

Lehigh Valley **Center for Independent Living**
Newsletter

LVCIL Newsletter

Winter, 2025



2025
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2025:
A year like no other

Real Education
Virtual Vehicle

Intrude on this!

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Who We Are

LVCIL is a non-profit organization based in Allentown, PA that provides services and support to people with all types of disabilities.

At LVCIL, we believe that every individual has the right to live a healthy, happy, and productive life in a community that is free from all barriers. We can help you achieve or maintain your independence through many of our supportive services and programs.

The Lehigh Valley Center for Independent Living (LVCIL) is a registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization that serves people with disabilities, and their family members, living in Lehigh and Northampton Counties.

What We Do

LVCIL offers a many services and programs. But like all Centers for Independent Living we offer our 5 core services.

Information and Referral

Information and referral can help you find the programs, services, and support you need to live independently.

Advocacy

To put it simply, advocacy is standing up for your rights and what you believe in.

Peer Support

If you feel like no one understands you, or that people treat you differently because of your disability, LVCIL's peer support can help.

Independent Living Skills

We can help you achieve independence by providing you with the information, support, and education you need to live independently and remain independent.

Where To Find Us

713 North 13th Street, Allentown, PA 18102
By appointment only

Contact Us

610-770-9781 - info@lvcil.org



2025: A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

A message from LVCIL's Executive Director

Dear Friends, As we head towards the end of the year, everyone here at LVCIL wants to wish you the warmest of Holiday greetings mixed with deep appreciation and gratitude for your support this past year. It was not exactly the best of times, but with your tangible, emotional, and financial support - we got through it. And thanks to the amazing strength of our consumers and staff, we made some incredible achievements.

(Continued on next page)

Through the long months when the state was unable to pass a budget, we were able to keep many critical programs going, even if it had to be at a reduced pace. Because as we all know, the need never slows down. Our Community Inclusion Program for Young Children is vital for parents with a million questions and no idea where to find answers. Our S2L program helps students learn valuable school-to-life transition skills. Our Job-training programs are proving successful not just for job seekers, but also for employers across the Valley. Our Assistive Technology program is putting a wide range of devices - telephones, laptops, wheelchairs and more - into the hands of those who need them. And our newest addition, our driving simulator, is helping people with disabilities manage one of the Valley's biggest challenges: Transportation.

So without a doubt, this community is a group of people who are determined to continue meeting challenges, breaking barriers, and finding new solutions.

When I think of all the holidays celebrate this time of year, I can't help but see what they share: A focus on blessings, light, and joy. It brings to mind a consumer's mother asking me if I realized what a blessing this organization was to her family. I think about the way consumers' faces light up when they tell me they just learned a new skill or got a job. And I think about the joy and laughter that just bubbles up in the room whenever the Adaptations group gets together.

And I can't wait for all that love and joy to carry forth into 2026.

From all of us here at LVCIL, we thank you for your support. We wish you all a wonderful Holiday season, and a very Happy New Year!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Seth Hoderewski'.

Seth Hoderewski
LVCIL Executive Director

*Want to help support LVCIL by making an end-of-the-year gift?
Visit lvcil.org/donate*

Real Education Virtual Vehicle

Helping people with disabilities test their skills behind the wheel, before they get behind the wheel.

We are excited to announce LVCIL's Driving Simulator program, which is a recent addition to our school-based or LIFE services. The program supports young adults in obtaining their driver's license permit and/or practicing driving skills using our newly acquired driving simulator.



Image: A photo of an LVCIL Staff Member testing the driving simulator

We're all aware of transportation needs for people with disabilities. The Driving Simulator can be a powerful way for your students to gain independence and get on a path to building other important "LIFE" skills.

For more information, please contact **610-770-9781 ext. 157** or at **DrivingSimulator@lvcil.org**

Disability Rights Roundtable

On Tuesday 1/13/2026, LVCIL will be hosting a Disability Rights Roundtable. Carol Obando-Dertsine will be listening about you thoughts and concerns related to disability rights and matters. Come and share your voice.

RSVP at <https://secure.actblue.com/donate/1.13disabilityrights>

CAROL OBANDO-DERTSINE FOR CONGRESS

Disability Rights Roundtable

**TUES., 1/13/26
6 PM TO 7:30 PM
LEHIGH VALLEY CENTER FOR
INDEPENDENT LIVING (LVCIL)**

Carol is on a listening tour & seeks to learn more about disability rights. Please join her to share your thoughts.

www.CarolForPA.com

Facebook: Carol Obando-Dertsine for Congress
Twitter/Instagram: @CarolForPA
X: @CObandoDertsine

RSVP HERE

Intrude on this!

Sign Language Interpretering

In recent days, the topic of sign language interpretation has come up and has been called an “intrusion” on the ability to control one’s public image.



Image: A photo hands signing

A great number of Deaf individuals use sign language as their first language and their way to communicate with the world. The role of a professional Sign Language Interpreter at schools, events, and medical appointments are essential for people that need that type of communication. And its not just words that an interpreter is conveying but also, the tone, emotions, structure and content of the message that is being delivered. People who are Deaf need this service and legally entitled to the accommodation. Their lives may depend on it.

Each person deserves the dignity of being understood, the right to express themselves. So, for years, LVCIL provided a Sign Language Interpretation referral service to our community. We work with many wonderful professional Sign Language Interpreters who capture the integrity of the language, and respect for those they sign for.

For more information about LVCIL’s SLIRS program, please feel free to reach out at **610-770-9781** or **info@lvcil.org**



Image: Bucks County Center for Independent Living (BCCIL) Logo

Did you know?...

About Bucks County Center for Independent Living?

That’s right. The Bucks County center for Independent Living or BCCIL has been associated with LVCIL, since 2022!

Although the Bucks Cil is its own entity and has its own Board of Directors, LVCIL provides management and fiscal support to the organization. BCCIL staff are LVCIL staff and LVCIL’s Executive Director is BCCIL’s Director. The wonderful team at Bucks, which has an office in Bensalem, covers all of Bucks county and provides the same 5 Core services that LVCIL does.

These include information and referral, Peer Support, Independent living skills, Advocacy, and Transition (nursing home to home, youth, etc.) if you need support in Bucks County, don’t hesitate to check them out:

www.buckscil.org - 215-781-5070 - info@bucklscil.org

Wish BCCIL a happy birthday, they just turned 20!

We are back!

Community Inclusion for Young Children is back in action.

After months of uncertainty caused by Pennsylvania's prolonged 2025 budget impasse, we are happy to announce that the Community Inclusion for Young Children project funded by the Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council has resumed services! We are excited to once again offer free, family-centered supports to families across Pennsylvania. CIFYC is designed to help families feel informed, empowered, and supported while focusing on inclusion, advocacy, and providing families with the resources they need.

CIFYC offers a variety of services that families can access from the comfort of their home! We host monthly virtual parent support group meetings where parents can come together in a welcoming space to learn, share experiences, and connect with other families.

We also offer one-on-one sessions to support parents in navigating resources, accommodations, early childhood systems and much more. Last but not least, we provide families with peer mentorship, connecting families with other families who have similar experiences, offering support and shared understanding.

With the return of CIFYC, families can expect the project to expand its offerings throughout 2026. As parents continue to reconnect with monthly parent support group meetings, the project aims to promote stronger advocacy skills, deeper community connections, and greater confidence in families navigating early childhood. As we enter 2026, be on the lookout for new things coming to CIFYC! We will continue to connect with organizations and businesses, such as amusement parks, to expand accessibility for families. We are also developing new ways to better support parents so that they have resources at the tip of their fingers.



For more information about CIFYC, including upcoming parent support group meetings, one-on-one family support, or how to get involved, contact us at **communityinclusion@LVCIL.org**. Families can also visit **www.LVCIL.org**, call LVCIL directly, or reach out to any one of our staff members to get connected.

LVCIL's Peer group round up

Peer Support Group - starting back up

A new year is here and with that there will be a new peer support group beginning. Since it is so cold and there is a lot of winterly weather each week, we are not sure when our peer support will resume. Please know that we are here at any time for individual peer support. We can talk on the phone or you can schedule an appointment to meet in person. Please stay tuned for our group to resume very soon.



Image: Consumers and staff gathered together for an activity.

If you have not been at our peer support, but are interested, please call Debbie at **610-770-9781 ext. 124** and leave your name and number and she will keep you

ADAPTATIONS FUN SWEATERS HOLIDAY PARTY!



Image: Consumers from the Adaptations Peer Support Group wearing festive holiday sweaters

Adaptations wishes everyone a happy holidays and a great 2026!

In Need of Food?

FYI – LVCIL has a small food pantry that can be accessed. We also have information and resources to share local food pantries in the area. No one should go hungry. Please reach out to us at **610-770-9781 or info@lvcil.org**

A Year of Choices

Another Year of Supported Decision Making

How do you make decisions?

Do you rely on your experience alone?

What if you don't know something?

How do you weigh your options or even decide what questions to ask?

Supported Decision Making is a way of making choices and decisions about your own life, with the help from others. This help comes from a team of trusted people that you choose to become your circle of support. The circle of support can include friends, family members, mentors, or professionals. They are here to support you!

It is natural to ask others for advice. This process is the same no matter the decision, although the amount of help someone needs varies by person. Decisions are made by you. For the past few years, LVCIL has run the **SDMPA.org** website and program, a project generously funded through the Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council.



Image: SDMPA Website header

This systems advocacy work has taken LVCIL staff to work with respected and valued partners on Guardianship reform. LVCIL is fortunate to have another year to promote SDM where the project will focus on decision making resources and curriculum for students, promotion of SDM, and continued advocacy efforts to have SDM recognized legally as a viable alternative to guardianship.

To learn more about Supported Decision Making, check our www.sdmpa.org or contact the SDM team at info@sdmpa.org



Generously funded by the Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council

Looking to warm up?

How about a way to beat the cold and support LVCIL?

Alt text: Order soups by January 31st to raise money for LVCIL. 16 Varieties. \$9.50 / Soup. Visit [Http:// fundraising.happyvalleysoupcompany.com/?fund=681](http://fundraising.happyvalleysoupcompany.com/?fund=681)



HAPPY VALLEY SOUP COMPANY

ORDER SOUPS!

BY **JANUARY 31ST** TO RAISE MONEY FOR
**LEHIGH VALLEY CENTER OF
 INDEPENDENT LIVING**

16 Varieties | \$9.50/soup

Please use this special link to credit us with the sale!

SCAN ME

OR VISIT:
<https://fundraising.happyvalleysoupcompany.com/?fund=681>

How are we doing?

Take **LVCIL's Satisfaction Survey** and let us know!



We are always looking for feedback on ways that we can better support you! Please click on the link to take our satisfaction survey.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/L85NS6C>

Interested in being a part of LVCIL?

Check out our job postings for current positions, or visit our website to learn more about volunteer opportunities with us!

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A graphic featuring a white sign with the text "WE'RE HIRING" in bold black and red letters, resting on a blue wooden surface next to a white coffee cup filled with orange liquid. The LVCIL logo is visible in the bottom right corner of the sign.

Interested in Joining the Team?

LVCIL Careers
and
Employment:

<https://www.indeed.com/cmp/Lvcil>

A square QR code located to the right of the text, which likely links to the LVCIL careers page.

Volunteer

Volunteers are essential to any non-profit organization, including LVCIL! Our volunteers complete endless tasks that contribute to our success as an agency. They also help make our CIL a great place for people with disabilities. Volunteers are always welcome, and everything our volunteers do is much appreciated.

**Please visit our website at: <https://lvcil.org/volunteer/>
or scan the QR code below to find out more.**

