June is National Pride Month and we celebrate and honor the contributions of the LGBTQ+ community. As I think about the intersectionality of the disability community and LGBTQ+ community, I also think about the BIPOC community. This past year the voices of the disability queer and disability queer/BIPOC community have been loud and proud, giving us all an opportunity to learn, grow, and challenge our perceptions.

Part of that growing is making sure that folks with intersecting identities are in leadership positions. The National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) is modeling that by hiring Reyma McCoy McDeid as their next Executive Director. I have had the opportunity to attend and listen to Ms. McCoy McDeid as a keynote speaker and presenter. She is inspiring and provides an opportunity to challenge one’s thinking. She proudly identifies as a black, autistic, gay woman and is recognized as “a leading voice in the Independent Living (IL) movement”. You can read more about McCoy McDeid on page 4.

**HAPPY PRIDE**

Here are some stories and information:

- An infographic of LGBTQ people with disabilities
- Why pronouns matter
- I am a Queer, Black, Disabled Woman. by Kay Shakespeare
- A short history of trans people’s long fight for equality: by Samy Nour Younes
- We’re all hiding something. Let’s find the courage to open up: A TED Talk by Ash Beckham
- Hotline for LGBTQ+
The Alliance of People with disAbilities, known in short as ‘The Alliance’, is a Center for Independent Living (CIL) that serves the disability community in King County. With office locations in Seattle, Auburn and Redmond, the Alliance provides five core services to their consumers: Information and Referral, Peer Support, Advocacy, Independent Living Skills Training, and Transition.

As the COVID-19 vaccine became available, The Alliance Special Projects Coordinator, Kayla Sainati, and Executive Director, Kimberly Meck, sought to identify the gaps and barriers facing the local disability community when accessing the vaccine. They partnered with Public Health Seattle King County’s Community Vaccination Program and The Seattle Cancer Care Alliance (SCCA) to set up community vaccination clinics. Kayla explained, “Essentially, we are responsible for finding the people that come to these clinics. Our clinics are specifically designed for people with disabilities, their families, and caregivers. Our primary goal is to vaccinate people with disabilities, but we also want to focus on making everyone they regularly interact with safe as well.” Public Health & the SCCA provide clinical staff to administer the vaccinations, and The Alliance organizes all requested accommodations. This is one such program the Alliance organized and facilitated using CARES Act funding. To find people who could benefit from their personalized approach to care, extensive outreach efforts were made to many regional entities such as: medical clinics, school district Special Educators, emergency managers, WA Special Olympics, and Seattle Children’s Hospital, among others.

Currently the Alliance is managing two vaccination clinics—one in Kent and one in Seattle—where 180 people and 53 people, respectively, have been vaccinated. They are also working with several school districts to host a clinic for children with disabilities ages 12+, their family members, caregivers, and anyone else in their networks. Alliance staff are working to educate the vaccine clinic staff about disability accessibility.

At The Alliance vaccine clinics, accommodation considerations such as stress balls, fidget spinners, weighted blankets, pressure vests, ear plugs/noise cancelling headphones, are on-site to reduce anxiety and tailor each clinic visit to the individual needs of each client. And since nursing staff wear PPE masks, they also wear a name badge with their picture on it so that the client can see the nurse’s smile. This seems to help the client connect with the nursing staff better. To maintain a clinic environment that is quiet and not overstimulating, appointments are thoughtfully staggered, allowing for seven people every 15 minutes or 30 per hour.

Kayla contacts the scheduled client prior to their appointment to provide them with the accommodation options available to them at the clinic. The goal of this outreach is to reduce people's anxiety about coming to the clinic, reassure them this clinic was designed for them, and to allow them time to think about their options and how they would like to be accommodated when they arrive. For example, people with mobility disabilities are told about the assistive devices available, as well as the option to be vaccinated in the car.

Recently, a non-verbal teenager with autism, according to his mother, had a history of being combative when receiving vaccines. The mother reported that for his last routine vaccinations, it took six grown men to hold him down so that he could be vaccinated. The SCCA vaccine team took the teen and his family to a quiet area of the clinic. Everyone formed a loose circle around him allowing him to remain upright and roaming within a confined space. When the teen walked by the nurse, she swabbed his arm with the alcohol prep pad and when he walked by
CIL Spotlight, continued from page 2

a second time, she quickly vaccinated him. The teen remained un-phased and the family was happy with the outcome and lack of trauma to the teen.

Based on the stories and experiences shared at the clinic, The Alliance has an interest in making their approach to vaccination clinics a standard. They are working to develop checklists, best practice tools, and are working to publish a paper on their approach. For more information, please contact The Alliance of People with disAbilities: kimberly@disabilitypride.org. [Visit the Alliance online](#)

**The Alliance Vaccine Clinic Meets Client’s Needs:**

**Helps Young Man Overcome Fear of Needles**

Griffin is a 22 year old young man who lives with his mother, Sabra Hernandez, and 17 year old brother in Seattle. Both Griffin and his brother have Autism. Griffin enjoys going on walks, watching movies, and especially loves visiting his local library. Since the library has been closed during the pandemic, Griffin cannot wait for it to reopen. He knew that in order for the library to reopen, more people in the community needed to get vaccinated. When the COVID-19 vaccine became available, Sabra worried that Griffin would refuse to receive it because of his longtime fear of needles, or trypanophobia.

Then, as Sabra describes it, a miracle happened. The mother of one of Griffin’s friends told Sabra about the Alliance pop up vaccination clinic. The mother had heard about the clinic at her work, and she helped Sabra sign up for vaccine appointments online. Sabra explained, “For the last decade, my son has had a deathly phobia of needles. Finding this clinic by the Alliance was a miracle from God!

It was amazing that just when we needed something like this, I was made aware of it. I could tell that the nursing staff had experience working with people with disabilities. They were skilled, compassionate, and patient with my boys. Their manor was wonderful. And the clinic setting was just what they needed to be at-ease and calm. It was not overstimulating. It was mellow and quiet and there was a very small group there, which is exactly what both boys needed to remain calm. If they would have had to go to a loud, busy pharmacy or standard mass vaccination site, Griffin’s fears would have been made worse and I don’t think he would have gone through with it.”

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**Quarterly Meeting Schedule**

- **Thursday, July 15 | 10:00am-5:00pm | Join Zoom**
- **Thursday, October 7 | Zoom**
The Alliance Vaccine Clinic Meets Client’s Needs:
Provides Support to Daughter with Autism

Kate lives in Seattle with her three-year-old daughter, who has Autism. Kate wanted to receive the COVID-19 vaccine but felt trepidation about having to go to a standard vaccination site, knowing that her daughter would need support. Kate envisioned scenarios like going to a pharmacy where the environment can be loud and her daughter becoming overstimulated by the bright florescent lighting, or screaming because they have to wait in their vehicle for a long period of time. Then one day last month Kate was taking her daughter to her appointment at Boyer Children’s Clinic in Seattle. She mentioned her concerns to the Speech Therapist, who informed Kate about The Alliance vaccine clinic.

Kate was able to tell them about her daughter’s needs, and the Alliance staff took note to provide toys to play with and a low-lighting, calming environment for Kate’s vaccine appointment. Her daughter was happy and calm throughout the duration of their time in the clinic. “I’d recommend this clinic to anyone, whether they have a disability or not. The staff were friendly and considerate, plus I could tell they understood what it means to have Autism and they knew how to get what my daughter needed. They got it immediately when I explained her sensitivity to bright lights,” explained Kate.

Reyma McCoy McDeid

Reyma is a leading voice in the Independent Living Movement. When she assumes her role as NCIL Executive Director on June 28th, she will be the first Black executive director of a national disability organization in the United States.

She is the former treasurer for NCIL and was previously appointed to the Biden administration as Commissioner for the Administration on Disabilities within the Administration for Community Living. She also served for five years as the Executive Director of Central Iowa Center for Independent Living. She is the first openly Autistic person to run for state legislature in U.S. history, is an AT&T Humanity of Connection award-winning activist, and speaks regularly nationwide about the intersection of race and disability at universities, organizations, and corporations. Reyma holds a M.A. degree in Nonprofit Administration from Lindenwood University. For more, please visit NCIL’s website.
WASILC stands in solidarity with the Black Community and all Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. We fully support the Black Lives Matter movement and condemn systemic racism, oppression, and injustice. Achieving our mission requires us to educate and advocate for systemic changes for all people with disabilities, which includes the intersectionality of race and disability. We recommit to this vital work and will hold ourselves accountable to become better allies. We know we cannot elevate the disability community without elevating the BIPOC communities we serve.

TELL ME MORE ABOUT INDEPENDENT LIVING!

We promote the Independent Living (IL) Philosophy by empowering communities through advocacy, education, and collaboration. This philosophy emphasizes the idea people with disabilities are the best experts on their own needs, deserving of equal opportunity to decide how they live, work, and take part in their communities. Learn more.

HOW YOU CAN ENGAGE

There are two ways you can participate with WASILC. You can join a committee or apply to serve on the Council. We are currently recruiting for three open council positions. If you are committed and passionate about the values and mission of WASILC, you can apply here. For more information, you can either visit our website or contact Kim Conner, Executive Director, at: kimberly.conner@dshs.wa.gov.

ABOUT US

The Washington State Independent Living Council (WASILC) is an eleven-person, Governor appointed council that ensures Washington State delivers Independent Living (IL) services that are community-based and consumer-controlled for all disabilities. The primary purpose of WASILC is to monitor, review, evaluate, and maintain a State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL). For questions about WASILC and its mission please contact Kim Conner, Executive Director, at 360.819.0672 or email: kimberly.conner@dshs.wa.gov

The Coalition on Inclusive Emergency Planning (CIEP), a program of WASILC, is a statewide disability advisory group that provides technical advice on physical and programmatic accesses and effective communication strategies. Questions about CIEP and its mission can be directed to Jim House, Disability Integration Manager at 360.339.7435 or email: jim.house@dshs.wa.gov.

For general information on upcoming meetings, events, and resources, visit us at: wasilc.org.