Haiku by Ashley Centers

And at the day’s end,
fill yourself with light because
you’re worthy of love.
LOCAL EVENTS - Please join us!

Jan 2 - Service Organization Round Table
        Lake City Center Banquet Room, 11:00 am - 1:00 pm
        Coeur d’Alene, ID

Jan 9 - Gifts & Abilities - Youth Program Meeting
        LINC Office, Overland Rd,  5:30 - 7:00 pm
        Boise, ID

Jan 14 - Fred Riggers Disability Awareness Day
        Boise State Capitol Rotunda, 9:00 noon and 2:00 pm
        Boise, ID

Jan 15 - Fighting the Common Cold Workshop
        DAC NW Office, 10:00 am - 12:00 noon
        Post Falls, ID

Jan 16 - Game Night Spokane Youth
        Disability Action Center NW, 5:00 - 8:00 pm
        Spokane, WA

Jan 25 - Moscow Talent Showcase Extravaganza!
        Moscow High School Auditorium, 6:00pm - 8:30 pm
        Moscow, ID

Jan 27 - TBI Support Group
        Pullman Regional Hospital Conference Room C, 6:00 - 8:00 pm
        Pullman, WA

TOOLS FOR LIFE
MARCH 9–10, 2020,
RED LION INN, POCATELLO, ID

This is a secondary transition conference for students with disabilities, families and professionals. There will be keynote speakers, break out sessions and a session of Reality Town. Register by January 21st.
From the Editor...

Years ago, when I first started at DAC NW, I put together a film event called Alive Inside. This film looked at how the part of the brain that processes music is the last to go in people who have dementia. A program called Music & Memory put the film together and they operate all across the country.

My favorite part was the way this was received in our area. Our local hospital, Pullman Regional Hospital, jumped on it and created one of the largest Music & Memory programs in the nation. But since it’s been a few years I thought I would refresh people’s memories on how music can help with dementia.

Music connects with us on an innate level and is part of our lives in so many ways. As we have just come through another holiday season, I know this connection is very real. Holiday songs that I loved as a child are still my favorite today. They instantly transport me back to my childhood home decorated for the holidays. It is part of the story of who I am.

And that is how Music & Memory works. By providing iPods and personalized playlists that are tailored to the individual, it can bring back voice and other abilities by circling around parts of the brain that aren’t working. It connects them with the times of their lives. It can reduce reliance on medication, by lessening agitation and anxiety, and can help create meaningful moments of social interaction between the individual and their caretaker and family.

My mother had vascular dementia the last year of her life and although the dementia comes on differently, we did reach a point where music and memory was tied together for her. We would play favorite music from Doris Day, Judy Garland, and she would find it calming. Eventually we got to where she would watch Barbra Streisand in Funny Girl every day - again the music was making the connection.

I would recommend to anyone who hasn’t seen Alive Inside to view it. And consider finding or even starting a Music & Memory certified program in your area. Collect older iPods and headphones for use with this and donate your cd’s you no longer want, no doubt that music is on someone’s playlist! You can enable someone to feel like themselves again, to converse, socialize and stay present.

If you have something for the newsletter email it to dac@dacnw.org
Fighting the Common Cold

Disability Action Center NW is kicking off the new year with a series of workshops to help people with disabilities. The first is Fighting the Common Cold on January 15th at their office in Post Falls.

For most people, a cold or flu means a day or two on the couch. But for those with a disability or chronic health condition, including cancer, diabetes, cystic fibrosis, it can be extra hard for a number of reasons:

The weakened immune system can make it harder for the body to fight off invading germs. The risk of developing complications is greater due to the medical condition. For instance if you struggle with muscle function due to a neurological condition or paralysis, you may have problems clearing fluids from your airways. This could lead to pneumonia!

At this workshop, we will focus on best practices for cleaning and disinfecting your home, good hygiene practices like hand washing, the latest in anti-microbial products for people with disabilities.

You can learn what foods to eat that can help fight a cold, and which ones NOT to eat when you are sick. For instance, did you know that eating refined sugar when you are sick can reduce the ability of white blood cells to function properly? And since these soldier cells are important in fighting off a virus, we want to do everything we can to help them.

This FREE workshop runs from 10:00 am to noon. It is located at 3726 E Mullan Ave in Post Falls. Call 208-457-3891 for more information.
Did U Know?
A friendly reminder about what it is that the Northwest ADA Center - Idaho does. We are available to provide you with information, resources, and materials on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other disability related laws. We are your go-to resource for the state of Idaho. We are available to answer your questions on the phone or by email. We can also travel and provide related training to meet your needs.

The Northwest ADA Center/Idaho website also has a variety of fact sheets, accessibility checklists, and other resources you may find useful. They are free to all for printing, use and dissemination. You can also find updated disability new and resources on our Facebook page.

Some facts about us you may not know: The Northwest ADA Center-Idaho was formerly known as the Idaho Task Force on the ADA. We are affiliated with the Northwest ADA Center in Seattle. There are four partners in the ADA coalition, the three Centers for Independent Living and a state coordinator. And we have been providing services since May 1, 2012!

Rather than serve as the ADA Police, our goal is to promote voluntary compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. We serve a variety of audiences including businesses, employers, government entities and individuals with disabilities. Our information is intended to be informal guidance and is neither a determination of your legal rights or responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act or other laws, nor binding on any agency with enforcement responsibility under the ADA and other disability related laws.

We continually recruit ADA Network Members, who are individuals, business and agency representatives interested in learning more about the ADA. In return, the center provides current information, educational training tools, and enhanced networking opportunities for sharing challenges, successes and more on the ADA. If you want to be added to our ADA Network, please contact us at the numbers below.

For more information about accessible parking contact:

**NWADACENTER.ORG/IDAHO**

**Dana Gover, MPA, and ACTCP Certification**
ADA Training & Technical Assistance
Email: dananwadacenteridaho@gmail.com
Phone: Voice & TTD 208-841-9422
Gifts & Abilities – Youth Program Meeting

Thursday, January 9th at 5:30 pm will be LINC’s Youth Program meeting and they are looking for ideas and samples of something YOU are good at.

Sometimes people with disabilities can offer a perspective others don’t see. When they showcase their talents and abilities, they prove they are just as capable as their peers.

For example; during the opening ceremonies of the 1995 Special Olympics, as President Clinton was walking up to the podium, a professional photographer noticed a group of athletes holding their disposable cameras backwards, looking through the lens. Thinking he was offering help, the photographer showed them the right way to take a picture, using his own camera as an example. The athletes then turned to the photographer and said, “Thank you, sir. But may I show you something? If you turn the camera around and hold your eye up to the viewfinder and look, it still works. It works like a telescope and you can see the president very clearly. So we are using these little cameras so we can get a good view of the president. But thank you for helping us.”

The photographer innocently thought he was teaching the athletes something that their disability impeded them from understanding, when in fact they were teaching him something that their disability helped them discover. People with disabilities are just as capable in many respects as those without a disability. They may also have skills that others do not, like the ability to think creatively and innovatively. They offer a fresh perspective that their peers may not have considered. It is because of this that people with disabilities can play such important roles in the workplace, giving a competitive edge to those who employ them.

Some of the abilities you may have might include providing perspective, the ability to connect and inspire others, peer support from a been there/done that view, and the ability to innovate.

Here at LINC we want to harness our consumers’ abilities and unique ways of thinking, uncovering YOUR hidden talents. So be thinking about what hidden talents you have and how you use them to your advantage and bring them to the meeting at our office on the 9th!
Increased Accessibility for Airlines

Plane travel presents a few challenges for a person with disabilities. The first is sitting for a long time. You can sit on your wheelchair cushion if you need to. The bulkhead seats have more room, but the armrests may not lift out of the way because the trays are stored there. That can present a problem when transferring. The second challenge is using the bathroom. But things may be changing!

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) is seeking public comment on a plan calling for all new, single-aisle aircraft to feature accessible lavatories. Current rules only mandate accessible restrooms on planes with more than one aisle. But the federal agency said that single-aisle aircraft are increasingly being used on long-haul flights. The inability to use the lavatory on long flights presents significant challenges to passengers with disabilities, and can be a barrier for some passengers to traveling by air. The DOT is looking to amend the existing Air Carrier Access Act. Under the new plan, a single-aisle aircraft with 125 or more passengers must have lavatories with accessible toilet seats, assist handles, faucets, attendant call buttons, and door locks among other features. They would also be required to have an onboard wheelchair with improved safety and maneuverability that could provide transport from seat to lavatory.

Flight attendants will be trained to assist individuals with disabilities to get from their seat to the lavatory using this folding “aisle chair”. It is very narrow and have four very small wheels, so you will need an attendant to push it. Information about the accessibility of the aircrafts lavatory would be available on airline websites, on the plane and on request by travelers to help in planning.

There are no plans currently to change the size of the lavatories. But depending on the feedback, the idea of mandating that lavatories should match the larger size found on planes with two aisles could be added. The estimate is that it would cost $1000 per lavatory to make the improvements the agency is seeking.

Public comment is open for 60 days, so click on the link below and let your voice be heard!!

Goatpacking is a growing sport that is enabling many people to go places they otherwise could not reach. The word pack goat generally means a full sized goat that is emotionally bonded to its human and is willing to go anywhere you go while carrying your supplies. These animals lighten the load on the trail allowing you to travel with the gear you need to be comfortable and safe.

Many years ago, our family became aware that my husband had advanced arthritis in his spine. Sciatic pain from his spine deterioration was not going to allow him to carry a heavy backpack while touring the backcountry. We were avid hunters and loved being out in the Idaho mountains. In researching the options for pack stock that could assist in our love of traveling in the wilderness we came upon packgoats.

Goats require much less land, tack, trailers and barn space than horses, mules, or llamas. Packgoats are usually neutered males known as wethers. The initial investment was quite reasonable as there is little other use for this type of goat. Packgoats are either bottle fed as babies or handled and socialized frequently to establish an unbreakable bond with humans. This bond is what makes pack goats fun and reliable as trail buddies.

Their size of 170-220 lbs. makes them easy to handle for people who are not up to the rest of handling larger stock animals. My three pack goats easily fit in the back of a pick up truck. Cross buck saddles designed specifically for goats allow them to carry weight on their backs. They can travel about ten miles a day carrying up to 25% of their body weight when fully matured at age four. In peak condition and cool weather, performance could increase.

Goats require no additional food to be carried on pack trips. They forage for a meal much like deer or elk. They are the ultimate water conservationists and rarely require carrying additional water. Pack goats do require a collar and length of rope to be secured at night. A light tarp over their heads is nice if you expect foul weather.

Goats are heard animals and you become the alpa goat. Where you go your goat will follow. They will follow you up rocky mountains, across water, into the forest, snow, or just walking down the trail. Training hikes for young pack goats helps them experience challenging terrain and eliminate fear. They develop confidence and figure out what you expect of them.

Much of the gear you need to be comfortable and safe in the wilderness is amazingly lightweight and strong. Chairs to sit on, mattresses to sleep on, extra clothes, food, and first aid supplies can be bundled to fit on the backs of these loyal and hard working animals. We take a tipi with a packable wood stove on cooler hiking trips. You could rough it without these luxuries but with a bad back, knees, or other mobility limiting problems it becomes more difficult if you don’t have a chair. Comfort and rest are important to reduce the risk and enjoy your time outdoors.

We love the solitude of the backcountry and pushing the limits of our abilities. Packgoats have allowed us to go further and feel safer being better prepared with the equipment we need in case of an unexpected situation. Our goats have also joined in on trail maintenance and clean up projects. If you would like additional information on pack goats you can find it at the North American Packgoat Association website: www.napga.org
Life Hacks for Disability!

Want to learn some quick and easy life hacks that are easy to do, low cost and save you effort and time? By tweaking little things in your daily life, you can make your life easier and more convenient. Send us a pic of your favorite Life Hack!

You can easily modify the grips of small utensils with sponge hair rollers!

Make it easier to open your dresser drawers by adding cord to simple drawer pulls. Or remove the pulls and attach the cord right through the holes instead.

Wrap foam tubing around the edge of a door knob and use a cable tie to secure it tightly. This creates a mini-lever you can easily use to open a door.

Want to learn some quick and easy life hacks that are easy to do, low cost and save you effort and time? By tweaking little things in your daily life, you can make your life easier and more convenient. Send us a pic of your favorite Life Hack!
Organizing Your Health Records

Having your health records clearly organized helps you and your health professionals make informed health decisions. Being able to review these records can help you monitor your health over time. Other benefits: If you get a second opinion, you can make sure the same tests are not performed again. This can save time, effort and money. Organized records help you remember important information when you fill out forms at the doctor’s office. Here are some tips on what records to keep and how to organize it.

- Keep the original copies of instructions, lab tests, or other items the doctor gives you. You can write down your own notes about a visit or use your voice recorder on your smart phone.
- Look through the notes. This will help you check what you thought you heard with what was actually said.
- Keep contact information, medication lists, and dates of doctor/hospital visits. Your smart phone is a great place to store these.
- Use a binder, notebook, or accordion file folder to store documents. Keep this up to date in whatever order makes sense to you.
- If you like to keep the records on your computer, scan the documents and bills, then create a list of what you have.
- Remember to take this notebook to medical appointments and update it with any new information.

This we often remember certain events or illnesses clearly, it helps to keep a written record over the years of your personal health history. Family history can be important to understanding your own risks for other conditions. Record illnesses, surgeries, hospitalizations, chronic conditions and the dates. Help your provider see the “big picture” of your health by keeping a central source of all medical records. You can request copies of records to be sent or access medical records online through a patient portal. And be sure to inform your doctor of any alternative therapies you have taken to improve your health, such as dietary supplements or acupuncture.

You should also keep a section in the notebook for medical bills and payments. Keep track of expenses like mileage to and from appointments, as these may be deductible from your taxes. Even some over the counter medications can qualify for these deductions.

Remember, your disability does not keep you from being healthy, but it can put you at risk of certain complications, so it’s good to be informed!
This inexpensive Phone Jack Powered Charger will charge your devices using an active land line during a power outage. It plugs into the phone jack and even has a nite lite feature. A trickle of power always runs through your landline and now you can access it. Only $4.44 at Walmart.

https://www.walmart.com/ip/Phone-Jack-Powered-Emergency-Night-Light-USB-

Another idea is to use the power in your laptop. If there is not power, more than likely your laptop isn’t doing much good since you probably don’t have wi-fi. In this situation, it’s basically a big shiny battery for your cellphone. Just make sure you have the USB cord.

You can buy a few portable chargers, then make sure they are fully charged in advance of a power outage. These are great when traveling and you don’t want to battle people for outlets at airports and the like. The solar variety can recharge using daylight. These tend to slowly charge, however. From about $10 and up.

Your car is also an option. If you have a charger that plugs into your car, many newer models have USB ports, you should be able to charge your phone while the car idles. Do this safely! If you car is in a garage, drive out of the garage to avoid building up carbon monoxide.

If you are feeling MacGyverish, you can use eight D batteries, paperclips and some tape to generate enough power for a phone charger to do its task. The paper clips connect the positive and negative terminals of the batteries on both sides and the charger is connected to free terminals at the end to get the power.

https://www.reddit.com/r/pics/comments/6ziuod/my_cousins_macgyverd_a_pretty_effective_way_to/
ABLE Accounts and Independent Living

Many Idahoans with disabilities are caught between needing federal and state benefits, like SSI and Medicaid, and asset restrictions inadvertently work to keep these people living in poverty. Asset restrictions prevent people from saving money for future goals or unexpected expenses, penalizing those who save more than $2000 by cutting benefits. ABLE accounts are a financial tool that can help level the financial playing field and expand independent living opportunities for Idahoans with disabilities.

An ABLE account allows eligible individuals to accumulate more than $2000 in assets without losing federally-funded, means-tested benefits. Fund in this account are not taken into consideration when determining eligibility for these programs.

In Idaho, several thousand individuals and their families depend on public benefits for health care, food, utility, and housing assistance. The passage of the Stephen Beck Jr. Achieving a Better Life Experience Act of 2014 (ABLE) provides the opportunity to save money beyond typical resource limits in order to purchase qualified disability goods and services that will help them gain independence and choice without losing the assistance they need.

Anyone who has a significant disability with a documented onset before turning 26 years of age is eligible to open an ABLE account. Eligibility can be established by a letter of certification from a doctor documenting a disability with functional limitations; receiving Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance; or by being medically eligible for SSI or SSDI benefits.

A qualified disability expense is any expense related to an individual as a result of living with a disability, including education, housing, transportation, training and support, assistive technology, ramps, eye glasses, personal assistant services, health care expenses not covered by insurance, financial management services. Currently the IRS has ruled basic living expenses, including food, clothing and utilities, also qualify.

The annual contribution for a single year is $15,000, which is also the maximum amount you can gift to a person without reporting it to the IRS. You can also contribute an amount equal to the amount of your current year gross income, up to $12,140, in addition to the annual standard contribution. The limit is $100,000 before your SSI cash benefit is suspended, but you do not lose Medicaid eligibility. If the ABLE account owner passes away, the state Medicaid program may file a claim against the account to reclaim expenses.

While Idaho does not offer an ABLE program, eligible Idahoans may sign up for out of state programs. A group is currently working to see if Idaho should establish its own ABLE program. If you are interested in helping advocate for this contact the Idaho State Independent Living Council at 208-334-3800.
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

TIDBITS!
Categorically left over but no less important

Quotes to make you think!

“The downside of my celebrity is that I cannot go anywhere in the world without being recognized. It is not enough for me to wear dark sunglasses and a wig. The wheelchair gives me away.”

~ Stephen Hawking

Reporters often don’t “get it”. When one boy saw the headline about his athletic achievements: “Disabled boy sets records’’- he was devastated. He called his father at work: “Guess what they called me? They called me a disabled boy.” He never felt the only thing important about him was that he was disabled. It was part of him, but never all of him. These athletes set personal bests, capture medals and records, the same as other athletes do. Changing these attitudes will go a long way to help these athletes be recognized for the work they do, training year round and traveling long distances with coaches, teams, and parents.
TECHNOLOGY FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

Ford Upfits Program Reimburses $1,000 towards Accessibility

The Ford Accessibility Program makes it easier for persons with disabilities to get on the road. They have a variety of adaptable vehicles to meet different needs. And to get things started they offer up to $1,000 reimbursement on adaptive equipment, or up to $200 for alert hearing devices, lumbar support, or running boards. They can help you select, purchase and adapt a vehicle that’s perfect for your needs, so you can claim your driving independence. They have a handy chart for which vehicles have adaptive equipment available. They event have motorhomes that come equipped with SYNC 3, an easy to use voice activated command center for things like lights, window shades. www.fordupfits.com

Braille Rubik’s Cube

Rubik’s Touch Cube is sold online for $16.99 with 6 distinct shapes embossed on each color to help the blind identify the blocks. But it is a relatively easy toy to modify and make accessible. Use strong adhesive and patches of different textiles like silk, denim, leather, lace, cotton and suede. Or add raised dots with puff paint. These enhancements allow for a person who is blind to enjoy the same activity that the sighted do. Introduce them to the challenge of Rubik’s Cube and they may have a hard time putting it down!
CONTACT YOUR LOCAL IDAHO CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

www.idlife.org

www.dacnw.org

www.lincidaho.org