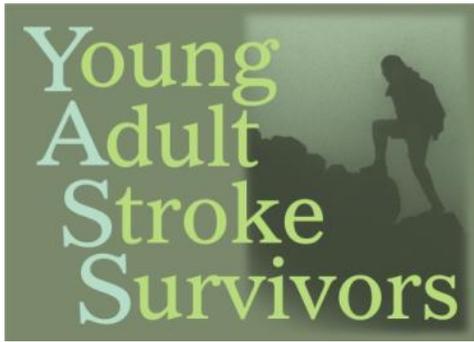


Sun 18 Feb 2018

Great to see everyone yesterday, at a really good meeting.



NEW FACES

- Kristi Long
- Paul Giersh & Barbara Nelson
- Jim Ferguson
- Jonathan Jacky

Welcome, folks! We hope to see you again soon.

J-P GUSTAD ON SSI & SSDI

John-Paul Gustad, social security lawyer from Gustad Law, gave a great presentation on the ins & outs of social security disability benefits. JP has been in social security law for over 17 years and has great experience and perspective. Here are some notes:

- SSDI provides a monthly stipend plus medical insurance if you qualify.
- SSI and SSDI both have the same eligibility requirements, so if you qualify for one you qualify for the other.
- They differ in that SSI is needs-based, and SSDI depends on inability to work. SSI provides \$750/month, and you must be low-income.
- It is important to apply early. Benefits are only retroactive for up to one year prior to your application date, so don't wait for years after your stroke hoping to get better in the meantime. It's better to apply early and not need it.
- Your SS benefits depend on the amount you have earned over your lifetime. More earnings = more benefits.
- At full retirement age SSDI is converted to regular SS retirement income. Typically this is about the same, perhaps slightly less.
- You can work and collect SSDI. You can earn up to \$1180/month in pretax "substantial gainful activity" (SGA) with no effect on SSDI. If you earn more than this, you are allowed 9 months of higher earnings as a trial work period, then SSDI is canceled.
- A spouse working does not affect your SSDI eligibility or benefits. Neither does investment income, which is not SGA.
- Your disability must last at least 12 months to qualify for SSDI, so you can't collect benefits earlier than 12 months after your stroke.
- An SS lawyer can be very helpful. They know the process, can get the proper paperwork and doctors' statements together, and avoid the appearance of you being able to press your claim while calling yourself disabled.
- JP works on contingency, so he doesn't receive payment unless benefits are obtained. He gets 25% of back benefits plus up to \$6,000 lawyer's fees (this is prescribed by the government).

It was an engaging and dynamic presentation, with lots of questions and group participation. J-P may be contacted at jp@gustadlaw.com (best way), or at 206-533-2222. His main office is only 8 blocks north of our meeting spot, with other branches too. Thank you, Mr. Gustad!

DSHS PAYMENTS FOR CAREGIVERS

As part of J-P's presentation the subject of WA State Department of Social and Health Services and payments available to caregivers came up. He mentioned the COPEs program through DSHS for caregiver pay, both for work and respite. This is another excellent benefit which you may be eligible for. Contact the DSHS at www.dshs.wa.gov or 360-725-2300. We also have several DSHS references in our group minutes archive. Go to <http://seattleyass.weebly.com/minutes.html> and enter DSHS in the Search box.

INNERTUBING AT SNOQUALMIE

Mike Tran is organizing an innertubing day on the snow, Saturday March 3 at 11:15 AM at The Summit at Snoqualmie, Tube Center. The cost is \$26, but you get a \$5 coupon from Mike if you RSVP to him at 206-713-8859 or sdfoundation.uw@gmail.com. Have some fun in the snow!

WALK, RUN, AND ROLL APRIL 22

The Brain Injury Alliance of WA is hosting their annual fundraising Walk, Run, and Roll at Green Lake on Sunday April 22. Registration starts at 9:00, a ceremony at 10:00, and the event at 10:15. There is a 5k course or 1 mile, or you can circle the lake if you want. I have set up a "Team YASS" for the event, and the first ten people who register for the team get their \$10 registration fee waived. Here's how to register on line:

1. Go to our team page at <http://bit.ly/2Ho8wnv>.
2. Click Register at the top, and fill in the first page form.
3. On the second page select "Team YASS" as your team.
4. On the fourth page use the discount code YASS10.

Seems kinda complicated when your brain is broken, but it's really not bad. You can donate as part of your registration, or you can gather pledges from friends & family too. Hope you can make it! Hey, look carefully at the home page for the event at <https://biawa.rallybound.org/walkrunroll/>. You'll see YASSer Eric Allison about two heads left of center in the crowd from last year. You go, Eric! See ya there.

FREE COUCH

Thanks to everyone who has helped get Frank Lim ready to move to his new digs at NorthHaven. He is 3rd on the waiting list now, so it won't be long. He has a nice, three-cushion dark green couch in excellent condition free for the taking. Contact me or Dorrit Jensen at rueniensen@gmail.com for a picture and details.

See you all next month!

Gerrit -- SeattleYASS@gmail.com -- 206-241-7693 (see our website at SeattleYASS.weebly.com)