



Inclusive Recreation Resource Center eNewsletter

2014

VOLUME 8

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Come join us in a mentored assessment!

Are you a Certified Inclusivity Assessor (CIA) and would like to practice what you learned in Inclusion U? Do you plan on taking Inclusion U online and would like some hands on experience after passing the final exam? Join us this summer for a mentored assessment in your region!

As part of our continued collaboration with the NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC), NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), two of our assessment specialists will be out assessing 250 state-operated sites this summer. We invite CIAs in the region to join us on the assessments to answer any of your questions and to build your confidence in completing assessments.



If you are interested in attending a mentored assessment this summer, please send us an e-mail at: InclusiveRec@cortland.edu

Highlights from 2014

Wrapping up the Adirondack Accessibility Assessment and Awareness Project



Continuing its work with Adirondack North Country Association and the New York Department of Transportation, the Inclusive Recreation Resource Center is helping to make the beautiful Adirondack Park more accessible to visitors with disabilities and their families. Mary Kelly, CTRS and Tyler Pearson are the staff who completed the remainder of assessments in 2014. The goal of the project was to conduct inclusivity assessments of up to 200 recreation resource sites and interpretive

facilities in the Adirondacks, in cooperation with the Adirondack North Country Association. Lynn Anderson is currently in the process of creating a digital *Public Awareness Guide*/ print marketing materials to improve conditions for travelers touring sites along the Adirondack Trail, Central Adirondack Trail, and the Olympic Scenic Byways and will finalize the project with a webinar to area businesses and tourism entities.

**Mission of the
Inclusive
Recreation
Resource Center**

*Helping ALL people
play wherever they
choose!*



*Learn what it is like
living on the road as
an assessment
specialist for the
Inclusive Recreation
Resource Center ...
Follow these
footprints to learn
more!*



Year 1 with NYS DDPC: Technology Upgrade and Conducting Accessibility Assessments at State-Operated Recreation Sites

As noted in last year's newsletter, the Inclusive Recreation Resource Center (IRRC) is collaborating with the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC), the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), and the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to provide training and complete assessments.



In the first year, the IRRC provided two face-to-face Inclusion U trainings for DDPC, DEC and OPRHP Staff. For four months, two of our assessment specialists, Deanna Moore, CTRS and Sarah Olear, traveled across the state completing over 150 assessments of state-operated recreation sites. These assessments mentored site managers as well as CIAs in the region.

As part of the technology upgrade piece, our new database and website are currently under construction. The sneak peeks look wonderful so make sure you stay tuned for the public release! Inclusion U Online is also nearing completion and will be available, after a pilot this winter, in the spring. Start recruiting friends, co-workers, and others to become CIAs! With the ease of the online format, Inclusion U will truly be accessible for all.

For the year ahead: We are beginning year two with the goal of 250 more assessments to be completed. If you are a CIA and would like to brush up on your assessing skills with a mentored assessment, send us an e-mail. Two Assessment Specialists will be traveling state-wide with many assessments happening in each region. Also, Inclusion U will be launching online in the spring. By the end of 2015, we will have an app so that information on inclusion and accessibility can be easily available on-the-go.

The Belize Zoo Transformation Project Update



For the second year in a row, the REC 429/529 class went to Belize over Spring Break. This time there were nine students, all Certified Inclusivity Assessors, that traveled to The Best Little Zoo in the World for an experience of a lifetime. They were joined by their still fearless leader, Vicki Wilkins.

The goal for the 2014 year was to raise enough funds to build accessible pathways throughout the zoo. Through the support of the Cortland community, the SUNY Cortland Campus, and the hard work of the students, over \$7,000 was raised for the materials to make the zoo accessible!

The work-intensive week involved digging deep holes through packed pebbles and stones, setting rebar, mixing, hauling, and packing cement, and a variety of other labor-intensive jobs. After many exhaustive days of physical labor, the students had laid one-hundred sixty feet of firm and stable, accessible pathway in the zoo. The group was also able to begin another 40 feet of pathway before they had to head back to New York.

If you would like to see a video summarizing the time the REC 429/529 group spent in Belize in 2014, visit their Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/BelizeZooTransformation

Life on the Road as an Assessment Specialist

By: Deanna Moore, CTRS



What is it like living on the road full-time as an assessment specialist for the Inclusive Recreation Resource Center? It is a wonderful experience in so many ways. My co-worker, Sarah, and I had the pleasure of working on the partnership with the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation and the Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation with funding by the NYS DDPC. We travelled all across New York State in 4 months and completed over 150 assessments.

What did a typical schedule look like? We would be on the road for ten days, go back home to do some paperwork and visit with our families then head back out for another 10 days. When we were on the road, we were living out of a minivan and camping every night. We rarely stayed in the same location for more than one night. Luckily for us, we both loved camping and being in the outdoors.

What was the best part of the job? We were able to travel state-wide fulfilling our passions of advocating for inclusion and accessibility as well as being in the outdoors. Knowing the work we were doing this past summer was going to assist other individuals in pursuing future outdoor recreational activities kept us pushing on through the tough times. We enjoyed hearing everyone's story; whether we met them through friendly conversation, helped them with their car trouble, or reunited them with their missing dog. Also, watching the sunrise as we climbed out of our sleeping bags in the morning or watching the sunset while roasting marshmallows over a campfire, we got to bask in the beauty of the outdoors...for work!

What was the hardest part of the job? BUGS! This year, our main focus was the Adirondacks with occasional trips South to the Catskills and West towards Buffalo. Anyone who has ever been in the Adirondacks in the summer can tell you that the bugs are relentless. Shortly after our first trip North, we had to create a system for re-entering the van after accessing a site in order to minimize our insect hitch-hikers. We named it the "Essential Mosquito Evasion Maneuvers." Another tough part of the job was the weather. It would often rain when we were headed out on our first day of a 10-day trip which made it difficult to set up camp knowing all of our gear would get soaked and would not dry out until we returned home. We also encountered some magnificent storms in our travels that were extremely intense, but we both get a good laugh when thinking back on them.

Sarah and I would like to extend a warm welcome to the year two assessment specialists on this project, Geoff Peppel, CTRS and Ian Haines.

We also encourage you to get outside and recreate as there are a multitude of activities available for everyone!



Assessing Across the State!



The Belize Zoo Transformation Project!





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We're on the Web!
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**We're on Facebook,
too!**
www.facebook.com/InclusiveRec

Like Us on Facebook

If you haven't already done so, please go to our Facebook page and "like" the Inclusive Recreation Resource Center. Also, please feel free to share news and updates about inclusion and recreation in your part of the world! We are at:

www.facebook.com/InclusiveRec



Meet Our Staff

Dr. Lynn Anderson, CTRS, CPRP is the director of the Inclusive Recreation Resource Center and a Distinguished Service Professor at SUNY Cortland. She can be reached at lynn.anderson@cortland.edu.

Dr. Vicki Wilkins is Center faculty and a Professor at SUNY Cortland. She can be reached at vicki.wilkins@cortland.edu.

Deanna Moore, CTRS, is an assessment specialist, who is working on the partnership project with the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation and Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, funded by the NYS DDPC.

Sarah Olear, is an assessment specialist, as part of an independent study. She is currently pursuing her Master's Degree in Therapeutic Recreation in SUNY Cortland's Recreation, Parks and Leisure Studies Department. Sarah is currently interning in Fort Collins, CO.

Mary Kelly, CTRS, is an assessment specialist, who is working with the Adirondack North Country Association accessibility project. Mary received her Master's Degree in Therapeutic Recreation from SUNY Cortland in 2014.

We would like to thank **Tyler Pearson** for his work as an assessment specialist this past summer with the Adirondack North Country Association accessibility project.

We would also like to welcome **Geoff Peppel, CTRS** and **Ian Haines** to the Center this coming year. They will be assessment specialists working on the partnership project with the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation and Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, funded by the NYS DDPC.

Deanna, Sarah, Mary, Tyler, Ian and Geoff can be reached at:

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