of
the 21 Century Library to learn more
about the services and facility. The
tour is designed to showcase how our

consumers can
best utilize library
services.



PROJECT WALK

August 3rd, 10:00 am and 1:00 pm

Project Walk challenges a traditional view
that nervous systems cannot reorganize. The
Method utilizes exercises mimicking those
found in human movement development.
These exercises are targeted at reestablishing
neural activity within the nervous system.
If you are interested in improving your
movement, come by The Independence
Center during the event to talk with a
specialist.

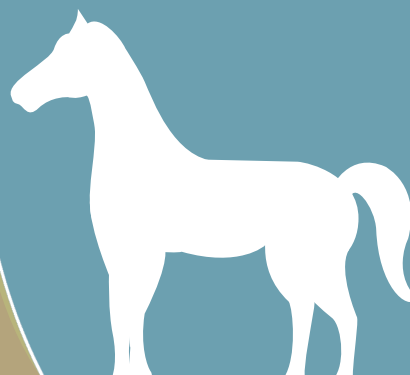


THERAPEUTIC RIDING CENTER

Coming late summer or early Fall!

Keep an eye out for details.

Therapeutic riding event for approximately 12
individuals with disabilities will be available.





Congratulations to Patricia Yeager,
CEO, for being named a
“Person Who Makes a Difference” in
The Gazette’s Best of the Springs 2016.

“The disability community here is hungry for information and validation of the belief that they can create the life they want to live....There’s a tremendous opportunity here for me to make a difference. . . . I like making order out of chaos.”

~ Patricia Yeager



The Independence Center CNA School Won Best of the Springs Continuing Education

For the first full quarter that The Independence Center CNA School has been operational , CNA School student graduates collectively received a 94% pass rate on the Colorado Nurse Aide Competency and Evaluation Exams (State Boards). Colorado State average pass rate is 79%.

Congratulations to The Independence Center Benefits Program

for receiving an “Outstanding Program” award at The Arc Pikes Peak Region’s World’s Greatest Annual Dinner & Awards Celebration on Saturday, May 14.

The Independence Center Benefits Program provides education, assistance, and guidance regarding state and federal disability benefits programs for consumers with disabilities.



Check out our Facebook Page!

www.facebook.com/TheIndependenceCenter