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JACKSON MI 49203

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www.disabilityconnect.org

Reflections 90



1932:

Rotarians hold their first
Rotary Christmas Party
for local children
with disabilities...

Rotary Christmas Parties of the Past, Present and Future!

Written by; Holly Peterson

I am a “full hearted” gal...I have been a part of disAbility Connections for 20 years, first as a client using the respite program through Handicapped Children and Adults (HCA) for my daughter, Then as a young mom on the board of directors and then as a staffer for United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) . My FIRST involvement with these fine agencies (that would become disAbility Connections) was when my daughter Sally (a student at Lyle Torrant Center) was invited by HCA to the Rotary Christmas Party held (then) at Gilberts in 1995. Who could imagine that they had been inviting local children to this party since 1932? What a rich history! And then who would imagine that 20 (plus)years later.. these same parties would still be hosted and I would have the privilege to be the liaison between the classroom and the Rotarians.

The stars here are the Rotarians of the Rotary Club of Jackson who remain committed to this event for 83 years now!!!! Along with Colour’s the clown who has been constructing balloon animals and performing magic tricks (as long as I have been coming), Santa makes his annual visit with a personally chosen gift for every child! The real treat of this year’s party was when a boy from Frost Elementary took his communication device up to Santa (after receiving his gift) repeatedly pushing the button which verbalized for him...”thank you, thank you, thank you!” The generosity of the Rotarians, Santa and children...these are the things that are keeping our hearts full!



Reflections 90

If not for Jackson's Rotary Clubs, disability Connections just wouldn't exist. They were the force behind our existence 90 years ago. We say thank you and congratulations on the 100th Anniversary of the Rotary Club of Jackson celebrating "Service above Self"



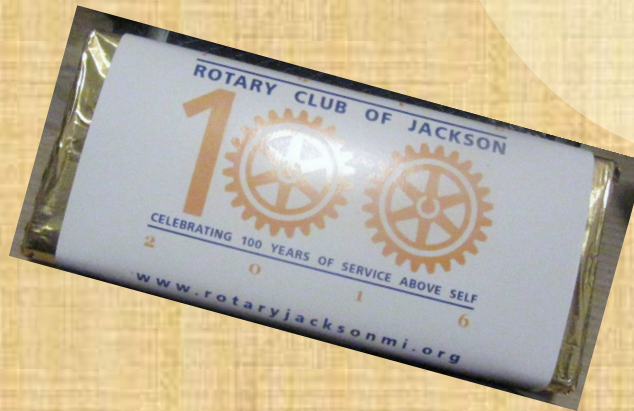
Mr. Jim Egan



Mr. & Mrs. Jon Hart



Mr. & Mrs. Derek Dobies



Rotary Club of Jackson Celebrates 100 Years

Written by: Parrish L. Stahl

Globally, they are in their own words, 1.2 million neighbors, friends, and community leaders who come together to create positive, lasting change in our communities and around the world. Rotary through the last century has set some pretty lofty goals on a national and global level, such as the eradication of new polio cases.

Rotary membership is ultimately about service. One example of the good work done locally is Rotary members, disAbility Connections staff and volunteers help design, order, build, purchase, train and coordinate volunteers on over 200 residential ramps over the years. Another favorite project is an annual Christmas party they host for special needs children that has been going strong for 83 years!

People like club president Jim Egan, Irwin "Butch" Hasenwinkle, Jerry Jenkins, Dave Fleming, George Page, Manya Otis and Jon Hart (to name just a few!) that dedicate their lives to helping our community be a better place to live and work. The next time you see a Rotarian working to support one of their causes, whether you give or not, reach out and shake a hand and say thank you. They deserve it. Here is to another 100 years of living their motto..."Service above Self".

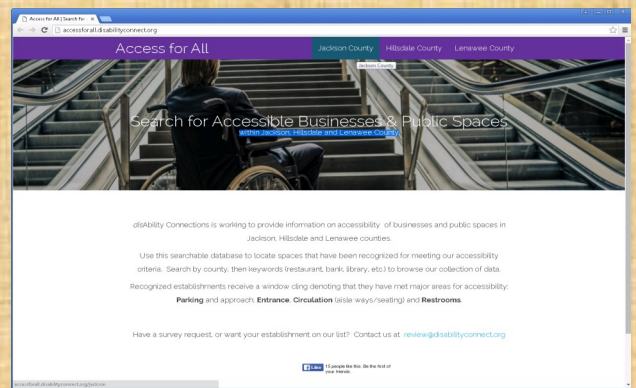
2016 RESIDENTIAL RAMP SEASON

We will begin taking applications for the 2016 ramp season on March 1st. Since this is a first-come, first-served program, no applications will be given or accepted before this date. Ramps are built by volunteers through Jackson Rotary Club. Recipients are responsible for 25% of material costs. This is not a low income qualifying program, but applicants with lower incomes will be considered first. If you have questions on the program you can contact Lora Bigcraft, Resource Manager at 517-782-6054 ext. 236.

disAbility Connections Launches "Access for All" Searchable Website

Written by: Parrish Stahl

In 2014, disAbility Connections created the "Access for All" project in Jackson, Lenawee and Hillsdale Counties. One of this campaign's goals was to develop a list of businesses, locations and partners who are making good faith efforts toward accessibility. The project looks primarily at a few priorities including, parking and approach, entrance, circulation and/or seating as well as restrooms.



<http://accessforall.disabilityconnect.org/>

disAbility Connections is proud to announce the next exciting phase of this ground-breaking project; the creation of a searchable website that is interactive with the public and was launched on December 4, 2015. People are able to review existing "Access for All" sites, view specific accessibility features identified, leave comments and suggest new places for consideration.

This new addition to our web presence will ultimately be a tremendously helpful tool to people with disabilities and their families as it continues to grow and evolve. We are looking for more volunteers to help give out more "Access for All" recognitions to deserving businesses and organizations. The training commitment is about 90 minutes and no experience is necessary. The actual process of checking for accessibility features takes just a few minutes. It can often be done in the course of a person's regular errands. Any adult is welcome to take the training. This would be an excellent opportunity for college students or anyone looking for a fulfilling experience.

If you are interested in helping with this important project contact Parrish Stahl at (517) 998-3089 or Lesia Pikaart at (517) 998-3082.

"Access for All" is another step in furthering our mission to advance the independence, productivity and full inclusion of children and adults with disabilities into our communities of Jackson, Lenawee and Hillsdale.



Marilyn Johnson is a real "Gift"!

"A great attitude", "giving and caring", "lots of fun" and Volunteer of the Year...

These are the words you'll hear when we speak of Marilyn! You may have talked to her on the phone or she may have retrieved a much needed walker or supplies for you on your last visit. You'll remember because you would have left happier. Clients and staff alike are treated with kindness by Marilyn when she volunteers at the front desk. Marilyn came to disAbility Connections about seven years ago after retiring from the Jackson County ISD in Special Education.

We are thrilled to have her here...***THANKS Marilyn!***

Photo left: Marilyn getting into the holiday spirit!



United Way is participating in a program with Consumers Energy called **CARE**. If you have a past due balance on your Consumers bill of \$3000 or less and are low income, you may qualify for an assistance program. This program will pay the past due amount, pay 50% of the consumers monthly bill during the winter then 30% of the monthly bill for the rest of the year through September. A limited number of slots are available. Applications are available online at **uwjackson.org** or call **1-844-249-0763**.



**disAbility Connections Associate Director
JoAnn Lucas Leaves to Pursue Her Dream**

BY: Parrish L. Stahl

The spring of 2006 was a time of tremendous excitement for disAbility Connections when it merged with the Jackson Center for Independent Living (JCIL), thus becoming part of the CIL network.

This merger more than doubled disability Connections' staff. One of the best human assets that came with that move was JoAnn Lucas.

Working for AACIL, she was instrumental in establishing JCIL in 2001; doing a peer consultant and other training. Her calm and renowned listening skills served her well as she helped steer the merger and our future. Since 2006 she has served disAbility Connections as Associate Director.

Her future includes working in private practice as a psychotherapist. We all thank her for her positive energy and dedication.

Community Action Agency has an assistance program to help with **deliverable home fuel**. At this time there is no limit to the amount of money that can be spent or the number of times people can apply. The home fuel tank just needs to be at or below 25% to qualify. Call CAA for more information at 784-4800.





LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD MEN/WOMEN!

Governor Snyder's appointment office is seeking names of people with disabilities who are qualified and would consider an appointment by Governor Snyder to a State of Michigan Board or Commission as described below. They have needs for specific skills and disabilities .

Talented people with (and without) disabilities who could bring a clear disability perspective to many of these important and influential Michigan Boards and Commissions, thus following the IL tenet of "Nothing About Us Without Us".

Reinventing Michigan requires a diverse and talented group of people and we look forward to working together to make Michigan a great state. The administration is always seeking visionary and energetic individuals to fill the wide variety of roles involved in rebuilding Michigan.

To learn more about Boards and Commissions go to: www.michigan.gov/appointments and look through all the Boards and Commissions and see what they do.

Examples of Boards with prescriptive spots for a person with a disability:

- **Barrier Free Design Board**
- **Commission for Blind Persons**
- **Advisory Council on Deaf, Deafblind and Hard of Hearing**
- **Developmental Disabilities Council**
- **Michigan Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers with Developmental Disabilities (Parent or Guardian)**

Many of the Boards and Commissions also have "General Public" member spots that prohibit appointment of a person licensed in, or who may gain financial benefit from a specific regulated profession. An example would be the Board of Nursing, Board of Medicine, or the Board of Barber Examiners.

Each Board or Commission has its own webpage that includes current members, term dates, a link to the department webpage (or organization), and a link to the statute that created each Board.

We encourage individuals who are interested to be considered for a possible appointment to fill out the online application at the website above.



Join us at disAbility Connections for the Meetings the second Tuesday of each month from 6:15 to 7:45 PM - Contact Carole Briggs at 783-6527

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9TH PROGRAM :

Dr Jennifer Huffman Clinical Neuro Psychologist
"Keeping Motivated in Parkinson's

TUESDAY, MARCH 8TH

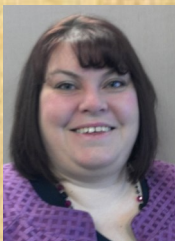
TUESDAY, APRIL 12TH



“One of the greatest barriers to connection is the cultural importance we place on “Going it Alone”. Somehow we have come to equate success with not needing anyone. Many of us are willing to extend a helping hand but we are very reluctant to reach out for help when we need it ourselves. It’s as if we’ve divided the word into “those who offer help” and “those who need help.” The truth is that WE ARE BOTH!”

- Brene’ Brown, The Gifts of Imperfection; Let go of who you think you’re supposed to be, and embrace who you are.

As part of our goal to be accessible to individuals and families in our community, Holly Peterson - Parent Education & Resource Coordinator is officing on site at Lyle Tarrant and Kit Young Centers on Mondays and Thursdays. She is working with families, students and staff on everything from resource coordination, peer supports (Holly’s daughter is a student at Tarrant Center) and transition planning. Her office number there is 990-8061. Holly is still in the office at disability Connections on Wednesdays at 998-3097. Give her a call or email at holly@disabilityconnect.org.



Tricia Bortell is an Employment Navigator in Hillsdale County. This program assists youth and young adults with transition services while still in school, and also assists in providing resources to individuals and families once students complete high school. Tricia is becoming an expert in the knowledge of programs and services in the Hillsdale area so that she can best assist students and their families. Tricia can be found at (517) 998-3096 and/or tricia@disabilityconnect.org

Much like Tricia and Holly you can find Shawna Hayes reaching out to the community she serves, to be as knowledgeable as she can so that assisting her clients make the needed connections is seamless. Shawna is an Employment Navigator working with Students (and graduates) in all of Lenawee County. Shawna is available at (517) 998-3093 or shawna@disabilityconnect.org



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135,000 MILES \$1500 OR BEST OFFER .
CALL MATT AT (517)740-4226**

ALL work ANd no pLay....?



For all of the equipment cleaned and rented, services provided, referrals made, respite coordinated, and individuals served...an afternoon remains for fun and comradery...We wish you and yours the best in 2016!

disAbility Connections
Board of Directors 2015-2016

Officers:

President - James Grose
Vice President - George Page
Immediate Past President & Treasurer
Michael Jaska
Executive Director - Lesia Pikaart

Board Members:

Dave Fleming Mike Barczak Larry Taylor
Phil Moilanen Rebecca Van Zandt
Jerry Jenkins Brad Williams Freddie Dancy

DC Foundation Board Officers

President - George Page
Vice President - Doug Barber
Treasurer - Charles Nelson
Past President - Jerry Jenkins
Executive Director - Lesia Pikaart

Trustees

Sarah Ermatinger Lloyd Ganton
Karyn Rice Jason Valente

Special thanks to our weekly Volunteers!

Mindy Albert, John Conley, Jeff Guillemette,
Desmond Herbert, Marilyn Johnson, Katrina Johns
Wendy Adams & Chuck Rupert



*We do our best to find mistakes...
but pardon us if we have missed anything!*

Staff and Direct Dial Phone Numbers

Lesia Pikaart (517) 998-3082
Executive Director
Cathy Yori (517) 990-6813
Finance Director

Staff

Lora Bigcraft (517) 998-3081
Resource Manager
Tricia Bortell (517) 998-3096
Employment Navigator
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 Rhines- (517) 998-3091
Customer Relations Specialist
Jon Hart (517) 998-3092
Youth Training & Assessment Coordinator
Shawna Hayes (517) 998-3093
Employment Navigator
Ladarius Jeffries – Facility Maintenance Support
Nicole Johnston (734)677-1139 – Vocational 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
Matt Rose - Youth Training, Fix-dis Coach
Parrish Stahl (517) 998-3089
P/R, Community Outreach Specialist
Dana Vance (517) 998-3087
VA Supports Coordination / Specialist
Carmon Yeloushan (517) 998-3080
Nursing Facility Transition Coordinator