October is Disability Awareness Month

In recognition of the important role people with disabilities play in a diverse and inclusive American workforce, the theme for National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2022 is “Disability: Part of the Equity Equation.”

Observed annually in October, it celebrates the contributions of America’s workers with disabilities past and present and showcases supportive, inclusive employment policies and practices.

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Plus lots more!
ALASKANS LIKE TO GET OUTSIDE!

After hosting a successful conference with the theme of Get Outside, it was a pleasure to visit Anchorage Alaska and see just how much progress they are making in accessible outdoor recreation. From their 19 mile coastal trail, which is used by runners, walkers, bicyclists, and people in wheelchairs; board walks for bird and wildlife watching, to the many hikes that have portions fully accessible. They include picnic tables, restrooms, parking and paved trails whenever they can.

And it’s not stopping there! After DAC NW presented information on BluePath at their statewide Independent Living Conference, it’s clear they are motivated to do even better. Since tourism is a big economic industry there, they are looking at ways to make programs and activities even more accessible. Stay tuned for more information in the future!

"People need to have "the dignity of risk" and "the right to fail". ~ Patricia Deegan, Disability Rights Advocate and diagnosed with Schizophrenia
COMMUNITY EVENTS FOR YOU!

October 2022

Oct 9th - Ice Skating for Special Needs
Lewiston Ice Arena, ID

Oct 10th - 10 Warning Signs of Dementia
Pullman Senior Center, Pullman, WA

Oct 13th - Speed Networking for Peers
Spokane Public Library, WA

Oct 15th - Quad Cities Walk to End Alzheimer's
Kiwanis Park, Lewiston, ID

Oct 25th - Medicare 101
Virtual Online Zoom Event

Oct 27th - Memory Cafe of Clarkston
Mama K's in Clarkston, WA

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

APRIL Conference
Reunited:
October 10-14
Held Virtually every night 4-5:30 pm.
DAC NW - A SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE IN THE BOOKS

The Statewide Independent Living Conference was a success, and the G.O. theme was a fun twist. This conference was held at the Clearwater River Casino in Lewiston, in partnership with the Nimipuu Tribe and our other Idaho CIL’s, LIFE and LINC.

Workshops included independent living skills like finding peer support groups, finding employment in the electronic age, Benefits Planning and ABLE accounts and even cooking.

Since the focus was on outdoor recreation, there were a lot of workshops on that. Photography, camping hacks, adaptive movement and exercise classes, even how to stay safe in an emergency when traveling. All of this is to empower those who came to get out and do more in the out of doors. It's proven to be a healthy lifestyle, both physically and mentally.

And the best part? Learning more about the Nimipuu culture. They performed welcome and closing dances in full tribal regalia. We hope you will join us for the next statewide Independent Living Conference!
It's National Disability Awareness Month and this year's theme – “Disability: Part of the Equity Equation” – is something we here at LINC celebrate! The workforce is changing, that is something we see in the media and in our own communities. According to the Idaho Department of Labor, our unemployment rate in Idaho is 2.7% as of August 2022. In researching the unemployment rate of people with disabilities, we were able to find on the Bureau of Labor Statistic a rate of 10.1%. As a part of our Independent Living philosophy, employment plays a key role for those of us who are looking for jobs to live the life of our choosing. We see that with employment comes opportunity, something everyone has a right to.

According the Gallup, the workforce is demanding more from employers. While employees were motivated by a paycheck in the past, they are now motivated by a job or career with purpose. We are looking for jobs that increase our quality of life and pay is only one part of that equation. People with disabilities need access to apply and thrive in the workplace. When we think about equity being a part of the equation, access is a key. This includes accessible job applications, job descriptions, and even website.

Are you someone with a disability who never thought of yourself as employable? Well, we have some amazing news for you! By employing people like you, businesses win. You help provide a chance for the disability perspective to be included in more aspects of business. By reaching out to your local Center for Independent Living, you can find resources and trainings to help you thrive in the workforce.

At LINC, we can help both businesses, employees and job seekers with disabilities. On our newly redesigned website, we have an entire page dedicated to this issue. Under our “Services” tab, the first choice “Access Means Business” is where we list just a few of the ways we can help. By working together, we can make employment for folks with disabilities a reality!
Disability Pride Month is celebrating its 32nd year. Once the Americans with Disabilities Act was passed on July 26, 1990, Boston held the first ever Disability Pride Day and Disability Pride Month was born. It's a time to celebrate how disability is a natural part of human diversity. This pride month isn't as well known as others, but it's an important one and it even has its own pride flag.

The flag was created to encompass all disabilities and was designed by Ann Magill, a member of the disability community. The flag has a black background and has five zig zag lines across it that are considered to be a lightening bolt. This lightening bolt represents how people with disabilities must navigate barriers and demonstrates their creativity in doing so.

Each color represents something unique about the disability community. The black background represents mourning for those who have died or suffered from ableist violence and serves as the color of rebellion and protest. The five colors represent the variety of needs and experiences: red is physical disabilities, yellow is cognitive and intellectual disabilities, white is invisible and undiagnosed disabilities, blue is mental illness, and green is sensory perception disabilities.

The parallel stripes represent solidarity among the disability community, despite our differences.

Disability Pride Month is a time to be loud and proud of who you are, and let your voice be heard. But we should also be advocating the rest of the year. This flag gives us the opportunity to lift up the disability community and shine the spot light on the people who are often marginalized, forgotten and discriminated against.

Working for Independence, Equity, and Justice!
Memory loss, Dementia, and Alzheimer’s develops for 20 years before showing symptoms. As we age, memory can begin to slip. Let’s look at ways to help keep as sharp as possible.

It’s important to get the right “brain food” to your brain. What you eat and how you treat your body determines the quality of the nutrition and oxygen your neurotransmitters receive. The death of your neurotransmitters happens slowly. Eventually, after years of bad fuel and oxygen, the brain creates “plaques” like the sludge in a clogged engine. Add coconut oil to your diet. You can stir it into foods, or replace your other oils with coconut oil for frying eggs, etc.

Add B Vitamins to your diet. Look for foods rich in B vitamins: salmon, tofu, green peas, avocado, spinach, and eggs are just a few. At the very least take a supplement.

Moderate exercise is important for brain health. For most of us, that's 150 minutes of exercise a week. That's just 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week. Consider walking every evening or morning, dancing, walking the dog, swimming, there are lots of ways to incorporate activity into your daily routine.

And make sure you are getting enough sleep. This means you may have to alter your nighttime routine to help you fall asleep. Perhaps check into how you are breathing and whether a CPAP machine will give you better sleep.

You can make a difference in your future now!
INTERSTATE CONNECTIONS

NORTHWEST ADA CENTER
ACCESSIBLE DESTINATIONS

Last month the Access Idaho Adventures (Idaho Access Project) made its first fact-finding tour of northern Idaho destinations. Their mission is to eliminate physical, attitudinal, and policy barriers to ensure people with disabilities can live, work and play in our communities.

Let's look at some of what happens when you become accessible, as written by Jake Steinman.

a) If you are accessible today, you will also be accessible for the future baby boomers of tomorrow. This is a huge portion of population with a lot of spending power. Many boomers self-identify as having a disability and control over 70% of all discretionary spending in the U.S.

b) It's a growing movement to become part of this new mainstream. Adaptive products, pop culture, and more are becoming inclusive of people with disabilities.

c) Become accessible to visitors and it helps the local community. Make everyone aware of what is accessible like hotels, attractions, and it benefits everyone.

d) Being accessible is appealing to elected officials. It's a great way to promote inclusiveness. This is a great time to be advocating for things like accessible housing, transportation and more as it's good for a local economy.

Accessibility has historically been considered a "nice to have", and not a "must have". It's good to see it moving to a "cool to have" feature.

Jake Steinman is the founder of TravelAbility. Those with questions can contact Jake Steinman at info@travelability.net

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SELF-DIRECTED PA SERVICES

Veteran Directed Care

Veteran-Directed Care gives veterans of all ages the opportunity to get home and community services they need - all while self-directing. And that’s the mission of any of our self-directed PA Services!

They can get assistance with activities for daily living; bathing and getting dressed, managing daily medications, house work or fixing meals.

This program has a flexible budget for services that are managed by the Veteran and family care-giver. The funds are used to help them live at home in their community.

You direct your own care and decide what and when services will be provided.

You are given a budget and can hire your own personal care givers and purchase items needed or other services. You are responsible for recruiting, interviewing, training, supervising and evaluating your support workers. And you can ask for assistance and training in how to do this successfully.

So how do you find out if you qualify? If you are a veteran who meets the clinical need for home care services due to disability, and you are enrolled in VA’s health care system, and you have a primary care provider and are interested in directing your own care you can apply. Veteran Directed Care is part of the VHA Standard Medical Benefits Package but is only available in certain locations.

To decide if it is right for you, check out the Veteran Decision Aid for Care to assess what services may best meet your needs now and in the future. Or try the Caregiver Self-Assessment to determine needs and how much support they can offer you. Ask your social worker for these resources or download Making Decisions and Advance Care Planning. And you can continue to live independently in your own home!

SERVICES YOU CONTROL!
Safety matters! With recent hurricanes hitting the east coast, it reminds us to be prepared in the event of an emergency. That is especially important if you require special accommodations or equipment. Here's a simple list to work through.

1) Find contact information for someone that lives near you within the same town. And include contact information for someone that lives in another state.
2) Have a list of all medications. Know where they are located.
3) Make sure you have a complete list of any allergies. Especially if you require emergency medical care and may have interactions with drugs you are taking.
4) Keep emergency supplies in one location. Water, flashlights, batteries, etc. And know where your cane, walker, wheelchair, cpap or other equipment you may need will be.
5) Have a supply of things for care of your pets. Food, water, any medication, recent vaccination records, and more.
6) Have a record of a local meeting place you have designated and how you will check in with loved ones. Does it have a phone if your cell phone isn't working?
7) And most important, find an item to take with you that will help keep you calm, focused or inspired. It could be a treasured item, a photo, or even a favorite song you can play on an iPod or phone.

With a little preparation, you can be ready quickly if you need to evacuate, AND have a plan on how that will be done.
You may have heard about the national hotline 988 intended to provide easy access to help for anyone experiencing a mental health crisis in much the same way that 911 connects people to emergency services.

The three-digit number will take over for the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline — which will also continue to be available at 800-273-8255 — but with an expanded mission. In addition to offering support to people at risk of suicide, the hotline is designed to aid those facing all sorts of mental health crises or any kind of emotional distress.

Kim Musheno, vice president of public policy at the Autism Society of America, said she and other advocates are optimistic that 988 will benefit people with autism and other developmental disabilities, many of whom have co-occurring mental health conditions. “We view this as a positive step in the right direction,” she said. “People with autism who are in a mental health crisis often have nowhere to turn. This often results in a call to the police or taking the individual to a hospital. Neither is appropriate. 988 will, hopefully, be better than calling 911 when there is a mental health emergency,” Musheno added.

The longer term hope is 988 will link those in crisis to community-based providers — who can deliver a full range of crisis care services. This is essential to meeting crisis needs across the nation.”

But disability advocates say more work is needed for 988 to meet its potential. Both the Autism Society and The Arc are pushing officials behind the new line to mandate a national training curriculum for 988 call center staff so that they know how to respond appropriately to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. They’re also calling for better investment in community-based infrastructure to respond to people in crisis and training for mental health professionals and first responders in serving people with developmental disabilities.
ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR EVERYDAY LIVING

HAULIN HOOKS FOR CARRYING THINGS

These are great for those missing fingers or with a lack of grip strength. These can help in lifting/toting situations and probably several other applications we haven’t run into yet. These strap comfortably onto your wrists with velcro and never feel like they are strangling you. The hooks are in just the right place to carry a strap, grocery bag handles. They can even be used to safely do pull-ups or lift weights to work out.

$60.00 from www.lpgmuscle.com

DUCK BAG FOR WHEELCHAIR PROTECTION

How do you protect your wheelchair when it is parked just outside your tent when camping? Turns out a Duck Bag covers most the wheelchair with waterproof material. They come in different sizes and comes with elastic or ties to secure it over your chair. Made of silicone coated rip-stop polyester, it's durable for years of use. And it folds up neatly in a little pouch during the day.

Around $30.00 from www.rei.com

STUFF TO MAKE LIFE EASIER

INTERSTATE CONNECTIONS
Camping is good for the soul. But it can also be tough on our bodies, especially for the disabled. But disabled camping has become easier! Countless campgrounds and national parks have implemented new ways to accommodate wheelchair users, the visually impaired and other issues to allow everyone to enjoy being out in nature. Find an accessible campground near you.

It’s always a good idea to make a checklist for supplies before you go camping, especially as a wheelchair user. 5 tips for Wheelchair Friendly Camping lists a few ways to make sure your trip goes off without a hitch so you can focus on having fun! Learn how to pick the perfect tent and more.

After generations of sleeping outside, you tend to pick up a few camping hacks. Since 1938, REI Co-op Members and staffers have been creating and tuning pro tips to help make the outdoors a little more fun. These may not change your life, but they just might save some time or impress your friends. Check out REI's Camping Hacks.

If you like birdwatching, you may have noticed that some spots are lacking in accessibility. Often times different parts of accessible design don’t get connected — for example, when a paved trail for wheelchair users has info signs placed too from the trail to read. Learn how you can advocate for better access by checking out BirdNote.

Spending time in nature provides a host of benefits, from lowering blood pressure and stress to boosting immune system function. For many people living with disabilities, though, there can be significant barriers to getting into the great outdoors. While ADA-accessible campgrounds do exist, there’s a lot of ground to cover to improve access to all. The Dyrt shares info on making the outdoors attainable beyond ADA Campgrounds.
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