

CAP UPDATE

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"Anne Exercises Her Right to Appeal" By: Cindy Crissman and Jamie C. Ray

After almost a month of waiting, Ann received a letter from her OVR counselor which she found very distressing. The letter informed her that OVR could not support her vocational goal of Teacher of blind and visually impaired students. The letter also said that OVR did not believe she had the ability to be a teacher because of her poor organizational skills. However, OVR would support her in becoming a Teacher's Aid. If she would like to pursue this option, she should contact her OVR counselor. If she does not agree with OVR's decision, she should contact CAP at 1(888) 745-2357.

Ann was not expecting to receive such a letter. At first she could not believe what the letter said. The longer she thought, the more upset she became. In no time Ann phoned her CAP Advocate. The Advocate listened to her and re-assured her that she did have a right to appeal this decision. Since CAP had previously helped Ann with her OVR concerns and had a copy of her case file, all Ann's Advocate needed was a copy of the letter Ann had just received from OVR. Ann said she would fax that right away. Ann's CAP Advocate explained to her that CAP could help her with her appeal and that the first step was to write a letter to the OVR Central Office formally appealing OVR's decision. The letter Ann had received from OVR was dated October 11, 2005, so the Advocate explained that her appeal letter must be postmarked within 30 days of October 11, or her appeal might be dismissed. The Advocate also explained that if the appeal was dismissed, she would lose her right to appeal so she must get her letter in within the 30-day timeframe. Ann explained that she had a friend in New Jersey who was denied a service by VR there and she only had twenty days to appeal. Ann really wondered about that. The Advocate explained that the policy on appeals is different depending on what State you live in so Ann could be correct about her friend. However, Ann's appeal must be in within 30 days.

Next, the CAP Advocate explained what the letter needed to say. She said it would be important to include:

- The date the decision was made by OVR (October 11, 2005);*
- What decision Ann was appealing (OVR's denial of her job goal); and*
- What Ann would like to see happen because of the appeal (have OVR support her goal of being a teacher).*

The Advocate also encouraged Ann to include the date, her signature, a way to reach her, and that CAP was helping her with the appeal. Ann and her Advocate agreed that Ann would write the letter and that the two of them would discuss it before it was mailed out.



Ann called her CAP Advocate the next day and read her the letter over the phone. Both agreed it included everything necessary. Ann signed the letter, and as her CAP Advocate had always suggested with earlier letters and forms, made a photocopy for herself and a photocopy for CAP. Ann's Advocate told her to mail her letter to the Director of Bureau of Program Operations, OVR, 1521 North 6th Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101. Ann's Advocate then explained that within 1-2 weeks she would receive a green postcard from OVR which would ask her how she would like to proceed with the appeal. Ann's CAP Advocate told her to give her a call as soon as she got the postcard, and they would discuss the different ways in which she could have heard. Ann was anxious to have her concerns resolved. She asked her CAP Advocate how long after she returned her post card would the appeal be scheduled. Ann's CAP Advocate explained an appeal would be scheduled within 60 days following OVR's receipt of her green postcard.

Will Ann choose an Informal Administrative Review (IAR) or go right to a Hearing? Stay tuned

Dreams Becoming Reality . . .

The 1st in a continuing series by Cindy Crissman

I moved into my apartment when I was young, around 22 or 23 years old, and have been there since. I began experiencing mobility problems in the late 1980's and was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1992. My apartment slowly became accessible over the years, as I went from losing my balance to walking with a cane, then a wheeled walker. Currently I use a manual wheelchair. With the help of my landlord, I have added grab bars, an extended shower chair and elevated commode to my bathroom; and a porch lift at my back door.

I have a comfortable and safe feeling in my apartment. It is "my self-made haven".

My father passed away suddenly in September, and I have the opportunity to move into his house. Although I was devastated by my father's death, I still felt an excitement of being able to move into my dad's house, a feeling of moving home. I realized I always had a secret dream of moving into my own house. I surprised myself by dreaming of changes I wanted to make before moving in this coming spring. In my imagination, I became a carpenter. I knocked out two small walls in the kitchen and dining room to make the biggest part of the down stairs an "L" shape. In addition, I remodeled the bathroom by putting in a roll in shower. I rebuilt the stairs and added a stair glide. I even moved the washer and dryer to where I could easily get to them. As I sat thinking about all my imaginary changes, I felt pride in my new found profession. After a few minutes, I realized I had forgotten one tiny detail: I could not get into the house without great difficulty. I needed to find out more information, so I decided to embark on a favorite pastime of mine, "surfing the internet."

I started by hunting information on ramps to allow entry into the house. I didn't find the information I was looking for on www.discounttramps.com. However, Discount www.ramps.com provides information on about any type of ramp you would want to purchase. Some of the ramps mentioned on the web site are motorcycle loading ramps, dog and pet ramps, heavy duty ramps and ATV loading ramps. Included on the web site is a section on "Wheelchair and Medical Scooter Products." Discount Ramps.com is a very interesting and worthwhile site to visit.

Next I hunted information on porch and deck lifts. I located information on the Liberator Porchlif on the Active Mobility website, www.amobility.com. This porch lift looked very attractive and immediately drew my attention. The picture shown on the website made the lift appear as being part of the house. Information provided says the lift is attractive, endures consistent and reliable access, and is easy to install. Another lift that drew my attention was a deck lift on the Mackhall Mobility Products web site, www.nsite.ca. The lift is a direct vertical lift and would look nice at the entry way I want to use every day. Information provided says this lift is generally used outside and varies in size depending on model. Both web sites offer information in such areas as wheel chairs, other types of stair and porch lifts, power chairs walkers, and living aids and bath safety.

Now that I have some ideas of how to get into my house, I'd like to share some more ideas for inside the house and some daily living aids I found. Then there's always getting ready to move, packing and locating information for the move itself.

Stay tuned. . . .

CAP ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Jamie Ray has been named to the CAP Advisory Committee sponsored by the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN, formerly NAPAS). The purpose of the Committee is to advise NDRN on the training and technical assistance needs of CAPs across the country.

DISABILITY BENEFITS EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROJECT

ATTENTION TEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES:

- *Are you getting social security benefits?
- *Think you might be eligible for these benefits?
- *Are you working and afraid of losing your health and other benefits?
- *Would you like to work, but fear losing benefits?
- *Do you have a job, but no health insurance?

If you have questions like these, and are a resident of Philadelphia County, please contact Jamie Ray or Margaret McKenna for information on:

SOCIAL SECURITY'S TICKET TO WORK
BENEFITS PLANNING AND ASSISTANCE
MEDICAL ASSISTANCE FOR WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES

CALL TODAY, (215) 557-7112 (voice/TTY)

**PENNSYLVANIA
CLIENT ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM****Philadelphia Office**

Suite 800
1617 JFK Blvd.
Philadelphia, PA. 19103

Voice/TDD: 215-557-7112
FAX: 215-557-7602
Toll Free: 888-745-CDLP

Harrisburg Office

Suite 100
2 North 2nd St.
Harrisburg, PA. 17101

Voice/TDD: 717-364-1733
FAX: 717-236-8800
Toll Free: 888-745-CDLP

E-mail:
info@equalemployment.org

Upcoming Events**Friday, November 18, 2005****9 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.**

Advisory Committee for Persons Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ACDPHH)

Wednesday, November 30, 2005**9 a.m. - 3 p.m.**

Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing(ODHH)

Wednesday, December 7, 2005**9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.**

PaRC Full Council Meeting

10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (GCEPD)

Thursday, December 8, 2005**9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.**

OVR Board Meeting

The above events are open to the public, please contact Jamie Ray at Jamiecray@aol.com if you would like more information.

Visit PA CAP on the WEB
<http://www.equalemployment.org>