

disAbility
CONNECTIONS, INC.

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www.disabilityconnect.org



Supporting
people with disabilities

in their efforts to lead

Independent,

fulfilling, productive lives

Since 1925



Find us on:
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newsletter #7

Editors Note: Since recycling, upcycling and repurposing is all the rage... I thought I would jump on that bandwagon and share an article written by Hank Bostic from a sister Center for Independent Living .

Social Security Disability and Work: Myths and Facts

Myth: Once I get onto Social Security disability benefits, I can't work.

Fact: This is not true. One of the Social Security Administration's highest priorities is to support the efforts of beneficiaries who want to work by developing policies and services to help them reach their employment goal. The Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) programs include a number of employment support provisions commonly referred to as work incentives.

Myth: I will lose my health insurance (Medicare or Medicaid) if I go to work even part-time.

Fact: Medicare will continue for at least 8 years and 3 months after you begin working, and it can go even longer. With Freedom to Work Medicaid you can have unlimited earned income and up to \$75,000 in assets plus your house, one car and retirement funds.

Myth: Because I have SSI, if I get a job I will wind up with less money every month.

Fact: The Social Security Administration counts less than half of an individual's wages when figuring cash payments in the SSI program. So recipients always have more money overall each month if they work.

Myth: I have to keep my earnings under \$1,070 a month or I will lose my Social Security (\$1800 a month if I am blind).

Fact: SSDI beneficiaries can continue to receive benefits during the Trial Work Period and Extended Period of Eligibility, and can also use work incentives -- such as Impairment Related Work Expenses and Subsidies -- to earn over \$1,070 per month while keeping their countable earnings to under \$1,070 per month.

ADVOCACY IN MOTION!



Pictured: Mike Jaska, Brad Williams and Representative Earl Poleski.

disAbility Connections Board Members enjoyed Legislative Day May 1, 2014. Brad Williams, Board President and Michael Jaska, Board Vice-President joined Lesia Pikaart, Executive Director at this year's event. After a brief welcome by disAbility Network/ Michigan Board President, Dave Emmel representatives from the fifteen Centers for Independent Living moved on to meetings with the state representatives and senators. Brad, Mike and Lesia were able to talk briefly with Representative Mike Shirkey and had lunch with State Senator Bruce Caswell. During a special presentation in the House Chamber, Representative Earl Poleski joined our group in the gallery to do a little instruction on legislative process.

We updated elected officials with information on disAbility Connections, what we do, who we serve and what we need to make an even bigger impact. We also provided our other elected officials with packets of information, including disAbility Connections services brochure, the Disability Network/Michigan Annual Report showing the impact of CIL's across the state and position papers on key issues for people with disAbilities: Transportation, Employment, Health Care, Long-Term Community-Based Services, and the Mental Health Commission Report. We were energized by our visits and are looking forward to the 2015 event.

If you're interested in more details on our position papers, the DN/M Annual Report, please contact Lesia by email, lesia@disabilityconnect.org



Register now for the Walk a Mile in My Shoes Rally for Mental Health

The 10th Annual Walk A Mile In My Shoes Rally for Mental Health will be held on the Capitol Steps in Lansing on Wednesday, May 14th at 1:15 pm. At the rally, over 3,000 mental health and developmental disability advocates from

around Michigan will gather to educate the public and our legislators about the importance of a variety of mental health-related issues.

If you or someone you know is interested in attending the rally this year, contact LIFEWAYS at 789-1200 to receive a registration form and return it by May 9th at 5pm.

This is your opportunity to be a part of advocacy... not a bystander!



**54th Annual
Rotary Ruler Day
Friday - May 9th**

Accepting Donations for rulers. All Proceeds go to disAbility Connections, Inc. Watch for local

Rotarians from 10 AM to 8 PM at

Beck's Flower Shop

Polly's - Spring Arbor Rd

Polly's - Vandercook Lake

Prime Cut Meats - Horton Rd.

Sam's Club

U.S. Post Office—downtown

Spring/Summer Fun!

If you are looking for something to do... why not head over to **Ella Sharp Park and Museum for Ella's Patio Parties on Thursday evenings from 5:30 to 7:30 starting April 23rd to June 26th.** There is live music weekly, a cash bar and light hors' devours! You can visit exhibits while you are there or just enjoy the music and friends all around you— it is fully accessible too! It is a great opportunity to enjoy your community!



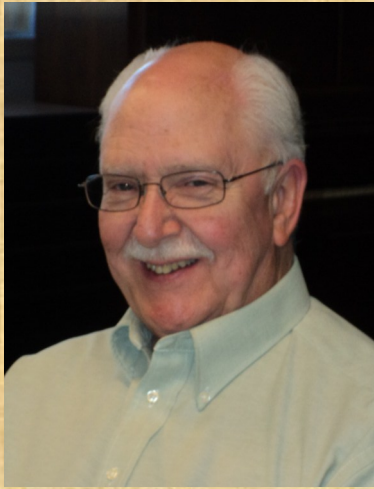
Join us!

Wednesday May 28th from 4 - 9 PM

**In Good
Company**
FOOD & SPIRITS

9039 S. Meridian Rd. in Clark Lake

15% of all proceeds that evening will go to disAbility Connections to support programs such as Ramps, Equipment repair, Respite and more!



JOHN CONLEY - VOLUNTEER EXTRAORDINAIRE!

John Conley has been with us for 5 ½ years, his years of service and dedication have not only been wonderful to disAbility Connections but to John as well. *“It means so much to me knowing that when someone calls or comes into disAbility Connections that we can help them. Working with such great staff and volunteers has been rewarding and is what has kept me volunteering here.”*

Survey says...

disAbility Connections Reception Desk has begun doing surveys to help improve our customer service. Thank you to those who have given their time to filling them out. We recently had a contest for our Front Desk volunteers, whomever got the most surveys filled out by our customers won a McDonald’s gift card. All of our volunteers worked hard, and the one with the most surveys was **Mindy Albert**. Congratulations Mindy!! We’re continuing our “Spring Survey Sprint” for Front Desk surveys. Please support our volunteers race to the survey finish line by filling out a quick survey while you are in. Additionally, customers who complete a survey will be put into a drawing for a Meijer Gift card in May.

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



Join other disAbility Connections Customers for **Tai Chi** Thursdays, beginning, May 1

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.

- ◆ Cost \$1 per class (no fee for A personal assistant attending)
- ◆ 3 PM at DC on Thursdays– Join in now!

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



Board of Directors

2013 - 2014

Officers:

President - Brad Williams

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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Past President - Jerry Jenkins

Secretary/Executive Director - Lesia Pikaart

Trustees

Kathie Martin Lysle Hall

Sarah Ermatinger Lloyd Ganton

Karyn Rice Jason Valente

Special thanks to our weekly Volunteers!

Matt Bundas, John Conley, Jeff Guillemette, Desmond Herbert,
Marilyn Johnson, Katrina Johns, Emily McGee, Al Walker, Mindy Albert

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 / Therapist

Staff

Lora Bigcraft (517) 998-3081

Resource Manager

Brenda Bobon (517) 998-3084

Independent Living Specialist

Tricia Bortell (517) 998-3096

Youth disAbility 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 disAbility 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