

# D P Connections



*We are dedicated to . . .*

Partnering with individuals and the community to enhance, advocate for and support personal choices, independent living and community inclusion.

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

Fall 2017



## Office Hours

8:30 am—5:00 pm

Office: 828-631-1167

Fax: 828-631-1169

Centers for Independent Living are private, non-profit, consumer-controlled, community-based organizations by and for people with all types of disabilities with the goals of maintaining civil rights options, controlling choices, and the freedom to participate fully in our communities.

## HAPPY FALL Y'ALL



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## Services

- ♦ Advocacy
- ♦ CyberPals Program
- ♦ Employment Network
- ♦ Home Care Partners
- ♦ Peer Support
- ♦ Information & Referral
- ♦ Independent Living Skills Training
- ♦ Person First Day Program
- ♦ Nursing Home Transition

## New Medicare Cards

CMS will be creating new cards for Medicare beneficiaries using a Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI) to replace the Social Security-based Health Insurance Claim Number (HICN) currently used on Medicare cards.

New cards are set to begin distribution in April of 2018 and are to be replaced by the April 2019 deadline.

“We’re taking this step to protect our seniors from fraudulent use of Social Security numbers which can lead to identity theft and illegal use of Medicare benefits. We want to be sure that Medicare beneficiaries and

healthcare providers know about these changes well in advance and have the information they need to make a seamless transition, said CMS Administrator Seema Verma.”

For more information and to read the full report, go to:

<https://www.cms.gov/medicare/ssnri/index.html>

### ADDRESS:

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
Room 352-G

200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

### PHONE:

CMS Media Relations  
(202) 690-6145



Like us on Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/DisabilityPartners-Sylva](https://www.facebook.com/DisabilityPartners-Sylva)



## Medicare Open Enrollment Period is October 15 – December 7

Now is the time to evaluate your current plan and make any changes as necessary. All changes must be made by December 7<sup>th</sup>.

Staff from SHIIP (Senior's Health Insurance Information Program), are available to help over the phone or in person in all 100 counties in North Carolina.

Get one-on-one help from your local SHIIP office by calling:

Diane Parker at 828-631-8037

Visit [www.medicare.gov/find-a-plan](http://www.medicare.gov/find-a-plan) to compare plans and enroll in a new plan if you decide to change plans. Review the Medicare & You handbook. It was mailed to people with Medicare in September.

Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048 or visit [www.ncshiip.com](http://www.ncshiip.com).

### About AgrAbility

The vision of AgrAbility is to enable a high quality lifestyle for farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural workers with disabilities. While the term "disability" often brings to mind conditions such as spinal cord injuries and amputations, AgrAbility addresses not only these but also many other conditions, such as arthritis, back problems, and behavioral health issues.

AgrAbility is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and consists of a National Project and State/Regional Projects  
(Currently serving 22 states)



### A Proud Moment for DisAbility Partners. . .

NC AgrAbility welcomes Chuck Oaks, Advocacy and Transition Coordinator for DisAbility Partners Center for Independent Living. He holds a bachelor's degree in human services. He has served people with disabilities for several years by supporting their personal choices, independent living, and community inclusion. Chuck will help coordinate efforts to reach out to the farming community in the area to help enhance the lives of farmers dealing with disabilities.

For questions or more information on AgrAbility, call Chuck at: 828-631-1167

**We are proud to have Chuck on board at DisAbility partners!**

# !!! NEWS BULLETIN !!!

*Governor Roy Cooper signed HB84 into law last week, making traffic stops safer for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people.*

Aug. 3, 2017 — Legislation that allows Deaf and Hard of Hearing citizens to **request a designation for their driver's license from the N.C. Division of Motor Vehicles** was signed into law last week by Governor Roy Cooper.

**"The bill, [HB 84](#), passed with unanimous, bi-partisan support and will make interactions between law enforcement and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community in North Carolina much safer," said Jan Withers, Director of the N.C. Division of Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing.**

HB 84 establishes education and training standards for law enforcement, and gives the more than 1.2 million Deaf and Hard of Hearing citizens in the **state the option, upon request, to have their driver's license indicate that they are deaf or hard of hearing.**

**"This is an important legislative achievement," Withers said. "It moves us closer to ensuring that communication with deaf and hard of hearing drivers will be as effective as communication with people who are hearing."**  
Author: Ryan Hill

## N e w T e c h n o l o g y for People who are blind!



An all-woman team of six engineering undergraduate students at MIT has created an inexpensive, hand-held device prototype that provides real-time translation of printed text to Braille -- which could greatly increase accessibility of written materials for the blind.

Read the full story by **Lisa Brackmann** May 24, 2017 at:

<https://www.cnet.com/news/portable-braille-translator-mit-students-team-tactile>

## Do you know the difference?

### Hurricane Watch or Hurricane Warning!!

**Hurricane Watch**— issued when conditions possible for the next 48 hours

Helpful information:

During a hurricane watch,

- Stay tuned to local radio and TV stations or a National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio (<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/>) for further weather information.
- Watch the weather and be prepared to take shelter immediately if conditions worsen.

**Hurricane Warning**— Hurricane warning = conditions are expected within 36 hours

Steps to take:

- Follow evacuation orders from local officials, if given.
- Check-in with family and friends by texting or using social media. Continued...↓

To sign up in your county, just search the internet for “Your County, NC alerts”

Example: for Jackson County enter:

“Jackson County, NC alerts”

Follow instructions on the website to enter your information into the local CodeRED alert system.

You will also find information for registering someone with disabilities in case of emergencies.



Follow the **hurricane timeline** **preparedness checklist**, depending on when the storm is anticipated to hit and the impact that is projected for your location.

**Find this information and more at:**  
<https://www.ready.gov/hurricanes>

### Tornado Watch or Tornado Warning!!

**Tornado Watch** — issued when weather conditions favor the formation of tornadoes, during a severe thunderstorm.

Helpful information:

During a tornado watch,

- Stay tuned to local radio and TV stations or a National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio (<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/>) for further weather information.
- Watch the weather and be prepared to take shelter immediately if conditions worsen.

**Tornado Warning**— issued when a tornado funnel is sighted or indicated by weather radar.

**You should take shelter immediately!**

## ARE YOU READY IN THE EVENT OF A DISASTER?

We are not out of the woods yet!

Hurricane season runs through November 30th.

The FEMA APP will give you up to the minute alerts for your area when weather develops that you need to know about. The app allows up to 5 locations so that you can keep track of what is happening where your friends and loved ones are.



Receive alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five locations.

Get safety reminders, read tips to survive natural disasters, and customize your emergency checklist.

Locate open shelters and where to talk to FEMA in person (or on the phone).

Upload and share your disaster photos to help first responders



FEMA



September was  
National Preparedness Month

# YOU CAN STILL MAKE A PLAN!

For information:

[www.ready.gov/september](http://www.ready.gov/september)

## More helpful resources to find what you need!



The first step in finding help is knowing “*who to call.*”

9-1-1 is for emergencies.

4-1-1 is for directory assistance.

2-1-1 is for community health and human service resources.

To access our information and referral line. . .

Dial 2-1-1 or 888-892-1162.



## Guide Dogs Get to Know a New Voice: Alexa

June 22, 2017

Source: Amazon (Blog)

### *Voice-Controlled Personal Assistant Helps the Seeing Eye School Help the Blind*

A blind person who stays at The Seeing Eye school in Morristown, [New Jersey] is only asked to pay a fraction of what it costs to train the dog that changes their life: \$1 for military veterans, \$150 for anyone else. The school, a nonprofit founded in 1929, covers the rest.

Students get everything they need to spend a comfortable three weeks learning to work with their new guide dog. That means meals, a roundtrip plane ticket from anywhere in America, a dorm room, and – most recently – an Echo to use throughout their stay.

It was Jim Kutsch, The Seeing Eyes CEO, who realized Amazons voice-controlled personal assistant could help students get through countless challenges. "Once we got an Echo at home, I put that together with the fact that we had so many access issues," said Kutsch, who has been blind since he was 16. "Look, a sighted person might just glance at a timer to know [there are] so many minutes left. With Echo, we can ask without having to go over and pick up a timer, push a button."

Kutsch decided to outfit the entire school with Echo devices, 33 in all. Today, [there is] an Echo in every individual dorm room and in all of the schools common areas. Even students who have no experience with the device, soon turn to it for everything from weather forecasts for outdoor classes with the dogs, to music and even shopping.

Kutsch's wife Ginger, who is also blind, said the Echo is one of the first devices that doesn't make her feel different.

"It's always fun when the device performs in the same way for a blind person or a sighted person," she said. "It brings people together because they have this common device and something they can use as a group."

More information: [Say "Hello!" to Alexa the Digital Assistant Within the Amazon Echo](#)

<http://www.visionaware.org/blog/visually-impaired-now-what/say-hello-to-alexa-the-digital-assistant-within-the-amazon-echo/12>

## Update on our Person First Services building!

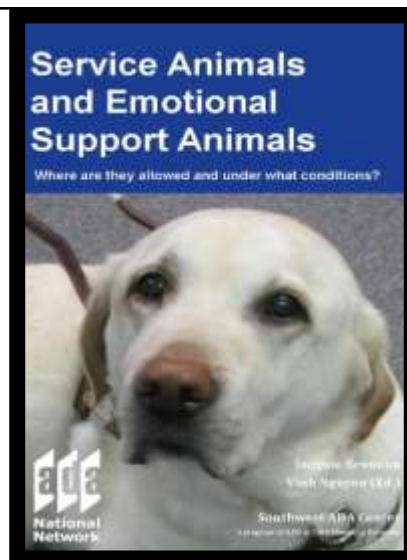
Most of our Person First  
administrative staff has  
moved into their new  
offices. We lovingly call the  
**new facility "The House."**  
Our sign has been installed!  
Our phones and internet  
are operational!

**It's been a dream**  
in the making!

Address:

2775 US 74 EAST  
SYLVA, NC 28779

Phone: 828-354-0296



For questions  
or additional information,  
please contact:  
Marisa Demaya  
via email at:  
[mdemaya@bcm.edu](mailto:mdemaya@bcm.edu).

Are you a US resident (Age 18+) who uses a service animal or other animal that assists you with your disability? If not, are you the parent of a child who uses such an animal?

If so, the Southwest ADA Center ([www.southwestada.org](http://www.southwestada.org)) would like to learn about your experiences with accessing public places with your animal. We invite you to complete the following anonymous survey at:

<http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/3773597/Assistance-Animal-Survey>

Thank you for your time,

The Southwest ADA Center

# Did you know?

Ever wonder why leaves really change color each fall?  
Here's the from an article in the Farmer's Almanac...

## Inside A Leaf

We checked in with a real “fall guy,” Appalachian State University Biology professor, Howard Neufeld, who has been studying fall color for much of his career, to get the answer. His scientific interest in what occurs inside a leaf has naturally progressed to what shows outside, and when. Neufeld’s research and sociability have made him a go-to guy for fall color science and forecasting. So what does he say about why leaves change color? What signals them to change?

The vivid, often simple colors on the outside are the products of the complex chemistry of growth inside a leaf. **Take the yellows and oranges**, for example—the dominant colors of aspen, ash, birch, beech, hickories, maples, some oaks, tulip poplar, and sassafras—generally, these colors come from compounds called carotenoids (also responsible for the color of carrots) which are present in the leaf during the growing season.

The green chlorophyll, the workhorse of photosynthesis, dominates and covers up those carotenoids in summer. As the days grow shorter and the temperatures cool, chlorophyll degrades and goes from green to colorless, allowing the oranges and the yellows to show up. These colors are present in the leaf during its growing season.

## What About The Reds?

What about those gorgeous scarlet, crimson, and ruby hues of the red maples, black gums, dogwoods, sourwood, and oaks?

“Red pigments are not present in the leaf during summer,” Neufeld says. “Trees that turn red actually produce this pigment, called anthocyanin, in the autumn.” However, though we might like to think so, plants don’t make this red pigment for our appreciation. These pigments play a key role in readying the tree for the next spring. Researchers discovered that anthocyanins act as a sunscreen, protecting

leaves (especially evergreen ones) from bright seasonal light when it is cold outside. Other researchers have discovered that the sun-screening effect protects leaves from too much light, which can interfere with late-season transport of nutrients from the leaf back to the twigs, something trees do as a conservation mechanism.

Still, other scientists believe the red color serves to ward off insect pests. A healthy, strong plant has lots of anthocyanin; certain insects laying eggs in the fall may seek other, weaker host plants for their offspring.

While anthocyanins may ward off insects, there is no doubt that they are magnets for “leaf peepers” for fall color tourism. A little bit of red goes a long way—and more is even better.

## Recipe For A Colorful Fall

Neufeld offers a “recipe” for good autumn color: “Starting in August, days must be sunny and the nights steadily cooling. This allows the trees to manufacture sugars, and sugars stimulate the leaves to make anthocyanins. The cold helps keep the sugars in the leaves producing anthocyanins.”

The calendar needs an August footnote to remind us to watch the weather now for fall color later. Too many clouds, too much rain, or too much heat in the eighth month can make for a duller fall. September, though generally cooler, follows suit. “Drought is the other enemy of a good fall,” Neufeld adds, “The trees have to be in a healthy state — not water stressed — heading into the season.”

Neufeld does his best to provide such guidance with continuing observation. The good news for would-be travelers is that “peak color” is a peculiarly local condition depending on the local weather, the mix of trees, the elevation above sea level, and the distance from the equator.

<https://www.farmersalmanac.com/weather/2014/09/22/chemistry-fall-color/fall>



# It's time to get informed!

## CapTel 2400i

Telephone calls can be challenging for people with hearing loss. The new CapTel 2400i makes it easy to enjoy phone conversations, confident you'll catch every word.

- Shows word-for-word captions during your calls
- Large easy touch-screen display
- Powerful amplification — up to 40dB
- Traditional telephone keypad — for comfortable, familiar dialing

See more at:

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

**This system is available for use...**

at DisAbility Partners' office  
Sylva, NC

**DisAbility Partners**  
now has a demo in the front office.

You or someone you know  
may qualify for a  
**FREE CapTel Phone**

Contact us today  
for more information.  
**828-631-1167**

Alternative formats of our newsletter are available upon request.

Please call Cindi at 828-631-1167 or email: [chall@disabilitypartners.org](mailto:chall@disabilitypartners.org) to discuss what works best for you.

*Created by: Cindi Hall*

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