

## Email Addresses for newsletter

Due to increased postage costs, we are seeking to build our E-mail address list. We would appreciate it very much if all our consumers who have E-mail would contact their independent living specialist at 508-679-9210 and provide us with your E-mail address so that we can enter it in our records. If you are an agency/business with an email address, please contact Karen Sullivan @ 508 679-9210 x 119. Also, if you have moved and have an address correction, please make sure that we are aware of it.



**SCIL's office will be closed** on Tuesday, September 23 from 8-12 noon as staff will be off site at a cross-training. We will reopen the office at 1:00 P.M.

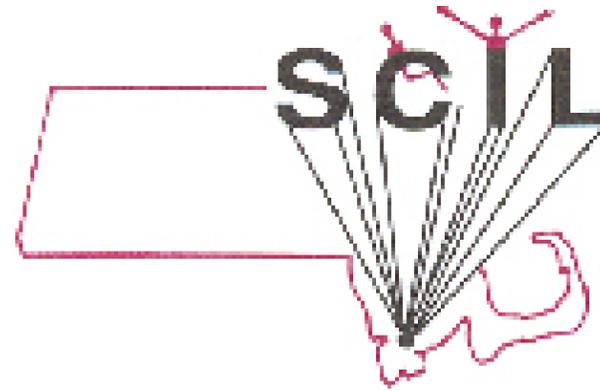
## TAP

For students with disabilities, ages 14-22, SCIL administers the Transition to Adulthood Program (TAP).

Students receive assistance planning for their future after high school; drivers education permit classes, assistance with getting into college or getting a job, educational reinforcement, adaptive equipment and more.

For further information contact us! Call Jessica Silva at 508 679-9210, ext. 105.

Don't forget TAP Grads can still get continued services through SCIL's IL programs.



SCIL, Southeast Center for Independent Living, Inc.

Fall River Office Contact Info:

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66 Troy St.  
Fall River, MA 02720

Phone / TTY: 508 - 679 - 9210

Fax: 508 - 677 - 2377

Email: [scil@secil.org](mailto:scil@secil.org)

Web: [www.secil.org](http://www.secil.org)

New Bedford Office  
*by appointment only:*

800 Purchase St., Rm 311  
New Bedford, MA 02740

Phone: 508 - 994 - 2040

# SCIL Gazette Newsletter, Issue: Summer 2008

## Area Disability Resource Consortium formed

The Southeast Center for Independent Living, along with the three area aging access points, Bristol Elder Services of Fall River, Coastline Elderly Services of New Bedford, and Old Colony Elder Services of Brockton, have joined together to form the Area Disability Resource Consortium –Southeast (ADRCSE). This is the fifth disability resource consortium in the state of Massachusetts, officially accepted by the Leadership Committee of the Office of Elder Affairs on July 8, 2008. The ADRCSE will cover all twenty-two cities and towns of SCIL's territorial jurisdiction, portions of which fall within each of the three aging access point territories. This collaboration will ensure a smooth, seamless transition of services for our consumers' benefit. It will allow for a "no wrong door" entry point for all consumers involved. Plans are underway for cross-training among all of the agencies so that we can serve our consumers more effectively.

## A New Face at the Office

SCIL has collaborated with Massachusetts Commission for the Blind this summer to host our first student intern from a statewide program the Commission has developed that placed thirty blind students into summer employ-

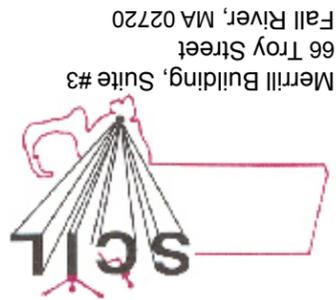


ment this year. Erica Costa of Somerset has joined us for approximately eight weeks, and she has made such valuable contributions to our work and operations that we have invited her to stay connected with SCIL as a consultant for future projects.

Erica began her education in the Somerset Public Schools. She was born with normal vision, but at the age of six she began to lose her eyesight. Erica also has progressive hearing loss. None of this could suppress her desire for learning, even as her sight deteriorated so severely that she was blind by ninth grade. It took ten years for physicians to find the diagnosis of Alstrom's Syndrome, an exceedingly rare genetic syndrome that affects major organ systems. Erica enrolled at Perkins School for the Blind as a residential student in the ninth grade, and achieved such high standards of accomplishment that upon graduation she was accepted at Bridgewater State College. She will enter her sophomore year at Bridgewater this fall, and plans to take her degree in social work.

"I want to specialize in children's issues because children need someone who will care and advocate for them," she explains. Here at SCIL, Erica quickly mastered the operations at our front desk, and has assisted us with the development of our Braille technology. Her accomplishments in the field of youth in transition to adulthood have been so well recognized that she has served on a panel at Perkins and holds a program certificate in the field. She has received multiple awards for her work with youth and community service, including the Marcie Scott Award for Communication and Leadership, the People's Choice Award

Southeast Center for Independent Living, Inc.



in Art Exhibition, and the Silver and Gold Awards, the highest awards in Girl Scouting. Erica has met with the director of Fall River's Youth Services Department and will serve as a liaison for SCIL with them. She has also agreed to serve as a consultant to SCIL's Transition to Adulthood Program.

## Emergency Preparedness Training

On June 3, 2008 the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) in partnership with SCIL, held an emergency preparedness meeting for people with disabilities and emergency planners at the Bristol Elder Services conference room. The purpose of the meeting was to facilitate the exchange and information of ideas among members of the disability community and emergency planners, responders and service providers. First responders received "Tips for First Responders, 2nd edition" and people with disability received a backpack containing two days' worth of emergency supplies. Jeffrey Dougan, assistant director of MOD, led the discussion. Thirty-one people attended the event.

## MRC/SCIL Advisory Council

All are invited to the next MRC/SCIL Consumer Advisory Council Meeting on Thursday, September 25th at 4:30 in the Community Room at SCIL. We have set an agenda for evaluation and planning for the future of this group, so it is urgent that you attend this meeting to help us to assess the work we have done to date, and determine what this Council can and should accomplish for the future. To date the Council has offered speakers on CORI issues, abuse of disabled persons and benefits. If you are unable to attend, your written comments will be most appreciated. This is a scent-free event. For reasonable accommodations and to register, please call SCIL at 508 679-9210 Voice/TTY by September 10th. Light refreshments will be s



## SCIL's Advocacy work with the RMV

SCIL has developed an excellent program that serves both youth and adults with disability who are seeking to obtain their motor vehicle drivers licenses from the Commonwealth's Registry of Motor Vehicles. Our program and many of the persons we serve suffered unexpected consequences when the Registry made changes to its computer systems that eliminated headphone technology that we found to be a crucial accommodation for those who require oral testing. SCIL launched an investigation to document the damaging effects of the changes in the Registry's technology and reported our concerns to local Registry officials and Massachusetts Office on Disability who also investigated. No solution was found at the local level. We took our findings to the Registrar of Motor Vehicles and are pleased to report that a solution has been developed at the State level, thanks to the attention of Registrar Rachel Kaprielian and Registry counsel, Robert Horacek, Esq. The Registrar is providing an examiner to conduct group testing for our driver's education students right here at SCIL as an accommodation, a collaboration that we believe is a first for this region, if not a first state-wide. We are grateful for the attention Registrar Kaprielian and her staff have provided to this favorable resolution.

## Car Wash—Save the date!

SCIL's Consumer Advisory Council cordially invites you to help kick off their first official fundraising event. The Council has taken on the organization of our annual Car Wash at a new location, to be held this year at AutoZone on 355 Rhode Island Avenue in Fall River on September 13th from 10:00 A.M.-2:00 P.M. Please come out and join us-whether to volunteer to wash cars, or have your vehicle washed! Tell all of your friends! The cost is only \$5.00. Hope to see you there! To volunteer, or for more information contact SCIL at 508-679-9210 Voice/TTY. This is a scent-free event. All proceeds benefit SCIL.



## Computer Classes

Free computer classes are held at SCIL for people with disabilities. For further information, please contact Steve Wood at 508-679-9210 Voice/TTY.

## SCIL Consumer Advisory Council

SCIL's Consumer Advisory Council is up and running and held its initial meeting with Executive Director, Lisa Pitta on Thursday, June 12th. The founding members who have been appointed to the Council are Denise Canuel, Barbara Schoonover, and Clair Antaya. The Council set a fundraising goal as its first priority, and they have taken on the organization of our annual Car Wash at a brand new location in Fall River on September 13th. (See details in this edition.) Their next goal in the works involves researching and planning a consumer trip. If you are interested in joining the work of the SCIL Consumer Advisory Council, please contact Lisa Pitta at 508- 679-9210 x 118.

## Summer School Driver's Ed

For the second year in a row, SCIL held a summer driver's education program to help consumers obtain their learners' permits. Eight people took part in the program conducted by Lois Alves and Leily Colon. Roberta Ogletree from the Registry of Motor Vehicles came down from Boston to conduct a group testing here at SCIL and will be here monthly to accommodate our students in the program. So far, fifty percent have passed the test successfully on their first try. Congratulations for a job well done!

## Lisa M. Pitta elected to Board of Directors, Coastline Elderly Services, New Bedford

SCIL's Executive Director, Lisa M. Pitta, has been elected to serve a three year term as an At-Large Member of Coastline Elderly Services, Inc.'s Board of Directors commencing with Fiscal Year 2009, on July 1, 2008. This will give SCIL an opportunity to continue to foster a relationship in which we can assist in planning, developing, and implementing programs that enable all to live with dignity and independence.

## ADA Day Dunn State Park

Fourteen consumers and staff celebrated the 18th anniversary of the ADA by attending the festivities at Dunn State Park in Gardner, MA. July 18th. This annual event is sponsored by the Massachusetts Statewide Independent Living Council. People from independent living centers all over Massachusetts

gathered to enjoy the beach, kayaking, a cookout and just lounging around listening to the music and soaking up the sun. Charles Carr, Commissioner, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, and Heidi Reed, Commissioner, Mass Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, were on hand to speak to those who attended.

