March is National Traumatic Brain Injury Awareness month. The #ChangeYourMind public awareness campaign provides a platform for education the general public about the incidence of brain injury and the needs of people with brain injuries and their families. We need to de-stigmatize brain injury through outreach. Let’s empower those who have survived brain injury and their caregivers. Communities can provide the support people need. ....And you are more than your brain injury!
LOCAL EVENTS - Please join us!

Our events serve as an emotional connection to share a common experience, and they build stronger, more resilient communities. We have both online and in person events 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! We love our communities!

Mar 16 - DAC & MOD Pizza St. Patricks Day Fundraiser
10:00 am - 9:00 pm PT
710 W. Pullman Rd, Moscow

Mar 26 - Let's Talk Bingo!
2:00 pm - 3:00 pm PT
Virtual Bingo game and chat with disability resources

Mar 29 - Mental Health Mondays
6:00 pm - 7:00 pm PT
Virtual Peer Mentorship

Mar 29 - heART and Mind Art Show
11:00 am - 2:00 pm PT
Virtual art show highlighting self-love

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month
TBI Tuesdays 1.00 pm - 4:00 pm ET
TBI TARC

Every Tuesday will be free workshop on topics relative to TBI: Outreach to underserved populations, building partnerships, accessible education, and advocating for justice. You must register for each workshop separately.
https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_AjtaBqEwS7-C-o0gh0_cmw
From the Editor

I’m going all “in a perfect world” on you now. The ads you see asking to donate to charities for people with disabilities are everywhere. I would like to propose what providing these services would be like - in a perfect world. Lately, the Wounded Warrior Project has been on the stations I watch. And regardless of their problems in the past with extravagant parties, I still have a problem with them.

American charitable efforts directed at people with disabilities began in the early 1800’s. Philanthropy had to step in where there were no social programs. But there is a fine line between paternalism and empowerment. The disabled were viewed as dependent and in need of help or saving. This carried into the 1950’s with the March of Dimes and their use of a “poster child”. Two of these children, Ron Mace and Cindy Jones, were unhappy in how they were used to raise money, regardless of the beneficial results of the campaign. Both grew up to be disability rights activists.

I grew up with the Muscular Dystrophy Telethons where people with disabilities were paraded as a pity party. Many of them have spoken out about the experience as adults.

Which brings me back to Wounded Warriors. These commercials are particularly pity worthy, often with parents tearing up. I am not the only one who thinks any service member that was wounded with life changing injuries as a result of serving in the armed forces should not be subjected to begging for funds for resources and services like a poster child. These services should be something that every American is responsible for.

Part of the burden of having a military for protection should include the coverage of their needs after service. Not just medical care, but other needs as well; Adaptive housing, Assistive Technology, Peer groups, etc. This truly is not a place a charity should have to step in and provide support. It continues a stigma that wounded service members who once did incredible thing are now forever damaged and in need of help. They are neither heroic nor broken. They are people that we have invested who still have a lot of potential. They way they are portrayed on the screen is often the way they will be thought of in the community. We can do better.

If you have an idea for our newsletter please contact dac@dacnw.org.
Video Contest offers Prizes

DAC NW invites you to make a 1-2 minute video about some barrier you have overcome for your disability. Grand Prize winner will receive a Kindle Fire HD Tablet, 2nd Place winner a $50 gift card, and 3rd Place winner a $25 gift card. Contest deadline is April 30th.

We live in a great big world and disability is a part of that. Get creative, have fun, learn about what others do and show us your “life hacks” that have helped you in life.

A panel of judges will select the top 3 videos. To enter submit a 1-2 minute video to a Google Drive account and send us the link to dac@dacnw.org with “What Accessibility Means to Me” in the subject line. Or you can use WeTransfer.com the same way.

Lights! Camera! Action!

DAC NW is also hosting a fundraiser through MOD Pizza in Moscow for St. Patricks Day. It’s pretty simple - mention DAC NW when you order or use coupon code “GR180739D” if you order on their website. Enjoy some pizza and DAC will receive a percentage of the days sales to use to fund projects like ramps, assistive technology, social gatherings and more for people with disabilities. Pizza will be available from 10am to 9pm, so this is good for lunch or dinner!

Event will be happening on March 17th at MOD Pizza, 710 W Pullman Rd in Moscow. It’s good on limited dine-in seating, take out, drive through and delivery. So why cook on St. Patricks Day? Come enjoy pizza for a good cause and support a local restaurant. It’s a win-win!

This fundraiser is organized through Group Raise which organizes meals that give back to the local community.
EXPAND DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE

An Information Technology consulting company is betting that the push to diversify the workplace should extend to an applicant’s brain.

Auticon is a company that exclusively employs adults on the autism spectrum at IT consultants, and will be setting up a regional headquarters in Columbus Ohio. “There’s a skills shortage in this area,” said David Aspinall, the CEO in the U.S. “We can bring to bear talent that does have a performance advantage and, at the same time, help people.”

The company is receiving tax incentives to hire 50 people with disabilities, though the company’s launch has been slowed by the pandemic.

With 15 offices around the world, they employ more than 220 IT consultants on the autism spectrum. They provide services in areas such as business analytics, artificial intelligence and software development and migration.

Many adults with autism struggle with employment despite having skill sets that can excel in the workplace. Various studies peg the unemployment and underemployment rate for those with autism at 80% or even 90% said Kerry Magro, who is on the board of directors for the National Autism Association. At the same time, about a third of those with autism have a college degree. Magro, who also has autism, said many companies believe hiring people on the spectrum is too costly. Yet workers with autism are less likely to take time off and more likely to stay with a company longer.

Applicants with autism often don’t disclose they have autism during the interview process and many find the interviews taxing. What often works better is for applicants to have a daylong tryout to show what they are capable of doing. And coaches and mentors can help them adapt.

JPMorgan Chase & Co. has a program called Autism at Work and has hired about 30 workers on the autism spectrum in Columbus Ohio, most of whom hold technology positions.

Auticon hopes to create positive change in the underemployment rate and hires workers at various levels of experience. The organization has an appreciation for inclusion. One of it’s clients, CoverMyMeds, has already placed one worker with autism and a second will join shortly. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are embedded in its culture. Bringing people with different backgrounds and abilities is good for business.

For more information about the ADA contact

NWADCENTER.ORG/IDAHO
Dana Gover, MPA, and ACTCP Certification
ADA Training & Technical Assistance
Email: dananwadacenteridaho@gmail.com
Phone: Voice & TTD 208-841-9422
Comedy Offers Life Skills to those with Down Syndrome

The Northeast Ohio based Stand Up for Downs group has turned to Zoom to continue its work of utilizing comedy to help build confidence and life skills for the Down syndrome community. The group was founded by Canton Ohio native Rob Snow. It all began with a very personal talk to groups and conventions drawing on his family’s experiences mixed with some humor honed from a stink at the famous Second City improv group.

He started offering improv classes locally for those with Down syndrome. These have grown with classes springing up across the country. When the pandemic hit they found an even bigger audience on Zoom. Now there are dozens of classes in all 50 states and Canada. It’s more than simply learning how to tell “knock-knock” jokes. By using humor, and more specifically, the improv exercises, it frees those in the classes to simply be themselves and learn some life skills along the way. They also learn to laugh and make others laugh too.

They have turned to YouTube to promote a new show, “Yes, and a Guest” that features Snow along with an instructor named Jenna Swan. Their second episode was posted recently and features comedian Colin Mochri of “Whose Line is it Anyway” fame. The five minute show features a few interview questions and then a series of improv exercises to try and one-up one another.

To learn more about the program visit https://www.standupfordowns.org/the-improvaneer-method
Paralympics Will be Aired in Prime Time

NBC will air coverage of the Paralympics during prime time for the first time this summer. They expect the prime time coverage to total four hours over multiple nights from the Summer Paralympic Games in Tokyo. The games are scheduled to begin in six months after being postponed last year due to the pandemic.

“It’s unreal and incredible. I’m so ecstatic,” said 13-time Paralympic gold medalist Jessica Long, who is competing in her fifth Games in swimming. “It’s time to show the world the diversity in disability and challenges we face, but also how incredible we are. It is nice being showcased for our work and elite-ness.”

The planning for this was decided before the pandemic, but the postponement of the Games has given extra time to find ways to expand coverage. NBC plans to cover the competition but also the stories of the athletes, that are compelling and will form the fabric of the coverage. NBC will also air the U.S. Paralympic Team Trials on June 27th. Coverage will be streamed to Peacock, NBCOlympics.com and the NBC Sports app.

This commitment to coverage and promotion of the Paralympics is something to celebrate. U.S. Olympic Paralympic Committee CEO Sarah Hirshland said, “This is a great reflection of our combined pledge to create a path to parity for the Paralympic Movement.”

Roderick Townsend, gold medalist in the long jump and high jump at the Rio Games, said the timing serves as more momentum with L.A. hosting the Games in 2028.

“After Loading in 2012, we saw how much of an impact it had in the United Kingdom,” he said. “This could have a huge impact for the future track for when Los Angeles comes around.”

Jessica Long, Gold Medalist at Olympics in London.
The League of Women Voters has always encouraged your opinion. Our Legislature is entering into the second half of the 2021 session and the pace will quicken. It is not always easy to keep track of what is going on. Something our League Advocacy Committee can attest to. Despite that, they are doing a fantastic job of keeping on top of new legislation. The Advocacy Committee has listed bills with League positions, principles, and visions. A weekly update can be emailed out with the advancement of these bills or new ones that are introduced.

Please contact your legislators or the chair of the committee which is considering the bill you are interested in. Remember, only the president speaks for the League, but your individual contact is important. You can also write a letter to the editor of your local paper.

Check out the two announcements here. One is an opportunity to learn how to use remote testimony. This is to keep people with disabilities safe, when in-person testimony is not guaranteeing COVID precautions like mask wearing. And it is also helpful if you live some distance away.

The other is an opportunity to learn about current legislation. It comes from an online meeting with District 5 legislators. If there is any such opportunity in other parts of the state, the league will be happy to pass it along.

If you have not already, please check out the How to Navigate the Legislative Website tutorial, it is located here: https://my.lwv.org/idaho/action-and-advocacy

Senate Bill S 1069
Description: Requires county clerks to contact voters who made mistakes on their absentee ballots to them by the election deadline
Bill status: This bill was passed by the Senate State Affairs Committee but may have a second reading there before going to the full Senate.
League recommends: Support – League position: In the Impact on Issues 2020-2022, “LWVUS promotes an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, and responsive. We encourage electoral methods that provide the broadest voter representation possible and are expressive of voter choices. Whether for single or multiple contests, the League supports electoral methods that: Maximize effective votes/minimize wasted votes.”

Senate Bill S 1110
Description: Requires signatures of at least 6% of qualified electors in all 35 of Idaho’s legislative districts for ballot initiative or referendum petitions. Current law requires 6% from only 18 of the 35 legislative districts and at least 6% of voters statewide.
Bill status: This bill will receive a hearing in the Senate State Affairs Committee
League recommends: Oppose – The League encourages and promotes citizen-led efforts to take part in our government, including getting initiatives on the ballot for all voters to vote on. This bill makes it much more difficult for any citizen-led group to propose a ballot initiative.
ParaKarate, What is it?  

By Sifu Diana McRae

People with disabilities are 3 times more likely to experience victimization in our society. They are often seen as lesser people, ‘an easy target’. This includes my son who was lured out of his apartment and shot with plastic bb’s on the back of his neck by a group of unsupervised kids.

With the rise of the disability rights movement, more of our community are living independently with their own apartment and holding down a job. What can we do to help? Teach a system that empowers and stops an attack from happening. PARAKARATE is not just about the physical training but also training your mind to make the best decisions about your life goals, as well as personal protection.

I use the ‘American Kenpo’ style of martial arts which I have studied and taught for over 25 years, using its adaptability, to make it relevant for those with any kind of disability. We believe that the ‘art’ should adapt to each persons unique make up. As Ed Parker, our Grand Master wrote in his series of books, “We are all physiologically different and whatever move might work for one, may not necessarily work for another”.

Students learn not only how to strengthen their bodies and defend themselves, but also to set goals and learn to self advocate - a skill that will be very helpful in everyday life. Students are not automatically given rank. Like other martial artists, they have to work hard, show up to class and show improvement. Thinking for yourself is a vital skill. If you are going to protect yourself when under attach, be it physical or mental bullying, it’s nice to rely on yourself. “You will discover through your training that your mind is the most important part that needs to be developed. Because of its importance, it is imperative that a complete understanding of mental conditioning be developed first or one cannot be completely successful physically,” said Ed Parker.

My students have become so successful, that they have competed in karate tournaments nationwide where they consistently won trophies. We have regularly put on demonstrations, with decisions of what to include being a team effort. Being a part of a team is important to social growth with each student having their own set of goals to achieve. Very similar to instruments in an orchestra. Each have their own sound but when played together the music is beautiful!

Classes begin and end with a ritual that shows respect for each other. Showing respect is an important part of karate training. Warm up exercises are followed by the ‘basics’ and then more difficult techniques.

I had a difficult time in school because it took so much more time and effort for me to learn. And those skills made me an effective and empathetic karate teacher! I had no idea that by 2021 I would have emigrated to the USA from Englund, created Parakarate and be in the process of writing a book to help other martial artists.

For those interested in learning more call 208-691-2498 or email dmkenpokarate@yahoo.com
COVID Deaths in Nursing Homes

As of February 4th, COVID-19 deaths in nursing homes were reported over 161,000. This is an increase of 8,774 over the number a week earlier on January 28th. That means, someone in a nursing home or other institution dies from COVID at least every 69 seconds.

If these facilities were on fire, the first thing we would do is evacuate the residents. CILs across the country have been fighting to provide these individuals an opportunity to leave the institutions. And the Olmstead decision is not enough to get these people out in the middle of a pandemic.

Which is why the Disability Integration Act (DIA) was created.

Section 4(b)(7) of the bill states that “discrimination by a public entity or LTSS insurance provider includes… a failure to provide community-based services and supports, on an intermittent, short-term, or emergent basis, that assist an individual with an LTSS disability to live in the community and lead an independent life.” DIA is trying to address how state policies and systems fail to meet the needs of people with mental health diagnoses and are in crisis or are periodically institutionalized because they cannot get ongoing services and supports they need to be independent.

Instead, if DIA were law, elderly and people with disabilities would be able to get services supports they need to leave the institutions and that would save lives.

Currently, people with disabilities can be forced into institutions because of capping the hours or dollars available to serve an individual, limiting eligibility for services because of age limits or “wrong” diagnosis, and restricting wages so the pay is inadequate to recruit and retain workers.

It doesn’t need to be like this. CILs and other agencies who offer in-home services have demonstrated that people with disabilities can successfully live independent, productive and integrated lives in the community. They just need access to the services and supports to help them be successful. Advocate to your U.S. legislators that we need the DIA. You can call the U.S. Capitol at 202-224-3121.

Services you control!
It may be hard to imagine a fleet of wheelchair-using pirates but they are naturally well suited for a modern day treasure hunt. With cell phones as today's treasure maps, and a social community teeming with support, geocaching is an affordable & exciting recreational adventure. https://www.newmobility.com/2013/03/accessible-geocaching/

Learn about Hippotherapy! That’s using horses for occupational therapy, physical therapy and even speech-language pathology. Why the horse? The average horse walks at approximately 100 septs per minute and can offer an opportunity for complex motor learning along with motivation and social and emotional benefits! https://www.americanhippotherapyassociation.org

Able-Outdoors is all about promoting access to the outdoor recreation, like hunting, fishing, ATV riding and more, to people with disabilities. Check out their ideas for helping you learn more about staying active outdoors, regardless of your ability level. Their magazine offers stories on ice fishing, camping, horseback riding all from a wheelchair. Get inspired! http://ableoutdoors.net

Did you know there is an organization that helps with scuba diving for people with disabilities? Check out their YouTube channel to see people accept the challenge to become part of a world that has been barely explored. You can travel and dive too! https://www.hsascuba.com

Want to climb with a disability? Here’s everything you need to know. This demanding sport is practiced by many disabled athletes already. Climbing, mountaineering and even hill walking are activities that anyone can do. Physically and mentally demanding, its a sport everyone can benefit from. There are paraclimbing championships too! https://rockclimbingcentral.com/climbing-with-a-disability-everything-you-need-to-know/
Idaho Vaccine Prioritization

The Idaho COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Committee (CVAC) is currently considering who will be included in the next group (Group 3 or 1c) of people to be given the COVID-19 vaccinations. It will be months before there is enough for everyone who wants it.

The CVAC is prioritizing the next group of people to get the vaccine. It may be based on: age, occupation, health conditions, or a combination of the above.

On Fridays during March, the CVAC will meet weekly to hear public comment. Please submit comments to covid19vaccinepubliccomment@dhw.idaho.gov Comments received by noon on Monday are distributed and reviewed each week.

There are approximately 241,000 people with disabilities living in Idaho. It is important to know that not all people with disabilities are at higher risk for getting COVID and experiencing severe illness.

Some people with disabilities and/or chronic health conditions are at greater risk of severe illness, hospitalization and death from COVID and should be given prioritization to receive the vaccine. Many are easy to identify because of Medicaid services. And many unpaid, family caregivers are also easily identified through Medicaid waivers and enhanced Medicare programs. Other vulnerable populations may be harder to identify, medical providers could help prioritize people they serve. Add to that, many people with disabilities have little or no access to health care due to social and systemic inequities.

Prioritizing adults with disabilities and people with chronic health conditions who use HCBS or other Medicaid enhanced plans will not capture everyone under 65 with a disability or chronic health condition. Including unpaid family caregivers will significantly improve lives and decrease risk of death. Without prioritization many in the high risk group will not be eligible to receive their vaccination for many months because of their age.


Vaccine Considerations for People with Disabilities, updated February 17, 2021

Promoting Independent Living for all Idahoans
Zoom Launches Automatic CC for Free

Coming this fall, ZOOM will roll out automatic closed captioning for all free accounts. The Live Transcription setting will be available to all Zoom users to provide a communication platform that is accessible. Those who use Zoom free accounts and require the automatic closed captioning can received an update request starting now, ahead of the broader release. Simply fill out a request form. This feature allows hosts to enable the captioning as a person speaks in the meeting. It can also be done by an integrated third party for greater accuracy.

They expect a high volume of requests, and appreciate your patience as they work to make the captioning available to all of the users.

Request Form: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScQQ2W-K8naaltkBlbuv6BfJvisy0NZS2qWIKd0gSMUWGpQ/viewform

Quotes to make you think!

“I am different, but not less.”
~ Temple Grandin, American Scientist and Disability Activist

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
TECHNOLOGY FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

MYOPRO POWERED BRACE

Even if you haven’t moved your hand and arm in years due to a stroke, MyoPro may be able to help you regain everyday function. Feed yourself, cook, carry objects, do household tasks, return to work or hobbies. This powered brace is a unique, patented upper limb orthosis designed to restore function to weakened or paralyzed arms of patients with CVA stroke, disease or injury. Movement practice with an impaired limb can help strengthen existing or forge new connections between neurons. This means that therapy with MyoPro assists the relearning process. It senses your own EMG signals through non-invasive sensors on the arm and drives tiny motors so your arm moves as you want it to. No implants, no electrical stimulation. Covered by most Medicare Advantage and Blue Cross/Blue Shield plans, and by the US Veterans Administration. For a free screening to see if it will work for you, call 877-736-9666.

www.myomo.com/ARP

Clear Plate Guard

This clear plate guard prevents food from being pushed off the plate. A wonderful item to have for those who are one-handed, lack dexterity in their hands or even for poor low vision. A groove attaches to the rim of most plates. It attaches by stretching open and placing on the rim. This forms a bumper part of the way around the plate. The spring like qualities keep it securely in place. Allows you to eat independently on the same dinnerware as everyone else. Easy to pack in a purse or bag for dining out at restaurants or social gatherings. Comes in a small and large size. Dishwasher safe.

About $15

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