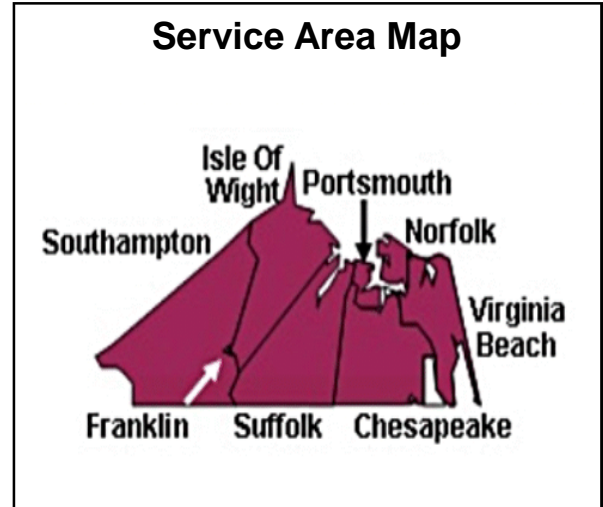


# Endeppendence Center, Inc.



## 2006 Annual Report

October 2005 - September 2006



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### Community Message

As an organization that works on behalf of people with disabilities, we celebrate 25 years of promoting Independent Living, equal rights and access for people with disabilities in South Hampton Roads.

In 1981, the Endeppendence Center, Inc. (ECI) opened its doors and became the first Center for Independent Living (CIL) in Virginia of which there are now 16 CILs assisting the disability community with direct services towards independence and breaking down barriers and attitudes in the community that prevent full integration of persons with disabilities. Our mission statement is "Opening Doors to Opportunities".

We have participated in the passage and implementation of the 1973 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the 1985 Virginians with Disabilities Act and the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act.

In our time, as part of the disability community in South Hampton Roads, we have seen barriers to independence slowly diminish as buildings became accessible, and support services such as Medicaid Waivers became available. The Tides Stadium in Norfolk has won awards for its model accessibility, and the Oceanfront in Virginia Beach is accessible with wheelchair access to the sand. Accessible public transportation is available in some areas. Local movie theaters now offer options with close captioning or audio description. Yet, accessible and affordable housing is scarce for those who desire to move out of nursing homes or family homes to independent lives in the community. The disability community has made significant progress, but there remains much to be done.

We hope you will continue to partner with the Endeppendence Center and our local disability community as we enter the next phase of advocacy and independent living. We welcome your collaboration in our efforts to empower people with disabilities and provide opportunities for self-determination.

### Purpose

The Endeppendence Center, Incorporated (ECI) is a consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability, non-residential, private, non-profit Center for Independent Living (CIL) operated by and for individuals with disabilities in South Hampton Roads. The purposes of ECI are to prepare individuals and to prepare the community for full participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society. These goals are accomplished by the following strategies: (1) the provision of direct services to individuals with severe disabilities, that result in a greater level of independence and community integration/functioning (2) the provision of services/advocacy in the community that result in a greater awareness of disability issues, physical and programmatic accessibility and systems change.

### Services

- ⇒ Peer Counseling
- ⇒ Independent Living Skills Training
- ⇒ Individual and Systems Advocacy
- ⇒ Information and Referral
- ⇒ Community Education/Training

### Public Support and Revenue

Federal Government	30%
State Government	26%
Local Government	12%
Grants & Contracts	14%
Other	18%
Expenses	
Services to Individual Consumers	50%
Community Services	26%
Other	24%

2006 Operating Revenues: \$1,655,000

### Board Members (Aug 2007)

- Michael Wang, President
- Dr. Laurie Lindblom, Vice-President
- Beverly Reid, Treasurer
- Patricia Anglemann, Ex-Officio
- Jeff Byrd
- Cheryl Drewery
- Anita Golden
- Heather Hornsby
- Stephen Johnson
- Michelle Groombridge
- Tom Swanson
- Lynn Kushner
- Mary Mathena
- Stephanie Thomas
- Martha Thompson
- Carmen Mendez

### Staff Members (Aug 2007)

- Administration
- Stephen Johnson, Executive Director
- Mareen Hollowell, Director of Advocacy & Services
- Lisbet Ward, Director of Advocacy and Services
- Amadeo San Antonio, Finance Director
- Cheryl Simpson, Operations Manager
- Administrative Support
- Carol Crabill, Executive Assistant
- Barbara Dixon, Accounting Clerk
- Tammy Manno, Administrative Assistant
- Jenny Woodhull, Administrative Assistant
- Diana Toner, Receptionist
- Lonnie Sublett, Network Administrator
- Independent Living Coordinators
- Felicia Brown
- Vantoria Clay
- Brenda Carper
- Teacia Cogdell
- Ben Conley
- Frances Durham
- Brenda Estes
- Sharon Franklin
- Samantha Gregg
- Tracy Husted
- Rena Lewis
- Catherine McManus
- Ruthanne Spindler
- Paige Shaw
- Rebecca Voskeritchian
- Cheryl Ward

### Service Highlights for 2006

During the year, the following services were provided:

- 1,129 Individuals with disabilities received direct services
- 754 Independent Living goals were met by Center Participants

Hours of services directly provided to individuals with disabilities:

- 4,617 Individual Advocacy
- 2,661 Peer Counseling Services
- 1,791 Independent Living Skills Training
- 395 Housing, Home Modifications & Shelter Services
- 292 Assistive Devices/Equipment Services
- 280 Information & Referral Services to Center participants
- 253 Communication Services
- 72 Youth Services

Hours of Community Activities Provided:

- 6,575 Collaboration/Networking
- 4,030 Information & Referral
- 3,358 Community Education & Public Information
- 2,914 Community/Systems Advocacy
- 1,449 Volunteer
- 1,312 Outreach Efforts
- 825 Center Management/Funding/Resource Development
- 277 Technical Assistance

October 2005 to September 2006

## "Opening Doors to Opportunities with the Disability Community"

2006 Operating Revenues: \$1,655,000

# 2006 Annual Highlights

## Peer Networking

### ⇒ Individual and Group Peer Networking

ECL offers various opportunities to receive peer based support to work on independent living goals and to learn about resources in the community or in group settings. Staff who have disabilities work one-on-one with individuals with disabilities to increase self advocacy skills, learn about their rights and work toward independent living goals.

### ⇒ Consumer Advisory Committee

The Consumer Advisory Committee is comprised of active Center participants that perform an annual Consumer Satisfaction Survey of ECL services.

### ⇒ Youth

The Y.E.A. group continued to work on their project to increase physical accessibility on the lawn at the Virginia Beach Amphitheater and conducted accessibility surveys at some of the local malls. The Youth Group continued to learn about independent living for life after high school by attending monthly support group meetings at the Center.

### ⇒ Peer Network Philosophy

Peer networking is based on the philosophy that living with a disability provides the best expertise on independent living. Peer networking is an empowerment model in which individuals with disabilities share their knowledge and experiences of living independently, advocacy and resources with each other through support groups, or by working with a staff with a disability.

This year several different types of support groups were made available to the disability community.

## Individual and Systems Advocacy

### ⇒ Education

Changes to the law governing education for students with disabilities, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004, were put into effect on October 14, 2006. This process greatly increased the amount of professional development for our staff, as well as education and training for students and their families. We held a variety of workshops and advocacy group meetings that focused on the changes taking place at the federal level and the ones anticipated to take place at the state and local levels. This work continues as these changes are ongoing.

### ⇒ Medicaid

ECL staff collaborated with advocates across the state to educate legislators to address Medicaid Waiver funding and slots. Our staff will continue their advocacy efforts to increase the support services provided by Medicaid Waivers.

### ⇒ Disability Action Network (DAN)

ECL helped to facilitate DAN. The DAN has become a local advocacy group that plans to address local disability issues and help to educate legislators regarding the needs. The main Projects that DAN has been involved with is educating the public on the needs of the disability community related to independent living and addressing issues related to taxi services

### ⇒ Virginia Beach Visitors Center

In the early part of 2007 we completed a project with the Virginia Beach Visitor Center so that they will be more accessible for people with visual disabilities. They now have JAWs set up on a computer at the center so people can access all that they have to offer. There is also accessible signage posted, as well as a list in Braille of all of their materials.

### ⇒ VACIL Coordination

The Virginia Association of Centers for Independent Living is a membership organization of CILs that advocate for inclusion of people with disabilities into all aspects of society. ECL staff provided coordination of the advocacy efforts of VACIL.

## Community Living

### ⇒ Medicaid Consumer Directed Facilitation

Facilitation services were provided to 212 people who used the AIDS, DD, EDCD and MR Waivers. A wide range of individuals, from 3 months old to 92 years old, used consumer directed personal care services to enhance their lives.

### ⇒ Medicaid Case Management

Individual and Family Developmental Disabilities Support Waivers were used by 82 people who received DD case management through ECL. An increased number of people used employment supports to expand their ability to live independently in the community.

### ⇒ Nursing Home Outreach

Common barriers to moving out of a nursing home into your own home include a lack of affordable and accessible housing, and access to needed support services. However, transition is possible with planning, and six individuals moved out of nursing homes this year. A young woman just graduating from high school moved out of a nursing home and is now attending college. A woman with MS and a hearing impairment moved from assisted living into her own apartment and received information on assistive technology for her hearing loss. A man in his forties called the center after a gun shot wound changed his life. He was discharged from a hospital to a nursing home far from his home city. ECL staff assisted him through peer counseling and housing counseling to obtain home modifications and a Medicaid Waiver so he was able to adapt his town home for wheelchair access and live independently. He is now learning about his options to go back to work. Many other individuals are exploring their options and making plans to transition as soon as accessible and affordable housing and services can be put in place.

### ⇒ DRS PAS

The waiting list for DRS PAS continued to grow. ECL collaborated with other CILs to develop a budget amendment with the General Assembly to increase the number of people who can be served by DRS PAS.

### ⇒ Housing Counseling

The Endependence Center maintains and updates a resource packet on subsidized and public housing in our region and how to apply for these as well as Section 8 vouchers. Staff assisted 96 individuals to prepare for living independently, get on wait lists for housing, and to identify accessible housing options and home modification funds.

## Information and Referral

### ⇒ Information & Referral

ECL provides information and makes referrals to the community on a large variety of topics such as:

- ⇒ Center Services
- ⇒ Education issues and IEP development
- ⇒ Housing availability and modifications
- ⇒ Emergency financial information
- ⇒ Ticket-to-Work and Social Security benefits information
- ⇒ Medicaid Waiver programs
- ⇒ Access to Transportation
- ⇒ Adaptive equipment and accommodations

## Training/Workshops

### ⇒ Independent Living Skills Training

Workshops on a variety of topics are held and ECL maintains an annual schedule. Topics include transportation, Medicaid services, American with Disabilities Act, education, Independent Living philosophy/history, and work incentives in Social Security programs.

### ⇒ Medicaid Trainings

Medicaid Waiver training was provided by the Waiver Mentors throughout Virginia in seventeen locations. Training was targeted to persons with disabilities, their families and to local screening teams. The training covered basic Medicaid information and details on the seven Medicaid home and community based Waivers.

## Assistive Technology and Home Modifications

### Modifications

### ⇒ TAP

ECL is assisting the Virginia Department of Deaf and Hard of Hearing-Technical Assistance Program (VDDHH-TAP) with test trials on new telecommunication equipment, which to date has been very successful. ECL also provided sensitivity training to local 911 Centers, including how to recognize and respond to Teletypewriter (TTY) calls.

### ⇒ Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funding for Ramps and Bathroom Accessibility

A Video Relay Service provider has provided several staff with video phones for communication access with the deaf community

ECL received CDBG Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funds through the City of Norfolk to administer a Home Modification Assistance Project for low-income Norfolk residents--renters and homeowners--with disabilities. The purpose of the project was to make home modifications to provide accessible entrances and assistance with bathroom modifications. Eleven applicants were screened and found eligible for the assistance and their modifications will be completed in 2007.

Through a partnership with Portsmouth Redevelopment and Housing Authority, CDBG funds are available to assist low-income Portsmouth renters with home modification assistance. ECL is working with several Portsmouth residents with disabilities at this time to achieve their modification goals.

### ⇒ Recycling of Adaptive Equipment

As part of a statewide push to create regional equipment recycling programs, ECL teamed up with VATS (Virginia Assistive Technology Systems) at Old Dominion University and started a planning team of interested people and agencies from our community. The team met every month and the end result is a partnership with Goodwill Industries. In October 2007, a program will be started at the Virginia Beach Boulevard Goodwill location to collect and donate needed adaptive equipment to those who need it and cannot afford it. Equipment will include items such as manual and power wheelchairs, walkers, shower chairs, and augmentative communication devices.

## Innovative Projects this past year

### ⇒ Travel Fund (CFPF)

ECL administered a 27-month Consumer and Family Participation Fund (CFPF) received from the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities. The fund assisted 189 consumers by providing financial assistance to people with disabilities and/or their family members to attend trainings on disability issues and to empower them to become involved in their community to share information learned.

### ⇒ Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center (DBTAC)

The DBTAC grant continues to provide ADA training, resources and technical assistance throughout Virginia. This year, the annual Ask the Experts Conference on the ADA was done as a video conference linking 4 regions of the State, and providing workshops on the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), accessibility in outdoor recreation areas, best practices in employment and the role of the Disability Services Boards in increasing accessibility.

Almost 70 people attended and attendees enthusiastically praised the conference and requested to be included in next year's event.

### ⇒ Assistance and Benefits Linked for Employment (Project ABLE)

ECL staff and trained staff from six other CILs provided information and counseling to individuals in the Southeast region of the State who receive Social Security benefits. Project ABLE Specialists provided assistance to several hundred individuals through this program. Project ABLE is a continuing project funded through the federal Social Security Administration.

## Volunteers

Individuals from the community play an important role at ECL volunteering their time and talents to enhance services provided by ECL. During the year, volunteer projects included literacy tutoring, building maintenance activities, clerical support, receptionist duties and 70 navy chief candidates who volunteered their efforts over a two day period to repaint the entire interior of our building.