

**Nothing More,
Nothing Less
For All People
With Disabilities**

Access to Independence of Cortland County, Inc.

ACCESS NEWS

Fall 2010 NUMBER XXVI

ATI Board of Directors Elects New Members / Officers

The ATI Board of Directors unanimously elected a new slate of officers during its October 19 Board Meeting. The new officers include: Gail Bundy, Chair; Lisa Perfetti, Vice Chair; Kurt Behrenfeld, Treasurer; and Mary Betters, Secretary.

At the same meeting, the Board elected the following new Members: Garra Lloyd-Lester, Paula Niederhofer, Larry Pfister, Sandy Price, Dr. Dan Pukstas, Bill Siedenbug, John Suarez and Christina Taranto, to serve for the next two years. The Board re-elected Kurt Behrenfeld and Dan Mullins to serve a second two-year term. Other returning Board Members include: Dr. Judy Bentley, Mary Betters, Gail Bundy, Laura Eaton and Lisa Perfetti.

The Board recognized outgoing Members: Angela Burchfield, Nancy Hazel and Peter Morse-Ackley.

ATI Awarded \$75,000 Initiative for Statewide Systems Advocacy

Access to Independence (ATI) has been awarded a three-year, \$75,000 grant from the New York State Department of Education to continue its participation in the Statewide Systems Advocacy Network (SSAN), a grassroots advocacy network of Independent Living Centers (ILCs).

SSAN provides a forum for ILCs from across the state to work collaboratively to achieve successful outcomes on disability priority issues. Fourteen ILC's from across the State form the Network.

"There aren't very many local agencies that offer their consumers an ongoing opportunity to have their voices be heard by state officials on matters that are important to them," says Chad W. Underwood, ATI Chief Operating Officer and SSAN Coordinator.

ATI has implemented a local volunteer disability advocacy network that can be called to action with the distribution of a single email. When combined with other local disability advocacy networks around the state, the impact can be tremendous. Cortland's volunteer disability advocacy network consists of more than 85 individuals, with and without disabilities.

For more information on how you can become a volunteer disability advocate, contact Chad W. Underwood by telephone: (607) 753-7363, or by email: cwunderwood@aticortland.org.

ATI Awarded \$300,000 More For *Access to Home* Projects

In September, Access to Independence (ATI) received word from the NYS Department of Homes & Community Renewal (HCR) that it would receive \$300,000 in funding to complete home modifications for qualified individuals through 2013.

The latest round of funding will aim to provide an additional 20 low-income households with funds to complete accessibility modifications to their homes. Mary E. Ewing, ATI's Executive Director, said the money would be used for accessibility modifications to households that include persons with physical, mental and developmental disabilities, as well as the "frail" elderly.

Rob Ferri, ATI's Architectural Barrier Programs Coordinator, will manage the program. He said the funding would provide for environmental modifications, including ramps, outdoor lifts, and structural changes, to make bathrooms, kitchens, bedrooms and other interior rooms more accessible.

The 2011 - 2013 grant is ATI's fourth *Access to Home* grant from the state in five years. The HCR has previously awarded ATI grants totaling \$700,000.

For more information on the ATI *Access to Home* grant and its other Architectural Barrier Programs, contact Audrey Jones, Architectural Barrier Program Administrative Assistant, by telephone at (607) 753-7363, or by email at ajones@aticortland.org.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

2011 <i>Friends of the Center</i>	2
Board / Staff Retreat.....	2
Leadership Cortland.....	3
Tenant Rights & Responsibilities ...	4
Disability Mentoring Day	5
Reach for the Stars	6
2010 Employment Conference.....	7
Disability Awareness in McGraw ...	7
HEAP Is Back!.....	8
SSI Recipients Can Work	9
Medicare Part D Enrollment	9
Universal Design.....	10

ATI Launches 2011 *Friends of the Center* Campaign

If you're like me, you get many solicitations this time of year – money is tight and everyone has their hand out. You get yet another request and you ask yourself “why should I give my hard earned dollars to this organization?” Let me answer why you should consider supporting Access to Independence!

Do you know a veteran who has served his country in Iraq or Afghanistan and who returned home with a head injury or a missing limb? Does someone you know use a walker or wheelchair to get around? Have you noticed all the people who use curb-cuts, not just with wheelchairs, but also strollers or bicycles or walkers? Does a friend or family member have a ramp or roll-in shower at home? Are you glad to see the wider aisles at the new Wal-Mart store? Have you used the accessible trails at the Lime Hollow Nature Center?

What do all of the above questions have in common? Well, Access to Independence (ATI) has had a hand in helping with the people and changes listed above. We offer peer counseling (one person with a disability to another), employment services, case management, youth transition and many other services.

ATI helps people to advocate for themselves and to work within the system to effect change. We have a loan closet of medical equipment, like wheelchairs, walkers and commodes that people may borrow for temporary use. Over the past five years, we have installed over 150 ramps and accessible bathrooms for people with a variety of needs, many of whom could not afford these modifications otherwise. We work with businesses and organizations to make our community more accessible (curb cuts, automatic doors, etc.).

In the coming days, if not already, you may receive another solicitation letter in the mail from ATI asking for your support in 2011. If you choose to make a contribution to ATI this year, you can rest assured that the money will help your family, friends and neighbors right here in Cortland County.

As we give thanks for our blessings at this time of year, let us think about how we can help others. I know that there are many agencies that need your help; I ask only that, if you believe in what we do, you consider sharing your generosity with us. Thank you.

-- *Mary E. Ewing, Executive Director*

ATI 2010 Board/Staff Retreat

On Saturday, November 6, Access to Independence (ATI) held its 2010 Annual Board/Staff Retreat. Eleven staff and twelve Board Members convened in the Vittorio & Santina Panzanella Community Room at the Agency to build momentum for a successful year ahead.

This year's Retreat focused on organizational change and balancing mission with outcomes during a period of growth. Andrea Wandersee of the Syracuse-based Wandersee Consulting, Inc., facilitated two of the three break-out sessions.

During the first session, Wandersee facilitated an interactive workshop with Board and staff to get everyone on the same page with regards to understanding organizational change. Given that ATI staff has more than doubled in two years, that the number of consumers served has tripled, and that the budget is set to double over the next year alone, personnel and operations changes will continue to be made in order to accommodate such spurts.

During a second session, Wandersee facilitated a workshop with Board Members only that aimed to build their leadership capacity. Wandersee guided Board Members through a discussion to help them fully understand their responsibilities and worked with the group to develop a strategy to improve their governance abilities.

While Wandersee met with Board Members, staff split into three groups and worked on strategies to fulfill the Agency's 2011 goals regarding community awareness and funding diversification.

Many thanks go out to Andrea Wandersee and the Staff and Board Members that participated in this year's event!

2011 ATI *Friends of the Center* Sponsorship Opportunities

For the second year in a row, Access to Independence (ATI) is offering businesses, agencies and individuals an opportunity to sponsor certain events or programs for the duration of 2011. ATI seeks community sponsors for its 2011 Bowl-a-Thon, ADA Celebration and Employment Conference events. ATI also seeks a limited number of sponsors to support its Community Room and Consumer Computer Lab, both of which are open to the public at no cost. Lastly, ATI seeks 2011 sponsors of its website. All sponsors are recognized at events and in our newsletter. Please consider a 2011 sponsorship of ATI when you prepare your 2011 budget.

For more information on how you can become a friend to the Agency and support our 2011 efforts, please contact Mary E. Ewing, Executive Director, or Chad W. Underwood, Chief Operating Officer, by phone: (607) 753-7363, or by email: info@aticortland.org.

Pizzola Attends Leadership Cortland: Develops Community Leadership Skills

What makes a good leader? According to the Social Change Model, “Leaders effect positive change for the betterment of themselves, their community and society.” (*Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA, 1996*).

In September 2009, Access to Independence (ATI) Community Education Coordinator, Fran Pizzola, was awarded a scholarship to participate in the Leadership Cortland program. Along with the scholarship, ATI granted Pizzola paid time-off from work to participate in the year-long training series. Pizzola says, “The experience has enhanced my ability to serve as a leader in the area of disability rights and to continue to act as a change agent for our community.”

There are two main goals for participants of Leadership Cortland: (1) to complete work on a group project with fellow Leadership Cortland classmates; and (2) to become informed, inspired and ready to serve in an area of need in the community.

The year-long training program begins with a two-day interactive retreat. Participants are given a series of assessments which aim to provide information on each participant’s personality traits and leadership qualities. At the end of the retreat participants break up into project teams and chose an area of interest to work on as a group.

Following the retreat, participants regularly meet with group members to work on their project. In addition, participants attend monthly day-long seminars or trainings on topics such as: History of Cortland County, Economic Development and Community Planning, Health & Human Services, State & Local Government, Law Enforcement & the Courts, Education in

Cortland County and Boards & Boards Development. Panelists and experts in the various topic areas share their experiences, strengths and weaknesses, and what effect it has on our local community.

Pizzola chose to work on the Economic Development Team. “This was an area where I could offer some expertise and also stretch myself to learn more about the business sector of our community,” said Pizzola. “What I found most interesting about the program was the opportunity to tour places such as the Cortland County Jail, Albany International and TC3.” Pizzola and her class completed three projects for the community.


Each Cortland Leadership class represents a cross-section of business, industry, education, non-profit and government organizations. The leadership program not only teaches class members about the assets and problems of our community, but

also about group behavior, leadership, teams, transforming communities, and power. Class members forge strong bonds with each other and learn to approach challenges by creatively using their collective talents and experience.


Leadership Cortland is a non-profit organization that provides specialized training opportunities to help individuals become leaders in Cortland County. The Cortland County Chamber of Commerce and Tompkins Cortland Community College founded Leadership Cortland in 1996. Since that time, there have been more than 180 Leadership Cortland graduates.

Many thanks to the Cortland County Chamber of Commerce and Tompkins-Cortland Community College for promoting the growth of our community leaders!

To learn more about Leadership Cortland visit: www.cortlandchamber.com.



Cornell University
ILR School
Employment and Disability Institute



Access To Independence
OF CORTLAND COUNTY, INC.

The American's with Disabilities Act "ADA"

Interactive Training Series:

- Program 1: Disability Awareness and ADA**
- Program 2: Getting Hired and Moving Ahead in a Job**
- Program 3: Tapping into Talent**
- Program 4: Serving Customers with Disabilities**
- Program 5: About Hidden Disabilities**
- Program 6: Accessibility in Federal, State and Municipal Entities**
- Program 7: Accessibility in Private or Commercial Business**
- Program 8: Accessible Technology In The Workplace**
- Program 9: Accessible Web Sites: Everyone Benefits**

To request a training session, please contact Fran Pizzola, ATI Community Education Coordinator, by phone at: 607-753-7363, or by email at: fpizzola@aticortland.org.

It's More Than Just Finding a Great Apartment: Your Rights and Responsibilities as a Tenant

Feature Columnist: Kim Nesser, WNY Housing Educator, New York Association on Independent Living (NYAIL)

Tenants and landlords, while known more often for their competing interests and differences, have several things in common.

Everyone looking for a place to live has criteria when looking for a suitable apartment: Is it affordable? Is it in a safe area? Will I be able to get to work or other activities? Does it meet my needs for accessibility?

A landlord has similar considerations: How can I find a good tenant who will want to live here for a long time? Will they pay the rent on time? Will they take care of the place? Will they be good neighbors?

The key to a happy landlord-tenant relationship is to be a good consumer. Being a good consumer means asking the right questions and doing your homework.

When visiting the apartment, a landlord will ask you some questions to determine whether you will be a good tenant, and you can also inquire about things that will help you assess whether the landlord is responsible. For example: How would the landlord like to be reached if there was an emergency repair? Will the apartment will be repainted or carpeted before you move in? .

The **Rental Interview** is a two way process to determine whether the apartment is right for you and if you're right for the apartment. Once you find your dream apartment, remember these things to ensure your landlord-tenant relationship stays positive:

- Pay your rent on time. Keep a dated receipt of your payment. If you are going to be late, contact your landlord right away (The landlord has bills too!)

- Respect the property by keeping your place clean and avoid damage to the property.
- Inform the landlord when anything needs to be repaired. It is best to hand-deliver a request in writing and keep a copy or note for your records about when you contact the landlord.
- Obey the rules and lease provided by the landlord. Don't invite friends to stay with you or obtain pets without contacting the landlord to ask permission.
- Do not disturb your neighbors. Your neighbors and your landlord appreciate peacefulness.
- Be respectful of your landlord so that you feel comfortable making contact when necessary.

In return for being a good tenant, you can also expect certain things from your landlord.. There are laws which will protect your rights, including **Fair Housing Laws, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act**, and in some cases, the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**.

For a comprehensive explanation of rights you have and explanations of the types of housing, lease provisions, safety, and tenant's personal protections, contact the Attorney General's Office for a booklet entitled, **Tenants' Rights Guide**, which can be sent to you for free by writing to the NYS Attorney General's Office, State Capitol, Albany, NY 12224.

The **Fair Housing Act** ensures your right to non-discrimination and to reasonable accommodations, such as allowing a service dog in a no pets building or a reasonable modification such as a ramp or grab bars. For more information on the Fair Housing Act, or to lodge a complaint, call 1-800-669-9777.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 applies to programs that receive federal financial assistance, including housing programs. For instance, housing providers may not discriminate against or segregate people with disabilities, such as by reserving a certain section of apartments off by themselves. Section 504 requires landlords to pay for reasonable alterations that will make a dwelling or common areas accessible to a person with a disability.

Although the **ADA** does not generally apply to residential housing, it would cover any area of a housing development that is open to the public, including the office where the public can apply for housing. All these areas must be accessible. For more information on the ADA and 504 concerns, contact www.ada.gov or call 1-800-514-0301 or 1-800-514-0383 (TTY).

In summary, a successful apartment search is no accident, it requires a consumer to be knowledgeable, as well as an active participant in selecting the right place and establishing a good rapport with the landlord.

In April 2010, Access to Independence (ATI) launched a 15-month **Housing Education Campaign** in collaboration with the New York Association on Independent Living (NYAIL). ATI is one of 19 Independent Living Centers from across the State to receive funding for the project through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

For more information on ATI's Housing Education initiatives, contact Aaron Baier, Housing Education Coordinator, by telephone at: (607) 753-7363, or by email: abaier@aticortland.org.

Youth In Power!

**Get empowered...
Use your abilities...**

Advocate for what you want!

**Last Wednesday,
Monthly 4:00 - 5:00 pm
CYB - Teen Center
35 Port Watson Street**

**For more information,
contact Aaron Baier at:
(607) 753-7363**



Communities That Care
Partnering for Smart Choices & Healthy Behaviors
www.cortlandareactc.org
Informed, Involved, Invested

CRAFT CLASSES

**Every Thursday
1:00 - 3:00 pm
ATI Community Room**

**For more information,
please call (607) 753-7363.**

Join Our Disability Advocacy Network!

- Keep up-to-date on current federal, state and local disability issues!
- Receive email alerts on pressing legislation and budget matters!
- Join the 85+ other local advocates and more than 1,000 statewide advocates to fight for change!

**For more information, please
email Chad W. Underwood at:
cwunderwood@aticortland.org.**

2010 Disability Mentoring Day for Youth

Last month, Cortland joined with communities from across the state and nation to recognize National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). In addition to an array of workshops, conferences and keynotes on disability employment issues, Cortland's youth had the opportunity to participate in Disability Mentoring Day (DMD).

On Wednesday, October 20, more than 30 students with disabilities (youth) were matched with workplace mentors according to expressed career interests. Youth experienced a typical day on the job and learned about the necessary training and expectations of their chosen career. Participants concluded the day with a luncheon that included guest speakers and an awards ceremony.

Access to Independence (ATI) Work Readiness / Youth Transition Coordinator, Aaron Baier, coordinated this year's DMD in collaboration with the Cortland Jr. / Sr. High School and the Cortland Works Career Center.

Mary thanks go out to every one of this year's event sponsors and supporters, including the more than 20 local businesses that facilitated job shadowing experiences, Cosimo's, the Country Inn & Suites and Tompkins Trust Company. DMD would not have been possible without your support!

While DMD takes place only one day each year, our community offers ongoing mentoring and career exploration opportunities for youth throughout the year. This is especially important given the fact that so many youth with disabilities, and their parents, struggle with successfully achieving educational and employment goals. Consider the following statistics:

- According to the NYS Education Dept., 8% of students with disabilities earn a Regent's diploma (51% get local diplomas; 30% get IEP diplomas).
- According to the NYS Education Dept., while 41% of students with disabilities intend to go to college, only 3.4% enroll.
- According to 2005 data from the U.S. Census Bureau, 46% of people with disabilities in NYS are unemployed.

Over the past three years, ATI has undertaken a dedicated effort to build capacity to address youth transition concerns and has applied its independent living philosophy to an array of new, unique services.

Furthermore, ATI is collaborating with the area's providers of youth transition services to lead the way in developing and implementing a set of programs that complement existing resources by promoting the development of life and independent living skills, including self-determination, self-advocacy and critical thinking.

ATI is committed to empowering youth to overcome barriers and to lead productive, independent lives in the community. ATI offers peer counseling and mentoring opportunities to help youth learn to think critically, make independent decisions, manage common adolescent anxieties, and to communicate effectively with parents, friends and authority figures.

For more information on transition services for youth with disabilities, contact Aaron T. Baier at Access to Independence by phone at 607-753-7363, or by email at abaier@aticortland.org.

“With Help From a Friend, You Can Reach the Stars!”

The Access to Independence (ATI) Peer Mentoring Program’s (PMP) goal for each participant is, of course, successful community employment. The PMP focuses on education, goal setting, problem solving, attitude, and advocacy, among other topics, all to help job seekers with disabilities to find the skills and confidence needed to gain and retain employment independently. The PMP also provides peer support as a conduit for participants to communicate and learn from each other’s failures and successes.

Phyllis is celebrating her 5 month anniversary in her part-time position here at Access to Independ-

ence. In her new role as Clerical Assistant, Phyllis provides technical assistance to a variety of ATI programs, from Peer Mentoring to Medicaid Waiver Services.

Phyllis joined the PMP in 2008 and right away was determined to gain meaningful employment. Phyllis had experience in human services, cake decorating, and crafts. Her goal was to find employment utilizing each of her unique skills. Phyllis was matched with a mentor who, while critical, was supportive of Phyllis and her goals. Together, they worked to make positive steps toward Phyllis’ dream job.

Phyllis and her mentor met weekly, sometimes more, to develop her resume, identify references, and work on ways to make better first impressions. There were times when Phyllis and her mentor would “butt-heads,” but it allowed for both to grow professionally and as a team. During this time, Phyllis

was an active contributor to the Peer Mentoring workshop series and also contributed much to the monthly support groups.

Much like many traditional mentoring relationships, there comes a time when the mentor must leave and let their apprentice grow independently. For Phyllis, this came through the unexpected passing of her mentor. Yet, while difficult for Phyllis to deal with, she remained steadfast and pressed on. Phyllis continued attending PMP events and became a mentor in many ways to others in the group. Phyllis tried new experiences and attended job shadowing opportunities at places like the Price Chopper Bakery.

Phyllis pushed herself to utilize as many resources as possible. An example of this was her volunteerism through the Employment Connection ACE Program. ACE placed Phyllis at Access to Independence as a program volunteer and Phyllis worked hard on several projects through the agency and put in many more hours than was expected of her. She even took over the ATI Craft Class for a period of time.

“I love working with the people at ATI,” Phyllis said. “Not only was I learning about a career, I was helping others at the same time.” Through the Peer Mentoring Program and her determination, Phyllis not only grew as an advocate and dedicated volunteer, but as an asset to ATI. Congratulations Phyllis, on your success!

For more information on the Peer Mentoring Program, please contact Aaron T. Baier by phone at 607-753-7363, or by email at abaier@aticortland.org.



Eyes on the Future:

Vision Support Group

1st Thursday monthly

5:00 - 6:00 pm

ATI Community Room

Get support from peers with similar vision barriers.

Learn about assistive tools and technology.

For more information, contact Aaron Baier by phone: 753-7363, or by email: abaier@aticortland.org

COMPUTER CLASSES

Basic: Mondays

Advanced: Thursdays

2:00 - 3:00 pm

ATI Computer Lab

For more information, please call (607) 753-7363.

Peer Mentoring Program

Every Thursday

3:00 - 4:00 pm

ATI Community Room

For more information, contact Aaron Baier

Phone: (607) 753-7363

Email: abaier@aticortland.org



Above: Phyllis, a former PMP participant, has achieved her goal of community employment!

2010 NDEAM: Talent Has No Boundaries!

Last month, Access to Independence (ATI) hosted its 4th annual, three-session Employment Conference, themed "Talent Has No Boundaries." This year's event featured interactive workshops, community resources, and networking opportunities to more than 30 Cortland area residents.

The first segment of each day featured *Employer's Perspectives*, which aimed to provide participants with a glimpse of what they might experience when they approach a prospective employer. This year's Conference featured Brad Totman of Alliance Bank, Teri Keegan of Country Inn & Suites, Theresa Henry of Walden Place, Wayne Clark of the Cortland Standard, Kim Stevens of Cortland Eye Center, and Steve & Vicki Besler of Shaw & Boehler Florist.

The second component of each day featured a *Peer Perspective*, which provided participants with an opportunity to hear about the experiences of, and barriers overcome by, people with disabilities who had achieved their employment goals. This year, ATI launched its "Path to Success" series on each day of the conference. Speakers included: Barbara Campbell, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor from the NYS Commission for the Blind; Darin Yoder, Exec. Director for Connections of CNY, a Developmental Disabilities Service Coordination organization; and Elizabeth Patience, an Advocate for the NYS Office of Mental Health.

The third segment of each day included one or two *Interactive Workshops*, which aimed to provide technical assistance to aid job seekers on their path to employment. This year, ATI featured several workshops, including: *Communicating Your Skills & Abilities*, by

Mickey Gibbons of SUNY Cortland; *Planning your SSA Benefits*, by Jay Fish of ARISE, Inc.; *Budgeting for Employment*, by Joe King of CFCU; *Job Trends and the ADA*, by LaWanda Cook of Cornell's DBTAC; and *Assistive Technology for Employment* by David Selover of Enable's TRAIID Center.

Finally, during the second day of the series, ATI facilitated a *Community Resources* segment to provide participants with an opportunity to learn about the myriad community employment services at their disposal. ATI enlisted representatives of the area's main providers for job seekers, including: Cortland Works Career Center, Employment Connection, Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped, Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID), OCM BOCES Adult Education, Cortland County Civil Service and CNY Area Health Education Center.

Many thanks go out to each and every person who contributed to the success of this year's event! Additional thanks go out to the numerous event sponsors and supporters, including: Mark's Pizzeria, Tops and Price Chopper.

Each year, ATI facilitates its Employment Conference series in tandem with the October celebration of National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM).

For more information on ATI's Work Readiness services, please contact Aaron T. Baier by phone: (607) 753-7363, or by email: abaier@aticortland.org.

Visit our website:
www.aticortland.org

Disability Awareness Day Goes to McGraw Schools

Over the past few months, ATI has undergone a dedicated effort to expand its Disability Awareness Day workshop series to schools throughout Cortland County. McGraw School District is among the most recent to welcome ATI into their classrooms at both the Elementary and Secondary level. On November 1st and 2nd, ATI facilitated Disability Awareness Day workshops for more than 250 students at McGraw Elementary.

ATI is also working with teachers and administrators at McGraw High School to bring the workshop series to its senior social studies classes and junior high health classes in the next few weeks. ATI has also scheduled a Disability Awareness Day lunch seminar for students at Homer High School on November 30.

The purpose of the Disability Awareness Day series is to provide students an opportunity to learn about the abilities that people with disabilities have, to ask questions about disability, and to open their minds to new ways of doing things. The workshops also aim to teach students about the Disability Rights and Independent Living movements, including the Americans with Disabilities Act. ATI tailors each Disability Awareness Day to suit the particular needs of a school as well as the age groups of students. ATI offers different style workshops and curriculums for grades K-2, 3-6, 7-8 and 9-12.

For more information on bringing Disability Awareness Day to your school, please contact Aaron T. Baier by phone at: (607) 753-7363, or by email at: abaier@aticortland.org.

Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) Is Back!

Effective November 1, the 2010 - 2011 Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) began offering assistance to low income New Yorkers with the cost of heating their homes.

The HEAP benefit is based on income, the primary heating source and the presence of a household member who is under the age 6, over the age 60, or who has a permanent disability. An eligible household may receive one regular HEAP benefit per program year. Regular benefits for households that pay directly for heat based on actual usage are paid directly to the vendor that supplies the household's primary source of heat.

Your household may be eligible for a regular HEAP benefit if:

- You and your household members are U.S. citizens or qualified aliens; and
- Your household's gross monthly income is at or below the current income guide as posted in the table below; or you receive food stamps; or you receive temporary assistance; or you receive SSI and live alone.

Regular HEAP Benefit Amounts (2010 - 2011)

Amount	Living Situation
\$1	Eligible households that live in government subsidized housing or a group home setting with heat included in their rent.
\$40 - 50	Eligible households responsible for their shelter costs but who do not pay their vendor directly for heat based on their actual usage.
\$600	Eligible households that pay their vendor directly for heat based on their actual usage with their main source of heat being oil, kerosene, wood, coal, pellets, corn, propane or other non-utility fuel.
\$400	Eligible households that pay their vendor directly for heat based on their actual usage with their main source of heat being natural gas or electric heat provided by a PSC regulated utility company or by a municipal electric company.

An additional emergency benefit is also available to assist low income New Yorkers who are facing a heat or heat related energy emergency and do not have resources available to resolve the emergency. You may be eligible for an emergency HEAP benefit if:

- Your electricity is necessary for your heating system or thermostat to work and is either shut-off or scheduled to be shut off; or
- Your natural gas heat is off or scheduled to be shut off; or
- You are out of or in danger of being out of fuel (oil, propane, wood, or coals); or
- Your heating equipment is inoperable.

Emergency HEAP Benefit Income Guidelines (2010 - 2011)

Household Size	Maximum Gross Monthly Income	Household Size	Maximum Gross Monthly Income	Household Size	Maximum Gross Monthly Income
1	\$2,129	4	\$4,094	6	\$5,404
2	\$2,784	5	\$4,749	7	\$5,527
3	\$3,439				

If you feel that you meet the income guidelines, contact your local Department of Social Services to sign up, or you may complete a HEAP pre-screening online at: www.mybenefits.ny.gov.

Marathon Snowdusters Inc.
P.O. Box 561
Marathon, NY 13803



www.marathonsnowdusters.com

Ladies & Gents - Bring your family!

Lisa's Beauty Shop
8 South Franklin St.
Cortland, NY 13045
607-753-1553

Wednesday - Saturday *Lisa Pizzola*

OCMBOCES 
Committed to Your Success

The Center for New Careers
Adult Job Training & Continuing Education
1710 NYS Rt. 13
Cortland, New York
607-758-5111
www.ocmboces.org

Office Technology, Pharmacy Technician, Medical Assistant, HVAC/R, Electrical Maintenance Technician, Automotive Technician, and more.

SSI Recipients Can Work & Not Lose Benefits

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a low income program that is intended to supplement any income or resources an individual might already receive. Too often, however, many people that receive SSI believe that they cannot try to work because they think they would automatically lose their eligibility for SSI. **FALSE!**

On the contrary, the Social Security Administration (SSA) has actually developed a work incentive program that encourages SSI recipients to go to work without immediately losing their SSI eligibility.

The SSA will count part of your earned income, but not all of it. There is a calculation worksheet that is used by the SSA to determine how earned income will affect your monthly check. There is a \$20 general income exclusion that is deducted from unearned or earned income and a \$65 earned income exclusion that is deducted from earnings.

After the SSA deducts both exclusions (\$85), it only counts one-half of the remaining earned income. The SSA combines this earned income with any unearned income to determine the total countable income for the month.

The total countable income for each month is the dollar amount that the SSA will use to determine

your SSI payment. Earned and unearned income is deducted from the Federal Benefit Rate to determine eligibility and the amount of the monthly SSI award.

There is also a provision called 1619(b) that allows an SSI recipient to keep their Medicaid even if they earn enough money to become ineligible for an SSI check. This provision also maintains a person's eligibility to receive SSI cash benefits in future months where countable income falls below the allowable limits.

This means that a person could work for several years and not be eligible for a SSI check because of earned income and then start to receive a check again if their earned income falls below allowable limits.

The 1619(b) provision works only with excess earned income. If a person's resource level exceeds SSA levels, or the person is no longer disabled according to SSA, the 1619(b) rule will not apply.

While the intricacies of all these rules and regulations are daunting, if you are thinking about trying to work and want to know how it will affect your SSI benefit, do not hesitate to contact ATI Certified Benefits Counselor and Independent Living Coordinator, Sue Lewis, by phone at: (607) 753-7363, or by email: slewis@aticortland.org.

Medicare Part D Open Enrollment Period

Open enrollment for Medicare Part D (prescription plans) started November 15, and continues through December 31, 2010.

This is the only time of year a person not receiving extra help can change their Part D Prescription plan. Even if you are satisfied with your current plan, it's a good idea to check and make sure that your current plan will still cover your medications at the same price. Everyone who is enrolled in a plan should have received a packet from their plan letting them know if anything has changed for 2011. There are a few Part D plans that dropped out this year, and if you do not receive extra help to pay your premiums, it will be up to you to pick a new plan.

If you do receive extra help to pay the Part D premium, it is still a good idea to look through any mailings from your prescription plan and Medicare. Some 2011 changes may affect your out-of-pocket costs.

If you need assistance in navigating through all the paperwork you may receive from your Part D plan or from Medicare, help is available. If you are over 60, you can call your Area Agency on Aging to make an appointment with a Benefits Specialist. In Cortland County, the number is (607) 753-5060.

If you are under 60, you may contact ATI Certified Benefits Counselor and Independent Living Coordinator, Sue Lewis, by phone at: (607) 753-7363, or by email: slewis@aticortland.org.



Lavish Beauty Salon

Julie Peacock, Owner
37 Main Street - Lower Level
phone: 607-756-2427
email: lavis-beauty.com

Barrier-Free + Accessible Design + Assistive Technology = Universal Design: Part V

Universal design is a relatively new concept that emerged from "barrier-free," "accessible design" and "assistive technology." It relates to the idea that all products and environments should be usable by everyone, to the greatest extent possible, regardless of age, ability, or situation. It relates to people who are young or old, with excellent or limited abilities, and in ideal or difficult circumstances. In short, universal design accommodates limitations.

There are four common aspects to universal design that apply to your home: **Flexibility:** making your home adaptable to your needs as they change over your lifetime; **Simplicity:** ensuring things remain accessible with housekeeping, storage, entertaining, home maintenance and routine daily living; **Stylish:** keeping the home beautiful and comfortable while being accessible; and **Safety:** eliminating risk factors that may lead to accidents in the home.

Grab bars are an essential safety feature, as well as a handy ergonomic feature. Not only do they make great towel bars, but they are there when you need them for balance, as well.

There are three key factors to remember to ensure that your grab bars will "be there for you" when you reach for them:

- How big around is it? The typical diameter is 1 1/2 inches. 1 1/4 inches may work better for people who do not have a strong grip.
- How far does it stick out from the wall? The grab bar should be designed to leave at most 1 1/2 inches of clear space between the wall and the inside edge of the grab bar.
- What is it attached to? A grab bar that is not properly installed can pull away from the wall and let you down just when you need it most.

The following method allows for sturdy attachment and also for easy repositioning, as changing needs may call for grab bars of different heights or lengths: *Reinforce the walls near the toilet and shower or bath by installing 3/4 inch plywood panels. Notch the plywood into the wall studs to provide a flat surface, then install wall covering (drywall, etc.) over the plywood.*

Please remember, accessibility in the home is not just for people with disabilities. If you think about

it, home accessibility is important for all people from youth to seniors; remember the Universal Design concept!

For more information on ATI's various architectural barrier programs, including our accessibility construction and aging-in-place services, please contact Rob Ferri, Architectural Barrier Programs Coordinator, by phone at: 753-7363, or by email at: rferri@aticortland.org.

You may also contact our Architectural Barrier Programs Administrative Assistant, Audrey Jones, phone at: 753-7363, or by email at: ajones@aticortland.org.

You may also visit our website: www.aticortland.org. Accessibility is what we do!


Access To Independence
OF CORTLAND COUNTY, INC.
Accessibility Construction Services
26 North Main Street
Cortland, New York 13045
Phone: (607) 753-7363

Planning a home remodel?
Having difficulty with daily activities?
Concerned for the safety of a parent?
History of falls? / Fear of falls?

Call us for a free estimate (607) 753-7363
We are your Local Accessibility Experts!

Got rent?

The Cortland Housing Authority has a rental assistance program that may be able to help you!!

The Section 8 Housing Program helps qualified people meet their monthly rent bills by paying a portion of their rent directly to their landlord.

Interested persons may pick up applications at the Housing Authority offices located at 42 Church Street or 51 Port Watson Street Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm

or
Call 607-753-9364 or 607-753-1771 to request to have an application sent by mail



Notice the grab bars in the shower and around the toilet!

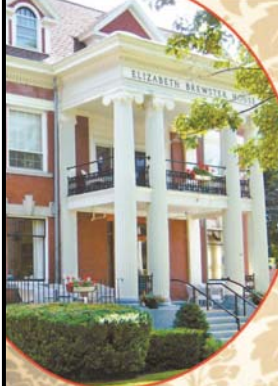
ASI of Cortland, LLC
 "Addiction Solutions for Individuals and Families"
Private Outpatient Alcohol and Drug Care

17 Main Street Cortland, NY 13045-6606
 Phone: (607) 756-4167 Fax: (607) 753-0608

Catholic Charities of Cortland County

- ◆ Emergency Food Pantry, Medications & Basic Needs
- ◆ Community Mental Health & Recovery Services
- ◆ Adolescent Support Services

33-35 Central Avenue Cortland, New York 13045
 Tel: 607-756-5992 Fax: 607-756-5999



Warm and gracious accommodations available for men, women and couples at Homer's best kept secret.

Elizabeth Brewster House
 ~ Established in 1891 ~

Contact Thomas L. Obuck for detailed information on our lovely historic Adult Home. Inquire about Veteran, widow of Veteran and insurance benefits!

Thomas L. Obuck
 41 South Main St., Homer, N.Y. 13077-1323
 (607) 749-2442



A.V.R.E.
 SERVING THE TWIN TIERS SINCE 1926

Seeing Things Differently

Association for Vision Rehabilitation & Employment, Inc.
 174 Court St., Binghamton, NY 13901
 607-724-2428 www.avreus.org



RACKER CENTERS
 Creating Opportunities for People with Special Needs

www.rackercenters.org • 866-408-9263

AUTOCRAFTING
 Mobility Solutions




Serving upstate NY since 1978

▼ Specializing In ▼
 Lowered Floor Minivans
 New/Used Full Size & Mini Vans
 Vehicle Financing & Leasing
 Trade Ins - Wheelchair Lifts
 Scooter Lifts - Hand Controls
 Full Line Service Center

www.AutoCrafting.com

Rochester - Syracuse - Buffalo
1-866-889-1867

Mark's Pizzeria (607) 753-6066
 105 Main Street Fax (607) 753-8995
 Cortland, NY



Jared Carlton
 Owner
 EST. 1982

CORTLAND ENT & SLEEP LAB

Specializing in:
 - General ENT
 - Sleep Disorders
 - Comprehensive Thyroid Care
 - Head and Neck Surgery

64 Pomeroy Street
 Cortland, NY 13045
 Phone: 607-753-6566
 Fax: 607-753-6566

MOST INSURANCES ACCEPTED, INCLUDING EMPIRE PLAN

Counseling Services of Cortland
 Individual Counseling

17-29 Main Street
 Suite 202
 607-662-0209
 607-662-0238

Gregory Moss, LCSW/R gmoss@tcwny.rr.com

www.counselingservicesofcortland.com

EC EMPLOYMENT CONNECTION

"Serving People with Barriers to Employment"

607-756-0246 / 607-756-8070 x2841

Kelly Garrett
 Intake Specialist
 Email: kellyg@jmmurray.com
 4059 Route 281 Cortland, NY 13045
 FAX: 607-756-6380

Port, Kashdin & McSherry
 CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

111 WEST ROAD • CORTLAND, NEW YORK 13045
 PH: 607-756-5681 • FX: 607-756-8320
 email: portkash@tcwny.rr.com

Cortland County
 Chamber of Commerce

Investment in Business... Investment in Community...

37 Church Street Ph (607) 756-2814
 Cortland, NY 13045 Fax (607) 756-4698
 www.cortlandchamber.com info@cortlandchamber.com

CORTLAND EYE CENTER
 Jacqueline Ferguson, MD
 Michele Barno, OD
 Nita K. Saini, OD

1160 Tompkins Street Tel 607-753-7528
 Cortland, NY 13045 FAX 607-756-8163
 www.cortlandeyecenter.com

HIGGINS SUPPLY COMPANY, INC.

Terri Maxson
 Vice President

18-25 South St.
 McGraw, NY 13101
 (607) 836-6474 x 15
 Fax (607) 836-6799
 terri@higginsupply.com
 www.higginsupply.com

UNDERWIRES GARMENT BONING ORTHOPEDIC STAYS ORTHOPEDIC HARDWARE



YELLOW LANTERN KAMPGROUND
 CORTLAND N.Y.

YELLOW LANTERN KAMPGROUND
 1770 ROUTE 13 NORTH
 CORTLAND, NEW YORK 13045

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, VISIT OUR WEBSITE:
 WWW.YELLOWLANTERNKAMPGROUND.COM
 OR E-MAIL YLKINCORT@AOL.COM

FOR RESERVATIONS, CALL 607-756-2959
 205 SITES, RECREATION & POOL FACILITIES
 1 MILE FROM I81
 FAMILY OWNED SINCE 1987

BLUMKIN, FINLAY & BIXLER, LLP
 Attorneys at Law

JOY A. BLUMKIN
MARCIE A. FINLAY
ELIZABETH J. BIXLER

Concentrating in:

- Social Security Disability
- Elder Law
- Wills & Trusts
- Planning for Persons with Disabilities

Located in The Gateway Center
 401 East State Street, Suite 300, Ithaca, NY 14850
 (607) 277-7286

BRIDGESTONE Firestone

Air Conditioning • Computer Diagnostic
 NYS Inspection • Starting & Charging
 Transmission Rebuilding & Replacement
 Wheel Alignment • Lube Oil Filters
 Steering & Suspension
 Other Tire Brands Available

Rich Borra
 (607) 753-3329
 Out of County: 1-800-479-3329

270 Tompkins Street
 Cortland, New York 13045

nokian TYRES **GREEN DIAMOND**

Offering a Complete Range of Home Medical Equipment & Supplies

Delivery • Set-Up • Maintenance

We Are Your Local Provider For:

CPAP & BiPAP
Oxygen Concentrators
Portable Oxygen Nebulizers
Power Chairs, Scooters & Lift Chairs
Wheelchairs
Hospital Beds
Walkers & Canes



HAVE A QUESTION?

Call us at **756-3880**

160 Homer Ave., Cortland
www.crmhomehealthservices.com

CORTLAND HOUSING AUTHORITY

The Cortland Housing Authority has 380 high quality apartments available in its senior/ disabled and family developments throughout Cortland County. A single person could earn up to \$31,800, and a family of five up to \$49,100 and still qualify to live in one of our apartments.



We have senior/disabled **efficiency** and **one bedroom** apartments located in the City of Cortland. We also have **one bedroom** senior/disabled units in Homer, McGraw, Marathon, Truxton and Cincinnatus.

Our large family apartments (**3, 4 and 5 bedrooms**) are located in the City of Cortland. We also have **two and three bedroom** family apartments scattered throughout the county in Homer, Truxton, McGraw, Cincinnatus and the City of Cortland.

There are short waiting lists for apartments in most of our developments.



Call 607-753-1771 today for an application.

Cortland Regional
MEDICAL CENTER

The Center of Your Care

Visit us at:
www.cortlandregional.org

Where to Go
When You
Want to Know

www.sevenvalleyshealth.org

The Seven Valleys Health Coalition website is your on-line connection to Cortland County healthcare and human service agencies and information.

Log on for all your health needs!



Search by

Topic

Agency

Keyword

Provider

* 50 Clinton Ave * Cortland, NY 13043 * Phone (607) 756-4198 *



Cortland Area
Child Care Council...
Where families and
child care come together.

Are you looking for care?

We can help you:

- Learn about different kinds of care
- Explore help paying for care
- Look for quality
- Choose child care

Are you caring for children?

We can help you:

- Get your business started
- Get the training you need
- Improve your quality of care
- Join the Child Care Food Program
- Connect with families

111 Port Watson Street
Cortland, NY 13045

Phone: 607-753-0106

Toll free: 1-877-785-KIDS

Website: www.cortlandchildcare.org



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

PRESORTED STANDARD MAIL
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
CORTLAND, NY
PERMIT NO. 49

Access To
Independence
OF CORTLAND COUNTY, INC.

26 North Main Street
Cortland, New York 13045