



Helping individuals with physical disabilities live independent and self directed lives.

2220 Hall Road, Elma, NY 14059 716-685-3976
We are a 501c3 not-for-profit organization.

Fall 2007 Newsletter

*In Loving Memory of:
Elliott Golach
June 9, 2007*



*In Loving Memory of:
Greg Wagner
June 23, 2007*

First Independence House Realized



Independence Foundation purchases & opens new home

In June of 2007 The Independence Foundation suffered great losses. Two more of the young men who planned to live in The Independence House have passed away waiting for their dreams to be realized.

We couldn't wait any longer. We searched for a ranch house that met our needs and could be quickly modified. In June we put in a purchase offer, in July we closed, and in August three young adults moved in!

Photo above is Jackie Swiatkowski hanging the picture that Marc, her son, wanted in his first house! Marc's presence is with us always!

**Thank you for the heroic efforts from our
Foundation volunteers,
First Niagara Bank, Uncle Bob's Storage,
Inergex, and our contractor – Doug Rowland!**

Thank you to everyone who helped with the house, to everyone who purchased house items from the gift registry, to everyone who brought paper products to the Open House, and to all for your continued support!



**Our Volunteers came in
all shapes and sizes!**



**The Independence House –
A Place to Call Home**

The Independence Foundation, The Mullers, and the new residents of the very first Independence House
"Thank you" with all of our hearts!

The Independence House OPTS proposal:

We continue to work with People Inc and the state to realize the original Independence House plan – a home for 8 individuals has been approved by the state – and we are still looking for land. As soon as land is identified and purchased, there will be another option for independent living.

A second house proposal has been submitted also - this one would be a 6 person home. The wait list for this type of housing substantiates the need. This is an option for individuals with physical disabilities who can manage their own lives. To be placed on the wait list – call Chris Muller at 685-3976.



Bike for Ben 2007 update:

Many thanks to all who participated in this years Bike for Ben on July 14th, 2007!
Again, the weather was beautiful, the crowd large and supportive, and the day a huge success!

Our First mile is the Memory Mile – and this year there were so many to remember: Greg Wagner, Elliott Golach, Eric Grammas, Alisa McFarland, Jerod Lane, Marc Swiatkowski, and Emily Morgan. We grieve the loss of these wonderful young adults.

The lime green t-shirts this year were a big hit! Again designed by our very own Jon Gardner – who still hopes to live in the Independence House. The design this year is a house – and the tag line- Independence... one house at a time. It describes our mission – to establish housing for these young folks.

Our final mile was marked by signs that showed our progress over the past two years, ending with our biggest accomplishment – the new home in East Aurora!

\$38,000 was raised between donations that day and Corporate Sponsors. These funds will continue to support our programs:

- ✓ Residential options
- ✓ Two power wheelchair soccer teams
- ✓ Our transportation program
- ✓ Three \$500 College scholarships
- ✓ Wheelchair Van donation program



- ✓ Equipment Loan Closet
- ✓ Information & Resources on our website
- ✓ Social gatherings

The Independence Foundation - Wheelchair Transportation Program

Funded by a grant from the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo

A collaborative project between
The Independence Foundation, People Inc, and The Self-Advocacy Association of New York State.

Our new program began in March of 07. We provide rides to individuals with disabilities in wheelchairs who can travel independently or with their aide.

*42 rides have been provided so far. The rides are used to get to church, meetings, shopping, family homes, and social activities like bowling. **The average wheelchair transport costs \$150!** Our young adults on fixed incomes simply cannot afford this.*

Funding is limited, we have almost exhausted our program funds! Please help us to continue this program by making a specific donation to the Independence Foundation

Transportation Program. Checks may be made payable to The Independence Foundation and noted Transportation Program care of: 2220 Hall Road, Elma, NY 14059

There is huge unmet need in this area – help us to help others gain independence!

For an application or for more information please visit our website at www.TheIndependenceFoundation.org



The Independence Foundation awards 2nd wheelchair van in 2007! Donate a Van Program

A Chevy Gladiator was donated to The Independence Foundation by the Muller Family. The van was then awarded to Tammy of East Aurora. Tammy is using the van to get to the Univ. of Buffalo where she is completing her PhD. The Independence Foundation thanks the Muller family for their generosity - and extends an invitation to anyone interested in donating a wheelchair accessible vehicle. Your donation can make a world of difference for an individual with disabilities.



Watch our website for more information on donated vehicles - as we expect another soon!

Please consider The Independence Foundation if you should ever find yourself in the position to donate a wheelchair accessible van. Your donation will help another family and you will receive a tax donation letter.



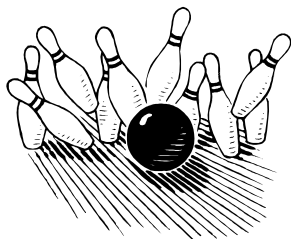
Visit our website for more details
www.TheIndependenceFoundation.org

Thank you to Mark Mingle, Of Elma Collision, 6381 Seneca Street for generously donating the custom work.

Social Events:

Bowling:

Sunday Oct 28 1PM
Sunday Nov 25 1PM
Sunday Dec 9 1PM



Come bowl with us at the
AMF Lancaster Lanes,
4319 Transit Rd. near Losson Rd.
Games are \$4.00 each, pay your own way.
The whole family can come!
There are ramps for wheelchair bowlers.
RSVP to 716-685-3976

Special Events:

“Power of I” Event on
Wednesday, November 14, 2007
from **5:30 to 8:00 p.m.**
Speaker Gary Guller and dinner on Sheas Stage!
By Invitation only - call Chris for more information

Friday November 23rd

**The Independence Foundation visits
the Festival of Trees**

**Adams Mark Hotel,
120 Church Street 3 - 5 PM
RSVP to Chris 685-3976
Chocolate Fountain and more**

Mom's Only:

Mothers with physically challenged children getting together.
(Pay your own way)

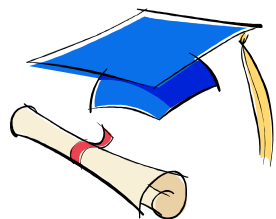
Monday October 22 6:30 PM
at **Panera Bread** Orchard Park
3995 North Buffalo Road
Orchard Park, NY 14127
(716) 667-2302

Thursday November 8 6:30 PM
at **Smokey Bones**
2007 Walden Ave.
Cheektowaga, NY 14225
(716) 683-0724

Skip December - Happy Holidays!



Monday January 14 6:30 PM
at **Olive Garden**
3951 Maple Rd.
Amherst, NY 14226
(716) 837-5211



College Scholarships 07 - 08

College Scholarships this year were awarded to :

Holly from Clarence
Amber from Texas
and Emily from Michigan

Applications are available online. The deadline for 08 – 09 is April 15, 2008

You may make a tax deductible donation to our scholarship fund – call Chris 685-

3976 for more information

SBA Dinner / Dance – The Spina Bifida Association holds their annual Dinner / Dance on **Saturday, November 10th at 6PM**, Classics V Banquet Hall. All are invited to attend. This is a great time for socializing! Food, entertainment, and Chinese Auction. Tickets \$25 adults, \$10 ages 13 – 21. Call Karen at 585-457-9867

Consumer Directed Aide Care

Have you heard about a program called Consumer Directed?

This is a program run through CASA (County social service agency for home care), and administered by various agencies – including People Inc and Independent Living Project. Through this program you run your own ad for a personal care aide, you interview the candidates, hire them and train them.

You are required to have a physical from your doctor, and a Casa visit every 6 months , and if you are ever hospitalized, you must notify Casa before you leave the hospital. The aides you hire must have a background check, a TB test, and a doctors physical. (There is a packet of paperwork for them)

The Consumer Directed Program is an alternative to traditional, agency managed home care aides. **The benefit to this program is that you are in control**, you chose the aides you want working with you. **The downfall is that if your aide doesn't show up – YOU must find back-up**, there is no agency who will send out another person.

There are other things you need to be aware of before choosing this program, but if you can manage your own life – this is a great option for aide care! We use The Independent Living Project for Ben's consumer directed aide care because their pay rate for the aides was higher. For more information on this program – call Chris.



Holiday Shopping Made Simple!

Our Gift Card program runs all year!

The Independence Foundation is participating in a scrip program. When you purchase Gift Cards from us – a percent of the face value is donated back to our Foundation. We are selling Gift Cards from a number of quality stores and restaurants. Current list on website.

New - Panera Bread, Burger King & Cheesecake Factory!

E-mail pbilski@roadrunner.com to purchase the cards or for more information.

Other Ongoing Fundraisers:

Collect cell phones or sponsor a Dress Down Day – contact Chris for more info.

We are still collecting cell phones. Dress Down Days continue –

Darius Goes West.... Coming soon....

Darius Weems, a 15-year-old with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, had never left his hometown of Athens, Georgia. In the summer of 2005, he and a group of young college students traveled across the country in a wheelchair-accessible RV to test accessibility in America. Their ultimate goal was to reach Los Angeles and convince MTV's hit show, "Pimp My Ride," to customize Darius's wheelchair. Along the way, they found joy, brotherhood, and the knowledge that life, even when imperfect, is always worth the ride.

The Independence Foundation has this movie and we will announce a show date soon.

Watch the e-mail list and our website for more information.

Airline for Wheelchairs!!!

A Not-for-profit airline that transports you in the wheelchair for the price of, but not the hassles of commercial airlines! See our website for more info

USA wins World Cup in Power Soccer!

CONGRATULATIONS to the Team USA – hand picked, the best Power Soccer athletes from around the USA! **Team USA won the World Cup – held recently in Tokyo, Japan!** We beat France, England, Portugal, Belgium, Denmark, and Japan! More info at www.powersoccerusa.net

Volunteers – If you can rake leaves, help at bowling, make a meal, volunteer to drive a wheelchair van, stuff envelopes, help at soccer, and many other various tasks – we need **YOU!** If you would like to help at any of our programs – call Chris Muller at 685-3976.



The Independence Foundation **Northtowns / Southtowns Power Soccer**

Join a Team Now!



Our Division 2 team wins the trophy at the Auburn, NY Tournament, held in June.

- > **If you can safely maneuver a power wheelchair – you can play! All ages!**
- > Registration Form available at www.TheIndependenceFoundation.org
- > \$25 Registration fee includes all equipment. Call 685-3976 for info.

Welcome Tony & Michael !

Visit our website for location, dates, and registration forms.
www.TheIndependenceFoundation.org

Southtowns: – all players invited

Elma, Marilla, Wales Boys & Girls Club
2080 Girdle Rd., Elma, NY 14059

Sun October 21

Sun November 4

Sun November 18

all 4 – 6 PM

Northtowns: - all players invited

**Boys & Girls Club of the Northtowns
325 Franklin St., Tonawanda, 14150**

Sat October 20

Sat November 10

Sat November 24

all 10AM – noon

Editors note:

I apologize that this newsletter is a little later than most, and a lot larger than most!

Our last newsletter was in Feb 07 – in March, Ben suffered a hip fracture and remained in bed until May. In June & July we were consumed with the Bike for Ben, while also purchasing and renovating a new house right up through August! I am happy to report that we were able to go on vacation in August – with Ben!



These past months have been a journey, one that has been extremely challenging and abundantly rewarding! While on this journey we learned even more “New Stuff”!

For example:

Did you know a portable x-ray machine can come to your home if you can't get out?

Medicaid will pay for Ambien CR - but not Ambien! (without prior approval)

Medicaid will pay for Claritin but not Allegra! (without prior approval)

A script written by a resident won't be covered by Medicaid!

You can't use aides from other agencies even after a hospital stay when in the Consumer Directed program!

When you have a hip fracture - the hoyer slings won't work - too much pressure in that area!

and the list goes on and on.....

We may be ready to write a handbook soon!

If ever our life experiences can ease your journey – don't hesitate to give us a call.

I hope you enjoy all of the wonderful things in this newsletter and forgive me for taking so long to catch up!

Chris

Winter Tips:

*As the winter months approach –
carry a snow shovel in your wheelchair van,*



*have an emergency plan,
know how to operate the manual overrides on your
vehicle and home lifts.*

*If you need another copy of the Emergency Folders
that we mailed out last year – give us a call.*

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We get by with a little help from our friends!

**Thank you to Alan & Becky Erb and
Erb Plumbing & Heating for their extremely generous support!**

The Independence Foundation!

Danny Hocutt at his Bake Sale to help



**The Stoffel Family at their
Garage Sale to help
The Independence Foundation!**