

JULY 2026

A Letter from the Director

I am proud to say that RCAL's 4th Annual Disability Awareness Parade was a tremendous success. Despite the rain and poor air quality, our community came together to celebrate disability pride, inclusion, and accessibility. Nothing could dampen our spirits!

A special thank you to Rock Academy and The Music Therapy Studio for providing fantastic entertainment throughout the day. I'd also like to thank Harambee, People's Inc., People's Place, the Kingston Police Department, and our major sponsor, Keegan Ales, whose generosity and support helped make this event possible.

We were honored to have support from Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger and her office, the Think Differently Initiative, the Ulster County Legislature, the New York State Chief Disability Office, OPWDD, NYAIL, and the many agencies, organizations, and community members who marched with us.

I couldn't be prouder of the RCAL staff and volunteers, whose hard work and positivity shined brighter than the rain. And, of course, Scooby had a wonderful day greeting participants and marching in the parade—before promptly falling asleep on the couch when we got home!

Thank you to everyone who joined us in sending a powerful message: We Are Here.

I hope you'll join us for our annual Friendraiser this fall, our new RCARoLing holiday event in December, and next year's 5th Annual Disability Awareness Parade on July 17, 2027. We look forward to seeing you there!

With love,

Anthony Mignone
CEO, Resource Center for Accessible Living



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WE ARE HIRING

Our Wonderful Sponsors!



Singin' in the Rain: Photos of RCAL's 2026 Parade!





JULY 2026

Getting to Know the Mayor of Marshalls



Keith Blanchard, affectionately known as The Mayor of Marshalls.

For more than two decades, Keith Blanchard has been a familiar and welcoming face at Marshalls. Since joining the team in 2004, Keith has spent 22 years brightening the days of customers and coworkers alike with his infectious smile, positive attitude, and genuine kindness. In fact, his RCAL job coaches have affectionately nicknamed him "The Mayor of Marshalls" because of the countless relationships he has built with regular shoppers and first-time visitors alike.

Keith says his favorite part of the job is making customers smile—and judging by the comments he receives, he's accomplishing that every day. Customers, support staff, and coworkers often thank him for the warmth and energy he brings to the store, making every shopping trip just a little more special.

A lifelong Ulster County resident, Keith recently celebrated his 44th birthday. Blue is his favorite color (fittingly matching the Marshalls logo), and you'll often find him dressed head-to-toe in shades of blue,

complete with his favorite watches, rings, and bracelets. Outside of work, Keith enjoys going to the movies, soaking up the summer sunshine, cheering on football teams including the Patriots, Cowboys, Eagles, and 49ers, and treating himself to favorites like lasagna, French toast, white chocolate, blueberry pie, and vanilla ice cream. He's also a big animal lover and never misses the chance to admire a friendly dog that visits the store.

RCAL is proud to celebrate Keith's success and the joy he brings to his workplace and community every day. A special thank-you goes to RCAL Career Coordinator Theresa Ettere, whose dedication and support help individuals like Keith achieve meaningful employment and thrive in their careers. Her commitment continues to make a lasting difference in the lives of the people she serves.

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Become a Monthly Donor.**

Scan the QR code to get started
or visit rcal.org/donate.



JULY 2026

RCAL CEO Addresses Ulster County Legislature

RCAL CEO Anthony Mignone recently appeared before the Ulster County Legislature during its July 14 meeting to provide an overview of the organization's mission, services, and impact throughout the community.

During his presentation, Anthony introduced the county's 23 legislators to the wide range of programs RCAL offers, highlighting how the organization empowers people with disabilities to live independently, make informed choices, and fully participate in community life. He also discussed RCAL's ongoing advocacy efforts and the importance of continued collaboration to expand accessibility and inclusion across Ulster County.

RCAL appreciates the opportunity to share its work with the Legislature and looks forward to continuing its partnership with county leaders to build a more accessible and inclusive community for all.



RCAL CEO Anthony Mignone addresses the Ulster County Legislature on July 14, 2026.

A promotional poster for Ulster County's 1776 Wigs Optional event. The background is a photograph of men in 18th-century military uniforms, including red coats and white breeches, holding rifles. The text is overlaid on the image.

ULSTER COUNTY
NEW YORK

STEP INTO 1776
WIGS OPTIONAL

Ulster County is the perfect place to celebrate our nation's 250th birthday. Walk the streets of America's first capital. Make it a wandering weekend through art studios, trailheads, museums and music-filled nights that prove our nation's independent spirit still burns bright. Ulster County isn't history behind glass. It's history you can move through.

Plan your trip at
VisitUlsterCountyNY.com

Seek for Yourself
Burning of Kingston Reenactment
3rd weekend October 2026

Accessible Outdoor Activities for People with Disabilities

There are many benefits and challenges to people with disabilities enjoying the outdoors. In this session, you will hear from a program coordinator in aging services, an ADA Coordinator for a state agency, and a volunteer advocate who all collaborate to improve access to the outdoors in New York State. We will provide examples of how programs, policies, and planning are improving accessibility and discuss ways disabled people can get outdoors or advocate for better access. This session will be useful for anyone who is interested in understanding outdoor accessibility or is advising others on resources for enjoying the outdoors.



Accessible Outdoor Recreation for People with Disabilities

Presenters

Leah Akins
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

Katy Carroll
Association on Aging in New York

Meg LeFevre Bobbin
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
Accessibility Advisory Committee

Wednesday, July 29th, 2026
1 p.m.-2:30 p.m.

American Sign Language (ASL) and human captioning will be provided.

 <https://ilny.us/training-education/webinar-series>

Presenters:

Leah Akins, Statewide ADA Accessibility Coordinator:
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

Katy Carroll: Disability Training Coordinator,
Association on Aging in New York

Meg LeFevre Bobbin (Committee Member, NYS
Department of Environmental Conservation
Accessibility Advisory Committee

American Sign Language and human captioning are provided. [Click here to register.](#)



NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION & PALISADES INTERSTATE PARK COMMISSION

You're Invited!

Please join us as we open the new swimming facility, pavilion, beach, and picnic areas at Lake Sophia in Sojourner Truth State Park.

FRIDAY, JULY 17, 2026 AT 10 A.M.

Sojourner Truth State Park
100 Sojourner Truth Way
Kingston, NY 12401

Commissioner Kathy Moser
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Please RSVP to: news@parks.ny.gov by Thursday, July 16, 2026 at 5 p.m.



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JULY 2026

Higher Education from Home: Learn About GABE

Have you always wanted to earn a college degree but felt that a disability or chronic illness made attending classes impossible? A unique program called GABE (Get a Better Education) is helping make higher education more accessible for people who are homebound.



Affiliated with Westchester Community College, GABE connects qualified individuals with public colleges and universities throughout New York State, allowing them to enroll in credit-bearing courses from home. To be eligible, participants must have a high school diploma or high school equivalency (GED/HSE) and be homebound due to a chronic illness or disability.

Through GABE, students attend live, instructor-led online classes from their own homes using a computer and internet connection. They participate alongside their professors and classmates in real time, creating an engaging college experience while eliminating the barriers associated with traveling to campus.

In addition to academic support, GABE participants receive assistance navigating financial aid opportunities, including grants that may help cover tuition, fees, books, and supplies. Students also have access to many of the same opportunities as their peers, including student organizations and other campus activities available remotely.

If you've been putting your educational goals on hold because of your disability or health condition, GABE may be the opportunity you've been waiting for.

For more information, contact:

George Smith, MSW

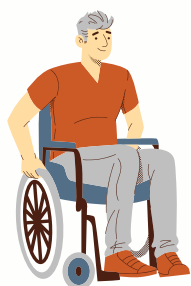
Phone: (973) 487-8095

Email: gsmith898@myyahoo.com

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INDEPENDENT

JULY 2026

Federal Bill Seeks to Strengthen Community Living Rights

U.S. Senator Michael Bennet has reintroduced the Latonya Reeves Freedom Act, legislation designed to strengthen the right of people with disabilities to receive long-term services and supports in the community rather than in institutional settings.



Named in honor of disability advocate Latonya Reeves, the bill builds on the landmark *Olmstead v. L.C.* Supreme Court decision, which affirmed that people with disabilities have the right to receive services in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs.

If passed, the legislation would require states to improve access to community-based long-term services and supports, reduce unnecessary institutionalization, address disparities in care, and strengthen enforcement of disability civil rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Supporters say the bill would help ensure that people with disabilities have greater choice, independence, and the opportunity to live in the communities they call home.

◦ ◦

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Ulster County Equips First Responders with Autism Preparedness Bags

Ulster County is taking an important step toward making emergency response more inclusive for individuals with autism and sensory sensitivities.

The Ulster County Department of Emergency Services has assembled and distributed 120 Autism Preparedness Bags to every EMS ambulance in the county, with additional bags provided to each fire and law enforcement agency. These specialized kits are designed to help first responders communicate more effectively, reduce sensory overload, and create calmer interactions during emergency situations.

Each bag contains a variety of supportive tools, including noise-reduction earmuffs, sunglasses, stress-relief and sensory items, a comfort stuffed animal, a dry-erase board with marker, a non-verbal communication chart, and additional resources to help responders adapt their approach based on an individual's needs.

The initiative was spearheaded by Ulster County Commissioner of Emergency Services Everett Erichsen and was inspired by an extraordinary young advocate. Nine-year-old Ledger Greyson Mann of Virginia, who is autistic, used his own savings to create emergency kits for first responders after recognizing how overwhelming emergency situations can be for people with autism. County officials recently met with Ledger and his family to thank him for inspiring a program that is now helping shape emergency response efforts here in Ulster County.



Ulster County Department of Emergency Services personnel distribute Autism Preparedness Bags to the Esopus Ambulance Squad.

Programs like this reflect the growing recognition that accessibility extends beyond buildings and transportation—it also includes ensuring that emergency services are prepared to meet people where they are. By equipping first responders with practical tools and resources, Ulster County is helping create safer, more supportive interactions for individuals with autism and their families when they need assistance most.



HUDSON VALLEY LIMB LOSS

➤ SUPPORT GROUP ➤

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A welcoming community for individuals living with limb loss and their loved ones in the Hudson Valley and surrounding areas.

WE'RE HERE TO:



SHARE EXPERIENCES

Connect with others who truly understand your journey.



FIND SUPPORT & ENCOURAGEMENT

Receive and offer support in a safe, judgment-free space.



LEARN & GROW TOGETHER

Share resources, tips, and information that empower.



BUILD CONFIDENCE

Be inspired and reminded that you can keep moving forward.



MEETINGS

We meet the 2nd Thursday of the month at 6 pm–7 pm.



In person or Zoom.
727 Ulster Ave.
Kingston, NY. 12401



Zoom ID: 876 1707 9276
Password: 812752



WHO IT'S FOR

Individuals living with limb loss

- All ages
- All causes of limb loss
- All levels of mobility

Family members, friends, and caregivers are encouraged to attend.

Together, we are stronger.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

hudsonvalleylimbloss@gmail.com



Hudson Valley Limb Loss Support Group

JOIN OUR TEAM

RCAL is hiring compassionate, motivated individuals to help support our community. To apply, email Leah Gherardi at lgherardi@rcal.org.

Community Habilitation Support Staff

RCAL is seeking compassionate and dedicated individuals to join our team as Part-Time Community Habilitation Support Staff to specifically serve the Marlboro and Modena, NY areas. In this role, you will provide direct assistance and support to individuals with developmental disabilities to help them achieve their goals, enhance their independence, and participate more fully in their communities. The Community Habilitation Support Staff will work closely with clients, their families, and other members of the support team to implement individualized plans and promote meaningful engagement and skill development.

Requirements:

- Previous experience working with individuals with disabilities or in a similar role preferred
- Knowledge of resident rights and the ability to advocate for individuals' needs
- Valid driver's license and reliable transportation to transport individuals as needed
- Ability to lift and transfer individuals as required
- Strong communication skills, both verbal and written
- Ability to maintain confidentiality and respect for individual privacy

Note: This job description is not intended to be all-inclusive. Employees may perform other related duties as assigned.

Job Type: Part-time

Pay: \$16.50 - \$18.50 per hour

Expected hours: 10 – 20 per week

Benefits:

- Flexible schedule
- Mileage reimbursement
- Paid orientation
- Paid training

If you have any questions about the position or if you're not sure if your experience can be considered please feel free to call program supervisor Leah Gherardi at 845-331-0541 ext. 27. Email Resume to lgherardi@rcal.org.

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RCAL Board Members
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Jack Ruddick



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Disability Advocates



Kiwanis
CLUB OF KINGSTON



MUSICFUSION



Anthony Mignone & Matthew Coumbes

Joanna & Peter Mignone

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