

Disability, accessibility & Possibilities

A weeklong series of entertaining and informative events

Disability, Accessibility and Possibilities offers entertainment and unique experiences designed to highlight the talents and diversity in our community as well as to deepen awareness of the daily experience of people with various disabilities.

The program for the event, which will be held throughout Aquidneck Island from April 8th through 15th, spans sports, music, poetry, film and more. Most of the activities offered have been created through partnerships among people with and without disabilities. These partnerships have enabled people to share diverse experiences and see the world through each other's eyes. The event is produced by local nonprofit agency, Looking Upwards, in collaboration with Salve Regina University and The Newport Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Looking Upwards is spearheading this weeklong event based on the belief that when all people participate fully in community life, it enriches all of our experiences. Looking Upwards is a Middletown-based nonprofit agency providing a wide array of services to support adults with disabilities and children with diverse needs to live fulfilling lives.

Disability, Accessibility and Possibilities is the theme of Disability Awareness Week 2011. This current event evolved out of the bi-annual Disability Awareness Day, last held in 2009 by The Newport Accessibility Advisory Committee under the leadership of Annette Bourbonniere and Pro Lyon.

For more information call Looking Upwards at 401-847-0960 ext. 26 or 401-862-0403.

Calendar of Events

Looking Upwards' Compassion Film Festival

Friday, April 8, Jane Picken's Theater, 6-7:30 p.m. - \$10

As the world is facing tremendous challenges, what might a little compassion mean to you and those around you? This festival of short films was organized by a group of people with and without disabilities in collaboration with Video & Vision of Newport. The group is also screening their own film at this event.

Live concert by The Berkshire Hills Music Academy Troupe

Sunday, April 10, Salve Regina University - Ochre Court, 2-4 p.m. - \$8

Playing jazz, rock classical and more, this troupe of musicians with disabilities has been inspiring audiences nationwide. Also featured will be local pianist, Michael Collins, a BHMA alumnus.

Film Screening of “Including Samuel”

Tuesday, April 12, Salve Regina University - O’Hare 260, 6-7:30 p.m. - Free

Produced by the father of a child with a disability, this award-winning documentary shares a father’s experiences as he works to include his son Samuel into the daily life of his community. The film inspired the nationwide “I Am Norm” campaign and is presented by Salve student chapter CEC.

New England Paralyzed Veterans of America ~ Wheelchair Basketball

Wednesday, April 13, Middletown High School, 6-8:30 p.m. \$3/\$10 families Five brave local players will face off against the New England Paralyzed Veterans of America - Celtics wheelchair basketball team. The NEPVA will bring 5 extra wheelchairs for the opposing team! This event is produced by Best Buddies of both Gaudet Middle School and of Middletown High.

Barrier Awareness Day

Thursday, April 14, International Tennis Hall of Fame & Museum, 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m. - Free

Persons with disabilities encounter many barriers when touring or trying to do business around the island, yet it is difficult for persons without disabilities to perceive these barriers and their effects. This event will allow participants to take a tour, either by wheelchair, blindfolded or silent, to experience barriers from a new point of view.

Poetry Reading

Thursday, April 14, Salve Regina University - Bazarsky Auditorium in O’Hare Academic Center 6-8 p.m. - Free

The participants at Learning Unlimited at Salve Regina University and the Ocean State Poets will present a selection of poems from their chapbook *Butterfly Wings*, a project funded by The John E. Fogarty Foundation. Learning Unlimited is an educational program through which Salve Regina students support and learn from people who have developmental disabilities.

Grand Opening of Downtown Designs

April 15, at 57 Broadway across from City Hall, 4-6 p.m.

Join us for the opening reception of this gallery featuring artwork, jewelry and a special line of art from re-purposed materials created by artists with disabilities. Also showcased will be the work of guest artists from the community. Plus: 6-9 p.m. Lois Vaughn and Public Gallery at Portofino’s, 425 East Main Road - Enjoy dinner amidst a gallery of art by artisans with and without disabilities while listening to jazz piano selections by Lois Vaughn.