



Introduction

Welcome to HireGround! Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities produces this newsletter expressly for our VR professional audience. We hope that these stories, best practices and practical tips will be of value to you as we continue our relationship and work with participants. Our goal is achieving quality employment, independence and disability determination outcomes through our integrated services, partnerships and innovation. For questions, content suggestions, or comments on this newsletter, please contact: Elizabeth.sammons@ood.ohio.gov. Thanks in advance for sharing this information as appropriate.

Disability Community Opportunities/Announcements

Tax Tips for the Disability Community

If you are like most taxpayers with or without disabilities, you want to get your taxes out of the way. However, you may have questions. The IRS' Tax Highlights for Persons with Disabilities can help answer many of them. Whether you have questions on your income, itemized deductions, tax credits and incentives, personal support services or your healthcare, the Publication of the Week helps cross the t's and dot the i's on your tax return at: <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p907.pdf>

If you earned up to \$60,000 in 2014, you can use MyFreeTaxes.com to e-file your federal and state tax return without charge. <http://www.myfreetaxes.com/>

Free Service Animal Eye Exams in May:

American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists (ACVO) is hosting the 8th Annual ACVO/

StokesRx National Service Animal free Eye Exam Event this May. Service animals eligible include guide, handicapped assistance, detection, military, search and rescue, and certified current registered other animals. To qualify, service animals must be "active working animals" certified by a formal training program or organization, or currently enrolled in a formal training program. Owners/agents must register the animal using an online registration form at: www.ACVOeyeexam.org. Registration ends April 30. Once registered online, the owner/agent will receive a registration number with a list of participating ophthalmologists in their area. They may contact a specialist to schedule a May appointment. Times may vary and are filled on a first-come, first-served basis, so clients should register and make appointments early.

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iPhone and Free Disability Tutorials

Hadley School for the Blind is offering various iFocus instructional tutorials primarily for sight-impaired users wanting to know more about iPhone access. At about 20 minutes each, these include:

- *Typing on Your iDevice*
- *Using the Zoom Features*
- *Searching and Downloading from the App Store*

Update on U.S. Currency Readers for the Visually-Impaired Community

Those wishing to get the free audio/vibrating bill reading device from the U.S. Department of Printing and Engraving do not need to be patrons of National Library Service for the Blind. However, certification of the need for this reader is still necessary through a doctor or other vision professional. Unfortunately, applications are not accessible to the alternative-reading community. They are available, however, by calling 844-815-9388. Anyone who receives a unit that does not work properly should contact the call center at the same number. Print-out paper applications are also available from: www.loc.gov/nls/other/currencyreader/index.html. The application should be filled out, signed, and mailed to the Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

In this blog, Rosie Rios, Treasurer of the United States, gives more details on the program and what to expect in actual upcoming alteration of U.S. bills. <https://usodep.blogs.govdelivery.com/2015/02/09/providing-meaningful-access-to-u-s-currency/>

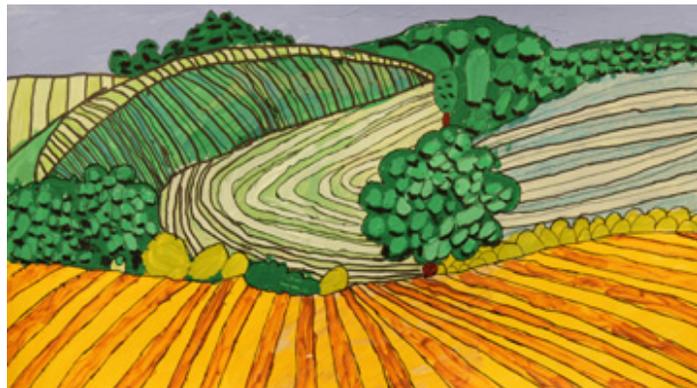
Select User Manuals Free for Download in Alternative Formats

American Printing House for the Blind offers a selected list of product manuals for free download: www.aph.org/manuals/. You may print or emboss these as needed.

When You Are on SSDI Disability Benefits, Some General Tax Tips

Compiled by Elizabeth L. Sammons

Note: The information below is general in nature. For individual questions and cases,



See "Day of Arts for All" for more information about "Golden Slumber" by Nathanael Curtiss, age 15.

please talk with a tax specialist or otherwise research to confirm specifics.

With the exception of SSI, which is never taxed, all Social Security benefits are federally taxed in the same way, (whether retirement, survivors, or disability benefits.) Most people only pay taxes on SSA benefits if they have other substantial income (such as wages, self-employment, interest, dividends and other taxable income that must be reported) besides SSDI benefits. Note: States exempt Social Security from taxed amounts.

For tax year 2014, Social Security disability income is taxable only if half of SSDI plus all other income is more than:

- \$25,000 if you filed as single, head of household, or married filing separately, and you and your spouse lived apart all year.
- \$32,000 if you are married filing jointly.
- \$0 if you are married filing separately, and you and your spouse lived together at all during the year.

At these figures and higher, up to 85 percent of benefits may be taxable.

Each January, beneficiaries receive a *Social Security Benefit Statement* (Form SSA-1099) showing the amount of benefits received in the previous year. You can use this *Benefit Statement* when completing a federal income tax return to find out if benefits are subject to tax. Voluntary withholding for taxes from monthly benefits can be requested through *IRS Form W-4V*. Amounts withheld generally range from 7% to 25%. See *Tax Withholdings*. You have the option to make quarterly estimated

tax payments to the IRS, **or** you can figure the taxable amount of the benefits on a worksheet in the *Instructions for Form 1040* or *Instructions for Form 1040A*, or in *Publication 915, Social Security and Equivalent Railroad Retirement Benefits*.

If benefits include other beneficiaries such as children, these auxiliaries may need to file a separate tax return. Each family member receiving benefits should get a separate 1099. This also applies to children. See Instructions for *Form 8615, Tax for Certain Children Who Have Unearned Income*. However, if the SSDI payments amounts are a child's only income, it would be unlikely that the child would need to pay any tax.

If you receive disability income from an employer while you are unable to work, that money is usually taxable just like regular wages. For benefits from a disability insurance policy, your tax liability depends on who paid the premiums for the policy. If your employer paid the premiums, then the benefits are taxable, but not if you paid the premiums using after-tax money.

If you have taxable disability income, you may qualify for the federal Tax Credit for the Elderly and Disabled. This credit is available if a doctor has certified that your disability prevents you from working and that your condition is expected to last more than a year or result in

death. The size of your credit depends on how much taxable disability income you had as well as how much you received in nontaxable disability benefits. See *IRS Publication 524* for more details.

If you make certain home improvements to accommodate a disability, you may be able to claim those costs as a medical expense deduction. This includes such things as adding a wheelchair ramp, chair lift or grab bars, modifying hardware, electrical fixtures or railings, or widening doorways or aisles. *IRS Publication 502* provides more details and examples.

Sidebar/Sources:

For details from the National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives, see: <http://nossocr.org/ssdi-federal-income-tax>

For additional tax information from Social Security, see <http://www.ssa.gov/planners/taxes.htm>

For details from the IRS, see: <http://www.irs.gov/Help-&Resources/Tools-&FAQs/FAQs-for-Individuals/Frequently-Asked-Tax-Questions-&Answers/Social-Security-Income/Regular-&Disability-Benefits>

For videos and examples of tax situations, visit TurboTax disability resources at: <https://turbotax.intuit.com/tax-tools/tax-tips/General-Tax-Tips/Tax-Tips-for-the-Legally-Disabled/INF22825.html>

The Social Security Red Book is a lead reference source about the employment-related provisions of Social Security Disability Insurance and SSI Programs for educators, advocates, rehabilitation professionals, and counselors who serve people with disabilities. See the 2015 edition at: <http://www.ssa.gov/redbook/index.html>

Hundreds of accessible federal tax forms and publications are available for download from the IRS Accessibility webpage at: <http://www.irs.gov/uac/IRS.gov-Accessibility>

Visit www.irs.gov and select the Forms & Pubs tab to access the Accessible Forms & Pubs link. You can choose from large-print, text, accessible PDFs, e-Braille, or HTML formats



See "Day of Arts for All" for more information about "Midas' Touch" by Sandy Donnamiiller.

compatible when used with screen readers and refreshable Braille displays. The IRS also provides American Sign Language videos with the latest tax information.

Day of Arts for All



"Liquid Amber" by Paul Laage can be seen at the VSA Ohio 7th annual Day of Arts for All.

On March 14, VSA Ohio hosted its 7th annual Day of Arts for All, featuring creativity from artists with disabilities from around Ohio. Pieces featured will be appearing for the next year in Accessible Expressions Ohio (AEO): a statewide, juried, visual arts exhibition and tour adding to Ohio's richness of cultural diversity. The program began in 1996 to challenge perceptions and raise awareness about the arts and abilities of every citizen. AEO advances creative careers, offering Ohio artists with disabilities the experience of submitting work to an adjudicated call for art and exposure to new state and national audiences who are potential patrons. For more information and to see where the AEO tour will exhibit, visit: www.vsao.org/programs/aeo.

Resource Spotlight: Upward Bound Still Climbs after 50 Years

by Elizabeth L. Sammons

As part of President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, Congress established measures to help low-income Americans enter college called TRIO: three federal programs originally funded through the Higher Education Act of 1965. The programs have expanded to seven:

- **Talent Search** - those as young as middle school to identify aptitudes and thinking about higher education.

- **Upward Bound** - starting in 9th grade through high school to develop leadership and college prep.
- **Upward Bound Math-Science** - with supplemental instruction in math and science.
- **Educational Opportunity Centers** - to assist in completing high school learning about and applying for scholarships and college opportunities.
- **Student Support Services** - providing career readiness, tutoring, academic and cultural enrichment, and academic support for college students.
- **Veterans Upward Bound** - to provide comparable opportunities/training to veterans.
- **Ronald E. McNair Post Baccalaureate Achievement** - support for students working on master's and doctoral degrees.

VR professionals are encouraged to share Upward Bound and other TRIO information with students. While the program is not disability specific, students in the Upward Bound program are four times more likely to earn an undergraduate degree than students from similar backgrounds who did not participate in TRIO.

Upward Bound focuses on college preparation, high school to college transition, and career and cultural exploration. "It is a pipeline from start to finish for first generation and low-income students," explained Rebekah Stewart, OSU's Program Director for the TRIO Upward Bound program. The learning is designed "to motivate students and develop the skills and resilience necessary for persistence and success in education beyond high school." Across the country, 22,000 current TRIO participants have known disabilities.

After school, on Saturdays and during the summer on campus, Upward Bound projects provide academic instruction in mathematics, laboratory sciences, composition, literature, and foreign languages. Also included are tutoring, mentoring, cultural enrichment, work-study programs, education or counseling services to improve the financial and economic literacy of students, and programs and

activities designed for students with limited English proficiency. College visits are also included. Nearly one-third of all low-income high school graduates who enrolled in college have been served by a TRIO program. Of the 964 programs throughout the United States, Ohio has 28 Upward Bound programs. For a database of all Ohio TRIO members, including some private colleges, see: <http://www.ohiotrio.org/#!/members/cpqm>

To be eligible for Upward Bound, students from persistently low-achieving feeder school districts must have completed the 8th grade, be 13 to 19 years old, and have a need for academic support in order to pursue a program of postsecondary education. All students must be either from low-income families or be potential first-generation college students. For those Columbus-area students ineligible for Upward Bound because of the school district where they live, Rabekah recommends the "I Know I Can" program: http://www.iknowican.org/about_us.aspx

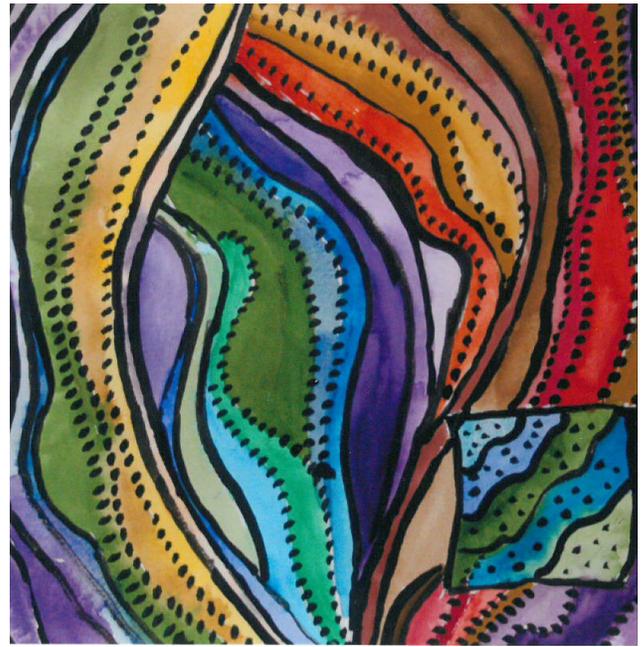
Most of OSU's Upward Bound participants have a G.P.A. of 3.0 or above, but despite their academic success, they need encouragement to enroll in the program. "My kids are scholars," Rabekah said. While active in all kinds of activities, "They need to break away from the pack." Students with IEP's at school can be channeled with special accommodations. "A lot of times, we have to dig for this information or the parents will share reluctantly," Rabekah said, thus leaving them out of the disability services that OSU and other universities can provide.

Sidebar:

For national and Ohio statistics, plus notes on each of the 7 TRIO programs, see: <http://www.ohiotrio.org/#!/reports/c1k5f>

For Veteran Upward Bound requirements see: <http://www.navub.org/vub-program-information.html>

Ohio TRIO is one of eight professional associations in the Mid-American Association of Educational Opportunity Program Personnel (MAEOPP) region. For more information on



See "Day of Arts for All" for more information about "Colors That Don't Care" by Lauren Marsh.

MAEOPP, please visit the webpage at: www.maeopp.org

Ohio TRIO works closely with the Council for Opportunity in Education (COE) which advocates on behalf of TRIO programs and the colleges, universities, and agencies that host the program: www.coenet.us

LINCS now offers 18 online, no-cost, self-paced courses for adult education practitioners. Topics include: Building Strategic Partnerships, Developing Effective Bridge Programs, Designing Contextualized Instruction, Integrating Career Counseling/Planning, and Engaging Employers in Adult Career Pathways. <http://lincs.ed.gov/courses>

Workforce Information You Can Use: Analyses of Online Job Ads

By Lewis R. Horner, Ph.D., ODJFS Office of Workforce Development

The job market is a moving target, driven by the needs of employers, so keeping up with the job market can be difficult. Our analysis of online job ads can help you get a handle on



Lewis R. Horner, Ph.D.

job demand in your area. Each month, three reports are available for Ohio and each of the six JobsOhio regions.

The Help Wanted Online® (HWOL) Snapshot Reports summarize online job ads each month. A graph shows changes in the volume of online ads over four years, the typical seasonal high and low demand periods. The Top Occupations table lists the 35 most-advertised occupations for the month. Many occupations on the Top Occupations list are consistently in high demand, while demand for others is seasonal.



See "Day of Arts for All" for more information about "Kandinsky Circles" by Ashley Parris.

The Top Employers table lists the 35 employers posting the online ads. Many top employers are in growing industries, and they post ads for a variety of occupations, often in multiple locations. The Top Certifications table lists the ten most commonly requested job credentials; the Top Skills table lists the most commonly requested job skills. Two smaller tables provide breakdowns of the estimated salary ranges and educational levels of those jobs being advertised.

Occupational Focus Reports provide more detail about the occupations advertised online. Each report has tables for the ten

most-advertised occupational groups. In the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC), occupational groups are represented by the first two numbers of the occupational codes. Each table gives the percentage that occupational group represents of all the online job ads for the month. For example, "Sales and Related Occupations, 13%" means this occupational group accounted for 13 percent of all online job ads for the month. Under each group title are the eight most advertised occupations within that group. Here, the percentage by each occupation is the percentage of jobs within the occupational group. For example, "Registered Nurses, 38%" means that ads for registered nurses accounted for 38 percent of ads within the healthcare practitioners and technical occupations group.

The Internship Focus Reports are similar to the Snapshot Reports. A graph shows changes in the ads for internship positions, along with tables for Top Employers and Top Occupations internships.

It is important to understand the limitations of these data to get the most out of them. First, these reports do not represent all online job ads. Smaller, specialized jobs boards are not included in these analyses. Second, remember that many jobs are never advertised online. Jobs advertised online tend to require more education than those not posted online. Finally, an ad does not necessarily mean a job exists.

The most recent online job reports are available at: <http://jfs.ohio.gov/owd/omjresources/jobpostingtrends.stm>. Past reports are available at: <http://ohiolmi.com/asp/omj/hw.htm>. You can send questions about the online job posting reports to: ContactLMI@jfs.ohio.gov or call (614) 752-9494.

Sidebar:

This article with state-by-state data showing job share by education level may be helpful for job seekers pondering where to work by geographic location. The first section describes states with high concentrations of jobs in occupations that typically require one of several levels of education. The second section

explains the data used for the analysis. The third suggests sources for more information. <http://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2014/article/education-level-and-jobs.htm>

Putting Your Skills to the Test with OhioMeansJobs

By Nate Fernandes, OOD Public Information Officer

OhioMeansJobs (OMJ) has many different features. In this HireGround, we will focus on the Assessments and Training portion of OMJ. Disclaimer: Due to the volume of assessments, it is nearly impossible to ensure every test is accessible using screenreaders.



Nate Fernandes

As always, to start, go to: <http://www.ohiomeansjobs.com>

OhioMeansJobs offers over one thousand virtual tests to help in a myriad of different ways. OMJ has tools to help high school students with SAT/ACT prep, AP tests, along with GED prep for alternative students, reading and writing assessments and much more. After pulling up the homepage, go to the link titled "Online Training." This brings up the assessment and training page. One may choose to Access Learning Express anonymously. This is an excellent way for a workforce professional to browse the tests and determine which would be best for a consumer to take.

At this point, one has several options. One can take the "Core Tests," which are the four tests OhioMeansJobs recommends initially, to help pinpoint four essential current competencies: Mathematics, Locating Information, Reading and Computer Fundamentals. These four tests will prepare an individual to successfully pass the WorkKeys assessments. WorkKeys assessments measure "real world" skills that employers believe are critical to job success. Test questions are based on situations in the everyday work world.

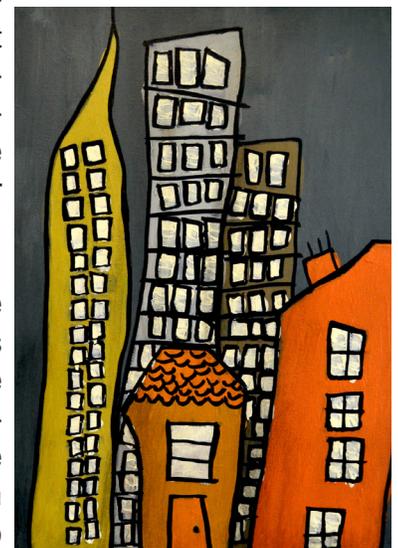
OMJ permits one to take these tests in three different modes:

- Practice - See the explanations after you have finished. If the test is timed, it will be displayed but not enforced.
- Simulation - The test will stop when the 55-minute timer is done.
- Learner - The correct answers will be available as you complete the test.

OMJ also offers tips on how to take tests and avoid overall testing anxiety. This in itself could be an excellent way for consumers to prepare for pre-employment assessments.

Remember, our OhioMeansJobs Centers offer classes on everything from resume building, to preparing for employment, and even job fairs/networking events with employers. Events are listed by county. This section of OMJ contains more than just testing. See in this article's sidebar the events and workshops page.

Sessions are not limited to just our adult consumers. For example, one three-hour session in June called "It's Summer and I want money!" is targeted to youth in Knox County. The description states "Learn valuable skills to successfully start out in the workforce. Create a resume, learn to job search, practice interviewing, discuss workplace etiquette, and learn communication skills."



See "Day of Arts for All" for more information about workplace etiquette, "Terracotta Townhouse" by John Miller.

If a consumer does not have some of these dynamic sessions in their area, or is unable to access OhioMeansJobs Centers, many online tutorials exist to help. One category to highlight is the "Master Core Business Skills" section. Tutorials assist in improving reading, writing, and math skills. Click on "How to be more

Productive” to see a list of courses such as Attitude and Teamwork, E-mail and Workplace Etiquette, and Time Management.

The next time consumers say they are nervous about how to behave in the workplace, or they are worried about that assessment they need to take for a job they have applied for, consider directing them to this section of OMJ. As always, any results or actions taken in these modules may be saved in the user’s “Backpack.”

Sidebar:

See these listings of Ohio job fairs and workshops; basic computer skills; resume writing; money management, and much more: <https://ohiomeansjobs.com/omj/workshoplister.do?selectId=0>

From the creators of OhioMeansJobs comes Ohio Means Internships; opportunities around the state: <http://www.ohiomeansinternships.com>

What does the revamped OhioMeansJobs website offer to job seekers and employers? Learn details in this 8-minute summary video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Su4U09ZULol&feature=youtu.be>

Why Fifth Third Bank Received Inaugural Champion of Opportunity Award

by Elizabeth L. Sammons

When he started college, Mitch Morgan planned to be either a teacher or a social worker. Instead, he is in his tenth year working at the Cincinnati headquarters of Fifth Third Bank. As Leadership Development Program Manager, Mitch oversees three Project SEARCH programs in Ohio and Michigan, with hopes of expanding this on-the-job training for graduating high school seniors with developmental disabilities into more of the 12 states Fifth Third serves. Mitch recalled, “I think it was my second day of employment, I saw that the program was opening, and I said ‘This (Project SEARCH) is fantastic! Is there anything I can do to help volunteer and make

it a success? Let me know.’ This is definitely something that helps me fulfill a need that I had personally to help and give back.”

From day one of their school-year-long internship, Project SEARCH participants receive a non-supervisory mentor to introduce them to corporate culture and the in’s and out’s of who’s who. Most of these mentors come from College Leadership Programs, so they often break down the age difference. “It’s more of a candid relationship,” Mitch explained. “The interns don’t look at that person as their boss, but as a very positive role model to help them navigate for some of those ‘unspoken rules’ that are part of employment.”



Accepting the Fifth Third Bank Champion of Opportunity Award are (left to right): Leigh Prop, Senior Vice President and Director of Talent Acquisition and Engagement ; Tiona Boyle, Administrative Assistant; Julie Fite, Vice President and Senior Leadership Development Program Manager; Teddy Kremer, Mail Operations Associate; and Mitch Morgan, Asst. Vice President and Leadership Development Program Manager.

Today Fifth Third is hosting 28 interns. Many more program graduates through the decade of this project have become full-time bank employees, with 25 currently covering sectors of work ranging from mailroom to clerical. “We wanted to target our systematic, structured types of jobs,” Mitch explained regarding where interns begin. “They can be complex positions, but if it’s the same steps each time, that’s where we find the most success.” Operations target positions where they can break down the required steps into skill sets;

it is these skills that are cultivated during the internship so that Project SEARCH participants can master the procedures needed to work independently.

Fifth Third has not carved out jobs specific to Project SEARCH interns; they compete for hiring with other applicants. However, thanks to the interpersonal relationships and mock interviews starting early on in their year at the bank, such interns often have an edge on success. "It's a win-win for them and for us.



Fifth Third Bank hosted the 2014 Tee Off for Project SEARCH that included two Cincinnati program interns from Great Oaks and Cincinnati Public. 2014 was their 9th annual outing and took them over the one million dollar mark for donations to Project SEARCH in 9 years.

They know us; they know our culture...and our staff knows the manager and can give feedback on the intern," Mitch explained.

The arrival of OOD's Business Sourcing Analysts last year makes a great liaison for businesses as they recruit talent with disability. However, counselors can and should still play an important role, Mitch said, in "Bringing your expertise to the table and don't be afraid to share it (...) be willing to challenge the process." An intern may not be ready to tackle as many tasks as are assigned, for example; or on the other hand, the same intern may have abilities not readily obvious to co-workers, but which VR professionals know about through contact with the participant or through evaluations unavailable to banking staff. "Push back," Mitch said. "Be willing to ask those questions. At the end of the day, your counselors want a successful placement as well."

At Your Fingertips: (A Few Additional Resources and Features)

Check in regularly on the Southeast ADA events calendar for conferences, free webinars and other disability events of interest: <http://adasoutheast.org/eventscalendar.php>

Nicknamed the "MacGyver of assistive technology," an occupational therapist is sharing her tricks for creating tools for people with disabilities on a budget of \$5 or less. <http://www.disabilitycoop.com/2015/03/03/everyday-assistive-technology/20101/>

Note: this therapist will be speaking at the May 13-14 Tech II: Technology toward Employment Conference in Columbus: <http://www.cvent.com/d/4rqmq2>

One of the biggest concerns SSI beneficiaries have about going to work is the possibility of losing *Medicaid* coverage. Section 1619(b) of the Social Security Act provides some protection for these beneficiaries. Learn about qualifying for continuing Medicaid coverage, income limits and more at this newly-updated site: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityresearch/wi/1619b.htm>

This 7-part video series presents the disability process. SSA representatives explain in detail what happens when a claim is denied and how to appeal the decision: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvQFbwq4dNA&feature=youtu.be&list=PLGSYaZN04xzFCoEqDIY3n7xgWLh55vvDh>

People with autism often struggle to access the medical care they need. A new set of tools is designed to smooth interactions between those on the spectrum and physicians: http://enewsletters.disabilitycoop.com/c/23172899/41495/PT1oThJ/mrw8d06zhi?redirect_to=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.disabilitycoop.com%2F2015%2F01%2F29%2Fnew-tools-doctor-visits%2F20004%2F

The site contains this link for creating your own worksheet to explain communication and setting preferences and sources of alarm during doctor visits. <http://autismandhealth.org/>

National Federation of the Blind offers a new assistive technology resource list grouping technology by topic and including details on features and pricing: <https://nfb.org/technology-resource-list>

“Finding and Paying for Assistive Technology” is a good place to start to find assistive technology or adaptive devices, plus resources to pay for them: <https://www.disability.gov/can-get-help-finding-paying-assistive-technology/>

Be among the first to enjoy this new AgrAbility Harvest, a newsletter designed for agricultural producers, AgrAbility staff members, rehabilitation specialists, agriculture professionals, educators, legislators, or anyone else with an interest in the agriculture and disability arena. <http://www.agrability.org/News/>

Here’s a blog summarizing the ways society most frequently portrays people with disabilities, along with some suggestions of what one can do, from the British perspective. <http://www.theguardian.com/media/media-blog/2015/mar/01/silent-witness-clarissa-disabled-portrayal>

Calendar of Disability Community Events



See “Day of Arts for All” for more information about “My Cabin in the Woods” by Cliff Williams.

April 23: **Assistive Technology Fair**, Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI) office, 470 Glenmont Ave., Columbus, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. There is no registration fee, and there will be door prizes and hands-on demonstrations

of assistive technology devices. For details, or to register, call Barbara Conner at 614-753-4679.

Deadline April 24, National Association for the Dually Diagnosed (NADD) is seeking workshop proposals for the **Annual State of Ohio IDD/MI Conference (Individuals with Developmental Disabilities/Mental Illness)**, September 21-22 at the Crown Plaza Columbus North Hotel. Proposals are encouraged to illustrate this year’s theme: Mental Health Aspects – Treatment and Support. Submit your proposal [here](#).

April 24-25: 2015 **NAMI Ohio Conference**, Dorothea Dix Presents: A Matter of Life, STRIFE or Death. Register/learn more at: <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/2015-nami-ohio-conference-dorothea-dix-presents-a-matter-of-life-strife-or-death-registration-14507958695>

April 29-30: Professionals, Advocates, Resources (PAR) Training on School-to-Work Transition and Social Security Benefit Programs in 2015, including young adult benefits, on April 29, at the Delaware County Board of DD, and on April 30, at the Educational Service Center (ESC) in Independence. For details and registration information, visit the [PAR website](#).

May 2: **The Assistive Technology Family Conference**, 2080 Citygate Drive, Columbus, OH 43219. For more information, contact Julie Pashovic: jpashovich@cisamoh.org

May 14-15: **The Ohio Association of County Boards of DD spring conference**, Columbus Hilton at Easton, Columbus, OH. Join DD service professionals from across the state for two days of professional development and discussions of the latest trends and best practices in the industry. Registration will open on April 1. For more information, visit www.oacbdd.org

May 14-16: **National Federation of the Blind STEM2U**, Columbus, OH, COSI; blind youth learning opportunity: <http://www.blindscience.org/nfb-stem2u>

June 1-4: **AAIDD Annual Conference**, Making a Difference through Research, Practice, and Policy, in Louisville, Kentucky. Offers four blocks of concurrent sessions featuring

information on the outcomes of more than 100 projects, programs, and research studies! See the full schedule of events, find hotel and CEU information, and register by clicking here. <http://aaid.org/education/annual-conference>

June 12: 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., **Seminar: Mental and Behavioral Health in Individuals with Developmental Disabilities: Research, Policy, and Practice**, Blackwell Inn and Conference Center, 2110 Tuttle Park Place, Columbus, OH 43210. <http://www.osu.edu/events/indexWeek.php>

July 3-11: **American Council of the Blind annual convention**, Dallas, TX, Sheraton Dallas hotel. Subscribe to the information list by sending a blank e-mail to: acbconvention-subscribe@acblists.org

July 5-10: **75th Annual Convention of the National Federation of the Blind**, Orlando, FL. For Convention information, see: <https://nfb.org/convention>

July 27-30: **National Council on Independent Living Annual Conference**, Grand Hyatt, Washington, D.C. <https://t.e2ma.net/click/bu5ph/riz59c/jknvsb>

Thanks and So Long

I want to thank each person who wrote or was interviewed for these articles, all of whom voluntarily gave of their time and wisdom. If you have suggestions, a success story or best practice from your work, please email Elizabeth L. Sammons, Hire Ground coordinator at: Elizabeth.sammons@ood.ohio.gov.

Interviewees, writers, designers and authors:

Nate Fernandes
Morgan Green
Dr. Lewis R. Horner
Diane Koren
Brigid Krane with logo design
Mitch Morgan
Rebekah Stewart



Above is the Accessible Expressions Ohio Touring Exhibition Mosaic. This image features a sneak preview of all 75 pieces of art in this year's exhibition. See "Day of Arts for All" for more information.