

# the Update



## Pennsylvania's Independent Living (IL) Project Newsletter July 2003

### **2003 IL STATEWIDE MEETING "AIN'T NO MOUNTAIN HIGH ENOUGH"**

The University of Pittsburgh ILP has just returned from State College and are pleased to report a successful statewide meeting. This year over 140 individuals attended the conference from both public CYS agencies and private. The event opened Wednesday evening May 28 with a staff reception and 6 round table discussion that covered the areas of transitional living programs, youth advisory boards, a general IL Q & A, curriculum development, subsidized employment and a program spotlight on Northampton County's Valley Youth House. The Thursday mornings opening event featured an appearance by the states Deputy Secretary for Children, Youth & Families, Wayne Stevenson and a thought provoking presentation by the states Youth Advisory Board. The conference again utilized a track system allowing participants to spend their day concentrating on specific needs. The tracks included: Experience IL Worker Skill Enhancement, Orientation for New Workers, Specialized Services, Budgets & Applications and Adolescent Services. Planning is already beginning for next year's event.

### **IV-E IL Program Applications for Fiscal Year 2003 – 2004**

The Department of Public has recently finished reviewing all applications submitted for the 03-04 program year. All of you should have received a letter notifying you of your status, need to submit additional paperwork or funding approval. William Wilson, State IL Grant Coordinator, is consistently making efforts to abbreviate the document in attempts to simplify the process for everyone. County Children & Youth agencies, if you have not already done so, please be sure to forward a copy of your county funding guidelines/bulletin to your private provider. The funding is a useful tool that helps in guiding the provisioning of services.

### **IL SCHOLARSHIPS**

Recipients of IL scholarships have been determined. 63 applications were received this year!!! Of those 63, 49 were totally complete with 25 of those individuals receiving \$1,000 scholarships. An addition to this year's scholarship will be an opportunity to receive a free computer. Within the next few weeks all scholarship applicants will receive an application to apply for an opportunity to win a free refurbished computer. If a youth in your program submitted a scholarship application and you would like to follow up please feel free to contact Jennifer Mariani at 717-795-9048 ext 237.

### **THERE'S GOING TO BE A ANOTHER WEDDING**

William Wilson, State IL Grant Coordinator, was recently engaged!! A summer 2004 wedding is being planned. Congratulations to the happy couple.

### **UPCOMING IL RELATED CONFERENCES**

August 1-3 Destination Future  
August 13-16 Daniel Memorial's Growing Pains 2003

San Diego, California  
Orlando, Florida

### **EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING VOUCHERS FOR YOUTH AGING OUT OF FOSTER CARE**

An amendment to the Foster Care Independent Living (IL) program under title IV-E of the Promoting Safe & Stable Families Act has been made in effort to provide states vouchers to youths who age out of foster care, for education and training to help them develop skills to lead independent and productive lives.

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In addition to making vouchers available to youths otherwise eligible to participate in the IL program (that is, youths who have aged out of foster care and have not attained age 21), the State program may provide such vouchers to the following:

- Youths adopted from foster care after attaining age 16 are to remain eligible for vouchers on the same terms as other IL youths.
- Youths participating in the voucher program on the date they attain age 21 remain eligible until age 23, while enrolled in a full-time postsecondary education or training program and making satisfactory progress toward completion of that program.
- Vouchers may be available for the costs of attendance at an institution of higher education, as defined in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA), and shall not exceed the lesser of \$5,000 per year or the actual incurred costs of attendance at such an institution.
- Vouchers may be disregarded for purposes of determining eligibility or benefit amounts under any other Federal or Federally supported assistance program, except that the total amount of educational assistance to a youth under all such programs cannot exceed the total cost of attendance, and except that the State agency must take appropriate steps to prevent duplication of benefits under this and other Federal and Federally supported programs.
- The program is coordinated with other appropriate education and training programs.

Nationally appropriations of \$42,000,000 for the 2003 fiscal year has been awarded for educational and training vouchers for eligible youths will be provided. Pennsylvania will only receive a portion of these monies. William Wilson is working with the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency to determine how these monies might best be accessed and to avoid duplication of benefits under this and other Federal and Federally assisted benefit programs. Please look for future IL Updates to provide additional information on the topic.

### **2003 IL YOUTH RETREAT**

As this edition of the IL Update goes to press, the final preparations for this year's youth retreat are being made at Valley Youth House. This year's theme is "Courage to Grow: Create a Legacy". The curriculum will focus on how the youth of today are our future, and that despite their past life experiences every day is a new day, a new opportunity to grow with courage and support and a new opportunity to create a better tomorrow. The staffs of the ILP and DPW look forward to seeing all of you at the conference!

### **PLEASE JOIN US IN WELCOMING A NEW STAFF TO THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH ILP**

Starting July 28, Jennifer Mariani will be transferring to our Curriculum Development Unit and Brett Witmer from Altoona will be joining our IL staff. A spotlight on Brett will be provided in the next edition of the Update. Brett will be stationed in our Altoona offices and will cover the western portion of the state. For those of you our west that got to know and enjoy Idotress Joseph, she will now be providing services to the eastern portion of the state.

### **IL REGIONAL MEETINGS**

The ILP is currently business planning for the 4 fall regional meetings that will be taking place in October this year. Keep your eye on your mail box for save the date notices which should come out some time in late August. As in previous years, the conferences will be in the Northeast, Southeast, Central and Western regions of the state. The morning will focus on new IL modules developed by the ILP for counties to use when running various life skills groups with the afternoon focusing on information sharing and networking.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

*Independent Living Project, 2 Market Plaza Way; Suite 102, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055  
PHONE: 717-795-9048 FAX: 717-795-8013*

Lenore Moton, ILP Supervisor [ldmoton@pitt.edu](mailto:ldmoton@pitt.edu)  
Idotress Joseph, IL Specialist [irj2@pitt.edu](mailto:irj2@pitt.edu)

Sally Logan, ILP Data Entry [sml20@pitt.edu](mailto:sml20@pitt.edu)  
Jennifer Mariani, IL Specialist [jlm69@pitt.edu](mailto:jlm69@pitt.edu)

*Office of Children Youth & Families, PO Box 2675, Bertolino Building, Harrisburg, PA 17105*

William Wilson, State IL Grant Coordinator [wwilson@state.pa.us](mailto:wwilson@state.pa.us) 717-214-3810