



In The Community

Volume I, Issue I

September 2007

Special points of interest:

- National Preparedness Month
- Creating an Emergency Plan
- Governor's Interagency Transition Council
- Children's Development Clinic
- Profile: Downtown Sailing Center

September Declared National Preparedness Month

Week of Sept 23 to Focus on Families, Individuals with Disabilities and Special Needs

National Preparedness Month is a nationwide coordinated effort sponsored by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security each September to encourage Americans to take simple steps to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses and schools. The goal of the program is to increase public awareness about the importance of preparing for emergencies including natural disasters and potential terrorist attacks and to encourage individuals to take action to prepare themselves and their families.

"In Maryland, we are working across all state agencies to ensure that our citizens are prepared for any disaster," said Governor Martin O'Malley. "The Maryland Department of Disabilities is taking a leadership role, helping people with disabilities learn more about emergency preparedness and the actions they can implement so injuries and damages can be prevented or minimized."

The Maryland Department of Disabilities has several brochures and

other resources that provide Marylanders with disabilities information to help them prepare for any natural or man-made emergency or natural disaster. These resources give detailed information on creating emergency plans, preparing emergency supply kits, as well as providing disaster readiness tips for owners of pets and service animals. Family emergency communications cards also can be downloaded from the MDOD web site.

"Like everyone else, people with disabilities will be better able to deal with an emergency if we plan ahead," said Catherine Raggio, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Disabilities. "We can take charge by having an emergency plan and some extra supplies in our homes."

For more information about emergency and disaster preparedness for individuals with disabilities and other special needs, contact MDOD Office of Emergency Preparedness Policy at 410-767-3662/1-800-637-4113 or by email at mdod@mdod.state.md.us.

News Briefs

Communications Cards Available on MDOD Web site

With Emergency Preparedness Month underway, we are reminded that maintaining an up-to-date list of emergency contacts is an important component for anyone preparing for possible natural or man-made disasters. The Maryland Department of Disabilities now offers a "Family

Emergency Communication Card" on its web site that includes names, addresses, email and telephone contact information, as well as local meeting place and out-of-town contacts.

The communication cards are wallet-sized and can be downloaded from www.mdod.state.md.us by selecting *Statewide Resources* and then clicking on *Emergency Preparedness*.

"We encourage each family member to carry one of these cards in

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FEMA Releases Reference Guide: Accommodating People with Disabilities in Disasters

The Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has released a new reference guide that outlines existing legal requirements and standards relating to access for people with disabilities. *A Reference Guide for Accommodating Individuals with Disabilities in the Provision of Disaster Mass Care, Housing and Human Services* is the first of a series of disability-related guidelines to be produced by FEMA for disaster preparedness and response planners and service providers at all levels.

The Reference Guide summarizes equal access requirements for people with disabilities within Disaster Mass Care, Housing, and Human Services functions. The Guide explains how applicable Federal laws relate to government entities and non-government, private sector and religious organizations. A full copy of the Guide may be accessed at www.fema.gov/oer/reference.

The development and publication of the Reference Guide is the first step in meeting the requirement of Section 689 of the Post-Katrina

Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006 to develop disability related guidelines for use by those who serve individuals with disabilities in emergency preparedness and disaster relief. It is the beginning of a comprehensive initiative by FEMA to provide guidance for including persons with disabilities or other special needs in all areas of emergency management activities, including evacuation, housing, sheltering, transportation, and communications.

The guide was developed by FEMA's Office of Equal Rights in coordination with the members of the Interagency Coordinating Council on Emergency Preparedness and Individuals with Disabilities (ICC), led by the DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. Contributing agencies include the: Federal Communications Commission, United States Access Board, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Department of Justice.

Excerpt from Federal Emergency Management Agency Press Release - August 21, 2007

News Briefs (cont.)

their wallet, backpack or purse," said Catherine Raggio, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Disabilities. "In times of emergency we may not readily remember our out-of-town contact information and if we are injured, first responders will have this important information."

CDC Releases ASL Versions of Hurricane Preparedness PSAs

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has produced a series of public service announce-

ment videos in American Sign Language (ASL) on emergency preparedness topics, including *Preparing for a Hurricane*, *Staying Safe after the Storm* and *Clean-up*, suggestions for after the storm.

To view the videos, go to <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/psa.asp>

Screening Tips for Travelers

Planning on traveling over the next few months? If so, then check out a new pamphlet by the U.S. Transportation Security Administration.

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Emergency Preparedness Events in Maryland for People with Disabilities and Other Special Needs

Many of our partners in Emergency Management and Citizen Corps Councils in jurisdictions across Maryland are holding preparedness events for people with disabilities and other special needs such as older adults. Attendees will receive starter preparedness kits and other preparedness materials. Volunteer mobilization training will be given to service providers of people with disabilities, elderly persons, families and children. Emergency Preparedness Events in September include:

September 13 Charles County
Contact: Mike Zabko, 301-934-2066
Mikez@somdredcross.org

September 24-28 Baltimore County
Contact: Michele Kehl, 410-887-3909
mkehl@baltimorecountymd.gov

September 18 Queen Anne's County
Contact: Barbara Fay, 410-758-4500
bfay@qac.org

September 25 Queen Anne's County
Contact: Barbara Fay, 410-758-4500
bfay@qac.org

September 19 Montgomery County
Contact: Michael Goldfarb, 240-777-2621
michael.goldfarb@montgomerycountymd.gov

September 26-30 Calvert County
Contact: Mike Zabko, 301-934-2066
Mikez@somdredcross.org

September 20 St. Mary's County
Contact: Mike Zabko, 301-934-2066
Mikez@somdredcross.org

September 28 Worcester County
Contact: Fred Webster, 410-632-1311
fwebster@co.worcester.md.us

Making an emergency plan? Here are a few suggestions:

- Register with your local office of emergency management or fire department so needed help can be provided quickly in an emergency.
- Create a network of neighbors, relatives, friends, and co-workers to aid you in a disaster. Discuss your needs with them, give trusted individuals a key to your home, and make sure they know how to operate necessary equipment. For example, if you don't drive, you may need transportation assistance. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, you may need someone to warn you of a disaster.
- Discuss your needs with your employer in case a disaster strikes while you are at work.
- Wear medical alert tags or bracelets to identify your disability in case of an emergency.
- If you live in an apartment building, ask the management to mark accessible exits clearly and to make arrangements to help you evacuate the building.
- Keep extra wheelchair batteries, oxygen, special foods, medications, etc. on hand. Keep a list of your prescriptions and the type and model numbers of needed medical devices.
- Develop a "buddy" system. Plan with family, friends, neighbors or co-workers. Plan how you will help each other in an emergency.

The most important things to have:

- Bottled water. Keep a supply of three gallons per person for three days.
- Flashlight. Keep one by the bed and others around the house for when electricity is out.
- Keep a one week supply of medicines (if possible) with instructions for usage, frequency, doctor's name, pharmacy name and phone numbers. Rotate the supply regularly. Post this information on your refrigerator under the heading "EMERGENCY INSTRUCTIONS."
- First Aid Kit
- Battery operated radio or TV or text alerting device and extra batteries.
- Fire Extinguisher. Know how to operate it.
- Smoke alarm. Change the batteries twice a year when the times change in the fall and spring.

“Youth with disabilities have a considerably higher unemployment rate than those without disabilities and fewer pursue higher education after high school. We must ensure these young people have the same bright future and career opportunities as other students across the state.”

*Governor
Martin O’Malley*

Governor Signs Executive Order to Recreate Interagency Transition Council

As a demonstration of his commitment to expand opportunities for people with disabilities, Governor Martin O’Malley signed an Executive Order to recreate the Governor’s Interagency Transition Council (IATC). Originally established in 2000 to improve the post-secondary school outcomes of youth with disabilities, the new IATC will bring together more agencies and programs that serve individuals with disabilities and will give greater leadership roles to members of IATC.

“Youth with disabilities have a considerably higher unemployment rate than those without disabilities and fewer pursue higher education after high school,” said Governor O’Malley. “We must ensure these young people have the same bright future and career opportunities as

other students across the state. By expanding the IATC we will convene a leadership team that will coordinate all the state’s resources to make certain that every student in Maryland has the opportunity to succeed in life and in their chosen careers.”

Catherine Raggio, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Disabilities and Robert Burns, Assistant State Superintendent, Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services, part of the Maryland State Department of Education, will be chairing the IATC for the next two years.

For more information about the IATC, please contact the Maryland Department of Disabilities at 410-767-3660 or by email to mdod@mdod.state.md.us.

Children’s Development Clinic Begins Fall Session on September 22

The Children's Developmental Clinic will begin its fall session on Saturday, September 22, 2007.

A nonprofit continuing education program, the clinic provides a special service to children, birth and up, who are experiencing various developmental difficulties such as learning problems, developmental delays, physical fitness and coordination problems, brain injury, mental retardation, emotional problems, or orthopedic challenges.

Children enrolled in the program are referred by various professionals such as teachers, pediatricians, psychologists, or therapists.

Conducted in cooperation with the Department of Health and Human Performance at Prince George's Community College and the College of Health and Human Performance at the University of Maryland, College Park, the clinic is in session for nine consecutive Saturday mornings during the fall and spring semesters of the academic year. A parent education program runs in conjunction with the children’s sessions.

For more information or to request an application, call The Children’s Developmental Clinic at 301-322-0519 or visit their web site at <http://www.pgcc.edu/pgweb/pgdocs/CDC/cdc3.htm>

PROFILE: Downtown Sailing Center

At the Downtown Sailing Center (DSC), they know sailing to be an effective vehicle to build character and teach self-reliance, teamwork and patience. They also know that the sailing lifestyle fosters an appreciation of the environment, the value of a college education, and the importance of the work ethic.

The Downtown Sailing Center conducts tuition-based sailing education programs from its waterfront site in Baltimore's Inner Harbor. A 501 (c) (3) nonprofit educational entity, the DSC primarily exists to provide affordable access to, and education in, sailing to area residents, regardless of their financial circumstances, ability or disability.

With a 40-boat fleet, its membership of over 600 avid sailors includes many volunteers who delight in assisting at-risk children and persons with disabilities to enjoy the sailing experience.

Supported by the generosity of DSC members, charitable foundations and corporate donors, thou-

sands of at-risk children and persons with disabilities have been able to enjoy an activity thought by many to be available only to the wealthy and able-bodied.

The DSC's *Access-Ability* program provides access to sailing to persons with disabilities. Unlike other adaptive sports, sailing participants leave their wheelchairs behind and compete on the water on an equal basis with the able-bodied.

Through the generosity of supporters, DSC was able to acquire a fleet of ten "access dinghies," unique Australian designed and built boats that are very stable and can be operated even by a person with quadriplegia due to spinal cord injury.

The "YaGotta Regatta," sponsored by Saint Agnes Hospital each year, is the centerpiece of the program and the culmination of the year's activity.

For more information about the Downtown Sailing Center, call 410) 727-0722 or visit their web site at www.downtownsailing.org.

News Briefs (cont)

"Screening Tips for Persons with Disabilities" is a new publication that provides useful information on airport screening rules and regulations for people with disabilities.

This pocket-size publication gives specific screening tips for individuals with mobility, hearing, visual, medical and hidden disabilities. The publication also provides information for persons with diabetes; individuals using prosthetic devices, walkers or canes, service animals, or assistive devices; as well as information on traveling with children with disabilities.

Developed with input from various disability-related groups and organizations, the pamphlet is also being used to train airport screeners in the methodology needed to ensure safe, effective, comfortable and respectful screening at all TSA security checkpoints.

"Screening Tips for Persons with Disabilities" is available from the Maryland Department of Disabilities by calling 410-767-3660 or sending an email to mdod@mdod.gov.md.us.



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410-767-3660
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Lieutenant Governor

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Secretary

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Deputy Secretary

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Coming in October...

- *Disability Employment Awareness Month*
- *Employed Individuals with Disabilities Program*
- *Business Roundtables*

Maryland Department of Transportation

Presents

“Breaking Down Barriers”

3rd Annual MDOT Secretary’s Conference on Accessible Transportation

Thursday, September 20, 2007

Johns Hopkins University
3301 North Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
Charles Commons Resident Hall

9:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.

For more information, call 410-865-1398 / 410-865-1342 TTY or
send an email to jmoyer@mdot.state.md.us.