

Our Network News



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

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MARCH 2018 VOLUME 1 ISSUE 1

From our Executive Director

Greetings,

I am honored to have joined Disability Network West Michigan in May of 2017 and am excited to introduce our newsletter to keep consumers and the community connected to some of the exciting things we've been up to. April is National Volunteer Appreciation Month and our volunteers are incredible assets for advancing our mission and enhancing our work environment. The need for coming together has never been greater as the violation of civil rights for people with



Diane Fleser
Executive Director

disabilities continues to be threatened. Disability Network West Michigan recently signed a letter to Congress opposing the ADA Education

and Reform Act (H.R. 620). If passed into law, this bill would create significant obstacles for people with disabilities to enforce their rights under Title III of the ADA to access public accommodations and would impede their ability to engage in daily activities and participate in mainstream society. For our first issue we've decided to celebrate the kindred spirits and acts of advocacy and volunteerism and hope you'll join us in continuing our efforts. There is much to do.
Diane

ADVOCACY IN ACTION

Roosevelt Park City Council Meetings Will Soon Be "In the Loop"

Recently, a group of Roosevelt Park residents who are hard of hearing contacted Disability Network West Michigan (DNWM) for help convincing city officials to install a Public Address (PA) System so they could hear council members clearly during city council meetings. DNWM provided City Manager Jared Olson with sug-

gestions and references to local experts in the fields of amplification and audiology. Mr. Olson located a local company which designed a **Loop-Enabled PA System** uniquely tailored to the meeting space, with cost significantly less than anticipated. DNWM was invited to attend a recent city council meeting during which the

proposal for the ADA-compliant audio system was put before the city council. Council members voted unanimously to approve the purchase and installation of the **Loop-Enabled PA System**. As a result, residents who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing will be able to participate fully in Roosevelt Park City Council Meetings.

Meet Emily Irish



Emily Irish
On-the-Job Training

Hello my name is Emily Irish. I came to Disability Network West Michigan through Michigan Rehabilitation Services. I was looking for a job after I graduated from Northern Michigan University with a Bachelor's degree in History. I had a hard time finding employment and the jobs I did work at were temporary. I soon

decided that I needed help and I came to MRS because a family member said they would help someone like me that is diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome. MRS sent me to Disability Network to earn some on the job experience of working in an office setting. I hope to learn some new skills of work-

ing in an office dealing with paperwork and other procedures that is required to run an office. I especially want to learn how to write grants, data entry, QuickBooks/ accounting, and run a front desk position.

Volunteer & Intern Opportunities

WITH DISABILITY NETWORK, THE OPPORTUNITIES ARE ENDLESS.

- Lead workshops
- Present educational information to groups
- Lead activities for an after-school club
- Serve as a mentor
- Assist with data entry
- Maintain photo collections
- Respond to inquiries
- Create a catalog of workshops

And much, much more!

CAN I EARN SERVICE LEARNING CREDIT HOURS?

High school and college students can earn service learning credit hours by participating in Disability Network West Michigan's volunteer programs. Students must provide school contact information to receive full credit and recognition for their service hours.

DO YOU OFFER AN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM?

Students may participate in Disability Network West Michigan's unpaid internship program if they're approved through Disability Network's Volunteer Coordinator and their teacher/professor before the start date. Internship projects are developed on an individual basis dependent upon the needs of Disability Network West Michigan, the student, and the course requiring service learning.

Volunteers under 18 must have the written consent of a parent or guardian before volunteering. Students volunteering for service learning credit hours for their school must submit their school's name and contact information before volunteering.

Jeffrey VanDyke
Job Club / Volunteer



Hi, my name is Jeffrey VanDyke and I came to Disability Network West Michigan after being referred here by my case manager from Michigan Rehabilitation

Services. While on site, Disability Network has not only become the environment in which I've been able to learn and enhance my skills through volunteering and participating in various other programs, which has helped groom

me to become a better employee in the future. It is my ultimate goal to not only be able to utilize the skills I've learned through this experience to improve my life as an individual, but to be able to help make our world a better place, as a whole.

Wall of Fame

Meet our Agency Interns & Volunteers!



Amanda Van Tubergen, Employment Navigation Guide and Emily Irish doing on-the-training in our Computer Lab.



Diane Fleser, DNWM Executive Director and Jeffrey Van Dyke, our Volunteer enjoying our Annual Holiday Luncheon & Cookie Exchange.



Howard Fisher and Jill Mathews, VA Interns participating at our Holiday Luncheon.



Billy McKay, Carrie Galanda, Cyndi Miller, Shannon Adams, Krystle Price, Jeff VanDyke...Our Holiday Luncheon & Cookie Exchange Volunteers!



Staff Spotlight

Meet Kim Lilly, Independent Living Specialist and Volunteer/Intern Coordinator

I have worked at Disability Network West Michigan since November 2014 and during this time I have worn many hats. I have been the Volunteer/Intern Coordinator for our agency and for the Step-In Program in conjunction with HealthWest for the last two years. It has been inspiring to watch our volunteers develop skills they thought they didn't have and also watch some volunteers move on to competitive employment because of their volunteer experiences. One of the first things volunteers wanted to establish is not being looked at as a person with a disability "taking from society." They are persons with disabilities that want to give back to their community. If you are sitting at home bored, call me and let's see how we can get you involved in the community in which you live!



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

Disability Justice League West Michigan

The Disability Justice League West Michigan is a collective group of people with disabilities and our allies committed to disability rights and disability justice in the West Michi-

gan area. This group will be consumer controlled (disability-led), with emphasis on leadership by the most marginalized voices prioritized. The Disability Justice League is powered by individuals with significant disa-

bilities and their allies and is supported by Peer Action Alliance and the HumUnity Center. For more information call our main office at 231-722-0088 or check out our website and find us on Facebook!

www.facebook.com/DisabilityJusticeLeagueWestMichigan

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

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

MARCH

14th - *Stronger Together Women's Group*. 12p-1p at Recovery Cooperative, 1871 Peck St, Muskegon MI 49441

14th - *Veteran's Connection Group*. 1p-2:30p at the United Way 31 E. Clay Muskegon MI 49442

14th & 28th - *Ignite Fire Youth Group*. 5p-7p at the United Way 31 E. Clay Muskegon MI 49442

23th - *Disability Justice League*. 1:15p-2:45p at the HumUnity Center at Our Savior Lutheran Church 1132 W. Southern Ave. Muskegon MI 49441

APRIL

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

19th - *"Spring into Action" Advocacy Conference*. 9a-3p at the Holiday Inn 939 3rd St. Muskegon MI 49440

23rd - *Newaygo County Access Team*. 1p-2p at the Empowerment Network 5 E. Main St. Fremont MI 49412

27th - *Disability Justice League*. 1:15p-2:45p at the Lemonade Stand, 1192 Jefferson St. Muskegon MI 49441

MAY

9th - *Stronger Together Women's Group*. 12p-1p at Recovery Cooperative, 1871 Peck St, Muskegon MI 49441

9th - *Veteran's Connection Group*. 1p-2:30p at the United Way, 31 E. Clay Muskegon MI 49442

9th & 23th - *Ignite Fire Youth Group*. 5p-7p at the United Way 31 E. Clay Muskegon MI 49442

25th - *Disability Justice League*. 1:15p-2:45p at the United Way, 31 E. Clay Ave. Muskegon MI 49441



Our Staff...

Diane Fleser - Executive Director

Will Wilson - Deputy Director

Ada Linderman - Program Director, Northern Counties

Lynn Korabik - Accountant

Karen Wynne - Nursing Facility Transitions Coordinator-Benefits Planning

Danna Pittman - Community Outreach Manager

Kim Lilly - Independent Living Specialist-Volunteer Coordinator

Lisa Sullivan - Information and Referral-Independent Living Specialist

Janet Perreault - Nursing Facilities Transitions Outreach Coordinator

Amanda Van Tubergen - Employment Navigation Guide

Ja-Relle Thomas - Youth Transition Specialist

Danielle Bennett - Youth Transition Specialist

Leslie Green - Youth Transition Specialist/ENG/Benefits Planning

Vicki Comeau - Mobility Manager - Independent Living Specialist, Newaygo County

Lisa Andritsis - 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.



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.

www.disabilitynetworkwm.org www.facebook.com/disabilitynetworkwm www.twitter.com/disNetworkWM

**Serving Muskegon, Mason, Lake,
Oceana and Newaygo Counties**

Muskegon Office (Main)

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Newaygo Office

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Fremont MI 49412
Office: 231-538-0738
Fax: 231-924-4860

Oceana Office

907 State St., Ste. 102
Hart MI 49420
Office: 231-720-5879
Fax: 231-231-1338

**Disability Network
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www.disabilitynetworkwm.org**

Address Label