



ATLANTIC

CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING, INC

JULY NEWSLETTER 2026 • VOL. 6



Photo: Woman walking in a field of flowers holding an American Flag

In this month's edition...

Core Services • Page 2

Community Spotlight • Page 3

Our Stories: Y.A.L.E. Northfield • Page 4

Why Advocacy Matters • Page 5

Support Groups & Activities • Page 6 & 7

Calendar & Life Skills • Page 8 & 9

Collaboration Activities • Page 10 & 11

From our ACIL family to yours...

July is a special month as we celebrate the 36th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), landmark legislation that continues to advance equal opportunity, accessibility, and independence for people with disabilities. At ACIL, we honor the progress that has been made while remaining committed to advocating for a more inclusive and accessible community for all. We hope you enjoy this month's newsletter and join us in celebrating the spirit of independence throughout July.

Atlantic Center for Independent Living, INC

1

Atlantic Center for Independent Living

160 S. PITNEY RD., UNITS 3 & 4, GALLOWAY, NJ 08205
PHONE: (609)748-ABLE (2253) | ATLANTICCIL.ORG

Our Mission

Atlantic Center for Independent Living, Inc. is a center that assists individuals with disabilities to live and work as independently as possible.

Our core services include:

Information & Referral

Information about & referrals to services and organizations that can help you achieve your independence.

Advocacy

Staff assist individuals with personal issues to advocate for what they need. Systems advocacy identifies issues that affect others within the community and develop strategies to bring about systems change.

Peer Support

We believe that individuals experiencing the same issues (peers) are in the best position to support one another dealing with similar experiences.

Life Skills Training

Services are designed to assist you in gaining the skills necessary to live independently in your community.

Transition Services

Youth: Our youth services provide support and guidance to students transitioning from school to adult life with a strong emphasis on employment.

Seniors: Atlantic staff can assist seniors living with disabilities to ensure they are receiving benefits and services designed to ensure the greatest independence possible with the goal of remaining within their communities.

Community Spotlight

Community Walks

With Coach Tadris & Friends
Tuesdays and Thursdays at 5:15pm
Call (609)748-2253 Ext. 4 or email
jburke@atlanticcil.org For More Details.




HERizon
A WOMEN'S GROUP BY MOCEANS CIL

July
HERizon Meeting

SESSION TOPIC:
Understanding Service
Animals in Disaster

Join our July HERizon session with **Carina Marzec, BA, NJCEM** from the Mercer County Office of Emergency Management

DATE: JULY 15TH
TIME: 3:00-4:00PM
ZOOM ID: 878 6054 0838

REGISTER NOW

Scan the QR code to RSVP!



SPEAKER:
CARINA MARZEC



JULY
GALLERY EXHIBIT
More Than Touch, A CONNECTION

JULY 1-30 • 2026

A traveling tactile exhibit focused on blind and low-vision access.

Artists' Reception: Friday, July 10th @ 7-8:30pm
Gallery Hours: Monday-Friday: 9am-9pm | Saturday: 9am-3pm

Premiering at Ocean City Arts Center, this exhibition is designed to engage the senses. Featuring more than 30 artists working across a wide range of media, it invites all audiences to experience art in new and meaningful ways.



Initiated by the Ocean City Arts Center, this exhibition was realized through a collaborative partnership with the Riverfront Renaissance Center for the Arts and the Noyes Arts Garage of Stockton University. The exhibition will be presented at all three galleries. Visit our website for future exhibition dates and locations.

  **OCEAN CITY ARTS CENTER**
1735 SIMPSON AVE.
SECOND FLOOR
OCEAN CITY, NJ

609-399-7628
oceancityartscenter.org



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS



NFB South Jersey Shore Chapter

10:00am – 12:00pm

Next Meeting: July 18th

Ocean City Library, 1735 Simpson Ave. (17th St. Entrance)

For more information contact: President Ed Garcia at 650-759-0470

Please visit: <https://www.nfbnj.org/chapters/south-jersey-shore-chapter/>

Our Stories



Photos: ACIL's Ana Then and Jamie Burke attending the 2026 Y.A.L.E. Graduation Ceremony

Atlantic Center for Independent Living was honored to attend the Y.A.L.E. Northfield graduation ceremony last month and to proudly accept the Community Partnership Award. Through our ongoing partnership, ACIL has had the privilege of providing Life Skills Workshops to Y.A.L.E. students, helping them build confidence, independence, and important skills for everyday life.

It was truly inspiring to celebrate alongside the students as they received their well-deserved awards and diplomas. ACIL is grateful for the opportunity to partner with Y.A.L.E. and to support these amazing young people in their journey toward greater independence and success. We look forward to continuing this meaningful partnership for years to come and wish the graduating Class of 2026 all the best as they pursue their future goals and opportunities!



Why Advocacy Matters

By Amadeo Astillero

Advocacy plays an important role in creating communities where people with disabilities can live, work, and participate fully. While advocacy can help individuals address specific challenges, it also has the power to create broader changes that improve opportunities and access for many people.

My own experience has shown me how important advocacy can be. As a student, I learned that I am an auditory learner and that I needed large-print materials to be successful in school. With the support of my parents, teachers, and other advocates, I received the accommodation I needed to learn and participate alongside my peers. Those experiences taught me the value of speaking up, seeking support, and ensuring that people have equal access to opportunities.

While individual advocacy can make a significant difference in one person's life, systems advocacy helps create change that benefits entire communities. The accommodations and supports that helped me succeed were made possible by policies, laws, and advocacy efforts that promote accessibility and equal opportunity for people with disabilities.

Systems advocacy focuses on improving policies, programs, and practices that affect large numbers of people. Whether it involves expanding accessible transportation, increasing employment opportunities, improving access to housing, or strengthening disability services, systems advocacy works to remove barriers and create lasting change.

Systems advocacy can take many forms, including working with elected officials, educating community leaders, participating in advisory groups, and collaborating with organizations to improve accessibility and inclusion. These efforts help ensure that people with disabilities have a voice in decisions that affect their lives and communities.

Today, I am proud to be part of those efforts through my work. My personal experiences help me understand the challenges that many people with disabilities face, but they also remind me of what is possible when individuals and communities work together to create change. The support I received throughout my life inspires me to help others access opportunities and advocate for a more inclusive society.

Advocacy matters because it helps create opportunities, strengthens communities, and ensures that the voices of people with disabilities are heard. Through both individual and systems advocacy, we can continue working toward a future where everyone can live independently and participate fully in community life.

CROPS Summer Fridays Program



Photos: CROPS Summer Fridays attendees.



FREE roundtrip
jitney service for



Fisherman's Park in Atlantic City



Fridays: June 5th - September 18th, 2026



shop at the Farmers Market - purchase fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs with SNAP/EBT, WIC & senior summer produce vouchers, cash, and card



enjoy the Community Garden - we harvest **free** vegetables & herbs; **free** activities

Exceptions

- *June 5th & 12th - jitney & garden activities, but **no Farmers Market**
- *July 3rd - **no jitney, no Farmers Market, no garden activities**

★Jitney departure locations and schedule (up to 12 passengers - first come, first served)

Jitney A

- 1) **Community Haven** @3:45pm
35 Virginia Ave, Atlantic City
- 2) **Baltic Plaza** @4:15pm
1313 Baltic Ave, Atlantic City
- 3) **Atlantic City Townhouse** @4:25pm
1330 Mediterranean Ave, Atlantic City

Jitney B

- 1) **Jeffries Tower** @3:45pm
227 N Vermont Ave, Atlantic City
(main lobby entrance)
- 2) **Pleasantville Towers** @4:15pm
156 N. Main St, Pleasantville

★subject to change if necessary

Service provided by



www.cropsnj.org
CROPS Nonprofit
@cropsnonprofit
info@cropsnj.org



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www.atlanticil.org
Atlantic Center for Independent Living
@atlanticil



Every 1st
Wednesday
2 PM

PEER-TO-PEER

Join the conversation! This discussion group is led by our Peer Support Specialist who brings lived experience, personal insight, and a listening ear. Discussion topics will vary and focus on disability related experiences, advocacy, and support.

ZOOM MEETING ID: 854 4918 0096 PASSCODE: 485855 [ZOOM LINK](#)

The Atlantic Center for Independent Living supports equal access for all. For accommodations please contact Amadeo at aastillero@atlanticil.org



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NEW!

Peer-to-Peer Support Group

1st Wednesdays at 2pm with

Peer Support Specialist

Amadeo Astillero

Zoom Meeting ID #: 854 4918 0096

Passcode: 485855 | [Zoom Link](#)

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6

Virtual Support Groups & Activities

The Atlantic Center for Independent Living supports equal access for all.
For accommodations please contact Jennifer at jburke@atlanticcil.org | (609)748-2253 ext.4

Atlantic CIL Weekly Activity Links

Life Skills | Monday | 1pm | Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83007585374?pwd=McU3UFciKbQjIltuB1kk9yLjCRufQp.1>

Call In: 1-346-248-7799 | Meeting ID: 830 0758 5374 | Passcode: 248110

Sketchbook Club | Monday | 3:30pm | Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83854391536?pwd=YWtFekQyeE9wTlBqdVpkQVIvRUdiQT09>

Call In: 1-309-205-3325 | Meeting ID: 838 5439 1536

Socialization and Wellbeing Group | Tuesday | 1pm | Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88558466172>

Call In: 1-301-715-8592 | Meeting ID: 885 5846 6172

Peer-to-Peer Support Group | 1st Wednesdays | 2pm | Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85449180096?pwd=4NvYwgyaO0zkFbbrL7TLC6M7BjNq1J.1>

Call In: 1-301-715-8592 | Meeting ID #: 854 4918 0096 | Passcode: 485855

Life Skills | Thursday | 6pm | Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84002836340?pwd=bc1DUppeQKS5Q7CFMhsNqGbc28bS9x.1>

Call In: 1-646-558-8656 | Meeting ID #: 840 0283 6340 | Passcode: 155686

Additional Atlantic CIL Collaboration Activity Contacts

United by Wellness virtual support groups with MHA

Visit: <http://www.mhaac.info/ubw.html>

Community Walks with Coach Tadriss, Tuesdays & Thursdays at 5:15pm

Contact Jen at jburke@atlanticcil.org, to join

Access to Art Classes with the Noyes Museum of Art

Ongoing programming Co-sponsored by Atlantic CIL

Visit <https://noyesmuseum.org> for details.



Atlantic Center for Independent Living, INC

Monthly Calendar



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Activities & Support Groups



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 <u>Peer to Peer</u> 2pm	2 Community Walk 5:15pm	3 Center Closed	4 4TH OF <i>July</i>
5	6 <u>Life Skills 1pm</u> <u>Sketchbook Club</u> 3:30pm	7 <u>Socialization & Wellbeing</u> <u>Group 1pm</u> Community Walk 5:15pm	8	9 <u>Life Skills 6pm</u> Community Walk 5:15pm	10	11
12	13 <u>Life Skills 1pm</u> <u>Sketchbook Club</u> 3:30pm	14 <u>Socialization & Wellbeing</u> <u>Group 1pm</u> Community Walk 5:15pm	15	16 <u>Life Skills 6pm</u> Community Walk 5:15pm	17	18
19	20 <u>Life Skills 1pm</u> <u>Sketchbook Club</u> 3:30pm	21 <u>Socialization & Wellbeing</u> <u>Group 1pm</u> Community Walk 5:15pm	22	23 <u>Life Skills 6pm</u> Community Walk 5:15pm	24	25
26 ADA Americans with Disabilities Act 36 Celebrate July 26, 2026	27 <u>Life Skills 1pm</u> <u>Sketchbook Club</u> 3:30pm	28 <u>Socialization & Wellbeing</u> <u>Group 1pm</u> Community Walk 5:15pm	29	30 <u>Life Skills 6pm</u> Community Walk 5:15pm	31	

Click on each group/activity title for active zoom link.
Contact us for more information at jburke@atlanticcil.org | (609)748-2253 ext. 4

Weekly Life Skills Activities

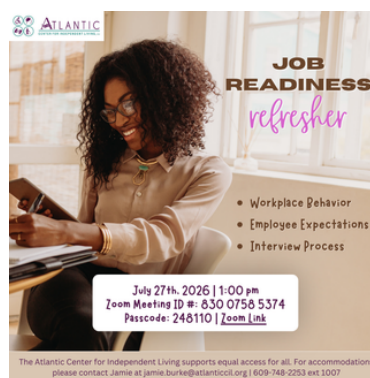
Join us for Life Skills every Monday and Thursday! New topics are presented each week to assist you in gaining the skills necessary to live independently in your community.



MONDAY

Mondays at 1pm with
Independent Living Specialist
Jamie Burke

Zoom Meeting ID #: 830 0758 5374 |
Passcode: 248110 | [Zoom Link](#)



THURSDAY

Thursdays at 6pm with
Independent Living Specialist
Jenny Walker

Zoom Meeting ID #: 850 6315 3999
Passcode: 154100 | [Zoom Link](#)



Collaboration Activities



MONDAY

2-3 PM: COPING SKILLS SUPPORT GROUP

MEETING ID: 975 3587 3500

<https://zoom.us/join/97535873500>

THIS GROUP IS OPEN TO ANYONE INTERESTED IN ADDING TO THEIR WELLNESS TOOLBOX! EACH MEETING INCLUDES AN ACTIVITY AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE & REFLECT.

5-6 PM: MENTAL HEALTH WRITING GROUP

MEETING ID: 861 6663 5659

<https://zoom.us/join/86166635659>

EACH WEEK, A NEW READING WILL BE PRESENTED ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH. MEMBERS WILL TAKE THE TIME TO WRITE ON THE READING, AND CAN CHOOSE TO READ OFF WHAT THEY HAVE WRITTEN/GIVE FEEDBACK AND REFLECT.

TUESDAY

5-6 PM: LIFE AFTER LOSS

MEETING ID: 850 5917 9372

<https://us06web.zoom.us/join/85059179372>

JOIN US IN OUR OPEN SHARE/TOPIC BASED GROUP DEDICATED TO FINDING COMFORT, JOY, AND GROWTH FOLLOWING LOSS.

* THIS IS A CLOSED GROUP, MEMBERS WILL NOT BE ADMITTED AFTER 5:10PM. *

WEDNESDAY

8-9 AM: SHARE YOUR SUNSHINE

MEETING ID: 890 3553 9203

<https://zoom.us/join/89035539203>

THE PURPOSE OF THIS GROUP IS TO CREATE A COLLABORATIVE SPACE IN WHICH MEMBERS FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS CAN COME TOGETHER AND FIND CONNECTION, SUPPORT, AND JOY FROM EACH INDIVIDUALS INTERESTS. THE GOAL IS TO CREATE A SPACE THAT NURTURES EMPOWERMENT AND SELF FULFILLMENT. ,

3PM-4PM: BETTER TOGETHER

MEETING ID: 875 6132 4882 <https://us06web.zoom.us/join/87561324882>

TOPIC FOCUSED GROUP - THIS IS A SUPPORT GROUP FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO STRUGGLE WITH A COMBINATION OF PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES. TOGETHER WE WILL DISCUSS A TOPIC SURROUNDING THE STRUGGLE OF BALANCING PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELL-BEING. LET'S SUPPORT EACH OTHER IN OUR JOURNEYS TO WELLNESS!



To receive the zoom information in a daily newsletter become a member of United by Wellness today

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8VXP2K8>



WWW.MHAAC.INFO/UBW



UNITEDBYWELLNESS@MHANJ.ORG



609-652-3800

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10

6-7 PM: DEPRESSION SUPPORT GROUP

MEETING ID: 934 5705 3073

<https://zoom.us/join/93457053073>

THIS SUPPORT GROUP IS FOR THOSE LIVING WITH DEPRESSION TO SHARE EXPERIENCES AND RECEIVE SUPPORT FROM OTHERS WHO UNDERSTAND. GROUP MEMBERS BENEFIT FROM MUTUAL SUPPORT AND CONNECTION.

THURSDAY

4-5 PM: LIFE SKILLS

MEETING ID: 870 3716 4227

<https://us06web.zoom.us/join/87037164227>

LEARN ADAPTIVE, POSITIVE WAYS OF DEALING WITH THE DEMANDS AND CHALLENGES OF ALL FACETS OF EVERYDAY LIFE, SUCH AS FAMILY, RELATIONSHIPS, WORK, ENVIRONMENT, SELF-CARE, RESILIENCE, AND MORE.

FRIDAY

2-3 PM: LIGHT BULB- A GROUP FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

MEETING ID: 995 1443 1197

<https://zoom.us/join/99514431197>

DURING THIS GROUP REFLECTION QUESTIONS ABOUT VARIOUS WELLNESS TOPICS WILL BE SHARED AND THEN EXPLORED AS A GROUP. EACH GROUP WE WALK AWAY LEARNING SOMETHING NEW!

4-5 PM: BREAKING BARRIERS

MEETING ID: 885 2514 6106

<https://us06web.zoom.us/join/88525146106>

A SUPPORT GROUP WHERE WE WILL LEARN, GROW, SHARE, AND BECOME MORE EMPOWERED TO BREAK THE BARRIERS TO HAVE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES TO LIVE THE LIFE WE WANT.

SATURDAY

11 AM-12 PM: PUT OFF PROCRASTINATION

MEETING ID: 891 6577 9251

<https://us06web.zoom.us/join/89165779251>

WHETHER IT'S FINISHING A CHORE, WORKING ON A PROJECT, OR EVEN STARTING A NEW HOBBY, LET'S START PUTTING OFF PROCRASTINATION TOGETHER.

SUNDAY

10-11 AM: OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

MEETING ID: 891 6452 0279

<https://us06web.zoom.us/join/89164520279>

THIS IS A SAFE SPACE FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE COMMON EXPERIENCES, FEELINGS, AND STRUGGLES WHEN IT COMES TO LIFE'S OBSTACLES. WE'LL SHARE AND DISCUSS OUR WORRIES... WHILE ALSO CELEBRATING OUR SUCCESSSES.

7-7:45 PM: MEDITATION

MEETING ID: 927 8257 0162

<https://zoom.us/join/92782570162>

EACH MEETING A 15-20-MINUTE GUIDED MEDITATION WILL TAKE PLACE FOLLOWED BY OPEN SHARING OF REFLECTIONS AND SETTING INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK.



To receive the zoom information in a daily newsletter become a member of United by Wellness today

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8VXP2K8>



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