

NYS Inclusive Recreation Resource Center

Fall 2010

Happenings and Highlights

Hello and Season's Greetings from the NYS IRRC! The wonderful thing about reporting to funders is that at year's end, you have the opportunity to take stock of your accomplishments in black and white. So, as the fourth year of this wonderful work draws to a close, we would like to provide you with a few highlights of our activities since the Center began in 2007.

- The NYS IRRC website has been visited over 10,000 times from people all over the world.
- 121 people with disabilities have directly benefited from services delivered through our Recreation Referral Service.
- 2, 288 people have attended NYS IRRC training presentations.
- Nearly 550 Inclusivity Assessments have been conducted by dedicated students and volunteers. Thank you!!
- To date, 978 people have passed their Inclusion U Final Exam to become Certified Inclusivity Assessors, or CIAs! With several trainings lined up for 2011, we will soon be celebrating the 1,000th CIA with a special gift from the IRRC. Will you be number 1,000?? If you have not attended Inclusion U, register today for one of our upcoming trainings! For more information, call or email: (607) 753-4833 or Inclusiverec@cortland.edu.



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On Saturday, November 6th, an extraordinary group of people came together to participate in our first Advanced Inclusion U training. As professionals and/or educators, all of those in attendance are instrumental figures in fostering Inclusion U in their regions. The day provided an opportunity to practice an Inclusivity Assessment and discuss resources for mentoring other trained assessors throughout NY and beyond. Many thanks to Tammy Sciera, Executive Director of the JM McDonald Center for providing the group access to the facility and participating in the assessment process! And, we offer our special thanks to all those who attended the training. We are grateful for your time and dedication!

Pictured left to right: Karen Boldis, Leiko Benson, Brandi Boden, Gail Lamberta, Janet Duncan, Carole Fraser, Janet Connolly, Mary Jo Archambault, Kerry Wiley, and Kirsten Impicciatore. Not pictured: Kathy Ambrosini

For the third year in a row, the New York State Inclusive Recreation Resource Center was selected to present at the National Institute on Recreation Inclusion's (NIRI) annual conference. Over the course of the three-hour session, attendees were provided with an overview of the work of the NYS IRRC, an introduction to the Inclusivity Assessment Tool, and information about how to provide Inclusion U trainings for their organizations. Marketing packets were distributed to several individuals who are interested in implementing the Inclusivity Assessment Tool in their states. Thank you NIRI for the opportunity to highlight the work of the NYS IRRC on a national level!



Introducing the New York State Inclusive Recreation Resource Center's Newest Team Members!



Meet Amanda Lengauer! Amanda is the NYS IRRC's new 2010-2011 Graduate Assistant. Amanda is currently working on her master's degree in Outdoor Environmental Education at SUNY Cortland. She completed her undergraduate work in Physical Education with minor in Business Administration at St. Bonaventure. Amanda is originally from Syracuse, NY. She became interested in the recreation field after working at a summer camp for seven years, and now hopes to one day own her own summer camp. Amanda does a lot of volunteer work, such as her recent work with Charity Water, and says it has changed her perspective on the world. Her favorite hobbies include gardening and traveling.

-contributed by Rachel Cohen

Christina Rossettie is in her first year of the Therapeutic Recreation Graduate Studies Program at SUNY Cortland. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Communications from Edinboro University. Christina became interested in the field of recreation when her grandmother was placed in a long-term care facility. She would visit her grandmother often and notice the different therapeutic recreation opportunities patients would receive. Christina, who is originally from Corning, NY, fully enjoys being at Cortland and is excited to be the Student Worker for the NYS Inclusive Recreation Resource Center. When not studying or working, Christina enjoys walking her dog and traveling, but above all she loves spending time with her family, especially her nieces and nephews. The NYS Inclusive Recreation Resource Center is happy to have Christina as part of our staff!



-contributed by Amanda Lengauer



The NYS IRRC also welcomes Rachel Cohen as our newest student volunteer. Rachel is a junior at SUNY Cortland in the Therapeutic Recreation Program. She became involved with the center when she heard that they were looking for volunteers. Rachel really likes volunteering at the NYS IRRC because it is laid back and she does the work on her own time table. When Rachel is not volunteering or doing work for her classes, she enjoys barbequing and hanging out with her friends. Since deciding to major in Therapeutic Recreation, she has started joining other recreation students in activities such as hiking at Raquette Lake.

-contributed by Christina Rossettie

Attention Certified Inclusivity Assessors!! Get the Tools You Need to Assess!!

Throughout 2010, Certified Inclusivity Assessors have increasingly contributed assessments of recreation sites and facilities for their regions to the on-line database. While the Inclusivity Assessment Tools are only available to those who have completed the Inclusion U training, all of the tools that Certified Inclusivity Assessors need are available on-line and can be accessed with a CIA password. If you are interested in completing an assessment, be sure that you have the most up-to-date versions of all of the tools by contacting the NYS IRRC at Inclusiv-erec@cortland.edu. The tools are available in Microsoft Word, allowing you to simply type in all of the assessment data you collect. We look forward to hearing from all of you as plan your next Inclusivity Assessment. Help us make a difference, one recreation site at a time!

Finding A Way Back

After 34 years of teaching I was more than ready to retire. I looked forward to pursuing the outdoor activities that I loved and which provided me with quality of life. I was excited about the future, but little did I know that fate had other plans for me. In February 1999, while on vacation in the Caribbean, I was struck by a wave which drove me to the hard-packed bottom breaking four vertebrae in my neck and leaving me with quadriplegia. The accident took from me not only many normal functions, but also most of the skills I had developed which depended on them. One of the biggest concerns I had adjusting to my new life was the belief that with these limitations I would not be able to return to my outdoor pursuits. I resolved to approach this new life with Christopher Reeve's philosophy; he said "I refuse to allow a disability to determine how I will live my life."



My most enjoyable outdoor experience was hunting. I enjoyed using my skills to pursue wild game, primarily deer and turkeys. The woods were beautiful in the early spring and fall. Being able to rapidly cover large areas of land to get to where the turkeys were was enjoyable. To be able to conceal myself to avoid detection by these highly intelligent animals was a challenge. To pursue game this way after my accident was no longer possible. The challenges seemed almost insurmountable.

Refusing to give in to my disability, I was determined to hunt. But it quickly became evident that my old skills were not going to work, and that I would have to develop new ones if I had any chance at all of succeeding. Two things I had working for me were my attitude and determination. Using the Internet I found an apparatus which would allow me to fasten a gun to my wheelchair. However, I soon realized my fingers would be unable to pull the trigger. After a lot of trial and error I created an inexpensive trigger adapter that would allow me to fire my shotgun using my mouth. My arm movement was also limited, so using my mouth freed both hands to help steady the shotgun. A friend suggested covering snow fence with camouflage to create a blind that would cover my wheelchair. Finally, I had to find a place where the turkeys would be. Almost every day turkeys will visit a spot where they can "dust" themselves to remove mites and tiny pests from under their feathers. Friends constructed a blind in an area leading to a nearby dusting site. My efforts finally bore fruit this past May when I harvested my first post-accident gobbler. I love hunting because the game does not care that I am in a wheelchair, or that I fire the gun with my teeth and they do not feel sorry for me. To them I am just another predator. This seems like such a poignant story: man becomes disabled, man refuses to let his disability stop him from doing what he loves and after some effort man harvests a wild turkey. What the reader needs to understand is that the time from man becomes disabled to man harvests wild turkey was 11 years.

Instead of allowing limitations to dictate what you can and cannot do and looking at obstacles as problems to be dealt with consider them challenges to be solved. Look at failure not as a reason to give up, but rather as an opportunity for growth. I was determined that nothing was going to keep me from returning to the activities I loved so much and in the end my real joy is just spending time outdoors.

-contributed by Rich Fabend

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Wants to Hear from You!



New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is calling for writers to share inspirational stories of experiences in New York's great outdoors. From the simplest walk through the woods to meeting a challenge through an outdoor activity, we want to hear how you appreciate nature. The "Great Stories from the Great Outdoors" contest is open to all and runs through February 2011.

Each month, DEC will post three of the stories on our public website, and a prize will be awarded for the top story each month. Complete rules are posted at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/34035.html>

The Great Outdoor Stories Contest presents a wonderful opportunity for people to share the activities they enjoy, the special places they have visited, and how they are inspired to explore our magnificent state through the seasons. Participants may send a few sentences or up to a full page (maximum 650 words) describing how they enjoy New York's great outdoors,

DEC is committed to providing meaningful opportunities for people to connect to nature in New York. By participating in the Great Outdoor Stories contest, students, sportsmen and women, outdoor enthusiasts, campers and hikers can reflect and share the importance of the natural environment in their lives.

All story entries must be received by February 28, 2011. Submit stories to GreatOutdoorStories@gw.dec.state.ny.us or Carole Fraser, NYS DEC Universal Access Program, 625 Broadway, 5th floor, Albany, NY 12233-4255.

-contributed by Carole Fraser, DEC Statewide Access Coordinator



Kansas City, Missouri Parks and Recreation Making a Difference in the Lives of ALL People

After attending the *Inclusion U Training* this summer, Kansas City, Missouri Parks and Recreation hit the ground running! By securing local Senate Bill 40 dollars, assessments have been conducted in 10 community centers, 4 outdoor pools, 4 spraygrounds, 1 tennis facility, and 1 museum. In addition to the assessments, detailed reports have been written for each location. Staff trainings have taken place to provide a greater awareness of the importance of ADA accessibility.

The overall benefit of the assessments and reports was highly recognized by the city and has led to additional funding provided by the city of Kansas City, Missouri. A new round of assessments beginning in January 2011 will be conducted for 13 additional facilities and locations including district office buildings, a theatre, athletic fields, parks, and more.

As we look to the future, it is our vision to continue to build upon our current efforts by collaborating with our neighboring cities and counties to expand our efforts and touch the lives of many more people throughout the Greater Kansas City area.



Southeast Community Center in Kansas City, Missouri

-contributed by Jennifer Omillian, Consultant Kansas City, Missouri Parks and Recreation

The NYS IRRC at SUNY Cortland

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FUNDED BY



Our Mission

To promote and sustain participation by people with disabilities in inclusive recreation activities and resources throughout the state of NY

Inclusion U Training!

We invite you to become part of the NYS IRRC!

Become a Certified Inclusivity Assessor!

Learn about best practices in inclusion and accessibility so that you can assess recreation sites and facilities for physical, administrative, and programmatic inclusion. Whether you are a person who has a disability, a family member, a recreation professional, Medicaid Service Coordinator, student or advocate, this training is for you!

How do you register for training?

Pre-register for Inclusion U training by contacting Laurie Penney McGee at (607) 753-4833 or email laurie.penneymcgee@cortland.edu. The cost of the training is \$95.00 and includes the bound Inclusion U Guide as well as the toolkit needed to complete assessments. Due to grant funding, Medicaid Service Coordinators may be eligible to attend Inclusion U at free or reduced rates. Please contact Laurie Penney McGee for more information.

- Inclusion U provides 7 full training hours. If you would like to purchase Continuing Education Credits, CEU's will be available on site for a payment of \$8.00. Please bring a separate check payable to "NYSRPS."
- We welcome people of all abilities to attend Inclusion U. If any accommodations are needed, please provide that information when you register for training.
- All Trained Assessors are asked to complete 2 Inclusivity Assessments at recreation sites or facilities of their choice within 6 months of training. The NYS IRRC will be happy to assist you in identifying a site.

Upcoming 2010-2011 Inclusion U Training Dates

Thursday, February 3rd, 8:00-4:30 PM, St. Joseph's College, Patchogue, (Long Island Region)

Saturday, February 5th, 8:00-4:30 PM, Lehman College, Bronx (NYC Region)

Friday, February 11th, 8:00-4:30 PM, Onondaga Community College, Syracuse (Finger Lakes Region) *Limited Space

Friday, February 18th, 12:30-9:00 PM, SUNY Cortland (Finger Lakes Region) *Limited Space Available!!*

Sunday, March 27th, 8:00-4:30 PM, Verona (Central New York Region) *NYSRPS Conference Pre-Institute*

Bring Inclusion U to Your Agency!!

Significant cost savings!!!

Are you interested in holding an Inclusion U at your agency? The NYS IRRC offers several training options for agencies who would like to train their staff in the best practices of both physical and social inclusion. By bringing Inclusion U to your organization, you can provide training for up to 25 people at a significantly reduced rate. Save costly travel and accommodation expenses for staff by hosting Inclusion U at your facility. For more information, contact Laurie Penney McGee at laurie.penneymcgee@cortland.edu or call (607) 753-4833.