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**THE IL EDGE**  
 SPRING 2021 - WVSILC - PO Box 625 - Institute, WV 25112

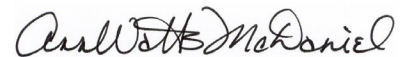
# SILC UPDATE

Spring is here and that means the legislative session has ended and something other than bills are sprouting and blooming! The 2021 legislative session was VERY different. The public wasn't allowed in the Capitol. Floor sessions and committee meetings had to be watched or listened to on-line. You could only attend a committee meeting if you had been invited – and only 2 people were allowed for each bill on the agenda. I never made it to the Capitol this year, but we followed the action (or inaction) on 273 bills. For information on the ones that were passed into law, see the Legislative Wrap-Up on page ??.

We are also moving into high gear on the implementation of our new State Plan for Independent Living. Many of the objectives are dependent upon our first big project – rebranding Independent Living (IL) and the CILs (centers for independent living). So many programs and places call themselves IL these days and people no longer have a good understanding of what our IL is or of what CILs are. We can't educate them and increase awareness until we have a "brand" for IL that sets us and the CIL apart as consumer controlled entities that believe in informed choice and the dignity of risk for individuals with disabilities. And the first step has officially begun. We have released a request for proposals (RFP) to find a really good consultant to help guide the CILs through the branding process. So if you, or someone you know, has that expertise be sure to check out the RFP on the SILC website at <http://www.wvsilc.org>.

Stay Safe and enjoy the spring weather – and if you are vaccinated, enjoy your opportunities to get out of the house!

From the desk of:

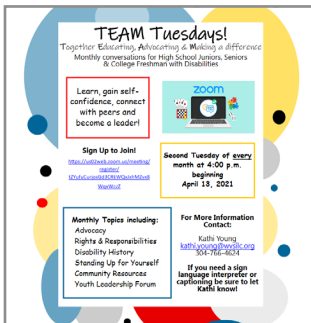


Ann McDaniel  
 Executive Director

### MISSION

*"To ensure persons who have disabilities have access to community-based resources that promote personal choice and facilitate the achievement of their independent living goals."*

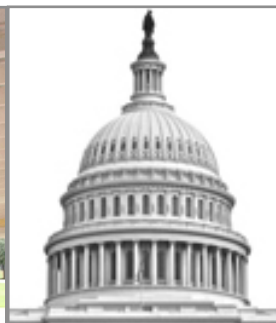
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### WV Centers for Independent Living

**Appalachian CIL**  
 Elk Office Center  
 4710 Chimney Dr.  
 Charleston, WV 25302  
 (304) 965-0376

**Northern WV CIL**  
 601-603 East Brockway Ave.  
 Suite A & B  
 Morgantown, WV 26505  
 (304) 296-6091

109 Randolph Ave.  
 Elkins, WV 26241  
 (304) 636-0143

**Mountain State CIL**  
 821 Fourth Ave.  
 Huntington, WV 25701  
 (304) 525-3324

329 Prince St.  
 Beckley, WV 25801  
 304-255-0122





## COVID-19 Vaccination Registration

Source: [WVDHHR](http://WVDHHR)

Pre-registration is open. **ALL** West Virginians over the age of 16 are encouraged to pre-register through the West Virginia COVID-19 Vaccine Registration System.

Vaccine supplies are limited, so pre-registration does not mean immediate access to a vaccine. Pre-registration offers West Virginians the opportunity to receive updates on vaccine availability and be offered an appointment when vaccine supplies allow.

The state's driving principles for COVID-19 vaccinations are to build community immunity in West Virginia by protecting our most vulnerable, reducing deaths, reducing hospitalizations, and maintaining access to critical services such as acute care.

Note: You are encouraged to create an account in the system even if you have received a first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine or if you are already on a waitlist through a local health department or healthcare provider.

Please visit <https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Vaccine.aspx> to input your information for pre-registration.\*

West Virginians who need assistance with pre-registration for any reason should call the West Virginia COVID-19 Vaccine Info Line for help at 1-833-734-0965. The info line is open Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. ■



## WVSILC Hosting Youth Webinar Series "TEAM Tuesdays"

Source: [wvsilc.org](http://wvsilc.org)

the WV Statewide Independent Living Council is pleased to announce the West Virginia Youth Leadership Forum "TEAM Tuesdays" virtual meetings (Together Educating, Advocating & Making a Difference)!

Monthly topics will include: Advocacy, Rights & Responsibilities, Disability History, Standing Up for Yourself, Community Resources, Youth Leadership Forum, and other topics geared towards today's youth.

All high school juniors & seniors and college freshmen with disabilities are invited to join us the second Tuesday of each month beginning Tuesday, April 13th, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.

To register, visit <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYufuCurjosGd3CREWQxJxhMZvx8WqvWczZ>.

Register Now for TEAM Tuesdays! ■

**TEAM Tuesdays!**  
Together Educating, Advocating & Making a difference  
Monthly conversations for High School Juniors, Seniors & College Freshman with Disabilities

Learn, gain self-confidence, connect with peers and become a leader!

**Sign Up to Join!**  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYufuCurjosGd3CREWQxJxhMZvx8WqvWczZ>

**Second Tuesday of every month at 4:00 p.m. beginning April 13, 2021**

**Monthly Topics including:**  
Advocacy  
Rights & Responsibilities  
Disability History  
Standing Up for Yourself  
Community Resources  
Youth Leadership Forum

**For More Information Contact:**  
Kathi Young  
[kathi.young@wvsilc.org](mailto:kathi.young@wvsilc.org)  
304-766-4624

**If you need a sign language interpreter or captioning be sure to let Kathi know!**

## Teacher makes clear masks so students with hearing loss can read lips

Source: [Good Morning America](#)



*Leslie Bailey, an instructional coach at Legacy Elementary School in Bossier City, Louisiana, created masks with clear, vinyl windows for children with hearing loss, including those who are deaf or hard of hearing. She also made the same masks for their fellow classmates and teachers.*

A Louisiana educator is working hard to limit the restrictions mask-wearing poses for children who are hearing impaired.

Leslie Bailey has been teaching for 16 years. It's now her seventh year as an instructional coach at Legacy Elementary School in Bossier City, Louisiana, which serves a majority of students who are hearing impaired from preschool to fourth grade.

Bailey told "Good Morning America" that children with hearing loss, including those who are deaf or hard of hearing, can struggle with understanding sign language if they're unable to read lips.

Bailey recognized this as a problem given face coverings are now being worn in Louisiana schools. Her solution: create masks with clear, vinyl windows.

"All educators in the entire United States are going above and beyond, reviving and rethinking how education is going to look like this year," Bailey said. "The masks' intentions aren't just for [people who are] hearing-impaired. It's for the first-grade teacher teaching phonics -- you want them to see your lips, but you don't want to take their masks off."

Bailey has designed and produced 60 masks for classrooms at Legacy to help kids who have hearing loss, their fellow classmates and their teachers. She also sells them through her Etsy shop, Magnolia Stitch Co.

She's made 70 masks for a district in Wisconsin and offers discounts to all schools. It takes about eight hours to make 40 masks on four embroidery machines, and Bailey has five people assisting. The clear windows are shaped so a person can see the wearer's entire mouth and smile.

"We live and breathe masks over at my house," Bailey said. "Seeing students smile and not having their faces covered up has definitely been a bonus as well."

One Legacy student, Baleigh Berry, is happy all her fellow classmates have the same mask. The 9-year-old was born deaf and has bilateral cochlear implants to partially restore her hearing, mom Shena Berry told "GMA."

(See Masks p11)

## New Year, New CEO, New Roles, and New Employees at Mountain State Centers for Independent Living

Source: <http://mtstcil.org/>

**Huntington and Beckley, WV** –Mountain State Centers for Independent Living (MTSTCIL) and Foundation for Independent Living (FIL) Board of Directors are happy to announce the names of the new President/CEO, Vice President for Resource Development, Consumer Resource Advocate Coordinator, and Executive Assistant to President/CEO.

This news was released after announcement of the retirement of Anne O. Weeks in December 2020 after forty years of dedicated service in the disability community. Huntington native, Angela Adams has been named President/CEO of Mountain State Center for Independent Living and Foundation for Independent Living. Previously, Angela spent her time as Executive Assistant/Office Manager to Weeks.

Kelly Elkins was named Vice President for Resource Development from the Beckley office. Kelly was hired as Community Resource Facilitator in May of 2016 and is excited to take on this new role in working in both the Huntington and Beckley offices as she will work with the Foundation for Independent Living, the fundraising arm of Mountain State Centers for Independent Living.

Joanna Hammond has a new title of Consumer Resource Advocate Coordinator, a role that Joanna is very familiar with. Her vast knowledge of resources in our state and community gives her the ability to assist consumers by providing much needed supports in their area.

Christie Payne was promoted to Executive Assistant to President/CEO and will work directly with Angela and assist in all day to day needs of running the organization.

New hires include Khelli Caldwell, Employment Services Specialist and Britany Stark, Skills Training Director. Both new employees will be working out of the Huntington Office. ■



## Mountain State Centers for Independent Living Getting a Makeover

Source: <http://mtstcil.org/>

**Huntington, WV** – Restoration has begun on the front of Mountain State Centers for Independent Living (MTSTCIL) Huntington office. According to CEO/Executive Director, Angela Adams. “We are curious to see what is behind the façade and wanting to restore it to what it looked like years ago, we are curious to see if we have original bricks back there, and the condition of those bricks.”

“This building has some rich history behind it”, says Adams. “In 1973 this building was owned by Stanley S. Gold and was Gold Furniture Co. Before that, it was Fetter Furniture Co. It was known for its distinctive facade featuring large glass display windows, colorful ceramic tile and New Orleans style gas lamps.”

Adams has recruited the assistance of Phoebe and Justin Randolph of after seeing their work with the Progress Building next door.

Mountain State Centers for Independent Living is wanting to do their part to make downtown Huntington a place that welcomes and encourages outside businesses and organizations to come to Huntington. It is being done by painting and renovating the 1st floor offices in hopes for a potential lessee.

If you have any questions or would like to schedule an appointment to look at the space on 821 4th Ave, Huntington, call 304-525-3324. ■



## Legislative Wrap-Up

The 2021 WV Legislative Session ended at Midnight on April 10th. A total of 2,039 bills were introduced – 722 in the Senate and 1,317 in the House. About 14% of the bills introduced – 282 total – were passed by both houses and completed the legislative process (160 House bills and 122 Senate bills).

We followed 273 of the bills (not necessarily supported – just followed). Of the bills we followed, about 10% passed (28 total) and included:

- SB 89** Exempting certain kindergarten and preschool programs offered by private schools from registration requirements
- SB 160** A rules bundle bill which included: **SB 140** - Division of Rehabilitation Services rule relating to Ron Yost Personal Assistance Services Act Board; and **SB 167** Insurance Commissioner rule relating to mental health parity
- SB 334** Establishing license application process for needle exchange programs
- SB 335** Relating to WV Invests Grant Program for students at accredited community and technical college
- SB 356** Allowing for written part of drivers' exam given in high school drivers' education course
- SB 375** Relating to county boards of education policies for open enrollment
- SB 387** Relating to drug screening of applicants for cash assistance
- SB 389** Relating to State Resiliency Office responsibility to plan for emergency and disaster response, recovery, and resiliency (there is no representation on this board from disability advocacy organizations)
- SB 562** Relating to juvenile competency proceedings
- SB 634** Requiring training of certain officers for persons with autism spectrum disorder
- SB 668** Creating Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact
- SB 680** Allowing State Superintendent of Schools define classroom teachers certified in special education
- HB 2012** Relating to public charter schools
- HB 2022** Budget Bill, making appropriations of public money out of the treasury in accordance with section fifty-one, article six of the Constitution
- HB 2024** Expand use of telemedicine to all medical personnel
- HB 2145** Relating to student aide class titles
- HB 2266** Relating to expanding certain insurance coverages for pregnant women
- HB 2290** Initiating a State Employment First Policy to facilitate integrated employment of disabled persons
- HB 2427** A rules bundle bill which included: **SB 146** - DHHR rule relating to client rights at state-operated mental health facilities; and **SB 147** - DHHR rule relating to delegation of medication administration and health maintenance tasks to approved medication assistive personnel
- HB 2616** Amend the reporting to the Governor and the Legislature to have

## Playground accessible to kids with disabilities to take shape in Kanawha State Forest

Source: [WV Gazette Mail](#)

The Kanawha State Forest Foundation is in the process of developing what will become the first wheelchair-accessible playground in the state parks system.

The playground will take shape later this year adjacent to the forest's Spotted Salamander Nature Trail.

So far, the foundation has raised \$58,000 of the \$80,000 needed to complete the playground, located on and adjacent to the site of an existing conventional playground. Construction and installation work is expected to begin this spring.

Centerpiece of the playground will be a swing set featuring a wheelchair platform swing, which forest visitors can mount and secure their wheelchairs to by themselves, and then use a pull chain to attain the desired swing arc.

The swing set also includes a child adaptive swing that has ample back support and a secure front panel to provide safe swinging for visitors needing the amenities. A patented JennSwing that provides full-body support for its riders will also be a part of the swing array.

Other playground items include a Curva spinner — a self-propelled spinning platform equipped with vertical metal bars gripped by its riders, who work together to build centrifugal force and increase speed. It can also be operated by a single rider. A smaller Lotus spinner, which requires a non-riding assistant to create the desired degree of spin using muscle power, is also planned.

The existing playground was widened and antiquated play structures will be replaced with ADA-compliant equipment suitable for use by both disabled and able-bodied users.

A solid rubber surface will be installed under the ADA-compliant swings and spinners, and virgin chipped rubber mulch will underlie the other new play gear to provide a nontoxic, wood- and metal-free surface.

The adjacent Spotted Salamander Trail, recently renovated by Foundation members and other volunteers, is a paved, quarter-mile circuit along a section of Davis Creek and a small wetland area. Signs along the way point out features of natural life encountered along the trail, using both printed and visual materials and braille.

The playground project will include adding a Braille game board near the trail, providing a fun way for both nonsighted and sighted visitors to learn the braille alphabet.

Money for developing the new playground includes a \$50,000 grant to expand recreational opportunities for the handicapped from the Marmet Hospital Foundation, a nonprofit representing the former tuberculosis treatment facility that merged with Charleston General Hospital in 1967. A \$5,000 grant was awarded by West Virginia University's "Take Back Our Health" physical activity initiative, and a \$1,700 bequest was made in memory of William Palmer,

*(See Playground next column)*

## Tee Shirts For Sale

Fair Shake Network tee shirts are now available for sale at the cost of \$10 for members and \$12 for non-members. The cost of shipping is \$3 if you need the shirt to be mailed to you. The shirts are available in 3XL, 2XL, XL, M, L and S. They are red and have the FSN logo in the center of the shirt. You can go online and order at [www.fairshake.org](http://www.fairshake.org) or call 304-766-0061. ■



*(Playground continued from previous column)*

Money for developing the new playground includes a \$50,000 grant to expand recreational opportunities for the handicapped from the Marmet Hospital Foundation, a nonprofit representing the former tuberculosis treatment facility that merged with Charleston General Hospital in 1967. A \$5,000 grant was awarded by West Virginia University's "Take Back Our Health" physical activity initiative, and a \$1,700 bequest was made in memory of William Palmer, frequently seen walking in KSF with his wife, Leola, prior to his death last August.

The Foundation has also raised \$1,300 for the playground through a campaign on its Facebook page.

The Foundation welcomes donations from individuals, corporate and club donors. Donations in excess of \$1,000 will be acknowledged on a permanent recognition sign at the playground entrance. Donations may be made online via the Foundation's Facebook site, or by mailing them to the foundation at 7500 Kanawha State Forest Drive, Charleston, WV 25314. ■



## WV Tobacco Quit Line

“Despite a pandemic known to affect the lungs, cigarette sales actually increased over the last year. West Virginia continues to have the highest smoking rate in the country. But, we have a program here in West Virginia that can help.

The WV Tobacco Quitline provides nicotine replacement therapy and expert coaching to help smokers quit. Most insurances, including Medicaid and Medicare, are accepted and there are funds for uninsured. Call, text, or chat today to enroll in the program.”



Caption this...



## Man With Cerebral Palsy On Inspiring Nike’s New Hands-Free Shoe

Source: [NPR Podcast Transcript](#)

MICHEL MARTIN, HOST:

And finally, Nike unveiled a new sneaker design last week, but these are not named for some superstar or even up-and-coming athlete. No, these are called the Go FlyEase. And they are the company’s first hands-free sneaker. That means no laces to tie, no Velcro to strap, no zippers necessary. It’s the latest model of a Nike line made with accessibility in mind, so people living with disabilities or who just have trouble tying and untying shoes can also have a cool, supportive sneaker for everyday wear.



And that line exists in part because of Matthew Walzer. He is living with cerebral palsy, and that affects some of his motor skills. Back in 2012, when he was just 16, Walzer wrote a letter to the company asking them to make shoes that he and others like him could wear. Walzer collaborated on the early models of FlyEase, and he is with us now to tell us more. Hello.

MATTHEW WALZER: Hello, Michel. How are you?

MARTIN: I’m good. Well, congratulations, sir. It’s not every day I get to meet the inspiration for a Nike shoe, so let me just drink it in for a minute here (laughter). So we’ll get to the design in a minute. But I was just wondering if you could take us back to 2012, when you first wrote that letter. I mean, would you mind just reading a bit for me? I particularly liked the couple sentences that began with, out of all the challenges I’ve overcome in my life.

WALZER: Sure. (Reading) Out of all the challenges I have overcome in my life, there’s one that I’m still trying to master - tying my shoes. Cerebral palsy stiffens the muscles in the body. As a result, I have flexibility in only one of my hands, which makes it impossible for me to tie my shoes. My dream is to go to the college of my choice without having to worry about someone coming to tie my shoes every day.

MARTIN: And you go on to describe, you know, that you’re a great student, that you have most mobility, that - you know, you - obviously your speech is not impaired. You can do all the things. But, hey, you know, you’re thinking about going to college and not being able to tie your shoes. What gave you the idea to write the letter? Did you think that they would see it, that the Nike folks would see it?

WALZER: You know, I want to take you back a bit, if I can, to the beginning of my life. I was born two months premature and was diagnosed with cerebral palsy, CP, at birth. And I had overcome a lot to even get to the point to where I could feasibly know in the back of my mind that I could go away to college and that the only thing that was stopping me at the time was, you know, not being

(See Nike p9)

# Girl's letter to lawmaker leads to legislation for people with hearing loss

Source: [Good Morning America](#)

Legislation being considered in Congress that would require insurance providers to cover hearing aid devices is the brainchild of a now 11-year-old girl.



Ally Tumblin, now 9, is pictured writing her letter to her local congressman.

Ally Tumblin, now a fifth-grade student in Colorado, was 9 years old and in third grade when she received a homework assignment to do something to better her community, with one option being to write a letter to an elected official about an important cause.

“She looked at me and was like, ‘Mom, my BAHA,’” said Ally’s mother, Melissa Tumblin. “And that was the start of it.”

A BAHA is a bone-anchored hearing system, an implantable device that treats hearing loss.

Ally used a BAHA because she was born with both microtia, a rare condition that causes missing or underdeveloped ears, and aural atresia, the absence of the ear canal, according to Children’s Hospital of Chicago.

In Ally’s case, she was born without a right ear or right ear canal, according to Tumblin.

“She was born via C-section and I remember my husband coming over to me teary-eyed and he said, ‘I think there’s something wrong with her ear,’” she said. “I immediately saw her sweet little smile and her face and I was so happy, but we were kind of shocked and our story is the same story as so many families.”

Tumblin said she and her husband felt “alone” after Ally’s birth without many resources to support their daughter.

When they discovered, through Tumblin’s own research, that Ally could get a BAHA device, they then found out the device was not covered at all by their insurance.

When Ally was around 1, the Tumblins purchased a BAHA for her out of their own pocket so that she wouldn’t face any further speech and hearing delays.

BAHA devices range in price from \$5,000 to \$12,000 each and need to be upgraded or replaced every five years due to new technology, according to Tumblin.

“I will never forget the day she got [a BAHA],” said Tumblin. “The audiologist put the device on Ally and she whispered Ally’s name behind her ear. Ally’s face lit up and she whipped her head around and looked at us and we both started crying tears of joy.”

(Update continued from p4)

information continuously available on the Office of Health Facility Licensure and Certification’s website

**HB 2671** Relating to financial exploitation of elderly persons, protected persons or incapacitated adults

**HB 2701** Relating to authorizing the Division of Rehabilitation Services to approve acceptable training programs required for low vision individuals to obtain a Class G drivers license

**HB 2794** To extend the Neighborhood Investment Program Act to July 1, 2026

**HB 2877** Expand direct health care agreements beyond primary care to include more medical care services

**HB 2918** Relating to Family Drug Treatment Court

**HB 2927** Adding Caregiving expenses to campaign finance expense

## Legislative Interims

Legislative Interims, the meetings of joint legislative committees during the interim between regular legislative sessions, have been scheduled for 2021 as follows:

- May 10
- June 6, 7, 8
- September 12, 13, 14
- October 10, 11, 12
- November 14, 15, 16
- December 5, 6, 7

The schedule of committee meetings for each “Interim” is generally posted about a week prior. You can check the legislative website for the meeting schedules at: <http://www.wvlegislature.gov>. ■





(Hearing Loss continued from p7)

"I remember someone in the audiologist's office told me, 'It's as if she's been re-engaged with her environment, like someone turned on a switch,'" she recalled.

Once Ally received her BAHA, Tumblin set out to help other families obtain insurance coverage where possible and also to ask lawmakers to make it a national mandate that insurance companies cover devices like BAHAs and cochlear implants.

"Our types of devices are constantly left out of coverage," said Tumblin, who founded the nonprofit organization Ear Community. "It feels discriminatory."

When Ally wrote her letter to her local representative, Rep. Joe Neguse, D-Colo., she asked him to mandate insurance coverage for devices like hers.

"There are thousands of children and adults just like me who need this device to hear better," she wrote in the 2019 letter.

Less than three months later, Neguse became the lead sponsor of "Ally's Act," legislation that would amend current law to "require coverage of hearing devices and systems in certain private health insurance plans," according to the text of the legislation.

Neguse reintroduced the legislation last month in the U.S. House of Representatives.

"I'm incredibly grateful for Ally's initiative and courage to bring this issue to my office so we could get to work on a legislative fix to address it," Neguse said in a statement announcing the reintroduction of Ally's Act.

Sens. Shelley Moore Capito, R-W.Va., and Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., also introduced Ally's Act last month in the Senate.

"I think it's pretty cool," Ally said of seeing the legislation that her letter inspired. "I'm excited and I hope Ally's Act passes. I think kids deserve to hear." ■



## World's First All-Rooms-Accessible Hotel to Open in West Virginia on New Year's Day 2022

Source: [TravelAbility](https://www.travelability.com)



On January 1, 2022, a new boutique hotel will open in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia featuring 28 guest rooms and two suites. Built inside of what was an abandoned schoolhouse building, it will be named – perhaps unsurprisingly and as a tribute to its past – The Schoolhouse Hotel.

The project is being financed by The Disability Opportunity Fund (DOF), a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). By investing in small businesses, affordable housing and commercial real estate projects, CDFIs generate job growth in struggling communities across the United States.

The City of White Sulphur Springs is a community that has faced particular difficulty in recent decades. In 1993, following the coal industry's departure from the area and the subsequent population decline, the city's high school was forced to close its doors. And in 2016, a major flood destroyed homes and businesses and took the lives of 14 people in less than an hour. Many businesses, already struggling due to a weakened local economy, never reopened.

Charles Hammerman, CEO of the Disability Opportunity Fund, said that White Sulphur Springs came to his attention after two area moms called his office, searching for work opportunities for their disabled children. Now, more than 25 years after the city's school shut down, Hammerman's DOF is making a substantial investment in the community. The school-turned-hotel will employ up to 40 people, providing the city with an opportunity to benefit from increased tourism.

In keeping with its focus on the disability market, DOF has committed to making The Schoolhouse Hotel fully accessible. When it opens next year, it will be the world's first hotel where every room is adapted for use by disabled people. Full accessibility, universal design and an accessible booking experience that matches customers to the room that will best meet their needs are priorities that DOF hopes to normalize, and Hammerman said that he hopes his hotel will serve as an example for the lodging industry.

To learn more about The Schoolhouse Hotel, visit: <https://theschoolhousehotelwv.com>. ■



(Nike continued from p6)

able to tie my shoes.

I have full dexterity in my left hand and very limited in my right. At the time, there was obviously nothing out there like there is now with the various options of FlyEase. And I didn't want to have to worry about who was coming to put on my shoes every day. And so I wrote this letter not only for myself, but also for the millions of other disabled people out there that can't put on their shoes for one reason or another. And I honestly wasn't expecting Nike to respond. I mean, it's hard to - as a 16-year-old to have that as my expectation. But I knew I had to make my voice heard and let Nike know that there is a need out there for a product like this.

MARTIN: So say more about why you wanted an athletic shoe because, you know, part of inclusivity, obviously is wanting to participate in things that everybody else can participate in. So you have every right to want, you know, a cool shoe, you know, like everybody else, and not necessarily to wear, you know, what my kids would call teacher shoes.

WALZER: (Laughter).

MARTIN: But is there another reason you didn't just want to be limited to slippers or sort of penny loafers or something like that?

WALZER: Sure. So with CP and, you know, various physical disabilities, you need a supportive shoe to assist with walking. And, you know, there are slippers and sandals, but those don't offer the support that someone like myself with cerebral palsy needs. And at the same time, you want something that looks just as good as it functions. And so that's why I, without question, wanted a basketball and a running shoe with a closure system that can be used by everybody.

MARTIN: So talk a little bit about - like, when you first saw them, do you remember what you thought?

WALZER: You're talking about the FlyEase Go?

MARTIN: The new ones, yeah, when they unveiled the first hands-free just a few days ago.

WALZER: Yeah. I saw them on Monday on social media. And once I saw the video of how they function, it's - you know, it's absolutely incredible. They have that kickstand system where the shoe kind of does all the work for you once you start to put your foot into it. And it's great for people that have little to no dexterity in their hands or have no hands at all for one reason or another.

When Nike's designing a shoe like this, it doesn't mean that everybody can't not wear them, right? You could wear them. I could wear them. It doesn't matter. And the entire concept of universal design as a whole needs to be further explored not just in the shoe industry and in the fashion industry, but across all sectors. I'm talking transportation. I mean, when a person with a disability goes and buys a car - right? - they have to go and pick out that car off the showroom and then go take it out to a third party and get it modified. We can't go in and work with Toyota or Ford and say, you know, I want the

## Gov. Justice In accordance with CDC and FDA, pause Johnson & Johnson vaccine

Source: [Office of the Governor](#)

Gov. Jim Justice announced today that out of an abundance of caution and upon the recommendation released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration, all use of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine in West Virginia will be paused immediately until further notice.

Clinics that are scheduled to use the Johnson & Johnson vaccine will substitute with another COVID-19 vaccine manufacturer.

"The safety of West Virginians is always our first and foremost priority," Gov. Justice said. "This pause will not impact our ability to continue vaccinating West Virginians, and is exactly the reason why we stood up our Joint Interagency Task Force led by our West Virginia National Guard. They were absolutely ready for this scenario."

The WV DHHR, through the federal Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS), has not received any reports of these extremely rare blood-clotting events in West Virginia residents who have received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. The DHHR will continue to monitor for instances going forward.

"The finding of abnormal blood clotting is extremely rare in citizens receiving the J&J vaccine, and in response to FDA and CDC guidance, and acting out of a great amount of caution, we will pause vaccinations with the J&J product for now," West Virginia Coronavirus Czar Dr. Clay Marsh said. "The fact that CDC and FDA are acting out of caution for 6 clotting episodes in 6.8 million doses given should reassure West Virginia residents that we are watching any and all associated findings in those vaccinated to make sure safety is our priority. We know that the key to saving lives and improving outcomes from COVID-19 in West Virginia is continuing to choose to be vaccinated. We have sufficient Pfizer and Moderna vaccines to continue our goal of vaccinating all West Virginia residents, and the key to our success or failure to save lives and protect WV citizens is the number of people choosing to get vaccinated." ■

(See Nike p10)



## The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation Announces The Bridge of Hope Fund

Source; [TGKVF](https://tgkvf.org)

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources' Bureau for Behavioral Health would like to share the following information about a scholarship opportunity from the Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation.

This scholarship opportunity is for a person in addiction recovery who is interested in pursuing a training or education program. This scholarship is for undergraduate studies.

### Eligibility

Applicants must:

- Be in recovery from addiction
- Have completed a recovery program and demonstrate good standing in regards to the recovery program's after care requirements
- Actively participate in a mutual aid group or alternative peer support group

Each application will be reviewed on an individual basis to determine merit.

Scholarship Application is Available March 1 – May 15, 2021

For more information, visit:

<https://tgkvf.org/special-initiatives/bridge-hope-scholarship/> ■



(Nike continued from p9)

just in the shoe industry and in the fashion industry, but across all sectors. I'm talking transportation. I mean, when a person with a disability goes and buys a car - right? - they have to go and pick out that car off the showroom and then go take it out to a third party and get it modified. We can't go in and work with Toyota or Ford and say, you know, I want the disability, you know, package, per se, like you get the convenience package on a car. And so we could buy a car in April and get it in October - because that's what happened to me.

You know, there's so many disabled drivers on the road as there's ever been. Like, why is it so difficult to get a car? You know, easy for all is easy for everybody. And something as simple as, you know, opening the bags that cereal comes in, you know, inside the box and how difficult it can be for someone like myself with limited dexterity to get that bag open sometimes. It's, like, why isn't this just easier? Because I'm sure if it was, someone without a disability would appreciate that just as much.

MARTIN: So can I go back and ask you - you know, you wrote this letter. You were thinking ahead to college. You obviously went, and (laughter) you did really well. How did it go for you? I mean, did you ever get sneakers in time to - I mean, was there a design available that allowed you to do what you wanted to do, which is, you know, take care of yourself?

WALZER: Yes. I mean, the prototype phase kind of even goes back to when I was in high school. So in high school and then the first year and a half of college, I wore, you know, Nike prototypes to school and to class every day. And so, yeah, there was a design in time. And the college in itself, on a personal level, was a lot of growing up emotionally faster than I was ready for but also making sure I advocated for things that I needed at my university to be able to function in a safe and inclusive manner, whether it was my - things with my dorm or transportation.

And so it just goes back to advocating. And my goals for the future are to work across different companies, organizations and sectors to address so many different issues that are out there that, to be quite honest, are being just ignored or not addressed.

MARTIN: Well, before we let you go, Matthew, you know I have to ask, are the sneakers cool?

WALZER: You know, I haven't tried them yet. I don't have a pair yet. So from what I've seen online, they are. They do look extremely cool. And I'm very, very excited to try them.

MARTIN: That was Matthew Walzer. His letter to Nike back in 2012 helped inspire the company's FlyEase line of sneakers. The newest hands-free model will be available later this year.

Matthew Walzer, thank you so much for being with us. Keep us posted - will you? - on everything you're up to.

WALZER: I will, Michel. Thank you for having me. ■



# Tommy Hilfiger Releases Spring Adaptive Collection

Source: [MRMAG](#)

Tommy Hilfiger has launched its spring 2021 Adaptive collection, a line of clothing designed to make dressing easier for adults and children with disabilities.

This collection features the same classic American cool with a twist design as other collections for men, women, and kids. This season redefines the preppy aesthetic through a modern mix of court sports and coastal prep styles, combining Tommy Hilfiger's classic red, white and blue color palette with spring pastels.



“Tommy Hilfiger Adaptive is about creating fashion that is accessible to everyone, regardless of ability,” said Tommy Hilfiger, principal designer of Tommy Hilfiger Global. “Getting dressed should be a joy – an experience that empowers you to look good and feel good in what you are wearing. Our adaptive collections have revolutionized everyday dressing for people with disabilities, giving them the independence and confidence to express their individuality through style.”

Tommy Hilfiger Adaptive casts diverse talent from the adaptive community in its campaigns. The spring 2021 campaign stars Olympic cyclist Kristina Vogel, Paralympian Rheed McCracken, Paralympic swimmer and track runner Haven Shepherd, former football player Isaiah Pead, paddleboarder Jonas Letieri, model Ashley Young, model Teddy B., and models and sisters Mila and Elora.

The shopping journey for Tommy Hilfiger Adaptive is also created with the goal of end-to-end accessibility for consumers. A “shop by solution” feature on [tommy.com](#) guides shoppers through all adaptive modifications, allowing them to choose the best solution for their lifestyle. Tommy Hilfiger Adaptive orders placed on [tommy.com](#) arrive in accessible, user-friendly packaging that provides ease of opening and returning. In the United States, customers can also shop Tommy Hilfiger Adaptive on [tommy.com](#) using Alexa's voice-enabled technology.

More than one billion people globally live with a disability, and yet they have been largely overlooked by the fashion industry. Determined to address this gap in the market and to make a positive difference, Tommy Hilfiger became the first global lifestyle brand to modify its mainstream apparel to fit the needs of people with disabilities. Tommy Hilfiger Adaptive launched in the United States in fall 2017, and the line is now available in Europe, Japan, and Australia on [tommy.com](#) and through select retail partners. ■



(Masks continued from p3)

“I picked her up from school and she had the biggest smile on her face,” Berry said. “If a teacher was masked, it'd be very different for my daughter to understand what's going on in the classroom. She's processing background noise and other variables that the hearing impaired community struggles with.”

Berry hopes more schools become aware that masks with windows are a necessity for some children. ■



Baleigh Berry, 9, wears a mask one of her teachers, Leslie Bailey, made for her and her classmates. The 9-year-old was born deaf and has bilateral cochlear implants to partially restore her hearing, mom Shena Berry told “GMA.”



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### TEAM Tuesdays!

We are pleased to announce the West Virginia Youth Leadership Forum "TEAM Tuesdays" virtual meetings (Together Educating, Advocating & Making a Difference)!

All high school juniors & seniors and college freshmen with disabilities are invited to join us the second Tuesday of each month.

To register, visit <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYufuCurjosGd3CREWQxJxhMZvx8WqvWczZ>

If you require disability accommodations, you must register one week in advance and inform us of the specific accommodation when you register.

### NCIL's 2021 Annual Conference on Independent Living July 19-30, 2021

NCIL's 2021 Annual Conference on Independent Living will be virtual!

NCIL is working hard on conference registration, the schedule, and other details. We will be releasing additional updates over the coming months.

For more information visit [ncil.org](http://ncil.org)

### Fair Shake Network

Location: Zoom

### Board Meeting

1:30 PM

July 21, 2021

September 22, 2021

### Membership Meeting

10:00 AM

July 28, 2021

September 29, 2021

For details visit [fairshake.org](http://fairshake.org)

### WVSILC Board Meeting

Location: Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82194833004?pwd=MitrVIVhSUI5RUNwL2Zibm02bUM0UT09>

June 2, 2021

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

August 4, 2021

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

### WVSILC Executive Committee

Location: Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82278731622?pwd=UUp0ckx1ZUxvQINBMGNsYlpaMy8xQT09>

July 7, 2021

1:00 PM

September 1, 2021

1:00 PM