

# Navigating Today™

"Independent Living News For People With Disabilities And The Community"

Spring 2009 Issue

Volume 2, Number 2

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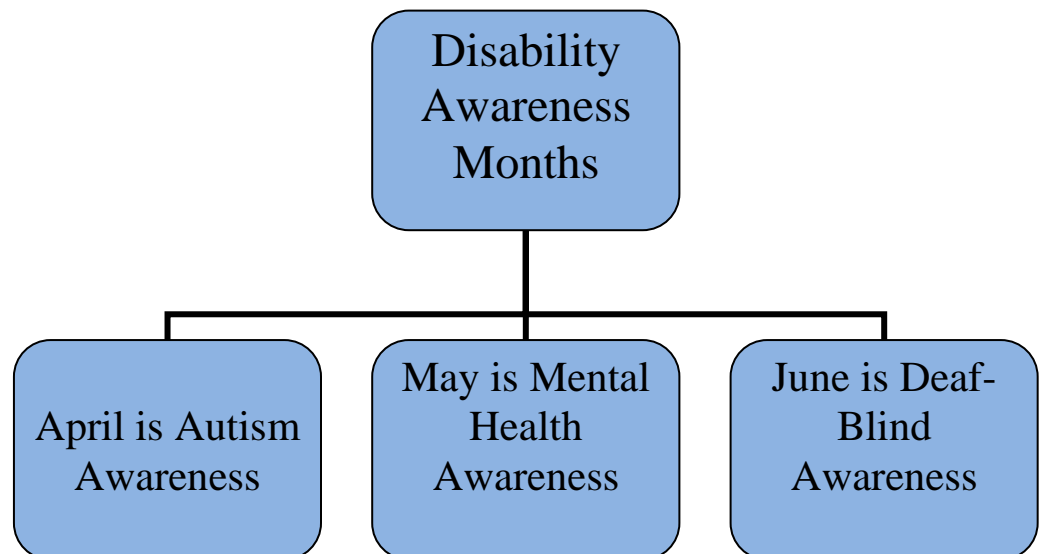
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## Center News



## World Autism Day: 1 Boy's Story

By CBS 2 HD Visits Wonder Boy: 12-Year-Old Damien Reid

When Damien Reid was born, his parents saw no sign that something may be wrong. But at 2 years old, after an evaluation for preschool, a psychologist broke the news. "I was extremely shocked. I really didn't know what autism was," said Damien's mother, Christina Mendez. Damien's parents were told that he would likely end up in a group home, may never end up showing affection or emotion and would likely not communicate. "He wasn't going to interact with no one," father Daniel Reid said, "That he was going to need somebody there with him 24 hours that he wasn't going to be speaking that he wasn't going to be playing with anybody." Today, Damien is 12 years old, is bilingual and talks up a storm, even testing CBS 2 HD's knowledge of reptiles. He took me on a tour of his classroom at Hawthorne Country Day School in Harlem and wanted me to know all about his classmates.

His parents said the key is early diagnosis and intervention. "If you can catch it early, catch it at 2 or 3 years old there's a great, great improvement factor there," Daniel Reid said.

## WCICIL Staff

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.....Glenda Farkas

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.....Ryan Jansen

Program Director  
.....Dale Winner

Youth Services  
.....Dustin Gorder

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Independent Living  
Specialist  
.....Joe Pashka

Independent Living  
Specialist  
.....Karen Burnham

## Experience Works Participants

Judith Longcor  
Linda Shaw  
Robert Livingston

Damien's mother turned his bedroom into a classroom, and went into overdrive when it came to education. "Everything I read on the Internet that worked, I just gave him like 20 times that," Mendez said. She said she documents everything and said there are countless free services from camps, to after-school programs. The key is finding them by networking with parents and autism support groups.

Damien's parents said they learn from him everyday.  
"Thanks for watching the school and bye bye," Damien said.

The Youth Services Program at WCICIL provides parents of children with disabilities with services to insure that they receive the most appropriate and least restrictive education possible. Armed with knowledge of the rights of children with disabilities, Youth Services can provide:

- \* **Advocacy** at school conferences to help assist parents and students to better understand their options and educational rights.
- \* **Trainings** to assist parents in becoming advocates for their children.
- \* **Transitional services** to assist students with a disability to generalize their skills into daily living after leaving school or entertaining post-secondary training.

For more information,  
please contact **Dustin Gorder**  
at (217) 223-0400

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## What Is Autism?

By Autism Society of America

Autism is a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life and is the result of a neurological disorder that affects the normal functioning of the brain, impacting development in the areas of social interaction and communication skills. Both children and adults with autism typically show difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication, social interactions, and leisure or play activities.

Autism is one of five disorders that falls under the umbrella of Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD), a category of neurological disorders characterized by "severe and pervasive impairment in several areas of development."

### Prevalence

Autism is the most common of the Pervasive Developmental Disorders, affecting an estimated 1 in 150 births (Centers for Disease Control Prevention, 2007). Roughly translated, this means as many as 1.5 million Americans today are believed to have some form of autism. And this number is on the rise. Based on statistics from the U.S. Department of Education and other governmental agencies, autism is growing at a startling rate of 10-17 percent per year. At this

## WCICIL Board Members

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Marcia Holmes, Vice-  
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Karye Willard  
Susan Goodwin  
Evan Horner  
Carolyn White

## WCICIL Services

### Main Services

- Advocacy
- Independent Living Skills Training
- Information and Referral
- Peer Counseling

### Additional Services

- Reintegration Program
- Youth Services
- Equipment Loan Program
- ADA Technical Assistance
- Braille Services
- Personal Assistant Program

rate, the ASA estimates that the prevalence of autism could reach 4 million Americans in the next decade.

Autism knows no racial, ethnic, or social boundaries; family income levels; lifestyle choices; or educational levels, and can affect any family and any child. And although the overall incidence of autism is consistent around the globe, it is four times more prevalent in boys than in girls.

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## Working Together to Impact Tomorrow

By Ryan M. Jansen

**Quincy, IL** - Children at Ellington School had the opportunity to test their abilities while participating in a simulation of physical, visual, and hearing impairments. The West Central Illinois Center for Independent Living partnered with Ken Mansell for the 2-day simulation which helped students understand the challenges of living with a disability, and the importance of maintaining patience and a positive attitude.

Ellington School is devoting three weeks of this school year to disability awareness activities. Students at all grade levels participate. Not only are they learning how to relate to persons with disabilities, but also discovering that many famous individuals such as Albert Einstein and Franklin D. Roosevelt were successful and made an impact in the world despite their disabilities.



The goal of the simulations is to educate the public that people with disabilities are individuals with families, jobs, hobbies, likes and dislikes, problems and joys. While the disability is an integral part of who they are, it alone does not define them. They should not be treated as disability heroes or victims, but as individuals.

**Carthage, IL** - Preschoolers and their parents experienced disability simulation stations and listened to stories about persons with disabilities during the Disability Awareness Program at the Carthage Public Library on April 23, 2009. This program was opened to the public free of charge courtesy of WCI/CIL and Carthage Public Library. The simulation stations allowed participants to experience what it is like to have a visual, hearing or physical disability. This program was well attended and the library intends to make this an annual event with WCI/CIL.

## [Contact Us](#)

### West Central Illinois Center for Independent Living

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300 Maine Street  
Suite 104  
Quincy, IL 62301

**(217) 223-0400**

**(800) 225-0407**

**TTY (217) 223-0475**

**FAX (217) 223-0479**

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440 N. Lafayette  
First Bankers Trust Bldg.  
Lower Level  
Macomb, IL 61455

**(309) 833-5766**

**(888) 309-5766**

**TTY (217) 223-0475**

**FAX (309) 833-4690**

[cilod@adams.net](mailto:cilod@adams.net)

[www.wcicil.org](http://www.wcicil.org)

**Macomb, IL** – Several disability awareness presentations were provided to the Western Illinois University administration, staff, and students. Ryan Jansen, Outreach Director for WCI/CIL was the keynote speaker at the faculty workshop during the 2009 Disability Awareness Day. He gave a presentation entitled “Breaking Down Barriers” (A Look at How to Interact with People with Disabilities). WCI/CIL showcased an informational booth at this event as well.

The West Central Illinois Center for Independent Living offers disability awareness trainings and simulations to businesses, individuals, units of government, and other agencies.

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## Volunteerism - A personal view

By Robert M. Livingston

Gordon Mac Donald in his book “Ordering Your Private World,” says “There are two types of people in the world – Driven People and Called People. Driven People think they own everything; Called People believe everything is on loan.”

Called People pay on their loan by volunteering. In the United States many pay by participating in the National organization such as Peace Corps, VISTA (Volunteers In Service to America), Experience Works, etc. as well as the local organizations of the library, Red Cross, Radio Information Service and the hospital. All efforts count toward the debt we owe for what we have borrowed.

With the doom and gloom dripping from the ink of the editorial pages and the burning acid that rips from the electronic media, one can be paying his debt in his own little corner by greeting one’s fellow man and woman with a smile and a cheery “Hello.”

Be Called!

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## Technology News

### Amazon’s New Kindle Isn’t Very Accessible

By Suzanne Robitaille

To be sure, the Kindle 2 announced several new features at a press conference on February 9, 2009 at the Morgan Library in New York, including a sleeker design and a lighter console. For the disabled, the most interesting feature by far is a text-to-speech function that allows readers to listen to books with a computerized voice.

#### Speech, but No Custom Voice

What's interesting is, though Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos didn't say as much, his

**TEEN SOCIAL  
PIZZA AND MOVIE  
NIGHT  
at  
WCI/CIL  
Thursday  
June 18, 2009  
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.  
Call Dustin Gorder  
for more info  
217-223-0400**

company partnered with a key assistive technology company, Nuance Communications, to build the speech capability into the Kindle 2. Nuance is the maker of RealSpeak software, which is the same technology that enables text-to-speech on Nokia cell phones and Freedom Scientific's JAWS screen readers to make them accessible for the blind and visually impaired. Nuance also makes Dragon NaturallySpeaking, a speech-recognition program that's popular among workers with mobility impairments who can't type on PCs.

Unfortunately, Amazon Nuance's full its menu of custom choose between a male the speech function a short article, but not a Amazon calls the text- "experimental" -- so sophisticated voices in



didn't take advantage of accessibility features, such as voices. Kindle 2 users can only or female voice, which makes adequate for reading a recipe or longer novel. However, to-speech function perhaps they'll upgrade to more future versions.

### **Lacking Universal**

As with Kindle 1, Amazon noticeably failed to consider accessibility or universal design in the new device. For example, a person with a learning or reading disability would benefit much more if the text could be highlighted and spoken at the same time. Amazon cited "improved ergonomics" for holding the Kindle 2, but didn't address how the device might help readers with physical impairments who cannot hold traditional books.

### **Design**

For those with limited vision, the Kindle 2 offers six fonts, but only up to 18 points, which isn't sufficient for a person with more than an eye-strain issue. Likewise, images -- but not text -- can be zoomed to full screen size. There's also the issue of how the books are formatted. Bezos says his vision is to have "every book ever printed, in every language" available on the Kindle. But he neglected to say in which formats. There is no Braille support, no large-print support and no speech capability for operating the Kindle if you can't see the buttons.

Overall, Amazon missed a huge opportunity to market this new device to people with disabilities. Perhaps Amazon doesn't think the disabled can afford the \$359 price tag, but people with disabilities are apt to spend twice as much on technology that will improve their lives. Unfortunately the Kindle 2 isn't one of them.

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## **Community News**

### **The Legal Self-Help Center**

The information for this article was obtained from the brochure printed by the **Illinois Coalition for Equal Justice.**

Have you ever asked yourself: Does my landlord have a duty to make repairs? Does my landlord have to give a reason for making me move out? How can I enforce my child support order? How do I get visitation rights to visit my child?

How do I get an “Order of Protection” in a domestic violence situation?

There is a website [www.illinoislegalaid.org](http://www.illinoislegalaid.org) that can answer these questions and thousands more for you. **The Legal Self Help Center** is a place to help you learn to represent yourself in court in simpler legal matters when you cannot find an attorney to represent you, a place where you can get free legal information about Illinois law, and a place to get information about free or low cost legal assistance in your area. This website is **not** designed to take the place of an attorney but it can give you information that will empower you as to your rights. We have added this link on WCI/CIL’s website. Please take a look and feel free to give us your feedback.

**Informational brochures are available at the WCI/CIL please stop by 300 Maine Street, Suite 104 in Quincy, IL and pick up more information.**

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## Emergency Preparedness for People with Disabilities (Revisited)

If you or someone close to you has a disability or a special need, you may have to take additional steps to protect yourself and your family in an emergency.

A record number of tornadoes tore through Illinois in 2006. The Illinois Emergency Management Agency says most tornadoes hit between April and June. Illinois also had a 5.2 - magnitude Earthquake on April 18, 2008.

If you have special needs: Find out about special assistance that may be available in your community. Register with the office of emergency services or the local fire department for assistance so needed help can be provided.

Check for hazards in the home during and right after a disaster, ordinary items in the home can cause injury or damage. Anything that can move, fall, break or cause fire is a home hazard. Check for items such as bookcases, hanging pictures, or overhead lights that could fall in an earthquake or a flood and block an escape path.

Be ready to evacuate. Have a plan for getting out of your home or building (ask your family or friends for assistance, if necessary). Also, plan two evacuation routes because some roads may be closed or blocked in a disaster.

Create a network of neighbors, relatives, friends, and coworkers to aid you in an emergency. Discuss your needs and make sure everyone knows how to operate necessary equipment.

Discuss your needs with your employer. If you are mobility impaired and live or work in a high-rise building have an escape chair. If you live in an apartment building, ask the management to mark accessible exits clearly and to make arrangements to help you leave the building.

### TRAINING NOTICE

*Personal Assistant  
Training*

*@ WCICIL*

*Call Jenny Kelly  
for more info and  
future training*

*dates*

*217-223-0400*

If you have ever dreamed of adding a water garden this class is for you!

University of Illinois Extension

Adams/Brown Unit offers

Introduction to Basic Water Gardens!

Tuesday, May 12th

1:00 PM

at U of I Extension

330 S. 36<sup>th</sup> Street

Quincy, IL

Fee: \$5

If you need a reasonable accommodation, please contact (217) 223-8380

Keep specialized items ready, including extra wheelchair batteries, oxygen, catheters, medication, prescriptions, food for service animals, and any other items you might need. Be sure to make provisions for medications that require refrigeration. Keep a list of the type and model numbers of the medical devices you require. Wear medical alert tags or bracelets to identify your disability.

Know the location and availability of more than one facility if you are dependent on a dialysis machine or other life-sustaining equipment or treatment.

For more information on the internet, go to [www.disabilitypreparedness.gov](http://www.disabilitypreparedness.gov) or call 217-223-0400 to talk with a WCI/CIL Independent Living Specialist.

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## 6 Workplace Myths about People with Disabilities

By Eric L. Hinton

"How do you go to the bathroom?"

It's an incredibly rude question, one most people wouldn't even think to ask another adult, especially in the workplace. But it's a question Cassie Mitchell repeatedly has been asked by coworkers. What would possess someone to ask such a question? Mitchell uses a wheelchair.

Mitchell, a 25-year-old biomedical engineer who's been paraplegic since 2000, has become accustomed to such boorish behavior from both colleagues and complete strangers.

"There will be times when I'm in a restaurant with family or friends, and when the waiter comes over, instead of taking my order directly from me, he'll turn to the person I'm with and expect them to order for me. It's like I'm not even there," she says.

Such ignorance about people with disabilities can lead to dehumanizing predicaments. That same ignorance often morphs into myths, which can provide ready-made excuses for employers who would rather look past a person with a disability when filling open positions.

And even when they are hired, employees with disabilities often find that the chief obstacle in the workplace isn't their disability--its bias from coworkers.

Here are six myths about people with disabilities in the workplace, courtesy of the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy.

**Myth 1:** A physical disability equals a mental disability.

**Fact:** A person with a physical disability, such as a motor or sensory impairment will be in full charge of his or her mental faculties unless the disability directly affects cognitive functions. Unfortunately, in the minds of many, physical and mental disabilities are intertwined.

## Support Group

### Schedule

*Blind\Low Vision*

*( Adams County )*

*Every first*

*Thursday of the*

*month*

*10:00 a.m.-12 p.m.*

*(Brown County )*

*Every last Tuesday*

*of the month*

*10:00 a.m.-12 p.m.*

*Call Patricia Bissell*

*for more info*

*(217) 223-0400*

Going Green!

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[www.wcicil.org](http://www.wcicil.org)

"I had a friend that was in a wheelchair. But people would come up and scream at him because they assumed his hearing was impaired as well," says Sarah Helm, associate coordinator for career services at the University of Tennessee. Helm is also the coordinator of the university's Disability Careers Office. "Sometimes people think physical disabilities are linked somehow with intelligence, and they aren't."

**Myth 2:** Employees with disabilities miss work at a much higher rate than employees without disabilities.

**Fact:** Several studies, including data from three internal studies by DuPont Corp., demonstrated that employees with disabilities typically have no greater absenteeism rates than that of non-disabled employees.

**Myth 3:** Employees with disabilities often are unable to meet basic performance standards, making them an unemployment risk.

**Fact:** A 1990 Dupont study, which surveyed the supervisors of 811 employees with disabilities, found 90 percent rated average or better in job performance, compared with 95 percent for employees without disabilities.

**Myth 4:** Employees with disabilities always need help. Taking the time to assist them in getting acclimated to their work environment will hinder your other employees, grinding productivity to a halt.

**Fact:** Many people with disabilities are independent and capable of giving help as well as receiving it.

**Myth 5:** Employees with disabilities will have transportation problems getting to work. They'll arrive late--when they arrive at all.

**Fact:** People with disabilities often are capable of supplying their own modes of transportation to work just like any other employee.

**Myth 6:** Considerable expense is necessary to accommodate employees with disabilities.

**Fact:** Following up an ongoing study by the U.S. Department of Labor's Job Accommodation Network (JAN), the University of Iowa's Law, Health Policy, and Disability Center (LHPDC) surveyed 778 employers that contacted JAN between January 2004 and April 2005, representing a range of sectors. According to respondents, most workers with disabilities require no special accommodations and the cost for those that do is usually manageable. Forty-two percent said the accommodation resulted in a one-time median cost of \$600.

"Many of the myths surrounding employees with disabilities result from a lack of communication," says Helm. "Just ask questions. People feel they should know everything about how to interact and deal with a person in a particular situation, and that's just not the case if you're not exposed to it. There are no hard and fast rules."

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## State of Illinois News

### University of Illinois at Chicago Offers New Course for Managers of Disability Organizations

By Illinois.gov

The University of Illinois at Chicago would like to share with you an exciting opportunity for managers of disability organizations to develop their management skills in a **new blended online course** through the Department of Disability and Human Development (DHD) at the University of Illinois at Chicago. This class can be taken as part of the Management and Leadership Certificate program or Master of Science program in Disability and Human Development.

#### **DHD 547: Analysis and Comparison of For-Profit and Non-Profit Organizations**

This online course will cover organizational theory and concepts and how they relate to real-life experiences in the non-profit disability sector. Students will learn core organizational theories, with a special emphasis on non-profit agencies serving people with disabilities. Standard theoretical models of organizations, theories of authority, leadership, and management are discussed and analyzed. Differences between for-profit and non-profit organizations are addressed, including budgeting and fiscal management.

While any student is welcome, this course is especially targeted at the professional or manager who is currently working in the disability field. In order to bridge the theoretical and practical, both instructors will draw upon their own academic and service experience, the work experiences of the students, and occasional guest lecturers from the disability sector. This course will give the student an opportunity to analyze the theoretical structure and design of traditional organizations, how these concepts are (or are not) applicable to real life disability organizations, and compare typical characteristics of for-profit organizations with those of their non-profit counterparts.

#### **Blended Online Approach**

Each week's course material will be online but we will use a blended online synchronous and asynchronous approach towards teaching the material. Specifically, there will be 3 online sessions that will be in-person (synchronous) meetings. What this means, is that the instructors will be in UIC classrooms for 3 of the weekly course meetings and require students to either attend this classroom session or to use a UIC e-room to participate in the session from a computer at a remote location as it occurs.

*Cross Disability  
Support Group  
Schedule*

*Every first  
Thursday of the  
month  
1:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m.  
at CIL  
Call Ryan Jansen  
for more info  
(217) 223-0400*

**Quincy Park  
District  
Introduces  
New  
Recumbent  
Trike**



**Cost:**

**\$5 per hour  
\$12 for 3 hours**

**Location:**

**Upper  
Moorman Park  
Batting Cage**

**For more info:  
217- 228-1261**

**Accessibility**

Our academic department emphasizes the concept of accessibility of the classroom and course materials. We especially focus on providing accessible material for students with visual and/or hearing disabilities. We provide scripts of all audio and video material. We rely heavily on html format and try to avoid pdf or other formats that may cause problems for screen readers. We use alternative tags and text files and try to minimize the use of web pages that cause problems for screen readers. If you need a special format or need some type of accommodation, please let us know as soon as possible and we will work to meet your needs.

If you are not enrolled at UIC and want to take this course, please contact the

UIC Office of Continuing Education:

(312) 996-8025

[oce@uic.edu](mailto:oce@uic.edu)

[www.oce.uic.edu](http://www.oce.uic.edu)

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## AmeriCorps Disability Outreach in Illinois

By [serve.illinois.gov](http://serve.illinois.gov)

AmeriCorps is a national service program that involves people in "getting things done" in communities. AmeriCorps members develop an ethic of service while strengthening local communities. Illinois has 22 AmeriCorps\*State programs in operation and more than 800 members committing to a year of service.

The Serve Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service administers the AmeriCorps\*State programs. The mission of the Serve Illinois commission is *"To improve Illinois communities by supporting and enhancing volunteerism and community service."* The Commission launched a new website, [www.serve.illinois.gov](http://www.serve.illinois.gov), in 2008 to help link interested persons with volunteer opportunities throughout Illinois.

The Illinois AmeriCorps Disability Outreach Program is a special project of the Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service. Our goal is to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities as members of AmeriCorps programs in this state. We work toward achieving this goal by promoting the service opportunities available through AmeriCorps to persons with disabilities and agencies that provide services to them.

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## Did You Know?

**New York Gov. David Paterson, who took office after the resignation of Eliot Spitzer, is legally blind.**

**Almost 3 in 10 of today's 20-year-olds will acquire a disability before reaching age 67. (Source: Social Security Basic Facts, July 2004)**

## Calendar of Events

### Quincy, Illinois

**April 28:** *"Lincoln's Greatest Speech"*

Ronald C. White, Jr., author of "A. Lincoln: A Biography", will discuss his important new research into Lincoln's life. Admission is free and open to the public. Held at Quincy University. More info-217.228.4515

**May 1:** *May Festival Federation Square Dancing*

The May festival federation square dancing comes to Quincy during the Dogwood festival. 300 couples expected to participate in the events. Held at the Quincy Senior and Family Center at 6th & York. For more information contact 217-224-1482

**May 2:** *Hy-Vee Ride/Walk for Juvenile Diabetes Research*

Join Hy-Vee for a great cause and a health activity. 5/10 mile bike ride includes historic downtown or 1 hr. walk/run through South Park. Quincy, IL 2pm at 1400 Harrison St. Hy-Vee Parking lot. All proceeds donated to the JDR Foundation. \$12 individual or \$30 for family, prior to 4/26 registration. Hy-Vee will be grilling out food for all participants.

**May 2:** *Dogwood Festival begins*

(continued)

**May 23:** *Gus Macker Basketball*

*Tournament* 3-on-3 basketball tournament played around Washington Park and on the streets of downtown Quincy. 217-214-3700

**June 6:** *Soap Box Derby* Sponsored by Quincy Breakfast Optimist Club. Held on North 18th St, Tom Averkamp Bridge, Quincy. 217-316-0172

**June 12:** *Blues In the District* Regional and local blues bands provide free, outdoor performances in Washinton Park, 5th & Maine, Quincy. 217-228-8696

**June 21:** *Mississippi Valley Historic Auto Annual Car Show* All America Park at Front & Cedar Streets. Free to public. Car show, music, bake sale, and lunch available.

**June 28:** *Midsummer Arts Faire* Held in Washington Park, 5th & Maine St, Quincy. Juried fine arts exhibition and sale, entertainment, and performing arts. 217-257-0721

**SAVE THE DATE!**

Thursday  
July 23, 2009  
10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

**ADA Celebration  
&  
Expo**

Will be held at  
Quincy Senior & Family  
Resource Center