

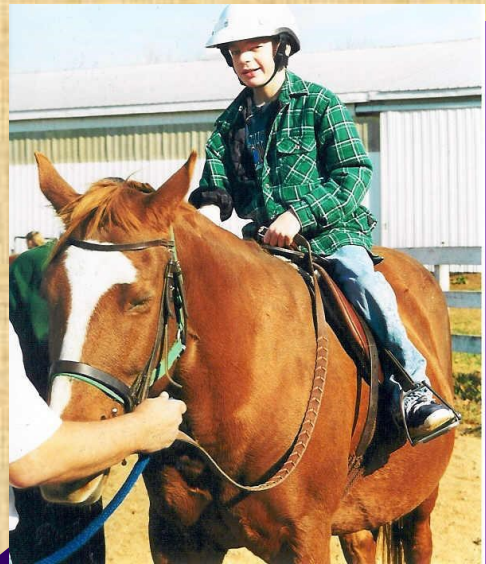


*disAbility*  
CONNECTIONS, INC.

409 LINDEN AVENUE JACKSON MI 49203

PH (517) 782-6054 FAX (517) 782-3118

[www.disabilityconnect.org](http://www.disabilityconnect.org)



*Supporting*  
people with disabilities

in their efforts to lead

*Independent,*

fulfilling, productive lives

*Since 1925*



Find us on:  
**facebook.**

# newsletter #6

## *A Letter from Lesia...*

It's Spring! This LONG, LONG winter has been so difficult for everyone including our staff, volunteers and our customers. Severe weather had forced us to close our office for parts of several days. I apologize if you were inconvenienced at any time this winter due to weather closure! As a reminder, when weather or road conditions are hazardous, please call our office at (517)782-6054 to make sure we're open. As a rule, if Jackson Public Schools are closed due to road conditions, we will be closed until noon to allow our staff time to arrive safely. Hopefully, winter is truly over, but this is Michigan and it's early April.

Spring also means our local Rotary Clubs are ramping up their support. We're so thankful that The Rotary Club of Jackson and the Breakfast Rotary are planning their local, annual fundraiser benefiting disAbility Connections; Rotary Ruler Days. Keep your eyes open for Rotarians on May 9th at several locations in Jackson: Downtown Post Office, Sam's Club, Walmart, Polly's Country Market at the Spring Arbor Road and Ferguson Road locations. They'll be selling rulers for donations to disAbility Connections. Stop by and show them your support.

Many thanks to our dedicated friends at the Rotary Clubs!

*Lesia*

Executive Director

# Looking for Supports?

*well, here are a few!*

## **JACKSON PARKINSON SUPPORT GROUP**

*Affiliated with the Michigan Parkinson Foundation*

**TUESDAY, MAY 13TH 2014 6:15–7:45 PM**

**At disABILITY Connections 409 Linden Avenue**

*(behind Prospect Street McDonald's)*

Program/Speaker:

**DR. CONNIE SMITH, DDS**

*"The Importance of Oral Health in Parkinson's"*

*For Information contact: Carole Briggs 783-6527*



### Alzheimer's Association Support Group

Participation in a support group can be an empowering experience, helping members feel better prepared to cope with their unique situation.

**April 8, May 13, June 10**

2nd Tuesday of each month | 6:30 - 8:30 pm

**John Ganton's Countryside  
Retirement Community, 3637 McCain Road  
Jackson, Michigan**

Support group members are typically the spouse, adult child, other family member or friend of someone with Alzheimer's disease or related dementia.

Information: [alz.org/mglc](http://alz.org/mglc) or call 800.272.3900.

### Amputee Social Network Mid Michigan Amputee Meet-up

Wednesday,

**April 9, June 11, August 13**

**6:00 PM**

**disAbility Connections**

Join Jen Lacey of Amputee Empowerment Partners for some fun in a relaxed social environment. This new group is planning to meet every other month to socialize, offer support and share information. All amputees, their families, caregivers and friends are welcome!

Contact Jen at 740-0572 or [jlaceyap@gmail.com](mailto:jlaceyap@gmail.com)



## **Youth Assessment Work Program Student Displays Service Above Self**

New to disAbility Connections this fiscal year is the Youth Assessment Work Program. Students are referred to d.C. from the Jackson Intermediate School District and Michigan Rehabilitation Services. The program is currently in its second semester with its second cohort of students.

One of the students this semester is Andrew Simon who comes to the program from Grass Lake High School. Andrew works in the loan closet at d.C. where he stocks the loan closet and the incontinence supply closet, inventories back stock, and helps customers get the equipment they need. One morning while working, Andrew noticed there was a lack of some of the most sought after supplies in the incontinence closet. Upon noticing this, Andrew decided to perform a fundraiser to get the needed items. The next day Andrew told supervisor Jon Hart he had bought candy to sell and had already sold \$17 of candy on the bus on his way to school! To date, Andrew and Grass Lake High School have raised a little over \$100 from the candy he purchased with his own money. With that donation, resource manager Lora Bigcraft and Andrew just recently ordered large and extra large Depends briefs for the incontinence closet.

### **Michigan Alliance For Families Webinars!**

Michigan Alliance for Families proudly presents our webinar series! A webinar is an online presentation you can attend without having to leave your home or office. It's an opportunity to hear an expert speak for about an hour on a topic you are interested in, at anytime. Our 2014 webinar series will focus on the topic of transitioning to adulthood. We are also able to offer 3 webinars on IEP topics in April.

Looking for our webinars? Click here:

<http://www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org/webinar/>



# Nationwide & Local Accessibility Standards Exist to Help with Consistency

*Written by: Parrish L. Stahl*



Like so many people, our family just returned from a sunny spring break which included some 2910 miles, eight states, baseball, attractions and numerous (supposedly) accessible hotel rooms. Traveling with a person who uses a wheelchair creates some unique issues. The good news is accessibility continues to get better overall. When we ask for an accessible room, seat, table or restroom we are no longer met with that, “I have no idea what you are talking

about” stare. Here, in our own community, we were more often met with smiling faces and well-meaning people wanting desperately to be helpful.

Businesses everywhere from retail, restaurants, professional baseball, travel, entertainment and leisure have figured out that accessibility is good for business and helps make everyone more comfortable. The Americans with Disabilities Act is a large document that contains standards. It does not say it makes our world accessible to everyone. Accessibility means different things to different people. One group that is often neglected is the community of people with visual impairments. Proper Braille signage is still relatively rare, over twenty years after the ADA was enacted.



Very often it is evident that a huge investment was made to be more accessible; the problem lies for those with a trained eye, it is obvious that the existing standard was ignored or modified. Some examples include placing obstacles, like a trash can, in clear space meant for accessibility under vanities, under railings and most often next to the clear space on the pull side of a door handle. That space perfectly fits a trash can, but means a person who uses a wheelchair cannot exit without moving it. Other problems are toilet seats that approach 2 feet high, bed tops that are at eye-level when a person in a wheelchair approaches, or shower seats mounted on the back of a tub so the user cannot reach water controls.



In a positive light, we also saw accessible restaurants, picnic tables, trains, nature trails, outstanding parking, family restrooms, and good signage at inaccessible areas pointing to accessible areas. Lots of areas have similar issues to what we have here locally. The most encouraging aspect of all of this is; we ran into good people wanting to help us make the world a better place. ■

# Wellness Days at disAbility Connections

**Each event includes a Wellness topic plus Arts & Crafts!**

2014 Schedule (subject to change at Program Coordinator's discretion)

**OPEN TO ANYONE WITH A DISABILITY, FRIENDS & FAMILY!**

Meet New People - Learn a New Art and Craft - Instruction Provided

Healthy Lifestyle Activities- Snacks & Beverages - Donations Always Welcome



**April 4, 2014 □ Mini Class: The New Healthcare Law**

**May 2, 2014 □ Mini Class: Stress and You**

**June 6, 2014 □ Mini Class: Healthy Eating**

*All 2014 crafts are with fabric! Contact Brenda at (517) 998-3084*



***on a roll!***

## **On a Roll Bike Program Ready for Spring!**

We are continuing our adaptive bike program! We have 2 great bikes at the Armory Bike Union off Mechanic Street. One is a foot bike and the other is a hand bike!

Bikes are available for a one day loan to peddle around the Bike Union on the Arts Walk portion of the bike trail!

To get involved, simply **call Brenda at 517-998-3084** to make an appointment to fill out an application! There is a one time fee involved and you must sign a release of liability statement. You will get a blue membership card that you can take to the Bike Union that will let staff and volunteers at Armory Bike know that you are a member of the Union!



Join other disAbility Connections Customers for

## Tai Chi

Thursdays beginning, May 1 (2 – 3 PM)

disAbility Connections – Large Conference Room

If you're looking for a way to reduce stress, consider tai chi (TIE-CHEE).

Originally developed for self-defense, tai chi has evolved into a graceful form of exercise that's now used for stress reduction and a variety of other health conditions. Often described as meditation in motion, tai chi promotes serenity through gentle, flowing movements.

- ◆ Wear loose, comfortable clothing and gym shoes or socks
  - ◆ No special equipment needed
  - ◆ May be done in a chair
- ◆ Participants needing an assistant to help them – assistant at no cost
  - ◆ Cost \$1 per class

Please call disAbility Connections at (517)782-6054 to register.

## SUBSCRIBE TO OUR ONLINE NEWSLETTER!

If you think someone else may benefit by receiving our online news, please send their email address to [hollyp@disabilityconnect.org](mailto:hollyp@disabilityconnect.org)



Save the date for this year's local BUDDY WALK!

**Saturday, August 30th at 12 PM**  
at Hague / Vandercook Lake Park

We are currently in the planning stages and fundraising for this coming Walk. Please **BE INSPIRED - GET INVOLVED!**

Let's all work together to make this a great event!

Contact Andrea Mann at (517)937-6947

[amann27@hotmail.com](mailto:amann27@hotmail.com)

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**You'll find the GOGOs at...**



GOGOs is a social club for adults with disabilities who are living at home. If you are interested in more information or would like to become a GOGO, or to RSVP, call Holly at (517) 998-3097

**Upcoming Dates / Events**

**April 16th** Water Volley Ball and Swimming at Lyle Tarrant Center 6:30 - 8:30 pm

**May 14th** Slumber Party (without the sleep over!) Party Games, Hot Dogs and Fun at disAbility Connections 6:30 - 8:00 PM

**June 12th** PROM! At First Church of the Nazarene, Jackson 6:00 - 9:30 PM

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*Some important dates to come...*

*Save the date!*

FOR THE DISABILITY CONNECTIONS' OCTOBER EVENT! A RARE AND UNIQUE SENSORY AWARENESS EXPERIENCE, TAKING YOU ON A JOURNEY OF TASTES, SOUNDS AND TOUCH.

*Friday, October 24th, 2014*



**SAVE THE DATE!**

**WHAT:**

The Jackson Community Providers will be hosting the Jackson Caregiver Retreat

**WHEN:**

Tuesday, November 4<sup>th</sup> 2014.  
8 am -3 pm

**WHERE:**

First Church of the Nazarene,  
3905 Clinton Rd., Jackson, MI

More information to come!





## Board of Directors

2013 - 2014

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Vice President - Mike Jaska

Treasurer - Al Walker

Secretary/Associate Director - JoAnn Lucas

Immediate Past President - Freddie Dancy

Executive Director - Lesia Pikaart

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Phil Moilanen Rebecca Van Zandt George Page

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Secretary/Associate Director - JoAnn Lucas

Executive Director - Lesia Pikaart

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Lysle Hall

Sarah Ermatinger Lloyd Ganton

Karyn Rice Jason Valente

### Special thanks to our weekly volunteers!

Mindy Albert, Matt Bundas, John Conley, Garrit Hutchkiss,  
Jeff Guillemette, Desmond Herbert, Marilyn Johnson, Katrina Johns,  
and Emily McGee

**We would love to put... Your Name Here!!!!**

### Staff and Direct Dial Phone Numbers

Lesia Pikaart (517) 998-3082

Executive Director

JoAnn Lucas (517) 998-3094

Associate Director / Psychotherapist

### Staff

Lora Bigcraft (517) 998-3081

Resource Manager

Brenda Bobon (517) 998-3084

Independent Living Specialist

Tricia Bortell (517) 998-3096

Youth Independent Living Guide

Carole Briggs (517) 998-3079

Respite Coordinator

Cindy Carlson (517) 998-3090

Development Specialist

Cyd Collins (517) 998-3085

Data Support /Accounts Receivable

Jim Cyphers (517) 998-3083

Independent Living Specialist

Angel Futrell - (517) 998-3091 Customer Relations Specialist

Jon Hart (517) 998-3092

Youth Training & Assessment Coordinator

Shawna Hayes (517) 998-3093

Youth Independent Living Guide

Cathy Heins (517) 998-3088 MAF - Parent Mentor

Michael Hester - Facility Maintenance Support

David Klenk - (734) 677-1207 - Rehabilitation Coordinator

Alan Lewis - Equipment Cleaning

Kim Parker (517) 780 -7450 - Vocational Coordinator

Holly Peterson (517) 998-3097

Parent Education & Resource Coordinator, Newsletter, GoGos

Dan Ramey (517) 998-3086

Nursing Facility Transition / VA Supports Specialist

Parrish Stahl (517) 998-3089

P/R, Community Outreach

Dana Vance (517) 998-3087

VA Supports Coordination / Specialist

Carmon Yeloushan (517) 998-3080

Nursing Facility Transition Coordinator

Cathy Yori (517) 990-6813

Finance Director