



New Community Opportunities Center at ILRU Presents...

Building an Effective, Comprehensive CIL Youth Program

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Presenters:

**Christy Dunaway and Augusta Smith
Living Independence for Everyone (LIFE)**

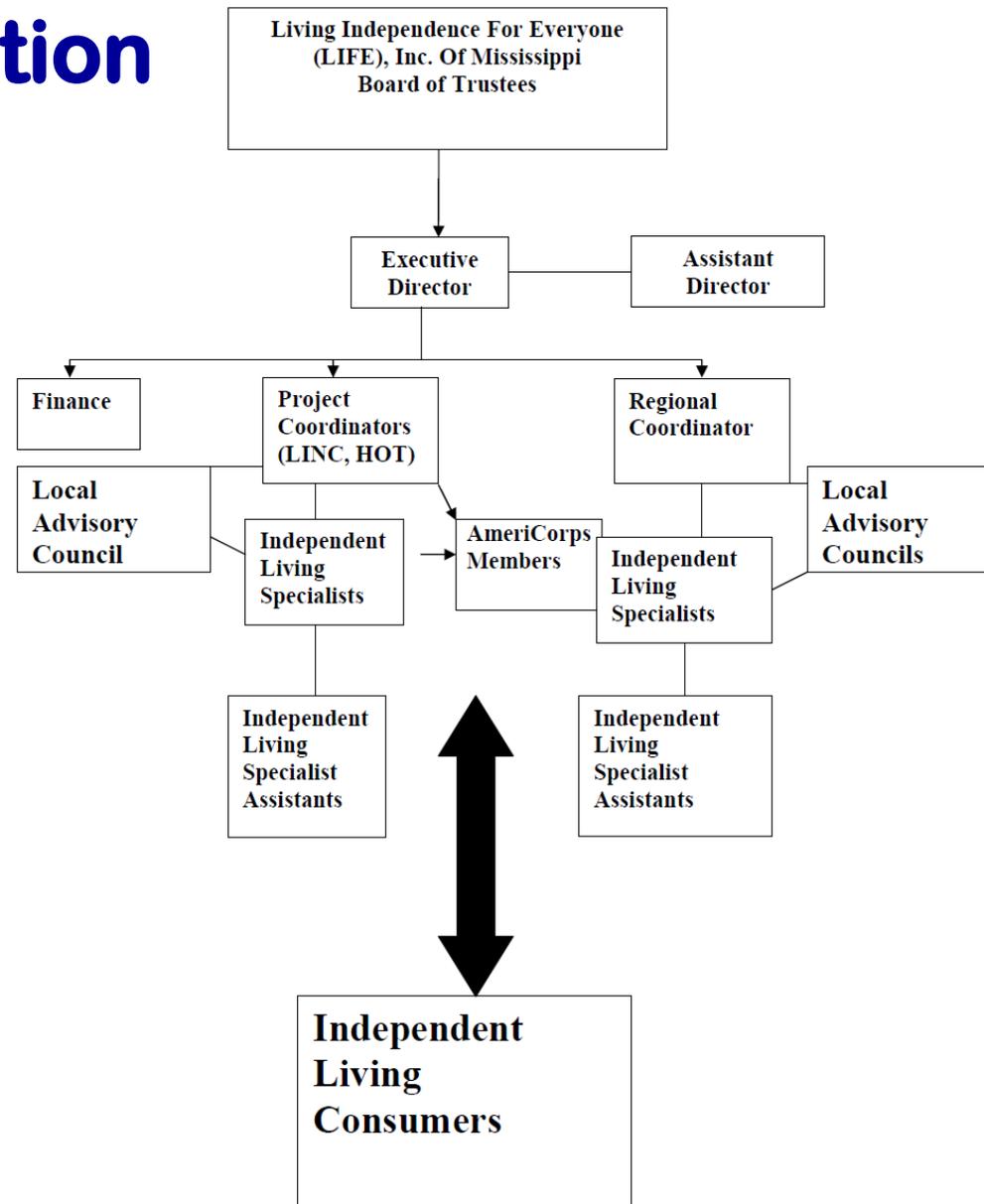
Living Independence For Everyone (LIFE) of Mississippi, Inc.



*Dedicated to the Empowerment
of Individuals with Disabilities*

Founded in 1993 in response to the reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act creating private, non-profit centers for independent living that are consumer directed and consumer controlled

LIFE Organization Chart



LIFE Budget

Current Budget = \$1,452,070

- Core Independent Living Grant: \$859,070
- Grants and Contracts: \$426,000
- United Way Funding: \$ 30,000
- Private Foundations: \$ 54,000
- Partnerships: \$ 58,000
- Fundraising Events: \$ 25,000



LIFE Offices and Staff

Six offices throughout MS

- Tupelo (northeast)
- Greenwood (delta)
- Jackson (central)
- McComb (southwest)
- Hattiesburg (south central)
- Biloxi (gulf coast)

Staff and Volunteers

- 25 staff members
- 20 AmeriCorps members
- 12 Board members
- Approximately 500 volunteers per year



Living Independence For Everyone (LIFE) of Mississippi's



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HEALTHY OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRANSITION (HOT) IN MISSISSIPPI



History and Funding of HOT

- Originally funded by the HHS Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) in 2001 as a contract between the center for independent living (LIFE) and the HRSA grantee in Mississippi designated by the State Department of Health (Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities).
- Title V funding
- Beginning in 2005 – funding obtained directly from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau of the Mississippi State Department of Health through a contract with the Children’s Medical Program.

Purpose of HOT in Mississippi

To establish a strong, responsive system of transition services for Mississippi children with special health care needs and their families, bringing together diverse groups and individuals, building community infrastructure, and resulting in successful transition to adult life.



Our Goal

HOT works to provide comprehensive, family-centered, culturally competent transition services, with a primary focus on health, which prepares children with special health care needs throughout Mississippi to make successful transitions to adult and community life including adult health care and related services, employment, and independent living.



Our Objectives

- Mississippi children between the ages of 0 and 21 with special health care needs receive services necessary to make successful transitions from one stage of life to another. Services will include peer support, skills training, advocacy, information and referral and other independent living services as needed;
- Families of children with special health care needs receive training and on-going support services to help them and their child confidently transition from a pediatric health care setting to adult health care providers;
- Health care professionals and service system agencies receive training and support equipping them to facilitate successful transitions for children with special health care needs from pediatric care to adult health care providers.

Our Activities

Independent Living Services - Includes the 4 core services of Independent Living

1. Peer Support

- Provided individually and in group settings
- Usually provided by the Independent Living Transition Specialist

2. Skills Training

- Provided individually and in group settings and usually by the IL Transition Specialist

Our Activities, cont'd.

3. Individual and Systems Advocacy

- This includes teaching the youth and their parents what their rights are under the ADA, IDEA and Section 504
- Empowering them to advocate for the services they need
- Assisting them in following up on the services they have requested from local, state and federal sources

4. Information and Referral

- Teaching the consumers and their families about available services in their area
- Making referrals to appropriate resources
- Following up on the provision of services from those resources

Our Activities, cont'd. 2

Transition Services

- Working with the consumer and their family to prepare for life changes such as transitioning from middle school to high school or from school to employment or parents' home to community living
- Planning the future after school by ensuring appropriate services are provided in the school
- Planning medical homes

Our Activities, cont'd. 3

Presence and Participation in Children's Medical Program clinics throughout the state

- Includes:
 - Meeting with consumers and their families at clinics specializing in transition, speech therapy, orthopedics, cerebral palsy, seating evaluations and others
 - Explanation of LIFE and HOT and the services we provide
 - Assisting the consumer and their family to determine services needed



Our Activities, cont'd. 4

- **Training and Awareness**
 - At schools - with groups of students
 - At conferences – to parents, other services providers
 - At community events – to consumers, families and general public
- **Annual Youth & Parent Retreat**
 - One weekend a year
 - Caters to 14-21 year olds
 - All activities planned by a Youth Advisory Council
- **Participation on Boards and Committees**
 - Nationally, statewide and locally

Integrating Youth

Advisory Council

- In keeping with the independent living philosophy of consumer direction and consumer control, LIFE developed a Youth Advisory Council for the HOT program so that we would always ensure input from the community we are working for.
- The Council is composed of individuals between the ages of 18 and 30 who have received services from LIFE/HOT at some point.
- The Council meets quarterly either face to face or via teleconference.

Integrating Youth, cont'd.

- The Youth Advisory Council is responsible for planning the annual youth/parent retreat each year. They determine the theme, the food and they choose the dates based on campground availability. They also determine who the speakers will be as well as the activities to be offered. This includes the parent aspect of the retreat as well. The retreat has focused on
 - transitioning from parents' home to the community
 - Relationships
 - health and wellness
 - community resources
 - and more.

Integrating Youth, cont'd. 2



Provision of Services

- Independent Living Transition Specialists
 - The Specialists working for LIFE/Hot were selected because of the fact that they had received services from the center, their age and experience in advocating for themselves and others.
 - Three of the four Transition Specialists are still under the age of 30.
 - Three of the four served as AmeriCorps members for Project LINC (Linking Individuals into Neighborhoods & Communities), LIFE's AmeriCorps program.
 - All are individuals with disabilities and provide peer support, skills training, advocacy, I&R and other IL services as needed.

Integrating Youth, cont'd. 3

- Serving on Boards and Committees/Systems
Advocacy
 - All LIFE staff are encouraged to serve on other boards and committees, both local/community boards and national councils when possible. The Transition Specialists serve on a total of six Boards and/or advisory councils. These include, but are not limited to: the National Youth Leadership Network, the Institute for Disability Studies, My Voice, My Choice.
 - The Transition Specialists are supported in these efforts through travel reimbursement, when necessary and feasible, and scheduling.

Questions and Answers





Contact Information

Christy Dunaway and Augusta Smith:

LIFE of Mississippi, Inc.

1304 Vine Street

Jackson, MS 39202

601-969-4009

www.lifeofms.com

New Community Opportunities Center at ILRU



This program is part of a series of trainings and other activities provided to the IL field by the New Community Opportunities Center at ILRU. The project's purpose is to assist CILs in developing self-sustaining programs that support community alternatives to institutionalization for individuals of any age, and youth transition from school to post-secondary education, employment, and community living.



New Community Opportunities Attribution

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