

VALUES

A Newsletter of Ability1st—North Florida's Center for Independent Living

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Our Mission:

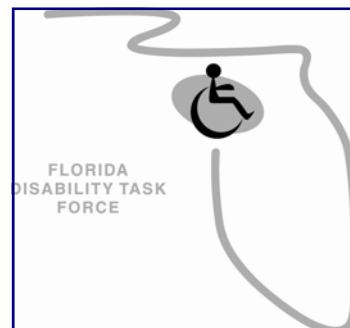
Offering persons with disabilities the opportunity to achieve, maintain, and strengthen their level of independence.



Register Now: Disaster Preparedness Conference

If you live in the Wakulla, Leon, Gadsden, Liberty, Franklin, Jefferson, Taylor or Madison Counties and are a person with a disability, a senior, or a care giver, mark your calendar and plan to attend the Disaster Preparedness Conference on Thursday, May 7, 2009 at Tallahassee Community College.

The goal of this event, which is supported by the Florida Disability Task Force, is to bring local government, provider organizations and members of the at-risk population together to listen and learn from one another.



LEARN:

- How and why you and your family should prepare a shelter in your home for 72-hours following a local disaster.
- How your city and county governments make most decisions regarding local emergency procedures and their response to local disasters.

REGISTER NOW

The conference is free and lunch will be available to those who pre-register. Reserve your seat by calling 575-9621 ext. 101.

SOAR Training to Aid Homeless Persons

Accessing Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits are often a critical first step in recovery for individuals who are homeless with mental health problems and other cognitive disabilities. The benefits are administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA) and generally provide either Medicaid and/or Medicare health insurance to individuals who are eligible.

SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery (SOAR) is a strategy intended to increase access to these programs for individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Ability1st staff members Pamela Sykes and Andrea Wiggins recently completed the SOAR training and are very interested in helping our consumers access the SSI/SSDI programs. The process is extremely challenging and often difficult to navigate, but by utilizing this training model Ability1st hopes to improve the success rate for our consumers. Contact Pamela 575-9621 ext. 118 or Andrea 575-9621 ext. 108 for information or assistance.

Quit Smoking NOW Classes Available at Ability1st



Thanks to the FSU College of Medicine Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Program staff, Ability1st staff is now trained to intervene effectively and efficiently with consumers who are interested in addressing their dependency on tobacco.

Tobacco use is the single greatest cause of preventable disease and premature death in the United States, and adults who smoke lose an average of 14 years of their life.

Individuals with the lowest levels of education and income are most likely to smoke or use other tobacco products. These are the same individuals who have the least access to state of the art interventions and treatments, and the most likely to fail when making a serious attempt to quit.

The prevalence of smoking for individuals in Florida who have physical disabilities is 25.7%, greater than the state average of 19.3%. For individuals with other substance abuse or mental health diagnoses, the prevalence of smoking is an alarming 50-90%, depending on the specific diagnoses. Quit Smoking NOW classes are starting soon. If you are interested, please call 575-9621 ex. 119.



2009 Walk, Run, Roll-a-Thon Special Thanks

Special Thanks to our corporate sponsors and volunteers that donated their time and resources to make this event a success.

Fla. Telecommunications Relay, Inc.	Tallahassee Orthopedic Clinic	Nancy Francis
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Board meetings are regularly held on the 3rd Monday of each month

High School/High Tech Program Teams with Americorps

As part of a collaborative Martin Luther King Jr. Day service project, the Ability 1st's Leon High School/High Tech (HS/HT) Program and Americorps set out to assemble twenty-five hygiene kits for the Children's Home Society. In December three Americorps members came to speak to the Leon HS/HT group about the programs offered through Americorps and the importance of service learning. On January 13th, 2009 approximately fifteen HS/HT students met with several Americorps students to start assembling the kits.

The students decorated paper gifts bags for boys and girls. The bags were then filled with items such as hand sanitizer, toothbrushes, deodorant, shower gel, mouth wash, and new wash clothes.

"The students really enjoyed putting these kits together for the Children's Home Society, as well as learning more about Americorps," said Emily Kennelly, Coordinator for the Leon HS/HT program.

The students are now preparing for a much larger service project during Global Youth Service Week on April 24-26, 2009.



HS/HT students work with members of the Americorps to assemble hygiene kits for the Children's Home Society.

This special partnership was able to get our students ready for their upcoming project, and give them a little taste of service learning!

CHADD Offers Services for Individuals with AD/HD and Their Families



CHADD (Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) is the nation's leading

organization serving individuals with AD/HD and their families. CHADD has over 20,000 members in 235 local chapters throughout the U.S.

Chapters offer support for individuals, parents, teacher, professional, and others.

The Leon County Chapter of CHADD serves as a local face-to-face support group in response to the needs of local families and individuals with AD/HD.

The following support services are available for free each month at Ability1st :

- Adult support group on the 4th Monday of each month from 7:00-8:00 PM
- Parent support group meets on the second Thursday of each month at 6:00 PM
- Social night for preteens is held quarterly.

In addition, the second annual FAST FORWARD summer camp for children transitioning from 6th, 7th, or 8th grade is scheduled for July 20, 2009.

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including Leon
County**

For more information, please email Dr. Jamileh Mikati at leon-county@chadd.net.



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Wheelchair Facts...Did You Know?

Did You Know?

There are an estimated 2.1 million wheelchair users in the U.S., more than twice as many as in 1980. More than 90 percent use manual wheelchairs and fewer than ten percent use electric wheelchairs.

Did You Know?

Wheelchair users are among the most visible members of the disability community, yet experience the highest levels of activity limitation and functional limitation, and among the lowest levels of employment.

Did You Know?

Women comprise a significant majority (58.8 percent) of wheelchair users.

Did You Know?

Elderly people are the group with the highest rates of both manual and electric wheelchair use.



Source: Disability Statistics Center, Institute for Health & Aging, School of Nursing, University of California