Young adults with disabilities are significantly less likely than their peers to be employed, and BCIL has responded to what’s ostensibly a crisis with action. For the second year in a row, its high school students with disabilities were placed in paying jobs throughout Boston this past summer, for the first time earning a paycheck, learning about the rigors of the workplace, and receiving training in basic skills. BCIL firmly believes, in order to attack the high unemployment rate for people with disabilities, it is essential to open up work avenues for youth.

The Boston Center for Independent Living gratefully acknowledges the support of the United Way.

**DONATIONS**

A donation to BCIL helps us serve over 5,000 people with disabilities and advocate for tens of thousands more in a number of critical areas including housing, healthcare, long-term care, transportation, civil rights law, education and employment. BCIL relays, in part, on the generosity of mentors, corporations, foundations and individuals who see the independence of people with disabilities as an important quality of life issue in the Greater Boston area.

The Boston Center for Independent Living

60 Temple Place, 5th Floor

Boston, MA 02111-1324

Please send to BCIL, 60 Temple Place, Boston, MA 02111-1324

Thank you.

Name

Address

City State Zip

Enclose a check payable to BCIL

Charge my DEBIT

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Please charge my

Charge

Yes! Here is my $ ______ contribution to BCIL.

A highlight for the year was our youth internship program. Eleven high school students with disabilities were placed in paying jobs throughout Boston this past summer, for the first time earning a paycheck, learning about the rigors of the workplace, and receiving training in basic skills. BCIL firmly believes, in order to attack the high unemployment rate for people with disabilities, it is essential to open up work avenues for youth. The national imperative to reform healthcare is taking many forms, and a key initiative is the effort to combine services and care for people with disabilities on both Medicaid and Medicare. Such individuals are referred to as “duals” because of their dual eligibility for each health insurance program, and there are 155,000 such people ages 21 to 64 in the state, 9 million nationally. Vital policymakers want to do is set up managed care plans with coverage provided by private insurers. This is a great opportunity to improve care and access to services—but it also creates a situation where services could be cut or insurers guarantee their profit margins. BCIL has been the co-leader of Disability Advocates Advancing our Healthcare Rights (DAAHKR), the leading consumer voice, speaking out loud and clear to be sure people will have access to PCA services, medical equipment, and peer services. Massachusettes will be the first state with such a plan, so BCIL’s leadership, including in how plans develop in other states, will be critical. Contact BCIL for more information on this evolving and complex initiative.

Supporting Personal Care Attendant (PCA) services are never far from the top of BCIL’s to-do list. 1,300 people are on our program, 22,000 people statewide use PCA’s, and it remains, uniquely, the most important independent living program in the state. Key concerns: BCIL addresses include ensuring the program is not harmed by budget cuts, that new initiatives such as the prepared orientation curriculums for PCAs honor consumer direction, and that each and every consumer receives quality services. People with major housing needs continue to come through BCIL’s doors on a regular basis. Our dedicated direct-services staff aided 250 people to obtain or retain their housing, helping curb homelessness and increase independence. Within this grouping are approximately thirty people we helped leave a nursing home. Staff also provided information and referral services to 1,500 people, assisting on a range of matters from obtaining Social Security benefits, finding vocational counseling, learning about civil rights laws, and securing assistive technology.

Fare increases to MBTA services were a huge concern for people across Eastern Massachusetts in the past year—and could be again if the City’s fiscal situation doesn’t improve. BCIL advocated and led protests.

**SERVICE & ADVOCACY**

Continued on next page
Once again, the construction industry came together in support of BCIL at our 31st Annual Construction Industry Night at the Pops. Attendees were treated to a gourmet reception at Symphony Hall and a terrific performance by Keith Lockhart and the Boston Pops. BCIL is grateful to our Host Sponsor, O’Connor Group of Companies, especially President Tom O’Connor and Chris Maye, for its leadership, backing and efforts on our behalf, along with our other Additional Sponsors and attendees who joined in to demonstrate their support for our work in the disability community.

Institutional O’Connor Group of Companies
SPECIAL THANKS
Building Trades Employees’ Association
CORPORATE SPONSOR
Consigli Construction Co., Ltd.
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Amanda Houghton
Board Member
David Sternburg
Graduate Student
Anne Weaver
Board Director
Continued from page one
The creatively, perseverance, and experience of BCIL staff assist many people to move from difficult situations to greater independence. Here is a quick sampling of successes.

A 27-year old man who is legally blind was homeless. He came to BCIL for services, received peer mentoring and assistance to apply for public housing. The offer paid off: he is now living in a unit in Boston.

A six-month old girl with numerous physical and neurological disabilities became eligible for Social Security Administration benefits through the work of BCIL with the baby’s mother. This has enhanced family stability during a challenging period.

A 27-year old man who had to reside in a nursing home for several years contacted BCIL because he was not allowed to staff the grounds. He helped develop a safety contract with the nursing home and she was able to go out into the community of her own free will. We then worked with her for full accessibility, he now lives on her own in Quincy on BCIL’s PCA program, and is becoming a leading BCIL activist, organizing meetings and attending events.

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