disAbility Connections, Inc.
409 Linden Avenue Jackson MI 49203
PH (517) 782-6054 FAX (517) 782-3118
www.disabilityconnect.org

Supporting people with disabilities in their efforts to lead Independent, fulfilling, productive lives since 1925.

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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
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 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 jlaceyaep@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/
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.
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

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
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 Torrant 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

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 4th 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

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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Lysle Hall
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Karyn Rice    Jason Valente

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

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!!!!