

COMMUNITY NOW!

... promoting inclusive communities for all people marginalized because of a disability



MISSION

Community Now! is a statewide nonprofit organization passionately committed to promoting inclusive communities for all Texans often marginalized because of a disability.

WE BELIEVE...

Our loved ones with disabilities should have the option to live in their communities and not languish on long waiting lists for services or forced to live in a dangerous, dehumanizing segregated institution.

The services for our citizens with disabilities must be nothing short of exceptional and that those responsible for providing these services must be held accountable.

Public policy and tax dollars must be aligned to support Texans with disabilities who want to live in smaller, more cost efficient settings in their communities and no longer support the waste and abuse of a failed institutional system.

Make Your Voice Heard

You can make a difference!

Community-based services at the state level were cut this past legislative session. Some programs were eliminated and rate of pay and service limits reduced. We can not let this happen again!

It has been said that the first step toward change is awareness. If this is true, we must all speak up. While the Texas legislative session has ended, we can not rest. There is much work to be done in the interim!

If you or someone you know has been affected by cuts or you are waiting on an interest list for services, take action.

Many legislators will not know about the issues faced by you or your family. Now is a good time to call and/or visit your legislator. Take advantage of their time in the District. Share your story. Make your voice heard!

"If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor."

- Desmond Tutu

Medicaid at the federal level has been, and continues to be, at risk for arbitrary and draconian cuts. On September 21st, individuals who have a disability, family members, and others gathered in D.C. and around the country to have their voices heard. Medicaid matters to them!

If Medicaid matters to you or someone you know, please continue making calls and office visits to Congress. So far, EVERY plan to address entitlements has included cuts to Medicaid. NONE has included reform measures proposed by the disability rights community.

Representative Jeb Hensarling, a member of the Congressional Super Committee (Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction) is from Texas. Let's send him a Texas size message on the importance of Medicaid in the lives of Texans who experience life with a disability.

For talking points see page 6.

Independence from waiting. Freedom from institutions.

Medicaid Reform, A Community *Now!* Priority



**Community Now! in action at the
D.C. Rally, Austin Press Conference & National Call in Day!**



To view a video of the My Medicaid Matters Rally visit:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VuapphK1zHs&feature=youtu.be>

Community Awareness

1st Annual 'Breaking the Cycle Jam'

Join Community Now! for a concert in the park with sweet sounds and delicious pints from local Austin bands and breweries & a silent auction.

Saturday – November 12, 2011 from 5:00 PM – 9:00 PM
Fiesta Gardens · Jessie E. Segovia Street · Austin, Texas

Ticket price: \$10 in advance \$15 at the door. To purchase tickets in advance contact Joe Tate by phone: 1-830-305-0613 or through Email tate392@gmail.com.

Unable to join us but want to make sure our work continues, please consider making a donation.

Donations can be made online at: www.communitynowfreedom.org.

Community Now! is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All donations are tax deductible.

Sponsorship packages are available.

For more information, contact Joe Tate: (830) 305-0613 or tate392@gmail.com or visit us at: www.communitynowfreedom.org.

2011 Red Wasp Film Festival

The 9th annual Red Wasp Film Festival will be Friday, October 21, and Saturday, October 22, 2011 at Stage Center Theater (201-B W. 26th St.) in downtown Bryan, TX. Doors open at 7 pm both evenings and the show start at 7:30.

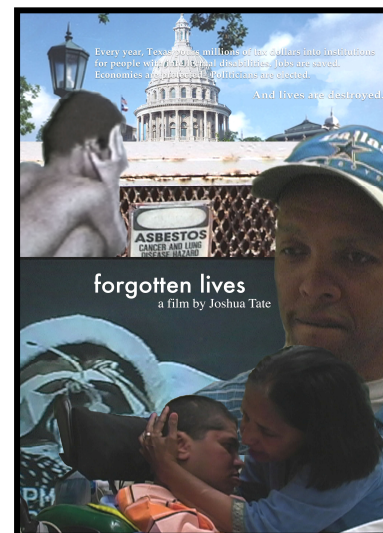
Community Now! is the proud sponsor of the Social Justice Award this year. As a recipient of the 2009 Social Justice and Audience Favorite Awards, for the documentary film, "Forgotten Lives", we understand the opportunities film provides in educating others about a specific issue. Particularly an issue that is often unknown or misunderstood by the community at large.

Forgotten Lives

Forgotten Lives is a 44 minute award winning film that chronicles the horror and abuse perpetrated against Texas' most vulnerable citizens inside state institutions and offers hope for a future of freedom and dignity in the community.

For more information about the film or to schedule a screening in your community, contact Joe Tate by phone at: 1-830-305-0613 or through Email at: tate392@gmail.com.

You can purchase a copy of the film for a \$25.00 donation. For more information or to place an order: communitynowfreedom@gmail.com



WILLOWBROOK

Willowbrook is a short film based on the true events surrounding the Willowbrook State School in Staten Island, New York. The film addresses the awful conditions in which individuals who have developmental disabilities were warehoused and the controversial research experiments that took place under Dr. Saul Krugman in the 1960s.

A fundamental goal of Community Now! is to produce and support films that expose the abuse and neglect, both past and present, of individuals who have an Intellectual Disability (ID) living in an institution.

Community Now! is proud to support this film and Mr. Cohen with his diligent research for the film. To quote Jeff Garrison-Tate, Community Now! founder, "We are excited about the film and the potential of reaching people who may not know of these horrific events."

It should also serve as a reminder that individuals who have an ID in Texas' institutions, called State Supported Living Centers, in spite of monitoring by the Department of Justice, are still warehoused in abysmal conditions exposed to on-going abuse, neglect, exploitation, and sub-standard care.

An Interview with Ross Cohen, Director "Willowbrook" short film

1. Tell us a bit about who you are Mr. Cohen.

I'm from Liverpool, England and am a grad student getting my MFA in Film Production at the University of Southern California's School of Cinematic Arts.

2. What was it that compelled you to make this film?

Not only was I shocked by what I learned researching the story of Willowbrook State School but in speaking to people they knew about the awful conditions but had no idea about the unethical medical experiments being conducted on the children in the 1960s.

3. Was there a particularly stunning moment for you when you were directing the film?

Working with over 20 children and teenagers with developmental disabilities as actors in the scene that takes place in the general ward was the most challenging moment of my career as a director but the most rewarding.

4. What do you want the audience to walk out with after they have seen Willowbrook?

I want them to see the awful conditions that children with developmental disabilities were warehoused in at Willowbrook as well as understand the true horror of deliberately infecting them with a disease. I hope the film will inspire people to always support the rights of people to always have access to the best possible treatment and support and not be coerced into being harmed.

5. How can advocates and the public support this important film?

We are trying to raise the final amount of money to complete the film, so they can see a 2 minute clip from the film and donate in our kickstarter campaign at: <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/936311743/willowbrook>.

They can also visit our facebook page here: <http://www.facebook.com/willowbrookmovie>. And our twitter page here: <http://twitter.com/#!/willowbrookfilm>.

6. Is there something you would like to add?

Please get in touch with me if you have any questions or comments about the movie: rosscohen23@gmail.com

Thanks to COMMUNITY NOW for their unwavering support for over a year now!

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

The month of October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month, and there's no better time to examine the latest research and practices leading to positive employment outcomes for individuals who have a disability. Below are a few resources worth your time!

Dallas Mayor's Committee for the Employment of People with Disabilities: *2011 Disability Hiring EXPO!*

Monday - October 17, 2011 at City Place | 2711 N. Haskell Avenue | Dallas 75204

For more information or to register for this event, please visit: <http://dmc-employ.org/events.html>.

Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS):

- *Benefits and Work Incentives Planning Supports and Services: Yes, You Can! Workshops*
Trainings are available September through November. For more information, including dates, times and locations, visit: <http://www.dads.state.tx.us/providers/communications/alerts/tworkincentivesfall2011.pdf> or contact Sara Kendall at: sara.kendall@dars.state.tx.us.
- *Division for Rehabilitative Services Rehabilitation Policy Manual*
This manual, revised September 2011 can be viewed at: <http://www.dars.state.tx.us/drs/rpm.pdf>

National Center on Secondary Education and Transition – (NCSET) *Handbook for Implementing a Comprehensive Work-Based Learning Program According to the Fair Labor Standards Act*

This handbook provides guidance to schools operating WBL programs and encourages the adoption of WBL programs by schools not presently using this approach. To view the handbook online visit:

http://www.ncset.org/publications/essentialtools/flsa/NCSET_EssentialTools_FLSA.pdf

Self-Advocate Leaders of Today (SALT): *Customized Employment! Workshop*

Friday – October 7, 2011 | 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM | Northwood Church | 1870 Rufe Snow Drive | Keller, Texas 76248
Individuals living life with a disability label want to work and are able to be competitively employed. Join us and learn how using a discovery process and available services/supports can make working a reality. To register (required) call: (817) 834-7700 or send an Email to: info@arcnetc.org.

TASH Webinar Series: *Discovery – The Foundation of Customized Planning*

This webinar series includes five individual webinar sessions on discovery, and will equip educators, adult service personnel and family members with the critical information necessary to facilitate the discovery process. The sessions offer a comprehensive overview to discovery, the relationship to employment and transition from school to adult work, relevance to curricular outcomes and the developmental of visual and written profile documents that capture the information learned during the discovery process. For more information: <http://tash.org/webinar/>.

U.S. Department of Labor: *Customized Employment Videos*

These Customized Employment (CE) videos, each specifically focused on Employers, Youth, or a General audience, highlight the benefits of CE, an employment strategy which matches the skills and preferences of the individual with the specific business needs of the employer. This process results in expanded employment opportunities for those who utilize and engage in this innovative, evidenced-based approach to employment. The General audience video has been created in both English and Spanish. To view the videos, visit the DOL at:

<http://www.dol.gov/dol/media/webcast/20110610-odep-ce/>

Work spares us from three evils: boredom, vice and need. – Voltaire



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“Disability is a natural part of the human experience that does not diminish the right of individuals with developmental disabilities to enjoy the opportunity to live independently, enjoy self-determination, make choices, contribute to society, and experience full integration and inclusion in the economic, political, social, cultural, and educational mainstream of American society.” - *Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act*

Continued from Page – 1

Talking Points

- **Expand the use of community-based services.** Studies have demonstrated that by reducing the over-reliance on institutions and nursing facilities and shifting toward more cost-effective community-based services, states can contain Medicaid spending. Despite the growing body of evidence showing that community-based services are more cost effective, the federal government still allows states to continue their wasteful, institutionally-biased practices. End the institutional bias!
- **Demedicalize services.** By reducing the reliance on costly medical personnel to provide assistance by allowing attendants to perform these tasks, states could use the same amount of Medicaid funding to support more seniors and people with disabilities living in their own homes. Changes in state Nurse Practices Acts could save millions of Medicaid dollars. Many of the long term services that are widely perceived as “medical” become a basic part of daily life to a person with disabilities. States continue to require that medical personnel provide such services, unnecessarily increasing Medicaid’s costs.
- **Expand consumer directed service options.** By empowering people to manage their own services and reducing the need for administrative overhead, states can also reduce Medicaid expenditures. Many seniors and people with disabilities can manage their services and supervise the people providing the direct care, reducing the need for agencies to provide supervisory and administrative supports like training and scheduling.
- **Reorganize Medicaid services to eliminate wasteful bureaucracy.** The current system wastefully organizes services based on diagnosis and age even though people may have the same functional needs. By organizing services based on functional needs states can eliminate redundant and needlessly expensive bureaucracies and reduce Medicaid expenditures. A system based on functional needs also eliminates gaps in services and makes services easier to access, reducing the need for professional assistance in navigating the system we currently have in place.

- Adapt MMM talking points