Challenge the way people think about disabilities. Pirates with their wooden legs, eye patches, hooks for hands are really just disability action figures. This tongue-in-cheek look at history, when you were paid for the loss of an arm or a leg, but still had a job, has merit today. We struggle to change hearts and minds to combat shame and external prejudice and low expectations for people with disabilities, large and small.
LOCAL EVENTS - Please join us!

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, around the world festivals, sporting events, community workshops and celebrations are being cancelled or postponed. We support these decisions but also understand the important role these events play in community life. They serve as an emotional connection to share a common experience, and they build stronger, more resilient communities. We have moved to offering our event experiences online and in person with Social Distancing Precautions in place. Be an active part and join us in our virtual workshops, peer support groups, get togethers and gaming opportunities. If you are having trouble connecting, have difficulties with high speed internet or lack the devices that enable you to be an active part, please phone your local CIL - we can help! And be ready to return to our in person events in full force when it is safe to do so. We love our communities!

Sept 1-Oct - Accessibility BINGO Game - 2020
   Virtual game that runs through October
   Youth in the state of Idaho

Sept 3-4 - COVID-19, Mental Health & the need for Equity
   Virtual Conference 10:00am -5:00 pm ET

Sept 16 - Handicare: Healthcare for Disabled Americans
   Virtual Presentation 3:00 pm-4:30 pm
   WSU Center on Disabilities
What does it take to work with people with disabilities? The same skills as working with anyone else. When you realize they are just people, it’s pretty easy to relate. My job requires me to be highly organized, especially since I am working from home during COVID. And flexible, as there is something called “disability time”. I need to be observant, and responsible. Have good listening skills, and an ability to communicate in more than one way.

And I can say that everyone in DAC offices and in other CILs across the state have the same skills. Their good judgement, ability to problem solve, and offer advice from a personal experience, is what sets them apart. Their disabilities have no impact on how they can interact in a sensitive way with our consumers.

Each of them bring their personal histories with them to work. I know I do. Every job I have ever held (let’s see, that’s six jobs so far. I still haven’t decided what to be when I grow up!) has given me highly-developed skills that make me unique to the organization. That’s the same across the board. We are all different and bring something of value to the table.

It bears mentioning that the disability community has for years been viewed as a segment of society that requires coddling and compulsory care instead of collaboration. It is this institutionalized thinking that many people with disabilities have internalized over time. This affects the way they pursue living their lives.

CILs offer something different. The consumer sets the pace, makes the decisions, and breaks out of the stigma to achieve the level of independence they want. You won’t hear “you can’t do that” or “you need help” from our staff. Instead we challenge that with “let’s try that” and “let’s see if this works”. They are a part of the community, not a lone wolf, and we are merely here to empower them.

So if you were wondering what it’s like to work with people with disabilities - you probably already know!

If you have an idea for our newsletter please contact dac@dacnw.org.
DAC Creates Awareness for the ADA

Staff at our Moscow office hosted a touchless, drive thru event on August 26th, thirty days from the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. After decorating 50 rocks with ADA inspired art, they were hid around Moscow to highlight accessibility features in the community - like accessible playgrounds, schools, public restrooms, city hall and the police station, and more. Those that found them brought the rocks to our event to exchange them for a free t-shirt. (if you missed out, call us and see if we still have some in your size!) We served 100 hot dog lunches and also gave out personal hand sanitizer and masks for our upcoming mask decorating contest. (You can still get a mask too!) Snap a photo of you in your decorated mask and email it to us to be entered to win prizes. dac@dacnw.org

The real goals of the event was to reach out to our community and let them know we are here and ready to provide services. We also want to educate everyone about the ADA and what it means to people with disabilities who want their independence. For many, this was in place before they were born. They may not understand the long civil and legal battles fought by advocates to gain those rights. And they need to know there is still so much to do.

Moscow has been stellar in making changes for accessibility as they can. Whenever a remodel or change is in the works, they include the best the ADA has to offer. From new curb cuts across the city, ramps, accessible parking, offering ASL, Braille signage, they are working to make Moscow a welcoming city.

Our other offices are working on ADA celebrations too! Stay tuned for more info…
Disability Rights Movement... 

A transformative advance in the recognition and realization of human rights burst forth in the U.S. in the early 1970’s when disability advocates began using the legal system to challenge striking, blatant injustices to people with disabilities. Their heroic efforts led to unprecedented victories and spawned what came to be known as the Disability Rights Movement. While Robert Burgdorf was in law school in 1971, a chance conversation prompted him to try to start a student advocacy project relating to residents of mental hospitals. A chain of circumstances led to his becoming involved in founding a new agency named the National Center for Law and the Handicapped (NCLH) - the first national advocacy center for disability rights.

The stars of this era were the amazing individuals with disabilities, parents, attorneys, judges, disability organizations, educators and disability professionals, journalists, sympathetic government officials, civil rights leaders, and many others who forged a movement bent on challenging and eliminating discrimination on the basis of disability. They jealously pursued the goal of equality and justice for people with disabilities in the courts, state and federal legislatures, media, and at times in the streets. Such efforts yielded considerable consciousness-raising, inspired protests and demonstrations, produced a spate of favorable court decisions, and prompted the enactment of many state and federal laws which ultimately led to the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

The origins of the disability rights movement can only be fully understood against the backdrop of the atrocious status of people with disabilities in our society before the movement’s inception. A condensed overview of the prejudice and discrimination faced by those having a condition viewed as a disability as of the beginning of the 1970s will be presented. Problem areas were widespread, including public education, transportation, housing, access to buildings and facilities, confinement in inhumane and unsafe residential treatment facilities, involuntary sterilizations, access to the courts, denial of medical treatment, event the right to travel on public streets and sidewalks, and many others.

You can read about the development of these disability laws in a website including the supreme court battles to uphold the right of a blind teacher to teach in public schools; the story of a person with MS, who challenged job discrimination; the story of a young woman with severe physical disabilities who won the right to an education in public schools; the right for people with disabilities to make medical decisions on their own behalf; and an influential article about the forced sterilization of individuals with disabilities. It is these personal stories that created the ADA that we know today. One fight at a time.

So if you don’t know where your civil rights originated from, and you recognize there is still more fighting needed, check out www.adachronicles.org for all the information. And a fully accessible website.

For more information about the ADA contact

NWADACENTER.ORG/IDAHO
Dana Gover, MPA, and ACTCP Certification
ADA Training & Technical Assistance
Email: dananwadacenteridaho@gmail.com
Phone: Voice & TTD 208-841-9422
SUPERFEST FILM FESTIVAL ONLINE

It’s almost Superfest season, so mark your calendars for October 17 & 18 and check out a few descriptions below! This year, the disability film festival will be exclusively online, which will give an opportunity to test some new formats and technologies, all with multiple forms of access in mind. Watch social media for more details about tickets, programs, opportunities for community conversations, and how it will all work.

For now, there is a terrific selection of cutting-edge disability films that will make you laugh, cry, groan, cheer, and take a welcome respite from the storm that is 2020. We all need this, and each other.

Verisimilitude
Best of Festival: Narrative  UK 2020, 14 min

A narrative short about an unemployed disabled actress who takes a job to advise an up-and-coming British film star on how to be disabled for his latest role. But will he win an award?

The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating
Innovation in Craft: USA, 2019, 15 min

When a woman is bedridden by a mysterious pathogen, a forest snail takes up residence on her nightstand. Together, they share an intimate journey of survival.

Garden Variety
USA, 2018, 5 min

A rockumentary about a disabled person’s gardjen and his unwarranted admirers.
Listening Sessions for Extended Employment Services

The Idaho Legislature passed the new EES statute, which took effect on July 1st. To prepare for the negotiated rule making process, EES is conducting listening sessions throughout Idaho. Because of the COVID-19 issue, these listening sessions will be conducted via a Web-Ex video/phone conference. The intent of these listening sessions is to give customers, guardians, care providers, and all other stakeholders an opportunity to provide input regarding the new statute.

The areas of concern they are looking at are: lack of staff in the EES program and the agency response; Waitlist concern and budget as a high number of individuals are waiting for services; and what the outcomes of steps/actions taken by the agency, and a lack of internal controls for case management.

To request reasonable accommodation to participate in the meeting, please advise June Fontes at 208-577-2000 or email at june.fontes@vr.idaho.gov.

There are additional meetings scheduled in the coming months for other regions around the state.

September 23, 2020 - Idaho Falls/Salmon Blackfoot

September 24, 2020 - Pocatello and Preston
Signs of our Times

By Geoff Crimmins, The Moscow Pullman Daily News

National Recovery Month is held every September to educate Americans that substance abuse treatment and mental health services can enable those with related disorders to live healthy and rewarding lives. Latah Recovery Center Director Darrell Keim said he hopes supportive messages like “You are enough” and “One day at a time” that are posted in yards of residents and businesses spread hope in celebration of National Recovery Month.

“What we really liked about (the signs) was that yes, we’re a recovery community center, but the messages are generic to any message that you wanted to have,” Keim said.

He said there will be about 110 signs throughout the county, with one of eight messages on them as part of a statewide campaign “Signs for Our Times.”

Messages like “You are enough,” You are worthy of love,” “You got this,” “You are not alone,” “Your mistakes do not define you.” “It’s not too late,” “One day at a time,” and “Recovery IS possible.” All signs say “Don’t give up” on the back.

Four signs are posted along East Third Street in Moscow. “We’re incredibly supportive of people that are working to better their lives and for people to know that there are community resources for them, which is really important,” Heart of the Arts Executive Director Jenny Kostroff said. She said a wellness recovery program med weekly at the 1912 Center prior to the pandemic.

Kostroff said the free support group is for people working through mental health issues and that Heart of the Arts feels connected to the recovery community through that group.

“There’s a lot of silent struggle that people go through and I always feel like when we have community resources it’s important for those to help show people they aren’t alone,” she said.

The 1912 Center is an old building getting a second life as second floor renovations near completion “There’s nothing saying you can’t do that for people too,” she said. “Give them another chance.”

Keim said he got the signs idea from an article in Reader’s Digest about a woman who place positive message signs in her town after a cluster of suicides happened in the city.

The Recovery Center plans to reuse the signs every September. The signs are courtesy of Optum Insurance, Recovery Idaho and a local benefactor. Many recovery centers across Idaho will be participating. For the full article from The Daily News, go here: https://dnews.com/local/latah-recovery-center-sends-positive-vibes/article_0f96c88a-06d7-5fa9-beb8-2636ae99d074.html
Parents everywhere are concerned about coronavirus as school resumes. Many are choosing to keep their children with disabilities at home because of immune system problems. But the simple truth is these kids need to return to the classroom.

Kids with disabilities are regressing something fierce since being home from March 2020. Loss of skills is one big issue that families with kids in special education are grappling with. Besides navigating the changes wrought by COVID, from hybrid learning to social distancing, these kids face even greater challenges.

For some, the mask requirement alone is daunting. Sometimes you can substitute a face shield instead of a mask. For others, in-person school simply isn’t an option. For those students with anxiety, this can become severe when triggered by contamination fears.

How severe a threat the virus poses to certain populations is truly unknown. Many parents are opting for virtual online schooling. But there are worries about how reading and reading comprehension can improve.

What you can focus on is the regular schedule. Having class every day, even if it is for a smaller amount of time, is critical. Keep the schedule routine, and it causes less upheaval. These families felt that when that routine changed on a dime last March.

It’s hard for schools to provide speech, occupational and physical therapy online.

Some states will be evaluating every student with a disability to determine if there were losses during the gap in in-person education. They can provide “compensatory services” in addition to what students receive in their education plans. These evaluations should be done by the end of the first month in school.

The most important thing is for families to know their rights have not changed. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act - a federal law - remains in effect. The hard part is keeping school as “normalish” as possible.
Survey Results from NCIL:

In June, NCIL reach out to gather input on the changes that COVID-19 has had on access to in-home support workers. Many of you graciously replied, sharing stories of the struggles being faced daily, and your very personal perspectives and this allows NCIL to continue to advocate for solutions. They have compiled an overview from the 100 responses they received.

The respondents ranged in age from 19-87 years old, that’s quite an age spread! The majority (64 persons) rely on personal care attendants using Medicaid as a payer. Hours of support authorized by Medicaid varied widely, but almost every respondent hired privately and indicated a new or worsening worker shortage due to COVID, and delays in receiving services or funds to make payments. Pay ranges reported an average of about $12.50 an hour. Compounding the worker shortage issue was a universal lack of personal protective equipment PPE, and many reports of out-of-pocket costs to supplement workers’ needs. In addition, 4 out of 5 responses recorded a disruption to their routine or elective healthcare due to COVID.

Many respondents detailed the commitment of attendants during these difficult times. As they search for a means to ease the burden of hiring and onboarding new workers, the majority of respondents believe that, along with greater pay, relaxing some of the background and drug testing restrictions would be useful, as well as creating access for care workers to receive their own health benefits.

In short, the conditions created by the COVID-19 pandemic have been difficult across the board. Please stay tuned as NCIL continues to advocate for legislative and policy relief.

And for those of you who responded, thanks for sharing your experiences!
Here’s information on how TSA screens for medications, medical equipment and certain health conditions. Learn how you can provide the TSA officer with a TSA notification card or other medical documentation to describe your condition. Medications in pill or other solid form must undergo screening as well.
https://www.tsa.gov/travel/special-procedures

Planning on traveling by train? Here is the accessible information for Amtrak to provide safe, efficient and comfortable service. They have been working on making their facilities more accessible to customers with disabilities. From reserving an accessible space to what kinds of oxygen tanks are allowed onboard, this resource covers it all.
https://www.amtrak.com/planning-booking/accessible-travel-services.html

Did U Know? People with disabilities had to fight for equal access for bus service? Here is a list of the ADA requirements for over-the-road bus companies large and small. Know your rights!
https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/regulations/americans-disabilities-act-reporting-and-other-requirements-over-road-bus-companies

Are you eligible for para-transit? The Department of Transit has a guide and FAQ sheet about how para transit eligibility is determined and what fixed route providers need to do. You can learn about pick up and drop off, mobility devices, passenger accompaniment and more.

Cruise vacations can be excellent choices for travelers with disabilities, but choosing the right cruise line is important. Cruise lines must copy with the ADA requirements, but there may be differences in amenities and programs for passengers with disabilities. Check out this booklet for points to consider.
How ABLE Accounts help protect your benefits

With everything in the world seeming to be a topsy-turvy mess…worrying about losing your benefits because of additional unemployment income or a stimulus check, shouldn’t be one of those messes.

ABLE Accounts are savings accounts for people who became disabled before the age of 26. The passage of the Stephen Beck Jr., Achieving a Better Life Experience Act of 2014, or the ABLE Act, provides the opportunity to save money beyond typical resource limits (usually $2000). The annual contribution for an ABLE account is $15,000, with the possibility of adding more if the account owner is employed.

Several thousand Idahoans with disabilities and their families depend on public benefits for health care, food, utility and housing assistance. ABLE accounts allow eligible Idahoans to save money to purchase qualified disability goods and services that will help them gain or maintain independence and choice without losing the assistance they need. Money in an ABLE account does not count against the resource limits for SSI, Medicaid, and other State and Federal benefits.

In order to be eligible for an ABLE account the individual must have a significant disability with a documented onset before turning 26 years of age.

This means…

- They have a disability with functional limitations documented by a physician with letter of certification.

OR…

- They receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).

OR…

- They are medically eligible for SSI or SSDI benefits, i.e. certain disabled children or working adults with disabilities who receive Medicaid benefits.

Idaho does not currently offer an ABLE program, however, many states DO offer out of state enrollment. These accounts can often be set up in 30 minutes or less.

If you have questions about ABLE accounts, please contact the State Independent Living Council at 208-334-3800 or 1-800-487-4866 or email jami.davis@silc.idaho.gov.
Pandemic affects the Service Dog Industry

The impact of COVID on Service Dog trainers has a bit of good news. That is the number of service dog puppy raisers. With more people staying at home it appears there are more people willing to take on the duties of raising a puppy. But these pups are being raised in a much different manner at the moment. It is common for organizations to send out their puppies to volunteer raisers who start taking these puppies out in public. This is how puppies get used to the sights, sounds and smells of grocery stores, for example. And the loss of fundraisers has hit them hard. But you can help support them! Follow them on social media to know what types of fundraising events they may be having. You can pick the program that touches you here:

https://growingupguidepup.org/donation/

Quotes to make you think!

“Sometimes I think someone upstairs saved me from being ordinary.”

~ Michel Petrucciani, overcame physical disabilities (born with osteogenesis imperfects, known as “glass bone disease”) to earn wide renown as a pianist and composer.

Durable Medical Goods Exchange

We are not accepting any durable medical goods at this time since it’s difficult to clean them. But we are distributing them. 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
Tarey Wilder in Boise 208-336-3335 x220
There are lots of low cost or free assistive technology that can make life easier. Certain disabilities or health problems, even aging, can make it hard to dress independently. This is a dressing aid to help putting pants on. You could even substitute a pair of suspenders! Simply clip the front waistband while you are comfortably seated. Then slip your feet in the legs and pull up! No bending over needed. Something this simple could alleviate so much frustration for those with a lack of flexibility.

It can be picked up for around $7.00
www.mileskimball.com

Keep all nail care items in one place and easy to use even if your dexterity isn’t the best! Using a small board, glue or screw down nail files and trimmers. Add a larger handle to the trimmers and you are ready to go. You could even clamp the board down on a surface for extra stability. You can label it for personal use as well. Follow DAC on Pinterest for more easy disability hack ideas!

www.pinterest.com/dacnw