THOUGHTS ON DISABILITY

I would rather you include my child on a daily basis, rather than make them Homecoming King or Queen for one day.
From the Editor....

BY VICKI LEEPER

THE JOY OF VIRTUAL TOURS

The pandemic has seriously hampered my travelling in the past two years. But one gem to come out of the pandemic is the creation of virtual tours. Just about every tourist site has developed a "virtual" version of itself. And some of these online tours can be curated with a zoom live discussion. Invaluable, since I now believe there are a number of places I will not have the time and where with all to get to. One of those was a recent tour of Jane Austen’s home.

With two great tour directors leading us through the virtual walk through and adding all kinds of information and back story, it really was like being there. And I could participate in it with my sister who is located two states away - another plus! This tour offered a Q & A session, but with over 300 attendees, I chose not to ask. I am sure I would have been annoying in person, as so many things in the home came to mind as curiosities. Virtual tours will never completely take the place of the real thing. But for many who find traveling difficult, whether due to illness or disability, or time and funding, they are a great option. Be curious - explore history and culture. And give a place you've been wanting to see a try...virtually!

"For most of us, technology makes things easier. For a person with a disability, it makes things possible." ~ Judy Huemann, American Disability Rights activist

Have something for the Newsletter? Email dac@dacnw.org
COMMUNITY EVENTS FOR YOU!
FEBRUARY 2022

Mar 7th - Tools For Life Conference
University Inn, Moscow, ID

Mar 10th - Health & Wellness Fair
Latah Fairgrounds, Moscow ID

Mar 11th - Climbing at Vertical View
Meridian, ID

Mar 15th - Game Night
Boise Public Library

Mar 17th - SSI Disability Benefits Webinar
Online Event

Mar 28th - Mental Health Monday
Spokane, WA

For registration and details of events visit
www.dacnw.org/events/

MENTAL HEALTH 5K
SAVE THE DATE!
April 9, 2022
Moscow, Idaho
DAC NW - MENTAL HEALTH WALKS

We are expanding our Mental Health 5k’s to Moscow and Post Falls this year! DAC partners with NAMI, LAMI, WRAP, The Latah Recovery Center, Optum and others to host this event. May is Mental Health Awareness Month and we will be having a kick off event April 9th to celebrate. The goal of the event is to end stigma surrounding mental health and to expand services in our areas.

"Mental illness is a disease, not a decision," said Sharlisa Davis, DAC Board Member and creator of the event, now in its 3rd year.

All are invited to join in the family friendly event. Come in costume, wear your t-shirt, post about ending the stigma and you can be entered to win prizes! The walk will culminate in a presentation, in person and virtual, with speakers, snacks and drinks, and resources for mental health in our area. If you register now you will receive a t-shirt and bright green shoe laces, plus other swag. Make a short video about what mental health means to you on our tribute site: www.tribute.co/5k-for-Mental-Health/

"We had 240 participants last year and expect even more this year," said Vicki Leeper." Everyone can take part, wherever they are and show support for those living with mental health issues, and work to increase access to mental health services. "It's time to change the image surrounding mental illness. It needs to be treated like any other health issue so people can feel ok about accessing the help they need. And it needs to be covered by health insurance as a vital part of our overall health."

One of the areas we focus on is speaking to yourself nicely. Replace self-sabotaging thoughts with encouraging ones. Positive affirmations can be as simple as "You've got this" or "You're ok". TIP: Talking to yourself in the third person (You) is more effective than first person (I).

Registration is open now at lamiadvocacy.org.

YOUR KEY TO INDEPENDENCE!
LINC - ACCESSIBILITY & THE LEGISLATURE

While the Idaho Legislative session traditionally wraps up in March, there is still time to connect with your legislators and watch first-hand how the process works.

VISIT THE IDAHO LEGISLATURE’S WEBSITE!
https://legislature.idaho.gov
This website contains all of the proposed bills and a great search engine that will tell you who YOUR legislators are. You simply put in your physical address! It provides you with contact information to write, call, or email them.

WATCH: Simply want to watch what’s happening at our state capitol during the session? Idaho Public Television provides a live stream, which does include closed captioning! Please visit their website for more information or just tune in to your local PBS station. https://www.idahoptv.org/shows/idahoinsession/

TESTIFY IN-PERSON or REMOTELY: Do you want to testify in a committee hearing? Need to do it remotely? The Legislature has links and information about how to do that. Don't wait until the last minute if you are going to need this service. Contact them ahead of time so that you don't miss your opportunity.
https://legislature.idaho.gov/resources/leg-accessibility-pub-testimony/

EMPOWERING INDEPENDENCE
Navigating the realm of education rights can be very daunting. There are so many acronyms and so much terminology that it may even feel like you need to learn another language just to understand your rights and responsibilities. Today we will look at the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Approximately 143,000 eligible students in Washington state receive special education through related services. These are carried out throughout the IDEA. Its responsibilities are to provide free appropriate public education to kids with disabilities. Students must learn side by side with their peers if possible. This is referred to as the least restrictive environment (LRE). Schools must give parents a voice in their child’s education. This includes a student voice. Reaching the age of 18 in Washington refers to Age of Majority. If still in school at that age, the student becomes legally responsible for their own education decision making.

IDEA has four parts: **Part A General Provisions** for purpose and definitions used. **Part B Assistance for all Children with Disabilities** which provides grants to assist schools to provide appropriate education to children 3 - 21. **Part C Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities** which includes early intervention services for infants and toddlers birth through age 2. And **Part D National Activities to Improve Education of Children with Disabilities** which provides discretionary grants to support school staff development, technology, and parent-training and information centers.

IDEA also applies to charter schools, private schools and early intervention services. To be eligible a student must have a disability that requires specially designed instruction (SDI). Instruction is tailored in the form of an Individual Education Program (IEP). For more information, contact INDE and learn about the process.

**Working for Independence, Equity, and Justice!**
LIFE, INC - BECOME A SELF-ADVOCATE

Self-Advocacy Training is coming this Spring! We believe that all Idahoans have the right to speak up for ourselves. We have the right to choose the services we want. Decisions about our lives should not be made without us. To achieve these goals, we need to be self-advocates.

If you are interested in the training, apply for it now.

You will learn to: speak or act for yourself, decide what is best for you and take charge of getting it, and standing up for your rights as a person. Most important - you will meet others from around the state. Together you can make a difference.

The trainings will happen in July, August, and September and will use Zoom to meet. Technology, training and internet access is available. Up to twelve participants will be accepted into the program. There will be 5-6 training sessions; each session no more than 2 hours long. The training schedule will be set once they know who will be participating in the training.

More information will be available soon! Follow your local CIL or the Pocatello Chapter of the Idaho Self-Advocate Leadership Network on Facebook.
2,352 Web accessibility lawsuits were filed in 2021. That's a 14% jump from 2020, partly because the courts were closed during the early part of the pandemic. There is increased awareness of the need to provide equal access to websites. So much word being done virtually in the past two years exposed a number that were not accessible. Many businesses quickly converted to online sales during the pandemic, a trend which is continuing. These sales sites can lack in accessibility features that render them unreadable to a screen reader. Menus, photos of products etc. are posted in inaccessible formats such as pdf's or images lacking alt text.

The most common complaints were from consumer goods, retail and services. Apparel, durables and beauty was second followed by food, beverage, and tobacco. At the end of the list is health & medical, something that went virtual for the first time last year.

Third party accessibility overlays by AudioEye and AccessiBe were specifically targeted as not being accessible because they change the user experience by overriding or adding to the existing code.

What you take away from this data may depend on how it impacts you and your business. For some the high levels of lawsuits may serve as a reminder of the real legal impact of inaccessibility. It may also prompt exploration and action related to the vast benefits of the digital world in business today. Access to websites and digital platforms is essential for employment, education, and independent living. For businesses, accessibility also helps reduce legal risk.

We believe everyone should have access to the important information available online. The full report and data can be found on Accessibility.com

www.NWADACenter.org/Idaho, dananwadacenteridaho@gmail.com
Phone: Voice & TTD 208-841-9422
The Idaho Association of Home Care Agencies has been extremely busy and many members have been to the capitol building meeting with representatives urging them to vote for the increase in rates for in-home care. From our meetings we are aware that we have strong support, but you never know until the actual vote.

Our lobbyists, Charlotte Cunnington and Jeremy Chou have been instrumental in setting up meetings to education representatives on how home care agencies are a cheaper means of helping people who need assistance. Keeping our aged and disabled out of hospitals and institutions is much less expensive than a home setting.

Specifically we are looking to increase the Personal Assistant provider rate funding to $10.49M in federal funding for fiscal year 2023. The hearing is set for March 4th during the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee Meeting.

If you would like to contact your legislators, take the time to personalize your message with your own examples and stories that paint the picture of why this money is critical in supporting providers, direct care staff, and those we serve.
What is it like to be on the Idaho State Independent Living Council? Denise Myler from Eastern Idaho is one of the members who will be leaving this year and we asked her a few questions about the 6 years she spent on the council.

**Why were you interested in serving?**
It was my next step of involvement with the Independent Living Movement. At the time I was on the Board of Directors for LIFE, A Center for Independent Living.

**What are some of the things you gained in your time on the council?**
Friends from across Idaho. An increased knowledge of what we do in the IL Network. I have also gotten involved in other organizations like the Idaho Caregivers Alliance and the Consortium for Idahoans with Disabilities. I am becoming involved in Aged and Disabilities Resource Center - No Wrong Door, and am working on becoming a regional coordinator for our Family Caregiver Navigator Program.

**What will you miss most about the Council?**
Seeing friends and family!

**What will you miss least about the Council?**
Nothing. I will miss everything and hope to be able to attend online in the future.

**Why should others join the Council?**
Idaho is facing a slew of problems. Joining the SILC will give you an opportunity to work on those problems, such as the direct care worker shortage, housing and creating the next IL State Plan.

If you are interested in applying, please visit our website for the application or call 208-334-3800 and we will send you one.

[https://silc.idaho.gov/council-members/](https://silc.idaho.gov/council-members/)
MODEL WITH DOWN SYNDROME A FIRST FOR VICTORIA'S SECRET

Sofia Jirau, 25 who has Down syndrome, is one of the new faces representing the Love Cloud campaign for Victoria's Secret. It's a one-of-a-kind campaign for the company featuring 18 diverse models. In addition to Jirau, there is a firefighter from the Nez Perce Tribe in Idaho, and Miriam Blanco, a model diagnosed with cerebral palsy and a rare-neurodegenerative disease called hereditary spastic paraplegia.

These incredible women bring the collection to life. There was an inclusive spirit on the set of the photo-shoot. All an important part of the standard they are creating.

"One day I dreamed of it, I worked on it and today it is a dream come true," said Jirau, from Puerto Rico. These images will appear in the stores and on the company website. "We were excited to expand the casting of this shoot to a broader group of women. This extraordinary group brought to life our product in a refreshing and unique way," said Megan Miller, with the Victoria's Secret company.

In recent years, companies including Target, Walgreens, Osh Josh B'gosh have been choosing to feature models with Down syndrome and other disabilities. Victoria's Secret is the latest to join this trend.

In addition to modeling she is focused on conquering the runways in Europe this year.
ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR EVERYDAY LIVING

SPEECHIFY WILL READ FOR YOU!

This app will read all sorts of documents for you. Text books, manuals, books and more. It highlights while you are reading so you can follow along. It boosts your comprehension, you can take your reading along anywhere. You choose the voice, speed, and can listen on any device. Simply snap a photo of the text and Speechify will read it to you. Or you can save it for later. You can try it for free for three days.

Annual cost is $139. That's around $11 a month!

www.speechify.com

Crafts with Finger Sleeves

If you find doing crafts or things with your hands difficult due to lack of grip or nerve pain, try using these rubber grippy finger tips.

One set includes three sizes to fit different fingers. Good for sewing, repairs, hot glue crafts and more. Made of flexible silicone, easy to wash in soap and water. They are easy to put on and take off.

About $7.00 from Mr. Pen

STUFF TO MAKE LIFE EASIER
Snowbot is the world's first autonomous snowblower robot for residential use. It is ready to help you keep your driveway, yard, and sidewalk snow free day and night. Easy to program using 3 positioning beacons and a remote control, you can control it easily from your phone. Let it clean your driveway before you even get up in the morning. https://www.thesnowbot.com

Want to attend concerts again but worried about your hearing? Eardial earplugs allow you to hear the music, converse with friends, and still protect your hearing from harmful sound decibels. Discreet and comfortable, they come in a compact case that has a luminescence sticker to find them in the dark. https://eardial.com

You have seen how a smart watch can simplify communication and access to weather, etc. Now OPPO is eyeglasses that can do that and so much more. It can work as a teleprompter for presentations, a navigator while biking or driving. It can even translate foreign languages in real time. Truly novel! https://www.oppo.com/en/newsroom/press/oppo-air-glass/

If indoor air quality is important for your health, check out the Eve Room. This device can monitor pollutants from furniture, carpets, plastics, aerosols, even cooking. By knowing what's accumulating in your air, you can take precautions and open up windows for ventilation. It can let you know to turn on your humidifier or air purifier. https://www.evehome.com/en-us/eve-room

If you are finding meditation difficult, consider Sens.AI for brain training. It can run separate modules or group them together in a "mission" to train your brain using biofeedback. Soundscales and thought tracks are included. You can track your progress with the biometrics on your smart phone. https://sens.ai

GOT A MINUTE? CHECK THEM OUT!
WE ARE
A POEM BY HANNAH ADIRA

We hold a voice.
We have a unique identity.
We are a human being.

We are not dumb.
We are not stupid.
We are not illiterate.

We hold jobs.
We have high grades.
We have families.

We raise children.
We created new opportunities.
We make change.

You blame us.
You hurt us.
You do not listen to us.

You are not willing to help us.
You are not willing to understand us.
You are not willing to help us create change.

All we want is to be heard.
Understood,
And supported,

We create change together.
Not apart...

We are a tribe.
We are a family.
We are not who you think we are.
# Contact Your Local Center for Independent Living

## DAC

- **Address:** 3726 E Mullan Ave, Post Falls, ID 83854
- **Voice:** 208-457-3891
- **TDD:** 208-457-3893
- **Fax:**

## INDEXX

- **Address:** 505 N Main St, Moscow, ID 83843
- **Voice:** 208-833-0523
- **TDD:** 208-833-0524
- **Fax:** 800-475-0070

## Life

- **Address:** 640 Pershing Ave Ste A, Pocatello, ID 83204
- **Voice:** 208-232-2747
- **TDD:** 208-232-2754
- **Fax:** 800-631-2747

## LINC

- **Address:** 1182 Eastland Dr. N. Suite C, Twin Falls, ID 83301
- **Voice:** 208-733-1712
- **TDD:** 208-733-7711

---

## Interstate Connections

- **Website:** [www.lincidaho.org](http://www.lincidaho.org)
- **Website:** [www.dacnw.org](http://www.dacnw.org)
- **Website:** [www.idlife.org](http://www.idlife.org)