Voter aid is available on Election Day

A voter using a wheelchair arrives at the polling place. Parking is signed and available. The front doors are easily accessible at ground level, with a paddle to hit. Hallway access is clear. But the room where the voting machines are located has steps to get inside.

A voter who has visual disabilities arrives at the polling place. The machine that helps with ballot marking is broken. The head judge makes the voter wait for a long time before assigning two other election judges to help. The voter misses a para-transit ride back home.

A voter with a speech disability arrives at the polling place. The voter has never been under guardianship, never been convicted of a felony and has voted in the precinct for several years. But an election judge openly questions whether the voter is qualified to cast a ballot given the speech disability. A residential facility worker and residents arrive at the polling place. The worker is brought to the residents to vote, but the head election judge will not let the worker vouch for the residents.

Now what? Those scenarios are all too familiar to people with disabilities. When a polling place challenge or an accessibility violation emerges, Election Day resources are available. But voters must be ready to call and take quick action.

By law, polling places are required to be accessible. In 2020, 76.3 percent of people with disabilities in Minnesota voted. That’s 344,164 people. That means another 106,902 people didn’t vote, according to the Rev UP Minnesota coalition. It’s not known why those voters stayed home.

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Learn about our new website and NewsMatch effort

Learn about the new Access Press website and support our fundraising efforts at an upcoming virtual event, Access Press Presents: Digital Transformation at 6 p.m. Tuesday, November 15.

The event is free. Sign up in advance at the Access Press home page, at www.accesspress.org.

But first, read a message from Holly Anderson, our executive director, on page 4 of this issue. The November event is also when Access Press announces our fund drive and matching dollars through the NewsMatch Program.

Disability-focused journalism is more important than ever and we need everyone’s support for Access Press to continue its mission of serving Minnesotaans with disabilities. All donations are tax-deductible.

Event sponsors are still welcomed. Contact Anderson at 651-644-2133 ext. 3 or holly@accesspress.org.

The November 15 event features Belo Miguel Cipriani. The digital inclusion strategist is passionate about making online content accessible for people who are blind and is an award-winning author and newspaper columnist.

In 2018 Cipriani founded the publishing house Oleb Books, which focuses on publishing writers with disabilities. Through his digital access consulting firm, Oleb Media, Cipriani has helped countless organizations especially in direct care, said Vicki Gerrits, executive director of Minnesota Community Solutions. Advocates will be back with an array of familiar asks, including higher wages, the ability for staff to be compensated for driving time, overtime pay, training and more.

Competitive wages continue to be a factor.

Preparations for the 2023 session will take place in an environment of uncertainty. The 2023 election features every state constitutional office on the ballot, from the governor on down. Every state House and Senate seat is also up for grabs.

As the 2022 session ended, Republicans in the Senate had a 36-31 majority.
Good service providers build trusted relationships with home care clients. Our lives are in their hands. Losing those bonds is daunting.

The work of St. Paul's Jewish women is recalled with Vision Loss Resources' move
Foster a stronger workforce." The Bayport-based company withdrew a job offer to an applicant at their Bayport production facility after learning of his disability.

Volunteers are needed to represent Minnesota’s long-term care residents

Help is needed for Minnesota’s assisted living and nursing home residents. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Minnesota’s Office of Ombudsman for Long-Term Care had 33 certified ombudsman volunteers statewide. Fast forward to the fall of 2022, and there are only 14 volunteer ombudsmen serving nearly 2,500 nursing care and assisted living facilities across Minnesota.

Addressing the ombudsmen volunteer shortage is a focus of MCD Director Cheryl Hennen. “We are critically short in the state without even one volunteer. ‘Just as nursing homes are struggling to recruit and retain staff, we face the same challenge with volunteers,’ said Long-Term Care Ombudsman for Minnesota Cheryl Hennen. ‘These volunteers are critical to our team, advocating for people living in long-term care facilities to ensure their quality of life and services.’

A major part of a volunteer’s role is educating residents, families and long- term care staff on residents’ rights. Volunteers advocate for people living in long-term care facilities to enhance their quality of life and services.

Volunteers provide access and information to residents and families of the Services of the Ombudsman for Long-Term Care. They provide a regular presence in an assigned long-term care facility and build strong relationships with residents and facility staff.

Ombudsman volunteers also include supporting complaint investigations and assisting residents in resolving concerns, and attending resident and family council meetings.

Volunteers must be at least 18 years old, have reliable transportation, and enjoy working with older adults and people with disabilities.

Counties with the biggest volunteer needs are Blue Earth, Brown, Carlton, Carver, Chippewa, Freeborn, Hennepin, Itasca, Jackson, Kandiyohi, Koochiching, Lac qui Parle, Mower, Nobles, Ramsey, Redwood, Rice, Rock, St. Louis, Washington, Wright and Yellow Medicine.

Prospective volunteers must submit an applications and two reference forms, pass a background check and complete an interview. Volunteers will also need to complete an initial 36 hours of orientation training to become designated Certified Ombudsman Volunteers. Orientation includes multiple activities including shadowing experiences and independent study. Volunteers are required to complete 18 hours of training every year to maintain designation.

Volunteers must dedicate at least six hours every month to visit their assigned facility, and are asked to communicate their year of service.

To learn more, please contact Volunteer Coordinator Marie Kessler at mcd.volunteers@state.mn.us or calling (651) 890-6308.


Find more information on the Office of Ombudsman for Long-Term Care at https://mn.gov/oolt/.

The Office provides free confidential advocacy services.

2023 SESSION

From page 1

majority over their DFL counterparts. In the House, DFLers held a 70-64 majority over their Republican colleagues.

The year 2023 is marked by some of the most significant legislative changes since 1972 and the era of almost 50 years in which DFLs were in control of both the House and Senate. While Minnesota is one of the few states that requires legislative bills to be assigned to committees, the concept of having a committee is not new to many Minnesotans.

The committee structure and membership of the Senate and House have evolved since the 1970s, and the current membership is a reflection of the changes that have occurred in the state’s demographics and population growth.

The results will help MCD shape its 2023 public policy agenda and inform discussions with legislators about what matters to Minnesotans with disabilities.

As the time for new legislation approaches, the MCD will be actively involved in the process of ensuring that the needs of the disability community are represented in the legislation. The MCD will continue to work with legislators and others to advocate for policies that will benefit the disability community and make life easier for all Minnesotans.

The MCD will also continue to provide training and resources to help legislators understand the needs of the disability community and the importance of inclusion in legislating for the needs of all Minnesotans.

The MCD will also continue to provide training and resources to help legislators understand the needs of the disability community and the importance of inclusion in legislating for the needs of all Minnesotans.
News for people, not for profit: Support our community-funded newspaper

by Holly Anderson, Executive Director

As a reader of Access Press, you already know that we prioritize quality disability-focused journalism over profits. We work tirelessly to produce public service journalism that you can trust because you deserve to have a go-to source for the news that matters most to people with disabilities. This is essential work, especially these days, and it wouldn’t be possible without the support of community members like you.

This year Access Press has received a generous grant as part of a campaign called NewsMatch. Starting now—through December 31, NewsMatch will match your new monthly donation 12 times or double your one-time gift, all up to $1,000. All individual gifts will be matched by NewsMatch, up to $15,000.

There are times that Access Press hangs on by a thread to ensure you have the news and information you need. We need readers like you to become members. Please give a gift today—your $5 gift will be $10. If we meet the match goal, we’ll raise a total of $30,000! These funds will go a long way to support the kind of journalism you know and trust.

Signing up as a monthly sustainer is the most powerful way to keep us in business so we can bring you the news you need. If you want to set up a monthly gift, all 12 months will be matched! Let’s say you want to give $1,000, which will be $2,000 with the match. You can sign up to give $83.50 each month in 2023 and all of it will be matched, you can give $5 a month and we’ll get $10! We need your help to survive. Please support the news and community you know and love. We are the only nonprofit newspaper in Minnesota that is focused on the disability community. Keep us going and give today! No gift is too small. Find the link at www.accesspress.org/donate.

WEBSITE

From page 1

who prefer print, an expanded website offers possibilities for more news and information. It also will offer more options for newspaper advertisers and supporters. Access Press has had a website since 2001. It was one of the first Twin Cities community newspapers to have an online presence, said McClure.

The first website was the work of founding Editor/Executive Director Charlie Smith and his successor, Tim Benjamin.

“Access Press began as a vehicle to help Minnesota’s disability community organize around key issues and get information out,” McClure said. “Founding Editor Charlie Smith was someone who really believed in the need for disability-focused journalism.”

In the pre-Internet days, it was not unusual to have people call a community newspaper office and ask about deadlines, so that meetings and events could be timed around when the newspapers hit the street. “We had community newspapers and we had telephone trees. If assistance needed to get news out, they’d divide up lists of member phone numbers and everyone would make calls. That sounds really quaint now,” said McClure.

The first Access Press website was quite basic. The Directory of Organizations, now the Access Press Directory, was a prominent feature.

In 2009, the website took a great step forward. Access Press was selected for the Sierra Bravo Overnight Website Challenge. The annual event paired nonprofits with teams of web developers. The event was held for several years and helped selected nonprofits create or improve their websites.

“Access Press worked with a young but capable crew during our overnight challenge. The ‘Code Cowgirls’ provided great help in updates and changes. We worked in a large room at the University of Minnesota with other nonprofits and teams, with music, lots of Red Bull, pizza, snacks and even yoga to keep the participants focused. People were working away, with some getting tired and napping on the floor, on top of tables—anywhere,” said McClure.

One project was unique in that during the 24 hours of web development, Access Press brought in people with an array of disabilities to try out the site and share ideas for accessibility.

After the event, Access Press was able to post a test website and invite readers to weigh in. That input was very helpful.

One advantage of the website challenge was that nonprofits also received a year of free web hosting and consulting. Organizations each year the challenge was held benefitted from about 2,000 hours of assistance.

But websites can quickly become dated and be hacked. Access Press was no exception. Over the years as staff made changes, important website features were lost.

The new website will be much more user-friendly and for some submissions, offer the chance to post in real time. “This gives us the chance for news and event updates in a more timely manner,” said McClure. “Most newspapers have had to drop longer print calendars for space and staffing. Being able to quickly find information online will be a great feature for everyone.”

(Read more about Cipriani in an article from our October issue, at https://accesspress.org/access-press-invite community-to-learn-about-digital-upgrades/)

VOTER AID

From page 1

Remember to be polite but direct in bringing up problems. The first person to talk to at a polling place if there is an access issue of any kind is the head election judge. That person can get assistance for a voter, make sure a helper is helping and not make calls. That sounds really quaint now,” said McClure.

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The Minnesota Secretary of State’s office works closely and promptly with county auditors, municipal clerks, county attorneys, county government officials and local law enforcement officials around the state when possible violations of election laws are revealed. Under Minnesota law county attorneys have the legal authority and jurisdiction to investigate possible election law violations. Complaints can be filed by using the Minnesota County Attorneys’ Association website, at https://mcaoa.org/.

Each of these websites outline the detailed processes that must be followed to make complaints.

Read about polling place accessibility at https://www.sos.state.mn.us/elections/voting/election-day-voting/polling-place-accessibility/

Read about ways to get assistance while voting and ballot marking machines at https://www.sos.state.mn.us/elections/voting/election-day-voting/get-help-voting/
When it comes to the workplace, disability is part of the equity equation

by Vocational Rehabilitation Services Director Dee Torgerson and State Services for the Blind Director Natasha Jerde

We know Minnesotans share a strong commitment to the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility and opportunity for all. That’s why we feel so strongly about National Disability Employment Awareness Month, which was celebrated here and across the nation every October. And it’s why this year’s theme – Disability: Part of the Equity Equation – is so appropriate.

On October 10, we held an event to commemorate the many and varied contributions of people with disabilities to Minnesota’s workplaces and our economy. More than 300 individuals and businesses joined the virtual Zoom event. A panel discussion and several video vignettes featured individuals with disabilities who have achieved their wide-reaching career goals: an aerospace engineer, a health care worker, a baker, state government employees, a farmer, a forklift driver and an unemployment insurance analyst.

We learned about their experiences as they pursued education, searched for a job, and moved through the recruitment, onboarding, and career advancement process. Panelists shared practical tips and advice on how businesses can make disability part of the equity equation.

While each of the participants shared their own unique experiences and perspectives, there was also a common thread that ran through their message for employers and career seekers: Don’t focus on the disability; focus on the person!

The event reinforced DEED’s strong commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and opportunity. While people with disabilities are critical to solving the well-documented nationwide workforce shortage, equally important is the accessibility component of our commitment. Accessibility for all is essential if we are to achieve our goals of creating a more diverse and inclusive workplace. And an important component of accessibility is for employees to ask for accommodations – and employers to provide the accommodations for people with disabilities in exactly the same way they would provide accommodations to any employee.

As one panelist pointed out: “Everyone needs an accommodation at some point.”

More than half a million Minnesotans report having one or more disabilities, and the unemployment rate of this group is more than double that of people without disabilities. DEED’s two main disability employment programs – Vocational Rehabilitation Services and State Services for the Blind – provide career guidance and counseling to assist people with disabilities in achieving their employment goals. But just as importantly, we partner with Minnesota businesses to seek recruitment, training, and hiring solutions that can help them meet their workforce needs.

DEED Commissioner Steve Grove, who joined us for this event, noted that hiring people with disabilities is an important part of meeting employers’ hiring needs during the “sharpest labor shortage we’ve seen.” DEED remains laser-focused on helping workers find jobs, and on helping HR departments and hiring managers look to talent pools they might not have considered before – including people with disabilities.

During the event we shared numerous resources for businesses who want to further explore the opportunities for working with DEED to recruit, train, hire, and retain people with disabilities. As one of the event panelists said, we shouldn’t “look past” the disability, but rather embrace the potential. We know people with disabilities are capable of anything, just like anyone else. The variety of careers and stories the panelists shared today speaks to the value of businesses including and considering people with disabilities as the untapped workforce they truly are.
People & Places

Organizations honored for various disability, human services efforts

Seven Minnesota human services organizations have been recognized for their commitment to providing housing, economic assistance, food, health care and other essential services to the state’s residents. The Commission’s Circle of Recognition Awards went to the Minnesota Department of Human Services, acknowledging outstanding organizations, counties and Tribes for initiatives and innovations that address critical needs in Minnesota’s communities. This is the eleventh year of the awards, which DHS started in 2012 to honor significant efforts in human services.

Award presentations began this fall with Housing Matters, Bemidji. The organization’s mission is to help disabled persons experiencing long-term homelessness to have a stable living environment in the community of their choosing, whether living alone or with family members. Housing Matters helped address Bemidji’s growing housing crisis by developing a community-site supportive housing model that led to more supportive housing initiatives. The organization also provides Housing Stabilization Services, the state Medicaid benefit launched in July 2020 to help people find and keep housing.

“Each year, we select groups that demonstrate an unwavering commitment to the well-being of Minnesotans,” said Human Services Commissioner Jodi Harpstead. “We are so grateful for the work these organizations are doing to help advance our mission by delivering health care, housing support, economic assistance and other services to their neighbors to enable them to live full lives in communities.”

Other winners are:

- American Indian Cancer Foundation, St. Paul. The foundation works with Tribal nations across the state to address cancer inequities in American Indian communities. In six years of operation, AICAF has provided support and education around policy, systems and environmental change related to healthy eating, tobacco, well-being and physical activity.

- C.A.R.E. Clinic, Red Wing. The clinic provides low-cost or free dentistry, medical and mental health care in Greater Minnesota, playing a vital role in making health care more accessible. By focusing on dental care, C.A.R.E. spotlights an overlooked but critical health concern, that poor oral health has been linked to poor mental and overall health, including heart health. Through a comprehensive health care approach, C.A.R.E. ensures that people get the services they need to maintain basic health.

- Hallie O. Brown Community Center, St. Paul. The community center strives to improve quality of life in the community by providing access to critical human services, fostering and promoting personal growth, and developing community leadership. The Basic Needs Program, one of six core program areas, includes a food shelf and clothing bank. It also features a community support navigator who connects constituents with housing, mental health and legal assistance. It operates in a neighborhood where residents come from a range of racial and ethnic backgrounds.

- Hennepin County Human Services Emergency Preparedness Unit. The county mobilized a multi-faceted operation to provide temporary housing for more than 1,000 Afghan arrivals, coordinating initial services and supports while permanent housing was being secured for each household. This response brought together human services, emergency response and refugee resettlement agencies to facilitate a smooth transition for Afghan evacuees coming to Minnesota.

- Hennepin Healthcare, Minneapolis. This comprehensive, integrated health system includes a hospital, 10 primary care clinics, 36 specialty clinics and community programs for low-income, uninsured/underinsured and vulnerable populations. The award recognizes three innovative efforts to improve health equity. The Pediatric Mobility Clinic was a direct response to the precipitous decline in essential childhood vaccinations and other preventive care for at-risk populations of color. The Redleaf Center houses Hennepin Healthcare’s Mother-Baby Program, which includes a range of mental health and parenting support for families before and after having a baby. This includes the Mother-Baby Day Hospital, Minnesota’s first and only partial hospital program for perinatal women with mental illness. The Talent Garden offers a comprehensive set of events, programs and initiatives designed to connect young people of color with clinicians, with a goal of building interest and providing support for pursuing careers in health care.

- Scott County Family Resource Centers’ three locations: Launched in 2021, Family Resource Centers provide a universal access point for families for services including parenting support, early literacy, financial literacy, mental and chemical health services, and assistance such as rental support. A program of the county’s Children’s Services Department, the center offers a wide range of supports.

- Choir wins recovery challenge

A Minnesota-based organization is an inaugural winner of an award focused on recovery. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), announced the winners of the first behavioral health Recovery Innovation Challenge. A panel made up of political and academic figures identified 10 organizations that have developed innovations that advance mental health or substance use disorder recovery. Among the winners is Voices of Hope, a Minnesota-based organization that fosters healing through singing for incarcerated people. Created by Dr. Jim Verhoye and Dr. Amanda Weber in 2015, Voices of Hope began as a 17-member women’s choir at the Minnesota Correctional Facility in Shakopee.

It has since grown to nearly 50 singers. In 2020, Voices of Hope formed a men’s choir at the Minnesota Correctional Facility in Stillwater. Also, a group of former Voices of Hope/Shakopee members are working to build a re-entry choir for women.

Voices of Hope will receive $40,000 in prize money, as will the other nine winners. HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra said that SAMHSA’s Recovery Innovation Challenge will allow the department to learn about innovative recovery tools that can be scaled nationwide.

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Opportunity Partners names vice president

Heather Shiell recently joined Opportunity Partners, a Twin Cities disability services nonprofit, as vice president of advancement recently. She brings 25 years of nonprofit leadership and fundraising success from organizations across the Twin Cities. In her role, she provides leadership and strategy for the Development and Communications teams.

Established in 1953, Opportunity Partners offers employment, enrichment and residential services that help people with disabilities earn an income, live as independently as possible, and participate as active members of the community. Opportunity Partners focuses on the abilities of the 1,500 people served each year.

She helped start foundation

Vera Robbins Segal helped start an early Twin Cities foundation that addressed how law enforcement officers respond to people in mental health crisis. Segal died in October. She was 86 and lived in Minnetonka.

Segal was a social worker and community advocate, who spent her life fighting for social justice. She was instrumental in creating the Barbara Schneider Foundation and was passionate about its purpose to improve the response to those in mental health crisis. The foundation formed in response to the death of Schneider on June 12, 2000, when she was shot by police during a confrontation in a mental health crisis call. Segal was very active for years with the foundation, which works with partners in law enforcement, courts, corrections, mental health, social service and health care systems to improve the response to those in mental health crisis and to prevent mental health crises.

Segal was a friend of Schneider. Segal also worked on other social justice causes including affordable housing. She was active in her synagogue and community, and enjoyed spending time with friends and family.

Segal is survived by four adult children and their families, a sister, and nieces and nephews.

Services have been held. Memorials are preferred to the Barbara Schneider Foundation.
Blind bus rider raises problems

The service dog or white cane were not enough to catch the attention of Metro Transit drivers as Barry Segal waited at the bus stop. Segal is Deaf Blind. In order to catch the bus, he must get to and from his accounting job in St. Paul, he stood exactly where he was trained to wait. But he saw a Metro Transit bus driver repeatedly fail to stop where they were supposed to — ignoring the t-sign — and sometimes Segal altogether.

Drivers left him waiting at the bus stop with his service dog or cane at least 23 times, according to court records provided to KSTP-TV 5 Investigators. In another case, video confirmed Segal was forced to cross a busy intersection without a stop, to effectively maneuver across the street.

Less than three years, Segal complained more than 150 times. But it kept happening.

Segal felt that the bus drivers were trained well enough. Their response was, “It’ll be better next time,” said Segal. He spoke with 5 INVESTIGATES through a sign language interpreter.

“It was terrible discrimination. It left me fearing for my safety.”

Scott Macpherson with the Minnesota Disability Law Center.

“Segal’s experience ultimately led to a lengthy legal battle, a recent six-figure settlement and new training at the state’s largest public transportation system. We’ve committed to do better,” said Macpherson.

“Metro should not be doing anything that would cost a passenger their life.”

The lawsuit dragged on for years. In less than three years, Segal violated not only their own policy but a lawsuit claiming that Metro Transit had violated several major laws. Their response was, “It was terrible discrimination. It left me fearing for my safety.”

In addition to the previous bulletins and videos, Funk said Metro Transit is also now offering in-person sensory training for drivers.

(Author: KSTP-TV)

Apostle Island access eyed

Along the South Shore of Lake Superior there’s a sandy beach that makes the perfect place to launch a kayak and paddle — not too far — to see the famous sea caves. It’s part of the Apostle Island National Lakeshore. Thousands of people go to the Meyers Beach each year to see Lake Superior’s majesty. But there are 45 steep steps between the parking lot and the beach, an insurmountable barrier for people with mobility issues. It exemplifies how much of America’s outdoors — beyond curbside sidewalks and wheelchair-accessible bathrooms — remains inaccessible to millions of people.

I was able to participate in a great Wellness Inquiry Trip a few years ago to go out and see the sea caves in person, to paddle out there ... But for them to get me down the steps to the kayak, they had to carry me on a wooden kitchen chair,” said Janet Badura. She lives with rheumatoid arthritis and uses a wheelchair.

“Being from Wisconsin, I had been up to Ashland and Bayfield several times before. But, until a few years ago, I was never able to actually get to the waterfront and tour on the water because it wasn’t accessible for me,” Badura said.

“I understand not every place is going to be accessible for me ... There are some places that can’t be because of the geography or the landscape. But, where it’s possible, our parks should be accessible to everyone.”

A new, $500-foot ramp at Meyers Beach would allow people in wheelchairs and others with mobility issues step-free access to the parking lot to the water’s edge. The $650,000 project is still on the drawing board. But members of the Friends of the Apostle Island Lakeshore are hoping to raise $325,000 in coming months to kick-start the project. It’s expected that a National Park Service grant would be available to match the remaining $325,000.

The ramp is another part of a yearlong effort by local park officials and Friends activists.

“The negotiations for space turned out to be very positive for us,” said Linda Timlin said he can’t speak to the specifics of Segal’s lawsuit but added that it’s an issue they take seriously.

“We are not justifying what happened, but we can see how something like this could have occurred with the current staffing at Metro Transit.”

The agency issued several bulletins and reminders to bus drivers on the importance of stopping the bus at the sign.

But it still kept happening. “They just drive right by,” said Segal.

Timlin said that the bus drivers were trained well enough. Their response was, “It’ll be better next time,” said Segal. He spoke with 5 INVESTIGATES through a sign language interpreter.

“The clinic was established in 1954 by Margaret Hamm, a social worker and granddaughter of St. Paul brewhouse titan Theodore Hamm.

(Source: Pioneer Press)
Innovations that improve options for people with disabilities will go forward over the next two years across Minnesota, with an initial investment of $2.9 million to support people with disabilities to live and engage with others in their communities and access better employment opportunities.

The grants are part of the Minnesota Department of Human Services’ innovation grant program for people with disabilities. Goals of the grants include achieving integrated, competitive employment and living in the most integrated setting.

“These providers are finding new ways to support full and connected lives for Minnesotans with disabilities,” Commissioner Jodi Harpstead said. “The grants recognize efforts to strengthen the direct care workforce and improve access to culturally and linguistically responsive services.”

Grantees are:

- Korean Service Center - Seniors Better Connected, serving Duluth, St. Cloud, Fairmont and Rochester, $202,000
- Increasing the use of Korean language video conferences and direct support services. The grant will provide live support that will help address social isolation due to language barriers among older adults. The Korean Service Center also works to reduce barriers and increase access to community resources, including mental health resources.
- Touchstone Mental Health - Housing Intensive Support Program, serving Hennepin County, $257,000. People living with a mental illness who have experienced homelessness will receive help securing integrated housing of their choice. During the grant period, on-site services will offer help navigating the process for accessing integrated community supports.
- Autism Society of Minnesota - Somali Autism Transition Program, serving Duluth, St. Cloud, Rochester and St. Cloud, $386,000. The Autism Society of Minnesota and the Somali Parents Autism Network will work together to reach Somali parents of children and young adults who have autism, offering culturally sensitive education and advocacy.
- Residential Services of Northwestern MN, Inc. - Employee Resiliency Project, serving St. Louis, Carlton, Pine, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Isanti and Chisago counties, $207,000. A new employee resiliency program will connect direct care employees with resources to address their needs. An employee resource specialist will develop and implement the program. The goal is to decrease turnover and improve employee satisfaction by helping employees address areas of instability in their lives that may interfere with work.
- Minnesota First Community Solutions - Workforce Solutions, statewide, $358,000. Direct support workers will receive more training and other resources to improve their job satisfaction, with a focus on Hawaii’s Native American and Somali workers. Activities will include peer mentoring, culturally specific training, to help the people we serve exercise oversight of their services, and a direct service worker retention program.
- NorthStar Technology, statewide, $305,000. A coordinated training program will help people with disabilities and their families use supportive and assistive technology to support their health care, social and employment goals. Training will be available for individuals and their families to help people with disabilities use the services, their families, vendors, case managers and providers.

From page 8

Regional News

From 5 to 16 uncontrolled behavioral and developmental problems. M Health Fairview Masonic Children’s Hospital was involved with each child last spring that it converted an ambulance bay into a shelter for them.

The boy has injured health care workers, including striking one worker in the head and causing a concussion, according to a report filed last week with the Carver County Sheriff.

ERs are the dumping ground by default because of a federal law — the Emergency Medical Treatment & Labor Act, or EMTALA — that requires them to screen and stabilize any patients who show up at their doors. The law also requires “appropriate” transfers of patients, but in the case of troubled children that often means to group homes or residential treatment centers that are full with waiting lists. And so they wait.

“For children with autism, children with developmental delays, the worst possible scenario would be sitting in an emergency department,” said Lew Zedner, M Health Fairview Masonic Children’s Hospital.

The hospital this month reported a new wave of children arriving. What used to be two to four children per month has now increased to about 10 per month. The number of cases in county protective custody. Their average length of stay in the ER is 12 days, but some have stayed as long as six months.

The child had a traumatic upbringing, with the death of a sibling and imprisonment of his mother. The hospital’s hope is to transfer him to a facility anywhere in the U.S. that is equipped for children with autism and aggressive behaviors. But nobody yet has found space for him. A Sibley child protection supervisor did not reply to requests for comment.

Privacy protections prevented Ridgewater College executive Kyle Phillips from discussing any specific boarding situations or providing support for the patients. The hospital is focusing on other matters.

Children’s Minnesota is opening an inpatient psychiatric unit in St. Paul next month. However, Phillips said the expansion and recent state mental health investments don’t really address the challenge of kids. More specialized residential treatment and group home facilities are needed, and more training is needed for employees to use the facilities that already exist.

“I can appreciate building inpatient psychiatric beds — that’s great — but we’re investing in outpatient mental health services,” he said. “But this is in between the lines of kids who just don’t have a place to go.”

(From: Star Tribune)
**Radio Talking Book**

Seeking more volunteer readers

Minnesota Radio Talking Book is seeking more volunteers to record books and periodicals for broadcast. Anyone who may be interested in becoming a volunteer should contact Roberto Ktilkin at 651-539-1423 or roberto.ktilkin@state.mn.us.

Greater Minnesota newspapers offered

In addition to the Twin Cities’ newspapers, which are broadcast live every morning from 8 – 10 a.m., the Radio Talking Book also broadcasts local newspapers from five other Minnesotans: Duluth Falls Falls, Mankato, Rochester and St. Cloud. All five are currently airing and can be accessed from this service.

Use an app to hear programs

Radio Talking Book is not just for listeners with visual disabilities. Anyone with difficulty reading or turning pages can enjoy the service.

Enjoy programming on a hand-held mobile device, for either iPhone or Android. Visit the Apple App Store for iOS, or Google Play for Android, and download the Minnesota Radio Talking Book app. Listen to RTB’s live or archived programs online at www.mnssab.org/rtb

Books broadcast on the Minnesota Radio Talking Book Network are available for loan through the Minnesota Radio Talking Book Library in Faribault. The catalog is at www.mrtbl.org, click on the link Search the Library Catalog. Call the Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library at 800-722-0550, Mon-Fri, 9 am - 4 pm CST.

For more information, please go to the Facebook site Minnesota Radio Talking Book.

**Choice Reading**

Audio information about the daily book listings is on the National Federation for the Blind (NFB) Newsline. Register for NFB Newsline by calling 651-539-1424.

The NFB-NEWSLINE service provides access to more than 500 magazines and newspapers. To learn more, visit www.nfb.org/services/newsline.

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**Radio Talking Book**

Empire of the Scalpel

by Elaine Tyler May, 2017. Though safer

and more comfortable, the roots of civilization’s success and
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reviewing the findings of this brilliant

and failure in evolutionary biology. Read by Jan

of the centurion’s—being told by fanatical

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and historian chronicler of the story of surgery’s
— from the Stone Age to the present—detailing medical

of Scopes, gusshoeing, and American

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and antibody.

foreheads of the rebellious Frenchwomen who were exiled
to colonial Louisiana and found power in the

Mississippi Valley. Read by Brenda Powell. 17 broadcasts; begins Thu, Nov. 10.

Empire of the Scalpel, nonfiction by

by Tracy K. Smith, read by Mary Knatterud.

foreheads of the rebellious Frenchwomen who were exiled
to colonial Louisiana and found power in the

Mississippi Valley. Read by Brenda Powell. 17 broadcasts; begins Thu, Nov. 10.

with Native American warriors who killed

ten-year-old Johanna travels across Texas

by Paulette Jiles, 2016. After the Civil War,

to her aunt and uncle’s home after living

with Native American warriors who killed

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to her aunt and uncle’s home after living

with Native American warriors who killed

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by Paulette Jiles, 2016. After the Civil War,
Conference

Open Flow Forum

Annually, the Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities announces a free virtual conference in celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the first Olmstead Planning Committee. A legal settlement agreement was approved in December 2011 with the state, and required appointment of an Olmstead Planning Committee in 2012. The Planning Committee met and recommended to then-DHS Commissioner Linda O’Neill a legislative fix to consider appointing an Olmstead Subcabinet. The report provides a 10-year summary of achievements and is based on review of Olmstead reports and interviews with key informants. FFI: https://mn.gov/mnolmstead

PACER Center’s annual benefit is Sat, Nov. 5 at Mpls Convention Center. Enjoy an array of activities and the music of a capella superstars Pentatonix. The evening will include an exciting live auction and a huge silent auction featuring sports tickets and memorabilia, exciting getaways, fabulous experiences, jewelry, and much more. Event tickets are now available. FFI: www.pacer.org

Attend open house

Pentatonix at PACER

PACER Center’s annual benefit is Sat, Nov. 5 at Mpls Convention Center. Enjoy an array of activities and the music of a capella superstars Pentatonix. The evening will include an exciting live auction and a huge silent auction featuring sports tickets and memorabilia, exciting getaways, fabulous experiences, jewelry, and much more. Event tickets are now available. FFI: www.pacer.org

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Two Harbors  218-595-1018

Duluth 218-722-2629

Foley 320-968-7791

Wadena  218-631-2575

Lima Inmon, Kip Shane and Springboard for the Arts. The gatherings are fully accessible: Anyone needing special accommodations should contact Andy Schindel at host 320-615-4672 or Springboard for the Arts. Funding is available for access needs. FFI: 651-294-0907, resources@springboardforthearts.org

Resources to Enjoy!

Enfold presents the free virtual conference on Nov. 1-3. Equality and Inclusion. The free virtual conference is Nov. 1-3.

PACER is hosting a FREE virtual conference on Nov. 1-3.

PACER workshops sampling

PACER Center offers many useful free or low-cost workshops and other resources for families of children with any disabilities. Some in-person workshops are being offered again. Open enrollment is now available and livestreamed at this time. Advance registration is required for all workshops. At least 48 hours’ notice is needed for interpretation. Check out PACER’s website and link to the newsletter of statewide workshops that allows participants to pick and choose sessions designed for their needs.

Effective Communication with the IEP Team will be held 11 a.m., noon Sat, Nov. 12 in Battle Lake. Parents who are significantly impacted by dyslexia for families with children from elementary through college age. Demonstrations will include low-tech to high-tech tools to support literacy and reading. FFI: PACER, 952-638-9000, 800-537-0949, paceronplay.com

Info & Assistance

Move is complete

After more than 75 years on Lyndale and Franklin, Vision Loss Resources, DeafBlind Minnesota, and Contract Production Services have moved and reopened at a new location as of Oct. 10. Their new home is 828 7th Ave. in Falconer Building, 1st Flr., St. Paul, MN 55101. FFI: 612-843-3439, 612-871-2222, info@visionlossresources.org

Many classes available

NAMI Minnesota (National Alliance on Mental Illness) has set up a wide variety of free and in-person online mental health classes. Choices include Hope for Recovery, Transitions, Ending the Silence, Understanding Early Episode Psychosis for Families, In Our Own Voices, Is it Me? Learning to Live with a Mental Illness, Living with Schizophrenia, and many more. Classes are taught by NAMI Minnesota volunteers and run weekly for 10 weeks. FFI: info@visionlossresources.org

Also available are a variety of community events, such as banquets, fundraisers and fun events by and for disability services organizations. Schedules may be subject to change. Some venues still may have mask and vaccine requirements. Please check with a venue or organization before making plans.

The Minnesota Access Alliance (MAAA) provides an Accessible Arts & Culture Calendar for artists patrons who use accessibility accommodations such as audio description, captioning, ASL interpreting and sensory-friendly accommodations. Link to more details at https://calendar.mnaccess.org. Attendees are encouraged to check the listing or venue to find out its COVID-19 protocol and if an advance reservation is needed for the accessibility service.

Accessible events can be submitted to their free monthly events calendar: email calendar@mnaccess.org and/or info@mnaccess.org. Ask for the entire events list or specific lists for ASL interpreting, captioning, audio description, sensory-friendly accommodations or a specific geographical area.

For other accessibility resources or upcoming webinars presented by MAAA, sign up for emails at https://mnaccess.org

Attend open house

Can Do Canines will host an open house noon-2 p.m. Sat, Nov. 12, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at its campus at 9400 Science Center Drive, New Hope. Potential clients, volunteers, or anyone who might be interested in supporting the organization may attend to learn how an assistance dog changes the life of a person with a disability. Through a self-guided tour, attendees will be able to watch a trainer working with an assistance dog, hear from a volunteer puppy raiser, talk with volunteer staff members, pose questions to client services coordinators about the application process, and meet graduate teams from each of the five types of areas. Can Do Canines trains dogs: hearing, mobility, seizure, diabetes and childhood autism. Assistance dog demonstrations will be held 12-3 p.m., 1 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. The puppy raiser will speak at 12:15 p.m., 1:25 p.m., and 1:15 p.m. There will be no pre-registration for this event, though attendees will be asked to share some contact information when arriving. FFI: www.candocanines.org

Oppportunities

Conference

Attend state conference

The National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) Minnesota hosts its state conference Sat, Nov. 5 at St. Paul RiverCentre. The theme is Charting a New Future. Learn how to reduce mental health disparities and advance health equity from the open keynote speaker Dr. Kisha B. Holden. Then choose from 18 breakout sessions on a wide variety of current mental health topics, including children and screen time, the important role of peer specialists, the impact of war on mental health, and many more. Check online for rates and registration information. FFI: www.namimn.org

Councils host conference

There is still time to register for the Minnesota Statewide Independent Living Council (MNSILC) Fall 2022 Conference, Equality and Inclusion. The free virtual conference is Nov. 1-3.

Keynote speaker is Allan Bergman, who has worked nationally as a systems change facilitator, strategic planner, culture change designer, board governance consultant, group facilitator and trainer, including work 15 years with Partners in Policymaking. He possesses an extraordinary ability to engage participants to pick and choose sessions of statewide workshops that allows attendees to tailor their planning and make the best offer 651-772-2502.”

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DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION
A FREE ONLINE EVENT FEATURING NEWSMAKER, BELO CIPRIANI

Join Access Press November 15 at 6:30 p.m. for our first online event. We'll launch our new website, provide an Access Press Update and hear from keynote speaker, Belo Miguel Cipriani, Ed.D. Belo is a digital inclusion strategist who became passionate about making online spaces accessible after being blinded by a group of men in 2007. His books and articles on disability issues have received numerous awards and international recognition. Through his digital access consulting firm, Oleb Media, he has helped countless organizations build inclusive websites, including Access Press!

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