

# FOCUSABILITY

## NORTHERN REGIONAL CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER

Anonymous

May your stuffing  
be tasty  
May your turkey  
plump,  
May your pota-  
toes and gravy  
Have nary a  
lump.  
May your yams  
be delicious  
And your pies  
take the prize,  
And may your  
Thanksgiving  
dinner  
Stay off your  
thighs!

### NRCIL, Family Support Services and Families Together in the North Country Host Candidates Forum



John Waterhouse addresses the importance of quality instruction.



Kristy Graves provides oral testimony on the difficulties she's faced as a parent of a child with social/emotional challenges.

*On September 15th , NRCIL hosted a Candidates Forum at the Watertown Elks Club.* The talking points for this forum were:

- The Reinstatement of a Quality Local Diploma
- Adopting the Model of Cross Systems Care as Outlined in the New York State Children's Plan Initiative.
- The Importance of Peer-Run Family Support.

We would like to take a moment to thank our local legislators Assemblywoman Addie Jenne Russell, Assemblywoman Diedra Scozzafava, Jefferson County Legislature and Candidate for State Assembly Ken Blankenbush, Candidate for State Assembly Brian McGrath, Jefferson County Community Services Director Roger Ambrose, and Lewis County Community Services Director Jennifer Earl. Our legislatures listened attentively as many parents of children with disabilities shared their experiences through both written and oral testimony.

Additionally Michael Johnson, Central Regional Youth Partner from Families Together in New York State and Karen Boliver, Lewis County Program Director spoke on their personal journeys and gave hope for change. We watched advocacy in action and again, thank-all who attended our event.

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## *Job Interview Mistakes to Avoid*

By Nathan Newberger

**The wrong move can cost you the job!** You have worked hard to get to the interview stage. You passed the cover letter and resume screening process...maybe even a few phone interviews.

Now it is time for the face-to-face interview with the employer itself. Any number of items can go wrong, but you have to be in control and must have confidence. Go into an interview with the feeling that you are going to impress them so much that they will have to make you an offer.

**These are the most common interview mistakes and their antidotes.**

**Arriving late.** Get directions from the interviewer or a map. Wear a watch, and leave home early. If the worst happens, and you cannot make it on time, call the interviewer, and arrange to reschedule.

**Dressing wrong.** You make your greatest impact on the interviewer in the first 17 seconds, an impression you want to make powerfully positive. Dress right in a conservative suit, subdued colors, little jewelry, and everything clean and neat. Hygiene includes combed hair, brushed teeth, deodorant and low-key scent.

**Play zombie.** OK, you are nervous, But you can still smile, right? And make eye contact, yes? Sit up, focus on the interviewer, and start responding. Enthusiasm is what the interviewer wants to see.

**No smoking, no gum, no drinking.** This is all comfort stuff for you, and none of it helps you here. Employers are more likely to hire non-smokers.

**Research failure.** The interview is not the time for research. Find out the company's products and services. Show that you are interested in working for the prospective employer by demonstrating knowledge about the company.

**Cannot articulate your own strengths and weaknesses.** Only you can recognize your most valuable strengths and most hurtful weaknesses.

**Winging the interview.** Practice! Get a friend, a list of interview questions and a tape recorder, and conduct an interview rehearsal.

**Talk, Talk, Talk.** Rambling, interrupting and answering a simple question with a fifteen-minute reply can be avoided if you have thought through and practiced what you want to communicate. Good answers are to the point and usually shorter.

**Failure to connect yourself to the job offered.** The job description details the company's needs. You connect your experiences, your talents and your strengths to the description. It answers the essential reasons for the interview.

**Not asking questions - and asking too many.** Use your research to develop a set of questions that will tell you whether this is the job and the company for you.

**Do Not Bad-mouth anyone.** Not just your present employer, or former employer, or the competition. You do not want to look like a complainer.

**Asking about compensation and /or benefits too soon.** Wait for the interviewer to bring up these issues, after the discussion of your qualifications and the company's needs and wants.

**Failure to ask for the job.** When the interviewer indicates the interview is over, convey your interest in the job, and ask what the next step is.

**Helpful Website/Resource for People With Disabilities**

**Check out Independence Today...the only national Newspaper on disability matters. You can view online at [www.itodaynews.com](http://www.itodaynews.com)**

### *A Few Employment Tips for Jobseekers*

Networking is the most important piece in the job hunting puzzle. Whether you are recently unemployed, looking to enter the workforce or considering a “change of scenery”, there is something for you at the Northern Regional Center for Independent Living. Come join in our Employment Support and Preparation Network on Wednesdays from 10-11 a.m. @ the Independent Living Center and work on interviewing skills, resume building, job history, etc. Do you know you only have ONE chance to make a first impression?

### **Some Tips on Job Hunting:**

1. Always dress the part...whether you are applying in an office or a factory, wear “work appropriate” clothes to the interview or any time you stop by to check on the status of your application.
2. Be courteous on the phone and in person when you are speaking with a prospective employer or any employees of the organization you are applying to. These could be your future co-workers and their opinion of you counts with the employer!
3. Be on time!!!!

For more employment tips or to join the Employment Network call



(Pictured left to right) Kristy Graves, Kathy Connor, Bridget Connor, Pat Lowe, Amanda Bradbury and Jennifer Sibley walked at the First Frost Aids Walk at Thompson Park on October 17th. They represented Team NRCIL as characters from the Wizard of Oz.

**NRCIL Autism Spectrum Disorder Support Group** has rearranged our meeting times to try and accommodate more of our working families. We will continue to meet at noon on the 2nd Monday of each month. On the 4th Monday of each month, we will now be meeting from 5:30-7:30 pm. As always, food will be provided and childcare is available with advanced notice. If you would like to use our childcare, call no later than the Friday before our next support group meeting to make arrangements with our staff. Call Jennifer or Brittney at our Watertown office at (315)785-8703 for more information or to request accommodations. We hope that you can join us to discuss the joys and realities of raising a child on the Autism Spectrum.



# Happy Holidays



“Your work-shops are consistently helpful. Now that I know my rights, I am better equipped to advocate at my child’s school”



**Northern Regional Center for Independent Living**  
 210 Court Street Suite 107 (315)785-8703  
 Watertown, NY 13601 Toll free: 1(800)585-8703 (315)785-8612 (fax)  
 Shelly David richelled@nrcil.net

Nothing about us, without us.

**Individualized Education Program (IEP) and 504 Plan Training**  
 Presented by Shelly David  
 Parent Training & Information Coordinator  
 Funded through the Advocacy Center from the US Department of Education

Every student learns in a different way and at different rates. This training will further explain what an IEP is and when a student may need one. We will also compare the 504 plan and discuss new changes in the laws. Special education services are not a privilege, they are a right. To learn more, please plan on attending this FREE training.

Please call Shelly or Ruth at (315)785-8703 to preregister.

**When: December 15, 2010 at 5:30-8:30**  
**Where: Northern Regional Center for Independent Living**

**Sponsored by:**

### News from Lewis County

Our Lowville office is now hosting drop-in hours every Friday from 10:00-12:00. Please join us for company and conversation and refreshments.... build your Social Support Network!

7632 N. State Street  
Lowville, NY 13367  
376-8696 (V/TTY)



Please call our office for additional information or to request accommodations.

### New Staff Member at NRCIL !!

Hola! My name is Susan Gonzalez and I am the newest Parent Partner on the Family Support Services team at the Northern Regional Center for Independent Living. I live near Theresa, NY and have two daughters, ages 19 and 14.

When the opportunity to work at NRCIL arose, I jumped at the prospect because I felt I had finally found an entire group of people who might understand the life I led as a single parent of two children with seizure disorders and other behavioral health issues. When I told someone here that I was emotionally and physically exhausted from people’s lack of understanding, the Support Services staff understood the depth of that statement completely. NRCIL is a peer-run program which means they have walked in my shoes.

In paring my home experience with my Bachelors Degree in Sociology and my Masters Degree in Elementary Education, I am hoping to work with parents in a manner that will make them feel supported, understood and listened to. I’ve experienced CSE meetings from the perspective of a teacher, and of a parent who is searching for answers. I’ve learned to organize, prioritize, research and ask questions until I get the answers I need. I have learned to never give up.

Although I am a civilian, my free time is partially spent working 40 hours a month at the Fort Drum USO assisting soldiers and their families with the use of our facility. Having been there since February 2009, I’ve met people from other states, countries and cultures who have impacted my life and my understanding of how the world really works. They have educated me in ways a classroom never could. The biggest thing I have learned is that no matter who you are, we all need a little help sometimes. And a hug never hurts either.



## Social Support: Tap this tool to combat stress during the holidays

Having close friends and family on whom you can count has far-reaching benefits for your health. Here's how to build and maintain these essential relationships.

*By Mayo Clinic staff*

It probably doesn't take a scientific study to convince you that surrounding yourself with people who genuinely care about you can have a positive effect on your mental well-being, but there's plenty of research to confirm it. A strong social support network can be critical to help you through the stress of tough times, whether you've had a bad day at work or a year filled with loss or chronic illness. Since your supportive family, friends, and co-workers are such an important part of your life, it's never too soon to cultivate these important relationships.

**What is a Social Support Network?** A social support network is made up of friends, family and peers. A social support network is different from a support group, which is generally a structured meeting run by a mental health professional. Although both can play an important role in times of stress, a social support network is something you can develop when you're not under stress, providing the comfort of knowing that your friends are there for you if you need them. You don't need to formalize your support network with regular meetings or an official leader. A coffee break with a friend at work, a quick chat with a neighbor, a phone call to your sister, even a visit to church are all ways to develop and foster lasting relationships with the people close to you. Don't wait for someone else to make the first move. If you meet someone you think might become a good friend, invite him or her to join you for coffee or another casual activity.

**Benefits of a Social Support Network:** Numerous studies have demonstrated that having a network of supportive relationships contributes to psychological well-being. When you have a social support network, you benefit in the following ways:

- **Sense of Belonging.** Spending time with people helps ward off loneliness.
- **Increased Sense of Self-Worth.** Having people who call you a friend reinforces the idea that you're a good person to be around.
- **Feeling of Security.** Your social network gives you access to information, advice, guidance. It's comforting to know that you have people to turn to in time of need.

Remember, social support networks and a successful relationship is a two way street. The better friend you are, the better your friends will be. Here are some suggestions for nurturing your friendships: Stay in touch, don't compete, be a good listener.

**The Bottom Line:** The goal of a social network is to reduce stress, not add to it. Watch for situations that seem to drain your energy. For example, avoid spending too much time with someone who is constantly negative and critical. Similarly, steer clear of people involved in unhealthy behaviors such as alcohol or substance abuse. Especially if you've struggled with these addictions. Research shows that those who enjoy high levels of social support stay healthier and live longer. Enjoy your holidays with friends. Stay connected.

## Calendar of Events

### November:



Wednesday	11/03	Peers Together	2:30-3:30 @ NRCIL
Thursday	11/04	Parent Support Group	5:00-6:30 @ NRCIL
Thursday	11/04	Families Together in the No. Country	12:00-1:00 @ NRCIL
Monday	11/08	Autism Support Group	12:00-2:00 @ NRCIL
Monday	11/08	Love & Logic Parenting Class	5:30-7:30 @ Lowville Office
Tuesday	11/09	Ft. Drum Support Group	11:30-1:00 @ ACS Ft. Drum
Wednesday	11/10	Peers Together	2:30-3:30 @ NRCIL
Thursday	11/11	CLOSED-Veterans Day	
Monday	11/15	Love & Logic Parenting Class	5:30-7:30 @ Lowville Office
Wednesday	11/17	Peers Together	2:30-3:30 @ NRCIL
Thursday	11/18	Parent Support Group	5:00-6:30 @ NRCIL
Monday	11/22	Autism Support Group	5:30-7:30 @NRCIL
Monday	11/22	Love & Logic Parenting Class	5:30-7:30 @ Lowville Office
Wednesday	11/24	Access for All Meeting	3:00-4:00 @ NRCIL
Wednesday	11/24	Peers Together	2:30-3:30 @ NRCIL
Thursday	11/25 & 26	CLOSED- Thanksgiving	
Monday	11/29	Love & Logic Parenting Class	5:30-7:30 @ Lowville Office

### December

Thursday	12/02	Parent Support Group	5:00-6:30 @ NRCIL
Thursday	12/02	Families Together in the No. Country	12:00-1:00 @ NRCIL
Wednesday	12/08	CONSUMER LUNCHEON	12:00-3:00 @ NRCIL
Monday	12/13	Autism Support Group	5:30-7:30 @ NRCIL
Tuesday	12/14	Ft. Drum Support Group	11:30-1:00 @ ACS Ft. Drum
Wednesday	12/15	Peers Together	2:30-3:30 @ NRCIL
Thursday	12/16	Parent Support Group	5:00-6:30 @ NRCIL
Friday	12/17	CLOSE @ NOON (Staff Mtg.)	
Wednesday	12/22	Access for All Meeting	3:00-4:00 @ NRCIL
Wednesday	12/22	Peers Together	2:30-3:30 @ NRCIL
Friday	12/24	CLOSED (Christmas)	
Monday	12/27	Autism Support Group	5:30-7:30 @ NRCIL
Wednesday	12/29	Peers Together	2:30-3:30 @ NRCIL
Friday	12/31	CLOSED (New Years)	

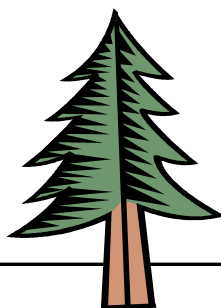
*NRCIL & Family Support takes its direction for activities and training from you...if you have ideas and/or would like to get involved, please let us know what's on your mind. Also, this list is subject to change. Please call for updates, additions, deletions, reservations, etc. @ 785-8703.*

### **Northern Regional Center for Independent Living (NRCIL)**

*A disability rights and resource center that promotes community efforts to end discrimination*

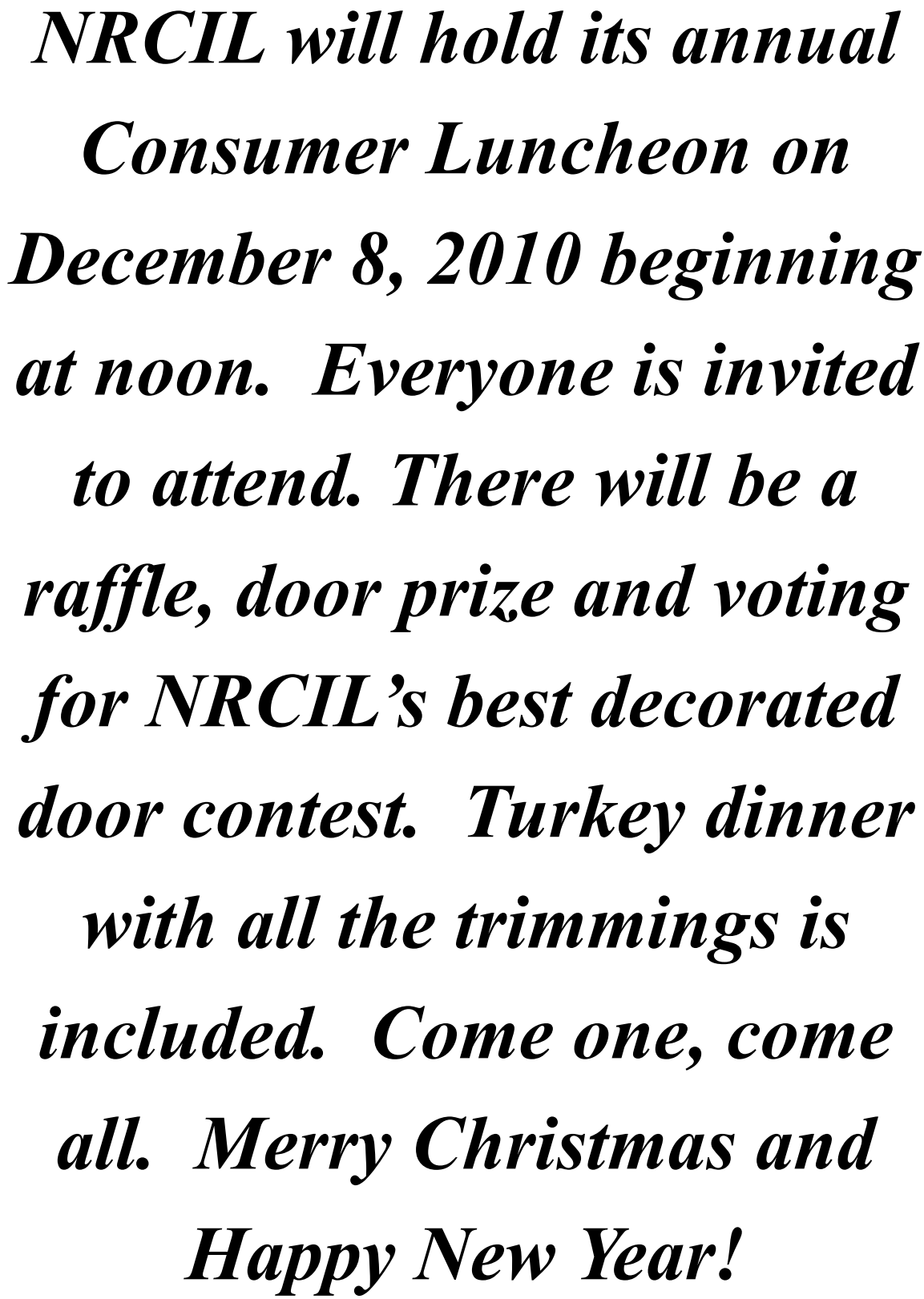


**Watertown Office**  
210 Court St. Suite 107  
Watertown, NY 13601  
(315)785-8703  
(315)785-8612 (fax)  
(315)785-8703 (TTY)



**Lowville Office**  
7632 N. State Street  
Lowville, NY 13367  
(315)376-8696 (V/TTY)  
(315)376-3404



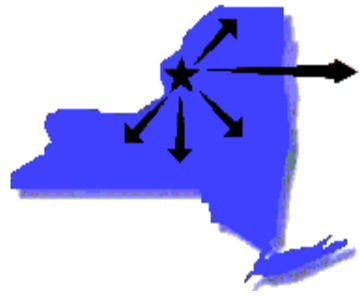


*NRCIL will hold its annual  
Consumer Luncheon on  
December 8, 2010 beginning  
at noon. Everyone is invited  
to attend. There will be a  
raffle, door prize and voting  
for NRCIL's best decorated  
door contest. Turkey dinner  
with all the trimmings is  
included. Come one, come  
all. Merry Christmas and  
Happy New Year!*

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**Northern Regional Center  
for Independent Living**

**210 Court St., Suite 107  
Watertown, NY 13601**



**Making the Difference since  
1987!**

**OR CURRENT BOX HOLDER**

**Join NRCIL today and support our work in the community!**

**Membership levels:**

- Contributing Member \$5
- Family Member \$25
- Patron Member \$50
- Sustaining Member \$100
- Business Member \$250
- Silver Member \$500
- Gold Member \$1000

Members attending the Annual Meeting in April, vote to elect the new Board of Directors. Membership also includes FREE Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) consultations. If you would like to become a NRCIL member please fill out this form and circle the membership level you are interested in and return it to NRCIL.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_