

CAP UPDATE

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Anne Prepares for her IAR

Anne had felt a bit more comfortable after talking with her CAP Advocate about the IAR process, but once she put the green card in the mail box, she became a nervous wreck.

Anne's CAP Advocate arrived to work on Monday morning to find 7 voice mail messages, some in the middle of the night, from a panic stricken Anne. One of her messages stated; "She was going to school to become a teacher, not a measly teacher's aide even if she had to rob a bank to pay for her schooling."

After listening to all of Anne's messages, the CAP Advocate gave Anne a call. The Advocate suggested to Anne that she focus specifically and objectively on the issue: OVR does not believe Anne has the ability and capability to be a Teacher of the Blind and Visually Impaired due to Anne's poor organization and cognitive skills as a result of her Learning Disability.

The CAP Advocate told her that the chances of being successful at her IAR will be greatly improved if she is prepared, calm and polite. The Advocate suggested Anne do a few things to help justify her request for training to be a teacher.

Step 1 -- It is a good idea to get a letter from your neuropsychologist documenting that in his/her medical judgment, you have been working with your doctor and are learning some compensatory strategies to help overcome some of your limits. You should provide your doctor some information spelling out the specific job tasks you will be required to do as a teacher so he/she has a more honest ability to determine if these are tasks you will be able to achieve within your limits. You can find out specific information about the goal of Teacher for the Blind and Visually Impaired by checking out a few career websites. A few suggestions are: Dictionary of Occupational Titles, Occupational Outlook Handbook, and O'Net. These websites will give you information on the training needed for your goal, some of the job tasks, the labor market potential, etc.



A letter from your doctor emphasizing your ability to be successful as a teacher would be very helpful. The research collected from these websites will also be impressive to OVR. Anne liked this idea but said this is a lot of work. She asked the Advocate, "Can you help me with this? I am not very organized and feel very overwhelmed." The Advocate added she would be willing to contact Anne's doctor on her behalf (with Anne's permission) to explain to the doctor what should be detailed in the letter. The other suggestion, Anne needs to work on herself. Anne said this would be helpful. She is very nervous but is willing to follow these suggestions.

Step 2 -- The Advocate also told Anne to get a letter from the child care center she worked/volunteered at part-time stating that Anne was able to handle the necessary tasks of the job specifying some of her skills.

Step 3 -- Anne also needs a copy of an acceptance letter from the school she selected with information about the program she is planning to start. Anne thanked her Advocate for all of her help. She will start working on these things right away. She hung up the phone feeling less stressed. She will get this information as soon as possible so she has it for the IAR. The CAP Advocate told her it should be scheduled in a couple weeks.

My Story ~ Cindy Casale

A Special Feature by Nicolle Tremitiere, Temple University MSW Program

Cindy Casale, 40, is a bright and articulate woman with a long history with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and the Pennsylvania Client Assistance Program (PaCap). Cindy was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy (CP) after a high fever and kidney infection shortly after birth. The impact of CP is such that she is unable to take care of her daily living requirements on her own. The effort it takes her to function in her daily life demands assisted coordination in the form of attendant care.

Attendant care helps Cindy with everything from assisting her in her personal hygiene needs, getting dressed, and preparing meals. Cindy's disability is at a level that the use of a wheelchair is necessary to go to work and live independently. Cindy works at the Center for Independent Living in Williamsport, PA. In the effort to go to work, Cindy must relinquish several hours of her day to prepare for the work day. She is required to get up at 6:00 am just to get to work by 8:30.

Flexibility in Cindy's schedule simply does not exist; she does not have the luxury of getting ready for work with a quick shower and having the ability to be out of the door in a half hour to 45 minutes. There is no hitting the snooze button for Cindy as this would throw off her entire schedule. No matter what, several hours at both ends of the work day are required to attend to her daily needs; she has to repeat a similar routine once she gets home from work.

Cindy's history with disability related helping organizations such as OVR is extensive. She initially applied for and received OVR services while she was in high school and also in college where she earned a college degree. It was at this time when she first called on Jamie Ray, Esquire, managing attorney for the PaCap to assist her in getting the services she needed

from OVR. Since then, Cindy reports continued struggles with OVR over the years. She is not sure why this is but she hopes that it will change as a result of sharing her story.

Most recently, Cindy was in a transitional period in her life where she found herself needing to go back to OVR for assistance to help her obtain a wheelchair so she could work. Originally, she had a wheelchair that was purchased through Medical Assistance at a time when she was financially eligible for the service. However, as it turned out, the wheelchair was defective.

Sometime after this discovery Cindy who was now on Medicare, became employed and quickly learned that in order for her to stay employed she would need a new wheel chair. She was able to get Medicare to approve the wheelchair she needed however she was no longer able to pay the Medicare premium to get the chair. Her only option was to apply for OVR to get financial support to pay for the wheelchair she needed to go to work.

Cindy was puzzled when her request for OVR's assistance to pay for the chair was denied. Cindy is concerned that OVR counselors are not aware of some of the processes and that they do not willingly share what services are available to their clients. She also stated a frustration when a counselor from OVR commented, "We can't pay for everything." Cindy understands the financial constraints OVR deals but her experience indicates that asking OVR to provide the services she is eligible for is a bother. She goes on to say, "I understand that there is not an endless pot of money. OVR should be collecting stories like mine so they can show what the needs are for people with disabilities."

Cindy was not unfamiliar with the PaCap. She learned about PaCap through George Morton another person with a disability who needed to involve PaCap to assist him in getting services from OVR. As a result of contacting PaCap she meet with Jamie Ray who she knew from past

Cindy stated, "OVR has the ability to bill the insurance companies. They did nothing to resolve the situation in a timely manner. I was in a desperate situation." That is when she called the PaCap and spoke with Lee Lippi the advocate located in the Harrisburg office. Two weeks later according to Cindy, OVR agreed to pay for the wheelchair she needed.

Cindy is very appreciative of the work the PaCap does. As a result of their advocacy she is still working. "If I would have received this chair I would have lost my job which seems to defeat the goals of OVR. Why did I have to fight so hard for the services I needed? There hasn't been a time where I have called the PaCap and they haven't been able to help...they know the regulations...I don't."

Upcoming Meetings and Events of Interest

*For additional information, please e-mail Jamie Ray at Jamiocray@aol.com.

OVR State Board

March 28, 2007
June 27, 2007
September 20, 2007
December 5, 2007

Advisory Committee for the Blind (ACB)

February 20, 2007
August 21, 2007
November 20, 2007

State Independent Living Council (SILC)

January 17, 2007 9-5
January 18, 2007 9-12
April 19, 2007 9-5
April 20, 2007 9-12
July 10, 2007 9-5
July 11, 2007 9-12
September 12, 2007 9-5
September 13, 2007 9-12

Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PRC)

February 21, 2007
May 9, 2007
November 14, 2007

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

February 2, 2007
April 27, 2007
September 7, 2007
November 2, 2007

Advisory Committee for Persons Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ACPDHH)

March 16, 2007
June 15, 2007
September 28, 2007
November 16, 2007

Multicultural Advisory Committee (MAC)

March 20, 2007
June 19, 2007
September 18, 2007
November 27, 2007

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

March 6, 2007
March 7, 2007
September 25, 2007
September 26, 2007

**PENNSYLVANIA
CLIENT ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM**

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Harrisburg, PA. 17101

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

E-mail:
info@equalemployment.org

Upcoming Outreach Events**CAP Advocate Margaret McKenna to Speak**

On January 18, 2007, Margaret McKenna will speak at the Philadelphia BBVS Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting. The meeting will be held at Philadelphia BBVS, 444 N. 3rd Street, 5th Floor, Philadelphia PA. It will begin at 3:30pm.

JAMIE RAY TO SPEAK AT GILDA'S CLUB

On February 6, 2006 at 6:30pm, Jamie Ray will be the guest speaker at Gilda's Club in Warminster, PA. Gilda's club is a support group for persons with all types of cancer. Jamie will discuss the services available through CAP and address member questions. For more information, contact Jamie at Jamiecray@aol.com Steve Pennington and Jamie Ray to Visit Meadville

On April 12, 2007

Attorneys Steve Pennington and Jamie Ray will participate in a panel discussion concerning employment for people with disabilities. The panel is sponsored in part by Community Resources for Independence (CRI). Attendance is free and a lunch will be served. For more information or to Register, please contact CRI advocate Chuck Giambone at Voice:(800) 530-5541 or (814) 838-7222 TTY: (814) 838-8115

. For more information on this meeting, please visit <http://www.nationalmssociety.org/pae/>

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>