



Independent Living  
of Niagara County (ILNC)

# ACCESS news

Vol. 37, No. 1 — Winter 2019

**NY's Human Rights  
Commission**  
page 2

**Addict 2 Addict  
Niagara County**  
page 3

**Health Homes**  
page 4

**Home and Community  
Based Services**  
page 5

**Niagara County  
CDPAS Program**  
page 6

Western New York  
Independent Living, Inc.  
3108 Main St.  
Buffalo, NY 14214  
(716) 836-0822 (Voice/TDD)  
(716) 835-3967 (Fax)

## **Want to Have the Power?**

*Donald Le Ber, Chair of the Nomination  
and Board Development Committee*

Did you know that Western New York Independent Living is a consumer controlled, consumer directed, consumer run community-based organization? Did you know that our Board of Directors, By-Laws, must be a majority of people with disabilities? Did you know that this is recruitment time for WNYIL, where we are actively seeking people with disabilities who want to help us navigate the future of services, programs, and community involvement for people with disabilities in Western New York?

If you are interested in considering to be a member of the largest disability run organization in WNY, please send a letter of interest, with your resume and/or a letter telling us about yourself, what you can offer, and why you would like to be on the Board to:

Donald Le Ber, Chair of the Nomination and Board  
Development Committee  
WNY Independent Living, Inc.  
3108 Main St.  
Buffalo, NY 14214

We are looking for people with disabilities (any kind) age 18 or older from any of the upper 6 Counties of WNY (Erie, Niagara, Orleans, Genesee, Wyoming, and Cattaraugus). We are looking for people of any race, religion, sex, gender, religion and anything else you can think of. WNYIL embraces diversity in its programing, hiring, and most  
*continued on page 2*

important on our Board. We can only grow if the whole community helps this organization. We are looking for people who:

Have received services from any one of our Family of Agencies:

- Independent Living Center of Erie County
- Independent Living of the Genesee Region
- Independent Living of Niagara County
- Mental Health Peer Connection
- OAHIO
- Niagara Frontier Radio Reading Service

We are looking for teachers, lawyers, laborers, students, business owners, accountants, social workers, family members, and so on.

So now you know who we are, what we are, now it's your turn to become part of our Family. Please feel free to call Chief Executive Officer, Doug Usiak, at 716-836-0822 ext. 117 for more information.

The Board meets monthly at 6:00 p.m. and if you become a member will be expected to serve on at least 2 committees ranging from Finance to Public Policy. We have something for everyone.

Take this opportunity to express your interest and become a part of an exciting organization that promotes and provides Education to Empower people with disabilities to be Equal partners in our communities. Send in your letters and resumes to the above listed address by March 15, 2019.

## **New York's Human Rights Commission**

*Mark Shaw, Independent Living Specialist*

This year has gotten off to a great start. I have been added to the board of The City of Niagara Falls, New York's Human Rights Commission. I started attending these meetings as part of a training for systems advocacy and found that this group does many of the same things that I do as an Independent Living Specialist and decided that I liked it. I attended the next meeting and from my interest, I was asked to be on the board. I submitted a cover letter and resume and was approved in January 2019. Now I have an opportunity to assist a larger audience with their housing and other advocacy related issues. I have several individuals that I am currently working with that want to go to Albany this year with the agency to voice their opinions of our services. I have some that are interested in attending the Olmstead Picnic in June, also. 2019 is shaping up to be a good year.

## **Upcoming New American Sign Language Classes**

*Jeanette Grimaldi, Deaf/Hard of Hearing Service Coordinator*

Did you ever want to learn a new language? What about American Sign Language (ASL)? American Sign Language is a beautiful language and it's used in deaf and hearing communities. In ASL you will learn how to communicate with Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals and it's not only for use with the Deaf Community, it is used for non-verbal children and adults, as well. Hearing babies also can be taught since they are not able to communicate until age 2. If you are interested in learning American Sign Language Classes, Independent Living of Niagara County will be offering the class in their Lockport office. For more information please contact Jeanette Grimaldi at 716-402-5508 or e-mail [jgrimaldi@wnyil.org](mailto:jgrimaldi@wnyil.org)

**What:** Learn American Sign Language Class

**Where:** Christ Community Church, 140 Genesee St., Lockport, NY 14094

**When:** April 4th - May 23rd, every Thursday from 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

**Cost:** \$45 for both class fee and book

## **Addict 2 Addict Niagara County**

*Desiree Wlodarek, Addict 2 Addict Peer Support Specialist of Niagara County*

The Addict 2 Addict Niagara County program is continuing to grow. Most recent growth has been due to our advertising billboards letting persons with substance use disorders and their families know that there is help available when they are ready for change. The A2A Niagara County team is strengthening relationships with traditional services providers as well as learning about alternatives like SMART Recovery, Refuge Recovery, and various religious/spiritual services. A2A NC is here to support persons with substance disorders identify personal goals to determine their path to a sustainable recovery; this includes harm reduction and medical assisted treatment. If you would like more information, please call 398-4333.

## **Independent Living Specialist and Certified Benefits Advisor**

*Robert Leiter, Independent Living Specialist*

My name is Robert Leiter I work as an Independent Living Specialist and Certified Benefits Advisor for Independent Living of Niagara County. I was elected to my first of three-year terms on the New York State SRC Rehabilitation Counsel. I am on the Work Force

*continued on page 4*

Development Committee. I will represent the Niagara County area and will share my peer story and represent the region proudly. I hope as someone with shared experiences I can make a difference and learn things from the fine group of people on the Board. My goal is to make a difference and help break barriers for people with disabilities moving forward in their life and work. Empowerment and Advocacy plus Education are so important to me, for what I do. This is true for me personally. I was told not to try new things because I would not be successful, and why take the chance at all. In the back of my head that eventually became something I told myself. Finally, following the dignity of risk philosophy, I decided to go for it. Deep down inside I knew I could be successful. We have a great team here at the Niagara Falls office and I am so pleased to be a part of it.

## **Health Homes Care Coordinator**

*Constance Walker, Health Home Care Coordinator for Niagara County*

Hi, my name is Constance Walker and I am the Health Homes Care Coordinator at Independent Living of Niagara County. We are excited to be offering Niagara Falls Memorial Health Homes services within the Family of Agencies. As the Care Coordinator, my role is to assist consumers with linkage to Health care providers and social services agencies. I coordinate care for the consumers by keeping in consistent contact with medical providers to ensure the consumer is receiving the best care possible while living independently in the community. Our goal is to keep consumers out of institutions.

The Health Homes program was developed through the Affordable Care Act of 2010. Health Homes were established to coordinate care for people with Medicaid who have chronic medical conditions. To qualify for Health Homes services you must have Medicaid, 2 chronic conditions and/or 1 Mental Health Diagnosis or HIV/AIDS.

If you are unsure if you qualify for Health Homes services, please contact me at 716-284-4131 ext. 210.

## **Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Services (CDPAS)**

*Joseph Mitravich, Niagara County Personal Assistant Coordinator*

Hi, I'm Joseph Mitravich; CDPAS Personal Assistant Coordinator for ILNC. I'm responsible all the Personal Care Assistants in Niagara County who assist the Consumers in the Taking Control Department. Affording them the ability to live in the community of their choice as independently as possible within Niagara County.

*continued on page 5*

New this year for our PCA's is the choice to receive their pay on a Rapid Paycard. This has eliminated paper checks for the majority of the PCA's. This provides the PCA's with a more efficient means to receive their pay, along with the many technological advancements the card offers. On-line banking to where they can see and manage their bank account. A GPS locator that shows them where the nearest in network ATM is located. Also, this provides Payroll the ability to more quickly adjust any mistakes that might have been made with the PCA's pay. Money can be added to the account electronically at the touch of a button, and the PCA's do not have to wait for another check to come by mail to resolve the issue. Majority have opted to use the Rapid Paycards and seem to be very happy with the change.

The ILNC's Taking Control Department has seen a steady growth in regard to new consumers and PCA's coming into the department. In a collaborative effort with CDPAS Administrator Dori Parry, and department Administrative Assistant, Julie Bunker, we cohesively work together to effectively serve ILNC's consumer along with their PCA's in the Taking Control program.

## **Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Health and Recovery Plan (HARP)**

*Lauren Ryan, Independent Living Specialist*

Are you in need of additional mental health treatment? Would you like to receive that service in your own home? HCBS stands for Home and Community Based Services, which means services that can take place within your own home. When it comes to mental health there is a plan within Medicaid called HARP, which stands for Health and Recovery Plan. This recovery plan is a mental health portion of Medicaid, which allows for those with chronic mental health issues to receive additional mental health services. For those that qualify for HARP, they must be within a Health Home and over the age of 21. HARP is an interesting program where a person with lived mental health experience, works with someone that needs help within their own mental health. This is a peer program because it's one New York State Certified Peer helping another peer in their mental health journey. It is a unique connection that cannot be found in a professional relationship. In this rapport, the certified peer talks about their own experience and how they manage their own mental health through evidence-based techniques in hopes that it will help benefit the person they are serving.

# Niagara County CDPAS Program

*Dori Parry, Niagara County Taking Control Administrator*

As the Niagara County Taking Control Program continues to grow, we are always happy to welcome new Consumers. The Taking Control Program gives our Consumers the opportunity to stay at home and have who they want care for them.

Anyone who is Medicaid eligible for Personal Assistant Services can become a part of our Taking Control Program. This is a Consumer Directed Personal Assistant Program (CDPAS) that allows our Consumers to be the supervisor of their own personal care services. The Consumer can hire who they are comfortable with coming into their home to help in areas that are important to them. They also maintain their own schedule and supervise the work of their personal care attendant.

The Consumer must be “self-directing”, meaning they must be able to understand the decisions about their medical and daily needs and implement them. If they don’t believe they are self-directing, they can designate someone to be their Directing Party.

We also link our Taking Control program with all our other Niagara County Independent Living Services.

## Open Doors/Money Follows the Person

*Gerilyn Capps-Anderson, Open Doors Transition Coordinator*

Open Doors/Money Follows the Person (MFP) is a federal demonstration project that provides support for home and community-based services. After a person moves out of institutional care back into the community the Open Doors/MFP reimburses the state which increases the available services in home and in the community. This demonstration project has provided me with insights on how funding goes back into the community and will continue to be a resource for home-based services.

While working with MFP program I have learned some people are placed prematurely in these nursing facilities for long term care. In certain instances, individuals are sent to the nursing home for rehabilitation or recovery from some sort of procedure or illness that can provide physical improvements when rehab is performed. Through seen and unforeseen circumstances, sometimes recovery turns into long term care.

As a transition specialist, I assist residents to move back into the community and connect them with care that would meet their level of need. Participants ideally would have health care

*continued on page 7*

needs that can be met through services available in the community. Some resident's health conditions have declined or deteriorated for many reasons while in institutional care. Even family and loved ones have put them out of their minds because it would seem that a facility is the best place for them. My role and goal for those that are still able to live and thrive in the community safely with community-based support services, is to allow them to do so.

## **MAAP: Medicaid Application Assistance Program.**

*Sally Perez, MAAP Facilitated Enroller*

MAAP is a program that is funded through New York State Department of Health to assist individuals who are over 65, disabled or certified blind. The program is under the department of social services, which includes Community Medicaid, Medicaid buy-in program for working people with disabilities, Medicaid spend down, Managed long term care, (MLTC), and Nursing Home for individuals with a chronic care diagnosis.

WNY Independent Living has experienced Facilitated Enrollers to assist with the Medicaid application process. Our agency serves Erie, Niagara, Genesee, Orleans, Wyoming, Allegany, Cattaraugus, Essex, Clinton, Chautauqua, St Lawrence, Jefferson and Lewis Counties. If you need additional information, please contact our office at 716-284-4131 ext. 571.

**M★A★A★P**

## **Medicaid Application Assistance Program**

**Do you or someone you know  
fall into one of the following categories?**

- **65 years or older** • **Certified Blind** • **Certified Disabled** •

**You may be eligible for Medicaid**



**(716) 836-0822 ext. 517**

**MAAP Secure Fax (716) 834-5647**

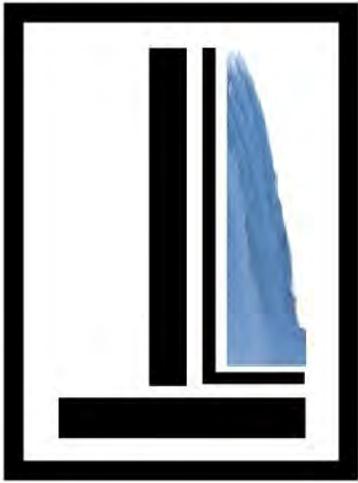


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Peer Support

**HOPE**  
Hold On Pain Ends



Independent Living of Niagara County's

# Policymaker's Breakfast

**with Guest Speaker Seth Piccirillo**

Director of Community Development, City of Niagara Falls

**Friday, April 5, 2019**

8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Antonio's Banquet & Conference Center

7708 Niagara Falls Blvd., Niagara Falls, NY 14304

\$25.00 per person or \$200 table (10)

*with all proceeds benefiting the ILNC Housing Fund*

**RSVP:** Call Marykate Waringa 716-836-0822 ext. 146

Pay online through PayPal at:

<http://www.wnyil.org/Events/ILNCs-Policymakers-Breakfast>

or mail payment to:

Marykate Waringa, 3108 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14214

14th Annual



# Bass Fishing Derby

**Sunday, August 4, 2019**

**- Fishing Derby -**

6:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon

**Old Fort Niagara**

Youngstown, NY at the boat launch.

Breakfast, beverages, BBQ, fishing poles (if requested) and bait will be provided.

**- Awards & Picnic -**

Starts at 1:00 p.m. at the **Fin, Feather, and Fur Conservation Society (3F Club)**

904 Swann Rd., Lewiston, NY.

Awards Ceremony • Theme Basket Auction  
50/50 Raffle Split • Family Barbeque

**\$125:** 5 Hours of fishing on a chartered boat, awards ceremony, and BBQ

**\$75:** Your own boat and equipment, 5 hours of fishing, awards ceremony, and BBQ

**\$25:** BBQ only (1 ticket) - or - **\$100:** BBQ Family Pack (5 tickets)

**\$40:** Fishing from land. Fishing from the pier, light breakfast, BBQ lunch at 3F Club, bait and permit included

**If you are interested in attending or sponsoring the fishing derby,**  
contact Marykate Waringa at (716) 836-0822 ext. 146.

Brought to you by Independent Living of Niagara County



Disability  
Accessible!  
All ages  
welcome!

**NEW  
LOCATION**



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## **Legislative Day in Albany**

Monday, February 11, 2019

## **MHPC 11th Annual Policymaker's Breakfast**

Friday, April 26, 2019

## **6th Annual Night for Independence Gala**

Saturday, May 4, 2019

## **Disability Pride Parade and Festival**

Saturday, July 27, 2019

## **14th Annual Bass Fishing Derby**

Sunday, August 4, 2019

For more information contact

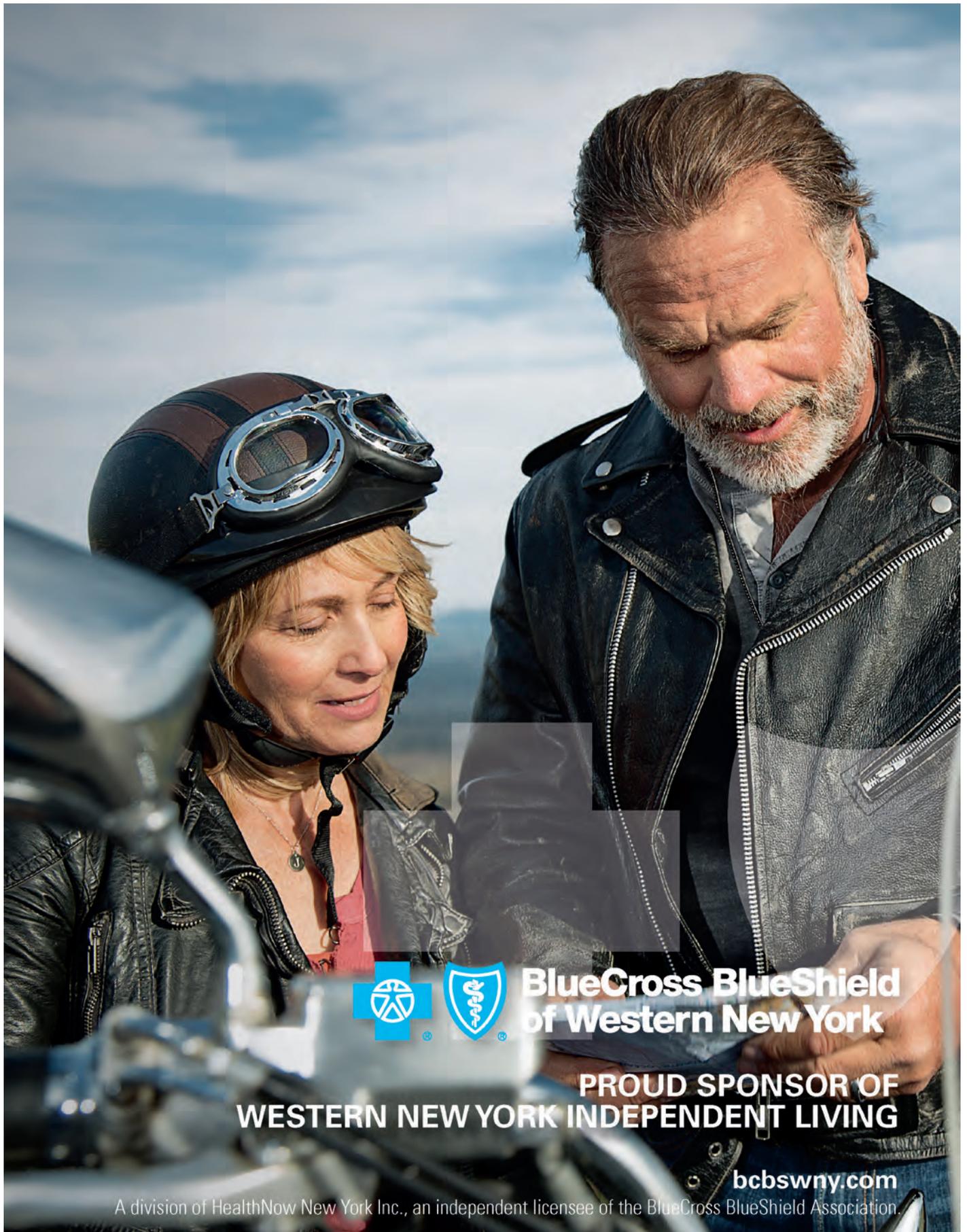
Marykate Waringa at 716-836-0822, ext. 146 or [mwaringa@wnyil.org](mailto:mwaringa@wnyil.org)



When you shop at AmazonSmile, Amazon donates 0.5% of the purchase price to Western New York Independent Living, Inc. Bookmark the link <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/22-2316065> and support us every time you shop.



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*Wegmans*

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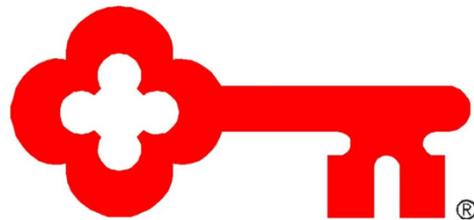
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## HealthWorks

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6th  
Annual

# A Night for Independence

# Gala

*To benefit Independence Express Transportation*

**Saturday, May 4, 2019**

**5:00 p.m. — 9:00 p.m.**

**Events at the Wurlitzer**

**908 Niagara Falls Blvd., North Tonawanda, NY 14120**

**\$75.00 per Ticket • \$125.00 for Two (2) • \$500 Table of Eight (8)**

*(Basket, premium auction, and live auction separate costs)*

🌀 High end live & basket items 🌀

🌀 Music & entertainment 🌀

🌀 Sit-down dinner & a night of fun 🌀

For more information and to RSVP by April 26, 2019

Phone: Marykate Waringa 716-836-0822 ext. 146 or email: [mwaringa@wnyil.org](mailto:mwaringa@wnyil.org)



# Disability

# Pride

**FREE!**

# Parade & Festival

## Saturday, July 27, 2019

## Canalside

### Parade 10:30 a.m.

Parade route will be released shortly

### Festival 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Live performances, food, vendors, giveaways and activities

Dozens of Western New York organizations invite you to join us to celebrate the Americans with Disabilities Act and Disability Pride with food, fun, and games.

We look forward to having you celebrate with us!

For more information contact Marykate Waringa at  
716-836-0822 ext. 146 or [mwaringa@wnyil.org](mailto:mwaringa@wnyil.org)