INCLUSION IS WITHIN EVERYONE'S ABILITY!

Disability Awareness Month is a way to help everyone become more understanding of the challenges faced by people with disabilities. It includes people with mental, physical, and sensory disabilities and works to ensure all people have equal opportunities for work, play, health, and success.
A FRESH NEW OUTLOOK

Lately we have been feeling a bit off. It seems every day is chaotic and something difficult is thrown our way. That must mean it’s time to rethink.

That’s why we changed up the newsletter this month. DAC NW has been publishing the IL Idaho Newsletter for 8 years now and have changed up our look a couple of times. Now we want to be more inclusive of our community partners in all of Idaho and Washington State.

Interstate Connections was born! A fresh spin to our look, brighter colors, modern fonts and simplified shapes. This new facelift reflects a new path forward for us. People with disabilities don’t want to stay in the background. We have a visual identity, we are bold, and we want to stand out!

Our new look is a perfect representation of where we are today and the values that lead us – inclusion, access, advocacy, and justice. But it also considers our history. The promise – Nothing about us without us. Why the new name Interstate Connections? It’s what interstates do - they connect people!

“I can’t change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination” — Jimmy Dean
DAC NW - INDEPENDENT LIVING PHILOSOPHY

"Independent living, as seen by its advocates, is a philosophy, a way of looking at society and disability, and a worldwide movement of disabled people working for equal opportunities, self-determination, and self-respect," said Ed Roberts. The key here is self-determination. Sherri Boelter, our Independent Living Advocate in Post Falls, knows first hand what a battle that can be.

She received a call for “advocacy assistance” from a service provider. After a few minutes it became apparent it was a 3-way conversation with the counselor talking over the consumer. “Every time I asked “Eva” how we could help, the counselor would talk loudly over her,” said Sherri. “Finally, rather sternly, I asked to speak to Eva only. It was her life and she needs to take charge.” With that the counselor finally backed off.

Eva shared that through her job coach she wasn’t getting the accommodations she needed. The counselor had tried to go in like a bull dog with a list of accommodations which only resulted in being dropped by the job coach. Eva agreed to meet with DAC and see how we could help her move forward with self-advocacy and finding employment.

Young people transitioning to living independently can get a variety of services tailored to their needs at DAC NW. We can provide information about job training, help with budgeting, self-care, and emotional support to help them for the next stage of their life. You can be independent, make your own choices, and take risks like anyone else! Our services are based on peer support and role-modeling with someone who has been in a similar situation. If you find people aren't listening to what you want in life, give us a call!

*Name has been changed for privacy

YOUR KEY TO INDEPENDENCE!
On August 4th Deana Louise (Asmussen) Gilchrist, 53, went from physical death into eternal life with her Savior Jesus Christ on July 17, 2021 at her home in Boise, Idaho due to complications of her Multiple Sclerosis.

Deana was born May 10, 1968 in Burns where she attended both elementary and junior high school. During her 7th grade year, her family moved to La Pine, where she attended 7th-11th grade, returning to Burns for her senior year, graduating from Burns High School.

She was passionate about music from an early age, playing the piano, trumpet, as well as singing most of her life. Deana was also a talented basketball player in high school and college. Deana attended Western Baptist College (Corban University) in Salem, playing basketball for the Warriors and singing in many of the college's music ministry groups.

Deana graduated from Western Baptist College in 1991 with studies in business and a degree in Psychology. It was during this time she met Matthew Gilchrist, the one she would love for the rest of her life. They married Feb. 1992 in Burns at Faith Baptist Church, remaining in Burns until 2000 where Deana worked at both Harney Counseling and Guidance, and Burns Life Care Center as an Administrator. In 2000, they moved to Boise where Deana worked at LINC as both a care coordinator and asst. administrator. During her time at LINC, she was very involved in advocating for the disabled community.

Matt and Deana attended Cole Community Church where they were involved in the music ministry, singing in the church's choir for several years. The biggest joy in Deana's life was spending time with Matthew, her family, and watching her nephew and nieces grow up.

Deana was diagnosed with Secondary Progressive MS around the age of 21. She endured many years of debilitating pain and physical decline, but always lived her life with grace, relying upon God for her joy and strength. Deana lived her life as a gift encouraging others through her kindness and strength, she always enjoyed spending time with the many friends who would come to visit and spend time with her.

The outpouring of love from her friends throughout her life, as well as those in the community, and from Cole Community Church was always an encouragement to her. A memorial service for Deana will be held at 11 am on August 28 at Cole Community Church in Boise. Donations may be made to the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation in lieu of flowers or other gifts.
SPOKANE - YOUTH
CHANGES COMING SOON!

Spokane Youth, a division of Disability Action Center, will be going through some changes in the next month. Currently, we assist youth and young adults (ages 14-24) with disabilities to find and connect with local resources to make a successful transition towards adulthood. As an organization run by people with disabilities for people with disabilities, they provide peer counseling, support and mentoring. The best advice often comes from those who have already experienced it.

We are poised to start expanding our services to everyone with a disability, not just youth. Stay tuned for more information on our exciting growth. And remember we still host our other regular events, like Mental Health Mondays. These are held the last Monday of every month. A virtual get together that offers tips and peer to peer advice for living with anxiety and other mental health issues.

We also host a game night once a month to play virtual games together and have some fun. You can meet up with us the third Tuesday of every month and chat and have fun with other young people with disabilities. You can find all our events on the website https://dacnw.org/events/.

So keep an eye out for great changes to our services provided to Spokane and other eastern Washington counties.

You can have the independence you wish, while building a network of friends, colleagues, and advocates.
LIFE, INC
CREATING AN INTERSECTIONAL FUTURE

The passage of the ADA 30+ years ago marked a beginning of disability rights in America. We also recognize the vital work of disability justice is just beginning, our movement is at a pivotal point in time. In keeping with our successful history of advocacy, we need to get young, disabled people involved in a multigenerational and intersectional initiative that connects generation to generation and involves all marginalized groups. The work toward equality requires a diverse disability movement and leadership that centers on all forms of injustice. Centers for Independent Living are grassroots organizations run by individuals with disabilities. We encourage young people with disabilities to get involved, learn what we are doing, and to tell us what is important to them. Are you a young person wanting to get involved? Call your local CIL and see how you can advocate for justice.
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many voters were concerned about voting at a polling place on Election Day in 2020. Large numbers of those voters took advantage of opportunities to vote by mail, or to cast an early in-person ballot, and many jurisdictions around the country modified their prior procedures to promote both the safety of their citizens and robust democratic participation. The 2020 election produced record turnout, with over 160 million citizens casting ballots, a result that was all the more impressive given the difficulties the pandemic posed to both voters and election administrators. Since the 2020 election, some States have responded by permanently adopting their COVID-19 modifications; by contrast, other States have barred continued use of those practices or have imposed additional restrictions on voting by mail or early voting. In view of these developments, guidance concerning federal statutes affecting methods of voting is appropriate.

There are three federal statutes that protect the rights of voters with disabilities. State and local government are required to ensure that qualified individuals with disabilities have a full and equal opportunity to vote. There are additional requirements to improve polling place access for elderly individuals and people with disabilities during federal elections. And these include requirements for voting machine accessibility.

There are also protections for the voting rights of certain active-duty members of the uniformed services, their eligible family members, and United States citizens residing overseas. It guarantees them the right to vote by absentee ballot in elections for federal office, and includes specific requirements designed to ensure that ballots are sent to them in time to be completed, returned, and counted.

For many voters with disabilities, voting by mail on a paper ballot does not provide an opportunity to vote privately and independently, as required by Title II of the ADA. The ADA requires States to provide auxiliary aids and services to voters with disabilities so that they may have an equal opportunity to vote. Early voting has formed an increasingly large percentage of the total votes cast in federal elections. Early in-person voting comes in two forms: early voting and in-person absentee. Early voting is typically available to all eligible voters, whereas in-person absentee voting is typically limited to voters qualified to cast a mail ballot.

Each in-person polling place must be equipped with at least one direct recording electronic voting system or other voting system equipped for individuals with disabilities.

If you are concerned about accessibility to voting in the next election, contact your nearest ADA Center.

www.NWADACenter.org/Idaho, dananwadacenteridaho@gmail.com Phone: Voice & TTD 208-841-9422

A GOOD IDEA IS MEANINGLESS WITHOUT THE COURAGE TO ACT! YOU MUST SPEAK UP!
SELF-DIRECTED PA SERVICES
SIMPLE WAYS TO SHOW YOU CARE!

The decision to hire an in-home caregiver can be a tough one - it's never easy to admit you need help. But when you realize you can control your care and it will happen successfully, your life will change for the better.

It's important to note that many caregivers feel underappreciated for their work. But there are ways to demonstrate your appreciation for their work. Here's a few options to consider.

- During any check-in, express your appreciation for their dedication to you or your family member. Ask them if there is anything they need to help them serve you better.
- Consider a small gift, like a planner. Organization is needed to do their job well and a planner can provide an entire year of support. They can include a month on a two page spread giving plenty of room to track personal activities as well as work schedules.
- A thoughtful, handwritten thank you card also goes a long way. Show your gratitude with heartfelt words. It can even be sent after they have been discharged.
- Break the traditional routine and treat your caregiver to a fun day out. Options may include a local shopping trip to their favorite store or a socially-distanced excursion in the neighborhood. Whatever option you decide on is bound to be a wonderful and thoughtful way to show gratitude.
- Be sure to remember their birthday with a card or small gift. Who doesn't smile when someone remembers their birthday? And don't forget to recognize them on the anniversary of their hire date.
- Check and see if the employer of record could organize an annual appreciation luncheon. This is a good time to get together, share tips, and recognize the great work they do!

While doing all of these things is impractical, doing a variety of things throughout the year will contribute to a better work environment that rewards their hard work and makes them feel more valued. And let's all work together to advocate for higher pay. Talk to your state representative. Give them your personal story of how the in-home caregivers keep you independent. Working together, we can have a bigger voice.

SERVICES YOU CONTROL!
Like many people with disabilities, I have a healthy mistrust of the U.S. medical system. My mistrust is based on a lifetime of mistreatment; having been institutionalized when I was younger, pushed from ‘specialist to specialist’ in an effort to fix me. As an adult without medical insurance, I often went without medical care. Then I acquired an indeterminate virus that rendered me a paraplegic. Since then, the typical medical office has become an even less welcoming place – glaring lights and tightly packed waiting rooms with little room to maneuver. It would be 15 years before I saw an exam table I could transfer to with or without help. Even now, it’s rare that a medical practitioner will poke or prod what ails me, because that would mean a transfer.

I’ve always loved science-y things. Science is reliable. It’s not black and white. Science tests and tests again and changes with time and research. Although I’m not a fan of medical science because it often puts people like me in a box to be fixed, and if not fixed then hidden, it also gave me my wheelchair and medications that enhance my life and give me freedom to pursue the life I choose.

I trusted science when I got vaccinations from the school nurse. I remember the fear in my mother’s voice when talking about kids with polio; how her family moved from Chicago to Phoenix due to a polio outbreak when she was a girl. She was hit with scarlet fever as a child, needing to relearn to walk.

I was initially afraid to vaccinate my kids. What if the unthinkable happened and my kid was crippled as a result of my parental choice? But I talked to my doctor, read a lot and both my kids were fully vaccinated without complication beyond fever, crying and crankiness.

The few people who have serious reactions to vaccines makes it more important that we get them to help protect those who cannot. The reason my kids and grandkids don’t have smallpox vaccination scars is because the disease was eradicated - because enough people were vaccinated. Vaccination is a shared responsibility to people (those I know and love) and my community (those I don’t know and may not even like).

Because of my job I was appointed to the State of Idaho Disaster Medical Advisory Committee (SIDMAC), and the state’s Covid-19 Vaccine Advisory committee in 2020. I learned the vaccines weren’t really rushed, they just streamlined the process. They do not change my DNA, or contain live virus. It provides immunity, and even if I get a breakthrough case, I am much less likely to need hospitalization. You can learn more, visit the CDC or talk to your doctor or another trusted source. Don’t rely on social media. COVID-19 is deadly serious and not a case for Dr. Google.

Independent Living is about supporting each other. It’s about living our best lives, learning new things, and not going through scary stuff alone - peer to peer support! I chose to get vaccinated after I learned more and weighed the risks. I’d rather risk a shot and protect my life, the lives of my loved ones, and friends who can’t get vaccinated and the larger community. Independent Living doesn't tell us we don't need people; that we are independent of each other. It tells us that with mutual caring and support, we are part of the community. We are independent and we need each other now more than ever to look out for our communities.

PROMOTING INDEPENDENT LIVING FOR ALL IDAHOANS
ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR YOU

ALINKER NON-MOTORIZED BIKE

The Alinker is a revolution in walk assists. It is a three wheeled self-propelled walking bike, designed for the user experience. This non-motorized walking-bike has no pedals in the way and has adjustable handlebars and saddle. People can maintain an active life regardless of their mobility challenges. The Alinker is challenging assumptions about people with disabilities and is building an inclusive community. Available in 3 sizes with a cost around $3000. You can find info on crowd-funding or rent-to-own on their site.

www.thealinker.com

PORTABLE CURB RAMP

The Portable Curb Ramp allows wheelchairs, carts, or vehicles to roll up curbs or steps up to 5.5 inches high. This mobility aid is great for wheelchair and rollator users, movers, and delivery personnel. The wheelchair accessory is made of durable plastic. Mounting holes on sides and bottom. 23 inches Wide x 13 inches Deep x 5.5 inches High. Note: 2 units may easily be attached together. Weight capacity: 500-lbs.

www.maxiaids.com $90

STUFF TO MAKE LIFE EASIER
LINKS WORTH SHARING
OCTOBER IS DISABILITY AWARENESS MONTH BY JAMES PICKARD

The theme for National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2021, “America’s Recovery: Powered by Inclusion,” reflects the importance of ensuring that people with disabilities have full access to employment and community involvement during the national recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. This commemorates the many and varied contributions of people with disabilities to America’s workplaces and economy. https://apse.org/october-is-national-disability-awareness-month-2/

We know that 15-20% of our school children have IEPs. Why are we not teaching kids about disabilities on a regular basis? We owe it to our kids, both the non-disabled and disabled ones. They have to learn how to interact, how to live and work together. This is their future. Check out these 20+ activities to help children learn about disabilities and inclusion. https://adayinourshoes.com/resources-to-teach-kids-about-disabilities-awareness-and-inclusion/

ADA Live! is a free monthly show broadcast nationally on the Internet. Learn about your rights and responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Leaders in the field will share their knowledge, experience and successful strategies that increase the participation of persons with disabilities in communities and businesses. Check out their podcasts for Disability Awareness Month! https://www.adalive.org/taxonomy/term/68

What’s the third largest market segment in the U.S.? The answer might surprise you. It’s people with disabilities. The size of this population—more than 50 million strong—surpasses Hispanics, African Americans and Asian Americans, as well as Generation X and teens. Add in their families and friends, and you’re looking at billions of dollars in purchasing power. Employers are smart to include them in the workforce. Develop your plan here. https://askearn.org/page/19#inclusion_step1

At work, it’s what people CAN do that matters. That’s the simple message behind “I Can”—the Campaign for Disability Employment's flagship public service announcement. In it, we meet seven working people with disabilities—not actors—demonstrating what they CAN do when given the opportunity. You can check out their stories here. https://www.whatcanyoudocampaign.org/psa-campaigns/i-can- psa/

GOT A MINUTE? CHECK THEM OUT!
Idaho’s Center on Disabilities and Human Development (CDHD) is creating a self-advocacy webpage which will be linked to the CDHD home page. This website will be for Idahoans with disabilities, and by Idahoans with disabilities. There will be articles, resources, stories, weekly blogs, and more!

CDHD is looking for adults in Idaho who have disabilities (we call them “self-advocates”) to tell us what should be on the webpage. Self-advocates on the committee will choose blogs, give suggestions, and make decisions about online content. People who want to be on the committee should contact us to tell us why they would like to join and give us their contact information (name, phone number and email address). We will send applications to people who tell us they would like to join the committee.

Meetings will be on ZOOM at times that work for the self-advocates. If needed, we can have small group or one-on-one sessions for people who cannot go to the full meetings. It’s important that we hear ideas from as many people as we can. If someone wants to be on the committee and has communication differences, please reach out! We can also help people fill out the application. Just ask!

If you know anyone who could help us with our webpage, reach out to Jessilyn Matthias at 208-885-1196 or by email at jmatthias@uidaho.edu. We are excited to meet self-advocates who want to join our new Self-Advocacy Website Committee!
CONTACT YOUR LOCAL CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

www.dacnw.org

3726 E Mullan Ave
Post Falls, ID 83854
208-457-3891 VOICE-TDD
208-457-3893 FAX

330 5th Street
Lewiston, ID 83501
208-746-9033 VOICE-TDD
208-746-1004 FAX
888-746-9033

505 N Main St
Moscow, ID 83843
208-883-0523 VOICE-TDD
208-883-0524
800-475-0070

Spokane Youth
25 W Main,
3rd floor #West 9
Spokane, WA 99201
208-618-1191

www.idlife.org

640 Pershing Ave Ste A
Pocatello, ID 83204
208-232-2747 VOICE-TDD
208-232-2754 FAX
800-631-2747

725 Jensen Grove Dr Ste5
Blackfoot, ID 83221
208-785-9648 VOICE
208-785-2398

250 S Skyline Ste 1
Idaho Falls, ID 83402
208-529-8610 VOICE
208-529-8610 TDD
208-529-6804 FAX

2311 Park Ave Ste 7
Burley, ID 83318
208-678-7705 VOICE
208-678-7771 FAX

www.lincidaho.org

1182 Eastland Dr. N. Suite C
Twin Falls, ID 83301
208-733-1712 VOICE
208-733-7711 TDD

1878 West Overland Rd
Boise, ID 83705
208-336-3335 VOICE
208-336-3335 TDD

703 S Kimball Ave
Caldwell, ID 83605
208-454-5511 VOICE
208-454-5511 TDD
208-4545515 FAX