



INDEPENDENT

JAN. / FEB. 2026

A Letter From the Director

I would like to start by taking a moment to acknowledge the passing of a great and wonderful man Alex Stier, our board treasurer, and a great friend to RCAL. Our hearts and thoughts go out to his lovely wife Denise and his family.

Losing someone like Alex reminds us how important this community is, and how much we rely on one another.

Winter is hard on a lot of us, the holidays are over and the weather isn't always friendly, and of course it's cold, but spring is just around the corner. Let's all look to the spring and renewal and hope. It's a New Year and lots of exciting things are coming for RCAL. NYAIL's Advocacy Day is just around the corner, and as we do every year, RCAL will be in Albany meeting with politicians and advocating for the independent living community.

Everyone take a breath and relax, we will ride out the winter together, fun is just around the corner. Time to start thinking about some of our winter gatherings, and our Disability Parade is never out of our minds. This year's Parade falls on July 18th; mark it down now, come and participate in this very special event.

Does anyone know a marching band (or any band) that is willing to proudly march down Broadway with us. That would be fantastic. Let us know! We can't wait to see you there.

With Love and Gratitude,

Anthony Mignone, CEO

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WE ARE HIRING

Our Wonderful Sponsors!



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Remembering Alex Stier

RCAL mourns the loss of Alex Stier, our Board Treasurer, a dedicated advocate, and a dear friend to our organization. Alex believed deeply in RCAL's mission and gave his time, energy, and heart to strengthening our community and advancing independence for people with disabilities. His impact will be felt for many years to come.

Those who served alongside Alex speak not only of his commitment, but of the warmth and encouragement he brought to everything he did.

"I was so fortunate to serve on the RCAL Board and Fundraising/Events Committee with Alex," said board member Kathy McMahon. "I so admire Alex's hard work and dedication to RCAL's mission. And he was fun to work with. Alex will be greatly missed. My heart goes out to his family."

For many, Alex was also a mentor and a motivator. Board member David Daws shared how Alex helped shape his own advocacy journey. "Personally my heart breaks, as he is the reason I started advocating and speaking with local officials," David said. "He insisted I do last summer's RCAL parade, where he introduced me to elected officials, which turned into many opportunities to advocate and better our community. I am thankful Alex was there to see me voted onto the Board and will do my best to push forward his missions with the Loan Closet as well as continue to push for Adult Changing Tables."

Alex's kindness and ability to connect left a lasting impression on new and longtime board members alike. Stephanie Galinson, who met Alex when she joined the Board, reflected, "He was welcoming both professionally and personally, sharing his story and connecting with both me and my daughter as we attended RCAL events. I was so impressed by his commitment to his family, to RCAL, and to the myriad of community service commitments he juggled with generosity and grace. His shoes will be hard to fill."

Above all, Alex believed in people — their voices, their potential, and their right to live independently and fully in the community. We extend our deepest condolences to his wife Denise and his family, and we carry forward his work with gratitude and resolve.

Alex, you will be missed, and you will not be forgotten.





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RCAL Heads to Albany for NYAIL Budget Advocacy Day 2026

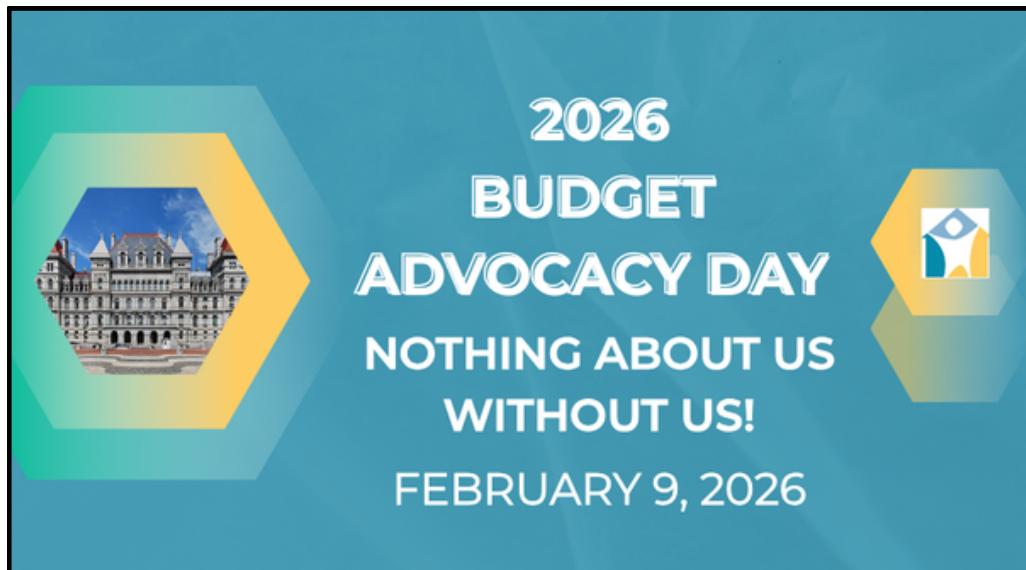
RCAL is excited to once again take part in the New York Association on Independent Living's 2026 Budget Advocacy Day in Albany on February 9. Each year, we proudly stand alongside advocates, Independent Living Centers, and partners from across New York State to lift up the voices of the community we represent – and this year will be no different.

Advocacy Day is a powerful opportunity to meet directly with state legislators, connect with fellow advocates and ILCs from around the state, and push for policies that support civil rights, community integration, and consumer-controlled services for people with disabilities. It's a busy, energizing day, and one of the most important moments of the legislative session to make our voices heard.

Do you have an Independent Living issue that's especially important to you? Let us know. We'd be happy to advocate on your behalf and make sure the right questions are asked when we meet with policymakers.

If you'd like to share an issue or concern, please email Robert at RMiraldi@rcal.org. We'd love to hear from you and bring your priorities with us to Albany.

Together, we advocate. Together, we make change happen.



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RCAL Benefits Advisement: Support You Can Count On

RCAL's Benefits Advisement program is here to help individuals and families better understand and navigate public benefits. Whether you're applying for benefits for the first time, experiencing a change in income or employment, or just have questions about how different programs work together, our Benefits Advisor can help.

RCAL provides one-on-one, confidential assistance with programs such as SSI, SSDI, Medicaid, Medicare, SNAP, and other public benefits, with a focus on helping people make informed choices that support independence and financial stability.

In addition to appointments at RCAL, our Benefits Advisement program hits the road twice each month to bring support directly into the community:

- First Wednesday of each month at the Trudy Farber Center, 50 Center St., Ellenville
- Third Wednesday of each month at the Broadway Bubble, Kingston

Check out the flyers included in this newsletter for upcoming dates, times, and locations.

To schedule an appointment in advance or to ask questions about Benefits Advisement, please email Todd at tmartin@rcal.org.

Benefits can be complicated – you don't have to figure them out alone.



Benefits Advisement at the Bubble!

Have questions about your benefits? RCAL's Benefits Advisor Todd Martin will be available on-site to provide free benefits advisement and answer your questions.

Location: Broadway Bubble, 718 Broadway, Kingston
When: 10 AM – 2 PM, the 3rd Wednesday of each month
No appointment is needed – just stop in!
To make the process smoother, please bring any relevant paperwork for review.

3RD WED. MONTHLY
10 AM - 2 PM

QUESTIONS? 845-331-0541 X 18



ON-SITE BENEFITS ADVISEMENT

1ST WEDNESDAY MONTHLY
10AM – 2 PM

Help with:

- Medicaid
- Medicare
- Disability

FREE TO THE PUBLIC

The Trudy Center
50 Center St.
Ellenville, NY 12428

No appointment is needed – just stop in!

Ulster County Warming Center Information

With cold weather already upon us, warming centers are a vital resource for members of our community who need a safe, warm place during the winter months. Ulster County's warming shelter will be operational 24/7 from December 1, 2025 through March 31, 2026.

IMPORTANT

WARMING CENTER/SHELTER ACTIVATION

Accessing Food Resources in Ulster County

RCAL is proud to share this helpful map of food pantries and meal programs across Ulster County—each accessible by Ulster County Area Transit (UCAT). These resources support individuals and families in need of healthy, reliable food options within our community.

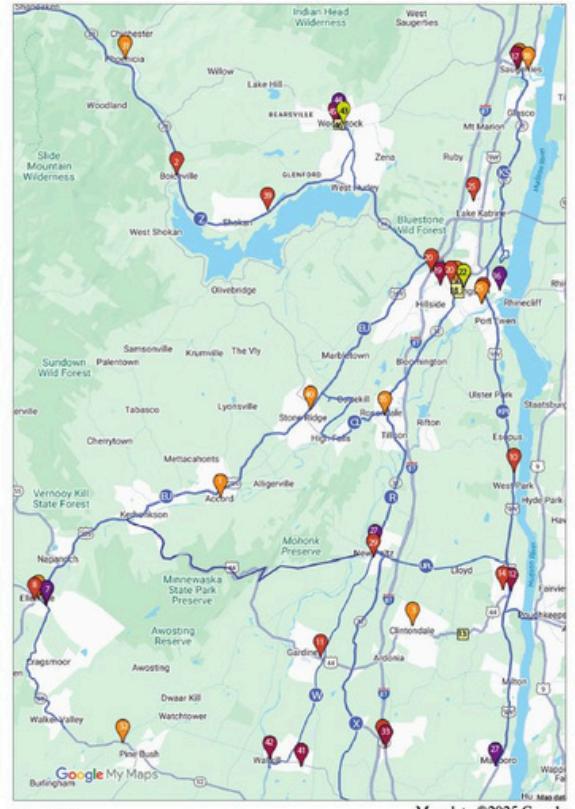
For more information on local food programs, visit [Ulster Corps website](#).

The warming center is located at 2nda Iglesia La Mision Church, 80 Elmendorf Street, Kingston, NY 12401. The center can be reached directly at (845) 334-0551. Law enforcement agencies and other organizations that encounter individuals in need of shelter are encouraged to transport them directly to the warming center. Additional assistance is available through the Family of Woodstock Hotline at (845) 679-2485. As temperatures drop, we encourage the community to help spread the word and look out for neighbors who may need support.

ULSTER COUNTY

Food Pantries & Meal Programs

accessible by Ulster County Area Transit (UCAT)

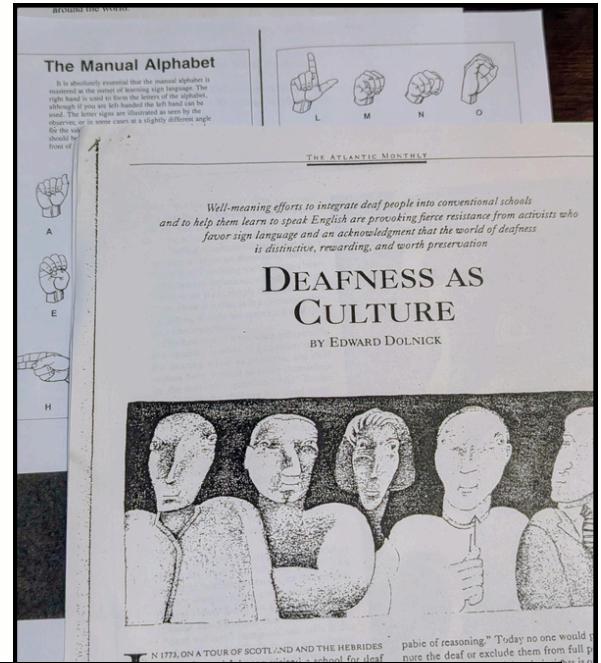
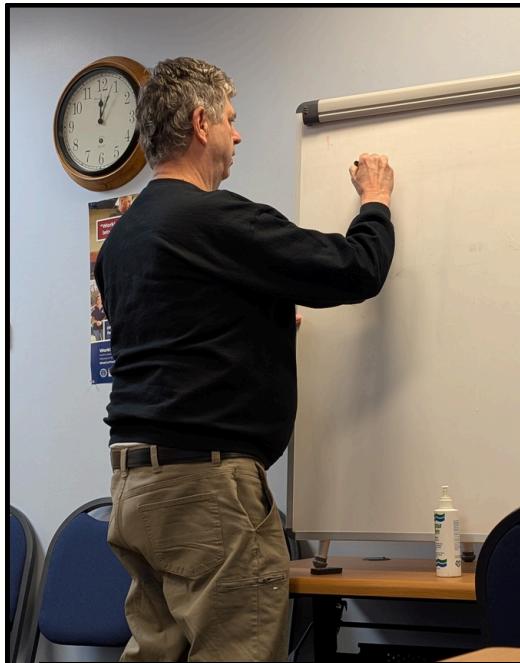


ASL Lunch and Learn!

January kicked off the first lunch and learn ASL series for RCAL employees. A group of employees from all different departments spent their lunch hour increasing their communication skills, building rapport, and having fun while learning ASL from RCAL's Systems Advocate, Vernon Bonse.

The class began with a short quiz about deaf heritage before introducing the alphabet, finger spelling and some quick phrases like "hello" "how are you" and "good morning." Vernon also shared how deaf individuals still face discrimination today.

These may seem like simple signs, but it will help create a more inclusive work environment and help us serve the deaf community. Thank you to Vernon for taking the time each week to educate his co-workers and make us all better community advocates.



RCAL's Systems Advocate Vernon Bonse leads weekly ASL Lunch and Learn classes for RCAL staff.

JOIN OUR TEAM

RCAL is hiring compassionate, motivated individuals to help support our community. Current openings include:

- **Part-Time Community Habilitation Support Staff** – Serve the Marlboro and Modena areas by assisting individuals with developmental disabilities in achieving goals and enhancing independence.
- **Career Coordinator** - RCAL is seeking a Career Coordinator to support individuals with disabilities as they pursue meaningful employment. This role blends coaching, advocacy, and hands-on support to help job seekers build confidence, develop skills, and secure sustainable work.
- **Pre-Vocational Counselor** - The Pre-Vocational Counselor is responsible for preparing individuals with disabilities, special needs, or other employment barriers for successful entry into the workforce. This position involves assessing client needs, developing individualized pre-employment plans, teaching job-readiness skills, and coordinating with support services to ensure comprehensive client development and success.

For full job descriptions, qualifications, and to apply, visit <https://www.rcal.org/employment-opportunities> or click the graphic below.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!
WE NEED YOUR HELP!



RCAL is looking for dedicated individuals to join us in our mission to make a positive impact in our community. We are seeking someone to help answer phones and emails, as well as assist members of the public in our Medical Loan Closet.

If you are interested, please email rmiraldi@rcal.org or call 845-331-0541 x12

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C R E D I T U N I O N



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Disability Advocates



Anthony Mignone & Matthew Coumbes

RCAL Board Members Kathy McMahon & Jack Ruddick

RCAL Board Members Sheila Kilpatrick and Jeffrey Galinson

Joanna & Peter Mignone



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Disability Advocates Continued



Support Groups at RCAL

2nd
THU

Amputee / Limb Loss of the Hudson Valley
This meeting is held on the SECOND Thursday of each month from 6 – 8:30 p.m. at RCAL. Members of the public are welcome.

2nd
MON

Traumatic Brain Injury
This meeting is held on the SECOND Monday of each month from 2-4 p.m. at RCAL. Members of the public are welcome.

3rd
THU

Hudson Valley Task Force of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
This meeting is held at 10 a.m. on the THIRD Thursday of each month at RCAL. Members of the public are welcome.

For more information, visit rcal.org

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