

TR^{hode}ANSI^{sland}ITIONS

Assisting Youth in Transition from School to Adult Life

Independent
Living &
Community
Participation

Vol. 6, No. 4
May 2003

New from Social Security - Ticket to Work!

In November 2003, Rhode Islanders age 18 and over who receive SSI or SSDI benefits may participate in a new Social Security Administration program, *Ticket To Work*. The goal of the program is to help SSI and SSDI beneficiaries get and keep employment, and earn enough money to no longer need Social Security cash benefits. Participation and use of the Ticket is strictly voluntary; Social Security benefits will not be affected for those who choose to *not* use the Ticket.

The *Ticket to Work Program* offers students the opportunity to receive services and support to work. Students can use Tickets for rehabilitation and employment services, or a job from a service provider in an approved network, chosen by students or their families. Tickets will be given out over a ten-month period, based on the last digit of students' Social Security numbers.

The Ticket offers students more choices in selecting vocational service providers from a list of approved **Employment Network (EN)** participants, public or private organizations, approved by Social Security, to help students get what they need to get and keep employment. The Ticket allows students to choose providers from the EN that best meet their needs and to receive employment-related services at no cost. In addition, Social Security will not schedule students for any medical continuing reviews (CDRs) while they are using the Ticket and making timely progress toward the employment goals they set with the help of the EN.

In late May, **MAXIMUS**, the agency that administers the Ticket program, will begin recruiting ENs in Rhode Island. When they get their Tickets, students should check with MAXIMUS for the EN list. To use the Ticket, students will need to take it to ORS or another EN, to help them develop their plans to go to work. They will then provide the services students need to follow their plans. Because some ENs specialize, and others may have the capacity to accept only a few Tickets, students will need to find out which ENs can meet their needs. Since it is so important to select the right

EN, students and their families need to make informed decisions, based on information from various ENs.

Questions to ask ENs:

- What type of services does your agency provide?
- What types of services can your agency purchase from other providers?
- Are there any requirements or restrictions on these services?
- How many individuals with my particular disability have you helped to obtain employment?
- Does your agency specialize in a disability area?
- What services can I expect if I give you my Ticket?
- What success have you had with other Ticket holders?
- In what types of occupations did your last 5 consumers become employed?
- How many people who you assisted went to work last year?
- How much experience do you have with Social Security Work Incentives?

Benefits Planning:

Working and receiving any income may affect student benefits (i.e. SSI, SSDI, food stamps, medical assistance, housing). Benefits planning is designed to help people who receive disability benefits make informed decisions regarding employment, based on understanding their benefits and available work incentives. Beginning in July, the **Ocean State Center for Independent Living (OSCIL)** can provide benefits planning or referral to local benefits planners.

Read the full article about *Ticket to Work* at:
www.sherlockcenter.org, Online Publications to RI Transitions.

(See Fact Sheet on page 3.)

In this issue:

► Ticket to Work

► Ocean State
Currents

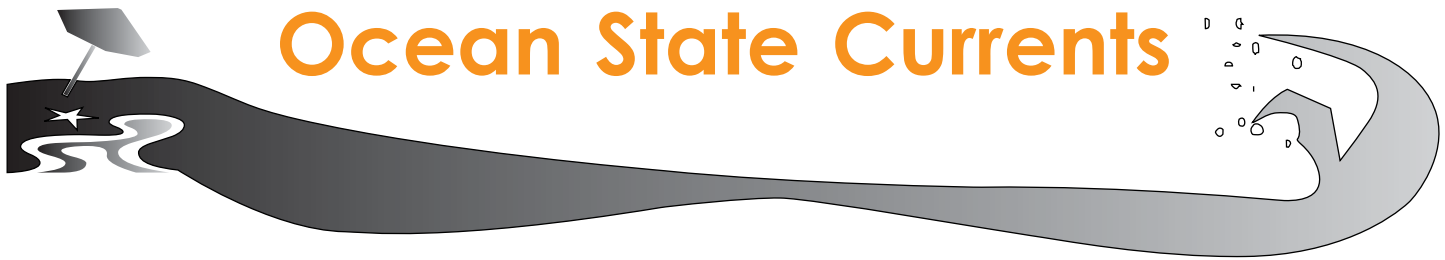
► RI Pathfinders

► Summer
Programs

► MAPs



Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities



Summer Transition Opportunity Program (STOP)

District approval is pending for the Providence Regional Transition Center's **STOP** program. Last year, seventeen 9th and 10th graders completed the program and received certificates of completion at a graduation ceremony at Mt. Pleasant HS. This year, the **STOP** program will be at the Textron/Chamber Academy, again for twenty 9th and 10th grade students with IEPs - five from each high school. As soon as it is approved, teachers will be asked to refer students who will be interviewed for acceptance. This summer program offers training in public transportation and banking skills (courtesy of Citizens Bank), and visits to the DMV and the State House. Additionally, students learn how to look for employment and an apartment. Students receive weekly stipends in this 3 week program. For more information, contact **Lisa Beaulieu** at **(401) 278-0520**.

Wheels and Heels

Wheels & Heels provides sports and recreational programs for adults and children with disabilities, including wheelchair soccer, track and field, bowling and others. On **May 26**, the new golf program will begin at Button Hole Golf Course and Learning Center in Providence. The association's track and field program will participate in regional games at Massachusetts Hospital School in Canton, MA, on **June 7, 8 and 9**, as well as national games at Connecticut College, in New London, CT, from **June 21 to 29**. For more information, call **(401) 781-8667**, or e-mail wheelchair1515@aol.com

Legal Aspects of Student Discipline

Rhode Island College Course (**SPED 580-02**) Summer Session I - explores legal issues and challenges teachers and administrators face on a daily basis. Class meets Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, 4:00-6:00 pm, beginning **May 19**. For more information, call David Kane **(401) 222-4600, Ext. 2314**.

SAVE THE DATES!

The New England Continuing Education Program for Community Rehabilitation **Personnel** will host a seminar on *Transition from School to Career*, at the Hotel Northampton, Northampton, MA, **June 25-27**. Registration deadline is **May 28**. For more information, visit <http://iod.unh.edu> or call **(603) 862-4117**. The program is sponsored by the University of Hartford, the University of New Hampshire and Assumption College.

The Council for Exceptional Children's **Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT)** will hold its twelfth international conference on **October 23 - 25**, in Roanoke, VA. This conference will feature keynote speaker, **Dr. Hunter "Patch" Adams**, founder of the Gesundheit! Institute, a holistic medical community that provides free medical care to thousands of patients. Register online at www.radford.edu/~conf-serv or call **(540) 831-6037**. Early bird discount applies until September 24th.

Ticket to Work Factsheet

Who:

Students who are 18 and over, and who receive SSI or SSDI Benefits

What:

Ticket to Work - a new program of the Social Security Administration - is an opportunity for students to receive services and support so they can go to work. Tickets can be used for rehabilitation and employment services, or for a job from a service provider, chosen by students or their families from an approved list, **The Employment Network (EN)**. The Ticket allows students to choose an EN provider that best meets their needs and to receive employment related services at no cost.

When:

Starting in November 2003, MAXIMUS, the agency administering the program, will give out tickets over a ten-month period, based on the last digit of students' Social Security numbers.

Where can I get more information:

Refer questions to **MAXIMUS** and **SSA**.

MAXIMUS - 1-866-YOURTICKET (1-866-968-7842), or 1-866-TDD2Work (1-866-833-2967)
Website: www.yourtickettowork.com

Social Security Administration (SSA) - Website: www.ssa.gov

SSA - Redbook 2003 - a summary guide to employment support for people with disabilities, under SSI and SSDI programs. Online at: www.ssa.gov/work; call SSA at: (1-800-772-1213v, or 1-800-325-0778 tty/tdd)

OSCIL - (401) 738-1013 - **Benefits Specialists** available after July 2003, to help people make informed decisions about employment, based on understanding their benefits and available work incentives. Students and families are strongly encouraged to contact a benefits planner to help them understand how working may affect their benefits.

RI Department of Human Services - Office of Rehabilitation Services, online at: www.ors.state.ri.us/TicketToWork.htm

Why:

The goal of Ticket to Work is to help SSI and SSDI beneficiaries obtain and maintain employment and earn enough money to not need Social Security cash benefits.

(See page 1 for Questions to Ask ENs.)

SELF-DETERMINATION

Student Page

SELF-KNOWLEDGE CHOICE-MAKING PROBLEM SOLVING GOAL-SETTING RISK-TAKING
SAFETY SELF-ADVOCACY LEADERSHIP

ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS:

Do you select your courses?

Do you help plan your IEP meeting?

Do you go to and participate in your IEP meeting?

If you answered NO to any of these questions, ask yourself

"Why are you letting someone else make plans for you?"

IN ORDER TO GET MORE INVOLVED, START BY KNOWING YOURSELF: SELF-KNOWLEDGE

My interests _____

My abilities _____

My needs _____

(supports such as more time, quiet room...)

People who support me _____

KNOW WHAT YOU WANT TO DO AFTER YOU GRADUATE: POST-SCHOOL OUTCOMES (based on the above info)

Employment _____

Post-Secondary Education _____

Independent Living _____

Community Participation _____

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO IN SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY TO REACH THESE OUTCOMES?

ACTION PLAN

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR EXPERIENCES NEEDED	Timeline	Who is responsible?	Done!!

This Action Plan is the basis for your IEP - what you do for the next few years should be preparing you for life after high school.... Bring this with you to your IEP meeting.

The more you know about yourself, the better choices you can make.

The more you practice expressing your feelings, opinions, and abilities, the more people will listen!!

Go to your IEP meeting and take charge of your life!! You are now armed with information about you!!
Whose life is it anyway??

FROM SCHOOL TO COMMUNITY LIFE WITH RI PATHFINDERS

In February, **Rhode Island Pathfinders** celebrated its inception with a day long program at Roger Williams Park's Casino. Hosted by **Parents and Friends for Alternate Living** (PAL), five New York Pathfinders joined six local young people and their circles of support to share experiences and visions for the future.

Guided by **Dr. Beth Mount** and **Connie Lyle O'Brien**, both nationally recognized for their person-centered planning work, the Pathfinders model helps students with developmental disabilities make choices about the future, and become involved in work or activities that connect them to the community.

This focus on person-centered planning drew the interest of **Doreen McConaghy**, PAL's Executive Director, and **Ken Renaud**, Coordinator of PAL's Employee Information Network. "It was like a light bulb went off," said Renaud. More than a year ago, they began e-mailing with O'Brien, who helped them plan the Rhode Island Pathfinders project. O'Brien came to Rhode Island for the celebration and facilitated the afternoon session called, *Life Building: Opening Windows to Change*. Ideas about relationships, preferences, gifts of capacity and community membership were explored.

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Lynda Kahn of the Division of Developmental Disabilities, **Mary Madden**, formerly of OSARR, and **David Sienko** of the Department of Education shared their perspectives on community supports and the roles of their organizations.

For **Clara Berg** and her son, **Kenny**, the search for the right community experience was particularly difficult. Kenny loves the outdoors and physical work—in fact, he wanted to work on a farm—but the family lives in Manhattan. With the help of N.Y. Pathfinders and a shared vision for Kenny, Clara was able to secure a job for him at a working farm museum, just four blocks from their home!

According to McConaghy, Pathfinders will meet 4-5 times a year. Students and their teams, including transition coordinators, families, providers and counselors from the Office of Rehabilitation Services will work together to create successful careers and foster full community membership.

R.I. Pathfinders can accommodate up to 20 families and is looking for more students to participate. For more information, contact PAL at 785-2100 or PAL@IDS.net.

COOL STUFF FOR A HOT SUMMER

Summer is coming - finally! Now is the time to think about making the most of school vacation. Get *The Rhode Island Summer 2003 Recreation Guide*, published by the R.I. Developmental Disabilities Council. Call 737-1238 or visit the website at www.ridde.org.

If you're considering camp, there are dozens of choices from specialty, day and overnight camps. For a comprehensive list, visit <http://www.projo.com/seasonal/camp>. Here are some samples:

Fantasy Works offers instruction in performing arts and will stage *Footloose* and *West Side Story*. Auditions for ages 15-21 will be on June 23 and July 5 at the Masonic Lodge in East Greenwich. Performances will be at The Greenwich Odeum. Call 294-2215.

The Prout School Summer Performing Arts Camp helps students, grades 9-12, explore or broaden their arts background. The program will run from July 7-25, with performances on July 25 and 26. Call 789-9262.

St. Andrew's School in Barrington hosts *Drawing with the Masters for Teens* on Tuesdays, July 8-Aug. 20. Call 246-1230.

The Rhode Island School of Design is sponsoring a six-week, pre-college program; students will live in residence halls and attend social activities. Call 454-6209 or visit www.risd.edu/ce.cfm

A Summer Academy in Architecture will be offered at Roger Williams College for students who have completed their junior year in high school, and want to explore architecture as a career. Students will live on campus for the four-week program, from July 6-Aug 2. Call 254-3605.

Camp Aldersgate in No. Scituate offers an overnight camp for youth and adults. Open house is June 1, 1-5 p.m. Call 568-4350.

Camp Hope, a one-week camp, Aug. 16-22, also located at Camp Aldersgate, is for individuals ages 8-17, who have cancer. Siblings are also welcome. Attendance is free. Call 722-8480.

Shake-A-Leg's Teen Body Awareness Program, from July 21-Aug. 10, focuses on therapeutic and recreational activities for those who have spinal cord injury or nervous system dysfunction. Limited to 15 students; call 849-8898.

A fact sheet on summer camps is at the National Center on Physical Activity and Disability, www.ncpad.org/Factsheethtml/summercamps.htm. For information about other camping experiences across the country, go to www.acacamps.org. For Rhode Island camps, visit www.ricamps.org.

TRANSITIONS

A newsletter of

Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities
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be downloaded from www.sherlockcenter.org
click on "Publications & Resources."

Revisiting MAPs (Making Action Plans)

MAPs is a person-centered planning process that consists of five steps, during which participants reflect on and answer questions about a student's history, dreams, fears, characteristics, and current and future needs. The student and a team come together to record their input on the five steps. This information is then used to guide IEP development, ensuring that students' dreams shape both IEP goals and objectives.

In April 1998, almost 35 participants took part in a **MAPs** Train-the-Trainer workshop, through the RITIE grant. Those trainers then returned to their respective schools and shared the information with their colleagues. In addition, 140 participants attended MAPS training sessions between 1997 – 1998.

This person-centered planning process works because it can be tailored to fit many different needs. Some students may use the process to the fullest with their entire circle of support at the meeting. Others may be able to attend a "mini-MAPs" session, in which several students work independently on their own **MAP**.

Keys to a successful process are collecting pertinent information and *using it* in the student's IEP.

The **Sherlock Center Resource Library** has the **MAPs** manual, video and other training materials to lend. If you would like additional information, or a list of MAPs trainers, contact the Sherlock Center at **(401) 456-8072**.

"I have used MAPs with many students. It was extremely helpful for students with very significant disabilities as well as those with the mildest of disabilities. MAPS is a unique tool. It allows the entire educational community: parents, the student, teachers, administrators, outside agencies, and friends, to dig deeper and to understand where a child has been and where he or she hopes to be. MAPS is an excellent planning tool, using a new and different way of thinking."

Donna Della Porta, Special Education
Department Leader, Coventry High School