

# AZ LINKS NEWSLETTER

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## Fall Is Season of Change!

Summer has officially ended, and the monsoons have tailed off, but not before they left their mark in the way of flash floods across Arizona. As the weather cools, we'll all be spending more time outdoors and changing up some of our routines. One thing that is about to change is the AZ Links website! In October we'll be launching a new version of AZLinks.gov, including the soft launch of a new online resource database that will list a variety of services and resources for the families served by the ADRC partners. We'll send out a special notice when the new website is up and available. In the meantime, please review the opportunities to learn and network that are presented in this newsletter, and take advantage of the weather to get out and support your local partners.

- David Besst, ADRC Project Director

## EXPECT, EMPLOY, EMPOWER!

### OCTOBER IS NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

*Submitted by Amina Donna Kruck, VP/ Advocacy Programs,  
Arizona Bridge to Independent Living – ABIL*

Held each October, National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) is a national campaign that raises awareness about disability employment issues and celebrates the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities. The theme for 2014 is "Expect. Employ. Empower."

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All members of the Arizona Employment Provider organizations are encouraged to participate. The purpose of NDEAM is to educate about disability employment issues and celebrate the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities. The true spirit of NDEAM lies in the many observances held at the grassroots level across the nation every year – including Arizona. Employers of all sizes and in all industries are encouraged to participate

For specific ideas about how your organization can support NDEAM, visit the website of the Office of Disability Employment Policy at <http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam/index-2014.htm>. You will find suggestions ranging from simple ideas such as putting up a poster to more comprehensive ideas such as implementing a disability education program. Regardless, all play an important part in fostering a more inclusive workforce, one where every person is recognized for his or her abilities — every day of every month.

## Updates from the Social Security Administration

Submitted by Jack Burns, Public Affairs Specialist in Arizona, SSA

### QUESTION:

Does Social Security provide special services/information for the blind or visually impaired?

### ANSWER:

Yes. Social Security offers a number of services and products specifically designed for people who are blind or visually impaired. You can choose to receive notices and other information from Social Security in ways that may be more convenient for you. Many of our publications, such as brochures and fact sheets, are available in Braille, audio cassette tapes, compact discs, or in enlarged print. Our publication, *If You Are Blind Or Have Low Vision – How We Can Help*, and other publications in alternative formats can be obtained by calling, toll-free, **1-800-772-1213** (TTY 1-800-325-0778), from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday, or call or visit your local Social Security office and ask us to read it to you. For more information, see our page *Public Information Materials in Alternative Media* at [www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/alt-pubs.html](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/alt-pubs.html).

### ANNOUNCEMENT:

Beginning October 2014, the Social Security Administration field offices will stop providing benefit verification letters, except in emergency situations. Benefit verifications are available online and can be obtained by registering for a “my Social Security” account at [www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount) or through the national toll-free number **1-800-772-1213**.



## PCOA 2014 Art Auction

Submitted By Barbara Brookhart, Development Department, Pima Council on Aging

People Creating Original Art  
**Saturday, October 4, 2014, 6pm – 9pm**  
 Steinfeld Warehouse, 101 West Sixth Street,  
 Tucson

**Pima Council on Aging** will hold its Second Annual Reception and Art Auction, People Creating Original Art, at the historic Steinfeld Warehouse, in conjunction with the Warehouse Arts Management Organization Tool Avenue Art Walk. Last year, the art auction raised over \$8,000 and was attended by over 200 local art enthusiasts. Proceeds will benefit the Pima Council on Aging: The place to go for HELP when you don't know where to go.

There is no charge for this event, but a donation is suggested. Ample free parking exists adjacent to the Warehouse.

To support PCOA by donating a piece of art, gift certificate or something else to the auction, or for general information contact **Kimberley** at **1-520-305-3401**, or you can email her at [khoidal@pcoa.org](mailto:khoidal@pcoa.org).

## The Area Agency on Aging, Region III Presents Its 23rd Annual Elder Issues Conference

*Submitted By Jenny Ellringer, Community Supports Program Manager, Area Agency on Aging-NACOG*

Aging, if it's not your issue...It will be! As our population ages, it seems we all know of someone dealing with Alzheimer's, and this year will be an educational and networking opportunity in Flagstaff to learn more about the issues we face when coping with this disease.

The Area Agency on Aging Region III presents its **23rd Annual Elder Issues Conference October 16, 2014**, in Flagstaff at the High Country Conference Center. Our conferences cater to professionals serving seniors in our community.

Our Keynote Speaker Sandy Markwood is the CEO of the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a). The n4a is dedicated to advocating on behalf of older adults and their caregivers; to take action to ensure that communities are equipped to support and enhance the well-being of older adults, persons with disabilities and their caregivers. We are pleased to have Congresswoman Ann Kirkpatrick deliver our welcome and look forward to her comments regarding aging.

Additional sessions will include a panel discussion on Wandering/Silver Alert facilitated by Sgt. Ben Scott of the Prescott Police Department. Dr. Mitchell Gelber from Prescott will present a session on keeping families with Alzheimer's together. Other presenters will

teach how to cope with the emotional aspects of Alzheimer's with humor, learn the secret to aging gracefully and lessons in keeping ourselves and loved ones active and engaged.

Special sessions targeting first responders who are dealing with people with Alzheimer's disease will also be available. This course has been determined to qualify for AZ POST continuing training credit and CEUs will also be available.

For information or to register for the conference, call **1-877-521-3500**, or visit our website at [www.nacog.org/aging](http://www.nacog.org/aging) and click on **2014 Elder Issues Conference**.

## TICKET to WORK PROGRAM ORIENTATION

The next New Horizons Orientation to the Ticket to Work Program will be on **Thursday, October 16 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** at New Horizons Disability Empowerment Center. At this free event, learn about the Ticket to Work program, how work affects your benefits and the work incentives available to you while participating in Ticket to Work. Space is limited. To register, please call **Deborah at 928-772-1266 Ext. 301**.

New Horizons Disability Empowerment Center is located at 8085 E. Manley Dr., Prescott Valley, AZ 86314. **Phone: 928-722-1266**; website: [www.newhorizonsilc.org](http://www.newhorizonsilc.org); Blog: [www.newhorizonsilc.org/blog](http://www.newhorizonsilc.org/blog). This is a fragrance-free facility. (Related article page 6)



## Darrel Christenson Elected to National Council on Independent Living Board

*Submitted by Amina Donna Kruck, VP/ Advocacy Programs, Arizona Bridge to Independent Living – ABIL*

At its Annual Council meeting in Washington D.C., on July 30th the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) elected Arizona Bridge to Independent Living's (ABIL) Vice President of Community Integration, Darrel Christenson, to its 22-member Board of Directors as one of three new members at-large.

Mr. Christenson has been involved in the Independent Living Movement since he began as a peer mentor in 1982 with the Southeastern Minnesota Center for Independent Living (SEMCIL) after he earned his bachelor's degree in both psychology and sociology from Mankato State University in Minnesota. He did his graduate internship at the CIL in Menomonie, WI where he earned his master's degree in guidance and counseling from the University of Wisconsin – Stout. He returned to SEMCIL where he was the Outreach Program Coordinator for nearly 12 years. In that position, he opened 3 of the first rural satellite offices in the nation.

In 1998, Christenson moved to Phoenix, Arizona where he became ABIL's Vice President of Community Integration, a position he currently holds with one of the nation's largest CILs. In this position he oversees programs such as independent living skills training, home modifications, information and referral and independent living services to individuals with disabilities in Valley rehabilitation centers and nursing homes.

Arizona Bridge to Independent Living offers and promotes programs designed to empower people with disabilities to take personal responsibility so that they may achieve or continue independent lifestyles within the community. The "Independent Living" philosophy states that people with disabilities should have the same civil rights, options and control over choices in their own lives as do people without disabilities.

Darrel has particular interest in increasing accessible, affordable housing for all individuals across the nation and has served on NCIL's Housing Sub Committee for the past six years. He plans to continue to make housing his priority and would like to see the Eleanor Smith Inclusive Home Design Act (HR 2352) passed, which would require newly constructed, federally assisted single family houses and town houses to conform to visibility standards, which include enough accessibility for a guest with mobility disabilities to visit.

After being elected as a new NCIL Board member, Mr. Christenson said, "I'm very honored, humbled and excited by this opportunity to work with these amazing leaders in the disability community. Now it's time to get to work."

## Vision Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Expo (VRATE)

Submitted by Amina Donna Kruck, VP/ Advocacy Programs, Arizona Bridge to Independent Living – ABIL

**November 7, 2014**

Phoenix Convention Center South Complex  
33 South Third St, Phoenix

**When: The doors open at 9:00 a.m. and exhibitors and presentations will continue until 4:00 p.m.**

Admission is free!

VRATE is the premiere expo in the Southwest that focuses on the specific needs of people who are blind, visually impaired or who have combined vision and hearing loss. This is an opportunity to connect with the specialized services, assistive devices and adaptive technology that will make a positive difference. Technology vendors, service providers, consumer organizations and advisory groups will be there.

There will be concurrent presentations throughout the day on a wide array of subjects. Sessions will be presented by eye doctors on eye care and eye research. Technology experts and knowledgeable end users will demonstrate the “what and how” on the latest assistive devices like smart phones, tablets and readers.

This event is for anyone that is looking to improve one’s lifestyle, whether they are looking for employment related resources, tools and techniques for living more independently, recreational activities or networking opportunities. All of this and more will be at VRATE.

## 3rd Annual Conference on Aging – SAVE the DATE!

*Jacqueline Romero, Program Development Specialist,  
WACOG Area Agency on Aging*

Western Arizona Council of Government’s Area Agency on Aging is hosting its 3rd Annual Region IV Conference on Aging on **Thursday, January 29th, 2015** at the Pivot Point Conference Center in Yuma, AZ.

The conference will feature three tracks: Elder Abuse, Caregiver, and General Issues, in hopes of providing relevant talks for individuals coming from all walks of life who work with seniors. This will be a chance for the attendees to increase their skills and knowledge with quality speakers and educational workshops. CEUs will be provided to support individuals in their efforts to remain current with important certifications that benefit seniors.

For more information regarding sponsorship opportunities and/or registration information you can contact **Jacqueline Romero at (928) 217-7158** or [jacqueline@WACOG.com](mailto:jacqueline@WACOG.com).

**SAVE the DATE**

WACOG Area Agency on Aging  
Western Arizona Council of Governments

**REGION IV CONFERENCE ON AGING**

By 2030, 1 in 5 Americans will be 65 or older.

For more information contact  
Jacqueline Romero at  
928-217-7158 or jacqueline@wacog.com

Hilton Garden Inn  
Yuma/Pivot Point

January 29, 2015

Registration and Sponsorship Information to Follow

## Ticket to Work: Support for People with Disabilities Who Want to Work

*Submitted By Cynthia Morton, New Horizons' Ticket To Work Coordinator*

The right job can change a person's life, especially for a person with a disability. The Ticket to Work program supports career development for people with disabilities who want to work. SSDI and SSI beneficiaries age 18 through 64 qualify for this free and voluntary program that helps people with disabilities progress toward financial independence.

The program is a good fit for people who want to improve their earning potential and who are committed to preparing for long-term success in the workforce. Ticket to Work offers beneficiaries with disabilities access to meaningful employment with the assistance of Ticket to Work employment service providers. If you are ready to go to work, there are people ready and waiting to help you!

While you explore employment, receive vocational rehabilitation and gain work experience, some of your cash benefits and your Medicaid or Medicare often continue. This is the case throughout your transition to work. And there are provisions in place to help you return to benefits if you find you are unable to continue working due to your disability. Social Security's Red Book, updated yearly and available online, describes in detail the provisions that are available to you.

Do you think you're ready to work? Take the next step by learning more about Ticket to Work by calling **New Horizons' Ticket to Work Coordinator, Cynthia Morton at (928) 772-1266 Ext. 309** or by visiting our website at [www.newhorizonsilc.org](http://www.newhorizonsilc.org). You may also call the office to sign up for the next free informational orientation. *(See Orientation article page 3)*

## The SEAGO Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

*Submitted By Laura Villa, LTC Ombudsman Program Coordinator, SEAGO*

At the Southeastern Arizona Governments Organization (SEAGO), in Region VI, the Long-Term Care (LTC) Ombudsman Program Coordinator is responsible for covering Cochise, Graham, Greenly and Santa Cruz Counties. The Ombudsman program offers frequent visits by the Coordinator and volunteers to all LTC facilities and assisted living homes. The Ombudsman exists to protect the human and civil rights of long-term care residents and to promote their autonomy through individual and collective advocacy efforts to enhance their quality of life in long-term care settings.

Volunteer Ombudsmen visit their assigned facilities on a regular basis, can serve as a liaison between residents, their families and facility personnel, investigates and resolves complaints within the assigned facility and reports complaints to his/her Coordinator. The LTC Ombudsman Program Coordinator provides administrative oversight, coordination and direct intervention of the Ombudsman program. The Coordinator also assures completion of monthly reports, acts as a liaison to the state Ombudsman and visits facilities to establish rapport, to investigate and assist in resolving complaints.

The Ombudsman program is in need of volunteers in Graham County in order to maintain a high awareness of this program to residents, family, staff as well as the community. Volunteers require 16 hours of initial training, which include classroom sessions, testing and facility visits. There is also 8 hours of annual continuing education to maintain certification. Background checks are a must, as well as a yearly TB test with negative results.



## PCOA 2015 Ages 'n Stages Active Adult Lifestyle Expo

*Submitted By Barbara Brookhart, Development Department, Pima Council on Aging*

**Date and Time: Saturday, March 7, 2015  
9am to 4pm**

Venue Location: Casino Del Sol Grand Ballroom

5655 West Valencia Road, Tucson, AZ 85757

The Pima Council on Aging (PCOA) 2015 Ages 'n Stages Active Adult Lifestyle Expo, a celebration of the quality of active living only available in Pima County, is a FREE and entertaining event for all ages, showcasing the best our community has to offer. The day-long Expo will be held on Saturday, March 7, 2015, from 9am to 4pm, at the Casino Del Sol Grand Ballroom, 5655 W. Valencia Road. Parking is free.

There will be more than 100 exhibitors, a wide range of fun things to do, live musical entertainment, and informative seminars. PCOA Ages 'n Stages Expo proceeds will benefit PCOA, the Area Agency on Aging, providing information, assistance, advocacy, and nutritional and social services for older adults and their families, who reside in Pima County.

For further info, contact **Kimberley Hoidal** at **520-305-3401**, or [khoidal@pcoa.org](mailto:khoidal@pcoa.org).



## 11th Annual American Indian Disability Summit “Gathering Native Voices to Embrace Vitality.”

*Submitted by Amina Donna Kruck, VP/ Advocacy Programs, Arizona Bridge to Independent Living – ABIL*

**Featuring: Presentation of the Marcus Harrison, Jr. Leadership Award**

2015 Summit will be held at:

Desert Willow Conference Center  
4340 East Cotton Center Boulevard  
Phoenix, Arizona 85040

**MARCH 26, 2015**

The summit is held to facilitate training, outreach and technical assistance for American Indians with disabilities residing in urban and rural areas. Attendees will gain awareness of support services and become empowered to improve their lifestyle by learning strategies to eliminate barriers to service delivery.

For registration information and for an application, please call:

**602-443-0707 (Rosalie), 602-495-7521 (Dorothy), (602) 443-0708 (Fernando), 800-280-2245**

**Special Accommodations: (602) 443-0708**, by March 12, 2015

Earn CEUs for the one-day event.

*This is a fragrance and tobacco free event.*



## ABIL to Host Medicare Enrollment Event

*Submitted by Amina Donna Kruck, VP/ Advocacy Programs, Arizona Bridge to Independent Living – ABIL*

ABIL will host a Medicare Enrollment Event together with the **Area Agency on Aging, Region One, Inc.'s** Benefits Assistance Program on **Thursday November 6<sup>th</sup>, from 9:00a.m. to 1:00p.m.** The event will take place at:

Arizona Bridge to Independent Living (ABIL)  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Center  
5025 E. Washington St., Suite 200  
Phoenix, AZ 85034  
602-443-0722

This enrollment event will be open to all Medicare beneficiaries who want to change their Medicare Part D enrollment or their Medicare Advantage Plan enrollment during Medicare's annual Open Enrollment Period.

**The Medicare Open Enrollment Period begins on October 15<sup>th</sup> and ends on December 7<sup>th</sup>.** The ABIL

event is timed in the middle of this important enrollment period to serve Medicare beneficiaries with plan evaluations and selections. Attendees need not RSVP for the event, but are requested to bring with them the following items:

- (1) Their red, white, and blue Medicare card
- (2) A list of their prescription drugs including dosages
- (3) Their current Part D or Advantage Plan card

**Area Agency on Aging, Region One, Inc.** Benefits Assistance Program Director Glen Spencer, ABIL's Benefits Counselor John Chatfield, and other Benefits Assistance personnel will be on hand to provide one-one assistance to ABIL clients and members of the public.

## Newsletter Submissions

Dear AZ Link Partners,

This is your newsletter – let us know what you would like to see included.

We are especially interested in hearing about regional partners and the work they do. Please send any news or updates, special projects, activities, calendar pages, any photos or brief notices that you may want to include in the newsletter to: [TPankey@azdes.gov](mailto:TPankey@azdes.gov).

Next newsletter: December 2014

Deadline for submissions: **December 5th**

I look forward to hearing from you all!

**MEDICARE OPEN  
ENROLLMENT  
OCTOBER 15<sup>th</sup> –  
DECEMBER 7<sup>th</sup>  
For questions about**

**Medicare and free  
benefits counseling call**

**1-800-432-4040**

