



# Wheelchair Getaways®



Quarterly Customer Newsletter  
**July 2003**

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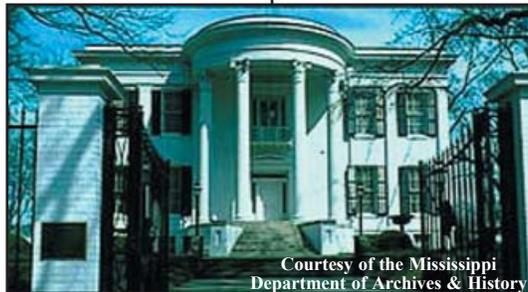
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## Welcome to Mississippi, the Home of Wheelchair Getaways' Newest Franchise Location!

Whether you are enjoying the beautiful beaches or trying your luck in a casino, Mississippi offers some great travel experiences. The state is known for its stunning antebellum homes, historical sites, and gorgeous landscape and with a new franchise opening in Gulfport what a perfect excuse to treat yourself to a vacation on the gulf coast!

Mississippi is home to the Gulf Islands National Seashore. Stretching 150 miles from Cat Island, MS to the tip of Santa Rosa Island in Florida, this shore includes shimmering blue waters, sandy-white beaches, coastal marshes, and dense forests for visitors to experience. A great way to enjoy this beautiful beach is to take a Ship Island Excursion. Ship Island Excursions provide wheelchair accessible ferry rides to some of the last undeveloped barrier islands off the coast of Gulfport. Passengers will enjoy Ship Island, the historic Fort Massachusetts, dolphins, and all the natural beauty of the clean, gulf waters.

If you are looking for more to do during your visit to Mississippi than hitting the beaches, rent a van from Wheelchair Getaways and plan a tour of antebellum homes or take a scenic drive. History buffs will find Mississippi to be full of interesting and educational historical sites. Grass Lawn is a historic house that was built in 1836. Located on East Beach Blvd. in Gulfport, the historic home has hand-hewn timbers, wide galleries supported by two story columns, and is furnished with period furniture. It is a fascinating example of antebellum architecture and is wheelchair accessible! For educational family fun, take the kids to Lynn Meadows Discovery Center. The Discovery



Courtesy of the Mississippi Department of Archives & History

Center is Gulfport's state-of-the-art children's museum. Fun exhibits include the Super Colossal Climbing Sculpture, Celebrate the World We Share, and the History Attic, which allows children to learn about Mississippi City in the 1890's.

After experiencing all that Gulfport has to offer during the day, visitors can experience Gulfport's nightlife in one of the city's many casinos. The Grand Casino is open 24 hours a day and boasts 2,200 reel and video slot machines, 70 table games, and designated non smoking gaming areas. The casino is wheelchair accessible and is also host to many events. Upcoming events in July include musical performances by country singer Lee Ann Womack on July 17 and David Lee Roth on July 19, as well as a comedic performance by Gallagher on July 26. Another wheelchair accessible casino is the Copa Casino. Located on a docked ocean liner the Copa Casino is 27,000 square feet and includes 825 slot machines and e-games, 42 table games, video games, senior specials, and 2 restaurants, one of which is open 24 hours a day.

For hotel accommodations log on to the Access-Able Travel Source's website: [www.access-able.com](http://www.access-able.com). Mississippi offers many wheelchair accessible hotels. Many of the hotels offer free shuttle service to and from the nearby casinos. For example, Ramada Limited Ocean Front in Gulfport offers non-smoking and wheelchair accessible rooms, as well as shuttle service to the casinos.

For more information about Mississippi or any of the attractions mentioned in this article, try the following websites:

[www.Mississippi.gov](http://www.Mississippi.gov)  
[www.visitmississippi.org](http://www.visitmississippi.org)  
[www.yazoo.org](http://www.yazoo.org)  
[www.gulfcoast.org](http://www.gulfcoast.org)

To rent an accessible van from Wheelchair Getaways for your Mississippi trip call (877) 416-0175.

**Have a wonderful Independence Day!!**

# ***Parking for Handicapped Requires Extra Space***

***by Shirley Williams***

***article featured in Knoxville Sunday News Sentinel***

More than ever before, people with disabilities shop, work, volunteer, exercise, attend church and try to make life better for themselves and others. With the Americans with Disabilities Act and vehicles with mobility equipment, America is becoming accessible. Finding accessible handicap parking spaces is challenging because so many use them. Gaining more understanding on disability needs helps us make wise, considerate decisions on parking lots and in other situations for a better future.

"Van accessible" handicap spaces have on each side large aisle spaces blocked off (usually with white paint) to provide vans equipped with side lifts or ramps accessibility. Unloading of lift equipment requires extra space and the van-accessible spaces provide that. That is the reason "van accessible" signs are posted.

Anyone driving a van that has a handicap permit but does not have lift or ramp equipment should use a regular handicap space. A regular handicap parking space does not have the larger blocked-off aisle space. A walking person doesn't need blocked-off aisle space, but people with wheelchairs, mobility chairs and lift equipment do. "Van accessible" signs should say "lift/ramp equipped vans only." When the van-accessible parking spaces are taken, the choice is a wait of 15 minutes or longer or using two regular parking spaces side by side. Finding two regular parking spaces side by side usually requires going to the back of parking lot to park and rolling back to the front of lot in a mobility chair, putting the mobility chair user in danger due to other vehicle traffic.

The white blocked-off spaces beside handicap parking spaces should not be parked on to create a personal parking space. As stated earlier, these are blocked off for loading and unloading mobility equipment and provide the required space needed for wheelchairs and mobility chairs to move. I have seen law-enforcement vehicles, motorcycles, trucks and cars on these white blocked-off aisle spaces, blocking the lift-ramp equipment space and blocking the person whose mobility depends on the lift, ramp or wheelchair equipment.

Another issue is nondisabled people who have a parent, child or spouse with a handicap parking permit. Permits are to be used when the person with the disability leaves the vehicle to go into a business or building. The nondisabled should not use a permit to park in a handicap parking space if leaving the disabled parent, child or spouse in the vehicle. Sitting in the vehicle doesn't require handicap parking.

Another problem that is created for those who have disabilities is the parking of a vehicle on top of or in front of the cut-out ramp area in sidewalks. The cut-out in the sidewalk provides access for the wheelchair or mobility chair user to the sidewalk leading to business door, etc. I have witnessed trucks, cars, and law enforcement vehicles blocking these due to the way they parked. Please be aware and prevent blocking access.

The blue handicap parking permits being used now should be voided and replaced with handicap permits that are a different color. This would help eliminate old permits being used after expiration date and eliminate permits of deceased kept and used by others. A fresh beginning is needed.

The medical profession should recommend temporary permits instead of permanent ones. Handicap parking permits have been issued in great amounts. Look around - the East Tennessee area is well blessed with these permits. It's time to make a change.

Speaking of change, to those with the handicap permits hanging on their rearview mirrors: Please take the permit placard off while driving. The placard plainly states not to drive with these in your window. They can block your view. These are not awards to be proud of. They are hanging from rearview mirrors like jewelry. They should not be on display except when needed to park.

Having a physical challenge requires patience and determination mixed with kindness. I try to display these to all and feel blessed most show kindness in return. However, parking situations challenge hearts.

In all things, learning and trying makes a difference. We all are still learning together how to live life the best way we can. Whether you have a disability or not, please do unto others as you would want them to do unto you. I will do that for you, too.

Shirley Williams is a Knoxville resident active in the community, church, and volunteering. She speaks on safe driving at local high schools.



# Meet Your Local Center for Independent Living

by Ann Bransom

One of the best places for wheelchair users to find resources is their local Center for Independent Living. Independent living centers are non-profit organizations that provide a broad range of services to individuals with disabilities. They serve to make communities more accessible and to help individuals become more independent in their own lives. Centers also promote volunteerism and social events. CILs are partially funded by federal programs and partially by state programs and are supported by rehabilitation services, the department of education, and other groups.

Some of the services provided by CILs include support groups, advocacy, recreational opportunities, and a broad range of information and referral services. Peer counseling gives individuals opportunities to talk about their experiences and learn coping skills in a group setting. Advocacy services give people with disabilities a voice on both a local and national level. Recreational opportunities are sponsored by CILs and give people with disabilities a chance to socialize. Information and referral services provide all kinds of information on anything from housing modification to support groups to information about assistive technology.

There are Centers for Independent Living all over the country. One example is The Three Rivers Center for Independent Living (TRCIL), located in Pittsburgh. This center provides a number of services including: peer counseling, advocacy, independent living skills training, information and referral (including a comprehensive resource library), and housing data and referral. They also provide home modification evaluations, recreational events, assistive technology, and educational outreach. The mission of TRCIL is "to promote independent living for and by individuals with disabilities; to empower people with disabilities to live self directed, productive, and personally meaningful lives in a self determined setting; and to provide high quality, consumer controlled services and to advocate for effective community change so as to enhance opportunities for people with disabilities." TRCIL is an excellent example of an active center, which administers all types of services to its community.

Another exceptional center is the Center for Independent Living, Inc., located in Berkley, CA. Founded in 1972 this center is dedicated to making the community more accessible. The center offers personal assistance services, services for the blind and deaf, employment services, housing, information and referral, and peer support services. In addition to these services, this center offers the Client Assistance Project (CAP) which is a federally

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## NATIONWIDE LOCATIONS

<b>CORPORATE</b>	(800) 536-5518	<b>KENTUCKY:</b>	(800) 458-1115	<b>NORTH CAROLINA:</b>	(800) 662-7572
<b>ALABAMA</b>	(800) 554-6893	<b>LOUISIANA:</b>	(877) 416-0175	<b>OHIO:</b>	(800) 398-5165
<b>ARIZONA:</b>	(888) 824-7413	<b>MARYLAND:</b> & Delaware	(800) 438-8465	<b>OKLAHOMA:</b>	(800) 689-0511
<b>CALIFORNIA:</b> Northern	(800) 638-1912	<b>MASSACHUSETTS:</b>	(800) 727-1656	<b>PENNSYLVANIA:</b>	(800) 221-6501
Los Angeles, Orange Co	(800) 659-1972	<b>MICHIGAN:</b>	(800) 887-7868	<b>RHODE ISLAND:</b>	(800) 727-1656
San Diego, Palm Springs	(877) 388-4883	<b>MINNESOTA:</b> & North & South Dakota	(888) 256-5807	<b>SOUTH CAROLINA:</b>	(866) 288-8118
<b>COLORADO:</b> & Cheyenne, WY	(800) 238-6920	<b>MISSISSIPPI:</b> (Gulf Coast)	(877) 416-0175	<b>TENNESSEE:</b> Eastern & Central	(888) 245-9944
<b>CONNECTICUT:</b>	(800) 228-0185	<b>MISSOURI:</b> & KS, IA, AR	(800) 781-0663	Western	(800) 781-0663
<b>FLORIDA:</b> Northern	(800) 637-7577	<b>NEVADA:</b>	(888) 824-7413	<b>TEXAS:</b> Dallas, Ft. Worth	(877) 688-4695
Central	(800) 242-4990	<b>NEW ENGLAND:</b> ME, NH, VT	(800) 727-1656	El Paso	(800) 408-2626
Southern	(800) 637-7577	<b>NEW JERSEY:</b> Northern NJ, NY City	(800) 344-5005	Houston, San Antonio, Austin	(866) 616-8267
<b>GEORGIA:</b> & Birmingham, AL	(800) 554-6893	Central	(800) 221-0034	<b>VIRGINIA:</b> Central & Southern	(877) 271-9826
<b>HAWAII:</b>	(800) 638-1912	South	(800) 221-6501	Northern Virginia	(800) 438-8465
<b>ILLINOIS:</b> Chicago & Northern, IL	(800) 637-2597	<b>NEW MEXICO:</b>	(800) 408-2626	<b>WASHINGTON, DC:</b>	(800) 438-8465
Central & Southern	(800) 781-0663	<b>NEW YORK:</b> Brooklyn	(800) 807-4801	<b>WASHINGTON:</b>	(888) 376-1500
<b>INDIANA:</b> Northern	(800) 826-9764	Long Island, NY City	(800) 379-3750	<b>WEST VIRGINIA:</b>	(800) 221-6501
Central & Southern	(888) 468-9055	Upstate NY, Syracuse, NYC, Albany, Westchester Co	(866) 725-1803	<b>WISCONSIN:</b>	(866) 748-3004

## **NATIONWIDE RENTAL INFORMATION:**

**(800) 642-2042**

**[www.wheelchairgetaways.com](http://www.wheelchairgetaways.com)**

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mandated program representing consumers of the Department of Rehabilitation. The center hosts a legal clinic, where attorneys from the Alameda County Bar Association meet with individuals and their families to discuss disability related issues. The center also offers youth services, which provide counseling for youth ages 14 to 22 and their families. The Center for Independent Living of South Florida offers similar services such as self-advocacy, job placement, and information and referral. However, they also offer full access to the Internet, assistance with filing ADA complaints, and even internship placement for undergraduates. This center is yet another example of outstanding resources for people with disabilities.

Many centers offer funding or waiver programs to help support individuals living independently in the community, rather than in institutions. These funding sources provide money for attendant care, adaptations to the home environment, and also for transportation. One of the waiver programs has been used frequently to pay for rentals of Wheelchair Getaways' vans.

The aforementioned centers are just a few examples of CILs. However, centers are located in every state. The easiest way to locate the closest center to you is by going to a website that has a national directory. The Independent Living

Research Utilization website [www.ilru.org](http://www.ilru.org), provides an excellent map to locate centers by state. Independent Living USA's website [www.ilusa.com/links/ilcenters.htm](http://www.ilusa.com/links/ilcenters.htm), also provides CIL listings for the United States, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Canada, the United Kingdom, Brazil, some European countries, and Africa. Both of these websites also provide information about Centers for Independent Living. Other informative websites include the National Council on Independent Living's website ([www.ncil.org](http://www.ncil.org)), Abledata's website ([www.abledata.com](http://www.abledata.com)), and Disability Resources Monthly's website ([www.disabilityresources.org](http://www.disabilityresources.org)). Contact your local Center for Independent Living to see what services are offered in your area.



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