

# NYS Inclusive Recreation Resource Center Winter 2009

## Highlights from the NYS IRRC

Hello and Happy New Year from the NYS Inclusive Recreation Resource Center! We are very excited to be starting our third year of this wonderful project! Throughout 2008 we have had the honor of meeting many individuals from across NY state and beyond who are truly dedicated to inclusion. In order to provide a brief snapshot of our work this past year, here are some of the highlights:

- 15 free full-day Inclusion U trainings were held in 2008
- 1 mini Inclusion U was held at the National Institute for Recreation Inclusion in Oregon
- 290 individuals attended Inclusion U, with 283 people completing their Inclusion U Final Exams in order to become Certified Inclusivity Assessors – congratulations to you all!
- Over 200 recreation sites and facilities were assessed this past year by Certified Inclusivity Assessors
- Inclusion U Train the Trainer was piloted in February 2008 and attended by 8 individuals in November. There are now 9 Trained Certified Inclusion U Trainers to help facilitate future Inclusion U trainings!
- Information about the NYS IRRC was presented by staff 21 times this past year, including during two national conferences in Oregon and Maryland
- 6 articles written by IRRC staff were included in state-wide publications
- 14 dedicated volunteers completed the Recreation Referral Service training to become inclusion advocates in their regions – thank you!
- The IRRC created 66 collaborations with other organizations and individuals to increase inclusive recreation across New York State. Many thanks to all of our partners!

The work of NYS IRRC staff, volunteers, and trained assessors has resulted in increased accessibility and inclusion at recreation sites and facilities across the state. Signage has been changed, doors have been automated, staff members have been trained, and people are using Person First Terminology to use language that is accurate and respectful of people of all abilities. We are incredibly grateful to all of the people who have attended training, to those who have conducted Inclusivity Assessments, and to the recreation providers who are making positive changes to be more inclusive. We have a new year ahead filled with Inclusion U trainings, so see page 6 for a location near you. Join us as we look forward to a great new year ahead!



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Visit us on the web  
[www.cortland.edu/nysirrc](http://www.cortland.edu/nysirrc)

- About the NYS IRRC
- Upcoming Training Dates
- Resources and Links
- Assessed site list
- And more....

## They are ALL Inclusion Heroes!! The NYS IRRC's First Train the Trainer Graduates

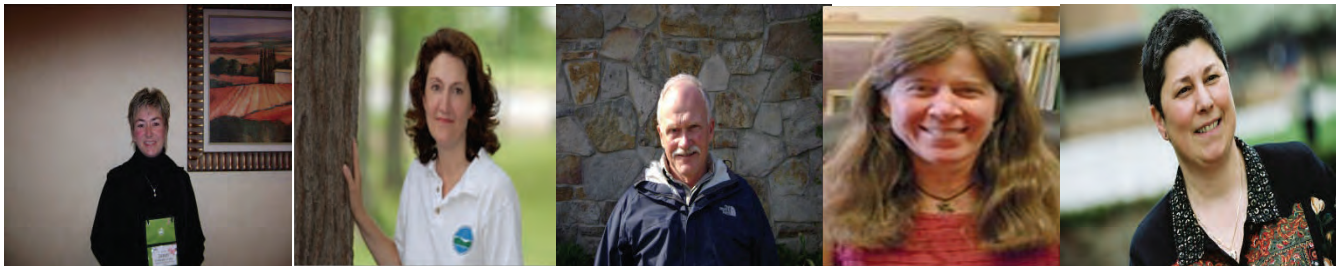


Leiko Benson

Karen Boldis

Brandy Boden

Beth Coveney



Janet Connelly

Carole Fraser

Mike Geiss

Linda Heyne

Gail Lamberta

On Saturday, November 9th, eight highly skilled professionals attended the IRRC's first Inclusion U Train the Trainer seminar. All of the trainers had previously gone through Inclusion U and have committed to assisting with future Inclusion U trainings. We are very fortunate to now have volunteer trainers who can assist with Inclusion U trainings around the state. They are all an essential part of our sustainability plan. Thank you trainers!!

Congratulations to the following NYS Inclusive Recreation Resource Center's Inclusion U Trainers:

Leiko Benson, Recreation Supervisor, Onondaga County Parks and Recreation

Dr. Karen Boldis, Associate Professor, Paul Smith's College

Brandy Boden, Adjunct Faculty, SUNY Cortland (participated in pilot training)

Janet Connolly, Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist, The Hospital for Special Care

Elizabeth Coveney, Adjunct Faculty, Tompkins Cortland Community College

Carole Fraser, State Access Coordinator, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

Mike Geiss, retired Assistant Regional Director, Office of Parks, Recreation and Historical Preservation

Dr. Linda Heyne, Associate Professor, Department of Therapeutic Recreation and Leisure Services, Ithaca College

Dr. Gail Lamberta, Professor and Department Chair, St. Joseph's College

We are truly grateful to all of these wonderful people for their time and dedication to supporting the work of the NYS IRRC!!!!

## Free Accessible Playground Training On-line

While the snow is falling around much of the state, recreation providers are already making plans for greener days ahead. To help ensure that your playground meets accessibility guidelines for play areas, a free web-based course is available on the Access Board's website. According to their site, "The interactive program explains how to apply and follow the guidelines for proper access. It covers the scope and application of the guidelines, including the number of play components required to be accessible, and technical provisions for accessible play equipment, surfacing in play areas, ramp and transfer system access to elevated structures, and access to soft contained play structures. The course covers all sections of the guidelines, which are one of the first of their kind in providing detailed criteria for accessible play areas. In addition, multiple choice exams are provided for each segment of the program." Visit this valuable resource at:

<http://www.access-board.gov/play/course/1-0.htm>



### Can everybody play??????

NYS IRRC Summer Intern Eric Komar attempts to access the playground.....



## 2008-2010 Resource Manual for Onondaga and Surrounding Counties

The **RESOURCE MANUAL** is a comprehensive guide to services in Onondaga and surrounding counties, including recreation. Organized in a user-friendly manner, it contains information about hundreds of programs and organizations serving people with disabilities.

**Free copies** of the 2008-2010 Resource Manual may be picked up at Exceptional Family Resources, located at 1065 James Street, Suite 220, Syracuse, NY 13203 (on the corner of James and Dewitt Streets.) Or, download a free pdf version from Exceptional Family Resources' website at: [www.contactefr.org](http://www.contactefr.org). It will also be available on the NYS IRRC website at [www.cortland.edu/nysirrc](http://www.cortland.edu/nysirrc).

**Mail Order Manual(s)** can be purchased as well. Send a check payable to *Exceptional Family Resources, Manual Order* to cover postage and handling charges as follows:

- For one or two copies—send \$2.75
- For three or four copies—send \$4.50
- For five or six copies send \$6.00



For more information or for any questions, contact Kathy Pierson at Exceptional Family Resources (315) 478-1462 ext. 328

## Reading in the Great Indoors

By Andra Smith and Kelly Wilcox, SUNY Cortland TR Graduate Students



When the winter months make their snowy appearance once again, it is prime motivation to want to snuggle up with a blanket and a good book. Reading has been shown to help with the expansion of vocabulary, increase general knowledge, and develop good reasoning skills. Reading is also a great way to let your imagination run wild. There are various accessible reading materials available for you to read at your leisure. The following examples are great resources to help you jump into reading this winter season.

### Screen Readers

Screen readers are software programs that can read what is on your computer screen out loud. This assistive technology is beneficial for those who have visual impairments, learning or other types of disabilities.

### Amazon Kindle

The Amazon Kindle is a convenient, portable reading device with the ability to wirelessly download books, blogs, magazines, and newspapers without the need for a computer. The Kindle is still fairly new with the initial release date November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007. The original price has been dropped to \$359 with enough space to download 88,000 plus books, magazines, etc. There is the option to download content on Kindle through Amazon Whispernet, allowing the consumer to download books without a computer free of charge. New releases by the New York Times are \$10 and classics are \$1.99. Although this option of accessible reading is a little pricey, it is well worth every penny.

### Accessible Reading for Children

There are many accessible reading options for children. The Reading Rockets website provides information for parents of children with learning disabilities. There are great ideas of how to get your child motivated and excited about reading. Different software, e-texts, and commercial source information are provided on the Reading Rockets website. Amazon has a collection of accessible children's books to help get children eager about reading. Most of these books are also available to read on the Kindle. *Children's Play: The Roots of Reading* by Edward Zigler is just one example of books available in Kindle.

### Libraries

Libraries offer many different services to both people with and without disabilities. Some of the services offered at libraries as stated by the American Library Association are waived late fees, extended reserve periods, library cards for proxies, books by mail, reference services by fax or email, home delivery service, remote access to the OPAC, remote electronic access to library resources, volunteer readers in the library, volunteer technology assistants in the library, American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter or real-time captioning at library programs, and radio reading services. More information about these services and more can be found at the American Library Association website [www.ala.org](http://www.ala.org). Books are also available in big print and a few in Braille. Some libraries let you check out MP3 players with books already downloaded onto them. E-books provide another great option. These are books you can check out online. One of the advantages of checking a book out online is that it allows you to change the font size if needed. To learn more, contact your local library.

(cont.)

### Talking Book Programs

Talking book programs are a great way for everyone to get involved with reading. Volunteers can help their local libraries transfer books to audio devices. As you read the book you are recorded and then your recording is entered into the library information system for that particular book. Volunteers are greatly appreciated. Those who are interested in volunteering can visit the website listed below in the information box. The National Library Service offers free services for people with low vision, blindness, and other physical disabilities. This free service is offered to US residents and citizens who live abroad. Through the National Library Service website you can enroll for eligibility to receive audio books, audio equipment, Braille books, and magazines at no cost. On the National Library Service site the heading to look under for eligibility information is "Talking Book and Braille Library". If you need help finding a book of interest <http://books.google.com/> is a great website. There are a variety of books to choose from such as non-fiction, fiction, and random subjects.

Reading is just one of various indoor activities to enjoy during your leisure time this winter. It is an activity that the whole family can enjoy. So go on! Grab a book and let yourself be immersed in another world! For more information about accessible reading materials, please visit the websites below.

### Reading Resources

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kindle>

<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/tbbl/>

<http://www.loc.gov/nls/faq.html#q1>

<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/16308> (Reading Rockets)

<https://www.nlstalkingbooks.org/talkingbooksform/> (fill out form National Library Service)

<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/tbbl/index.html> (information about the talking book program in New York)

<http://www.amazon.com/Childrens-Play-Reading-Edward-Zigler/dp/094365775X> (amazon children books)

<http://archives.chicagotribune.com/2008/mar/04/news/chi-mxa0304tempodigitalmar04>



## The NYS IRRC will proudly be participating in the following upcoming events.....

### New York State Recreation and Park Society's Annual Conference

69th Annual Conference & Business Expo

April 19 - 22, 2009

Hyatt Regency Long Island, Hauppauge, NY

For more information, visit [www.nysrps.org](http://www.nysrps.org)



### New York State Therapeutic Recreation Association's Annual Conference

14th Annual Conference

"NYSTRA Branching Out"

March 28–March 31, 2009

Holiday Inn, Saratoga Springs, NY

For more information, visit [www.nystra.org](http://www.nystra.org)



## The NYS IRRC at SUNY Cortland

NYS Inclusive Recreation Resource Center  
Studio West B-4  
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SUNY  
**Cortland**

### Our Mission

To promote and sustain participation by people with disabilities in inclusive recreation activities and resources throughout the state of NY

## Free Inclusion U Training!

*We invite you to become part of the NYS IRRC!*

Become a Certified Inclusivity Assessor! Learn about best practices in inclusion and accessibility so that you can assess recreation sites and facilities for physical, administrative, and programmatic inclusion. Whether you are a person who has a disability, a family member, a recreation professional, student or advocate, this training is for you!

### How do you register for training?

Pre-register for this free training by contacting Laurie Penney McGee at (607) 753-4833 or email [laurie.penneymcgee@cortland.edu](mailto:laurie.penneymcgee@cortland.edu). If you would like to purchase Continuing Education Credits, CEU's will be available on site for a payment of \$8.00. Please bring a check payable to "NYSRPS." If any accommodations are needed, please provide that information when you register for training.

All Trained Assessors are asked to complete 2 Recreation Assessments of their choice within 6 months of training.



Inclusion U Assessors at Letchworth State Park

## Upcoming Inclusion U Training Dates

### Friday February 6th

Burke Rehabilitation Hospital, White Plains  
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

### Saturday February 7th

Lehman College, Bronx  
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

### Friday February 13th

Onondaga Community College, Syracuse  
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

### Tuesday February 24th

SUNY Cortland Campus, Cortland  
12:30-9:00 PM

### Tuesday February 25th

Utica College Campus, Utica  
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

### Saturday February 28th

SUNY Cortland Campus, Cortland  
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

### Saturday March 28th

Holiday Inn, Saratoga  
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

### Saturday April 18th

Hyatt Regency Long Island, Hauppauge  
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

### Monday June 29th

Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve & Environmental  
Education Center, Depew  
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

# NYS Inclusive Recreation Resource Center

Fall 2009

## The NYS IRRC Launches the Inclusivity Assessment Database!!!

After much anticipation, the NYS IRRC is very excited to announce that the Inclusivity Assessment online database has officially gone LIVE! With over 250 recreation inclusivity assessments entered from across the state, the database provides accurate and descriptive information about recreation places and spaces so that people with disabilities, together with their family and friends, can better plan their recreation.

### *Accessing the database:*

You can begin using the database by visiting our website at [www.nysirrc.org](http://www.nysirrc.org) and clicking on the map of NY or the "Find Recreation" link. Once there, you will find that recreation facilities are categorized according to the I Love NY regions. For a list of assessed sites in your area, simply click on the map and a list of all the assessed sites will appear. If you are unsure of what region a recreation site is located in, you can use the search engine to determine whether or not it has been assessed. You can also use the search feature to further explore the database by typing in the name of a town or a specific recreation or leisure activity.

### *What you'll find:*

When you click on the name of a recreation facility you would like to learn more about, you will find information about physical accessibility as well as the social inclusion practices of the site's facility and staff. Additionally, a summary of the services, programs and types of activities offered available is provided, along with contact information and travel directions.



### *How you can help:*

The NYS Inclusive Recreation Resource Center continues to work on making the database as informative and user-friendly as possible. In November, we will be conducting a survey of the website and database, and we welcome and appreciate any feedback or suggestions from you on how to improve the site. Please feel free to visit the website and database and let us know what you think!

[www.nysirrc.org](http://www.nysirrc.org)

Please send any suggestions, comments or questions regarding the website or database via email to

[Inclusiverec@cortland.edu](mailto:Inclusiverec@cortland.edu) or call (607) 753-4833

. We look forward to hearing from you!!



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## Fall 2009 Inclusivity Hero Brandi Crowe



We are very proud to announce that this quarter's Inclusivity Hero is our very own Graduate Assistant, Brandi Crowe. While it is highly unusual that we would choose to feature a NYS IRRC staff member, without Brandi's hard work and dedication over the past few months, our brand new database would not yet be available. Since June, Brandi has spent countless hours entering over 250 Inclusivity Assessments that are now available on-line to provide accurate and descriptive information about recreation places and spaces. Each of the 250 assessments has a minimum of 230 fields of data, as well as additional specialty tools and pictures, producing over 57,500 details about recreation sites, facilities and

programs. We are truly grateful for Brandi's time and commitment to ensuring that the NYS IRRC's new database is rich in information that will help people with disabilities and their families plan their recreation. Thank you Brandi!!

*NYS IRRC's student volunteer, Jamie Florindi interviewed Brandi to provide the following article:*

While interviewing Brandi, it is clear to see that she has a strong passion for what she wants to do for the rest of her life. She began her education as an undergrad studying Therapeutic Recreation (TR) at the University of South Alabama, and is now getting her master's degree at SUNY Cortland in Outdoor Recreation/Environmental Education. Brandi came here from Columbus, Mississippi because of the graduate program offered by SUNY Cortland's Recreation, Parks and Leisure Studies Department. Brandi had the opportunity to choose between a graduate program in Utah or at SUNY Cortland, and said that aside from the cold weather in upstate New York, she is very happy with Cortland and all the activities she has been involved with here. She believes that by studying Therapeutic Recreation and Outdoor Recreation, she will have a broad range of opportunities when she is finished with graduate school. Brandi hopes to get a Therapeutic Recreation job which will incorporate her Outdoor Recreation degree.

When asked how Brandi became interested in Therapeutic Recreation, she shared a story that gives insight as to why she has become so passionate about the field. Between her sophomore and junior year of high school, a personal experience changed her life. While playing a soccer game in high school, Brandi was poisoned by a crop duster. (Crop dusters are airplanes that distribute pesticides. At that time, it was fairly common for crop dusters to work while people were out playing in the field.) As a result, Brandi was in and out of the hospital for many months, and soon realized that there was a lack of recreational activities for herself and other patients. When asked how she felt about this, Brandi responded, "I wanted to help solve this problem and increase the activities provided in hospital settings for all patients."

Brandi has gained a great deal of experience providing recreational programs, especially while she was in Atlanta, Georgia where she facilitated an adaptive sports program that included wheelchair basketball, baseball, and track and field, among others. While interning, Brandi worked in a clinical rehab center, working mostly with people who had sustained spinal cord injuries. Brandi has also volunteered at recreation centers, summer camps, and helped out with intramural sports.

As a graduate assistant, Brandi plays a vital role in assisting whenever and wherever she is needed. She keeps a busy schedule, but always manages to have some free time for herself. Brandi enjoys running, playing sports (which she is very competitive in!) and just hanging out with friends. *(Brandi....continued on page 3)*



At the NYS IRRC, Brandi's responsibilities include presenting at Inclusion U trainings, mentoring recreation students and working on the new NYS IRRC database. Brandi believes that the Center plays a huge role in providing inclusion education and awareness. She also believes that the Center is a great resource for people with disabilities across the state, as well as recreation providers. When asked about the value of the NYS IRRC, Brandi said, "The Inclusive Recreation Resource Center plays a role in getting the word out and helping other organizations improve and better their services."

Brandi believes that being the Fall 2009 Inclusivity Hero is an undeserved honor. "There are a ton of other heroes out there, and a great amount of work that everyone is doing in New York State, especially with the assessments... those are the people who should be honored as well." Brandi is dedicating her time and devotion to improving the NYS IRRC at SUNY Cortland. When Brandi graduates, she wishes to take the GREs and go to school to obtain her PhD next fall, while continuing her work as practitioner, because she loves being hands on. Good luck to Brandi and congratulations!

-Jamie Florindi

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## DDPC Funds Stage 2 of the NYS Inclusive Recreation Resource Center

As the NYS IRRC nears the end of its initial 3 year grant cycle from the NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC), we are pleased to announce that we have been approved for an additional 2 years of funding to implement a new phase of work. Beginning in January 2010, the NYS IRRC will be partnering with the NYS Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD) to provide free training to Medicaid Service Coordinators and other OMRDD staff across the state. In addition to our Inclusion U training, a new Recreation Inclusion Training Module will be developed, focusing on leisure education and the use of inclusive community recreation services. These trainings will be free to all OMRDD staff and count toward the 15 hours of training required of all service coordinators.

In December, NYS IRRC staff will participate in a state-wide video conference to promote the new partnership and educate OMRDD coordinators and staff about upcoming training opportunities. We will be working closely with OMRDD to establish a training schedule that will make the NYS IRRC training available state-wide over the next two years. We are grateful to the DDPC for this next round of funding and look forward to this new venture!

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## The NYS IRRC Goes to Texas!!

In September, NYS IRRC staff traveled to San Antonio, Texas to present at the National Institute of Recreation Inclusion's (NIRI) annual conference. For the second year in a row, our mini version of Inclusion U was chosen by NIRI's committee as a double session for conference delegates. Nearly 40 people attended the session and had the opportunity to learn about the Inclusivity Assessment Tool and best practices in inclusion. Many professionals from across the country are very excited about future collaborations to bring Inclusion U to their states!



Vicki Wilkins, Lynn Anderson,  
& Laurie Penney McGee  
outside of the Alamo

# The NYS IRRC at SUNY Cortland

NYS Inclusive Recreation Resource Center  
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### Our Mission

To promote and sustain participation by people with disabilities in inclusive recreation activities and resources throughout the state of NY

## Inclusion U Training!

*We invite you to become part of the NYS IRRC!*

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### How do you register for training?

Pre-register for Inclusion U training by contacting Laurie Penney McGee at (607) 753-4833 or email [laurie.penneymcgee@cortland.edu](mailto:laurie.penneymcgee@cortland.edu). If you would like to purchase Continuing Education Credits, CEU's will be available on site for a payment of \$8.00. Please bring a check payable to "NYSRPS." If any accommodations are needed, please provide that information when you register for training. The training itself is free.

All Trained Assessors are asked to complete 2 Inclusivity Assessments at recreation sites or facilities of their choice within 6 months of training. The NYS IRRC will be happy to assist you in identifying a site.

## Upcoming Inclusion U Training Dates

**Wednesday, November 4th, 12:30-9:00 PM**  
SUNY Cortland, Cortland

**Friday, November 13th, 8:00-4:30 PM**  
Utica College, Utica

**Thursday, November 19th, 8:00-4:30 PM**  
White Plains, (Downstate Conference Post-Institute)

**Saturday, March 20, 2010 8:00-4:30 PM**  
Saratoga Springs  
(NYSRPS & NYSTRA Conference Pre-Institute)

**To date, the NYS IRRC has trained over 600 people in inclusion and accessibility**

**Become a Certified Inclusivity Assessor!!**



Inclusion U attendees enjoying learning about inclusive recreation

### Save the Date!!!

The 59th Annual  
Cortland Recreation Conference  
will be held  
November 5th & 6th!!

Visit [www.cortland.edu/reconf](http://www.cortland.edu/reconf)

# NYS Inclusive Recreation Resource Center

Summer 2009

## Who's Who & What's New at the NYS IRRC



Brandi Crowe & Jennifer Smiley  
at Letchworth State Park

This summer, we welcome two SUNY Cortland students who are new to the work of the NYS IRRC. Brandi Crowe is graduate student who is pursuing her Master's degree in Recreation, with a concentration in Outdoor/Environmental Education. Brandi will serve as the Center's new Graduate Assistant throughout the 2009-2010 academic school year. Jen Smiley is completing her undergraduate degree in Recreation. Jen is currently working on an independent study course focusing on the NYS IRRC. We are very excited about the wonderful skills and talents both Brandi and Jen bring to us!

- We would also like to wish a fond farewell to Graduate Assistant Whitney Mayer! After serving the Center since January 2008, Whitney is finishing her summer internship and is seeking a job as a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist. We will miss her greatly and wish her the very best!
- Since our last newsletter, Inclusion U was delivered three times across the state. Congratulations to our 55 new Certified Inclusivity Assessors! Many thanks to the staff at Letchworth State Park and the Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve & Environmental Education Center for assisting us and hosting these trainings!
- After much anticipation, the Inclusivity Assessment Database is in its final stages of development. Staff are busy entering over 200 assessments that provide descriptive information about recreation spaces and places so that people with disabilities and their families can better plan their recreation. The database will be piloted throughout August before its official launch in September. We will be looking to Regional Advisory Committee members to give us feedback about the assessment information and its display.
- If you'll be visiting the Great New York State Fair next month, stop by the I Love New York booth and pick up a NYS IRRC bookmark. We are proud to be partnered with our state tourism department who will help promote the work of the Center to thousands of fair-goers. Thank you I Love New York!
- In June, NYS IRRC staff traveled to Albany to present an overview of the Center's work and accomplishments to members of the NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council. We would like to sincerely thank Carole Fraser of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, and Debbie Keville of the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historical Preservation for speaking to the council members on our behalf about the impact of the NYS IRRC on their organizations!!



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Debbie Keville, Vicki Wilkins, Carole Fraser,  
Laurie Penney McGee, Jim Huben,  
Lynn Anderson & Sharon Winchester  
in Albany

## Summer 2009 Inclusivity Heroes Laurie Klotz and Loren Leonard

In today's world of high speed technology, it is imperative that information be readily available and easily accessible to users of all abilities. This includes those seeking various recreation and leisure opportunities that are both inclusive and accessible. Thus, as the NYS IRRC continues to work toward the launch of our online Inclusivity Assessment database, which will provide users access to valuable information regarding inclusive recreation across the state of New York, we are pleased to introduce our Summer 2009 Inclusivity Heroes: Laurie Klotz and Loren Leonard.



Having worked on the SUNY Cortland campus for 27 years, **Laurie Klotz** has served for the past five years as a database developer, assisting SUNY Cortland faculty and staff on various projects involving data and the web display of data entered. As one of her many projects, Laurie has been working closely with the NYS IRRC team in order to develop an online database that allows for information collected during inclusivity assessments to be entered, stored and displayed in a user-friendly format. Laurie has been a wonderful asset to the project, working to understand the work of the NYS IRRC so that the assessment information will be meaningfully organized for people of all abilities who are seeking recreation activities. We appreciate her great flexibility and willingness to make many changes as the project continues to evolve.

As a result of her working with the NYS IRRC project, Laurie says she has “become more aware of the need for and focus on inclusion”, particularly in how it relates to recreation. She also mentions that working with the NYS IRRC team has been great, as she loves the level of dedication and positive attitude that surround the project.

When she is not creating, developing or editing database entries and displays, incredibly family-focused Laurie enjoys spending time with her husband and three children. In addition to her personal leisure interest in gardening, Laurie says she and her family value moments spent together that actively involve outdoor recreation activities, namely, hiking.



**Loren Leonard**, a web developer and support specialist for SUNY Cortland, is in his fourth full-time year of academic web development, providing support to SUNY Cortland faculty and staff in building websites and configuring website design.

For the past two years, Loren has assisted the NYS IRRC team in organizing the NYS IRRC website, working to get a clear idea of how the website should look while also making sure that it is a model of best practice with regards to what an accessible website should incorporate and include. Once the site is complete, Loren hopes to review the website, thoroughly grooming it so that users find it easy to navigate and locate information. Loren's dedication to the IRRC project stems from his belief that any contribution to this project is huge, as the information provided to individuals will have an enormous impact on the quality of recreation experienced by all in the future.

(continued on page 3)

### Summer 2009 Inclusivity Heroes continued:

From a technical standpoint, Loren says that one of the most enjoyable aspects of working with the IRRC project has been having the opportunity to work with Laurie Klotz, a fellow colleague at SUNY Cortland. He believes, as do we, that he and Laurie complement one another well in the collaborative work they are producing with the IRRC database. Loren goes on to say that he has enjoyed working with the IRRC team, as they have a great energy and are “really jazzed up about the project...which is really cool”. He acknowledges that “it’s always nice to have the right pieces of the puzzle working together on a project versus having to force it” when working with additional groups on an assignment.

During his time away from the office, Loren very much enjoys spending time with his wife. Together, they find joy and contentment when hiking throughout the New York State Parks. Originally from the Cortland area, Loren prides himself on being a “local yokel”. And while claiming to live a relatively low key lifestyle, unknown to many, Loren is a rock n’ roll talent and entertainer who plays bass guitar in a local rock n’ roll band called New Animal.

The work of our Summer 2009 Inclusivity Heroes is greatly appreciated by the NYS IRRC, as our database project would not be a reality without their expertise, diligence, and commitment to the purpose of the project. A huge thank you to you both!

View the wonderful work of Laurie Klotz & Loren Leonard, at the NYS IRRC’s website: [www.cortland.edu/nysirrc](http://www.cortland.edu/nysirrc)

*-written by Graduate Assistant Brandi Crowe*



## Fishing for Something to Do?

This time of year we field many questions about accommodations for fishing. Many thanks to our summer student, Jen Smiley who found the following helpful resources:

- Fishing Has No Boundaries, Inc. (FHNB) is a nonprofit, volunteer organization dedicated to assisting people with disabilities in the United States experience the great outdoors through fishing. Through research and development of specialized adaptive equipment, dock loading systems, and boat adaptations, FHNB is working to create and provide access to all people, regardless of disability. Visit [www.fhnbinc.org/](http://www.fhnbinc.org/) to learn more about the organization and their Albany chapter.
- Technology Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities, TRAIID, is a federally funded project administered by the NYS Commission on Quality of Care and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities. The NY TRAIID dollars have been used to establish regional technology centers, some of which have recreation equipment. Call 1-800-624-4143 for more information.
- Find an accessible fishing pier at [www.dec.ny.gov](http://www.dec.ny.gov)
- Visit [www.adaptiveoutdoorsman.com/](http://www.adaptiveoutdoorsman.com/) for information about adaptive fishing, hunting and camping equipment.
- Contact your local Independent Living Center and ask if they have a loan closet of adaptive recreation equipment. To find a Center near you, visit [www.nysilc.org/directory.htm](http://www.nysilc.org/directory.htm)



The clamp on fishing pole holder keeps a good grip on the pole while it makes the reel available for one-handed operation

## The NYS IRRC at SUNY Cortland

NYS Inclusive Recreation Resource Center  
Studio West B-4  
P.O. Box  
Cortland, NY 13045

FUNDED BY



Phone: (607) 753-4833  
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### Our Mission

To promote and sustain participation by people with disabilities in inclusive recreation activities and resources throughout the state of NY

Looking for someplace to enjoy the great outdoors this summer? The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation has been working hard to revamp their website, providing more information about accessible outdoor recreation opportunities. Visit [www.dec.ny.gov](http://www.dec.ny.gov) and type "accessible recreation" in the search field for a webpage that provides a regional map of DEC Accessible Recreation Destinations.



### Save the Date!!!

The 59th Annual  
Cortland Recreation Conference  
will be held  
November 5th & 6th!!  
Inclusion U will be offered as a  
FREE Pre-Institute  
Wednesday, November 4th  
12:30-9:00 PM

### Free Inclusion U Training!

*We invite you to become part of the NYS IRRC!*

Become a Certified Inclusivity Assessor! Learn about best practices in inclusion and accessibility so that you can assess recreation sites and facilities for physical, administrative, and programmatic inclusion. Whether you are a person who has a disability, a family member, a recreation professional, student or advocate, this training is for you!

#### How do you register for training?

Pre-register for this free training by contacting Laurie Penney McGee at (607) 753-4833 or email [laurie.penneymcgee@cortland.edu](mailto:laurie.penneymcgee@cortland.edu). If you would like to purchase Continuing Education Credits, CEU's will be available on site for a payment of \$8.00. Please bring a check payable to "NYSRPS." If any accommodations are needed, please provide that information when you register for training. The training itself is free.

All Trained Assessors are asked to complete 2 Recreation Assessments at recreation sites or facilities of their choice within 6 months of training. The NYS IRRC will be happy to assist you in identifying a site.

### Upcoming Inclusion U Training Dates

**Saturday, September 19th, 8:00-4:30 PM**  
Paul Smith's College, Paul Smith's (Adirondacks)

**Monday, September 21st, 12:30-9:00 PM**  
SUNY Cortland (limited space available)

**Thursday, September 24th, 8:00-4:30 PM**  
Stony Kill Stony Kill Farm Environmental Education Center, Wappingers Falls (north of NYC)

**Friday, September 25th, 12:30-9:00 PM**  
SUNY Cortland (limited space available)

**Saturday, September 26th, 8:00-4:30 PM**  
Ithaca College, Ithaca (Fingerlakes Region)

**Thursday, October 8th, 8:00-4:30 PM**  
Rosamond Gifford Zoo, Syracuse

**Tuesday, October 13th, 8:00-4:30 PM**  
SUNY Cortland (limited space available)

**Wednesday, November 4th, 12:30-9:00 PM**  
SUNY Cortland, Cortland

**Thursday, November 19th, 8:00-4:30 PM**  
White Plains, (Downstate Conference Post-Institute)

# NYS Inclusive Recreation Resource Center

Spring 2009



Nick Rose, Kate Quinn, Angela Dinardo, Debra Keville, Kathryn Capella and Stephanie Shields at our recent State Advisory Meeting

In March, several members of the NYS IRRC's State Advisory Committee met to review the Center's accomplishments and to discuss opportunities for increased partnership and collaboration. We are grateful to all of our SAC members for your time and for your wonderful feedback and guidance as we look to expand the breadth of our work.

Many thanks to Professor Kirstin Impicciatore for her efforts to bring Inclusion U to her students at Utica College. The NYS IRRC welcomes Utica College to the list of colleges and universities who have incorporated Inclusion U into their students' curriculum!



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## The NYS Therapeutic Recreation Association Honors NYS IRRC's Whitney Mayer and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation



Student of the Year Whitney Mayer

On Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup>, the New York State Therapeutic Recreation Association honored SUNY Cortland Graduate Assistant Whitney Mayer by awarding her "Student of the Year!" Whitney has served as the NYS IRRC's grad assistant since January 2008, and will be graduating in August with her Master's Degree in Recreation with a concentration in Therapeutic Recreation. Whitney has been an amazing asset to the IRRC and will be greatly missed by all of her colleagues who have had the pleasure of working with her. We wish her the very best and many congratulations on her prestigious honor!

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) and the work of their Statewide Access Coordinator, Carole Fraser, were also recognized at the NYSTRA awards ceremony, distinguishing their work with the "Organization of the Year" award. Carole Fraser has been previously featured by the NYS IRRC as an "Inclusion Hero," highlighting her work to make the outdoors accessible to all. The NYS DEC has made great strides across the state with improvements to over 200 outdoor recreation areas, including campgrounds, trails, restrooms, and fishing piers, to name just a few. The DEC has also been working on their website to provide more detailed information about accessible recreation activities across the state. The DEC has proven to be a wonderful partner to the NYS IRRC, supporting Carole Fraser to become one of our first Trained Trainers of Inclusion U, providing training space and encouraging DEC staff to attend Inclusion U trainings. Many congratulations to the DEC and Carole Fraser for all of their wonderful work to ensure that all people of all abilities have access to nature!



Vicki Wilkins, Carole Fraser, Lynn Anderson & Laurie Penney McGee celebrate the DEC's recognition

## Spring 2009 Inclusivity Spotlight Onondaga County Parks



Onondaga County Parks Commissioner Bob Geraci,  
Inclusion Point of Contact Leiko Benson, &  
Director of Recreation Jon Cooley

Each quarter, the NYS IRRC features an individual or agency whose work promotes opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to play wherever they choose. This spring, we are recognizing Onondaga County Parks for their great work throughout their system to increase accessibility, implement best practices in inclusion, acquire adaptive equipment and support staff training in disability awareness and accommodations. Many Onondaga County Parks employees have already attended the NYS IRRC's full-day Inclusion U training, taking back useful information for changes at their own parks. Recreation Supervisor Leiko Benson, a SUNY Cortland Recreation Alumna, has been designated as the agency's Inclusion Point of Contact and is now a Certified Inclusion U trainer. Leiko will be using her training skills to continue to enhance inclusion throughout the Onondaga County Park system.

Whether you are looking for an accessible playground, an adaptive fishing program, or a ride through the park or nature center, Onondaga County Parks have something for everyone. Here is a brief overview of some of the services the parks have to offer:

- Beaver Lake Nature Center's "Nature On Wheels" NOWmobile was recently honored with the "Exceptional Program of the Year" award by the New York State Recreation and Park Society. The NOWmobile allows people who have limited mobility impairments to experience nature via a ride on the Center's trails.
- Onondaga Lake Park offers adaptive equipment, such as hand-pedaled Amtrykes and wheelchairs to borrow, free of charge. The park's Tram that tours the park is also wheelchair accessible.
- The Wegmans Playground at Onondaga Lake Park was designed as a boundless accessible playground so that children of all abilities can play.
- Carpenter's Brook Fish Hatchery in Elbridge offers a "Time Out to Fish" program each summer, allowing seniors and people with disabilities an opportunity to learn to fish.
- Jamesville Beach has a concrete ramp that provides people who use wheelchairs direct access to the water's edge.
- On June 5<sup>th</sup>, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo will host "Dreamnight at the Zoo" as part of an international event focusing on community inclusion of children of all abilities.
- At the marina at Onondaga Lake Park, a collaboration with ARISE has resulted in an accessible pontoon boat that is available to take people fishing. Visit [www.ariseinc.org](http://www.ariseinc.org) for more information.
- The Onondaga County Parks website has a "Plan Your Visit" feature that provides a link to "Services for People with Disabilities," providing detailed accessibility information about many of the county's parks.



Wegmans Playground at Onondaga Lake Park



## Onondaga County Parks (continued)

Onondaga County Parks' Director of Recreation Jon Cooley has been of great service to the NYS IRRC by serving on the Fingerlakes Regional Advisory Committee, promoting inclusion and arranging training space at the Zoo. Many of the parks have already been assessed using the NYS IRRC's Inclusivity Assessment Tool, and all of the parks will eventually be assessed and linked directly to the IRRC's website so that visitors to the parks can have detailed information about all of the recreational activities the parks have to offer. We are very proud to have Onondaga County Parks as a strong partner of the NYS IRRC and commend them for their wonderful work to ensure that all visitors can enjoy the parks!

To learn more about Onondaga County Parks, visit their website at [www.OnondagaCountyParks.com](http://www.OnondagaCountyParks.com) or call (315)451-7275.



Hop on Beaver Lake Nature Center's NOWmobile



Leiko encourages visitors who have children with mobility impairments to borrow one of Onondaga Lake Park's two hand-pedaled Amtrykes, available for loan at the Griffin Visitor Center



Participants at a 2008 event enjoy a day of fishing and fresh air

## Getting Outdoors

Would you like to learn how to catch fish?

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation is holding a number of free sport fishing clinics around the state to introduce people to fishing. No fishing license is required for these events and all necessary equipment will be on hand.

Bring the whole family and learn about aquatic biology, fish identification, habitat protection and more. To see the events currently scheduled near you, see the DEC website at:

[www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/27123.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/27123.html)



## Gardening: Growing More Accessible All the Time!

by Brandon Cruz

TR Student, NYS Inclusive Recreation Resource Center at SUNY Cortland

Spring has finally arrived, and along with it the opportunity to plan for and to plant a garden. From fruit trees to flowers, herbs, vegetables and even mushrooms (for the brave) there is such a diverse array of goodies to grow and, different ways to grow them. Gardens have been planted on roof tops and window sills, in vacant urban lots, wash tubs and pots, even hanging upside down! With a little creativity, no matter what your location or degree of ability, you can enjoy the many pleasures of planting a garden.



More and more, gardens are becoming accessible to people with different abilities. For instance, garden beds are raised and paths are widened, leveled and paved to make gardens accessible to those of us who may use a wheel chair. Store bought or home modified ergonomic gardening tools are used and kept within easy reach. Trellises are built for climbing plants such as beans and peas, which allows harvesting to be done without bending. Green houses are utilized during colder months and workbenches put at accessible levels. Benches and places of shade offer places for rest, garden viewing and contemplation.



One of the beautiful things about gardening is that it truly is an experience of the senses. From the cool, moist feel of the soil and revitalizing fragrance of herbs and flowers to the diverse spectrum of colors, textures and flavors, it's no wonder gardening is such a meaningful and popular leisure time activity. For people who have various sensory impairments, gardens can be designed to stimulate or appeal to specific senses. For someone who may have a visual impairment, strong scented herbs or flowers may alert them to their location in the garden. Wind chimes and trickling water may also help. There are also many therapeutic benefits associated with gardening ranging from stress reduction to increased flexibility. For research on the therapeutic benefits of gardening and also

tips on accessible gardening, visit the American Horticulture Therapy Association's website at [www.ahta.org/](http://www.ahta.org/).

### Basic Tips for Planning a Garden

- Start small. Plan for a garden that can be easily managed with your schedule.
- Grow plants that you love to look at, smell or eat. Different plants need different amounts of water, nutrients and light and will also be ready to harvest at different times so read up on them.
- Use what's around the house first. Old boards, bricks or cinder blocks are great for making raised beds. Visit your plastic recycling bin for containers to start seeds. Compost your kitchen scraps for organic fertilizer. Also, don't be afraid to ask your neighbor for help.
- Do your research! Read books, browse the inter-net, talk to your neighbor.
- Grow organically!
- Don't use pressure treated wood, old railroad ties or tires for raised beds, especially when growing edible vegetables.



## Techniques for Making Gardening Easier



Some tips from the Joyce Schillon in her article "Create an Enabled Garden"\*

- Tie a cord around the handles of small tools to make retrieval easier if they are dropped.
  - Use gloves to protect hands and help maintain your grip on tools.
  - A large magnifying glass helps to see small plants and seeds.
  - Wear an apron or smock with large front pockets to carry seed packets and tools.
  - Use a piece of light-weight plastic pipe to help you sow seeds without bending over.
- Carry a whistle. A short blast can alert people if you need help.
  - Rig hanging planters with a pulley to lower them for watering.
  - Grow vining varieties of peas and beans that can be trained up a trellis to make harvesting easier.
  - To limit bending and stooping, use containers or raised beds for planting.
  - Use drip irrigation or soaker hoses for watering to eliminate the need for carrying water. Use a sprinkler large enough that it will water the whole area and won't have to be moved around.
  - Choose plants that appeal to different senses.
  - Garden in raised beds or containers that minimize bending and stooping. Containers can be moved around for convenience.
  - Select plants carefully according to the gardener's wants or needs. Consider the plant's height, expected life span, and the amount of attention and special care it needs, including watering and spraying.
  - Make work areas accessible. Make gardening walkways three feet wide, with a non-slippery surface. Build handrails or hand grips where possible.
  - Use equipment that is easy on the body. Use foam pads when kneeling. Purchase light-weight tools with large handles. Buy gloves that are large enough to insert foam padding to ease joint pain and foster better gripping. Mechanical "click" seeders and seed tape eliminate the need to grasp tiny seeds. Specially adapted tools for easy grip are available at garden shops, nurseries, and from gardening catalogs.
  - Remember to rest and stop for breaks. Pace yourself and don't overdo.



\*Retrieved from: <http://www.gardenforever.com/pages/artenabled.htm> on March 30, 2009

### Adaptive Gardening Resources

In New York State, your local Cornell Cooperative Extension at [www.cce.cornell.edu](http://www.cce.cornell.edu)  
The American Horticulture Therapy Association at [www.ahata.org](http://www.ahata.org)

# The NYS IRRC at SUNY Cortland

NYS Inclusive Recreation Resource Center  
 Studio West B-4  
 P.O. Box  
 Cortland, NY 13045

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Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve & Environmental Education Center, Depew (outside of Buffalo)

**Saturday, September 19th, 8:00-4:30 PM**

Paul Smith's College, Paul Smith's (Adirondacks)

**Thursday, September 24th, 8:00-4:30 PM**

Stony Kill Stony Kill Farm Environmental Education Center, Wappingers Falls (north of NYC)

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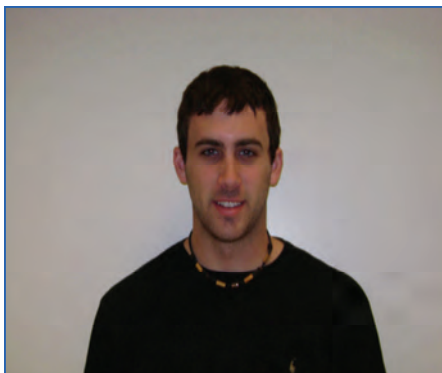
Ithaca College, Ithaca (Fingerlakes Region)

**Wednesday, November 4th, 12:30-9:00 PM**

SUNY Cortland, Cortland (Fingerlakes Region)



*Students at Lehman College enjoy a simulation game of "Go Fish"*



Staff at the NYS IRRC would like to express our sincere gratitude to Ian Serguson, our work-study student who has spent countless hours this semester making clinometers, cutting 60 inch circles and working on research data for the Center. Ian is a Junior at SUNY Cortland who is studying Sport Management. In his free time, Ian enjoys boating, sporting events and travel.

### Save the Date!!!

The 59th Annual Cortland Recreation Conference will be held November 5th & 6th!! Inclusion U will be offered as a FREE Pre-Institute Wednesday, November 4th