Haiku by Ashley Centers

Escape confinement,
stand, stretch your tired body.
Free your mind’s monsters.
LOCAL EVENTS - Please join us!

Sept 7     - Courageous Kids Climbing
            Downtown YMCA
            Boise, ID

Sept 14    - Break the Silence 5K Walk
            Coeur d’Alene, Idaho
            Riverstone Park

Sept 17    - Game Night
            Spokane, WA
            DAC Office, Saranac Building, Spokane 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Sept 19-20 - Making a World of Difference IL Conference
            Worley, ID
            Coeur d’Alene Casino, 10:00 am - 4:30 pm

Sept 21    - Walk to End Alzheimers
            Pullman, WA
            Bill Chipman Trail, 10:00 am

Sept 28    - Ataxia Support Group
            Post Falls, ID
            821 N Spokane St.

INDEPENDENT LIVING CONFERENCE
MAKING A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE:
   . . . .Starting at Home

September 19-20
Coeur d’Alene Casino, Worley, ID

Learn more about the IL movement, advocating for yourself and your community, learn your leadership style and how to work together, meet the resources in your area. Power in Peers Karaoke and Dance, Youth Vision Project, ADA Basic Training, Intimacy and Disability, Reasonable Accommodation and Goal Setting
How does the Disability Action Center (DAC) assist people with disabilities to become employed and then stay employed? DAC assists through empowering. We empower consumers with disabilities to themselves lead the way because, ultimately, consumers are responsible for their own lives. Before we at DAC can aid them to go further, consumers first must educate us on where they are right now in their journeys toward safety and security and toward stable work and living as independently as they wish. I think it is likely that people must have safety and security before they are able to fight for their civil right to protection from job discrimination.

We at DAC can support an individual with disability by remembering and “feeling back.” I, myself, remember when I was denied jobs that would have me talking with people (although talking with—and stuttering at—people is one of my favorite things). Now, I feel back to how I was affected by job discrimination, recalling those tender learning experiences. What knowledge and skills did I acquire, so that I could advocate for myself? Now I am able to guide DAC consumers in gaining the knowledge and skills they need in order to advocate for themselves and take control of their lives.

And so we at DAC become peer mentors—individuals with disability who guide other individuals with disability. DAC assists consumers experiencing employment discrimination with accessing Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act, from knowledge of workplace reasonable accommodations to the know-how to lodge a discrimination complaint. We at DAC also mentor the skills, including communication skills, organizational skills, and technology skills, that we gained to solve the problems of our own workplace struggles. And then there is health care and insurance and the other pieces that we all best have in place to stay employed. For example, can DAC guide a working consumer to acquiring Medicaid for Workers with Disabilities?

I ended last month’s piece with a few words about the group - or macro - approach to answer employment issues facing people with disabilities. Government policies, including those that strengthen employment, are generally implemented through law. These policies include anti discrimination protections like the ADA, and income supports like SSI and vocational training programs like Ticket to Work. There are also policy initiatives that support keeping people working, such as childcare for working parents and health care, including Medicaid for Workers with disabilities.

Next Month: more about social programs to keep people with disabilities working.
DAC NW Staff and Consumers Help Make Recreation Accessible!

Michelle Porter and a consumer have been working with CDA Parks and Rec to make sure changes to the park are accessible to everyone.

When deciding on a ramp that allows a person to roll all the way into the water, so you can get out of your wheelchair, their input will help make sure lock down devices or bungee cords are available to make sure the wheelchairs don’t float away. This allows a person to independently go into the water and then swim. Whether they use a wheelchair or a walker, their device will be waiting for them to use to get out of the water.

Another idea came about as they are planning a dog park near the water.

Hearing from our staff and consumers that a person in a wheelchair needs to be able to access the waters edge to take their service animals down to play in the water, toss a stick out for the dogs to fetch from the water. So discussions are in the works for a concrete path down to the lake for just such a purpose.

These decisions are important to be made WITH people with disabilities. We know best what we need, and this communication makes sure accessibility is included in the planning stages, when it makes the most sense.
ACCESSIBLE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN

More than 15% of voting age Idahoans have a disability. More than 14 million people with disabilities voted in the 2018 mid-term election. That’s an increase of 9% from the 2014 mid-terms.

To reach these voters, public events like debates, forums and town hall meetings need to be accessible. Prior to scheduling, planners should check for:
- accessible parking close to the entrance
- access route to the door is at least 36” wide
- are all doorways inside the building 36”
- are bathrooms accessible
- if accessible entrance is different, make sure signage directs people to accessible entrance
- make sure licensed sign language interpreters are available for entire event

- if the event is filmed make sure it is closed captioned

For email information:
- avoid using images in emails because screen readers cannot tell what the image is
- if you include a phone line for the general public, include an email address for alternative communication
- if using PDF’s make sure it is accessible.

For snail mail:
- be sure staff know how to handle a request for braille or large print.
- have material available on a CD or flash drive
- use a font that is easy to read like Aphont, Arial (18 pt)

Communicate:
- talk directly to the person, not the aide
- use a normal voice unless requested otherwise
- make eye contact
- if you don’t understand the person, ask them to repeat what they said
- when talking to a person in a wheelchair, find a chair or bench to put yourself at the same height.

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Braille Sees A Resurgence Among Students

By Erin Jepsen

For years the rumor has circulated that Braille was going the way of the dinosaur, made obsolete by technology. In reality, Braille is alive and well, seeing new growth among the younger blind population.

According to the National Federation of the Blind (NFB), Braille is necessary for literacy within the blind population, it’s estimated that 85% of employed blind people are Braille readers. Students too require it for literacy if they are not able to read print comfortably. “Audio books can’t teach spelling or punctuation in a sentence,” says Alana Leonhardy, secretary of the Palouse Empire Chapter of NFB in Idaho. “Braille provides the same information for the blind that print provides for the sighted, whether we are talking books or computer readouts,” adds Nancy Scott, co-editor of Slate and Style. “Braille is the only way to gain the exact information in the same way as a print user gains it.”

Technology is actually helping Braille reach more readers. Hardware such as refreshable Braille displays allow reader to access web pages and ebooks. Bluetooth allows smartphones to interface with Braille displays, and there are even portable options for note takers. Facebook and other social media provide quick communication between transcribers and Braille users, as well as allowing for “hand-me-down” books to pass around the Braille community. Transcribers have access to powerful software and embossers, allowing for faster and more accurate transcription of books than at any other time in history.

Braille, the dot-code of embossed writing for tactile reading as been embraced by blind readers and disliked by many sighted teachers since its invention in 1820. Today, it has spread into a worldwide use in every major language. Dedicated users can read and write literature, music, math, languages, maps and science, as well as practical uses like labeling medication, jotting notes, coordinating clothing color and more.

Educators realize the benefit of dual-media learning: Simultaneous print and Braille instruction for students with low vision. Terri Rupp, a tireless advocate for dual-media instruction due to the fact she herself was not taught Braille until she was adult, says “I’ve shoved a part of myself aside for too long. Making sure that her daughter is Braille literate is a big step toward a successful life as a blind person.”

Students who are blind or low vision should be afforded the same rights as their peers. “Poverty in the blind community is preventable by education. Literacy is the key to equality and providing people who are blind their civil rights.” - BrailleWorks.com

While it’s true that Braille use has dipped to 8.5% the last decade, many people in the blind community see that changing in the near future. With efforts of advocacy groups and better knowledge and education, Braille literacy is again on the rise.
When Scout Basset, a girl who lost her right leg at 18 months, crossed the finish line in her first race at age 14, she knew she was going to be OK. She could see herself in terms of possibility instead of limitation. She would go back to her tiny northern Michigan town and stop trying to convince everyone she was just like everyone else. There would be no more hiding, no more flesh-toned prosthetics that weren’t falling anybody anyway. This finish line was a starting point. “I am never again going to be ashamed of my story, or where I came from,” she vowed.

Now 31, she stands 4-foot-9 and weighs 85 pounds, and she is the fastest American of her classification ever to run the 100 meters. It’s astonishing to see how fast she can power her body around the track as she trains at an Orlando High School. Her running blade - a $30,000+ per leg, does not include a knee joint, which reduces weight and increases speed but gives her gait a slight side-to-side motion. The 100 meters is an event so illogical for a person of her jstature it’s hard to come up with a comparison. Like a 150-pound man playing offensive tackle for the NFL.
About 10 million people with disabilities receive paid personal assistant services in the United States. These services are critical for social and community participation. And self-directed services allow for personal choice and control by the consumer.

However, little is known about rural-urban differences in the delivery of these services and how this influences community participation and health. To address this, RTC is conducting research in rural America. Dr. Rayna Sage, RTC: Rural Project Director, explains the project and its goals and gives a quick progress update.

This project has three exciting components that involve getting a lay of the land, surveying and interview consumers across five states, and conducting interactive training to shape existing PAS training programs to better meet the needs of rural workers. Currently there is very little anecdotal data on the personal experiences of PAS consumers in rural areas. They are deciding on which questions and measures to include in the research and a consumer survey will be out this fall.

This will bring greater public awareness to the challenges and opportunities related to these vital services that are often the first to be cut during difficult budget years. The project will help tell the story of many rural people with disabilities that are using PAS services and making it work. This is important because these services are incredibly underfunded, but for many people in rural places, access to PAS services is vital to their independence.
Most wheelchair design is focused on users’ comfort in everyday use. Rolling Dance Chair supports dancers who can’t necessarily perform without mechanical aid. This chair has greater flexibility to move in any direction using a wireless connection and motion sensors. (Similar to a Segway). http://mentalfloss.com/article/88268/new-type-wheelchair-designed-dancers

One of the challenges facing double arm amputees is to wait for months for prosthetics. During this time they cannot eat independently. Remap has designed an eating aid worn on the shoulder that is easy to put on and take off via a blood pressure cuff. https://www.remap.org.uk/1656/eating-aid-double-amputees/

Remap developed a wrist support to enable someone to still play the piano after breast cancer left her unable to support her left arm. The device is attached to a rail from middle C to just beyond the left hand keys. The truck runs along the support rail to comfortable support her wrist. https://www.remap.org.uk/1639/1639/

The US Hot Air Balloon Team now has an accessible gondola that gives those who use wheelchairs the opportunity to enjoy a hot air balloon ride. The new door gives the ability to roll or walk right in. Traditional baskets do not have a door. https://www.ushotairballoon.com/private-handicapped-accessible-rides/

A new powered mobility device coming out in the future is Mobi. It has an innovative folding mechanism that shrinks it to be stored and transported easily. Controlled similar to a manual wheelchair, it has sensors to detect the physical exertion and adds power to the wheels similar to power steering in a car. http://www.tuvie.com/mobi-electric-folding-wheelchair-by-jack-martinich/
NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness is deeply saddened by the mass shootings that are far too common and impact every corner of our nation. Every time we experience a tragedy like this, people with mental illness are drawn into the conversation. The truth is most violence is not perpetrated by people with mental illness. Statements to the contrary only serve to perpetuate stigma and distract from the real issues.

NAMI sees gun violence as a national public health crisis that impacts everyone. “In the U.S., it is easier to get a gun than it is to get mental health care,” states Angela Kimball, NAMI CEO. “We need to flip the script. It should be easy - not hard - for people to get the mental health care they need.”

We implore and advocate for commonsense approaches to ending gun violence. For example, we support gun violence prevention restraining orders or “Red Flag” laws, provided due process is used, that don’t target people with mental health conditions, but allow for the removal of guns from any person who poses a real, evidence-based risk of violence to themselves or others.

Elected officials have made statements about reopening mental “institutions,” some have called people with mental illness “monsters.” This is not constructive and has perpetuated false stereotypes. Words matter!

Persons living with mental health problems are our friends neighbors, children and spouses. They’re not “monsters,” “the mentally ill,” or “crazy people” - they’re us. Talking about putting people in an institution only further marginalizes and isolates the one in five persons that experience a mental illness sometime in their life. Instead, we need to be talking about the power of early treatment and effective intervention to change lives. We should be talking about better care and earlier access to intensive treatment, not revisiting the shameful institutions of the past.

Frequently people languish in emergency rooms and law enforcement officers are responding to avoidable crises because community based mental health services aren’t there. We know these approaches are effective so we must
- promote early intervention. Half of all mental illness begins by age 14.
- invest in better access to quality care. 60% of all counties do not have a single psychiatrist.
- divert people from the criminal justice system. Jails shouldn’t be today’s mental health institutions.

NAMI welcomes the opportunity to work with our government on steps for improving mental health services in Idaho and across the nation.

It’s easier to get a gun than to get mental health care in the U.S.
Nike Air Zoom UNVRS Debuts New FlyEast Technology

Ableds are weird!

Had a pretty lady in a wheelchair flirt with me on the train and I flirted back. When she got to her stop she handed me her number. Some lady across the aisle asked me “Why would you lead her on like that? They can’t have sex!”

Designers drawing insight from her sister, who lives with disabilities, was instrumental in creating a high performance basketball shoe that radically redefines how a player gets into their shoe. FlyEase technology has a magnetized heel that folds down. You can put it on without using your hands. There is also an articulated strap to allow one handed secure fit. Perfect for those with OCD to adjust the feel of the fit and easy to put on and off. By designing more inclusively, Nike is creating solutions that benefit everyone. The shoe will be available in November.

TIDBITS!

Categorically left over but no less important

Durable Medical Goods Exchange

Please call an office near you to make donations of durable medical items you no longer use or see if there is something you may need! Explain your needs and our trained staff may know the perfect item that will help you!

James Pickard in Moscow 208-883-0523
Valerie Johnson in Idaho Falls 208-529-8610
Todd Wilder in Boise 208-336-3335
This app was motivated by a need to remember where you parked your car. But it has many more applications to it. For example, if you are a kayaker who is blind, you can set it to drop your breadcrumbs at 5 second intervals as you paddle out and then use those crumbs to find your way back to the dock. Make sure to not let your screen go dark or it will stop dropping crumbs. Open sourced and usable on both iPhone and Android devices, we are sure you can find even more uses for it.

https://breadcrumbs.nz

These comfortable wireless sensors stick to the skin and can track your health and then beam these readings to a receiver clipped onto your clothing. Called BodyNet, they peel and stick like bandaids and monitor pulse and respiration rates. They hope to integrate more health applications into it in the future. Originally designed as a security measure for opening locked doors, they find there are many possible uses.