

# Progress for All

## The Newsletter of Progress Center



Spring 2020

Volume 7

### The 2020 Census

This year, 2020, is a Census year in the United States. The Census is a count of how many people live in the United States. A new Census is taken every ten years. The last Census in the United States was in 2010. At Progress Center, our goal is to ensure that people with disabilities in Suburban Cook County are aware of the Census, have accurate information about the Census process, and can access the Census and can participate in the process. To meet this goal, Progress Center will:

- Participate in the Census process— Across Cook County and Illinois, groups are creating what are called Complete Count Committees. The committees develop strategies that will support an accurate count. At this time, we are members of two Complete Count Committees. One committee is specific to disability. That committee includes representatives from disability groups around Cook County. The second committee is specific to River Forest, Illinois, a community in the Progress Center service area.
- Conduct focused outreach to the disability community in the Forest Park area, informing people about the Census and what to expect.
- Be a resource for people with disabilities who have questions about the Census

### Why is the Census Important?

An accurate Census is important because Census Data helps to determine the number of elected officials in a particular state and the level of Federal Funding for a community. If a state or a community is under-counted, then that area may not receive the representation or the funding that it deserves. Census figures help advocates, community leaders, and

elected officials address disparities in housing, health care, employment, and education. Fair proportionate voting representation depends on valid census data, as does the enforcement of voting rights laws.

### Why is the Census Important to people with disabilities? (The information below is from the Disability Rights California Website)

While the United States census only comes around once every 10 years, census data plays a vital role in the lives of people with disabilities every day. People with disabilities make up 22% of the US population, nearly 1 in 4 (<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/infographic-disability-impacts-all.html>).

The census, not population estimates, determines allocations for real-life necessities, like health care, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, special education grants and Medicaid.

**See more on the Census on page 6**

In honor of **Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month** join the **Community Mental Health Board of Oak Park Township** and the **Developmental Disabilities Consortium** for an

## ADVOCACY TOWN HALL

for all parents, guardians, families, caregivers, and persons with lived experience with an **INTELLECTUAL and/or DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY**

|                                      |                       |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Thursday, March 12, 2020             | Riveredge Hospital    |
| 6:00 pm - Doors Open                 | 8311 W. Roosevelt Rd. |
| 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm - Panel Discussion | Forest Park, IL 60130 |

Lifelong Transitions - Vocational Opportunities - State Funding

## The Institution Chronicles

*Linda Marek is a Progress Center Board Member and an advocate. She has conducted a series of interviews with former nursing home residents and with professionals whose work brings them into the nursing home industry. A few of these interviews will be featured in the Progress Center newsletter. The first was featured in the Fall 2018 Progress Center Newsletter. This is the fourth narrative.*

### Interview with Don Walker

*Narrative by Linda Marek*

Don Walker attended one year of college and was employed at Progress Center as one of three Transportation Employee Advocate Travel Trainers. He was laid off during Governor Rauner's budget crisis.

Don was a resident of a nursing home in Forest Park. My question to Don Walker was to ask him if a social worker helped him with his search for a home. Don responded that there were two social workers who did not find a suitable home in his price range. So, rather than stay in the nursing home, he voluntarily became homeless.

I told him that my heart goes out to him for being homeless and the horror stories he endured with his nursing home stay. I also told Don that his spiritual faith has made him a survivor and that he is now prepared to help others survive and to find a home without the confinement of a nursing home and the privileges of freedom.

Don was on a housing wait list for a long time. He is diligent and faithful. Possible housing slated for Walker is available in Indiana, and Forest Park.

Don also plays a guitar and keyboard. Don Walker's goal is to be as comfortable as possible in a new home.

*Respectfully submitted by,  
Linda Marek, Advocate*

## Progress for All

### Interview with Daniella Hrvojevic

#### *Daniella Hrvojevic volunteers at Progress Center. She also is a former intern through the Vocational Rehabilitation Program*

My first experience with the Progress Center was back in 2016. I did an internship with Sara Capetillo and she had me do certain amount of work with her. I was working on my resume at the time and several different assignments with her. Sara was one of the Progress Center's best employers and a hard worker advocate. Throughout my internship here I had met different individuals with different disabilities and I really enjoyed knowing people and what situations they have. I remember I was working on a project with another person with cerebral palsy and Sara would have given us a topic about how individuals with disabilities communicate. She then had me and Ryan (project partner) present it by the end of my internship. In the next year Sara had called me in again to see if I would like to volunteer and help her out again, and I said yes.

My involvement with the Progress Center for right now is helping out Gary (Arnold) with everything he needs like typing papers or documents for him. Last week he had me searching on transportation agencies in Evanston and Skokie, IL.

I really like how individuals with disabilities come together and talk about the situations they might be facing and express how they feel. I really like that day when Christopher Lennart (a disability advocate) came to the Progress Center and he talked about his life experiences living with Cerebral Palsy and how his life came about. I really like how people can tell their life experiences and what difficult situations they have been through.

I think the most important issue that people with disabilities need to work on is getting to places



*Daniella, second from right, with her mother, second from left, and others at the 2019 Liberty Gala. Photo courtesy of Two Birds Photography.*

on time with Pace (transit services). They need to work on being strict with Pace drivers to bring them on time to places rather than to be late.

### The Public Charge Rule and immigrants with disabilities

Recently, there has been a lot of news about immigration and what is called the "Public Charge" rule. The public charge rule dictates that someone can be denied a visa or green card if it's determined the person is likely to rely on U.S. government assistance. The public charge rule is a potential threat to immigrants who may need government assistance in the United States. In particular, the rule is a threat to immigrants with disabilities.

Up until January 2020, an injunction from New York prevented the Department of Homeland Security from implementing the Public Charge Rule nationwide. In a news release announcing an amicus brief filed to prevent the reversal of the injunction and the implementation of the Public Charge Rule, **See Public Charge on Page 7**

## Social Security Administration proposes new rule that threatens Social Security Benefits

*Information and wording for this piece taken from a blog post by Matthew Cortland <https://www.patreon.com/posts/32360088>*

The Social Security Administration has proposed a new rule that would change the way it decides if Social Security Disability Income and Social Security Income beneficiaries will continue to receive disability benefits. Beneficiaries would be required to prove that the disability is significant enough to qualify for benefits.

Already, Social Security puts people with disabilities through what is called a "continuing disability review (CDRs)." In the specific words of Matthew Cortland, "A CDR is basically a 'are you still disabled enough' audit." Under the new rule proposal, the number of reviews conducted by the Social Security Administration would significantly increase.

In a ten-year period, there would be an increase of more than a million mailer reviews and an increase of more than a million full medical reviews. On January 28, at a news conference to protest the new rule, one speaker said, "Disabled people and their families will be forced to collect more paperwork and attend more meetings at their own expense... to prove their disability."

The additional reviews would cost Social Security \$1.8 Billion. The new rule is expected cut hundreds of thousands of people from Social Security Benefits and could result in \$2.6 Billion in cuts to social security.

With this proposed rule, the Social Security Administration is required to give the community

an opportunity to submit public comments. The deadline for comments was January 31, 2020. As of January 28, more than 110,000 comments were submitted, including comments from Progress Center opposing the new rule. Social Security is required to respond to the comments before implementing the rule. If the rule is implemented, disability advocates expect the rule to be challenged in court.

*Thank you to Matthew Cortland for posting and for advocating against this new rule. Cortland is a disabled, chronically ill, healthcare and disability rights lawyer. Cortland is an SSI beneficiary.*

### **Staff at the Blue Island Office are starting a Membership and Outreach Group**

Join the Membership and Outreach committee. We meet on Tuesday February 18, 2020 from 1pm until 3 pm at Progress Center in Blue Island. At this meeting you will learn about...

Issues impacting the lives of people with disabilities

- ◆ Advocacy Opportunities, Rallies and Actions
- ◆ Upcoming Events at Progress Center
- ◆ Community Events
- ◆ Relevant Legislation
- ◆ How you can get involved!

Come share your ideas and experiences with others! Join your voice with the voice of others and get involved.

**Knowledge is power. Together we become stronger.**

To join us at this meeting, call 708-388-5011 ex 12 and ask for Manuel.

12940 S. Western Av., 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Blue Island IL 60406



Above: Executive Director Trudy Snell and others with the Illinois Telecommunications Access Corporation, a 2019 Liberty Gala Honoree

## 2019 Liberty Gala

The 2019 Liberty Gala was a hit. Progress Center raised support for programs and services and had the opportunity to honor members of the community doing great work. Progress Center extends a deep thank you to everyone who attended and all that supported the event. Images courtesy of Two Birds Photography.



Above: Thank you to Forest Park Mayor Rory Hoskins for attending the event and addressing the audience



Right: Enrique Rodriguez, Univision Anchor, EmCee'd the 2019 Liberty Gala



Left: Carol Nemecek of Progress Center presented a Liberty Award to attorney Andres Gallegos.



Right: The audience loved the performance of the Oak-Leyden Choir



*Hello to all readers of Progress Center for Independent Livings up and coming newsletter. This newsletter is written by people with disabilities for our many friends and allies. Thank you for your support.*

## We're Back

Hello and Happy New Year! I would like to start the new year off by saying to all the readers, one of my resolutions is to write articles that will be inspiring to people with and without a visual disability. We all put our pants on one leg at a time. Although some of us might need help, you are still a human being. I would also like to take the time to apologize to anyone that I may have offended (knowingly or unknowingly) in 2019. My disability does not give me the right to be disrespectful or ignorant to anyone. I've made up my mind that in 2020 I will evaluate, think, and respond in order to get better results for the disability community. Over the Christmas and New Year's holidays I took time to reflect, and now in the new year we might not win every issue, but it would be a slap in the face to all those leaders and advocates that came before us if we say nothing.

Henry Boyce  
Project Committee  
Advocate

## Census...Continued from Page 1

Medicaid, State Children's Health Insurance Program (S-CHIP), Head Start and Early Head Start, highway planning and construction, and our nation's foster care programs are among the top 16 largest federal programs whose funding—totaling nearly \$600 billion a year—depend on census data. Special education grants provide resources to disabled students, tailored to their individual needs. If the U.S. Census Bureau does not conduct a full and accurate count, administrators of special education programs will have no way of knowing how many children they must teach, which school districts need more educators, or what communities need more schools.

### What's Next

People should receive mailings from the Census in March. This will include information about how to complete the census. In the months that follow, Census workers will check in with people who haven't filled out the census, helping to make sure that everyone participates. For more information, visit the Progress Center website or contact Progress Center at 708-209-1500.

Another group in California, the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, is doing significant work on the 2020 Census. They have partnered with Rooted in Rights to produce a series of videos in English and American Sign Language. These videos address the Census, Census Accessibility, and privacy. To access these videos, visit this website: <https://disabilitycounts2020.org/>



## DIA Held Up in Committee

By Larry Biondi

It has been over a year since the Disability Integration Act (DIA) was introduced in Congress. It has garnered 235 co-sponsors in the House Representatives (14 from Illinois), and 25 co-sponsors in the Senate, (including Senators Tammy Duckworth and Dick Durbin).

The DIA is Civil Rights Legislation that would free thousands of people with disabilities and senior citizens out of nursing homes and institutions, and support independent living in the community with support services, such as accessible, affordable, and integrated housing, and personal assistance services.

The legislation was gaining momentum and strength. It drew over 200 national and local organizational sponsors, gaining enthusiasm and hope from the disability community. Well, not from the entire community. Some people are opposing this legislation. Opponents fear the legislation will take away choice for people wishing to remain living in nursing homes or institutions. The DIA is just the opposite – it will afford people more choice. Also, there exist institutional options for people who chose them. Community-based options are limited. That is why legislation is needed. Currently, the legislation is stuck in the Energy and Commerce, Judicial Committee.

It's common that this legislation has endured opposition. The first version of the bill – Medicaid Attendant Services Act (MICASA) - introduced by then-Congressman Newt Gingrich in 1997 – was ridiculed by a major parent group for people with developmental disabilities, VOR. This group was concerned that MICASA would force their kids out of institutional settings and dump them into the community.

How can you help? You are encouraged to

contact the Chairman of the Energy and Commerce, Judicial Committee, Congressman Frank Pallone, Jr (New Jersey) at (202) 225-4671. Urge him that the DIA is a civil rights legislation for people with disabilities to live in the community, and urge him to call the DIA up for a vote in the committee.

Free our People!

### **Public Charge ..from page 3**

Alison Barkoff, the Director of Advocacy for the Center for Public Representation wrote, "The new public charge rule sends the message that people with disabilities are not valued and that disabled immigrants have no place in the United States. Congress removed the per se exclusion of immigrants with disabilities decades ago in recognition of the unfounded, discriminatory nature of such assumptions. Since then, Congress has remained committed to the full inclusion and integration of people with disabilities in this country and has repeatedly passed legislation affirming that commitment. The district courts were absolutely right to find the new public charge rule is contrary to federal law."

Unfortunately, late last month, the United States Supreme Court set aside the injunction. Now the rule can go into effect across the United States. The exception is Illinois. For now, people in Illinois are still protected because of a statewide injunction.

For information about the public charge rule and its impact on people with disabilities, see

[www.medicaid.publicrep.org/feature/public-charge](http://www.medicaid.publicrep.org/feature/public-charge).

**The Mission of Progress Center:** Progress Center for Independent Living is a non-profit, non-residential, consumer controlled disability rights organization serving suburban Cook County, Illinois, As a part of the disability rights movement, Progress Center's mission is to build a society in which people with disabilities shall have the same freedoms, rights, and civil liberties as everyone else. We directly assist individuals with all types of disabilities and a wide range of accommodation needs to achieve their self-determined goals. We also engage in social justice advocacy for the rights of people with disabilities on the local, state, and national levels.

Progress For All Advertisement Form

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Please make checks out to Progress Center for Independent Living, or pay via paypal on the Progress Center Website. Please send artwork to [garnold@progresscil.org](mailto:garnold@progresscil.org)



7521 Madison Street  
Forest Park IL 60130

708-209-1500

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in alternate format upon  
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