

Our Network News



SERVING LAKE, MASON, MUSKEGON, NEWAYGO, & OCEANA COUNTIES

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JUNE 2018 VOLUME 1 ISSUE 2

Our Stephen A. Silky & STEP IN Volunteer of the Year Award Winners



Diane Fleser, Kim Lilly, Vicki Comeau & Terry Dewey

Every volunteer has their own personal reason for being active in their community. Through volunteerism, we find our purpose and create meaningful change. Disability Network West Michigan's Volunteer Luncheon is a moment to be celebrated and endured and to know that the difference our volunteers are making goes well beyond their own intentions.

April is Volunteer appreciation

ADVOCACY IN ACTION

Pere Marquette Park upgrade receives input and feedback from disability community

According to a recent news release, Pere Marquette Park will be updated in late 2018 to include a handicap accessible playground and two barrier-free family restrooms.

The project will be funded by a \$220,700 Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund grant awarded to the city of Muskegon in 2016. The improvement project at the Lake Michigan park was just one of 87 approved for several Michigan communities which received a total of \$19.4 million in grant

month and the perfect time to celebrate the millions of people who give their time, talent, voice and resources to help strengthen communities around the world.

In honor and memory of a friend, a board member and fantastic volunteer for Disability Network West Michigan, the Stephen A. Silky award is presented each year to honor and remember Mr. Stephen August Silky, who passed away in 2009 with a brain stem tumor at the age of 40. In the spirit of providing time and talent, it was our pleasure to present the 2018 Steve Silky Volunteer of the Year Award to Terry Dewey.

Terry has been a volunteer driver for Newaygo County for over three years. He has gone above

and beyond driving by assisting those he drives in various activities to delivering Thanksgiving baskets.

Cynthia Johnson was awarded the STEP IN Volunteer of the Year Award for her three years of dedicated service. She epitomizes the reason STEP IN was developed...to assist persons with mental illnesses move towards employment through volunteer experiences. Cynthia is now a Peer Support Specialist at HealthWest!



Cynthia Johnson, Kim Lilly & Kris Burgess

funding. According to early renderings submitted for grant approval, the proposed playscape would be built to the east of the park's concessions and changing facility.

This prompted follow-up to the City to promote the positive social change Disability Network West Michigan pursues for people with disabilities. DNWM hosted an input session and alongside adults and children with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities enacted a planning session with Sinclair

Recreation to develop and provide suggestions to the current design that would promote greater accessibility to go beyond the current renderings. Sinclair Recreation captured the input from the group and resubmitted 2 additional designs for the City to consider in promoting accessibility.

Many thanks to everyone who participated and for providing great perspective and education to others. We look forward to keeping you posted!

Muskegon DisCover Youth Transition Conference

On April 27, 2018 Disability Network West Michigan (DNWM), in collaboration with Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) held a half-day Youth Transition Conference at the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District (MAISD). This event targeted transition students ages 14-26 from Wesley School.

The 2018 DisCover Youth Transition Conference aimed to fulfill our mission to advocate, educate, empower, and provide resources for persons with disabilities by:

- ⇒ assisting students in their ability to network and develop personal and professional relationships,
- ⇒ increasing students' knowledge of employer expectations, and
- ⇒ helping students learn and identify strategies and supports to continue the transition process to drive their personal goals toward independence.

The morning began with an opening session on **Employer Expectations** presented by *Preferred Employment & Living Supports of Muskegon County*. This agency aims to empower individuals faced with

employment and life barriers to live higher quality, more independent lives through individualized, relationship-based and goal centered supports.

In addition to interacting with the students, Deb Tober, Employment Services and Dave Betlejewski, Operations identified the following skills and desirable traits that employers look for in new hires: Attendance, attitude, ability to follow directions, obeying rules, being safe, teamwork, communication (asking questions), taking initiative, doing your best, being honest and independent.

To support the specific goals of the conference, Disability Network West Michigan offered break-out sessions facilitated by three of its staff members:

- ◆ Danielle Bennett Youth Transition Specialist presented, **Focus on Your Future- Focusing on options for future em-**

ployment, careers and professional development based on individual desires.

- ◆ Amanda Van Tubergen, Employment Navigation Guide presented **NET-WORKING! Strengthening your ability to network by identifying mentors and allies and developing professional relationships to increase your job readiness and personal development.**
- ◆ Ja-Relle Thomas, Youth Transition Specialist presented **GOALS! Learning to identify strategies and supports to continue the transition process post-schooling by using individual transition plans to drive personal goals.**

We are so proud to have provided this event to our Youth Transition students in Muskegon County!

Ignite Your Life with the Ignite Program

WHAT IS THE IGNITE PROGRAM?

Ignite is a program directed toward identifying and empowering youth with disabilities who may encounter challenges transitioning into adulthood after school.

The program staff foster a commitment to young people that will promote independence through self-determination, self-advocacy, strong interpersonal skills, and hope for the future.

WHAT ARE THE KEYS TO SUCCEED?

- Access to a quality education
- Information on career options, including structured internships
- Develop social, civic, and leadership skills
- Access to safe places to interact

and make connections with peers

- Support services and accommodations to become independent

These opportunities can steer families, institutions, and youth themselves through the transition processes.

IGNITING RESULTS, ONE STEP AT A TIME

When our participants finish the Ignite Program, we know they will be better equipped to address adult issues they will face once they transition from post-secondary education,

such as:

- How to lead a self-determined life
- How to present themselves when seeking employment
- Employment readiness skills
- Financial responsibility
- Management of their own home
- How to be a good team player
- How to handle conflict
- How to make good decisions about where to live, recreate, and work

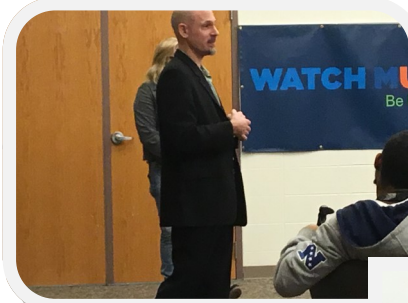
WHAT ARE THE QUALIFICATIONS?

All individuals are referred differently but most often through a state vocational rehabilitation services organization. Referrals may be made by school counselors, teachers, parents or other important supporters connected to the youth.

“All individuals are referred differently but most often through a state vocational rehabilitation services organization. Referrals may be made by school counselors, teachers, parents or other important supporters connected to the youth.”

Wall of Fame

Muskegon Discover Youth Transition Conference



Dave Betlejewski, Preferred Employment & Living Supports of Muskegon County



Youth Conference Group



Amanda Van Tubergen, Employment Navigation Guide presenting **NETWORKING!**



Ja-Relle Thomas, Youth Transition Specialist presenting **GOALS!**



Focus on Your Future Marshmallow Tower Activity



Staff Spotlight

Meet Danielle Bennett, Youth Transition Specialist

As a Youth Transition Specialist, I have the honor of working with many students throughout the school year by offering the Ignite Program. The Ignite Program is designed with the intention of transferable skill building and application; as well as finding value in oneself in spite of barriers or stigmas through personal advocacy and awareness. As a facilitator, the main goal is to accommodate the needs of the group, and at times an individual. This includes assisting the learning process through various, untraditional methods of activity and participation while providing education on their rights as a person with a disability.

Danielle Bennett
Youth Transition Specialist

As the school year comes to a close and Ignite concludes, the only way to describe it is bitter-sweet. Presenting the Ignite Program in seven schools and completing 13 eight-week sessions, feels like an accomplishment with plenty of room for growth. As summer approaches, a new form of transition support surfaces with our Summer Transition Youth Camps (STYC) which are one- or two-week day camps.

This year, the program will be tiered from exploration to experience; both camps will involve segments on health and wellness and career interest assessments. However, tier one will be solely for the purpose of exploring options, strengths and needed growth; helping the youth understand the options they have and avenues they may or may not want to pursue. The experience camp will provide will be hands on learning, coaching and skill development at a more intense level. Community support and collaboration aid in making these programs to work for a complete overall experience.

Join Us for Disability Pride Day!

DISABILITY JUSTICE LEAGUE
WEST MICHIGAN

DISABILITY PRIDE
DAY 2018

The disability community - people with disabilities and their allies - will gather at the Humunity Center Muskegon on Saturday, June 16 to celebrate Disability Pride Day.

This is an opportunity to educate ourselves and others about relevant and pressing issues and to demonstrate that our voices are critical to current policy debates.

Over 26,475 residents in Muskegon County are people with disabilities under the age of

65. This is an opportunity to come together, learn more about each other, and build community.

All are welcome and encouraged to attend. Music, light refreshments, and speeches from local disability rights advocates, our allies, and elected officials will be provided. The program will also feature an "open mic" session to increase dialogue about disability issues in our community.

This event is supported by Disability Justice League West Michigan, Disability Network West Michigan, the Humunity Center, and Peer Action Alliance. Thee Humunity Center is located at Our Savior Lutheran Church: 1132 W. Southern Avenue. The event is scheduled from 12:00 – 3:00 p.m. and is free of charge and open to the public. Attendees are encouraged to RSVP on Facebook.

www.facebook.com/DisabilityJusticeLeagueWestMichigan

LIVING INDEPENDENTLY

Everything we do at Disability Network West Michigan is geared toward helping people with disabilities live independent lives and become their own advocates. But that does not mean you cannot get a little help from your friends along the way!

we can help

If You Need Answers, We Are Here To Help!

- Information & Referrals
- Disability Rights and the ADA
- Benefits – SSI, SSDI
- Housing
- Transportation
- Peer Mentoring/Support Groups
- Independent Living Skills
- Community Services
- Counseling/Other Supports
- Individual Advocacy
- System Advocacy
- Youth Transition
- Nursing Home Transition
- Adult Transition
- Senior Millage Transportation Voucher Muskegon County
- Transportation Voucher Newaygo County
- Transportation Voucher Oceana County
- Employment Supports
- Health Care Services
- ADA Accessibility Evaluations
- Disability Inclusion and Awareness Training
- Employment and Hiring of Individuals with Disabilities
- Other

For More Information About Any Of Our Programs Or Services, Please Call 231-722-0088, Or Reach Us Through Our Website's Contact Page.

www.disabilitynetworkwm.org/contact

Schedule of Events

JUNE

5th - Verity Voting Touch Writer System Training/Demonstration.

11a - Noon at the United Way, 31 E. Clay Ave. Muskegon MI 49442.

13th - Stronger Together Women's Group. 12p-1p at Recovery Cooperative, 1871 Peck St, Muskegon MI 49441

13th - Veteran's Connection Group. 1p-2:30p at the United Way 31 E. Clay Muskegon MI 49442

13th & 27th - Ignite Fire Youth Group. 5p-7p Call 231-332-4031 for location.

18th - Disability Pride Day. 12p - 3p at the HumUnity Center at Our Savior Lutheran Church: 1132 W. Southern Ave. Muskegon MI 49441

29th - Disability Justice League. 1:15p-2:45p at the United Way of the Lakeshore, 31 E. Clay Ave. Muskegon MI 49442

JULY

11th - Stronger Together Women's Group. 12p-1p at Recovery Cooperative, 1871 Peck St, Muskegon MI 49441

11th - Veteran's Connection Group.

1p-2:30p at the United Way 31 E. Clay Muskegon MI 49442

11th & 25th - Ignite Fire Youth Group. 5p-7p at the United Way 31 E. Clay Muskegon MI 49442

26th - FlotillAbility "Float the Vote." 9:30a-3:30p Bridgeton Township Hall 11320 Warner Ave. Grant MI 49327. Call 231-538-0738 for more information.

27th - Disability Justice League. 1:15p-2:45p at the United Way, 31 E. Clay Ave. Muskegon MI 49442

Hackley Community Care Celebration - TBD. Call 231-332-4032

AUGUST

8th - Stronger Together Women's Group. 12p-1p at Recovery Cooperative, 1871 Peck St, Muskegon MI 49441

8th - Veteran's Connection Group. 1p-2:30p at the United Way, 31 E. Clay Muskegon MI 49442

8th & 22nd - Ignite Fire Youth Group. 5p-7p at the United Way 31 E. Clay Muskegon MI 49442

16th - HealthWest Health, Wellness & Recovery Fair. 12p-4p at Hackley Park Muskegon MI.

18th - Health & Wellness Fair. 12p-4p at Muskegon Family Care, 2201 S. Getty Street Muskegon MI

31st - Disability Justice League. 1:15p-2:45p at the United Way, 31 E. Clay Ave. Muskegon MI 49441

Our Staff...

Diane Fleser - Chief Executive Officer

Will Wilson - Deputy Director

Ada Linderman - Program Director, Northern Counties

Lynn Korabik - Accountant/Benefits Planning

Karen Wynne - Nursing Facility Transitions Coordinator/Benefits Planning

Danna Pittman - Community Outreach Manager

Kim Lilly - Independent Living Specialist/Volunteer & Intern Coordinator

Lisa Sullivan - Information and Referral/Education Specialist

Janet Perreault - Nursing Facilities Transitions Outreach Coordinator

Amanda Van Tubergen - Employment Navigation Guide

Brad Hastings - Advocacy & Outreach Coordinator

Ja-Relle Thomas - Youth Transition Specialist

Danielle Bennett - Youth Transition Specialist

Leslie Green - Youth Transition Specialist/ENG/Benefits Planning

Vicki Comeau - Mobility Manager, Newaygo County

Lisa Andritsis - Mobility Manager, Oceana County

Carla Morat - Mobility Manager, Oceana County

Sue Harris - Administrative Assistant



OUR NETWORK NEWS is a quarterly newsletter and is available in alternative format upon request. Issues of our publications will be available on our website at www.disabilitynetworkwm.org

SUPPORT OUR WORK

You can help support the work we do with a tax-deductible donation to Disability Network West Michigan. Visit our website to donate online or call 231-722-0088.

Address Label

Disability Network
West Michigan
27 E. Clay Ave.
Muskegon MI 49442
www.disabilitynetworkwm.org



Disability Network West Michigan is committed to accessibility, inclusion, and diversity while being consumer directed and accountable.

OUR MISSION is to advocate, educate, empower, and provide resources for persons with disabilities. We promote accessible communities, fulfilling our vision of ensuring that accessibility will be an accepted civil right.

Serving Muskegon, Mason, Lake,
Oceana and Newaygo Counties

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