

# NYS Inclusive Recreation Resource Center

Fall 2008

## Highlights from the NYS IRRC

Hello and happy fall! Just a few highlights to keep you up to date about recent NYS IRRC activities:

- In September, NYS IRRC staff traveled to Eugene, Oregon to conduct a mini Inclusion U at the National Institute for Recreation Inclusion. Since then, we've had calls from around the country requesting support to deliver training in such states as Colorado, Washington and Florida.
- Many thanks to Carole Fraser and the Regional Access Coordinators at the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation who participated in a phone conference interview with IRRC staff to examine the state-wide policies of the DEC for all Inclusivity Assessments conducted across NY.
- We are very excited that the Inclusivity Assessment Database is getting close to going online. Data entry of all the completed assessments is underway!
- Attention trained assessors! We are in the process of creating a survey to send to all Inclusion U graduates to help us help you conduct your assessments. Please contact Laurie Penney McGee if you need any assistance in identifying or connecting to a site you would like to assess. Many thanks to all the assessors who are helping add to our database!

And, as I write this, a fast moving snowstorm has brought snow to much of NY, so it seems suddenly fitting that you'll find great information about adaptive snowsports in the following pages. While this snow won't last, there are plenty of winter months ahead to enjoy!

From the Access Board's Website:

## Amendments to the ADA Signed Into Law

In September, Congress passed, and President Bush signed into law, amendments to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) that are intended to clarify and reiterate who is covered by the law's civil rights protections. The "ADA Amendments Act of 2008" revises the definition of "disability" to more broadly encompass impairments that substantially limit a major life activity. "This bill fulfills the promise of the ADA and greatly increases the number of people eligible for its protections," stated Senator Tom Harkin, a leading sponsor of the act. The amendments take effect January 1, 2009. The text of the law is available on the Board's website at [www.access-board.gov/about/laws/ada-amendments.htm](http://www.access-board.gov/about/laws/ada-amendments.htm).

## Free Inclusivity Assessment Training! Inclusion U

Wednesday December 3rd

Stern Family Center for Extended Care & Rehabilitation  
Manhasset 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

Sponsored by the Therapeutic Recreation Association of Long Island & the Stern Family Center for Extended Care & Rehabilitation

Check our website for more dates to come!

### How do you register for training?

Pre-register for Inclusion U by contacting Laurie Penney McGee at [penneymcgeel@cortland.edu](mailto:penneymcgeel@cortland.edu) or at (607) 753-4833. If you would like to earn Continuing Education Credits (CEU's), they will be available on site for a payment of \$8.00. If any accommodations are needed, please provide that information when you register for training.



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Visit the NYS IRRC website at  
[www.cortland.edu/nysirrc](http://www.cortland.edu/nysirrc)



## Embracing Winter: Adaptive Skiing and Snowboarding ~ Dr. Lynn Anderson



The days grow shorter, the air crisper, and the snowflakes begin to fly. Instead of dreading the cold, snowy months ahead, over 13 million people in the United States get very excited. Of these, 6.6 million people are snowboarders, and 5.9 million are skiers, and they are ready to hit the slopes for winter fun. In New York and other New England states, ski and snowboard visits have been increasing by almost 10% each year. And in New York, no matter where you live, there is a mountain resort nearby. With over 40 ski and snowboard areas spread around the state, and numerous *Learn to Ski and Ride* programs, snowsports are accessible and affordable to all.

Accessible to *all*? Having or acquiring a disability may make skiing or snowboarding seem inaccessible, if not impossible, to learn and enjoy. The difficulty of negotiating the winter environment, with its cold and snowy conditions, the challenge of steep terrain, and the seeming need to be fit and athletic, make many of us feel that snowsports are out of our reach. However, according to the Snowsports Industries of America, over 100,000 people with disabilities ski or snowboard every winter. And that number is growing, thanks to specialized equipment, and support from programs like Wounded Warriors, adaptive snowsports, and Special Olympics. Having a functional difference, whether physical, sensory, or cognitive, does not mean you cannot enjoy the slopes. It may mean that you need to take advantage of the many adaptations available to make snowsports accessible.

### Snowsports Adaptations for Physical Differences

Differences in physical functioning can be due to things such as spinal cord injury, multiple sclerosis, amputation, spina bifida, cerebral palsy, and other physical disabilities. Adaptations to allow someone with a physical difference to ski or snowboard can include any of the following equipment or activity modifications:

- Use of a mono-ski, that allows a person to sit instead of stand while skiing or boarding
- Use of outriggers, allowing someone to “tri-track” (one ski, two outriggers) or “four-track” (two skis, two outriggers). The outriggers, basically forearm crutches with retractable ski blades on the ends, allow for improved balance and weight transfer for someone with an amputation or balance problems.
- Use of a snow slider – basically a sophisticated walker on skis – that allows someone with very little strength or muscular control, to stand and ski while tethered by other skiers or snowboarders.
- Use of tethers – long straps attached to the skier or rider with a disability - allowing another skier or snowboarder to control their descent, until they have gained the skills, strength, and confidence to traverse the slopes independently

### Snowsports Adaptations for Cognitive or Learning Differences

Differences in ability to process information and learn can be due to many different disabilities, ranging from intellectual or developmental disabilities, to traumatic brain injury, to learning disabilities to mental illness. Many adaptations in teaching and learning can be used to help people with cognitive differences learn to ski or snowboard. Here are just a few examples:

- Task analysis and activity adaptation – breaking the skill sequence down into small steps and changing some of the steps to make them easier to learn – is a common approach to facilitate learning
- Tethering, hula hoops, bamboo poles, harnesses, “edgie wedgies” (small rubber devices that hold the ski tips in a wedge position), trombones (metal devices that hold the ski tips in a wedge position, but allow natural movement), and other equipment that allows two instructors to help guide the new skier or boarder through the movements and skills as they descend the slope, helps facilitate learning through a more sensory approach, versus a verbal or linguistic approach
- Picture cards, cue cards, and other storyboard techniques that allow the participant to see and understand the steps in each aspect of skiing or snowboarding (from getting equipment from the rental shop to getting on the chair lift) helps the learning process

### Snowsports Adaptations for Sensory Differences

Differences in sensory functioning can be due to things such as vision impairments, hearing impairments, and autism, where an individual may have difficulty with sensory processing and sensory integration. Adaptations for sensory differences can include:

- Guided skiing or snowboarding, where a sighted guide provides constant directions and cues to the skier or rider with the vision impairment, as the pair descends the mountain. The directions can be given over a radio system worn by the pair, or out loud. Guides and skiers or riders wear bright orange vests identifying them as a “Guide” and “Blind” so that other skiers and riders on the mountain are aware that the pair must stay together, and to prevent unnecessary obstructions.
- Simple sign language or written cue cards can be used with a skier or rider with a hearing impairment, mostly to provide any needed directions or warnings
- A hula hoop, Snow Wing, or other similar device can be used with a skier or snowboarder with autism, who may need to have a sense of a more confined space around him or her while descending the slope, to help prevent sensory overload

### Instructor Qualifications

A qualified adaptive snowsports instructor is as important to successful learning as the modifications to equipment and skills. The Professional Ski Instructors of America (PSIA) and the American Association of Snowboard Instructors (AASI) provide instructor certification programs, preparing instructors for the specialized instructional techniques and equipment needed to introduce and help all people learn to ski and snowboard. PSIA/AASI offers certifications in areas such as visual impairments, developmental disabilities, mono-ski, bi-ski, three-tracking, and four-tracking. See Gregg Macey's story below as one example of a mono-skier who pursued certification to teach others. When choosing an adaptive ski and snowboard program, check on the qualifications of the volunteers and staff, and look for PSIA/AASI certification.

With the programs, equipment, and instruction now available across New York, (see page 4 for a list of programs) all people truly can learn to ski or snowboard, and get excited for winter! Gregg Macey's story inspires us all to bundle up and hit the slopes. Once you have the skills and equipment, you can join the millions of people who are joyous when they see the snowflakes start to fall!

### Additional Resources

PSIA/AASI certification information: <http://www.psia.org/01/adaptive/adaptive.asp>

Freedom Factory adaptive snowsports equipment: <http://www.freedomfactory.org/>

Wounded Warriors Project: <https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/>

Special Olympics <http://www.specialolympics.org/>

Winter Feels Good: <http://www.winterfeelsgood.com/index.php>

Disabled Sports USA: <http://www.dsusa.org/>

## Meet Gregg Macey ~ Adaptive Snowsports Instructor

Gregg Macey has been skiing since he was fifteen years old. The only difference is when he started skiing in high school, Gregg skied standing up. Now he skis sitting down. Although Gregg was an avid skier, after an accident resulted in him using a wheelchair, he gave up on the idea of skiing for many years. Gregg had never envisioned there was a way to ski without having to stand up.

Friends of Gregg knew how much he loved the outdoors and consistently tried to get him back into skiing, but for years Gregg refused. "I couldn't envision what skiing sitting down would be like. I didn't get it. I didn't get how fun or easy it could be." After many tries Gregg's neighbor and friend finally convinced him to give monoskiing a try. Gregg caught the skiing bug again and his only regret was that he had not tried it sooner. His interest in monoskiing gave him a new outlook on winter in Upstate NY.

Today you can find Gregg on the slopes of Greek Peak Mountain Resort in Virgil, NY several times a week and on weekends. He still skis with the same neighbor who reintroduced him to the sport. He also has made many new friends by skiing at Greek Peak. One thing he loves about skiing is the ability to meet new people and make new friends through the sport.

Gregg started as a participant in Greek Peak's Adaptive Snowsports program five years ago and as his skills improved he figured that the natural progression would be to become an adaptive instructor, and to help others learn to ski. Last year he passed the PSAI level one adaptive test to become a certified instructor. Gregg now works as part of the all-volunteer instructor led adaptive program at Greek Peak.

He feels that Greek Peak's program is second to none and encourages anyone interested to check it out. Not only are the staff at the program great, but the facility and equipment are top notch. He feels that the program at Greek Peak is the best in the area. Gregg's advice to those who are thinking about trying monoskiing is, "Don't hesitate! You are only young once."

Gregg loves watching people grow as a skier and develop new friendships through his role as an instructor. He especially loves that skiing is an activity where people can see significant gains in a short period of time. He finds being an adaptive instructor a rewarding experience where he gets to share something he loves with others. When Gregg is not on the slopes, he enjoys hunting, riding his all-terrain vehicle, kayaking and cutting firewood.

For more information on the Greek Peak adaptive program please visit: [www.gpadaptive.org](http://www.gpadaptive.org)



Ski Instructor Gregg Macey (far right)

*~ written by Graduate Assistant Whitney Mayer*

## Adaptive Snowsports Programs in New York State

### Adirondacks

Double H Ranch – A Hole in the Wall Camp – Adaptive Winter Sports Program

<http://www.doublehrench.org/winter-program.htm>

(518) 696-5676

Gore Mountain

(518) 251-2411, x1005

<http://www.goremountain.com/>

Double H Ranch collaborates with Gore Mountain on adaptive snowsports opportunities

Whiteface Mountain

(518) 946-2223

<http://www.whiteface.com/newsite/lessonsprograms/adaptiveski.php>

### Capital-Saratoga

STRIDE Adaptive Sports

STRIDE collaborates with Catamount Mountain (see Hudson Valley below), Jiminy Peak in MA, and Ski Sundown in CT

(518) 598-1279

<http://www.stride.org/sports/skiing/>

### Catskills

Belleayre Mountain

845-254-5600 ext. 2473

<http://www.belleayre.com/winter/adaptive.htm>

Windham Mountain

518-734-5070

<http://www.windhammountain.com/lessons/adaptive-programs/>

### Chautauqua-Allegheny

Holiday Valley Resort

(716) 699-2345

<http://www.holidayvalley.com/winter.cfm?subpage=366>

### Finger Lakes

ARISE & Ski at Toggenburg Mountain

(315) 472-3171

<http://www.ariseinc.org/programs/ski.html>

Greek Peak Adaptive Snowsports

607-657-8317

<http://www.gpadaptive.org/>

### Hudson Valley

Catamount Mountain

<http://www.catamountski.com/lessons-racing/stride.cfm>

Adaptive snowsports provided by STRIDE. – see Capital-Saratoga Region



*The NY Access Pass is accepted at Gore, Whiteface, and Belleayre Mountains – call for details*

## The NYS IRRC at SUNY Cortland

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FUNDED BY



### Our Mission

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

## Ruts, Bumps, Dips and Mounds! ~ Dr. Vicki Wilkins

My interest in and involvement with accessibility began more than 25 years ago while working on my doctorate at Penn State; and it began with trails. I used to gather up small groups of students, head out to Shaver's Creek Nature Center and "work on the trails." Our intent was never to work on a trail and then post a sign that said "this trail is accessible"; nor was it to try to convince administrators to pave the trails. We were there to try to figure out what made trails inaccessible and see what improvements we could make. We studied the literature available at the time and learned tons from interested members of a local support group for individuals with visual impairments and a friend and fellow student who uses a wheelchair by coaxing them out to Shaver's Creek and onto the trails with us. This was a very positive time for me.

So imagine my excitement when my involvement with the Inclusive Recreation Resource Center brought me into contact with Carol Fraser and something called the Universal Trail Assessment Process (UTAP)! UTAP was developed by Beneficial Designs in the mid-1990s with the goal of "creating a system to assess trails for visitors of all abilities" and is "widely accepted as an objective, accurate, and reliable methodology that provides a consistent way of looking at trails and gives land managers a common language by which they can communicate with the public and each other" (UTAP Certified Coordinator Training Application Materials, July 2008). Much like Inclusion U and the Inclusivity Assessment Tool (IAT), UTAP is concerned with providing land managers and trail users with accurate and detailed information so that decisions can be made. Specifically UTAP assesses surface, width, length, grade, cross slope and features (e.g., boardwalk, picnic table, ditch, stump) and then posts the information for potential users.

This past summer Parks & Trails NY hosted a two-day UTAP Certified Coordinator Training for up to 16 selected people, representative of all regions of the state, so that they might continue to build a group of people with the knowledge, skills, and commitment needed to assess New York's trails. The training took place on two incredibly beautiful days in July at Gilbert Lake State Park and consisted of both classroom instruction and outdoor trail sessions followed by a certification exam at the end of the second day. Basically UTAP involves establishing what are called Trail Access Information (TAI) Stations as you move through the trail. These stations serve as reference points along the trail identifying points where characteristics of the trail change. Stations are established at the beginning and end of each trail or trail segment and then along the trail whenever there is a visual change of about 15 degrees or more in trail direction, or 5% or more in grade or cross slope; a significant change in tread width; the surface changes; the previous station will be out of sight or more than about 100 feet away; or the trail branches or intersects another trail. Measurements are then taken at the station, from one station to the next, at a typical or representative point between stations, as well as at maximum grade and cross slope and minimum clearance width.

Now that I have completed the training and passed the certification exam, I am eligible for certification. The next step is to actually assess at least two separate trails totaling at least 1 mile within one year of the training. Once that is complete and my documentation of the assessment is accepted I will become a Certified Trail Assessment Coordinator allowing me to lead small teams in the application of the Universal Trail Assessment Process. Additionally, as a selected participant in this free training, I have committed to assess at least three miles of trails selected from the Parks & Trails New York Trail Finder Map using the UTAP.

I learned tons; and not just about trail assessment but about assessment in general and how to train and motivate folks to get out there and gather the accurate and detailed information that is critical to so many when choosing where to recreate. I was especially pleased to learn that the UTAP philosophy and mission is very much in line with that of the Inclusive Recreation Resource Center. Bottom line: Participation in recreation is a right, not a privilege; and for people who happen to have disabilities accurate and detailed information is needed in order to make decisions about successful and satisfying participation. A special thanks to Parks & Trails New York for the opportunity. I am honored to have been chosen for the training and pledge to help increase accessibility to New York's outdoor trails for all people as I continue my work with the Inclusive Recreation Resource Center and on into retirement!



# NYS Inclusive Recreation Resource Center

Summer 2008

## Summer at the NYS IRRC

When people learn that the NYS IRRC is located at SUNY Cortland, many then ask if we are “off” for the summer. “Off and running” describes us best. Since our last newsletter, Inclusion U was delivered three times, certifying 84 new Inclusivity Assessors. We are grateful to the Genesee Valley Recreation & Park Society, the NYS Therapeutic Recreation Association, the Fingerlakes DDSO, and staff at the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center at Wellesley Island State Park for sponsoring our training events. Thanks to our Inclusivity Assessors, there are now over 160 assessed sites ready for entry into the database, which we hope to have available on our website soon. The NYS IRRC staff has also been busy attending events state-wide to promote the Center, including North Country Access in Clayton, local ADA celebrations, and a Cerebral Palsy of NYS conference in Rock Hill where our own Dr. Susan Wilson provided the keynote address. And of course, we have met many wonderful recreation providers as we continue to implement our Inclusivity Assessment Tool. We are having a summer filled with recreation and hope you are enjoying yours as well!



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## A Visit to John Dillon Park

John Dillon Park is wilderness day use and camping area located along Grampus Lake, deep in the heart of the Adirondacks. The park was developed using universal design principles in order to provide an accessible outdoor experience for people of all abilities. The park provides numerous campsites with lean-tos, outhouses and metal food storage cases for protection from animals. There is also a tent site available. John Dillon Park contains two miles of well maintained trails. There are two separate docks, one available for fishing, and another for boating. A pontoon boat is available for guided boat rides by the staff of John Dillon with advanced notice.

Recently, NYS IRRC's student interns, Eric Komar and Shane Brown camped at the park. Many thanks to Park Manager Steve Cobb for his hospitality! In describing his experience, Eric writes:

“John Dillon Park puts you in the center of New York State's finest natural setting. During my recent stay, my only alarm was the cry of a loon in the distance. John Dillon Park is one of the finest rustic recreation sites in New York State, not just because it brings people closer to nature, but because it brings us closer to one another. One of the most well thought out features in its design is the universal accessibility that it provides. The lean-tos have stone and dirt ramps built up to them, to allow access to all. The outhouses are built with significant space inside with grab bars next to the toilets. The trails were intentionally designed with fine gravel for a less taxing hiking experience. Docks at John Dillon Park are much wider than other docks I have seen and have lowered railings for barrier-free casting for a seated fisherperson. The floor of the dock is also covered with an outdoor carpeting to avoid the challenges provided by the boards of an average dock. Another great feature of the park are the beds that are hinged to the walls of the lean-tos and fold down for easy transfer. Also, the fire rings have grills that can elevate and swing away for safer cooking. The design of John Dillon Park is the most inviting rustic campsite that I have ever experienced. I will be a camper at John Dillon Park for as long as the great outdoors have a place in my heart.”



Eric at John Dillon Park

The park is open for day use from 9 am to 9 pm. To learn more about John Dillon Park, visit [www.johndillonpark.org/](http://www.johndillonpark.org/) or call (518) 524-6226 to make a reservation. Many sites are still available through September. - Eric Komar

## Summer 2008 Inclusivity Hero Carole Fraser

Because of her outstanding dedication to ensuring that the outdoors are accessible to people of all abilities, the NYS IRRC has chosen to feature Carole Fraser as our Summer 2008 Inclusivity Hero. As Universal Access Coordinator for the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC), Carole's work as an advocate, educator and mentor is helping to make the natural environment accessible throughout the state of New York. Carole has also been invaluable to us here at Cortland for both her knowledge and support of the NYS IRRC.

NYS IRRC Intern Shane Brown recently interviewed Carole at the Schenectady Access Festival. Carole first began her position as the Universal Access Coordinator seven years ago when the DEC was looking for a "spark" to organize staff training on disability awareness, oversee the effort of building accessible sites, to conduct service meetings and to write publications. Carole became the "spark plug" the DEC was looking for. Carole noted that since the DEC now has over 200 accessible sites, her role has shifted to getting the word out about all the wonderful opportunities the DEC has to offer and making sure that programs and services continue to be accessible.

When asked about what she feels is the most rewarding aspect of her job, Carole responded with a story about a woman who uses a wheelchair that she met earlier that day. "Days like today when this woman says how much she loves camping and I inform her about all of the Accessible DEC sites...the woman was so excited." Carole went on to say how gratifying it is to hear from people who use DEC sites and find that connection with nature or discover a new activity such as bird-watching. Carole also enjoys running events that bring people together and watching the stereotypes just drop away... "I think that inclusion is the key that unlocks the door to understanding ourselves and one another."

Of course there are also challenges that are part of the job. It is important that designers and builders of

accessible sites create universal access while protecting the natural setting. The new challenge Carole says is to "...reach people and encourage them to put down the remote, get away from the computer for awhile and find a natural area to download some peace and quiet."

There are many DEC sites that Carole is proud of, including the 300ft long fishing pier on the South Bay of Lake Champlain. Carole is also very proud of the DEC



staff who now understand the need for access and are designing and planning accessible sites with little input from her. "Scaroon Manor has many accessible features and offers something for everyone." When asked if there is one site she recommends, Carole smiled and said, "It's hard to choose just one site. I would say any place where people can sit

around a campfire at night and share their experiences." Some of her own favorite activities include anything that exposes her to woods and water, especially fishing. "To catch a fish on a fly that you've tied is a great feeling!"

We are very grateful for all the assistance Carole has given to promote the NYS IRRC. Earlier this year, Carole provided a Trails Workshop to staff and students to increase awareness about accessible trail design. Carole has also encouraged DEC staff to attend Inclusion U and assess their own DEC sites so that people with disabilities can learn more about the great work being done by the DEC and its staff. As we travel the state and meet with DEC staff, people constantly remark about Carole's commitment and passion to making sure that everyone can enjoy the outdoors. Thank you Carole!

The DEC manages 4.5 million acres of land and is committed to enabling people of all abilities to access fishing, hunting, boating, camping, and other activities on state lands. For more information about outdoor recreation opportunities, visit the DEC's website at [www.dec.ny.gov](http://www.dec.ny.gov) - Shane Brown

## IT'S THE LAW!

By Dr. Vicki Wilkins



I have been advocating for the use of person first language for more than 20 years, most of those while living and working in New York. And, in all those years, I never once described person first language as politically correct. I described it as accurate, positive, and sensitive; as a technique for communicating humanness; but never as politically correct. But now it is the law!

Previously approved by the New York State Assembly and Senate, but vetoed by former Governor Pataki; the “person first” bill was reintroduced by Assemblyperson Harvey Weisenberg (D-Long Beach) in February and signed into law on August 1, 2007 by Governor Spitzer. The bill requires the use of person first language when describing individuals in legal documents, publications, and state and local legislation. The text of the bill reads:

“On or after the effective date of this section (immediately), all new and revised statutes, local laws, ordinances, charters or regulations promulgated or any publication published by the state or any political subdivision that refer to persons with disabilities shall seek to:

1. avoid language that
  - A. implies that a person as a whole is disabled (e.g., the mentally ill or the learning disabled),
  - B. equates persons with their condition (e.g., epileptics, autistics or quadriplegics),
  - C. has negative overtones (e.g., afflicted with cerebral palsy, suffering from multiple sclerosis, confined to a wheelchair or wheel chair bound) or is regarded as derogatory or demeaning (e.g., handicapped or mentally deficient)
2. replace non-respectful language by referring to persons with disabilities as persons first (e.g., individuals with disabilities, individuals with developmental disabilities, individuals with mental illness, individuals with autism or individuals with mental retardation).”

So there you have it: accurate, positive, and sensitive; a technique for communicating humanness; and now, in New York, the law! The Recreation, Parks, and Leisure Studies Department at SUNY Cortland has for some time now had a commitment to the use of person first language. Students will find a statement to that effect in every course syllabus. Additionally the NYS Inclusive Recreation Resource Center now in its second year, and also located in the RPLS Department at SUNY Cortland is working to educate folks across the state about person first language as part of “Inclusion U,” a full day training designed to prepare individuals to gather descriptive and detailed information about recreation programs, areas, and facilities so that potential users may make better plans for enjoyable inclusive recreation.

If you have been way ahead of the legislation, congratulations! If not, perhaps it is indeed time to get on board. If you are interested in learning more about Inclusion U or the NYS Inclusive Recreation Resource Center, please contact us at [InclusiveRec@cortland.edu](mailto:InclusiveRec@cortland.edu)

**The NYS IRRC website is up and running!!!!**

[www.cortland.edu/nysirrc](http://www.cortland.edu/nysirrc)

NYS IRRC News  
Upcoming Training Dates  
Resources and Links  
Assessed site list  
And more....





## The NYS IRRC at SUNY Cortland

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FUNDED BY

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### Our Mission

To promote and sustain participation by people with disabilities in inclusive recreation activities

## Experience Great Places! Become an Inclusivity Assessor!



NYS IRRC's Summer Interns Eric Komar (left) and Shane Brown (right) enjoy a hard day at work assessing the Adirondack Museum. Many thanks to Eric and Shane for assessing this famous destination which includes over 20 out-building exhibits!!! The museum staff were very helpful and very interested in making sure that visitors of all abilities enjoy their experience.



### Free Inclusivity Assessment Training!

#### Inclusion U Dates:

**Wednesday, October 8th**

Rosamond Gifford Zoo, Syracuse 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

**Thursday, October 23rd**

Hilton Head Resort, Lake Placid 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

**Wednesday October 29th**

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

**Wednesday December 3rd**

Stern Family Center for Extended Care & Rehabilitation  
 Manhasset 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

Check our website for more dates to come !

#### How do you register for training?

Pre-register for Inclusion U by contacting Laurie Penney McGee at [penneymcgeel@cortland.edu](mailto:penneymcgeel@cortland.edu) or at (607) 753-4833. If you would like to earn Continuing Education Credits (CEU's), they will be available on site for a payment of \$8.00. If any accommodations are needed, please provide that information when you register for training.

### Carole Fraser recommends a day at the DEC's Scaroon Manor



Located off Route 9 in the town of Chester on the shores of Schroon Lake, Scaroon Manor is a Universally Designed day use area.

Enjoy....

- picnicking in the woods or a covered pavilion
- accessible beach and fishing access
- bathhouse with unisex room
- interpretive kiosks

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL (518) 623-1200**

# NYS Inclusive Recreation Resource Center

Spring 2008

The NYS IRRC continues to grow this spring! Staff has been very busy training new assessors around NY, speaking at regional and state events, and developing a new training for recreational professionals who are interested in becoming Inclusion Advocates in their regions for the Recreation Referral Service.

Inclusion U, our Inclusivity Assessment Training, is in great demand! The one-day class teaches the foundations of inclusion and accessibility while preparing participants to assess recreation sites, programs, and facilities. People who attend Inclusion U are then able to provide their assessment data to the IRRC for entry into a state-wide database so that people with disabilities can better plan their recreation. We hope to have an on-line version of Inclusion U available later this year. (*Find a list of upcoming training dates on page 4.*)

Many thanks to **Dr. Ori Caroleo** at Lehman College who developed a 3 credit course focused on Inclusion U. As part of the class, each student is required to complete three Inclusivity Assessments. As a result, the NYC region now has many assessed sites to add to the NYS IRRC database. If you are a professor in NY who would like us to develop a class or embed Inclusion U in one of your classes, please contact Project Coordinator Laurie Penney McGee.

The development of the NYS IRRC website has also been a top priority. The initial launch of the site is planned for early May, with the accompanying database to follow later this year,

Additional highlights include:

- Inclusion U was added to the curriculum of courses at Onondaga Community College & Corning Community College
- The NYS IRRC has been accepted to present later this year at the National Institute for Recreation Inclusion in Eugene, Oregon
- The NYS IRRC has been listed as a resource in a national publication, "Paths to Inclusion" (article page 3)
- The NYS IRRC launched its first "Train the Trainer" session which prepares skilled professionals to become Inclusion U Trainers. Congratulations to Dr. Linda Heyne, Ithaca College, and Brandy Boden, Corning Community College, for becoming Inclusion U trainers!!
- The NYS Recreation and Park Society and the NYS Therapeutic Recreation Association both included Inclusion U as full-day pre-institutes at their annual state-wide conferences. Thank you!!



NYS DEC's Labrador Hollow accessible fishing pier in Cortland County. Picture compliments of the DEC



## Access Pass for People With Disabilities

Did you know that an Access Pass permits a resident of New York State with a permanent disability free use of parks, historic sites, and recreational facilities operated by OPRHP and the Department of Environmental Conservation? Veterans with disabilities may also obtain free Access Passes as well. To obtain an application or for additional information, call (518) 474-2324 or write to: Access Pass, NYS OPRHP, Empire State Plaza, Agency Building 1, Albany, NY 12238.

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## Visit us on the web in May at

[www.cortland.edu/nysirrc](http://www.cortland.edu/nysirrc)

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

## Our First Inclusivity Heroes Rob Ferri and Fran Pizzola

**Fran Pizzola** has been advocating for people with disabilities for over 20 years. Although advocacy was not her first career choice, she became an advocate out of personal necessity. Several years ago, Fran sustained a spinal cord injury and needed to find accessible routes around her home town of Cortland, NY. In 1996 she started a grassroots organization to advance accessibility for people with disabilities, which later became Access to Independence of Cortland County. Today Fran is the Program Coordinator of Access to Independence and has worked to get multiple laws changed for people with disabilities.

Access to Independence serves as an Independent Living Center, offering multiple services including equipment loans, advocacy services, architectural barrier/ADA consulting, independent living programs, and transitional programs for youth. As program coordinator, Fran works with people on achieving health and wellness and sees recreation as an important part of health. If someone comes to her for help and they are not in her region, Fran will find someone in their area to help them. Fran wants the community to know that Access to Independence is a community resource and encourages people to come to the center for information. Fran's goal is to keep people healthy and independent and she will work with people to help find solutions and resources for accessibility.

**Rob Ferri** did not plan on becoming an advocate for people with disabilities either, but after breaking his back while working construction, he became involved in helping people with disabilities find jobs through New York's Vocational and Educational Services for Indi-

viduals with Disabilities (VESID). He found that architectural barriers were a main issue and decided to use his background in construction to find ways to remove the barriers. Rob is now the Architectural Barriers Specialist at Access to Independence. He provides technical assistance to the community through architectural barrier consultations. A major project he is working on right now is the Access to Home Grant, which provides funding for modifications to individual's homes so that they can stay in their homes independently and safely. Just a few of the places Rob has helped become more accessible include Greek Peak's Hope Lake Lodge, the Cortland Country Music Park, Lime Hollow's Trail for All, SUNY Cortland's Alumni House and the Tioughnioga River trail.



In addition to all the great work they do, Fran and Rob have also been important assets to the NYS IRRC. Fran has an interest in the NYS IRRC because of her love of travel and recreation. She is excited to use the center's website for travel information. Fran and Rob took the very first Inclusion U training and since, Fran has helped to assess Lime Hollow Center for Environment and Culture as well as Shipwreck Miniature Golf. Rob incorporates Inclusion U ideas into his everyday assessments. The NYS IRRC is grateful to Fran and Rob for their assistance, knowledge and support. We look forward to continuing working with them in the future.

Please find out more about Access to Independence, Fran and Rob at [www.aticortland.org](http://www.aticortland.org).

## NYS IRRC Holds First Professional Recreation Referral Service Training



Pictured: Top row: Tameka Battle, Myra Roman, Sue Lance, Daniele Fish; Bottom row: Candace Sessoms, Gloria Golightly-Hendricks, Margaret Reid, Megan Cavo. Not pictured: Sabrina Woodhams Smith.

These dedicated therapeutic recreation professionals have agreed to volunteer to be recreation resources for people with disabilities in their region! People may simply be looking for information or some additional resources to be included in recreation in their communities. Volunteers are trained by NYS IRRC staff to use the Therapeutic Recreation Process as a part of our Recreation Referral Service. If you would like to volunteer, contact Project Coordinator Laurie Penney McGee ([penneymcgeel@cortland.edu](mailto:penneymcgeel@cortland.edu)).

## Calling All Inclusivity Assessors!

You've attended Inclusion U, received your assessment tool kit and you are now ready to hit the road to assess your favorite recreation places and spaces. The ability to create a meaningful state-wide database depends largely on the efforts of all the people who are trained to become Inclusivity Assessors. To date, approximately 185 people have participated in the Inclusivity Assessment Tool training, with roughly 108 of these being students. Now we need your help by contributing your assessments to the database so that people with disabilities, their families and their providers can better plan their recreation. Need help setting up an appointment? Call Laurie Penney McGee – (607) 753-4833. Did you lose your Specialty Tools or the Guide? No problem, email Laurie Penney McGee at [penneymcgeel@cortland.edu](mailto:penneymcgeel@cortland.edu). Whatever it takes, let us help you make the most of your training by conducting an Inclusivity Assessment. We greatly appreciate your time and all your work in helping to promote inclusive recreation for all!

# INCLUSION



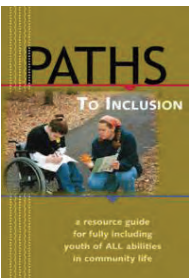
Inclusivity Assessment  
Training

## NYS IRRC Included in National Publication

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
April 3, 2008

Contact: Rayna Aylward, Executive Director  
(703) 276-8240  
[rayna.aylward@meus.meia.com](mailto:rayna.aylward@meus.meia.com)

SAN DIEGO, CA, April 3, 2008—A new publication, *Paths to Inclusion*, made its debut today at the national conference of the organization Kids Included Together (KIT) in San Diego. Published by the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation (MEAF), *Paths to Inclusion* is a resource guide to help youth-serving organizations integrate youth with disabilities into their regular programs.



The 14-page guide was developed by an Inclusion Task Force organized by MEAF, which includes leaders of national and community-based organizations that serve youth and people with disabilities, along with representatives of universities, foundations and government agencies. NYS IRRC Project Director, Dr. Lynn Anderson, is a member of the task force. The publication was unveiled during a nationally broadcast panel discussion featuring representatives from MEAF, Disability Funders Network, Bubel/Aiken Foundation, The Manual D. and Rhoda Mayerson Foundation, Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA), KIT, INclusion Network, and A.E. Finley YMCA.

*Paths to Inclusion* is an outgrowth of MEAF's Inclusion Initiative launched five years ago. The \$2 million invested by MEAF in the Initiative has been leveraged by \$4 million raised by program partners, including two dozen youth-serving organizations such as BGCA, the National 4-H Council, and the Girl Scouts. The publication is available free to the public. It can be ordered in print form or downloaded at the Website [www.IncludingAllKids.org](http://www.IncludingAllKids.org) or download at [www.cortland.edu/nysirrc](http://www.cortland.edu/nysirrc).

## We Need to Hear From You!

Have you or your organization participated in the NYS IRRC Inclusivity Assessment process? As we near the one year anniversary of the launch of our Inclusivity Assessment Tool, we are looking for stories from you about how your program or site became more inclusive as a result of being assessed. Maybe you've made changes in your policies or staff training, started creating materials in larger prints, or simply moved some of your garbage cans to allow for greater access, but we need your stories!!! Please contact Laurie Penney McGee at [penneymcgeel@cortland.edu](mailto:penneymcgeel@cortland.edu) or call (607) 753-4833. Thank you!!



Information about this adaptive aquatic chair was added to the Skaneateles Community Center's website after their assessment in July 2007. Nice job SCC!!!

## The NYS IRRC at SUNY Cortland

NYS Inclusive Recreation Resource Center  
Studio West B-4  
P.O. Box 2000  
Cortland, NY 13045

Phone: (607) 753-4833  
Fax: (607) 753-5982  
E-mail: [InclusiveRec@cortland.edu](mailto:InclusiveRec@cortland.edu)



### Our Mission

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

### The NYS IRRC is participating in the following upcoming events.....

- Dreamnight at the Zoo, Syracuse June 6th
- CP of NYS Fitness, Recreation and Sports Conference, Rockhill June 9th
- Disability Awareness Access Festival, Schenectady June 27th
- North Country Access Outdoor Recreation for All, Clayton July 19th
- For Your Independence Conference, Watertown September 16th

## We Invite You to Become Part of the NYS IRRC at SUNY Cortland

- Attend Inclusion U and become an Inclusivity Assessor
- Conduct assessments and help the NYS IRRC build a comprehensive NYS database
- Become a Recreation Referral Service Volunteer to help people with disabilities find recreation in your region
- Host an Inclusion U Training for professionals in your region

## Free Inclusivity Assessment Training!

### Inclusion U Dates:

#### Thursday, May 1<sup>st</sup>

Wellesley Island, Fineview, 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

#### Wednesday, May 21<sup>st</sup>

Gates Recreation & Parks Dept., Rochester 8:00 AM – 4:30PM

#### Wednesday, October 8<sup>th</sup>

Rosamond Gifford Zoo, Syracuse 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

#### Thursday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>

Hilton Head Resort, Lake Placid 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

Other dates to come.....Check our website.

### How do you register for training?

Pre-register for this free training by contacting Laurie Penney McGee at [penneymcgeel@cortland.edu](mailto:penneymcgeel@cortland.edu) or at (607) 753-4833. If you need them, CEU's will be available on site for a payment of \$8.00. If any accommodations are needed, please provide that information when you register for training.

## North Country Access Promotes Outdoor Recreation for All

North Country Access Cycling, Northern New York's chapter of Disabled Sports, USA, is announcing that North Country Access 2008 will be held July 19, 2008 at the Antique Boat Museum in Clayton, NY.

North Country Access 2008 is an all-day all-abilities water sports recreation event taking place on the shores of the St. Lawrence River. Children and adults with mobility impairments, sensory limitation or other disabilities will have the chance to fully participate and are encouraged to register for this rare opportunity in a world that is not designed with disability in mind. Designated as a Wounded Warriors Disabled Sports event, recently injured veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan will also be participating.

Speakers will present the latest in technology and equipment for enabling people with a variety of disabilities to live actively and engage in fun fitness building activities. Guest speakers include: Dr. Hugh Herr of MIT, Dr. John Simeral of Brown University, Carole Fraser of the DEC and Jerry Kerr, President of DRAFT (Segways for Vets).

For more information or to register for this event, contact the North Country Cycling by calling (315) 782-2838 or via email at [northcountryaccess2008@gmail.com](mailto:northcountryaccess2008@gmail.com). Sponsor and donor information is also available online at [www.ncaccess.org](http://www.ncaccess.org). The NYS IRRC is proud to be helping to sponsor this event.

