



# *Living without Limits*

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## **Highlights from our Independent Living Conference**

On April 26th, the Ocean State Center for Independent Living (OSCIL) hosted its annual Independent Living Conference at the Crowne Plaza in Warwick. The event drew an enthusiastic capacity crowd committed to advancing independent living for individuals with disabilities in Rhode Island. We were honored to have the support of our three title sponsors: CCA Health RI, UnitedHealth, and the Rhode Island Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC). Their contributions were crucial to the conference's success.

Our event was further enriched by several dedicated organizations: Lift and Care, the Rhode Island Parent Information Network (RIPIN), The Rhode Island Governor's Council on Disability (GCD), the Rhode Island Department of Health, and the YMCA of Greater Providence highlighted twenty-three organizations that exhibited and interacted with attendees.

A panel discussion moderated by Michelle Machado, featuring Christina Battista, Earnest Okwara, Brian Adae, Elisabeth Hubbard, Jessica Podesva, and Rep. Tina Spears, provided valuable insights into the past, present, and future of independent living in Rhode Island.

Another highlight was Representative Gabe Amo's introduction of Former Congressman Jim Langevin, who presented Rep. Tina Spears with an award recognizing her contributions to the disability community. Keynote speaker Sandra Swift Parrino recounted her experiences leading up to the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Additionally, five Rhode Islanders received the Catherine T. Murray scholarships for their continuing education and professional development.

The conference was well attended and received, with participants appreciating the informative sessions, networking opportunities, and strong sense of community. OSCIL is grateful for the support of our sponsors, attendees, and vendors, whose contributions were vital to the conference's success.

We look forward to continuing to build and strengthen our relationships with all our partners as we work together to promote independence and improve the quality of life for individuals with disabilities in Rhode Island. Thank you to everyone who made the 2024 OSCIL Independent Living Conference an unforgettable event. We eagerly anticipate next year's conference and ongoing collaboration with our community.

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# OSCIL's Annual Conference

The Past, Present, & Future of Independent Living in Rhode Island

April 26, 2024 - Crowne Plaza Warwick



OSCIL's Independent Living Conference was held on April 26th, 2024 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel located in Warwick. Approximately 175 people filled the ballroom and foyer area and enjoyed an informative conference and delicious breakfast!

## THANK YOU TO OUR EXHIBITORS

- UNITED HEALTHCARE
- CCA HEALTH RHODE ISLAND
- LIFT AND CARE
- GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
- DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
- YMCA OF GREATER PROVIDENCE
- ASSISTIVE TECH. ACCESS PARTNERSHIP
- SERVICES FOR BLIND & VISUALLY IMPAIRED
- OAKLEY HOME ACCESS
- NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND
- WEST BAY COLLABORATIVE
- OFFICE OF REP. SETH MAGAZINER
- NAT'L COUNCIL ON INDEPENDENT LIVING
- UNITED WAY OF RHODE ISLAND
- WHITE CROSS PHARMACY
- THE ARC
- INSIGHT
- PACE
- RIPTA
- RIPIN
- OSCIL



## KEYNOTE

Former Chairperson of the National Council on Disability (NCD), Sandra Swift Parrino (pictured above) delivered a memorable keynote address detailing her work to help write and enact the Americans with Disabilities Act along with the experience of being the sole woman and surviving participant in the signing ceremony at the White House on June 29, 1990 in the Rose Garden at the White House.



## Panel Discussion

Hosted by Michelle Machado, *The Empowering Independent Strategies for Inclusive Living* Advocacy Panel addressed many important topics associated with the Past, Present, and Future of Independent Living in Rhode Island. Among the topics covered were minorities within the disabled community, priorities that are not being met such as accessible entrances to buildings, and advocacy for the disabled community on the national and local levels.



Pictured: (Left to Right) Jessica Podesva, Rep. Tina Spears, Brian Adae, Elisabeth Hubbard, Christina Battista, Earnest Okwara, Amanda Reed, and panel moderator Michelle Machado.



Pictured Above: OSCIL Board Member Chris Bove presents Taylor Roberts with a scholarship certificate

Pictured Below: Scholarship Recipients (left to right) Connor O'Neal, Taylor Roberts, Max Holroyd, and Christopher Senice pose for a photograph with OSCIL Executive Director Mireille Sayaf. (Scholarship winner Ryan Lukowicz not pictured.)



## Catherine T. Murray Memorial Scholarship

A little woman with a big heart, Catherine T. Murray (pictured on the right), a Warwick school teacher for 35 years, provided OSCIL with the greatest gift of all - a future of opportunities to assist and support students with disabilities in reaching their career goals.





# Lunch & Learn Workshop

## Westbay Community Action Agency Information and Assistance

**Joe Neri, Senior Medicare  
Counselor, from Westbay  
Community Action Agency will be  
here at the May 29 Lunch & Learn.**

**Refreshments will  
be served.  
An ASL interpreter  
and captioning will  
be available.  
The 211 van will be  
on site as well.**

**Joe will discuss the following  
topics and present related  
informational material:**

- 1. Available services at Westbay**
- 2. Medicare Review**
- 3. Medicaid Renewal**
- 4. Extra Help Program**

## May 29<sup>th</sup>

**12:00 Noon - 1:30 PM**

**In-Person and on Zoom**

**1944 Warwick Ave, Warwick RI**

**Zoom Meeting ID: #872 2748 0787**

**Contact Heather Schey**



**401-738-1013 heather.schey@oscil.org**

**Advanced registration  
is necessary to attend,  
as in-person space is  
limited.**

## Special Award Presentation

Former Representative and Honorary Advisory OSCIL Board of Directors Member Jim Langevin made a special appearance and presented Rhode Island State Representative Tina Spears with an award recognizing her commitment to advocacy and the disability community. Rep. Spears upon receiving the award invited people to reach out to her office and pledged her commitment to sponsor legislation that helps the disability community in Rhode Island.



Pictured Above (left to right): Rep. Jim Langevin, Rep. Tina Spears, OSCIL Program Manager Michelle Machado, and OSCIL Associate Director Beth Pinkham.



Pictured Above: Rep. Gabe Amo introducing former Representative Jim Langevin



Pictured Above (left to right): Award Recipient Rep. Tina Spears, Panel Moderator Michelle Machado, OSCIL Program Director Ryan MacLeod, Rep. Jim Langevin, Rep. Gabe Amo, and OSCIL Executive Director Mireille Sayaf.

## Thank you to our Title Sponsors



Rhode Island Statewide  
Independent Living Council

# Images from the IL Conference



# Youth Transition Support Group



## Welcome Back!

Enjoy a fun party with  
pizza and games!

Tuesday, May 28<sup>th</sup>

5:00 PM - 7:00 PM



[RSVP Form](#)

OSCIL Warwick Office  
1944 Warwick Ave.  
Warwick, RI 02889

Please R.S.V.P. by May 24th.

..... Please contact us if you have any questions. ....

**Molly Smith**



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[www.oscil.org](http://www.oscil.org)



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*Spring 2024 Newsletter*

*Your Go-To  
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for  
Disability  
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Resources  
&  
Information!*



Return Service Requested

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# The Past, Present, and Future of Independent Living In Rhode Island

April 26, 2024 Crowne Plaza Hotel

