

Accessibility for the disabled is topic of Sunday discussion

1/5/13

By Kate Day Sager
Olean Times Herald

ALLEGANY — When a disabled person attends a community event at a church, restaurant or other venue, there can be challenges with the individual's ability to enter the facility in a wheelchair, with a walker or on crutches.

Issues such as this will be addressed at 11 a.m. Sunday when a representative with Directions in Independent Living Inc. gives a presentation at the Olean Unitarian Universalist Community gathering in the First Presbyterian Church on Third Street in Allegany. The program is free and open to all in the area.

The speaker, Sadie Jay-Edwards, is a member and lay minister of the congregation as well as statewide systems advocate for Directions in Independent Living.

Her topic, entitled "Disability and Diversity and the Inherent Worth and Dignity of All People," will address the many issues that challenge the disabled in the community.

She said the Unitarian Universalists established a partnership with the Presbyterian Church several months ago because their membership was concerned with the accessibility of their meetings to the disabled. The two religious entities worship at the facility on different schedules.

"The new (church building) we moved into this past year has wheelchair accessibility with an elevator to the meeting area," Mrs. Jay-Edwards said.

She said Directions, located at 512 W. State St. in Olean, has 13 staff members and serves approximately 1,200 people each year.

Mrs. Jay-Edwards said Sunday's event will include a PowerPoint presentation on Directions and that she will take questions and comments from the audience.

Other activities planned by Directions at its West State Street location during the month of January include the following events:

► **Jan. 15, 10 a.m. to noon** — "Scrap Wrap" activity. Southern Tier Recovery Activity Without Walls will host the activity which combines the creative fun of scrapbooking with the participant's Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP.) The event will help participants gather personal tools to build their own wellness tool box. The session also will help participants manage their own wellness and recovery in a comfortable manner. Contact Candi or Michele weekdays;

► **Jan. 16, 9 a.m.** — Ed McCormick of McCormick Management Consulting will present a working clinic on the best practices for not-for-profits in expanding their community presence. Space is limited. Contact Leonard X. Liguori, executive director of Directions;

► **January and February, Wednesdays, noon to 1 p.m.**

— "Recovery is Real: Bipolar Education." Free and open to the public. Participants may join at any time and walk-ins are

be addressed at 11 a.m. on Sunday when a representative with Directions in Independent Living Inc. gives a presentation at the Olean Unitarian Universalist Community gathering in the First Presbyterian Church on Third Street in Allegany. The program is free and open to all in the area.

The speaker, Sadie Jay-Edwards, is a member and lay minister of the congregation as well as statewide systems advocate for Directions in Independent Living.

Her topic, entitled "Disability and Diversity and the Inherent Worth and Dignity of All People," will address the many issues that challenge the disabled in the community.

She said the Unitarian Universalists established a partnership with the Presbyterian Church several months ago because their membership was concerned with the accessibility of their meetings to the disabled. The two religious entities worship at the facility on different schedules.

"The new (church building) we moved into this past year has wheelchair accessibility with an elevator to the meeting area," Mrs. Jay-Edwards said. "It's been a wonderful experience. It's perfect."

She said Directions plans to provide more presentations to encourage people in the community to speak on a number of issues that are important to them.

"This is our 25th year (at Directions). We are kicking things in a new direction and becoming more involved with the community," Ms. Jay-Edwards said. "We're here and people in the community can come to us. The disability community often has multiple barriers getting someplace, so we are working on taking what we do into the community."

planned by Directions at its West State Street location during the month of January include the following events:

► **Jan. 15, 10 a.m. to noon** — "Scrap Wrap" activity. Southern Tier Recovery Activity Without Walls will host the activity which combines the creative fun of scrapbooking with the participant's Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP.) The event will help participants gather personal tools to build their own wellness toolbox. The session also will help participants manage their own wellness and recovery in a comfortable manner. Contact Candi or Michele weekdays;

► **Jan. 16, 9 a.m.** — Ed McCormick of McCormick Management Consulting will present a working clinic on the best practices for not-for-profits in expanding their community presence. Space is limited. Contact Leonard X. Liguori, executive director of Directions;

► **January and February, Wednesdays, noon to 1 p.m.**

— "Recovery is Real: Bipolar Education." Free and open to the public. Participants may join at any time and walk-ins are welcome. Contact Theresa or Sadie at Directions; and

► **Ongoing sessions** — Assistance in employment search, résumé and cover-letter writing and interviewing strategies for the disabled. Directions will help participants further their educations and training and obtain employment preparation. Social Security advice to job-seeking claimants also is available.

For more information on any of these activities, call officials listed with Directions at 373-4602.

(Contact reporter Kate Day Sager at kates_th@yahoo.com)