New Community Opportunities Center at ILRU presents: Building an Effective, Comprehensive CIL Youth Program

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Ability Center of Greater Toledo Youth Programs and Services Overview

Kim Arnett and Annie Kim; Judith Holt

>> JUDITH: All right, we need to get started for our second session. You did hear the bell, most of you, I hope. I felt like I was back on the farm.

A couple of housekeeping points again, when you're using the microphone, it needs to be close to your mouth because sometimes we're not able to hear you or pick up your comments on audio. Thank you for remembering to use the mics, now just closer. It's your friend.

I'm also starting a participant list. I'll start over here and have it go from table to table. We need to make sure that your E-mail addresses are correct. And so we can stay in touch with you and if there is any other information that's changed, please just note on here and I'll kind of check on it during the first of the day.

We're really excited now because we're getting into what constitutes, I think, the first thing that you need to be thinking about in terms of developing your programs for your centers. And that is understanding how other centers have developed and used various aspects of their CIL to support and strengthen the youth activities.

So this is not -- this is like the big picture of the CIL. This is not the drop down in-depth in a specific program which we'll be doing tomorrow, but this is kind of the overview of what the CIL has done and are doing and kind of how they got there, the steps they went through and I think you'll probably recognize some of these steps and maybe you're in some of them yourselves.

So our first presentation will be the Kim and Annie show, and I've asked them to introduce themselves. They are from the CIL in Toledo, right? So if they'll go ahead and I'll start this paper over here.

>> KIM: I am Kimberly Arnett and I'm director of the operations at the center in greater Toledo. I've been there 12 years and started as the camp director. We have a summer camp there. I moved on to start our youth programming and now second in charge. I'm also as of October the current program director of (inaudible) of America. I'll talk about that in a minute, too. And bear with me I'm a little bummed. I just learned that I have crossed over into being an adult ally. We were going to use one of my -- I thought this was awkward.

>> ANNIE: My name is Annie Kim, and I'm one of the program directors at the Ability Center. I've been there three years this month. Most of the programming in my department revolves around assisting individuals of all ages with setting goals for their life that will help them get more involved in their community, as involved as they want to be. Some individuals want to be really involved in their community, and we can assist them in providing supports and helping them get as involved as they want to be. Some people don't want to be that involved in their community, so we help them -- they tell us how involved they want to be and then we help them as far as social involvement, recreationally, vocationally. We can help them achieve those goals.

>> KIM: Like I said, this morning we're just going to go over kind of the Ability Center, what we do, talk about the basics of our program. We'll show you how much the youth is involved. I figured the best way to start this was we have a great video that our auxiliary has done for the community to show them what a Center for Independent Living does. We're going to start out by playing that video. It's about seven minutes long.

YOUTUBE VIDEO:

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>> FOR MORE THAN 90 YEARS, THE ABILITY CENTER OF GREATER TOLEDO HAS BEEN HELPING PEOPLE TO LOOK PAST LIMITATIONS.

EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS AND INVENTORS, DREAMERS AND DOERS TO USE THEIR ABILITIES

TO THE FULLEST.

FROM ITS MAIN CAMPUS IN SYLVANIA AND TWO SATELLITE OFFICES, THE ABILITY CENTER SERVES ALL OF NORTHWEST OHIO, SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES IN THEIR EFFORTS TO BE INDEPENDENT, ACTIVE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY.

>> MY PARENTS WANTED ME TO GROW UP DOING THE SAME THING THAT OTHER KIDS WOULD DO,

LIKE GOING TO REGULAR PUBLIC SCHOOL.

>> EDUCATIONAL ADVOCATES WORK WITH FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS TO HELP STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES LEARN AND THRIVE IN A SUPPORTIVE, INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT ALONGSIDE THEIR PEERS.

>> I LEARNED A LOT AND MAYBE PEOPLE LEARNED SOMETHING FROM ME, TOO.

>> EVERYONE WANTS TO MAKE THEIR OWN WAY IN THE WORLD. WE HELP OUR CLIENTS ENJOY GREATER CONTROL OVER THEIR LIVES.

>> INDEPENDENT LIVING TRAINING HELPS YOUNG ADULTS AND THOSE NEW TO DISABILITY TO ACQUIRE THE SKILLS AND TOOLS NECESSARY TO LIVE AS INDEPENDENTLY AS POSSIBLE.

>> EVERYDAY THINGS, LIKE BEING ABLE TO PREPARE YOUR OWN MEALS, IS SO IMPORTANT. IT'S A REAL JOY TO HELP SOMEBODY BECOME MORE SELF-RELIANT.

>> GETTING IN AND OUT OF YOUR HOUSE IS SOMETHING YOU TAKE FOR GRANTED UNTIL YOU CANNOT DO IT ANYMORE.

>> WHEN MODIFICATIONS ARE NEEDED TO ENABLE SOMEONE TO REMAIN IN OR RETURN TO THEIR HOME, THE HOUSING RESOURCE CENTER OFFERS ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT AND SUPPORT SERVICES ACCORDING TO THEIR PARTICULAR NEEDS.

>> YOU DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH THIS IS GOING TO HELP ME. THIS WILL START ME TO LIVING AGAIN.

>> CAMP IS THE BEST TIME.

WE PLAY GAMES

AND MAKE FRIENDS.

>> THE ABILITY CENTER HELPS KIDS BE KIDS.

MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR THOSE WITH DISABILITIES TO SAFELY ENJOY SUMMER CAMPS

THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY.

A MENTORSHIP PROGRAM CONNECTS PEOPLE WITH SIMILAR INTERESTS AND TALENTS TO EXPLORE ALL THE COMMUNITY HAS TO OFFER.

>> THE ABILITY CENTER HAS LEGISLATIVE LIAISONS TO HELP KEEP DISABILITY CONCERNS IN FRONT OF STATE AND NATIONAL LAWMAKERS.

>> WE NEED TO BE THAT VOICE TO MAKE SURE THAT ALL CONSTITUENTS CAN FULLY PARTICIPATE IN OUR COMMUNITIES.

>> BUT BUILDING INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES DOESN'T JUST MEAN CHANGING LAWS, IT MEANS CHANGING HEARTS AND MINDS. WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS ACROSS NORTHWEST OHIO,

WE'RE WORKING TO INCREASE UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT IT TAKES TO CREATE COMMUNITIES WITH EQUAL ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERYONE.

>> IDEALLY, YOU WOULDN'T NEED AN ORGANIZATION LIKE OURS TO DO THIS.

IT WOULD JUST BE THE NORMAL WAY THINGS ARE DONE.

WE KNOW THAT THAT'S A WAYS OFF YET, BUT IT'S STILL OUR VISION OF THE FUTURE.

>> THAT MEANS WORKING WITH ARCHITECTS TO DESIGN FACILITIES WHERE EVERYONE FEELS WELCOME.

AND TRAINING WORKERS ON HOW TO BEST SUPPORT VISITORS WITH A WIDE RANGE OF ABILITIES.

>> SO IF YOU JUST LISTEN FOR THE (CHIPMUNK SOUNDS) BECAUSE THEY ARE DOING ITS NOW, THAT IS GOING TO BE AN INDICATOR THAT YOU HAVE A FAMILY OF CHIPMUNKS AROUND.

>> THE WORK OF THE ABILITY CENTER IS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE INCREDIBLE VOLUNTEERS AND ONGOING SUPPORT OF OUR COMMUNITY.

>> TO FULFILL OUR MISSION,

WE RELY GREATLY ON INDIVIDUALS WHO DONATE THEIR TIME, TALENT AND TREASURE

IN SUPPORT OF THE CENTER.

>> CRITICAL SUPPORT COMES FROM THE ABILITY CENTER'S AUXILIARY.

EACH YEAR THEIR TIRELESS FUND-RAISING EFFORTS CULMINATE IN A STYLE SHOW. THE PROCEEDS HELP TO FURNISH HOMES FOR THOSE TRANSITIONING OUT OF NURSING HOMES.

FOR MANY, IT'S THE FIRST TIME THEY'VE LIVED INDEPENDENTLY.

>> WE KNOW WE'RE MAKING A DIFFERENCE.

IT'S NOT ALWAYS EASY TO MEASURE.

WE CAN SEE IT.

WE CAN FEEL IT.

WE KNOW WHEN IT HAPPENS.

>> THE ABILITY CENTER IS A PLACE OF EDUCATION

AND EMPOWERMENT.

HELPING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES TO LIVE AS INDEPENDENT, INVOLVED MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY.

AND HELPING COMMUNITIES UNDERSTAND HOW TO BE MOST ACCESSIBLE AND WELCOMING TO PEOPLE OF ALL ABILITIES.

OUR GOAL IS TO CREATE COMMUNITIES WHERE ALL CITIZENS CONSIDER EACH OTHER WITH DIGNITY, EQUITY AND RESPECT.

WHEN WE LOOK PAST EACH OTHER'S LIMITATIONS,

AND OPEN OUR EYES TO EACH OTHER'S GIFTS, TALENTS AND INTERESTS, WE MIGHT JUST BE SURPRISED AT WHAT WE'RE ABLE TO DO.

[APPLAUSE]

>> KIM: Okay, so that is the introduction to the Ability Center.

>> DARRELL: Kim, excuse me. This is Darrell. I just wanted to mention that there is an alternate version of the text that was unspoken through the video in the packets of those who requested alternate versions. So if you have a chance to watch it again later, and make sure that you have your alternate text, it will make some of this make more sense to you. Thanks.

>> KIM: Let's start from the beginning. Okay, the Ability Center of Greater Toledo was started in 1920's and we've been around and celebrated our 90\_th\_ anniversary. Funny story, it was started by the Rotary Club in Toledo. One of their members had come across a young child in an alley way that was using a scooter to get around. His name was (inaudible) and what they did was they encouraged their entire rotary to get around fund-raising for this child to get him prosthetic and an education. The story goes that that became the society for crippled children which is what the Ability Center was way back in 1920, and it also sprung the Easter Seals movement cross the country. So we claim the Easter Seals.

We have currently 53 employees with five satellite offices all in northwest Ohio except for we do have a director of public policy that lives in Columbus which is the capital and she does obviously public policy.

All of our satellite centers, we have one at the aelante center, and that is basically a community center for the Hispanic population. We felt it was important to reach out to the Hispanic population and so we created a position there.

We also have one at the YMCA downtown. You guys don't know Toledo very well, but we live in Sylvania which is kind of the uppie part of town and we decided we were missing on a lot of consumers in the downtown area and didn't want to get on the bus and traveling all the way up to us. So we created a styte office downtown.

This is our organizational chart and I'm sure it's very, very tiny. I believe you have a copy in your folders if you want to see it closer. But I can describe it to you.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes, you do have a copy in your folders. It's on the left-hand side. It's the back -- between the red -- the very back of the first day.

>> KIM: Basically the organizational chart -- all I can tell you about it is we have five branches of focus. We have assistance dogs, our housing resource center, our community connections department, which is Annie, our community outreach our options for tomorrow program. So I'll go through each one. As I'm speaking feel free if you have a question just to raids your hand and stop me. You might have to yell at me because I might not be looking at you.

Feel free. And like we said earlier, this is just a really quick basic -- I'm going to talk about our youth programs very quickly. We're going to cover them a lot more in the next two days.

Our consumer ages -- if you look at this chart you see that our consumers, more than 60 percent of our consumers are under taj of 24. So you can see it's a pretty big focus of our center. Pretty much everything that we do -- I would say everything that bee do has a great consumer youth base to it.

Assistance dogs -- due to the economy and since 2007 you guys all realize that some nonprofit agencies have had some difficulties staying a float. Assistance dogs in our area is one of those agencies. And how we decided to solve it, since our missions are so similar, obviously independence for people, we decided to merge. So on October 11\_th\_ of this year, last year it would be, we merged and became just the Ability Center and now they are a program of the Ability Center. And I'm now the program director.

They graduate -- it's small agency. They graduate about 20 people per year with dogs. They do both service dogs and therapy dogs. And so what our director has allowed us to do as a center is to then continue on with those people that are receiving the dogs and make sure they are more connected to their communities and are actually able to get out and use their dogs to become part of their community, get jobs, volunteer, and that sort of thing.

and like I said, I am luckily the program director of this along with everything else. I shouldn't say that. That's terrible. Can

and it's new to me going from working with kids my whole career to then working with dogs. I can tell you -- I said in our meetings they are talking about dogs and I still giggle every little bit when they start talking about bitches, I have a hard on time not giggle with that. That's what they call female dogs.

Housing resource center -- our housing resource center holds several different programs. Number one is our nursing home transition program. We started our nursing home transition program 12 years ago. We hired one gentleman and he basically made up the program as he went. He was able to in seven years transition over 300 people into the community by himself, which is a huge feat. So huge that the state of Ohio started to notice that we had something going.

So when they started to talk about what we have in Ohio is called the home (inaudible) program. And it is a program where the different centers and AoA, area office of aging have decided to get together and try to move people into community living instead of nursing homes.

So when they started talking about the home choice program, they came to us and said what are your ideas? What do you use? How do you do it? What do you come across that are problems and issues that we may face? And we were lucky enough to share a program with them and now we've transitioned over 500 people.

Still a huge program for us. So huge that we started a home modification program. We found that people could not get out of the nursing homes unless their homes were accessible at least with a ramp. So we went after grants and said, hey, we can build ramps way cheaper than a lot of people. We hired contractors on staff. It costs about $2,000 a ramp. We do somewhere around 179 or 180 ramps a year.

Accessible housing -- we also do accessible housing. Obviously we keep track, a database of what's accessible in the community. The unique thing we did do in the city of Toledo is we started the visitability ordinance. And what the visitability ordinance is, is that any new construction that is either federally or state funded has to be visitable by a wheelchair at least on the first floor. So they have to have a bathroom accessible and the front entrance has to be accessible. And that is passed within Lucas county where we're from, and we're working on passing it in the state of Ohio.

the pictures that we have here obviously there is a young boy getting a ramp. We have a lot of volunteers from fraternities, different agencies, groups, that get together. It takes about a day and a half to build a ramp. They are amazing and do it very quickly. And it's a great opportunity for people to volunteer within our agency.

the other picture down at the bottom is a couple of our staff members. We are really good advocates for accessibility for new buildings and what this is is a picture -- they built a MUD hen stadium which is minor league stadium in downtown Toledo and we're a great part -- actually the only part of the accessibility of building a stadium and I'm proud to say that they received a nailings Al accessibility award for being one st most accessible stadiums in the country. So we are making a difference in that.

Community connections -- our community connections department is the department that houses what you would normally expect to see from a center of independent living. It's the social skills training, our transition programs, our youth leadership programs, our recreation, Annie is the director of that program and we'll talk about that in detail later. That's kind of the main focus.

So basically working on increasing people's social capital is the goal of that and I'll describe that later to you. Social capital is basically that they have more people that they can rely on when they need help or assistance or anything like that.

Community outreach -- our community outreach program -- this is where we have the staff that does all of our information fare, all of our speaking engagements to different groups, schooling agencies, I can tell you last year we spoke to over 3,000 community members in the capacity of going to them and speaking to them about disability and what a center for independent living does as well as hiring -- we especially lies in hiring HR kind of things around disability and doing a lot of speaking on that.

We also have a disability awareness training that we do. We try to do it on a monthly basis. And what it is, is it's an enjoyable mix of videos and speakers. Hands on ac assistive ties, what's unique about it for our center -- we go back and forth because we do have hands on experience with disability. I know that's a real touchy subject, but it does bring them more into the training, but all of our training is done by staff with disabilities. And it's a about their disability and they talk about how they feel, how they grew up, what they've experienced, different things like that. it's very hands on and very interactive. Very popular.

Last year we had 1,090 community members attend and I can give you an idea of our crediting (inaudible) staff, METRO parks, our public transportation has sent all of their staff to our training. METRO parks, our zoo, I can go on and on, send people to our training and it's a lot of fun.

Options for tomorrow -- options for tomorrow was an initiative that we started with our local county board of developmental disabilities in collaboration with University of Toledo, which is in our area. What it is, is what it says, options for tomorrow. We see a real need in our community for plans for adult parents raising adult children and what has happened is we've been the -- we get the call that says, you know, something has happened. We have a child. The police usually call or the fire department or whoever, we have a child that's actually an adult with a disability and we don't know what to do with them.

So unfortunately the family did not plan for the fact that they would not be there forever. So what we have done is initiated this program that allows them to decide what comes next. What are the plans for your children if you're unable to care for them or, better yet, what are the plans now that we can get them out and about and independent.

I'm getting into a little bit more of the nitty gritty of what we do at the center. The roles that youth play at our center. 20 percent of our staff started in our youth leadership program. So we take it really to heart that we cultivate our own. Actually my Executive Director started out as a camper when he was a child. He became a counselor and then camp director and went off to college and got his degree and came back as our marketing director and 12 years ago became our executive director. This is being taped but I will say he is no longer youth full. But still, board members -- we have currently two of our youth board members -- youth that are board members. They went through our youth leadership program. Our current vice chair is one of my youth leadership members. They do have a great say in what we do at the center and what kind of plans we do.

Camp counselors, as I mentioned, we have a summer camp for kids and we encourage our youth with disabilities that are in our programs to either come and volunteer or be camp counselors. Just to provide the spirit that these people have jobs, they are active members of the community, they great role models for the kids going through the camp.

Volunteers -- this is a tricky one. We do have volunteers for our youth at the Ability Center. However, I'll talk about this more tomorrow, but we encourage them not to get stuck in the disability bubble. We are very comfortable agency that has all the accessibility that you can ever desire in life and what we try to do when we work with your youth leadership kids is get out there and experience something else. This isn't real. You know, as we're all aware as a center for independent living. We try to get them -- some volunteers and some things that they are interested in out in the community with our community partners.

Interns -- the same thing with the interns. We have a lot of interns that come through our agency. We hire a lot of our interns. It's good chance to figure out if they are going to be good employees or not. We definitely steal a few of those. Sarah at the table is one of our interns.

Mentors -- we have a mentor program. We go encourage our youth that have gone through our youth leadership program to become mentors for other youth. And advocates -- in our youth leadership program we have an advocate component where we teach broad spectrum from Get-Out-The-Vote campaign, phone banks where you call people and say are you registered to vote? Keeping up on local and state legislation, letter writing, active protesting in Columbus. We've got some down there. So they are very involved in advocacy.

Types of services for youth -- again we'll cover this a lot in the next two days, but I'll go through it quickly. Camp cricket is a summer camp for kids 5 to 14. Educational advocacy, I'll talk about that in a minute. We have our youth leadership program. We have a transition program called big dreams new horizons. We have a mentor program, we have a job club, we have independent living in action, which is community-based independent living, getting out there, get to go see how things are. Introduction to recreation, and community connections.

Staff qualifications -- basically our staff is selected probably how everybody selects their staff, based on potential and experience. We like to keep your youth staff youth full which is why I'm not in it anymore. For most positions, we have a requirement of a bachelors degree in the social service industry or like I said potential. So we do hire staff and we have tuition reimbursement. We provide them with the opportunity to go to school as long as they are interested in something that will interest us when they get done.

and on new staff that comes into the agency is assigned a staff mentor so they get know the culture , what we believe in, make sure all their interactions have to do with the philosophy of independent living.

Past youth programs -- I'm going to go over these quickly just because I don't know how much time we have. If you want to know more about them later, just find me and I'll tell you a little bit more. We've had a school/high tech program. Has anybody out here done a high school/high tech program? A couple of people. What it is is a grant and they come in and we hire a position and she worked with us for three years I believe and brought in students and fitted them for technology to make them more independent. It's kind of a cool program. We didn't go after the grant because we moved in a different direction after that. It's a cool program. I believe it's still granted right now if anybody is interested. The pathways program, Annie will talk about later, it's a collaboration that we have with our local bureau of vocational rehab. And basically it allowed us to hire two D. VR counselors and cut through the red tape situation in Ohio. It takes forever. So we were able to kind control it for awhile.

Your life your dream was a program we started with a local school and the county board. It was a grant from the county board. And what it is -- and I have a tape, too. It's not accessible but if anybody is interested. It's not captioned.

and talks about a transition program and we had our transition professionals actually have offices at the school system and worked closely with the youth to make sure that they were transitioning through school appropriately.

Project LIFE is kind of a mentor program that was started in our local school system and it was learning independence through friendships and shared experiences. And it's just that, we found that a lot of the kids wouldn't go to like the football games or the dances or things that normal teenagers would do because they wouldn't have anybody to go with or they didn't know what they were going to do or where they were going to sit. So what we did was start kind of a club and we would say -- there is a football game. Who is going to go? Where are you going to sit? And everybody would just kind of join together. So it was kind of a mentor program. Not really a one on one. But it worked out really well.

Act funding streams -- the Diana princess of Wales grant is how we started our youth leadership program. It's been 12 years. I'm not sure if it's still available or not. Types of grants like that, they are really interested in youth leadership. It's a great way to get a program like that started.

I will talk about our youth leadership a little bit later. I do have our curriculum available if anybody wants it.

Project gain is a grant that has a golf accessible alliance. It's accessible golfing, basically. They still do give out the grants nationally if you're interested in starting a golf program. I can definitely give you the contacts for that agency.

the Toledo el, our local Toledo el, gives us $8,000 a year. They have a PET project of cerebral palsy, still it's $8,000 a year. And it's like clock work they give it to us. We have an auxiliary. They put on a style show that raises funds. Our ARRA federal stimulus funds, I'll talk about that in a minute what we do with that.

Lucas County board of developmental disabilities. We partner with them a lot on different grants for people with cognitive disabilities. Ohio Rehab Service Commission. Our P. C. A. program, personal care assistance program. Department of Education and of course United Way funds are educational advocacy program.

Key partners -- we have -- what we have done with our ARRA funding -- I guess everybody is familiar with the ARRA funding. A lot of centers got it. We granted it out to other agencies to make our community more inclusive. So these are a few of our community partners. We have wood county 4 H. The girls and boy scouts in our area, the YMCA, the University of Toledo does what we call project scout program which is employment for people with disabilities within their campus. Supported employment.

We didn't give mine to the bureau but it's one of our other key partners. And local high schools, we do a lot of grant mixing with local high schools. That's how we get our students and then the adelante center for the Hispanic population outreach.

Educational advocacy and consulting services. We have a FHAP tasks particular educational advocacy and counseling program. They made is your they were receiving the appropriate IEP, 504 accommodations. We also identified different kinds of systemic issues within local school districts and attack that so we've had a lot of success in that area. We work with ages 3 to 22. Like I said on 504.

and so we'll talk about our strategic plan is a available at our website if anybody is interested in looking at our strategic plan. There is our contact information.

Karnett@abilitycenter.org is mine.

Add then Annie's is aKim@Ability Center.org. Does anybody have any questions? I know it was pretty quick.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: How do you -- do you guys have actual youth involvement like during the day or is your programs at after hours? How do you work with the high schools to get students involved?

>> KIM: You want to answer it? I'll answer it. We do both. During the day like I said we've had a grant where we actually had people placed in high schools, and so we worked it out with the counselors so that they would have time during breaks or homework time or whatever to come down and talk to the counselors. We obviously work with kids that are out of high school up to the age of 24. So those youth are usually available and not in school. A lot of our programming is in the evenings and weekends and then of course the summertime.

Anybody else?

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: I have a question. I see for your funding stream you have the Department of Education. Can you tell a little bit about how that works?

>> KIM: About the Department of Education.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: How you made that connection?

>> KIM: We will talk e about that a little bit later.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: My question was -- you said that you have your program after hours and during the summertime -- so how do we -- for those parents that work, how do we get those students to come to the center in the summer? Do you have a transportation system?

>> KIM: We live on the bus line. We encourage and do transportation training and we do have door-to-door service in our area. So we do train and get people signed up with tarps, it's what it is called. We do not provide transportation specifically.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: That's one of the barriers for us. The parent wants their child to go, but what about transportation?

>> KIM: We try and make that an independent living goal and try to come up with a solution for their independence and how they have friends or neighbors or whatever to transport them.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Okay.

>> JUDITH: Thank you very much.