

Annual Statewide Independent Living Education Day

Join us for the Massachusetts Statewide Independent Living Education Day at the Statehouse on Wednesday, April 22, 2009 from 11A.M. to 4:00 P.M. at the Grand Staircase. Bus transportation will be provided from SCIL. Contact SCIL to reserve your seat on the bus at 508 679-9210 x119 and for more information.



Are you interested in joining the Board of Directors here at SCIL? Contact Bill Boffa at 508-679-9210 for information.

Wanted: A few good men and women to be on the SCIL Consumer Advisory Council. Contact Lisa M. Pitta at 508-679-9210 for more information.

All SCIL Offices & Events are Scent Free



Computer Classes

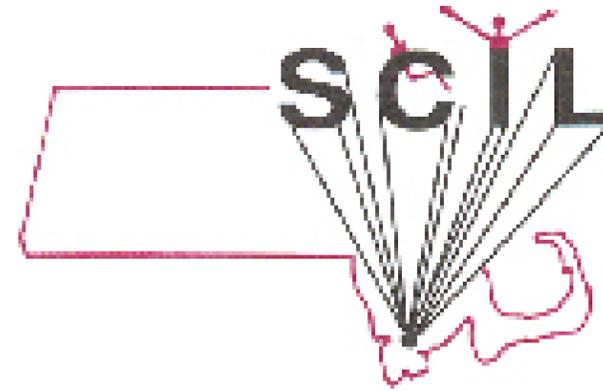
Free computer classes are held at SCIL for people with disabilities. Classes are on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays and are in the morning from 10-12 or in the afternoon from 2-4, and run for eight weeks. The next eight week cycle begins on Tuesday, March 10th with Introduction to Computers. Wednesday, March 11th starts Keyboarding or Data Entry. On Thursday March 12th Introduction to Word, Excel, PowerPoint or Access begins. To register for classes and for further information, please contact Steve Wood at 508-679-9210 Voice/TTY.

SCIL would like to thank the following for their generous contributions to our turkey baskets for our consumers:

Pastor David A. Arruda, Faith Fellowship United Methodist church and his congregation

Mass Rehabilitation Commission-Fall River area office

Pastor Norman Noriega, Full Gospel Church of East Freetown and his congregation



SCIL, Southeast Center for Independent Living, Inc.

Fall River Office Contact Info:

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Fall River, MA 02720

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SCIL Gazette

 Newsletter, Issue: Winter 2009

This newsletter is dedicated to the passing of our beloved friend & colleague Alvaro Colon



SCIL reports with deep sadness the passing of one of our independent living specialists, a colleague and dear friend, Alvaro Colon. It is a tremendous loss to us at SCIL and we miss him dearly.

Our dear friend has passed, and there are no words to describe the loss,

A dear friend with a lovely soul, who gave us his love, warmth, and laughter.

We walk past your office, wishing you were there.

To confront our sorrow, we can only comfort each other.

We did not wish for you to suffer anymore, And we know that you are in a better place.

We cherish in our hearts a part that will always be reserved for you,

And we thank you for your gift that your life has brought to each of us.

*With love and fond memories,
Your SCIL family*

In deepest sorrow, we must report the death of Alvaro Colon, the man who shouldered the development of SCIL's mission to bring independent living services to the Hispanic families who have settled in our service area. Alvaro succumbed to cancer March 9. A brave man of deep faith, he fought the disease heroically and served the people he loved until the very end. Please join us as we express our condolences to his family and pay tribute to a remarkable man. Alvaro Colon embodied the highest virtues of a true family man. Good, brave, devoted and wise, he loved his family. He lived his faith. He practiced his vocation with honor.

Alvaro dedicated his life in service to persons with disability. After earning degrees in psychology, sociology and public administration at Interamericana University of Puerto Rico and University of Puerto Rico, Alvaro worked as

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a social worker in some of the most challenging urban communities in San Juan. He became assistant director for the Home for Children at Trujillo Alto. He served as assistant director of the Office of Disabilities Services for the University of Puerto Rico. The range and depth of his vocational experience in Puerto Rico were remarkable, and he brought that experience to SCIL when he settled here with his family.

A tribute to Alvaro higher than any we can pay is the fact that his daughter Leily joined her father at SCIL and worked at his side. He loved his children and was so very proud of her. We are grateful that Leily carries on her father's legacy at SCIL.

Annual Holiday Party Held at SCIL

SCIL held its annual Holiday party on Saturday, December 6th. Over fifty people attended the event here at SCIL. Besides a complete turkey dinner with all the fixings, guests were treated to a visit and gifts from Santa. Our consumers have reported favorably on the event.

SCIL wishes to thank our generous contributors to the event: Eulalia and George Pitta, Blueport Wireless, Ameritel Communications, Inc., Lisa Antonelli, Lillian Belanger, Lisa M. Pitta, William Fontaine, Cordeiro Financial Group, Sayer, Thayer and Flanagan, LLP, Law Offices of Deborah G. Kohl, Anthony F. Cordeiro and Father Richard Chretien. SCIL appreciates all of your support.



Crackdown on Placard Abuse

The Fall River Commission on Disability, in conjunction with the Fall River Police department is cracking down on people illegally parking in designated handicap parking spaces, as well as placard abuse. Widespread cases have been found by the Registry of Motor Vehicles and the Inspector General's office of people who are not valid placard holders and use family and friends' placards to park in designated handicap spaces.

The Commission is modeling their program after a similar successful program in Waltham. Fall River Police Officers will be hired and paid for by the Commission to work seven days a week patrolling the city and issuing citations for those in violation. One-hundred dollar citations will be issued to those parking in designated handicap parking spaces without displaying a handicap placard or plate. Five-hundred dollar citations will be issued to individuals with placards who are not valid placard holders and who are not transporting a valid placard holder. The hundred dollar fine will be go to the Commission, as stipulated by city ordinance, while the five-hundred-dollar fine will be shared 50/50 by the Commission and the state, in compliance with the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 90, Section 2. The handicapped placard will also be seized and the owner of the placard will have to come down in person within twenty four hours to retrieve the card, and it will only be returned after positive verification of the owner's identity. Monies from the City of Fall River's budget will not be used to fund this effort.

SCIL's Executive Director, Lisa M. Pitta, continues to serve on the Fall River Commission on Disability and has been instrumental in helping identify issues of concern to those with disabilities.

Sailor Valentines

Back in the days of the Ernestina, Schooners, Square-riggers, windjammers and all sorts of sailing vessels traveled the oceans in search of a livelihood. After a long voyage, local ports became a source of rest and the place where gift buying would occur.

In the Caribbean port of Barbados, this beautiful 19th century folk art originated. Native artisans, commissioned by sailors framed seashells for their sweethearts back home. Originals were framed in octagonal mahogany or Spanish cedar frames. The art form often incorporated hearts, assorted flower patterns, wind roses, photographs and even a message of love. Thus the name, Sailor Valentine took hold.

In recent years, many folks have come to appreciate this almost forgotten art form. New artists have arisen, giving a new birth to a wonderful expression of love...

SCIL would like to invite our consumers to share in a unique opportunity to learn how to create a sailor valentine. We will have five classes with space for 8 students, so if you would like to participate, please let us know. You must let us know if you are coming, so that we can prepare properly. (The valentine you create will become part of a SCIL fund-raiser). The classes will be held at SCIL on Tuesday afternoons from 2-4pm, starting May 5th.



Emergency Preparedness Meeting

SCIL and the Massachusetts Office on Disability are partnering with the City of New Bedford Emergency Management Department and the New Bedford Commission for Citizens with Disabilities in hosting a meeting to bring together people with disabilities and local emergency preparedness professionals.

This meeting will be held on April 30, 2009, from 12pm – 2pm at the Coastline Elderly Services Building, Saxon Hall located at 1646 Purchase Street in New Bedford. The purpose of the meeting is to explore how to ensure that people with disabilities have the assistance they need in times of emergency. Members of the disability community will learn about the emergency response resources and procedures within their local communities and the steps that can be taken personally to prepare for emergency situations. Persons with disabilities will also receive an "Emergency Go Pack" with essential items that might be needed during an emergency. First Responders will receive "Tips for First Responders, 2nd edition".

If you would like to attend, please RSVP by April 24, 2009 to Jeffrey Dougan at the Massachusetts Office on Disability at 800-322-2020 extension 27316. Please note, if there are weather concerns on the day of the meeting, please contact MOD for an update.

Accommodations will be provided upon request. In order to make requests, please contact Mr. Dougan at the number above, no later than April 22, 2009.

