



NWGACIL

All We See Is Possibility

SUMMER Newsletter

SUMMER
2026

Hours of Operation
Monday - Friday
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.



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Rome, GA 30161

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FROM THE DESK OF

The Director



Big things are happening!

What a wonderful and productive summer it has been at the **Northwest Georgia Center for Independent Living!**

We had an amazing turnout for our **youth camps**, with young people learning, building confidence, making friends, and creating memories that will last a lifetime. Our **classes** continue to thrive, and we are already preparing an exciting **fall schedule**, which will be released very soon!

Our team also had the opportunity to attend the National Council on Independent Living (**NCIL Conference**) in Washington, D.C. It was an inspiring experience filled with powerful learning, networking, and renewed energy for the Independent Living Movement.

We are thrilled to welcome **three new staff members** to our team! We'll introduce them in this newsletter, and we know you'll enjoy getting to know them as much as we do.

We are also excited to begin our **Adaptive Farm-to-Table Project** very soon! This new initiative will engage middle-school youth in hands-on learning, healthy living, accessibility, and independence. More information is coming—stay tuned!

We are excited to announce our new location!



Beginning
September 1, 2026,
you'll find us at:
**800 Broad Street,
Suite 210
Rome, Georgia 30161**



Our phone number, website, and commitment to our community remain the same.

*New space. New opportunities.
Same mission.* ♥

As summer winds down and we look ahead to fall, I am filled with gratitude for our consumers, staff, board members, partners, and friends who make all we do possible. Thank you for being part of this journey with us!

Here's to a great summer and an even better fall! ♥

Christina Holtzclaw, Executive Director
NORTHWEST GEORGIA CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING





WE ARE MOVING!

New Location

**800 Broad Street,
UNIT 210
Rome, GA 30161**

We look forward to this
new chapter as we
continue serving our
community and continuing
our mission.



<https://nwga-cil.org/>

Meet the Team



**Christina
Holtzclaw**
.....
Executive
Director



**Katie
Duncan**
.....
Business
Manager



**Angela
Vicente**
.....
Independent
Living Specialist



**Crystal
Brazelton**
.....
Independent
Living Specialist



**Tonia
Clayton**
.....
I&R
Specialist



**LeAnn
Newsome**
.....
P2P
Instructor



**Lynsey
Ruff**
.....
Independent
Living Specialist



**Zander
Carver**
.....
Youth
Coordinator



**Gina
Abernathy**
.....
Transition
Specialist



Lynsey Ruff

Independent Living Coordinator

Lynsey is a lifelong Georgia resident with a passion for helping others and serving her community. Her desire to make a difference has been shaped by her own life experiences, which have taught her the value of perseverance, independence, and advocacy while inspiring her to build meaningful relationships, encourage others, and assist people in reaching their goals. Outside of work, Lynsey enjoys spending time with her son, her family, and her dogs.



MEET *Zander* CARVER

YOUTH SERVICES COORDINATOR

I was born and raised right here in Rome, Georgia and have lived here almost my entire life. I graduated from Berry College in 2022 and immediately knew I wanted to spend my life helping and teaching people. When I'm not at work you can find me at home either doing something creative like writing or drawing, watching WWE, playing a Sonic or Pokemon game, and hanging out with my cat, Missile who always gets herself into trouble. My days are fueled by chocolate milk and bad puns or dad jokes.



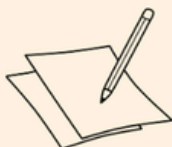
MY LIFE OUTSIDE WORK (FEATURING MISSILE)



FUN FACTS ABOUT ME

- ▶ I've published 2 books
- ▶ I write and draw comics
- ▶ I collect action figures
- ▶ Squirtle is my favorite Pokemon
- ▶ Some people say I look like Jack Black

THINGS I LOVE



Drawing



Writing



Video Games



Comic Books



Wrestling

Gina Abernathy

Transition Specialist

Hi everyone, I'm Gina! I'm a down-to-earth person who loves good people, good laughs, and enjoying the little things in life. I'm hardworking, caring, and always willing to lend a helping hand. I've worn a lot of different hats over the years, and I've learned something from every experience. In my free time, I love to cook and love exploring the outdoors. I believe you should always treat people with kindness and respect. Life isn't always perfect, but I try to find the humor in it, appreciate the good days, and keep moving forward.



NCIL & our *Washington Trip!*

Our team recently traveled to Washington, D.C. for the 2026 NCIL Annual Conference—a powerful experience focused on learning, connecting, and coming home ready to make an even greater impact.



NCIL-Empowering My Community: My Journey to *"Protect, Persist, and Prosper"*




A Transformative Experience

Attending the 2026 NCIL Annual Conference at the Grand Hyatt in Washington, D.C., was a truly transformative experience for our work at NWGACIL. Arriving at the event, we were eager to find fresh solutions for the funding constraints and systemic challenges that Centers for Independent Living face every day.



Learning that Leads to Action

The conference theme, *Protect. Persist. Prosper.*, resonated with us immediately. We focused our time on the interactive workshops, downloading the PPTs right onto our phones to study between sessions. These sessions provided us with invaluable, concrete strategies to protect our core services and ensure people with disabilities in our community have the resources they need to remain out of institutions and continue living independently.



Stronger Connections, Bigger Impact

We connected with passionate advocates and CIL leaders from across the country, building relationships and sharing ideas that will strengthen our work here at home.



Ideas in Hand, Purpose Renewed

We returned home from Washington with a notebook full of ideas, an expanded network of national colleagues, and a renewed sense of purpose. We have already begun implementing a new outreach plan inspired by the conference's grassroots frameworks, confident that our community will continue to persist, protect, and truly prosper.



Protect. Persist. Prosper.



Together, we are building
a more inclusive,
independent tomorrow.



Thank you to NCIL for an inspiring conference
and to our community for your continued support!

Learn more about our work:
www.nwgacil.org





UPCOMING EVENTS

October 15th 2026 - White Cane Safety Day Event

Celebrate independence and raise awareness by joining us for our upcoming White Cane Safety Day event to honor the achievements of blind and visually impaired individuals in our community!

Keep Up With Future Events By Checking Our
Social Media Pages



UPCOMING FALL CLASSES 2026

New Perspective- Nutrition & Wellness	Exploring healthy meals on a budget. When: 4th Tuesday of each Month at 3:30 pm Where: Community Room at 807 Ave B Rome, Ga 30161 Also Available On-Demand & By Appt.
New Perspective-Job Club and Employability	Working on self-advocacy, work readiness, and job exploration. When: 4th Thursday of each Month at 3 pm. Where: Goodwill Career Center 154 Hicks Drive SE Rome, GA 30161 Holiday Schedule: November 19 & No class in December Also Available On-Demand & By Appt.
Yoga With Donna	Do you need to decrease stress, work on balance, or want to learn more about Chair Yoga? If your answer was yes, then join Donna as she leads participants of all skill levels in her Chair Yoga. When: -TBD- Where: 800 Broad Street Ste 210 Rome, GA 30161
Tech Tuesday	Exploring Assistive Technology from no/low A.T., Mid-Grade A.T., and High-Grade A.T. When: 3rd Tuesday each month beginning 9/15/26 Time: 3:30-4:30 pm Where: In person or on Zoom. 800 Broad Street Ste 210 Rome, GA 30161 Also Available By Appointment

UPCOMING FALL CLASSES 2026

Goals, Plans, & Success

Learn to set clear objectives and create a road map for your future.

When: 2nd & 4th Tuesday Every Month

Where: Salvation Army 317 East 1st Ave. Rome, GA 30161

JOIN US ONLINE FOR PRE-RECORDED CLASS AND SCHEDULED APPOINTMENTS:

Meta Workshop

For hands-on training with the Meta glasses

When: On Demand or by Appt.

Where: In person or on Zoom.

800 Broad Street Ste 210, Rome, GA. 30161

IEP Informational Session

Learn more about the IEP that is used for your child at school and get answers to your questions.

When: On Demand or by Appt.

Where: In person or on Zoom.

800 Broad Street Ste 210, Rome, GA. 30161

Self- Advocacy

Join our Independent Living Skills class to learn how to speak up for yourself, make your own decisions, and confidently navigate the systems that impact your life!

When: On-Demand or by Appt

Where: In person or Zoom.

800 Broad Street Ste 210, Rome, GA 30161

Money Management

Taking control of Financial Responsibilities and practicing good spending habits

When: On-Demand or by Appt

Where: In person or Zoom.

800 Broad Street Ste 210, Rome, GA 30161

UPCOMING FALL CLASSES 2026

Emergency Preparedness & Safety

Gain the vital skills to keep yourself and your community safe by participating in an emergency preparedness session.
When: On-Demand or By Appt.
Where: In Person or On Zoom
800 Broad St. Ste. 210, Rome, GA 30161

Time Management

Take control of your schedule and achieve your goals by participating in the time management class, and learn practical strategies for improving your day
When: On-Demand or By Appt.
Where: In Person or On Zoom
800 Broad St. Ste. 210, Rome, GA 30161

Household Responsibility

Master the essentials of independent living by participating in household responsibilities classes to learn practical skills for managing a clean, organized, and efficient home.
When: On-Demand or By Appt.
Where: In Person or On Zoom
800 Broad St. Ste. 210, Rome, GA, 30161

Transportation

Gain the freedom to travel confidently and independently by participating in the transportation class to master local transit options, route planning, and navigation skills.
When: On-Demand or By Appt.
Where: In Person or On Zoom
800 Broad St. Ste. 210, Rome, GA, 30161

GPS - Goals, Plans, & Success

Join us as we explore a range of IL skills, topics, and provide related resources.
When: On-Demand or By Appt.
Where: In Person or On Zoom
800 Broad St. Ste. 210, Rome, GA, 30161

UPCOMING FALL CLASSES 2026

Braille

Discover the power of literacy and independence by participating in our Braille class designed for all skill levels!

When: On-Demand or by Appt

Where: In person or Zoom.

800 Broad Street Ste 210, Rome, GA 30161

American Sign Language Class

Unlock a new way to connect and communicate by joining our upcoming American Sign Language (ASL) class!

When: On-Demand or by Appt

Where: In person or Zoom.

800 Broad Street Ste 210, Rome, GA 30161

Jaws

Need assistance in learning Jaws? Join us to learn the shortcuts that can be used to navigate your computer with Jaws quickly and efficiently.

When: By Appointment

Where: In person or on Zoom.

800 Broad Street Ste 210, Rome, GA. 30161

KID'S CORNER



PATHWAY TO DREAMS

BEGINNING 3RD YEAR AT ROCKMART MIDDLE SCHOOL



LeAnn Newsome, P2P Instructor, is looking forward to getting back in the middle schools in September. We hope to serve approximately 40 students at Rockmart Middle School during first semester. The Pathway to Dreams curriculum focuses on Pre-Employment Transition Services to empower students in achieving their career dreams.



LOOKING AHEAD:

NWGACIL is anticipating adding Summerville Middle School to the P2P program this Fall. We're also in the planning stages for more middle schools in our area to join the program. Stay tuned for more updates!



NWGA CIL KIDS' CORNER



BTG-Summer Dreamers'

After another great school year, we prepare to welcome in new and returning students to the Bridging The Gap program as we prepare to assist them with their goals in post-secondary schooling, and their efforts in Independent Living.

This year we prepare to expand and continue our efforts with our P2P curriculum.

We also want to reflect on the achievements of our incredible students this past year and congratulate all of them for their hard work and accomplishments.

Revving Up For The New School Year

As the new school year begins, Zander Carver, Youth Coordinator, begins preparing to meet with students at the Cave Spring Center, the Rome Youth Detention Center, and individual students enrolled in the Bridging the Gap program.

The upcoming classes will focus on Money Management, Nutrition and Wellness, and other general Independent Living Skills as we prepare to continue our goals of helping individuals pursue their independent living goals.

2026 NCIL Annual Conference

In July we had the opportunity to attend the NCIL Annual Conference in Washington, D.C. With the conference theme of *Protect. Persist. Prosper.*, NWGA CIL was able to gain invaluable, concrete strategies to protect our core services and ensure people with disabilities in our community have the resources they need to remain out of institutions and live independently.



SUMMER FARM STAND Pasta Salad

Bright, fresh, and packed with
farm stand flavor!

LEMONY • HERBY • EASY • DELICIOUS



ACTIVE TIME
30 mins



TOTAL TIME
40 mins



SERVINGS
8



Perfect for
picnics, potlucks
& backyard
cookouts!

Ingredients

- 12 oz. uncooked rotini or fusilli pasta
- 1/3 cup fresh lemon juice (from 2 lemons)
- 1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tsp. honey
- 2 tsp. kosher salt, plus more for pasta water
- 1 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 1/2 tsp. black pepper
- 2 zucchini or yellow squash, sliced into 1/4-inch-thick half-moons (about 4 cups)
- 2 1/4 cups fresh corn kernels (from 3 ears)
- 1 pt. cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 cup thinly sliced red onion (from 1 onion)
- 1 (8-oz.) block feta cheese, cut into 1/2-inch cubes (about 2 cups)
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh mixed herbs (such as chives, tarragon, and dill), plus more for garnish

Directions

STEP
1

Cook pasta in a large pot of boiling salted water according to package directions for **al dente**. Drain; rinse pasta under cold water until no longer hot, about 2 minutes. Let cool to room temperature, about 10 minutes.

STEP
2

Meanwhile, whisk together lemon juice, oil, honey, salt, mustard, and pepper in a large bowl. Add zucchini, corn, tomatoes, and onion; toss to coat. Let stand 10 minutes, tossing occasionally.

STEP
3

Add cooled pasta, feta, and herbs to vegetable mixture; gently toss to combine. Garnish with additional herbs.

Tips For Making It Your Best!

- ✓ Pasta can be made up to three days ahead and stored in the refrigerator in an airtight container for up to three days.
- ✓ Lay pasta out in a single layer on a baking sheet to help it cool quickly, fast.
- ✓ Stick to pasta shapes that don't need to be twirled. In other words, shapes like fusilli, casarecci, orecchiette, cavatappi, and gemelli work very well.



Use the lemony dressing for any combination of pasta and vegetables for dinner **ALL SUMMER.**



HAP & BSITFC FOR THE HOME YOU LOVE

HOME ACCESS PROGRAM
BRAIN AND SPINAL CORD
INJURY TRUST FUND
COMMISSION



NWGACIL works in collaboration with the State of Independent Living Council (SILC), Home Access Program (HAP), and Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund Commission (BSITFC) programs that offers Georgia residents a wonderful alternative to moving into an assisted living facility. For many individuals facing new mobility or physical challenges can make a beloved home suddenly feel full of obstacles. By providing direct grant funding, this program helps you remodel your owner-occupied home to perfectly match your physical needs.



These programs offers a variety of home modifications. For example that would include installing a sturdy entrance ramp, widening doorways, or creating a beautiful roll-in/ walk-in shower—brings a profound sense of safety and daily freedom. These thoughtful updates eliminate high-risk fall hazards and empower you to navigate your entrance ways (ramp), doorways, and bathroom and living spaces completely on your own terms. Beyond the immediate physical relief, staying in your own home preserves your hard-earned savings by bypassing the high recurring costs of institutional care, keeping your financial future secure.....



Best of all, because these funds are distributed as grants rather than loans, you can complete vital accessibility upgrades with absolutely no repayment worries or added financial stress.



NWGACIL helps guide these individual through the process of applying for the program by:

- ✓ Assisting with fill out the application
- ✓ Giving individuals a step by step guideline to follow so they can provide the correct information that SILC needs to approve the requests
- ✓ Scheduling meetings with the consumer and contractor to review applications and provide guidance on filling out the forms from start to finish.



*Stay in the home you love.
Live with independence.*



Building Accessibility. Building Independence. Building Better Lives.



CONTACT

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