December 10th is Human Rights Day!

Human Rights Day calls on everyone to stand up for someone’s rights! Many of us are fearful about the way the world is heading. Disrespect for basic human rights continues to be widespread across the globe. Messages of intolerance and hatred prey on our fears.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.
ENTITLEMENT MYTH

I recently had a conversation where someone mentioned today’s youth feel they are entitled. Many declare that millennials expect special treatment, do whatever they feel like, and think they deserve to have things handed to them. But this is a myth. By looking deeper we can argue that the majority of millennials are actually disentitled, facing bleak economic prospects and potential ecological disaster.

I am certainly aware that my coming out of high school or college put me in a position to afford housing, a car, etc. on a nearly minimum wage job. And buying a house was pretty much standard at some point. But that’s all different right now. Many aren’t able to move out of their parents home, and the dream of buying a house just isn’t there. I think instead, these young people have lost hope, there is no "American Dream" anymore. So I think the conversation needs to be not "entitlement" but "disillusion-ment".

"Beneath every behavior there is a feeling. And beneath each feeling is a need. And when we meet that need rather than focus on the behavior, we begin to deal with the cause, not the symptom". ~ Ashleigh Warner, holistic family psychologist
COMMUNITY EVENTS FOR YOU!

DECEMBER 2022

Dec 2nd   - Community Conversation
           1912 Center, Moscow, ID

Dec 8th   - 6 Week Mental Health Support Group
           DAC Office, Post Falls, ID

Dec 10th  - Meet Santa for Military & Veteran Families
           Post Falls, ID

Dec 14th  - Federal Jobs Application Workshop
           Asotin Library, Clarkston, WA

Dec 26th  - Head Injury Support Group
           Virtual Online Zoom Event, WA

Dec 27th  - Fibromyalgia Support Group
           Pullman Regional Hospital, Pullman, WA

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

Autism in the Wild
January 26th
1pm - 5pm
Asotin Fire Station
Clarkston, WA
DAC NW - SOME HOLIDAY FUN

You've heard of Elf on a Shelf. But we have Mark on a Lark!! By making a fully posable avatar of our Executive Director, Mark Leeper, each of our offices can have some fun this December with pranks about the office. You can well imagine what kind of hijinks he can get up to!

The avatar was created by our Administrative Assistant Kristin Graham. He is certainly dressed in festive attire, but we can always add accessories to make a bold fashion statement! The rules are basically the same. This fun staff-friendly game of hide-and-seek is played out daily leading up to the Christmas Holiday. A staff member works behind the scenes to create the perfect vignette, from messing around in the lunch room, to mixing up the file cabinet. And those data points you entered into CIL Suites that went missing? Guess who pressed the delete key! Yes, it's a great scapegoat for anything in December that goes wrong!

And unlike Elf on a Shelf, whose job it is to rat us out to Santa, the DAC NW staff get to be the ones who do the tattling. Each office will snap a photo capturing Mark on a Lark getting into mischief so we can share this fun on our social media. Be sure to follow our Facebook, Instagram, and Tik Tok so you can see what kind of larking he is doing in each office.

Keeping the creative juices flowing and spreading a little holiday cheer one lark at a time!

YOUR KEY TO INDEPENDENCE!
LINC - WORKING GUIDE DOGS

When you meet a working guide dog team, it may be tempting to pet the guide dog. Remember that this dog is responsible for leading someone who cannot see. The dog should never be distracted from that duty. A person's safety may depend on the dog's alertness and concentration.

Although guide dogs cannot read traffic signals, they are responsible for helping their handlers safely cross a street. Never obstruct the dog's path or call out to the dog. It may break their concentration on their work.

Listening for traffic flow has become harder for guide dog handlers due to quieter car engines (like EV's) and the increasing number of cars on the road. Please don't honk your horn or call out to signal when it is safe to cross, that can be confusing. Instead, be especially careful of pedestrians in crosswalks when turning right on a red light.

It's not all work and no play for a guide dog. When they are not in their harness, they are treated the same way as other pets. However, for their safety they are only allowed to play with specific toys. A guide dog represents a significant investment, and their safety is important.

You may encounter a guide dog wearing a head collar, which is a humane training tool that helps a dog become calm and focused. The head collar is not a muzzle and permits the dog to fully open its mouth and can even be worn when the dog is eating, drinking or playing.

The ADA permits guide dogs to accompany their handlers anywhere the general public is allowed, including taxis and buses, restaurants, theaters, schools, hotels, and office buildings. They are trained to stand, sit, or lie quietly in public spaces when not leading.

If you would like more information about guide dogs, go to their website or call 1-800-295-4050.

EMPOWERING INDEPENDENCE
GETTING READY FOR VIRTUAL ADVOCACY DAYS

Advocacy Days begin at 10 a.m. on every Wednesday during the 2022 Washington legislative session. There is an hour and a half briefing on current issues at the start and it ends with an afternoon of advocacy. A highlighted topic will be featured each week, the morning briefing will also cover late breaking news on budget items and bills of interest relating to individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families. You can register each Advocacy Day.

January 12th - "Zooming in on the Northstar! Developmental Disabilities. Funding for people with intellectual/developmental disabilities.
January 19th - Housing Accessibility. Finding safe, affordable, accessible housing
January 26th - Civil Rights. Guardianship and Supported Decision Making
February 2nd - Employment and Day Services. Currently you must choose between employment services OR day services. Can't we have both?
February 9th - Barriers to Transportation. Some concerns about public transportation are decisions the state should make. i.e; how to transfer from one county to the next.
February 16th - Caregiving of Children and Adults. Caregivers are paid low wages that require them to work two or three jobs. It's very hard to find quality caregivers.
February 23rd - Meeting All Needs in Education. Full inclusion for all students! Addressing language supports for all families to participate in their child's education. Assistive technology and universal design in schools.
March 2nd - Healthcare for People with IDD. There is a lack of qualified healthcare providers for those with IDD dual diagnosis and mental/behavioral health. Medicaid pays 35-50 cents on the dollar compared to private health plans. Many end up in expensive emergency rooms due to this.

Working for Independence, Equity, and Justice!
LIFE, INC - IDAHO IS CALLING ALL E-ACTIVISTS

It's time to make your voice heard! The upcoming Idaho legislative session is in sight. And you can participate in the legislative process by becoming an e-activist. E-activists receive email action alerts asking them to help influence their lawmakers. This is one of the most successful and cost effective ways to make systemic change through specific pieces of legislation.

The 2023 agenda includes support to lower property taxes, provide affordable housing, and create additional retirement savings options in the state. You can sign up to receive alerts and the free AARP Activist newsletter to let you know about legislation that may be impacting you in Idaho.

By weighing in on issues that matter most to Idaho families and providing trusted information, you can help Idahoans live life to the fullest. AARP regularly hosts telephone town halls with elected officials and others across the state and want you to get involved. Past topics included lowering the cost of prescription drugs, veterans benefits, and disaster preparedness. They will be hosting two virtual workshops on the Scam Jam to help you stay protected from fraud and identity theft. You can even view previously recorded information sessions. Sign up today to receive these calls and find out more at https://vekeo.com/subscriptions/
Several credible news sources recently reported that none of the campaign websites for major midterm candidates were fully accessible to blind voters. This is alarming since 2022 was the 32nd anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The sites from many of the country’s most high profile races, including Republican Dr. Mehmet Oz and Democrat John Fetterman in Pennsylvania, Republican Herschel Walker and Democratic Sen. Raphael Warnock in Georgia, and others did not have websites that fully comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), meaning that voters with disabilities could have a tough time learning about the candidates and engaging with their campaigns.

One in four Americans has a disability and at least 12 million people over the age of 40 have a vision impairment. This underscores the need for all organizations to ensure current and potential customers, clients, students, and stakeholders can access their digital information. That includes websites, documents, videos, webinars, meetings and virtual events.

It is a great concern when access to communication is denied to a certain population. All websites and social media posts need to remember that information needs to be screen readable and photos need alt text descriptions.
SELF-DIRECTED PA SERVICES

Walking cuts Dementia Risk

The step counter on your smartphone could improve your chances of avoiding dementia, according to a large-scale study recently published in *JAMA Neurology*. Participants in the study wore bracelets that counted their steps and compared results of increasing dementia.

The key finding? Walking 9,800 steps a day reduces your risk of cognitive impairment by as much as half. Steps with a higher intensity, like going uphill, can reduce it even more. Even if you only add 3,800 steps to your day, you improve your chances of avoiding dementia by 25%.

Using step counting as the measure is a good choice. It's easy to track and the general public is familiar with it and it is popular. And walking is easy for most people to do. Getting outside has plenty of mental health benefits as well, even if it is only around the neighborhood.

Researchers in Australia and Denmark monitored the step counts of 78,000 adults, between 40 and 79 years old. After a seven year period they found a lower risk of cognitive impairment for those who hit the step goals.

It's an easy "step" in maintaining your cognitive health!

SERVICES YOU CONTROL!

INTERSTATE CONNECTIONS
HOLIDAY TRAVEL TIME IS HERE

I love to travel, I don't care if it's by plane, train or automobile. I. LOVE. TRAVEL. At any given time, I have at least one trip I'm planning for the future and that makes me happy. What doesn't make me happy are some of the things that will set my anxiety into overdrive.

In my daily life I can pretty much keep my anxiety under control, knowing what situations will trigger an anxiety attack and how to deal with them. I know Bath & Body Works on a sale day is a big no-no, and I know I can always head home really fast if I need a bathroom. (Public restrooms are one of those things I avoid at all costs!)

But when I travel, those safety nets are gone temporarily. I have to consider places I'm in may be busier than I'm comfortable with. I may actually have to use a public restroom, and plan accordingly. I tell myself over and over it's ok to go say no to a crowded place. That going to a restroom that isn't mine is going to be ok. I may not like it, but chances are high I will actually survive the bathroom trip.

These are things I deal with when I travel. This may not even start to be what others experience. But what we CAN do is try to prepare ourselves. Before you travel, come up with a plan for dealing with things that trigger your anxiety. Perhaps it's downloading a public restroom app, calling ahead to check accessibility features for your hotel room - will there be enough room to charge your power chair or use the shower?

The holidays are prime travel time and nothing ever goes perfectly, but taking time on the front end can minimize some stressors and go a long way to a more enjoyable trip. Happy holidays and safe travels!

P.S. It's always ok to pack your own toilet paper too!

PROMOTING INDEPENDENT LIVING FOR ALL IDAHOANS
Veterans often have the same eye disorders as civilians, but they are more likely to suffer from traumatic brain injuries (TBIs), which can cause vision damage. The Veterans Administration (VA) has provided vision care since it was founded, and those services continue to improve. Preventative care and routine care are included. Glasses and contact lenses may or may not be covered depending on whether there is an underlying condition, service-related injury involved, or other factors.

One way the VA may expand support for veterans with underlying vision conditions is through telemedicine, including teleretinal screening.

Low vision and legal blindness are more common among veterans, so the VA offers several special programs to treat and support former service members. These services do not currently include guide dogs, but the VA can help veterans find service animals. To get care through the VA, you may need to have your disability rating measured, which may require legal representation for an appeal. There are nonprofit organizations that can help with this, so you can get the best possible vision care with your benefits.

Veterans are eligible for glasses (and other devices like hearing aids) or related higher order vision care services if they meet the following criteria:
- They have any compensable service-related injury,
- They are a former prisoner of war,
- They have been awarded a Purple Heart,
- They have received compensation for an injury or an aggravation of an injury that was the result of VA treatment,
- They are receiving an increased pension due to being permanently house-bound and needing regular attendance,
- They have a vision impairment caused by an underlying condition that they are already receiving VA services for, like traumatic brain injury (TBI), diabetes, vascular disease, ocular photosensitivity, cataract surgery, or another related eye surgery or injury,
- They have significant functional or cognitive impairment shown in a reduced ability to perform daily activities, or they have a vision impairment that is serious enough that it interferes with their ability to participate actively in medical treatment.

For more information visit their website.
ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR EVERYDAY LIVING

FINGER OPTICAL MOUSE
All you need is a thumb and index finger to use this bluetooth mouse device. 100% new high quality USB finger optical mouse. Plug-and-Play, no installation needed. Can be used on any surfaces. No mouse pad is required. Ergonomical design that reduces fatigue effectively. Uses a AA battery. Includes a USB receiver to plug into your computer.

$16.00 from www.Amazon.com

Bluetooth Hands Free Mouse
GlassOuse is worn like a pair of glasses to control mouse pointer and connects to mobile phones, computers, tablets and Smart TVs via Bluetooth to revolutionize the technology use for those with restricted mobility or just want/need to use pointer hands free. The device tracks even the slightest head movements to move the cursor accordingly. 3 working modes: Mouse, Switch, or Joystick. Can be glasses frameware, beanie hat, baseball cap, or a headband - it's your choice!

Starting at $589.00 from https://glassouse.com
The holidays can be a stressful and anxious time for some people with disabilities. This blog post from Ideas has put together some considerations to help make Christmas more inclusive, hoping you can enjoy it more.

The holidays are a time of joy but they can still be a time of stress. New foods, fancy clothes, schedule changes, sparkling holiday lights and too many choices all add strain to the holidays. Here are 9 tips on how you can minimize holiday stress while celebrating the joy and wonder of Christmas with your loved one with an intellectual or developmental disability (I/DD).

It can be tempting to disappear into your own home with your autistic child and shut the world out. Depending on your child and your situation, you may need that sometimes—but know that you don’t have to. Here are ways for neurodivergent children to enjoy the holidays without the pain.

Not all places are accessible for people with disabilities and it is even more apparent during the holidays because you just want to go and do things and have a great holiday experience like everyone else but it gets foiled because it is not “accessible.” So, what do you do? Check out this advice from a parent who uses a wheelchair.

If you have a physical disability, the holidays can present some barriers. Consider planning your shopping trip at stores or a mall that is disability accessible and has a variety of restaurants where you might shop and eat out. Shop during off-times and plan to buy heavier gifts last, so you don’t have to carry them around. Or, make yourself some tea or cocoa and shop online. For more tips for the holidays check out their site Disability Tips.
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

INDEEx
25 W Main,
3rd floor #West 9
Spokane, WA 99201
509-606-INDx

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
208-454-5515 TDD
208-454-5515 FAX