

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Transforming Community Living: A Virtual Event Promoting Inclusion and Empowerment

[Pittsburgh, PA] – [October 3, 2023] – In an effort to foster empowerment, education, and meaningful dialogue surrounding home- and community-based living and the rights of individuals with disabilities, the Western Pennsylvania Disability History and Action Consortium (WPDHAC) proudly announces the "Transforming Community Living" virtual event. Scheduled for Thursday, October 26, 2023, from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM EST, this free event promises to be an enlightening experience for attendees.

The "Transforming Community Living" event will feature a dynamic agenda that includes:

- **Film Screenings:** Participants will be transported into the historical roots of the deinstitutionalization movement with the powerful short film, "From Wrongs to Rights." Additionally, attendees will have the exclusive opportunity to witness the premiere of "Polk Center 1897-2023: A Reflection," offering a perspective on the closing of one of Pennsylvania's last institutions and evolution of home- and community-based living.
- **Keynote Address by Jill Jacobs:** Commissioner for the U.S. Administration on Disabilities at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Jill Jacobs, will deliver an insightful keynote address. She will reflect on the history of advocacy and the right to home- and community-based living while addressing current challenges and initiatives.
- **Panel Discussion:** A thought-provoking panel discussion, moderated by disability rights advocate Chaz Kellem, will feature three esteemed experts in the field of home- and community-based services: Kristin Ahrens, Deputy Secretary of Pennsylvania's Office of Developmental Programs (ODP); Hope Dittmeier, Executive Director of Mattingly Edge; and Christopher Liuzzo, Independent Consultant with extensive experience in the field. This discussion aims to provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities facing home- and community-based services in the modern era.

The event is open to people with disabilities, their families, provider agencies, public agencies, legislators, educators, disability advocates, historians, archivists, and anyone interested in the future of home- and community-based services.

To register for this impactful event, please visit <https://www.wpdhac.org/transforming-community-living-virtual-event-october-26-2023/>

The Western Pennsylvania Disability History and Action Consortium would like to extend gratitude to the event's partners and sponsors, including the A.W. Mellon Foundation for generous funding, the Heinz History Center for technical support, and ArtifactLA for filmmaking services. Additionally, event planning support was provided by the WPDHAC Executive Committee, comprised of staff members from Temple University Institute on Disabilities, Achieva, and Heinz History Center, as well as community advocates.

For media inquiries, please contact:

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About the Western Pennsylvania Disability History and Action Consortium:

The Western Pennsylvania Disability History and Action Consortium is committed to preserving and promoting the history of disability rights and advocating for a more inclusive future for individuals with disabilities. Through events, education, and advocacy, the Consortium strives to empower individuals and organizations to work towards a more accessible and equitable society.

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c/o Achieva

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Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WPDisabilityHistoryandActionConsortium/>

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