Living with several rare diseases, Sharona Franklin constantly examines disability justice through the lens of her multidisciplinary art. She seeks to reclaim digital spaces for folks with disabilities on her Instagram page @hot.crip
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!

Dec 8
- Mental Health and Crisis Intervention
  Virtual Online Webinar 5:00pm -12:30 pm PT
  Moscow Police and Latah County Sheriff

Dec 14
- Monkey Vs the Organ Grinder - Brain Injury and Addictions
  Virtual Online Webinar 10:30am -12:00 noon PT
  Washington Department of Veteran Affairs

Dec 17
- Thriving Thursdays - YFP Symposium
  Virtual Conference 11:00am -12:30 pm PT
  Peer meeting with COVID-19 updates

NEW YEAR’S EVE BINGO BASH

December 31, 3:00 pm - Online

Join other young adults with disabilities at the (Anti-) Social Event of the Season! Come play Bingo for a chance to win prizes and meet others from around the region. All are welcome. RSVP to Molly at molly@dacnw.org or call 208-746-9033 for sign up information and bingo cards. Tablets and wifi hot spots are available on request.
Every now and then we get a comment on our social media accounts that gives us pause. An example was a reaction to a Go Fund Me for someone with a disability. This person had died, and someone who didn’t know him personally started a Go Fund Me page to raise funds for a memorial park bench in his name.

Although on the surface this sounds like a noble thing to do, it took us a day to really think through the response. We share the concern this consumer had over someone “using” that person’s disability in order to raise the funds. In reality, the disability shouldn’t play into whether a person deserved a memorial park bench or not.

Instead, disability is often used as a subject for emotional appeal rather than for real, positive change. A disability stirs a “warm and fuzzy” response as we innately want to help. We have all cringed at the “news” stories of some person with a disability being “allowed” by coaches, players, and officials to score a basket or make a touchdown - simply because of a disability and not in an inclusive environment.

DAC NW has strived and had some success in altering such portrayals. A local medical office had commercials portraying disabilities as awful - cue horror movie scenes - in order to sell their treatments. We successfully got them to change this portrayal to something much less negative. But there still continues to be a strong societal bias toward the feelings people thinking they are making a positive difference for someone or something that they see as needy. It takes more than just organizations such as ours to make a change in these attitudes. If we all share our concerns about the negative stereotyping that can happen, even when intentions are good, we can educate against this generalized response to a pretty vague portrayal of disability. A perfect quote from a local college student after learning about disability in the media, “I did not understand how angry it may make someone with a disability to be called an inspiration.” No one wants to be your inspiration porn.

If you have an idea for our newsletter please contact dac@dacnw.org.
RAMP UP PROJECT

Disability Action Center NW (DAC) is seeking partner organizations in our service area for our Ramp Up Project. This includes, but not limited to, the top five counties of Northern Idaho, along with Spokane County. The Ramp Up Project expansion is funded by a grant from the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation.

Through the program, people can borrow aluminum modular ramps for a short period of time. Priority of the ramps goes to people with paralysis, but other kinds of mobility disabilities can be served as well. In order to accomplish this, DAC is looking for community partner organizations to donate the labor of installing and taking down the ramps.

The modular ramp system goes together in a fashion similar to lego building blocks. First a site evaluation is done to find the best way to configure the ramp. The ramp is always done in a 1” - 12” ratio, that’s 12” of ramp for every 1” of rise. These ramps have a safe surface, level landing pads, and ADA regulation hand rails. Because they don’t attach to the structure they can be installed without a building permit. Once a design is completed, the necessary parts are set aside for delivery and construction. With an experienced team of volunteers, it rarely takes over a couple hours to set one up.

DAC has already installed many ramps. The modular units mean once the pieces are dismantled, they can be reconfigured for the next ramp.

The Ramp Up Project promotes a vision of an accessible world by reducing barriers to home accessibility. This service also helps to promote advocacy and the independent living philosophy. If you know of anyone interested in knowing more about our program in the north, please contact Bill Steele at bills@dacnw.org or call 208-457-3891 or in north central Idaho contact Mellowdee Brooks at mbrooks@dacnw.org or leave a message at 208-883-0523.
Women’s Clinics Need to be Accessible

Joycelyn Banks, from Mt. Washington, gets off the lift of her accessible van. She maneuvers her way into the hospital lobby, onto an elevator and gets off at her floor. Banks enters the doctors office, where she’s greeted by a registered nurse and the two enter the patient exam room.

Banks gets onto an examination table - from her motorized wheelchair. Banks is 43, and has cerebral palsy. She’s arrived for her annual gynecological visit. Being in a wheelchair requires extra space to navigate. She may need assistance transferring onto a table, and requires help keeping her legs stable.

An annual visit to the doctor is stressful enough for women, but for those with a physical or intellectual disability, there can be added worries. There are only a handful of centers in the country that offer accessible gynecology appointments for women with disabilities.

Medical offices need scales for weighing women in wheelchairs, accessible exam tables, patient lifts, and padded hydraulic stirrups. This kind of care needs to be extended to radiology and breast imaging departments to coordinate the care for mammograms and related services, so women can get a mammogram while seated.

Things most females take for granted, such as stepping on a scale, can be a major hurdle for those who can’t walk or stand, or who use assistive technology for communication. An annual one-hour appointment can last much longer without accessibility.

The best result comes from designing the medical clinic in consultation with women who have disabilities, and who might not have control over their lower extremities because of some form of disability. Equipment with larger foot rests, a Hoyer lift to raise a person onto a table if an adjustable exam table isn’t available, transfer boards so a patient can slide from a wheelchair to the table.

Having trained staff confident to work with a variety of disabilities can help earn the trust of the patient. For instance, not being able to see the doctors face because of a mask can be intimidating, especially for those with intellectual disabilities. If you view the process of the exam from the point of view of the patient, then everyone will win.

For other information about accessible medical offices contact the Northwest ADA Center. We can provide information on physical access and communication access, for example - how to prepare documentation/billing in large print or alternate format, or when and where to find ASL interpreters for consultations. Most health care exams are stressful. It’s important to make people feel more comfortable in stressful situations. Let’s work together to make medical care accessible for everyone, even in rural areas.

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
People with Disabilities can be successful Business Owners

By Mary Wilson

Taking the plunge into business ownership takes a lot of dedication and research. If done correctly, owners can reap the fruits of their labor. People living with a disability are no exception. There are many resources to help you learn the ropes, develop a strategic plan and launch a successful business.

Develop a business plan

The planning stages of starting a business are the most important. You may go through several ideas before settling on one, so write them out to see you processes and changes. Do some research into what type of businesses are in your area that might be competitors and learn from them. Building relationships and networking will provide you with valuable insight as you are taking steps to launch your new venture.

Look for funding

Most entrepreneurs don’t use their own money, so you might want to consider investors or grants that will help a person living with a disability get a startup off the ground. You’ll also need to make sure you have some money set aside to get you through at least the first 12 months, unless you intend to keep a job on the side for income. Do some research to find more information about grants, and research online for grants specific to your state.

Setting up shop

The beauty of starting your own business is that you can set your own hours and choose where you want to work from. It’s especially helpful if you have a service dog or are thinking about getting one. Even though these animals have the right to be in any public space, it can be tricky to put them on a rigorous work schedule at your side. Working from home eliminates those decisions and allows you to get the maximum benefit from a wonderful companion.

Get some help

You may be tempted to do as much as you can yourself, but it’s a good idea to get a professional opinion when it comes to taxes and financial concerns. Depending on what state you live in, there may be special tax issues or breaks for a disabled entrepreneur, so check with an accountant to make sure all your bases are covered. You should also look into local LLC regulations and requirements; if this part seems daunting, you can hire companies that can get your paperwork filed allowing you to focus on other tasks.

Find out your benefits

It’s essential to know your rights as someone with a disability, Find out what benefits you are entitled to as a small business owner and how your state can help you succeed.

It takes a lot of work to start a business, so reach out for help when you need it. Garner support from friends and family who can assist with growing your company and provide moral support when you need it most.

Photo via Pixabay by Firmbee
Monetary Gifts Through ABLE Accounts

An ABLE account is a new way for people with disabilities to receive tax-free gifts without losing their benefits. Opening an ABLE account online is easy with as little as $25. Then you can set up a gifting page and select a savings goal. Share the gifting page with friends and family. These savings do not count when determining an Idaho resident’s eligibility for state or local assistance.

Although Idaho residents can’t currently open ABLE accounts in Idaho, you can open one in Washington.

ABLE accounts are bank accounts that allow people with disabilities to save money without jeopardizing their disability benefits. A traditional bank account balance can count against that person’s ability to qualify for benefits. As a result, people with disabilities are not able to build savings with money they earn receive from an inheritance or gift. One way around this issue is to use a special needs trust, but it must be controlled by a trustee - not by the person with the disability. This limits a person’s independence.

Anyone can contribute money to an ABLE account, including the owner. Contributions are capped at $15,000 per year. To be clear, the owner of the account must keep track to ensure they do not exceed $15,000 for the calendar year.

For those who qualify for SSI, the balance of an ABLE account can’t exceed $100,000. The income earned from the funds are not taxed. Contributions are made with post-tax dollars.

The kicker is funds must be used for Qualified Disability Expenses (QDE). Thankfully, this is a fairly broad definition and can include expenses for housing, education, transportation, employment training, health and wellness, legal fees and more. So think about assistive technology, an accessible vehicle or power chair!

So check out setting one up before the holidays. To learn more about how to receive or make a gift to an ABLE account watch Washington State’s step-by-step video.

https://youtu.be/rC3Z_2x99Wg
Hi all! James here. It’s been awhile, good to write to you again! I came across a strange video (well, strange to me anyways) one day while researching other venues. So, I thought that I would take a few moments out of my busy schedule to check it out.

One thing led to another and I ended up doing a little research on the concept of what is call a “brain-gasm”. I thought how bizarre and intriguing and maybe you’ll find an interest in what has apparently been on the rage since 2009. Obviously, I just found out this month.

What is ASMR? Let’s start first with the acronym and then we’ll get to the meat and potatoes of it. So “ASMR” stands for Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response.

**Autonomous** = feelings from within; **Sensory** = self explanatory; **Meridian** = suggests peak, orgasm, also refers to as energy pathways from Chinese medicine perspective. Finally, **Response** = referring to not a constant state or presence.

What??? To break it down in laymen’s terms it means a tingling sensation that begins in the scalp, moves down you neck into your back and possibly throughout your entire body.

You know that sensation when you get all goose pimplly because either your girlfriend or boyfriend softly blows on the back of you neck or when its dark out and you get those chills running up and down your spine because of that unnatural feeling of a presence that sets you on edge. Well, the ASMRtist’s have over 13 million videos on YouTub e and that was in 2018. These videos consist of all manners of “triggers” that will send you into a euphoric bliss - or so they claim.

These triggers are a conglomeration of whispering, chewing gum, brushing hair, tapping fingers, sounds from a hair dryer, to more elaborate role-playing style like eye beams and librarians to name but a few.

Heck, there’s chatter about Bob Ross being the first one to debut this trend, not to mention top brands like Pepsi, Dove chocolate and KFC making ASMR commercials. Even the National Sleep Foundation is jumping on board saying “even though ASMR doesn’t work for everyone, these video and audio clips can stimulate relaxation before bedtime, which can help you overcome insomnia.”

In the words of Gomer PYLE “Well, I’ll be!” I have provided a few links to get you started if you would like to investigate this phenomenon for yourself.

-sleep.org [https://www.sleep.org/what-is-asmr](https://www.sleep.org/what-is-asmr)
- Bob Ross [https://discoverasmr.com/what-is-asmr-bob-ross-asmr/](https://discoverasmr.com/what-is-asmr-bob-ross-asmr/)
Bedroom Accessibility Modifications

With about 61 million people in the U.S. living with a disability, the COVID pandemic is forcing many to suddenly move in with family and relatives who do not have accessible spaces in their homes. This means that people with disabilities may be uncomfortable or even unsafe in a room that doesn’t set them up for independence. Bedrooms, in particular, are supposed to be our safe haven, but that simply isn’t always the case during the COVID crisis.

A disability can impact your sleep in a number of ways. An irregular sleep schedule, an uncomfortable bed without pressure relief, and more can be counterproductive to good sleep. Many with disabilities report poor sleep, and research has shown that those with an intellectual or developmental disability can have long term sleep disorders.

And living with a disability might mean you spend more time in your room than the average person. Most homes are not prepared to handle the demands of a disability, but there are some modifications you can make in order to make it more suitable for you.

Location: Just because a room is the master bedroom doesn’t mean that it is right room for you. Consider layout and space, for those with mobility issues a room on the ground floor is ideal. A room measuring 10’x12’ is a recommended size. You will want at least 3-5’ clearance around the bed with a minimum of 5’x5’ open floor space so you can turn your wheelchair easily.

And don’t forget about acmes to the bathroom. Older homes feature narrow doorways that make it difficult for wheelchairs or other equipment. 36” doorways are minimum, although 42” wide are ideal.

Some assistive technology that can help include: Bed rails - these run along the sides of your bed to ensure you don’t fall out. Grab bars: help you get in and out of bed, and can also help you sit up, roll over, or move around without assistance. Hand blocks: are portable weighted handles that similar to grab bars. These can help you lift yourself to move. Rope Ladders: hook on to the foot board and help you pull yourself up.

It can seem like an overwhelming and expensive task to outfit the home. There are many organizations available to help you find the right support. Check it out here: https://myslumberyard.com/blog/bedroom-modifications/
Granny Pods Study Act of 2020

The pandemic’s effects on community living situations has shined a harsh light on why almost 90% of people with disability say they would rather live independently.

But many homes are not accessible. The Granny Pods Study Act is exploring a possible solution - tiny homes, also known as “granny pods,” located on property owned by family or other loved ones.

The act instructs the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to conduct a feasibility study of temporary family health care structures no more than 300 square feet in size. Such structures would provide an environment facilitating a caregiver's provision of care for intellectually or physically impaired individuals.

Come cities and towns do not allow homes with foundations that are less than 1000 square feet under their zoning regulations. Homes built on wheels are classified as recreational vehicles, and many local ordinances forbid people from taking up permanent residence in them, even if they are placed on private property.

Then there are building codes to consider: many contractors aren’t well versed in what tiny homes require to be safe.

An exploration of this option for aging in place would have to address these obstacles and ways to overcome them.

A granny pod is also called an accessible dwelling unit or care cottage. They differ from the tiny homes because they are build with accessibility and universal design in mind. A granny pod does not have a loft or ladder and features a larger bathroom with raised toilet and grab bars. They may also have medical devices such as hospital style beds. Families can also equip the pod with two-way video communication and fall alert sensors to help keep their loved one safe.

If passed, this bill would continue the conversation about how and where people age, including opening up possible Medicare funding for granny pods, should the study reveal a need.
Uppie is a space efficient, cost effective and modern stand-up helper designed for people with disabilities. It fits onto any toilet bowl and uses state of the art technology to lift you up. Gives you a sense of security and independence when using the bathroom. Easy to use with just two buttons integrated into the handle bars. [https://competition.adesignaward.com/design.php?ID=56941](https://competition.adesignaward.com/design.php?ID=56941)

Imagine if you could operate your blinds from your smartphone! Motorized blinds are a huge hassle to install, very expensive, and have not really changed over the years. But for around $120-$150 you can easily install Blind Engine yourself and operate your blinds from your smartphone any where in the world. Or use the timer function. [https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/965750266/blind-engine-make-a-smart-motorized-blind](https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/965750266/blind-engine-make-a-smart-motorized-blind)

A WeWALK smart cane uses an ultrasonic sensor to detect obstacles above the waist, and it alerts the user via in-hand vibration when these obstacles are nearby. This cane enables people to walk freely and securely, aware of things like overhead poles and street signs. And it can give directions via Google Maps! [https://www.freethink.com/videos/smart-cane-for-the-blind](https://www.freethink.com/videos/smart-cane-for-the-blind)

There is a plug and play LED strip that can help anyone start playing the piano in minutes. It transforms any 88 key piano or keyboard into a smart one and allows you to pick from a library of digital sheet music. You can stop, slow down or rewind whenever you want. The LED lights guide you with hand by hand instruction. [https://www.thegrommet.com/products/the-one-music-group-app-connected-smart-piano-hi-lite](https://www.thegrommet.com/products/the-one-music-group-app-connected-smart-piano-hi-lite)

Team Supreme is a new comic book hero group that features differently abled super-powered kid! From the talented Leonard Studios, they create positive stories for Nickelodeon and other customers. The Team Supreme use their super powers to fight for inclusion and acceptance. He is working on the pilot for an animated show. [https://www.leonardstudios.com/about](https://www.leonardstudios.com/about)
Is 2020 Over Yet?

If 2020 has taught us anything, it's taught us to expect the unexpected! No longer can we use phrases like…. “Nothing short of a pandemic will stop me from (insert whatever here).” The last month of the year is a great time to review our own Emergency Preparedness Plans.

Idaho SILC will be hosting an Emergency Preparedness online workshop Monday, December 14th at 2:00 pm Mountain Time/1:00 pm Pacific Time. Register at www.surveymonkey.com/r/SNHZ5NT and get a FREE Emergency Preparedness Folder! The Zoom information will be sent to you after registering.

Once you have completed the workshop, SILC will send you a FREE Emergency Go Bag filled with items get you started on building you own Emergency Kit. Captioning and ASL will be provided. For questions or accommodation requests or to register by phone, please contact Jami Davis at 208-334-3800 or email jami.davis@silc.idaho.gov

There is a large gap between people with disabilities and emergency planners and responders. Including people with disabilities in disaster planning, response and recover is necessary to identify and address gaps in the planning process. Do your best to be prepared!
Kiera Allen Stars in Hulu’s New Thriller

The first major thriller to star a real wheelchair user in over 70 years! “I’m a person,” Allen said. “Disability is part of my identity, but it’s just a part. I’m many other things. And that’s what I saw in the character of Chloe as well, whose identity as disabled is central to the movie, but it’s not the whole movie.”

Acting is her passion and the movie RUN is different from other stories about wheelchair users. “It’s a psychological thriller about a teenage girl, played by me, who begins to suspect that her mother may have a dark secret,” Allen said. She is proud to take on the role because it humanizes someone with a disability - which is unfortunately not too common in Hollywood. The film debuted on November 20th and is already their most watched feature film ever.

TIDBITS!

Categorically left over but no less important

Quotes to make you think!

“Our body is not unlovable or undesirable... our physical makeup is only a small part to our encompassing beauty; the personality, talents, skills, and emotional, caring aspects you possess are worthy of being loved.”

~ Vilissa Thompson, disability advocate

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
The Rocking T-Knife is a unique and easy to use knife that lets you cut any type of food with just one hand. Ideal for those with an amputated arm, limited hand movement, or low hand strength. It lets you cut your food with a rocking motion that ensures the food doesn’t shift or move around the plate. This knife is comfortable to hold and gives the user complete control over it. It can cut all kinds of food including meat, bread, fruits, and vegetables for eating or preparation. Dishwasher safe.

Between $16 and $25

www.ActiveForever.com

We all know some fellow who is reluctant to wear the needed bib at meal time. Now he can eat with dignity and no reluctance. This bib is easily constructed of up-cycled men’s shirts and is larger than most bibs. It will cover the lap when wearer is seated.

You can make it from denim, flannel and regular oxford cloth shirts. Since the size of the bib depends on the size of the shirt, you can use a child’s size shirt for children with special needs. If you use a lightweight shirt you may need to line it with a towel. A simple velcro attachment is added for the back. Easily cleaned by throwing in the washer and dryer. If you have basic knowledge of sewing and a sewing machine, you can make it with no problems.

It even comes with a pocket to store a hankie or medicine, etc! Digital download pattern from Etsy for $8.
