WE ALL HAVE BLIND SPOTS

“We all have blind spots - those areas for improvement and growth. As painful as it can be to admit we are doing things we never wanted to do and saying things we never wanted to say, it is this acknowledgement that enables us to take the first step toward change. Be gentle with yourself. Be real with yourself. Take baby steps.”

~ Rhonda Louise Robbins
LOCAL EVENTS - Please join us!

Our events serve as an emotional connection to a shared 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!

Sept 11  - Smooth Talkers AAC-User Conference
           10:00 am - 11:00 am PT
           Virtual Online Event

Sept 15  - Diversity Symposium
           9:00 am - 3:45 pm am
           North Idaho College, ID

Sept 17-18 - Idaho Independent Living Conference (Hybrid)
              9:00 am -5:00 pm MT
              Idaho Falls, ID

Sept 17  - Building Capacity: Brain Injury Conference Series
           10:00 am - 3:00 pm PT
           Virtual Online Event

SAVE THE DATE!
2021 Virtual APRIL Conference
October 18 - 22, 2021

Great workshops for leadership, advocacy, independent living and more! Learn about housing, employment, post secondary education, relationships and other resources. Youth Conference is held October 16th. Pre-register at https://www.april-rural.org/index.php/conferences/2021-conference/2021-virtual-conference-registration
From the Editor

As the pandemic was taking a breather this spring, I attended to a few medical procedures I had been putting off, such as a mammogram. Never do I look forward to heading to the hospital to have my boob squished between two very cold plates, but it is a necessary thing to have done on a regular basis.

Once there, I wondered how many of these necessary medical procedures and screenings are truly accessible. If I were in a wheelchair, would I be able to be screen successfully for a life threatening cancer?

I posed this question to the radiology technician and was pleasantly surprised to find out how accessible it was in our community. The machine, indeed, could be lowered to a person who is sitting. This would require leaning forward a bit and raising your arm above your head. However, with a bit of advance notice, they can easily have two technicians ready. One to operate the 3D imaging machine and one to assist and support a person to lean forward or hold their arm over their head. They also schedule a bit more time, if it is needed.

I have no idea how accessible other imaging machines are in other areas. I encourage women to ask and make sure they have this kind of accommodation.

Studies show women with disabilities are less likely to get a mammogram every two years, the recommended time frame for women ages 50-74. Don’t put it off! Find an accessible mammogram near you!

If you have an idea for our newsletter please contact dac@dacnw.org.
DAC NW part of Wheelchair Challenge

A warm day in August saw Coeur d’Alene Mayor Steve Widmyer, and City Council members get a behind-the-wheel experience navigating Sherman Avenue to understand the challenges faced by the disability community. DAC NW is not new to this concept, as they were part of a similar experience in Moscow, Idaho a number of years ago.

This group made its way along the little over half-mile stretch from the Chamber of Commerce to City Hall. The event was organized by Denise Jeska, a member of the Coeur d’Alene pedestrian and bicycle advisory committee.

The hope was to make city officials aware of uneven sidewalks, improperly placed sandwich boards and outdoor seating on sidewalks, bicycles leaning against trees, missing grates around trees which pose a threat to the independence of people using wheelchairs. Jeska said it’s especially difficult when boards are placed in front of sidewalk ramps.

“We have a lot of people who have mobility issues and they want to enjoy the game things that everyone else does,” said Tessa Jilot, chairman for the committee. It’s definitely a challenge to get around during the busy seasons.

DAC NW knows it the city officials have direct experience with these accessibility struggles, it can bring awareness when it’s time to modify codes or put more ADA regulations in place. It’s a good idea for a community to look at their transition plan and prioritize needs.
Disabled Scientists Excluded from Labs

Who is the first disabled scientist you think of? Probably Stephen Hawking. But he wasn’t the only disabled person who has made a contribution to science. The contributions that marginalized people make to research are rarely acknowledged and struggle to thrive within the scientific workforce.

There is no doubt that the ADA made great strides in increasing participation of students in STEM, but people with disabilities are still vastly underrepresented in science. In 2013, disabled chemists made up only 2.3% of researchers, despite being 8.6% of undergraduates. This drop can be attributed to the physical and attitudinal barriers that come about because of ableism.

Even though the knowledge and skill level is there for researchers with disabilities, laboratories are difficult to navigate. For those having trouble standing for long periods, the typical space is high off the ground. Even a stool can’t be used as space underneath coulters is blocked by cabinets. These high workbenches combined with narrow aisles means you can’t use a wheelchair. And clutter in the aisles often impedes other mobility aids such as crutches or a cane.

We need to build new labs with universal design and renovate old labs accordingly. While there is not yet a standard design for accessible labs, guidelines have been published that are based on universal design. Though this will never completely negate the need for accommodations, it proactively incorporates the most common ones such as adjustable height fume hoods, automatic doors, and pull cord alarms for safety.

Diversity is needed in the scientific world. It’s important to include the perspectives that disabled scientists can offer. Accessibility is beneficial to all, as most people with a disability acquired it over the course of their lifetime. Increasing accessibility makes science more inclusive to disabled students, but also ensures that scientists can have life-long careers, regardless of what situations are thrown their way.


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
Recording IL History in Idaho

By Jen Grush-Dale

Long-time staff member, Melva Heinrich, has begun a new project to create a record of the independent living movement in Idaho. Melva, who is the Director of Community and Resource Integration, will be retiring at the end of the year after 28 years at LINC. As her final project, she is working to document all of the hard work and people who have made independent living here in Idaho what it is. And she’s looking for stories!

What kind of stories is she looking for? Melva wants to hear about the folks who have made changes in their communities and in the state that help all people with disabilities live independent lives. From the neighborhood activist who helped persuade city hall to put in curb cuts to the folks who helped change Idaho law to protect parents with disabilities and their children.

You don’t have to have worked for a center for independent living to participate! If you worked or volunteered for any agency or organization that has contributed to expanding the rights of people with disabilities, or done advocacy work on your own, Melva wants to hear from you!

Ready to tell your story? Great! You can submit your story directly to Melva at mheinrich@lincidaho.org. You can call her in our Twin Falls office at 208-733-1712. Or you can submit your story online at https://tinyurl.com/49et2xb9.

Powering Independence
Idaho Independent Living Conference goes Hybrid

As Covid cases are on the rise, the Idaho Independent Living Conference is now offered both in person and virtually.

The conference will be September 17 - 18th at the Holiday Inn & Suites in Idaho Falls. Holiday Inn is setting a nightly rate of only $99 per night, a considerable discount! Book sooner rather than later.

The conference is for anyone with a significant disability. Anyone who knows someone with a significant disability. Anyone who supports someone with a significant disability. Anyone who cares about someone with a significant disability. And anyone who wants to promote the independence of someone with a significant disability. Register at IDLife.org.

The General Track will be all about getting back to our IL roots. What are the fundamental things we can do to be more independent, get the rights we have been denied and advocate for those that may need support?

The Advanced Track will be concurrent to the General Track and have special advanced training on financial issues when living with a disability, tracking outcomes on populations with disabilities, interviewing and more.

The Keynote Speaker will be Steven Jacobo, US Paralympian. Steven brings a great story of independence sure to inspire you. He is the father of two amazing little boys. The Nevada resident had an unfortunate snowboarding accident that left him with an incomplete spinal cord injury at the T9-10 level. After spending a month at Renown Medical Center, Steven was transferred to Ranchos Los Amigos in Downey, CA. Since his injury, Steven has focussed on therapy and lifting weights. He has worked to become a member of the USA Para-Bobsleigh team and after reaching one podium in World Cup season, is now ranked 10th in the world.
Self-advocates in Wisconsin living with intellectual and developmental disabilities have a lot to say about choice and control over their lives. That’s why they launched a Self-Determination YouTube channel in the fall of 2019. The theme across more than 80 videos is that self-determination is essential to living our best life - the life we all deserve.

Whether it’s voting, how to talk to your legislator, supported-decision-making, or dating and relationships, the Self-Determination Channel celebrates successes and shows that, through perseverance, anything is possible. More than 100 self-advocates have contributed their expertise and perspectives. They have collaborated with four other states with more collaboration in the works.

**Take a look at their videos:**

**Supported Decision Making** - Jordan was just hours away from a court hearing that would have awarded his parents guardianship. In this video, Jordan shares his supported decision making story and how he almost lost his rights. Jordan and Ashley also talk about a new project they are working on for the Center of Youth Voice. Youth Choice will train other self-advocates about alternatives to guardianship.

**Ideas for Job Coaches and Workers with Disabilities** - Job coaches give extra help to workers as they learn how to do their jobs. In this video, Ashley and Cindy share ideas on how job coaches and workers with disabilities can better communicate with each other and work together for independence.

**Did U Know? You have the right to take risks!** - In this video, six self-advocates talk about your rights to make choices, take risks, and self-determine your own life. Thinking about living away from home, choosing your own friends? This is the video for you.

**Help make voting accessible and easier** - This interactive video helps gather data with a voting survey. Everyone has the right to vote.

Check out and subscribe to their channel here: [https://www.youtube.com/c/SelfDeterminationChannel](https://www.youtube.com/c/SelfDeterminationChannel)

And if you have an idea for a new video connect with Fil Clissa at fil.clissa@wisconsin.gov.
“My name is One Who Takes Care of Water,” says Stacia Morfin, dressed in regalia that reflects her Native American heritage. She is leading a “Hear the Echoes of Our Ancestors” jet boat tour of the Snake River. A member of the Nimipuu (Nez Perce), who are known for their expertise in horse breeding and fishing.

Numbering 6,000 at the beginning of the 19th century, they once roamed 17 million acres spread across four states. For years the tribe has watched as tour operators built a $4 million riverboat business through their ancestral lands. Morfin is forcing the tourism industry to take the Nez Perce into account. Now the owner of Nez Perce Tourism, it’s a business that offers dinner tours, powwows, Appaloosa-riding experiences, white-water rafting and river tours.

She has hired more than 55 drummers, singers, historians, presenters, storytellers and artists from the tribe to contribute to the company. She sees Indigenous tourism going mainstream, “I know people are really hungry for it,” she said.

Morfin makes sure her listeners understand the losses her tribe has suffered. “This was a Nimipuu village site,” she says as they pass Asotin, a small town on the west bank. “But no Nimipuu live here today.”

Their reservation is now confined to a patch of high desert less than one-tenth the original size of their lands. She can tell the story of the area, tying the native people to their homeland.

American Cruise Lines, which sails the Columbia and Snake rivers, said that Morfin’s “carefully curated” tours offer an exceptional experience for its guests who go on the excursions. NDN Collective, a South Dakota-based philanthropic organization that supports Native projects awarded Morfin $200000 in a community self-determination grant in April. Her work is seen as “regenerative” and a way to support an economy that allows Natives to stay on their homelands.

She hopes to use earnings to provide scholarships for Nez Perce children to better learn their culture.
SEPTEMBER 2021

Idaho IL Newsletter

SELF-DIRECTED PERSONAL ASSISTANT SERVICES

Make an Emergency Plan

September is Emergency Preparedness Month. With local fires happening, and the scope of the recent hurricane in New Orleans, being prepared to evacuate at a moment’s notice is important. And for people with a disability, you need to make a comprehensive and complete plan. Your family may not be together if a disaster strikes, so it is important to know how you will contact one another and reconnect if separated. Establish a meeting place that’s familiar and easy to find.

Step 1) Put a plan together, and who can be involved in helping you.

1. Are you signed up to receive emergency alerts?
2. What is your shelter plan? Where will you go? Is it accessible?
3. How will you get there? You will need reliable and accessible transportation.
4. What is your communication plan? Cell phone towers may be down, and electricity out.
5. Do you have an emergency bug out kit ready? Include medicines, batteries, pet food, important papers and numbers, etc.
6. Check with shelters for emergency plans around COVID. Have masks and sanitizer ready.

Step 2) Be precise in your specific needs. Do you have what you need for daily living? Include people in your network who may need to assist. Things to consider:

1. Dietary needs
2. Medical needs, prescriptions and equipment
3. Devices and equipment needed for access
4. Language and communication barriers
5. Cultural and religious considerations
6. Pets or service animals
7. School aged children

Discuss your plan with assistants, family and neighbors. And have a back up plan to your back up plan.

You can download and fill out an emergency plan or just use it as a guide to create your own. https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/2021-04/family-emergency-communication-plan.pdf

And start now to prepare your bug out kit. Here is a downloadable and printable checklist version to help you. https://www.ready.gov/kit

Services you control!
Guide Dogs for the Blind has special programs for children who are blind like camps, workshops and the K9 Buddy Program. They create partnerships with mobility dogs that offer companionship and enhanced independence. https://visionaware.org/directory/profile/guide-dogs-for-the-blind/12/

You’ve probably seen a guide dog out and about, but you may have misconceptions about the incredible work these dogs do. Here is a list of seven things you may not have known about guide dogs from the American Kennel Club. https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/lifestyle/7-things-you-probably-didnt-know-about-guide-dogs/

Amid lockdowns, service animals daily activities have been put on hold. And their owners fear they won’t recover from it. These guide dogs are used to working in noise, smells and sights of being out and about. Staying at home can directly affect their skills. Read about what you can do for your service animal here. https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2021/feb/02/how-guide-dogs-are-faring-in-the-pandemic

Thinking of training your own service animal? The book Forward Together is an inside look at the methods of guide dog training. How they learn skills like accepting the harness, leading around obstacles, stopping for changes in elevation, ignoring distractions and other actions to keep their handler safe. https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08956CQ6Rtag=cutecale-20&linkCode=osith=1&psc=1

Guide Dogs of America has merged with Tender Loving Canines to provide hardworking service dogs for people who are blind/visually impaired, veterans, and children with autism to help them become confident, independent people. Their services are provided free. A charity banquet is being held in November to raise funds. https://web.event.com/event/dad8170e-f0a5-4533-9321-0a26c235d13a/summary
I planned on calling this article “How NOT to Hire Caregivers”, thinking the sassy tone of my writing would be self-explanatory, but then I realized the title sounds more like a guide for helping job seekers avoid incompetent employers. Instead, dear readers, my goal is to help families and individuals with disabilities recognize and understand they have a right to consistent, compassionate and reliable caregivers. So I propose this title: “Reasons to Fire Toxic Caregivers.”

As someone who has self-directed her own Community Support Workers (CSWs) for two years now, and was on traditional care service for many years before that, I have seen the gamut of caregivers. I could write a book about my experiences, both good and bad. Of course I would change the names to protect the not-so-innocent. I understand there is a significant shortage of in-home caregivers right now, which puts a lot of us in crisis mode. Having acknowledged this sobering reality, I still maintain there is no reason why families and individuals with disabilities should keep or have to deal with rotten or even abusive caregivers.

Here are reasons why people should request a different aide or leave a care company and even fire inadequate caregivers…

1) Personality Clash: I put this one first as it’s not an offense, just a fact. Everybody is different and that’s ok. Not everyone is going to get along with certain people. We have diverse likes, dislikes, habits and opinions.

2) Patronizing Know-It-Alls: This behavior has ramped up my stress and anxiety levels a number of times over the years. The caregiver I had in college was an awesome person, however, she thought I needed a flu shot. I said no, but she didn’t listen thinking she knew my body better than I did. She took me to the doctor, who took her word over mine. I was vaccinated and had a severe reaction, going into hypertension. She had to call my mom. She never made the suggestion again.

They can mean well, wanting to help, but at the end of the day, if you’re unhappy and become anxious when they’re around, it’s time to look for another caregiver.

3) Passive Aggressiveness: Now I’ve had a few caregivers display this kind of behavior. This is expressing negative feelings in an indirect confrontational way. For example, two ladies working with me were best friends, and sometimes would come together on a shift. They would sometimes ignore me in conversations and disregard some of my preferences - like not dropping the F-bomb. I felt they used the time to hang out with one another. I called the company to share my feelings and after they were reprimanded they constantly made comments like: “I can’t do that, it would be unprofessional.” every chance they got.

4) Unprofessionalism: This is an obvious reason. There was a CSW who bullied me in texts, and was unprofessional the entire time he and his wife worked for me. He never stuck to his shifts, brought his wife along and she ended up doing the bulk of the personal care work on their shifts. One even took a nap on the floor and they brought their son to my home without permission - because he wanted to meet my cat.

5) Money, or Bottom Line, Mattered Most: The last two companies I was with before self-directing didn’t care much for their clients well-being. These employees complained frequently about being double or even triple-booked and overworked. One was in tears because she’d been forced to cancel a planned and much needed vacation. Some were stretched so thin because the company took on more clients than it could provide care for.

As for me? One company told me I had to move out of my apartment “because it wasn’t accessible enough for them.” I was even yelled at for not having a Plan B in the event the company couldn’t provide full coverage. That…was..their… job!

6) Lack of Communication: If there is a problem between the caregiver and the client, how can it be peacefully resolved if it’s not addressed? I’ve told my CSW’s to please communicate with me. One can’t fix what’s wrong if you are not aware of the problem. We are all adults here. But I’ve had a couple caregivers that wouldn’t let me know when they were upset, and had a mutual friend talk to me. So aggravating!

There are more reasons, of course, why it doesn’t work out with certain caregivers, theft, betrayal, or simply not a good fit. The important things are your mental and emotional health and well-being. Look for my book sometime in the future! ✿winks✿
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

Disney Improving Access to Parks

After scrapping their disability access system introduced in 2013 due to abuse, they have now started a new access program. Disability Access Service (DAS) allows people with disabilities who cannot tolerate long waits in lines to obtain a return time for rides and other attractions.

Visitors can enroll up to 30 days before arrival through a live video chat with a cast member. They can select two experiences per day through the DAS Planning option and get a one hour return window on the day of their visit. In addition they can get their return times for rides and other experiences via an app.

They are also launching a digital tool called Disney Genie that’s designed to offer a personalized itinerary complete with current and expected wait times.

Quotes to make you think!

“So many of our dreams at first seem impossible, then they seem improbable, and then, when we summon the will, they soon become inevitable.”
~ Christopher Reeve, actor and philanthropist. 1952-2004

TIDBITS!
Categorically left over but no less important

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They are also launching a digital tool called Disney Genie that’s designed to offer a personalized itinerary complete with current and expected wait times.
This stool is perfect for computer work or in the kitchen. Pivoting angled column moves with your body for constant alignment. Adjustable height works for different workstations or counters. Swivel seat moves with you as you twist. In the kitchen, it is perfect for taking weight off your feet and relieving back pain.

Don’t think an aid means you are giving up. It’s the complete opposite. Aids allow us to function in a world that is not built for disabled people.

About $150.00
www.amazon.com

Two tools in one! This is perfect for those who have difficulty removing socks and shoes. It gently pushes off any sock with ease while the shoe horn helps put shoes on or take off. Long 28” handle with contoured grip rotates so it can be used for both socks or shoes. Compact and perfect for travel, it folds to less than 14”. Great for arthritic or weak hands and can be used with ease from standing or sitting position.

$12.00 from
www.MaxiAids.com