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## **Life Skills Program at DAWNcil for Teens and Young Adults with Disabilities**

DAWN Center for Independent Living, Inc., is offering a 72-hour interactive comprehensive life skills program, available to teens and young adults with disabilities, called Skills for Independent Living (SkIL). Thanks to support from the United Way of Northern New Jersey, in 2016, SkIL will be available to teens and young adults residing in Morris, Sussex and Warren counties.

SkIL units cover themes including *"Who fired the maid?"* (Keeping a Clean, Neat Home), *"Making contact"* (Communicating with Others), *"Money isn't funny!"* (Managing Money), *"Teach me something I DON'T know"* (Options for Continuing Education, Vocational Training, and Employment), *"Some of the finer things in life"* (Exploring the Creative Arts), and much more. The program provides a fun, inherently social, hands-on learning experience led by DAWN's Independent Living Transition Specialist with the aid of an assistant. The program incorporates practical learning sessions in the "classroom," with visits from special guest speakers and interactive technology-based learning opportunities, and planned activities in the community. Every session provides opportunity for social and emotional growth and focuses on healthy peer relationships. Each student will receive a robust curriculum binder to keep filled with information, resources, and materials that they can continue to use in their life beyond SkIL to facilitate ongoing life application of the learning content. The curriculum will be concluded with a celebration honoring participants, who each will receive a certificate of participation in the SkIL program.

Like all of DAWN's programs and services, SkIL will follow the Independent Living Philosophy, which states that people with disabilities should have the same civil rights, choices, and control as do people without disabilities. The curriculum also incorporates elements of The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability (NCWD)/Youth's "Guideposts for Success," and the U.S. Department of Labor – Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) "Skills to Pay the Bills" curriculum. In April 2012, Governor Chris Christie declared New Jersey the 14<sup>th</sup> Employment First state, making employment the first and preferred outcome for people with disabilities. SkIL is aligned with this principle as well, creating opportunities for participants to explore their strengths, preferences, and abilities in connection with vocational options.

Pre-Registration forms must be submitted to DAWN by all interested candidates, and do not guarantee enrollment. These forms, and additional information about SkIL, can be obtained by contacting Pamela Hamilton at 973-625-1940 ext. 214 or [phamilton@dawncil.org](mailto:phamilton@dawncil.org). More information about DAWN is available on their website at [www.dawncil.org](http://www.dawncil.org). The next cycle will begin in September, 2016 and run through December, 2016. Sessions will take place on Mondays and Wednesdays from 4-6:30 PM and will be held in Andover, central to Morris, Sussex and Warren counties. Location to be advised.