

Livin'

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We're Having a **YOUTHQUAKE!**

By: Amy C. Beck

Many of us on the East Coast felt an earthquake in late August. Me? I felt a mild vibration while conducting a community outreach program with staff and volunteers. It did not change my life. But, another type of *quake* is changing my life and the lives of countless others... I'm talking about a **YOUTHQUAKE!**

The word popped up on our own Greg Bott's "Word-A-Day Calendar" on his birthday, March 15th, and it just clicked with all of us. So, what is this **YOUTHQUAKE** I keep talking about? Well, a youthquake is "*a shift in cultural norms influenced by the values, talents and mores of young people.*" **POW!** That's it! All of the systems change work we have been experiencing through our "School to Life: S2L" program is contributing to a youthquake here in the Lehigh Valley and beyond. I keep an enlargement of the calendar page on my office wall. I look at it every day, and every day it has an impact on me.

The **YOUTHQUAKE** I'm talking about truly starts with the young adults in our S2L program. They are not only attending their high school IEP meetings, but are also speaking up at them and even leading their meetings. They are learning what life will be like after they leave the school system and they are preparing to lead full adult lives. They are building lifelong friendships, volunteering, working, becoming socially aware, getting active, and building confidence. The S2Lers have helped us realize that we need to do more. They helped us create the "Have you thought about...LIFE?" in-school, transition workshop which we have presented to students with disabilities in classrooms all over the Lehigh Valley. The S2Lers went to the Penn State CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Community on Transition Conference this summer and were the largest collective youth delegation there, perhaps in the history of the event!

Their parents are pioneers too... They've strayed from the norm, broken down barriers, and have said, "My son or daughter can achieve more and become his or her own advocate." They are working, along with their sons, daughters, and Dr. Christie Gilson of Moravian College, in participant driven research and have identified areas for change in transition services. They are leaders, fueled by the **YOUTHQUAKE**.

Through the S2L program, the enthusiasm of everyone involved, and the **YOUTHQUAKE** we have experienced, we realized the potential to empower young adults to fulfill their hopes and dreams in many other areas. We have started the development of the S2L: House, with support from the Bethlehem Rotary Club and Harry C. Trexler Trust. With help from the Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, we have started to help young adults with disabilities find competitive employment through the S2L Career Path program, where several young adults are now employed and acting as mentors for their peers. These are just several of the exciting ventures we have realized in the aftershock of this **YOUTHQUAKE**.

The impact stretches far beyond our doors. The Lehigh Valley Partnership for a Disability Friendly Community has made improvement of transition services in the Lehigh Valley a priority. The Pennsylvania Youth Leadership Network feels the Lehigh Valley can create enough buzz to become the transition hub for the eastern half of Pennsylvania. And, thanks to the generosity of the Dorothy Rider-Pool Foundation and the Harry C. Trexler Trust, we are inviting you to experience the **YOUTHQUAKE** with us!

On November 18th & 19th at the Holiday Inn & Conference Center, Fogelsville, the Lehigh Valley will play host to the first ever "Have you thought about... LIFE?" Transition Conference. This two-day affair will include informative sessions, guest speakers, a resource fair, social activities, and more for young adults with disabilities, parents, educators and professionals.

The influx of positive energy surrounding the S2L program and the breaking down of barriers has encouraged young adults to tap into their potential and realize their dreams. In addition, parents are acting as advocates and professionals are opening themselves up to new, exciting ideas.

The phone never stops ringing in S2L! We're having a **YOUTHQUAKE**, come and join us!



Seth Hoderewski, LVCIL Director of S2L Transition Services, was recently awarded the Allen D. Deibler Advocacy Award at The Arc of Lehigh & Northampton Counties' 2011 Membership Dinner. Congrats Seth!



LEHIGH VALLEY Center FOR Independent Living

The Lehigh Valley Center for Independent Living (LVCIL) is dedicated to empowering individuals with disabilities and promoting the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of life.

LVCIL provides services for its consumers such as information and referral, peer support, independent living skills, and individual and systems advocacy.

The organization also provides housing search and support, services for landlords, a 24-hour sign language interpreter referral service, youth transition services, and community outreach through specialized programs and groups.

Intern Spotlights!

Recently, LVCIL has become a hotbed for interns! Here's a little bit about some of the interns who have joined us over the summer and will be with us throughout the Fall semester.

Elana Lowell

My name is Elana Lowell and I am a deaf senior at Moravian Academy Upper School. This past summer, I interned at LVCIL and the experience has been enriching, to say the least. From going food shopping at Giant to raising awareness of disabilities to young children by participating in game show parodies, I truly had no idea what I was in for when I started working at LVCIL. It was a great and fun adventure.

Having a disability myself made helping out at LVCIL easier. It was easier to relate to the teenagers in the S2L program and it was easier in general to understand the message of this organization: people with disabilities have the power to live their own, independent lives. When I go to college next fall, I plan on majoring in sociology and this LVCIL experience has only made me more dedicated to this broad study of people. The staff at LVCIL was wonderful to work with, and they really made me feel welcome. In the future, I look forward to attending events at LVCIL!

Rachel Canfield

My name is Rachel Canfield and I am a Senior at Kutztown University. This May, I will graduate with a degree in Social Work and a minor in Psychology. I grew up in Northern New Jersey but have been living in the Lehigh Valley for the last five years or so.

I heard about LVCIL through a friend of mine who works for the agency. When I went to the website and learned more about LVCIL, I knew that it was a great place for me! I am very interested in the work that is being done here and the advances that LVCIL has made, especially with the S2L program.

Besides being a full-time student, I work part time and also am a founder and director of a fundraising committee for a private park. While I may not have any disabilities myself, I have a family member who has learning disabilities and have always been interested in making sure she has the best opportunities available to her as well as others who have learning or other disabilities.

The work that is done here at the CIL is incredibly

inspiring to me and I know that this will be a fantastic opportunity to get involved in a field that I feel passionately about! I am extremely excited to be a part of the LVCIL team and to meet some amazing people during my time here!

Sharon Blissett

My name is Sharon Blissett and I currently attend Lehigh Carbon Community College (LCCC). My major is Human Services and I am one of the interns here at LVCIL. I chose LVCIL because it allows me to work with individuals with special needs.

My passion in life is to help people get the services they need, whether young or old, but I have a special interest for those who have a disability. I am currently working with the elderly, giving them the help they need so they can live in their own home, independently and with dignity. I've been working as a caregiver for the past seven years and I hope to walk away with a wealth of information and experience from this internship.

Even though I've only been here for a short time, everyone at LVCIL is helpful and friendly. It is such a comfortable work environment! I look forward to the rest of my internship here.

Migdalia Morales

My name is Migdalia Morales, and I am majoring in Human Services at Lehigh Carbon Community College (LCCC). I am a sophomore determined to achieve my Associates' Degree, and I feel privileged to be interning at LVCIL. This opportunity will help me train and develop my skills by providing direct services and resources to people with disabilities. I am excited to reach my goals with a diverse population.

I'm originally from Brooklyn, NY with a history of working in the financial industry. I've always liked working with and helping others, and during this career change into the social services I hope to develop and build my skills. Recently, I received a certificate for advocacy and determination.

My goal is to graduate from college and to also obtain a license in counseling adolescents of abuse. I have three children and enjoy the beach and nature walks. LVCIL is going to be my family throughout the fall semester, and I'm looking forward in spending the holidays with the agency.

Thanks interns for all your hard work!

Upcoming LVCIL Events!

October 8th—Location TBA. From 10:30-12:00 noon. **FAN Group.** Activity TBD. For more information on FAN Group, call Greg Bott at 610-770-9781 ext. 120 or email gregbott@lvcil.org.

October 12th—Location TBA. From 6:00 pm-8:00 pm. S2L is going bowling! For more info, please call Seth Hoderewski at 610-770-9781 ext. 119 or email sethhoderewski@lvcil.org.

October 19th—From 1:30 pm-4:00 pm @ LVCIL. Free flu shot clinic. Injectable and intranasal vaccines will be offered. For info, please call Annette Drobil at 610-770-9781 ext. 127 or email annettedrobil@lvcil.org.

October 21st—From 6:00 pm-8:00 pm @ Wegmans, 3900 Tilghman Street, Allentown. Sign Language Club. For more info, please email Kadie Trauger at kadietrauger@lvcil.org.

October 22nd—From 9:00 am-Noon @ LVCIL. S2L group monthly meeting. Topic TBD. For more info, please call Seth Hoderewski at 610-770-9781 ext. 119 or email sethhoderewski@lvcil.org.

October 29th—From 9:00 am-Noon @ LVCIL. S2L Parent Group meeting. Topic TBD. For more info, please call Seth Hoderewski at 610-770-9781 ext. 119 or email sethhoderewski@lvcil.org.

October 29th—From 5:00 pm-9:00 pm @ LVCIL. S2L-O-Ween! S2Lers dress up and bring a friend.

November 8th—Time TBD @ LVCIL. Volunteer appreciation lunch.

November 12th—From 6:00 pm-9:00 pm @ LVCIL. S2L movie night! For more info, please call Seth Hoderewski at 610-770-9781 ext. 119 or email sethhoderewski@lvcil.org.

November 12th—Time TBD @ Carmike 16, 1700 Catasauqua Rd., Allentown. **FAN Group.** Tonight we're going to see a movie at the Carmike! For more information on FAN Group, call Greg Bott at 610-770-9781 ext. 120 or email gregbott@lvcil.org.

November 18th & 19th—First Annual Lehigh Valley Transition Conference! For more info, visit www.lvcil.org/lvtransitionconference

For more LVCIL events, please visit www.lvcil.org!

S2L: Career Path Update

The S2L: Career Path program continues to move forward at a fast pace. Since May, four participants have obtained employment in competitive settings. Two participants have found employment at Holy Family Manor as Dietary Aides, one at HMSHost as a Utility Person, and one at Weis Markets as a Stocker. Each of these young adults has said that they are very excited and happy with the opportunities they have found. While the Vocational Coaches work hard to support each of these young adults on the job, they continue to help all the other participants move closer to their employment goals.

The last few months have also brought many new participants to the program. Each young adult receives training through group activities, seminars and work experiences that help them develop the skills needed to successfully obtain and retain employment. The progress is amazing for those who actively participate, and the motivation of each young adult adds to a very positive environment.

During the summer, participants took part in various work experiences. They helped set up and direct traffic at The Ben Event, a two-day festival in Macungie that celebrates young adults with disabilities. In addition, the young adults cleaned and maintained the event areas at Musikfest, performed clerical duties at HomeWatch Caregivers, cleaned classrooms at Bethlehem Catholic High School, and packed food boxes for the elderly at the Second Harvest Food Bank.

The future looks extremely bright for those who attend the S2L: Career Path program. As the young adults move towards successful employment, they are also moving towards their independent living goals. It is a truly wonderful thing to take part in.

f disabilities to choose independence.”

A Rockin' Thanks!

LVCIL would like to send out a huge thanks to all of the donors and sponsors who helped make this year's "We Built This CIL on Rock & Roll!" 2011 Independent Living Celebration a smash hit!

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- Thanks for making this year's ILC
A ROCKIN' GOOD TIME!***

S2L: the 411

By: Seth Hoderewski

Where has the summer gone? The third year of S2L's Real World Lehigh Valley summer program has come and gone, but what an eventful summer it was! Our S2Lers showed up every day ready to go and ready to learn. They took part in group activities like "S2L Top Chef," where 4 groups planned, shopped for, and prepared a meal for judges. Each group did well but the "Killer Kanines" group won bragging rights this year! Other group activities included "S2L Amazing Race," an S2L version of a group scavenger hunt. Groups also worked on things like filling out applications, job interviewing, daily living, computer, and self help skills. Different groups also worked on an S2L song, a Mosaic of the S2L symbol, an S2L cookbook, and an S2L Documentary. We were busy!

The group also learned a lot from informative seminars. We invited experts into the CIL to speak to the group about things like: relationships, yoga, first aid, fire safety, and advocacy. The speakers did a really nice job! They kept things hopping and really got the information across to the S2Lers. The group definitely enjoys meeting new people and learning about new things!

Our S2Lers also enjoyed getting out into the community. They enjoyed trips to the Shakespeare festival, Musikfest, bowling, the movies, and an IronPigs game, to name a few. Each group also participated in volunteer work. The groups helped out at Coca-Cola Park, where they shagged fly balls during a home run derby to benefit breast cancer research, the Shakespeare festival, the Parkland Library, and Meals on Wheels. Our S2Lers truly love getting out and giving back!

Our biggest and best outing was our trip to the Penn State transition conference. Eighteen young adults, ten parents, and eight staff made the trek out to State College for the conference. It was an incredible learning and social experience for everyone who went. We had tons of fun and got to spend a lot of quality time together. Highlights included meeting many new people, sitting in on the many different seminars, swimming in the pool, the Creamery, and the dance. Boy, did those S2Lers dance the night away! Folks are already planning a trip for next year!

The Real World Lehigh Valley ended with a huge

picnic—over 80 people attended! There was good food, team building games, group presentations, awards, and even a dunk tank. People stood in line to have a chance to dunk the S2L staff. It was a great way to end the summer program and a way to blow off some steam from all of the great work we did over the six weeks.

What a great time the group had this summer! We learned a lot and had a lot of fun. Thanks to all of the staff, volunteers, parents, S2Lers, and everyone that made this summer yet another great success! Now, we look toward the next few months where we will be having more seminars, participating in new volunteer opportunities, hosting our second Flap Jack Fundraiser, and taking part in some social events like our Halloween party, "S2L-o-Ween." We will miss the summer, but we're looking forward to continuing many great things in the fall!

New Staff Member!

LVCIL is excited to welcome a new staff member to the team... Julie Zelena!

Julie was a staff member for S2L during the Real World Lehigh Valley and has recently joined the CIL as a Community Support Coordinator. "It's a pleasure to be back at the CIL after the heartbreaking end of the Real World Lehigh Valley," Julie said. "I look forward to this position helping me fulfill my desire to make a positive difference in people's lives." Julie grew up in the landlord business, and will combine her experience and interest in helping consumers and landlords through the Landlords for All program.

She graduated in 2008 from Wilkes University with degrees in Elementary Education and Psychology. Before joining the CIL, Julie worked in local school districts as a Therapeutic Staff Support Worker for children with Autism, a 1st Grade long-term substitute, High School inclusion aide, and most recently, in a 6th Grade learning support classroom. In her spare time she enjoys spending time with friends and family, baking, anything outdoors, traveling, and the Philadelphia Eagles & Phillies.

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Merrily We Roll Along

By: Debbie Rozear

On Sunday, July 17th, Muhlenberg College was the first in the area to present a fully accessible play. People of the blind and deaf community enjoyed seeing Godspell in alternate formats, and the Tri-County Accessible Arts Coalition has started to plan more ways to make the Lehigh Valley more user friendly for people who are deaf or blind.

On the day of the event, there were many people who were blind or had visual disabilities, several folks who were deaf, and an undisclosed number of people who utilized the closed captioning feature. People were required to call ahead of time to make reservations and state the need for accessible features, such as a sign language interpreter, headphones, audio description, or closed captioning. Attendees requiring special accommodations were allowed to bring one companion, and each ticket purchased was at a huge reduction (regular price per ticket was \$38, but those attending the special production paid \$10 per person!). All-in-all, the event was well attended.

Several hours before the play, individuals who needed the accessible features were invited on stage for a tour and were allowed to check out the props and costumes. Some of us sat in the front row and, since there were not many props for the performance, the stage manager explained the set-up and passed around props and some of the more elaborate costumes for us to check out. Actors and actresses also went around and explained their role in the performance and their costumes for us.

The play was wonderful! Afterward, we met in the lobby for punch and cookies, met the performers once again, and filled out evaluations. Overall, the performance and timing of events went very well and not much will have to change for the next play which will be on Sunday, November 6th, at Muhlenberg College once again! The title of the play is "Merrily We Roll Along" and the cost this time is \$8.00 per person. We invite anyone who is interested to call Jessica Bien at the box office at 484-664-3087. Reservations should be made in advance and the tickets have to be paid for two weeks in advance of the play. If there are any questions, feel free to call either the Lehigh Valley Council of the Blind, Rita Lang at the Center for Vision Loss (610-433-6018 ext. 231), or Debbie Rozear at Lehigh Valley Center for Independent Living (610-770-9781 ext. 124). We look forward to making this second production a bigger and better success. Spread the word and come join us!

If you are affiliated with a venue in Lehigh, Northampton, or Monroe Counties, or you would like more information on hosting an accessible event, you may call any of the numbers above. If you are an individual with a visual disability and you'd like to see more accessible presentations in your area, start asking for accessibility when you attend community events. The accommodations available through the Tri-County Accessible Arts Coalition can be used for plays, movies, museums, art galleries, college performances, circuses, public events, etc. There are many places that could be made more user friendly. The more you ask and spread the word, the sooner the community will become disability friendly!



**Lehigh Valley Center for
Independent Living
435 Allentown Drive
Allentown, PA 18109**

"Providing services to persons with all types of disabilities" A member of the PA Council on Independent Living (PCIL), a consumer controlled state association of Centers for Independent Living (CILs)

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