



RESOURCE CENTER FOR ACCESSIBLE LIVING, INC.  
*Opening the Doors of Opportunity*

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**Former *RCAL* Employee Fran Wishnick Publishes Book About Son's Struggle With Mental Illness & Suicide**

*Craig Climbs a Tree: His Lifelong Struggle* follows author Fran Wishnick (co-authored by her son Craig) as she, husband Ken, and daughter Lindsay, embark on an often heartbreaking yet inspiring journey. They struggled to guide Craig through life as direct care providers and first-hand witnesses to his development and the internal turmoil that persisted throughout so much of his life. Craig's diagnosis of Asperger Syndrome was accompanied by daily depression and the stress of constant anxiety. Fran tells the story of her son's struggle in her own words, as well as his, via saved notes, e-mails, and letters Craig wrote throughout his life, during moments of contemplation, assignments for school, responses to family members, and a lifetime of correspondences.

The honest and straightforward story depicts the exhaustive and sleepless nights two parents endure as they attempt to navigate an anemic mental health care system in search for some respite or relief for their son's constant turmoil. Plagued with ongoing suicidal ideations, Craig's writings give readers a firsthand look at the meticulous and direct nature one can express their thoughts through writings, while at the same time struggling internally to elevate oneself to social interactions with others. This book, five years in the making since Craig's suicide, is a must read for those in the healthcare service industry, especially within the area of mental health care. It is a book that all individuals, especially parents, should read to obtain a greater grasp on the human condition and the potential we all have for affliction that may require the help of others.

Fran previously worked as the Public Policy and Advocacy Director at **RCAL** from 2006 until 2011. She then worked as Systems Advocate and Advisor for the New York Association on Independent Living (NYAIL) from 2012 until 2014. Most recently Fran worked for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as a Disability Integration Advisor Trainee Reservist until April 2016, during which time she was deployed to Louisiana to assist individuals affected by recent flooding disasters. Fran also serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the Mental Health Association of Ulster County. She sits as Chairperson of the Advocacy Committee and is a member of the Corporate Compliance Committee.

*Craig Climbs a Tree: His Lifelong Struggle* is available at the following link ([https://www.amazon.com/dp/1537048414/ref=tsm\\_1\\_fb\\_lk](https://www.amazon.com/dp/1537048414/ref=tsm_1_fb_lk)) (Go to <https://smile.amazon.com/> before purchasing, search for **RCAL**, and .05% of your purchase price will be donated.)