

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 paratransit 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 voter arrives at the polling place, with a friend to help mark a ballot. That friend doesn't agree with the candidates the voter wishes to support and wants to mark the ballot against the voter's wishes.

A residential facility worker and residents arrive at the polling place. The worker has brought the residents to vote, but the head election judge will not let the worker vouch for the residents.

Now what?

These 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. But worries about polling place access are real and may be a factor.

Making sure polling places are accessible is the work of local election officials. People with disabilities and their allies also play key roles.

Justin Page, attorney at the Minnesota Disability Law Center, outlined the resources available at a recent Rev UP MN forum. The center has a hotline to call on Election Day if voters face problems. It is 1-800-292-4150.

Some of Minnesota's Election Day work is proactive. "On Election Day we recruit numerous volunteers across the state to go to polling places," said Page. "We have a tool we came up with in conjunction with the Secretary of State's Office that allows volunteers to check and make sure that polling places are accessible."

These volunteers check for steps, too-narrow doorways and hallways, working ballot marking machines, proper signage and overall polling place access.

Complaints can be addressed in different ways on Election Day.

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Self-advocates are hoping for the return of in-person state capitol rallies this session.

Preparations for 2023 session take place in face of uncertainty

by Jane McClure

The clock is ticking toward the start of the 2023 Minnesota Legislature. Disability advocacy organizations and their allies are putting the finishing touches on legislative proposals. The session starts January 3 so there isn't a lot of time left to get bills ready and into the hopper.

2023 is a budget year so there is much work ahead. The Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (MNCCD) had its full proposals due October 21, after initial meetings earlier this fall for review. MNCCD will announce its 2023 priorities soon.

Much focus will likely be on issues around the state's support staff shortage. "The crisis just continues to get worse,

especially in direct care," said Vicki Gerrits, executive director of Minnesota First 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 worrisome.

Preparations for the 2023 have gone on under a cloud of uncertainty. The November 8 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

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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 Minnesotans 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 spaces accessible. Cipriani is 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



Belo Miguel Cipriani

including *Access Press* build inclusive websites and apps. *HuffPost* referred to him as an "Agent of Change," and *SF Weekly* named him one of the best disability advocates.

Access Press has been able to benefit from Cipriani's vast experience in the work on our own website. Cipriani uses assistive technology that many of our

readers use. After he became blind, Cipriani began to use JAWS (Jobs Access With Speech). JAWS utilizes synthesized speech and Braille to allow users to read information as it is displayed on a computer screen.

He also uses a digital recorder to document his thoughts and an application that reads back to him what he is typing on his laptop. With the use of assistive technology, Cipriani has been able to reinvent himself as a writer and digital access consultant.

Cipriani's work puts a spotlight on the need for online news media to be accessible. That can be a challenge with the wide array of disabilities people live with.

The newspaper board and staff are pleased to unveil a new website, which has been months in the making. "Our goal at *Access Press* is to have a website that is accessible to readers with a wide range of disabilities," said Editor Jane McClure. "I myself live with multiple disabilities and understand all too well the need for good web design. Many websites are a frustration for me to use. Hand movements can be difficult, or I get thrown off by flashing messages. Type that cannot be easily magnified is another problem."

While there will always be readers

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EDITORIAL

On top of so many challenges, a Medicare cut would be deeply felt

Those of us who need home care have faced incredible challenges in recent years. A workforce crisis has turned catastrophic. We clients and our service providers cannot find and retain qualified staff as they can leave the field for higher wages elsewhere.

We cannot find enough staff to fill our shifts, which means sitting at home and not being able to work and otherwise participate in our home communities. Some of us have had to move from our own homes to group homes, or rely on friends and family members. More and more of us who live at-risk cannot find adequate care. This puts us MORE at risk.

Simply put, care delayed is care denied. Inflation has its own ripple effects, adding to the care crisis we are in. Some of us have even faced the closure of our provider home care agencies and have had to look for new service providers. At least three home care agencies in Minnesota have closed recently, according to the Minnesota Home Care Association (MHCA).

Providers already face rising costs, ranging from personal care supplies to motor vehicle fuel. The mounting inflationary pressures in turn stress everyone's budgets. This summer we saw prices rise to a four-decade peak. How many of us canceled trips or put food items back on store shelves because of sticker shock? Those cost crunches multiply significantly for home care provider agencies.

And it's not like replacing the corner store where you pick up a morning cup

Good service providers build trusted relationships with home care clients. Our lives are in their hands. Losing those bonds is daunting.

of coffee. Good service providers build trusted relationships with home care clients. Our lives are in their hands. Losing those bonds is daunting.

Now there's yet another threat. A proposed 7.86 percent Medicare cut to home health services looms on the horizon. The cut is being debated in Congress. It would be a permanent cut if approved and could come on top of an additional \$3 billion in cuts Medicare officials are seeking. That massive cut would wipe out more home care providers and would impact the roughly 33,000 Minnesota Medicare beneficiaries who rely on home care.

Another red flag is the challenge of cases for those referred to home care. MHCA estimates that more than 90 percent of Minnesota's Medicare home health beneficiaries live with at least three chronic health care conditions. Those are far more complex health care situations than the vast majority of Minnesota Medicare recipients live with.

We have to say, enough is enough. Why would federal officials make

cuts that could divert many of us into nursing homes and out of our home communities? The nursing home options are potentially much more costly.

The Preserving Access to Home Health Act of 2022 gives hope. It would block the \$3 billion in proposed funding takebacks and would delay the 8 percent permanent cut. The U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) would be prevented from reducing payments until 2026.

Does that kick the can down the road? Possibly. But it would provide time for a thoughtful look at the issues facing Medicare recipients and home care providers.

We hope this situation can be addressed. It's a double-edged sword. As people live longer, their health issues and disabilities become more complex. Home health care and the ability to stay in one's community is a much more popular option than it used to be.

Yet we have a workforce situation where people can pick and choose jobs. More and more, people don't see home care and

personal care as a career or as a career gateway. We need home care funding and access to care preserved and not cut as Medicare's own path forward is charted.

It's that time of year

No, we're not talking about Christmas. (And yes, the decorations have been in stores for some time already.)

The Minnesota Legislature convenes January 3, 2023. Disability advocacy groups are already hard at work on legislative agendas and bills for the upcoming sessions. Given the 2022 session's ending, many of the bills that were held up before passage are likely to be back.

If you have interest in legislation that impacts your life and the lives of the people you care about, now is the time to get involved. The Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (MNCCD) just rolled out an impressive array of asks from its members. That's a great group to join, as an organization or a an individual.

Or find the specific advocacy group that best addresses the issues you care about.

You may not think of yourself as someone who can be a self-advocate. But why not try? Many groups have classes or online guides to provide education and support.

Self-advocacy can be a good way to venture out of a personal comfort zone. Over the years at *Access Press* we've seen countless people come into their own and blossom as effective self-advocates. Maybe 2023 will be your year to do the same.

HISTORY NOTE

The work of St. Paul's Jewish women is recalled with Vision Loss Resources' move

The move of Vision Loss Resources and its partners this month from Minneapolis to new quarters in Little Canada brings to mind one branch in its family tree.

Vision Loss Resources serves Minnesotans with visual disabilities. It has its beginnings in several groups, including the Minneapolis Society for the Blind and the Mutual Aid Blind Association of St. Paul.

The St. Paul group was started by the city's Council of Jewish Women in 1909. The association became an independent organization 100 years ago.

"The association, which has no capital stock, will endeavor to promote education and training for the blind and near blind by means of training centers and will co-operate with the state and the state department of re-education," a May 1922 *Star Tribune* article stated.

At that time middle-class and well-to-do women didn't work outside of home, and could devote time to volunteering. Minnesota had a large and diverse federation of women's clubs, which took up many causes. Women's clubs often spun off groups dedicated to specific issues or social services.

Early women's organizations were often segregated by race, religious faith

or ethnicity. It's worth noting that the November 9, 1919 *Catholic Bulletin* newspaper reported that St. Paul's Guild of Catholic Women joined their Jewish sisters in support of the association, so they could help their blind neighbors.

History doesn't tell us why Jewish women took up the cause of visual disabilities. Donald Ross's history of African American and Jewish Women's Clubs in Minnesota tells us that both Twin Cities Councils of Jewish Women helped the blind, with the St. Paul council the first to do so. The Minneapolis council later formed a "sight-saving committee" and opened an eye clinic. These efforts upheld the National Council of Jewish Women's commitment to "service to faith and humanity."

Another factor might be involvement by Esther Frankel, the St. Paul association's secretary for 15 years. Newspaper articles indicate that Frankel was a social worker, with a deep interest in people with visual disabilities.

The association's first president was Esther F. Rypins, wife of a longtime rabbi at St. Paul's Mount Zion Temple. Rypins, Frankel and many others from St. Paul's Jewish community had long involvements

with the association.

The association quickly joined the Community Chest, with more than 50 other social service organizations in an annual funding appeal. Another early activity was a Thanksgiving display and sale of items made by the blind, at Bannons Department Store in downtown St. Paul.

The association also joined the Minnesota State Council of Agencies for the Blind.

For many years the association held a picnic at Como Park, with games, races and plenty of good things to eat. One picnic featured Helen Keller as a speaker. Keller was a prominent author and disability rights advocate who lost her sight and hearing due to childhood illness.

Frankel for years organized the association's Minnesota State Fair display, in the women's activities building. At some fairs reading and writing Braille, using a typewriter or weaving mats and baskets were demonstrated. Other years handicrafts were on display.

The 1941 Directory of Activities for the Blind in the United States and Canada tells us that the St. Paul association was quite active in its day. It

officed in a building owned by Wilder Foundation. It owned a house on the city's East Side, where people with visual disabilities could live and work. It had three people on staff there and provided training, employment, recreation and other assistance to blind persons. One service was instruction for people to be able to live in their own homes.

At a downtown workshop the association maintained a small industrial school for vocational training and provided employment. It had 10 employees and one supervisor. Work included chair caning, reed work, door mats, brushes, rugs, bird houses and other items.

After World War II, the East Side house was leased to a group seeking housing for refugees from Europe.

The association continued for many years after that, but its activities were gradually absorbed by other groups.

The History Note is a monthly column produced in cooperation with the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities. Past History Notes and other disability history may be found at www.mnddc.org

ACCESS PRESS

MINNESOTA'S DISABILITY COMMUNITY NEWS SOURCE

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Settlement reached with Andersen Corporation over rescinded offer

Window and door manufacturer Andersen Corporation must pay a former job applicant a year’s worth of pay as part of a settlement brokered by the Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR). The Bayport-based company must also work to build a more inclusive workplace for people with disabilities. The settlement resulted from a situation in 2019. Andersen Corporation withdrew a job offer to an applicant at their Bayport production facility after learning of his disability. “Minnesota is not in the business of excluding people from jobs because of their disability,” said Minnesota Department of Human Rights Commissioner Rebecca Lucero. “The state’s civil rights law requires employers to have inclusive hiring practices, which help employers recruit applicants and foster a stronger workforce.” The company claimed that it withdrew

the job offer because the applicant could not safely operate a forklift. However, operating a forklift was not an essential function of the job. MDHR found that the applicant could safely operate a forklift, a fact that was confirmed by his doctor. When the applicant provided medical documentation to Andersen Corporation and asked them to reconsider his employment, the company again refused to hire him. As a result of an investigation, MDHR found that the employer’s alleged justification for rescinding the job offer was false. The investigation concluded that Andersen Corporation refused to hire the applicant because of his disability, in violation of the Minnesota Human Rights Act, the state’s civil rights law. The job applicant’s identity was not released. Nor was the nature of the disability. He will be paid \$41,000.

The settlement indicates that Andersen denies it violated the law or was discriminatory. The company released a statement, saying “This single instance from 2019 is not reflective of our policies, practices or procedures then or now. We pride ourselves on being a place where every employee is welcomed, valued and inspired to achieve their full potential and we work hard to deliver on this commitment every day.” Andersen officials committed to several steps as part of the settlement, as a means of helping to prevent future discrimination. The company agrees to: Audit all manufacturing positions at Minnesota-based production facilities so they accurately reflect the actual job functions of each role. Create and enforce a policy so applicants can appeal a decision to rescind a job offer. Provide all employees with anti-

discrimination training, including disability-related topics. State officials will monitor the company for three years to ensure compliance with the settlement agreement. Andersen Corporation is an international window and door manufacturing enterprise employing about 13,000 people at more than 30 manufacturing facilities, logistics centers and company owned retail locations. The Minnesota Department of Human Rights is the state’s civil rights enforcement agency. It is tasked with enforcing the Minnesota Human Rights Act, one of the most comprehensive state civil rights laws in the country. Anyone who believes they have been discriminated against, submit this online form or call the Discrimination Helpline at 1-833-454-0148.

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 ombudsman volunteer shortage was a focus of Residents’ Rights Month during October. Training is provided and it can be a very rewarding task. There are currently 14 regions 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. “Volunteers are a critical part of our team, advocating for people living in long-term care facilities to enhance 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 about the services of the Office of 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. Other volunteer activities 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 a mixture of classroom training, 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 visiting their assigned facility, amd are asked to commit to one year of service. To learn more, please contact Volunteer Coordinator Marie Kessler at marie.l.kessler@state.mn.us or calling (651) 890-6308. Details on the rights of long-term care residents are available at <https://mn.gov/ooltc/residentandfamilyresources/>. Find more information on the Office of Ombudsman for Long-Term Care at <https://mn.gov/ooltc/>. The office provides free confidential advocacy services.

2023 SESSION

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majority over their DFL counterparts. In the House, DFLers held a 70-64 majority over their Republican colleagues. But advocates are looking at the most significant legislative changes since 1972. With almost 60 state lawmakers either retiring or seeking other offices, both the House and Senate will look very different come January. Add to the mix the fact that five more state lawmakers lost their primary election bids. While it is not typically too difficult to bring back a legislative proposal or proposals from years past, one wrinkle for 2023 is that many bills will likely need no authors or coauthors due to legislators stepping down. Another need is to plan ahead for possible changes in committee structure and membership, as the faces at the capitol change.

State council survey

The Minnesota Council on Disability (MCD) has already announced its 2023 legislative forum, noon to 2 p.m. Thursday, December 15. The event will be virtual. Learn about the council’s legislative agenda, hear elected officials and their thoughts on disability policy, and learn from citizen advocates about the disability issues that matter most to them. Sign up through the state council web page, at <https://www.disability.state.mn.us/> In preparation for the 2023 session, the council worked for two months on a legislative survey. Members of the disability community were surveyed to learn more about the issues that are important to them, with 286 responses. Those surveyed were asked to choose issues MCD should work on in the 2023 legislative session; and tell council staff how these issues affected them as members of the disability community. Respondents were able to choose more than one issue when asked what MCD should work on during the upcoming

session. Fifty percent said human services, with 47 percent in support of efforts on disability and human rights. Another 36 percent want to see action on accessible, affordable housing, with 33 percent interested in a focus on home care and personal care attendants. Close behind was health care at 32 percent and employment at 31 percent. Health care and health care affordability drew support from 30 percent, with 27 percent expressing interest in accessible transportation issues including disability parking and accessible vehicles. K-12 education and special education is a priority for 24 percent, with 23 percent wanting attention to public transportation and 21 percent supporting public accessibility for buildings and building features such as restrooms. Accessible state parks is a priority for 18 percent, with 16 percent expressing interest in higher education. COVID-19 is an issue for 14 percent, with entrepreneurship/business ownership access of interest to 7 percent. The results will help MCD shape its 2023 public policy agenda and inform discussions with legislators about what matters to Minnesotans with disabilities. What was striking were the responses when asked, how do disability issues affect you as members of the community? According to MCD, many of the survey responses had a common theme: a lack of community inclusion. Participants said they continued to feel excluded from their communities. And they described how it remains difficult for people with disabilities to share in areas of this communal life. Barriers to inclusion included inaccessible public accommodations, costly healthcare, few transportation options, confusing social services and affordable accessible housing that is too expensive. One participant noted, “Community inclusion is the most important thing for

us. Transportation, community-based housing, human services, and advocacy skills to leverage those resources is what it takes to make that inclusion happen.” Politics contributed to a sense of frustration, some respondents said. Last year’s legislature was unable to pass policies that would remove barriers to inclusion and bring people together. Here are a few more responses: “Public accessibility is lacking for sensory needs and means I can’t go to a lot of places without stress. Healthcare providers not being understanding of my needs and unaffordable healthcare options means I skip care that I should try to get.” “I am capable of driving now,

unknown when does privilege will be no longer be a capability for me. Better more reliable access to transportation. Better more affordable insurance covering more procedures and medical equipment. Affordable housing that is larger than one room living space.” “With rising costs of everything, healthcare is hard to afford when you are not working. For me, I am only living off Social Security disability, and that is not much. It would be nice to have affordable housing. Also, make the process with the social services a lot easier. Dealing with social services is like pulling teeth, it is not easy at all.”

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ACCESS PRESS

MINNESOTA'S DISABILITY COMMUNITY NEWS SOURCE

News Match

FROM OUR COMMUNITY

News for people, not for profit: Support our community-funded newsroom

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 a 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 \$120! 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

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ACCESS PRESS
MINNESOTA'S DISABILITY COMMUNITY NEWS SOURCE

News Match



Holly Anderson

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 an organization 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 Cowboys' 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.

Our 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 benefited 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-invites-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 unfairly influencing the voter, and look at access issues.

On the other hand, not every head election judge is an expert on the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act. Some head judges may be inexperienced.

If a situation cannot be resolved by the head judge, call the local election office. It's a good idea to look up that phone number

before going to vote, write it down and take it along in case there are problems.

Keep in mind that physical access issues to polling palaces can be complicated by no fault of the judges. Occasionally judges show up for setup and find that the building staff has made changes without consulting election officials. Rooms have been moved without notice and even entrances changed. Still, such situations must be addressed and corrected.

The Minnesota Secretary of State's office works closely and promptly with county auditors, municipal clerks, county attorneys and local law enforcement officials around the state when possible violations of elections law 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://mcaa-mn.org/>

With federal elections, complaints can be filed under the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002. HAVA is a federal law that reformed aspects of the United States election system regarding federal elections only. The law was prompted by voting issues that arose during the 2000 presidential election. For more information, check https://www.eac.gov/about_the_eac/help_america_vote_act.aspx

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/>

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ACCESS PRESS
MINNESOTA'S DISABILITY COMMUNITY NEWS SOURCE

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FROM OUR COMMUNITY

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.



Clifford Poetz

Poetz is remembered

A celebration and remembrance of Clifford Poetz, a pioneer in the self-advocacy movement and lifelong disability rights activist, is 1-3 p.m. Sat, Nov. 5 at the Spirit of St. Stephen's, 5011 31st Ave. S, Mpls, in the New Branches building. The service will include an opening and closing prayer, readings, a eulogy, and an opportunity to share stories. Refreshments will be served. The event will livestreamed on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/JHpe4-eEWCA>).

Poetz not only defined self-advocacy, he set the example and opened the door for countless others to take up the cause of disability rights. At the time Poetz became an activist, about 200,000 Minnesotans were still living in institutions.

Since 2001 Poetz served as community liaison with the Research and Training Center on Community Living within the University of Minnesota's Institute on Community Integration (ICI). He was a past *Access Press* Charlie Smith Award winner.



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PEOPLE & PLACES



Organizations honored for various disability, human services efforts



Housing Matters

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 Commissioner's Circle of Excellence Awards from the Minnesota Department of Human Services acknowledge 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 for every disabled person 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 community."

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 Goodhue County, 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 Q. 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 whose 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



Hallie Q. Brown Community Center

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 centers offer 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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PEOPLE & PLACES



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.



Heather Shiell

In Memoriam

She helped start foundation

Veta 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.

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REGIONAL NEWS



Hamm Clinic unveils new space

The Hamm Clinic, which was in downtown St. Paul’s Hamm building for more than 60 years, has moved to new quarters.

The clinic’s longtime Hamm Building home was sold last year to a developer, who will convert it from office to residential use. Clinic leaders made the decision to move to a St. Paul building across the Mississippi River from downtown.

The clinic earlier this fall hosted an open house at its new home at 10 River Park Plaza. Much of the building was occupied until recently by Comcast, which has downsized.

“The negotiations for space turned out to be very positive for us,” said Linda Ewing, interim clinic director. A big advantage of the move is ample parking for staff and clients.

Located toward the north side of the building, the Hamm Clinic now spans 13,000 square feet on one level. It previously occupied 8,300 square feet spread across three levels of the Hamm Building, “which made it challenging,” Ewing said. “It is a big upgrade.”

The nonprofit clinic, which launched an ongoing capital campaign to cover the expansion, worked with an architect to achieve a build-out that emphasizes curved walls, natural lighting, a soothing color palette and other emblems of "trauma-informed" design, Ewing said. That includes hallways large enough for social workers and therapists to strike a reassuring pose walking elbow-to-elbow with clients, rather



than leading in front of them.

As a training facility for a variety of therapists, the Hamm Clinic works with three psychiatrist-trainees at a time, as well as social workers and other mental health professionals. The organization is actively looking to hire more psychologists, Ewing said, and interviews for a permanent new executive director are underway. Six offices remain empty and available for future services and expansion.

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

(Source: Pioneer Press)

Violations with education cited

Minnesota’s Department of Corrections violated the civil rights of disabled prisoners by not granting them opportunities to seek needed modifications to its General Education Development (GED) exams, a U.S. Justice Department investigation has concluded.

The federal probe found that the state’s corrections system discriminated against those with disabilities in multiple ways, leading to failed practice tests or official exams, a denial of access to other prison programs and in some cases prisoners being released without the GED they sought.

The Justice Department’s investigation started after complaints from disabled prisoners. It found that Minnesota’s DOC discriminated against disabled prisoners by failing to notify them about modifications for GED courses, practice tests, and exams; failing to give them extended time and breaks for courses and tests; and preventing them from applying for GED exam accommodations.

In a statement, DOC spokesman Nicholas Kimball said that the department was “committed to collaborating with DOJ, stakeholders, and others to resolve any issues they identified.”

“Education during incarceration, including adult basic education, is critical to a successful transition back to the community for the 95 percent of incarcerated individuals who will eventually be released from prison,” Kimball said. “We worked closely with DOJ as it studied the DOC’s GED programming and are reviewing their findings.”

Anne Raish, acting chief of the Justice Department’s disability rights section, sent a 10-page letter of findings on Friday to Corrections Commissioner Paul Schnell, asking that the state prison system take new steps such as changing policies and procedures, putting an Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) coordinator in place, training staff and reporting to the Justice Department.

Raish wrote that the Justice Department interviewed 12 formerly or currently incarcerated people with disabilities and 36 Minnesota Department of Corrections employees at multiple facilities. The DOC also produced documents for review, including files of 24 incarcerated people with disabilities.

“While the MNDOC generally allowed qualified individuals with disabilities to enroll or participate in its GED program, the MNDOC unlawfully denied them an equal opportunity to benefit from the program by failing to provide necessary reasonable modifications,” Raish wrote.

(Source: Star Tribune)

Need for facilities is cited

The situation of a 10-year-old boy with severe autism and aggression illustrates the dire need for adequate housing and treatment facilities. The boy has been at Ridgeview Medical Center in Waconia for seven months. His case is an example of a growing problem in Minnesota for large and even small hospitals — the boarding

REGIONAL NEWS To page 9

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 DeafBlind. In order to safely catch the bus to get to and from his accounting job in St. Paul, he stood exactly where he was trained to wait.

But videos show that Metro Transit bus drivers repeatedly failed to stop where they were supposed to — ignoring their training — 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 INVESTIGATES by Segal’s attorney.

In another case, video confirmed Segal was forced to cross a busy intersection after the bus driver stopped across the street.

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

“They 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 feeling unsafe.”

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 Brian Funk, the chief operating officer at Metro Transit.

Segal lives with from multiple medical conditions, including optic atrophy — leaving him with extremely limited vision. He said he can only make out large shapes and the contrast between light and dark.

“The bus is very large, and when it’s coming, I can see that it’s there because of the size of it,” he said.

To safely get on the bus, Segal waited right next to what’s known as the “t-sign.” The red circle and capital “T” identifies bus stops across the Twin Cities.

“As I stand by the t-sign, I know that if I go forward, the pathway is clear and I’ll be safe,” Segal explained.

According to training records, bus drivers are taught to stop at that exact spot.

Transit officials later confirmed that drivers failed to follow that training nearly 75 times, according to court records.

“Our bus operator members are human and make mistakes,” said Ryan Timlin,

President of the ATU Local 1005, which represents Metro Transit bus drivers.

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 him,” said Rick Macpherson with the Minnesota Disability Law Center.

In 2018, Macpherson and Segal filed a lawsuit claiming that Metro Transit violated not only their own policy but also the Americans with Disabilities Act. “They seemed to take the approach that there was nothing they could do, and that wasn’t acceptable to Mr. Segal. And it wasn’t acceptable to us,” Macpherson said.

The lawsuit dragged on for years as the agency fought back against the allegations.

This fall the agency settled the lawsuit for more than \$400,000.

Funk said Metro Transit’s service in this case fell short.

“It’s not what any of us expect,” he said. “It’s not what our operators want to do when they’re providing service.”

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

(Source: 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 access 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 curb-cut sidewalks and wheelchair-accessible bathrooms -- remains inaccessible to millions of people.

“I was able to participate in a great Wilderness 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 ecology 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 from 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 yearslong effort by local park officials and Friends activists to make what otherwise might be seen as a very inaccessible, wild place into an example of how to provide better access outdoors.

“It doesn’t do much good to have an accessible tour boat, or accessible kayak programs, unless you have accessible walkways and destinations for people to experience,” said Jeff Rennicke, executive director of the Bayfield-based Friends of the Apostle Islands.

(Source: Duluth News Tribune)

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Grants for providers will improve choices for people with disabilities



Innovations that improve options for people with disabilities will go forward over the next two years across Minnesota, funded by a new round of state grants. Ten service providers will share approximately \$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, Mankato and Rochester, \$202,000. Increasing the use of Korean language mobile video conference apps, and providing live support will help address social isolation due to language barriers among Korean 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 Innovations 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 Partnership, serving the Twin Cities, 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 Northeastern MN, Inc. - Employee Resource Project, serving St. Louis, Carlton, Pine, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Isanti and Chisago counties, \$207,000. A new employee resource 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 Hmong, Native American and Somali workers. Activities will include peer mentoring, culturally specific training, tools that let the people receiving services exercise oversight of their services, and a direct service worker retention program.

ARRM – Technology Training, 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 the people using the services, their families, vendors, case managers and providers.

out to parents and county child protection agencies and find placements for them.

But the progress was temporary. The hospital earlier this month reported a new wave of children arriving. What used to be two to four children per month has now increased to about 15 — half of whom are 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 has had a traumatic upbringing, with the death of a sibling and imprisonment ofb 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 Ridgeview chief executive Mike Phelps from discussing any specific boarding situations in his ER, but he said it is a growing problem for many hospitals.

Children's Minnesota is opening an inpatient psychiatric unit in St. Paul next month. However, Phelps said the expansion and recent state mental health investments don't really address this population of kids. More specialized residential treatment and group home facilities are needed, and more staffing is needed to maximize the use of facilities that already exist.

"I can appreciate building inpatient psychiatric beds — that's great — and investing in outpatient mental health services," he said. "But this is in between that and it's a subset of kids who just don't have a place to go."

(Source: Star Tribune)

Dakota County – Wheelchair Accessible Van (WAV) Driver Recruitment, serving Dakota County and the Twin Cities metro area, \$134,000. The project will offer incentives for Twin Cities wheelchair-accessible van drivers to drive for Lyft, providing rides and offering an equitable on-demand transport option for people using mobility devices.

Autism Society of Minnesota – Towards Inclusion, serving the Twin Cities, \$214,000. The Autism Society of Minnesota and the Multicultural Autism Action Network will work together to continue providing culturally appropriate support, empowerment and training to families of children with disabilities through peer-to-peer networks. They will also continue working with providers on the unique challenges serving individuals with disabilities and their families in multicultural communities, while working with autistic adults act as their own advocates to address views of disability in multicultural communities.

Rise Inc. – Supported Decision-Making, statewide, \$207,000. The Deaf-Centered Supported Decision-Making and Self-Advocacy Program will help participants move toward competitive, integrated employment. Participants and their guardians will work with planning specialists in an experiential, person-

centered process to develop employment goals, identify obstacles and create plans.

The Arc Minnesota – Individualized Grant Program, statewide, \$600,000. Individualized grants will offer \$100 to \$2,000 for people with disabilities across Minnesota to move toward personal employment and inclusive housing goals. The Arc will expand outreach and engagement of diverse populations, with a focus on individuals whose intersecting identities create additional barriers to employment and inclusive housing of their own.

DHS distributes innovation grants in three groupings:

The current grants are part of the large grant program, which awards grants of up to \$500,000.

The small grant program awards \$5,000 to \$50,000 a year to people and organizations working with Minnesotans with disabilities.

The micro-grant program, administered by The Arc Minnesota, offers direct individualized grants to help people with disabilities achieve personal goals in employment, housing and community integration.

For more about innovation grants, visit <https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/grants-rfps/disability-innovation-grants/> or email DSD.Innovation@state.mn.us.

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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 Roberta Kitlinski at 651-539-1423 or roberta.kitlinski@state.mn.us to learn more.

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 Minnesota areas: Duluth Fergus Falls, Mankato, Rochester and St. Cloud. All five are currently airing and can be accessed from the menu listeners use.

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 iOS 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.mnssb.org/rtb
Books broadcast on the Minnesota Radio Talking Book Network are available for loan through the Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library in Faribault. The catalog is at www.mnbtbl.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 news, go to the Facebook site Minnesota Radio Talking Book.
Audio information about the daily book listings is on the National Federation for the Blind (NFB) Newslines. Register for NFB Newslines 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/programs-services/nfb-newsline. Donate to the State Services for the Blind at mn.gov/deed/ssbdonate
The sampling published monthly in *Access Press* doesn't represent the full array of programming. More programs and books are available.

Chautauqua*
Monday – Friday 6 a.m.
A Hunter-Gatherer's Guide to the 21st Century, nonfiction by Heather Heying

and Bret Weinstein, 2021. A bold, provocative history of our species finds the roots of civilization's success and failure in evolutionary biology. Read by Jan Anderson. 12 broadcasts; begins Thu, Nov. 10.
Empire of the Scalpel, nonfiction by Ira Rutkow, 2022. From an eminent surgeon and historian comes the story of surgery's development—from the Stone Age to the present day—blending meticulous medical research with vivid storytelling. Read by Dan Sadoff. 14 broadcasts; begins Mon, Nov. 28. – G
Past is Prologue*
Monday – Friday 11 a.m.
Mutinous Women, nonfiction by Joan DeJean, 2022. The secret history 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.
Bookworm*
Monday – Friday 12 p.m.
House of Gold (rebroadcast), fiction by Natasha Solomons, 2018. The Goldbaum family had wealth and power across Europe, but that would change with the shifting times. Read by Pat Muir. 17 broadcasts; begins Tue, Nov. 8.
The Writer's Voice*
Monday – Friday 1 p.m.
Chasing History, nonfiction by Carl Bernstein, 2022. The Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist recalls his beginnings as an audacious teenage newspaper reporter in the nation's capital—a winning tale of scrapes, gumshoeing, and American bedlam. Read by Roger Sheldon. 17 broadcasts; begins Wed, Nov. 2.
Foreverland, nonfiction by Heather Havrilesky, 2022. An illuminating, poignant, and savagely funny examination of modern marriage. Read by Diane Dahm. Nine broadcasts; begins Mon, Nov. 28. –L
Choice Reading*
Monday – Friday 2 p.m.
News of the World (rebroadcast), Fiction by Paulette Jiles, 2016. After the Civil War, ten-year-old Johanna travels across Texas to her aunt and uncle's home after living with Native American warriors who killed her parents. Read by Pat Muir. Seven broadcasts; begins Mon, Nov. 7.
Girl In Ice, fiction by Erica Ferencik, 2022.

A harrowing thriller about a brilliant linguist struggling to communicate with a young girl who has been thawed from the arctic ice alive. Read by Eileen Barratt. 11 broadcasts; begins Wed, Nov. 16. – L
Afternoon Report*
Monday – Friday 4 p.m.
Fortress America (rebroadcast), nonfiction by Elaine Tyler May, 2017. Though safer than ever, Americans continue to protect themselves and their families against crime and terrorism. Read by Glenn Miller. Eight broadcasts; begins Tue, Nov. 8.
Revolt, nonfiction by Nadav Eyal, 2021. An eye-opening examination of nationalism's spread around the world as the promise of globalism wanes. Read by John Potts. 13 broadcasts; begins Mon, Nov. 21.
Night Journey*
Monday – Friday 7 p.m.
The Lost Dragon Murder, fiction by Michael Allan Mallory, 2021. Detective Henry Lau's investigative ability and kung fu skills are pushed to the limit when the murder of an art expert propels him into the nebulous world of ancient antiquities. Read by Tom Speich. Nine broadcasts; begins Mon, Nov. 7. – L
The Oxford Brotherhood, fiction by Guillermo Martínez, 2022. A literary thriller set at Oxford University that puts a talented mathematics student at the center of a murder mystery sparked by the discovery of hidden secrets in the life of famed author Lewis Carroll. Read by Jack Rossmann. 10 broadcasts; begins Mon, Nov. 21. – L
Off the Shelf*
Monday – Friday 8 p.m.
The Swank Hotel (rebroadcast) Fiction by Lucy Corin, 2021. A stunningly ambitious, prescient novel about madness, generational trauma, and cultural breakdown. Read by Laura Young. 15 broadcasts; begins Wed, Nov. 2. – L, S
Mouth To Mouth, fiction by Antoine Wilson, 2022. A successful art dealer confesses the story of his meteoric rise in this sly, suspenseful novel. Read by John Schmidt. Six broadcasts; begins Wed, Nov. 23.
Potpourri*
Monday – Friday 9 p.m.
How to Disappear (rebroadcast), nonfiction by Akiko Busch, 2019. A reflection on how people seek to be unseen in a world that

All times listed are Central Standard Time.
Abbreviations V – violent content R – racial epithets L – strong language S – sexual situation G – gory descriptions

craves attention. Read by Pat Muir. Eight broadcasts; begins Wed, Nov. 9.
Long Train Runnin', nonfiction by Tom Johnston & Pat Simmons, 2022. The incredible true story of the legendary band, the Doobie Brothers, written by two founding members. Read by Jim Tarbox. 10 broadcasts; begins Mon, Nov. 21. – L
Good Night Owl*
Monday – Friday 10 p.m.
The Morning Star (rebroadcast), fiction by Karl Ove Knausgaard, 2021. An astonishing, ambitious, and rich novel about what we don't understand, and our attempts to make sense of our world, nonetheless. Read by Don Lee. 24 broadcasts; begins Wed, Nov. 2. – L

RTB After Hours*
Monday – Friday 11 p.m.
Life's Too Short (rebroadcast), fiction by Abby Jimenez, 2021. A brilliant and touching romantic comedy about two polar opposites, one adorable dog, and living every day to its fullest. Read by Michele Potts. Nine broadcasts; begins Tue, Nov. 1. – S, L
Book Lovers, fiction by Emily Henry, 2022. Sparks (eventually) fly between two literary agents out of their big-city element. Read by Carol McPherson. 13 broadcasts; begins Mon, Nov. 14. – S,

Weekend Program Books
Your Personal World, 1 p.m. Sat, presents *How To Not Die Alone* by Logan Ury, read by Beverly Burchett.
For the Younger Set, 11 a.m. Sun, presents *The Ogress and the Orphans* by Kelly Barnhill, read by Pat Muir.

Poetic Reflections, noon Sun, presents *The King's Touch* by Tom Sleigh, read by Jim Ahrens; followed by *Wade in the Water* by Tracy K. Smith, read by Mary Knatterud.
The Great North. 4 p.m. Sun, presents *Diesel Heart* by Melvin Whitfield Carter Jr., read by John Mandeville – L, V, S, R; followed by *The View from Split Rock* by Lee Radzak, read by Karen Ray.

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Attend open house

Can Do Canines will host an open house noon-2 p.m. Sat, Nov. 12, from Noon-2 p.m., at its campus at 9440 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 at 12:30 p.m., 1 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. The puppy raiser will speak at 12:15 p.m., 12:45 p.m., and 1:15 p.m. There is no pre-registration for this event, though attendees will be asked to share some contact information when arriving. FFI: www.candocanines.org

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 cappella 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

Open Flow Forum

The Artists with Disabilities Alliance meets via Zoom 7-9 p.m. the first Thu of the month. Upcoming dates are Nov. 3 and Dec. 1. Virtually join artists with disabilities and supporters to share visual art, writing, music, theater and artistic efforts or disability concerns. Facilitators are Tara Innmon, Kip Shane and Springboard for the Arts. The gatherings are fully accessible. Anyone needing

special accommodations should contact Andy Sturdevant at host organization Springboard for the Arts. Funding is available for access needs. FFI: 651-294-0907, resources@springboardforthearts.org

Resources to Enjoy!

The Enjoy listings are for arts events as well 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 (MNA) provides an Accessible Arts & Culture Calendar for arts 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>. Be sure 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 the MNA Calendar (and MinnesotaPlaylist.com). A list of other venues follows the event listings.

To receive a free monthly events calendar: email mactfactor@icloud.com 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 disability-related topics.

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

■ ■ ■ ■

OPPORTUNITIES

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 opening 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 working 35 years with Partners in Policymaking. He possesses an extraordinary ability to understand and analyze complex issues, and to present solutions in an understandable manner to diverse audiences. He'll present on Independence, Productivity, Integration & Inclusion of Individuals with Disabilities into Mainstream American Society.

The conference features 11 sessions over three days. Preregistration is required and participants can choose their sessions, including the ADA and substance abuse, transition from school to adult life, parenting while disabled, leadership development for systems advocacy and systems

change, voting rights and responsibilities, diversity and disability, and mental health for center staff and self-care during isolation. Opportunities will also be provided to comment on the three-year State Plan for Independent Living. FFI: <https://mn.gov/deed/events/mnsilc/>

Publications

Anniversary is marked

The Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities announces release of a new publication celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the first Olmstead Planning Committee efforts. 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 Lucinda Jesson that the Governor consider appointing an Olmstead Subcabinet. Gov. Mark Dayton signed Executive Order 13-01 appointing the first Olmstead Subcabinet. The report provides a 10-year summary of achievements and is based upon review of Olmstead reports and interviews with key informants. FFI: <https://mn.gov/mnddc/>

Children and families

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. Other workshops are online 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 familiar with the special education process will learn communication strategies to help them advocate for their child at IEP team meetings to help shape their child's special education services and supports. The workshop is made possible using funding from the Minnesota Department of Education and is a collaboration with Lionseed Bookstore & Learning Commons.

Young Adults and Social Security Benefits: What you need to know is offered virtually 1-2:45 p.m. Thu, Nov. 3. Learn about Social Security Administration's decision-making process. get tips to submit an effective application. How benefits change when a child turns 18 is another topic, as is an overview of programs that can continue benefit payments. Co-sponsored by the MN Disability Determination Services and Social Security Administration

Crisis Planning: Proactive Crisis Planning for Children with Mental Health Challenges is offered virtually 6:30-8 p.m. Wed, Nov. 9. When children or teenagers experience escalating behaviors at school, a proactive crisis plan can help support recovery and wellness. This session will provide information on strengths-based planning in the school setting.

Young Adults and Customized Employment: What you need to know is offered virtually 1-2:30 p.m. Thu, Nov. 10. The training will provide an overview of customized employment and the discovery process. Customized employment is an option for individuals who are significantly impacted by their disability and desire competitive, integrated employment. The presentation will cover the discovery process and how it has led to successful employment outcomes for many Minnesotans.

Assistive Technology for Students with Dyslexia: A Two-Part Series, Part 1, is offered virtually 2-3 p.m. Wed, Nov. 16. The workshop will discuss the fundamentals of dyslexia for families with students from elementary through college age. Demonstrations will include low-tech to high-tech tools to support literacy and reading. FFI: PACER, 952-838-9000, 800-537-2237, www.pacer.org \

Info & Assistance

Move is complete

After more than 75 years on Lyndale and Franklin, Vision Loss Resources, DeafBlind Services Minnesota, and Contract Production Services have moved and reopened at a new location as of Oct. 10. Their new home is at 3230 Spruce Street, Little Canada MN 55117. 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 Voice, Family to Family, Positive Psychology, Creating Caring Communities, smoking cessation, a suicide prevention class called QPR – Question, Persuade and Refer, a special QPR class for Agricultural Communities and more.

The classes are designed for family members and caregivers, persons living with a mental illness, service providers, and also the general public. Find a complete listing of these classes and how to join in by going to namimn.org and clicking on "Classes" or go straight to <https://namimn.org/education-public-awareness/classes/scheduled/>.

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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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