



ATLANTIC

CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING, INC

MAY NEWSLETTER 2025 • VOL. 5



Photo: Spring tulips in the rain.

From our ACIL family to yours...

Happy May from all of us at Atlantic CIL! This month, we're proud to highlight stories and events that amplify disability advocacy, celebrate inclusion, and empower our community to speak up, stand strong, and support one another.

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Atlantic Center for Independent Living, INC

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Atlantic Center for Independent Living

160 S. PITNEY RD., UNITS 3 & 4, GALLOWAY, NJ 08205
PHONE: (609)748-ABLE (2253) | ATLANTICCIL.ORG

Our Mission

Atlantic Center for Independent Living, Inc. is a center that assists individuals with disabilities to live and work as independently as possible.

Our core services include:

Information & Referral

Information about & referrals to services and organizations that can help you achieve your independence.

Advocacy

Staff assist individuals with personal issues to advocate for what they need. Systems advocacy identifies issues that affect others within the community and develop strategies to bring about systems change.

Peer Support

We believe that individuals experiencing the same issues (peers) are in the best position to support one another dealing with similar experiences.

Life Skills Training

Services are designed to assist you in gaining the skills necessary to live independently in your community.

Transition Services

Youth: Our youth services provide support and guidance to students transitioning from school to adult life with a strong emphasis on employment.

Seniors: Atlantic staff can assist seniors living with disabilities to ensure they are receiving benefits and services designed to ensure the greatest independence possible with the goal of remaining within their communities.

Community Spotlight

Community Walks

With Coach Tadris & Friends

Tuesdays at 5:15pm

Stockton Track, Galloway

Call (609)748-2253 Ext. 4 or email
jburke@atlanticcil.org For More Details.



ACCESS to ART **FREE**



Location: Stockton University - Galloway campus
101 Vera King Farris Drive, Galloway, NJ
Campus Center, Meeting Room #5

Date: Tuesday, April 8, May 13, June 10


Time: 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

Art is in the Making: Join us each month for a fun, all-levels art session where you can explore your own ideas or follow along. No experience necessary. Supplies provided.


Co-sponsored with Atlantic Center for Independent Living supporting equal access for all.
For accommodations, contact Michael Cagno, mcagno@noyesmuseum.org, 609-626-3420



"Book Club for Adults With Disabilities"
Read *The Rest of the Story* By: Sarah Desson



May 29, Thursday
AT 7:30PM- 9:00 PM (EST)




Virtual on Google Meets

Let Reading be Your Escape

FREE EVENT
Lead by a self-advocate

Have a snack that relates to book and do something creative that relates to book; examples: Poem, Craft, Drawing, etc.

If you want to join us email
booksarecool1985@gmail.com



NFB South Jersey Shore Chapter

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Next Meeting: May 17th

Ocean City Library, 1735 Simpson Ave. (17th St. Entrance)

For more information contact: President Ed Garcia at 650-759-0470
Please visit: <https://www.nfbnj.org/chapters/south-jersey-shore-chapter/>

Our Stories



Photo: Amanda Chirelli

Amanda Chirelli's journey has been shaped by resilience, inner strength, and a deep sense of purpose. Born prematurely with cerebral palsy, she faced physical and societal challenges from a young age, yet her family's love—especially her mother's encouragement—helped her grow into someone who sees adversity as a learning experience.

Even when told she wasn't "college material," Amanda never gave up. Her siblings treated her with honesty and equality, giving her the foundation to face the real world with grit and grace. However, her transition into adulthood felt like she didn't know where to turn for answers. Amanda's determination led her to find community, opportunity, and eventually, her voice as an advocate.

Since connecting with Moceans and the Atlantic Center for Independent Living (ACIL), Amanda has flourished both personally and professionally. Amanda works for Moceans as their Outreach Coordinator. Working at Mocean's has taught her how to talk to legislators, plan events, organize volunteers, and build connections within her community. ACIL has provided a space where her strengths are celebrated and her voice as a disability advocate has grown louder and more confident. Through her involvement with virtual support groups, life skills trainings, and in-person community events, Amanda has built a strong local support system and lasting friendships. She continues to inspire others in the ACIL community with her warmth, kindness, and unwavering belief in the power of connection and advocacy. Amanda's journey is a powerful reminder of what's possible when people are given the support and opportunities they deserve.

No Cuts To CILs Rally



Photo: Disability advocates gathered from across the state representing NJ's 12 Centers for Independent Living.

Tuesday, May 6th, we raised our voices at the No Cuts to CILs Rally in Trenton! Funding cuts to Centers for Independent Living (CILs) threaten the vital services that empower people with disabilities to live independently. We showed up to say:

Our lives, our services, our voices—MUST be protected.

CILs are not optional - they are essential.

We stand united with advocates across the state to demand full and fair funding for CILs.

Please continue to reach out to legislators in support of Centers for Independent Living!



Photos: CIL Directors, advocates and CIL staff members at the No Cuts to CILs Rally..

Inclusive Healthy Communities

WORKSHOPS

Module 4

Building on Success

WORKSHOP 1: WHAT IS RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

- Wednesday, April 9th, 2025 [3:00pm] & Thursday, April 10th, 2025 [5:00pm]

WORKSHOP 2: UNDERSTANDING GROUP & ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS

- Wednesday, April 16th, 2025 [3:00pm] & Thursday, April 17th, 2025 [5:00pm]

WORKSHOP 3: STORYTELLING AND ADVOCACY

- Wednesday, April 23rd, 2025 [3:00pm] & Thursday, April 24th, 2025 [5:00pm]

WORKSHOP 4: FOLLOWING UP ON ACTIONS

- Wednesday, April 30th, 2025 [3:00pm] & Thursday, May 1st, 2025 [5:00pm]

WORKSHOP 5: SELF-CARE FOR OURSELVES

- Wednesday, May 7th, 2025 [3:00pm] & Thursday, May 8th, 2025 [5:00pm]

WORKSHOP 6: WRAPPING IT ALL TOGETHER

- Wednesday, May 14th, 2025 [3:00pm] & Thursday, May 15th, 2025 [5:00pm]



For Zoom links to the workshops register with United by Wellness to receive the daily newsletter.



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8VXP2K8>



Each of our classes are designed for participants to build skills needed by advocates interested in civic engagement.



Virtual Workshops!

Closed Captioning will be available during this meeting. For any other meeting accommodations contact Ana Then at: athen@atlanticcil.org two weeks prior to each workshop.



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**Mental Health
Association
in Atlantic County**

**Inclusive Healthy
Communities**
NJ Division of Disability Services



The Atlantic Center for Independent Living and The Mental Health Association in Atlantic County support equal access for all. This initiative was funded by an Inclusive Healthy Communities Grant from the Division of Disability Services, New Jersey Department of Human Services.

Virtual Support Groups & Activities

The Atlantic Center for Independent Living supports equal access for all.
For accommodations please contact Jennifer at jburke@atlanticcil.org | (609)748-2253 ext.4

Atlantic CIL Weekly Activity Links

Life Skills | Monday | 2pm | Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83007585374?pwd=McU3UFciKbQjIltuB1kk9yLjCRufQp.1>

Call In: 1-346-248-7799 | Meeting ID: 830 0758 5374 | Passcode: 248110

Sketchbook Club | Monday | 3:30pm | Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83854391536?pwd=YWtFekQyeE9wTlBqdVpkQVIvRUdiQT09>

Call In: 1-309-205-3325 | Meeting ID: 838 5439 1536

Social Group | Tuesday | 2pm | Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88558466172>

Call In: 1-301-715-8592 | Meeting ID: 885 5846 6172

Chronic Illness and Pain Group | Wednesday | 2pm | Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85449180096>

Call In: 1-301-715-8592 | Meeting ID: 854 4918 0096

Health Connection Call | 2nd and 4th Wednesdays | 5:30pm | Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87297450944>

Call In: 1-646-876-9923 | Meeting ID: 872 9745 0944

Life Skills | Thursday | 2pm | Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81807072057?pwd=Nr91FvzfuCsuyPTkkZ9PdvIMaoFgOv.1>

Call in: 1-312-626-6799 | Meeting ID #: 818 0707 2057 | Passcode: 948317

Life Skills | Thursday | 6pm | Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85063153999?pwd=NmJXdlZUUhHpUkxneExISEJQWk8xQT09>

Call In: 1-646-931-3860 | Meeting ID: 850 6315 3999 | Passcode 154100



Additional Atlantic CIL Collaboration Activity Contacts

United by Wellness virtual support groups with MHA

Visit: <http://www.mhaac.info/ubw.html>

Community Walks with Coach Tadris, Tuesdays at 5:15pm

Contact Jen at jburke@atlanticcil.org, to join

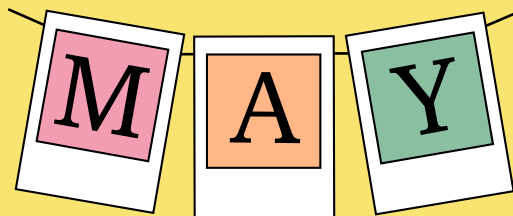
Access to Art Classes with the Noyes Museum of Art

Ongoing programming Co-sponsored by Atlantic CIL

Visit <https://noyesmuseum.org> for details.



Monthly Calendar



Activities & Support Groups

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
 MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH	 Arthritis Awareness			1 <u>Life Skills 6pm</u>	2	3
4	5 <u>Life Skills 2pm</u> <u>Sketchbook Club 3:30pm</u>	6 <u>Social Group 2pm</u> Community Walk 5:15pm	7 <u>Chronic Illness & Pain Group 2pm</u>	8 <u>Life Skills 6pm</u>	9	10
11 	12 Board Game & Puzzle Group 12-2pm <u>Life Skills 2pm</u> <u>Sketchbook Club 3:30pm</u>	13 <u>Social Group 2pm</u> Community Walk 5:15pm Art 6:30pm 	14 <u>Chronic Illness & Pain Group 2pm</u> <u>Health Connection Call 5:30pm</u>	15 <u>Life Skills 6pm</u>	16	17
18	19 <u>Life Skills 2pm</u> <u>Sketchbook Club 3:30pm</u>	20 <u>Social Group 2pm</u> Community Walk 5:15pm	21 <u>Chronic Illness & Pain Group 2pm</u>	22 <u>Life Skills 6pm</u>	23	24
25	26 Center Closed 	27 <u>Social Group 2pm</u> Community Walk 5:15pm	28 <u>Chronic Illness & Pain Group 2pm</u> <u>Health Connection Call 5:30pm</u>	29 <u>Life Skills 6pm</u>	30	31

Click on each group/activity title for active zoom link.
 Contact us for more information at jburke@atlanticcil.org | (609)748-2253 ext. 4

Weekly Life Skills Activities

Join us for Life Skills every Monday and Thursday! New topics are presented each week to assist you in gaining the skills necessary to live independently in your community.



MONDAY

**Mondays at 2pm with
Independent Living Specialist
Jamie Burke**

Zoom Meeting ID #: 830 0758 5374
Passcode: 248110 | [Zoom Link](#)



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Mental Health

Check-in

May is Mental Health Awareness Month! Let's check-in with our peers and discuss ways to improve our mental health.

May 5, 2025 | 2:00 pm
Zoom Meeting ID #: 830 0758 5374
Passcode: 248110 | [Zoom Link](#)

The Atlantic Center for Independent Living supports equal access for all. For accommodations please contact Jamie at jamie.burke@atlanticcil.org | 609-748-2253 ext 1007

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Comfort
Hope
Inspiration
Forgiveness
Motivation

Take What You Need

This discussion will highlight the importance of building a support network. Learn strategies to foster relationships and advocate for your needs!

May 12, 2025 | 1:00 pm
Zoom Meeting ID #: 830 0758 5374
Passcode: 248110 | [Zoom Link](#)

The Atlantic Center for Independent Living supports equal access for all. For accommodations please contact Jamie at jamie.burke@atlanticcil.org | 609-748-2253 ext 1007

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SPRING self-care

Learn how self-care practices can help you maintain your well-being and manage stress effectively!

May 19, 2025 | 2:00 pm
Zoom Meeting ID #: 830 0758 5374
Passcode: 248110 | [Zoom Link](#)

The Atlantic Center for Independent Living supports equal access for all. For accommodations please contact Jamie at jamie.burke@atlanticcil.org | 609-748-2253 ext 1007

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ELIMINATE stinking thinking by....

May 1st @ 6PM
Meeting ID: 840 0283 6340
Passcode: 155686
[Zoom Link](#)

THROWING AWAY NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

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LEARNING HOW TO CONTROL OUR ANGER

May 8th @ 6pm
Meeting ID: 840 0283 6340
Passcode: 155686

The Atlantic Center for Independent Living supports equal access for all. For accommodations please contact Jenny at jwalker@atlanticcil.org or (609)748-2253 ext #3

THURSDAY

**Thursdays at 6pm with
Independent Living Specialist
Jenny Walker**

Zoom Meeting ID #: 850 6315 3999
Passcode: 154100 | [Zoom Link](#)

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UNDERSTANDING THE BENEFITS OF Problem-Solving

May 15th @ 6pm
Meeting ID: 840 0283 6340
Passcode: 155686
[Zoom Link](#)

WORK SMARTER NOT HARDER

THE ATLANTIC CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING SUPPORTS EQUAL ACCESS FOR ALL. FOR ACCOMMODATIONS, PLEASE CONTACT JENNY AT jwalker@atlanticcil.org OR (609)748-2253 EXT #3

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Using your voice to be an Effective Communicator!

Your voice matters so learn to speak up for yourself~

May 22nd @ 6pm
Meeting ID: 840 0283 6340
Passcode: 155686
[Zoom Link](#)

The Atlantic Center for Independent Living supports equal access for all. For accommodations please contact Jenny at jwalker@atlanticcil.org or (609)748-2253 ext #3

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Protecting Your Inner PEACE

MAY 29TH @ 6PM
MEETING ID: 840 0283 6340
PASSCODE: 155686
[ZOOM LINK](#)

THE ATLANTIC CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING SUPPORTS EQUAL ACCESS FOR ALL. FOR ACCOMMODATIONS PLEASE CONTACT JENNY AT jwalker@atlanticcil.org OR (609)748-2253 EXT #3

Collaboration Activities



10 AM – 11 AM SUNDAYS: OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Meeting ID: 891 6452 0279 [Click on Link Here](#) Everyone experiences obstacles in many unique ways, whether it be physically, mentally, or socially. We'll share and discuss our worries... while also celebrating our successes.

2 PM – 3 PM MONDAYS: COPING SKILLS SUPPORT GROUP

Meeting ID: 975 3587 3500 [Click on Link Here](#) Learn new coping skills to help develop resiliency and ways to process stress. Types of activities vary from writing, art, poetry, and music.

5PM – 6PM MONDAYS: MENTAL HEALTH WRITING GROUP

Meeting ID: 861 6663 5659 [Click on Link Here](#) A new reading will be presented about health. Members will take time to write on the reading. Afterwards members can choose to read off what they have written/ give feedback and reflect.

11AM-12 PM TUESDAYS: YOU HAVE THE FLOOR (2ND/4TH)

Meeting ID: 948 2568 3415 [Click on Link Here](#) Allow people to be seen and heard by giving them the floor so to speak to talk for up to five minutes. May also include, from time to time, topics on better communication skills.

3 PM – 4 PM TUESDAYS: BETTER TOGETHER

Meeting ID: 875 6132 4882 [Click on Link Here](#) This is a group to support physical & mental health challenges. Together we will discuss a topic surrounding the struggle of balancing physical and mental well-being.

4PM – 5 PM TUESDAYS: RISING MINDS (SUPPORT FOR 18-30 YEAR OLDS)

Meeting ID: 938 3794 0309 [Click on Link Here](#) This is a support group for 18-30 year olds; the group aims to share ideas & experiences, meet others who understand, and develop tools for self-care. There is no health without mental health.

5PM – 6PM TUESDAYS: LIFE AFTER LOSS

Meeting ID: 850 5917 9372 [Click on Link Here](#) Join us in our open share and topic based group dedicated to finding comfort, joy, and growth following loss. **Members will not be admitted after 5:10pm. **

8AM – 9AM WEDNESDAYS: SHARE YOUR SUNSHINE

Meeting ID: 890 3553 9203 [Click on Link Here](#) This is a dynamic social group that functions from what each member brings to the table, culturally, recreationally, socially, and emotionally; nurtures empowerment and self fulfillment.

10AM – 11 AM WEDNESDAYS: GRATITUDE COFFEE

Meeting ID: 957 5149 1505 [Click on Link Here](#) Grab your coffee and join us as we use the gift of gratitude to disrupt stress and anxiety. It's believed that when we have gratitude, the weight of anxiety can be lifted off our shoulders.

7PM – 8 PM WEDNESDAYS: BOOMERS WELLNESS (1ST AND 3RD WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH)

Meeting ID: 914 9131 7292 [Click on Link Here](#) Baby boomers are a generation raised on television, rock & roll, and a youth spent fighting for social change. As we age, how do we stay well in a world of chaos? You are not alone, let's chat.

12PM-1PM THURSDAYS: BIG TIME FUN PARTY

Meeting ID: 928 1468 0220 [Click on Link Here](#) Activity Group - We're going to party like it's 1999! Different activities for different weeks. Just a place to have some laughs and explore a variety of ways to generate connection through fun!

7PM – 8 PM THURSDAYS: NOT FEARING FEAR

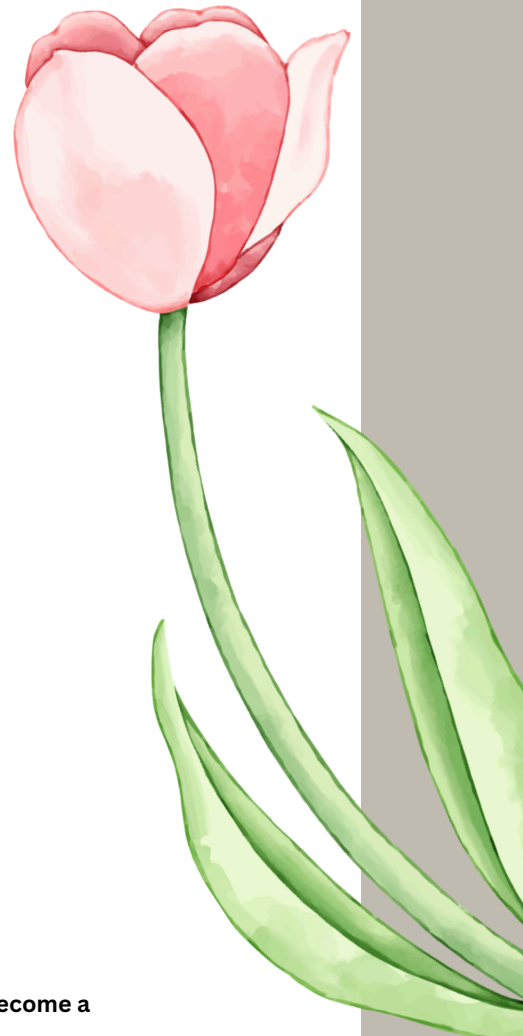
Meeting ID: 943 7789 0952 [Click on Link Here](#) Fear from facing unknown circumstances and from not being in control keeps them from exploring. By realizing this, we may begin to get comfortable with being uncomfortable.

2PM – 3 PM FRIDAYS: LIGHT BULB – A GROUP FOR YOUR THOUGHTS!

Meeting ID: 995 1443 1197 [Click on Link Here](#) During this group, reflection questions about various wellness topics will be shared by the facilitator and then explored as a group. Each group we walk away learning something new!

10AM-11 AM SATURDAYS: ARTS & HUMANITIES (1ST/3RD SATURDAY OF THE MONTH)

Meeting ID: 869 9856 3459 [Click on Link Here](#) Explore a sampling and light study of topics including the arts, music, dance, history, theatre, literature, poetry, philosophy, culture, and language through video and audio clips, images, readings, and sharing. Come stretch your mind and have some fun!



To receive the zoom information in a daily newsletter become a member of United by Wellness today

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8VXP2K8>



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