Academies fare well in first round

2022 is not only a bonding year at the Minnesota Legislature, it also could become the largest bonding year in state history. Gov. Tim Walz has put forward a $2.73 billion Local Jobs and Projects Plan for legislators to consider. It includes $2 billion in general obligation bonds, $270 million in general fund spending and $250 million in appropriation bonds.

The bill’s contents could change greatly between now and the end of session, so no project should be totally counted out yet.

Nor can it be assumed that passing any sort of bonding bill is a slam dunk as passing a bonding bill requires a three-fifths majority in the House and Senate. Quarrels in past years have meant that an entire bonding package was set aside.

“In 2020, we passed the largest jobs bill in state history, investing in the projects that local communities told us matter most to them. None, with Minnesota’s strong economic outlook, we have an opportunity to make even more progress,” Walz said in a statement. “With a focus on projects like roads, bridges, fire stations, and veterans homes, our plan will repair and replace critical infrastructure and improve the lives of Minnesotans in every corner of the state.”

Despite a large proposal from the governor, many requests were left out. Nearly $5.5 billion in requests were received for 2022. That includes $84 billion from state agencies and about $1.5 billion from local units of government.

Needs for Minnesotans with disabilities met mixed results. The Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf (MSAD) and Academy for the Blind (MSAB) had four requests in. The governor recommended three move ahead. That is cause for cautious optimism in Faribault.

“We thank the support from Governor Walz’s office, three of MSA’s bonding requests made it into his recommendation to the legislature,” said Superintendent Terry Wilding. “Those requests include funding for renovations to our dorms on both campuses, design funds to assess and recommend a new student center on the MSAD campus to replace aging and outdated buildings; and asset preservation funds to maintain and improve our campuses and buildings to ensure safety, accessibility, and use of those buildings for our student programs.”

“Originally, we had four requests, including design funds to assess and recommend plans for a new pool and related upgrades on the MSAB campus, but due to the numerous requests that passed through the governor’s office, they had to prioritize needs from all agencies across the state,” Wilding said. “We are thankful that those three requests are being considered and hope that the

Drive-through service debate raises issues of accessibility

In Minneapolis and St. Paul, debates over drive-through services are playing out in different ways. The issues are being watched closely by people with disabilities who fear losing accommodations.

In St. Paul Starbucks has opted to remove a drive-through service lane that has been closed since 2021. In Minneapolis the fate of two closed fast-food restaurants remains up in the air since city officials rejected a request to restore drive-through use at both.

The issues put a spotlight on drive-through services, which are often criticized for causing excessive motor vehicle emissions and hazards to pedestrians. The COVID-19 pandemic gave a boost to restaurants and other businesses that provided goods via drive-through services. But with city policies around the nation geared toward addressing climate changing and reducing motor vehicle miles driven, drive-through services could still be an endangered species.

Banning drive-through services has a direct impact on people with disabilities who often must use the windows to get their food and beverages, obtain their medicine, do their banking, pick up dry cleaning and laundry, and complete other everyday tasks.

Bill deadlines are approaching, but questions remain

A month into the 2022 legislative session, Minnesotans with disabilities are continuing to track an array of bills.

More about how those bills will fare will be known March 25. That is the first bill deadline. Deadlines narrow the field of bills, with some moving ahead and others waiting until next year.

While there is no yearly deadline to introduce new bills, committee action is what needs to be watched. Deadlines apply to most bills, excluding those in House capital investment, ways and means, taxes, or rules and legislative administration. Nor do deadlines apply to Senate capital investment, finance, taxes or rules and administrative committees.

March 25 is the deadline for committees to act favorably on bills in the house of origin, be it the House or Senate. There isn’t much time between then and the second deadline of April 1, when committees must act favorably on bills, or companions of bills, which met the first deadline in the other house.
Remember that in drive-thru debates, not all of us walk alike.

Climate change is one of the most serious issues the world faces. Many of the greenhouse gases that trap heat and make our planet warmer come from transportation. So it’s not surprising to see that communities everywhere are urging us to de-emphasize motor vehicle trips. We are all asked to do more biking and walking. Use of public transit, where it is available, is encouraged.

One piece of this effort is in local government policies meant to discourage the use of drive-thru services. Communities around the United States have restricted where drive-thru services can be located.

Minneapolis in 2019 became the largest U.S. city to ban future drive-thru services at restaurants, banks, coffee houses, pharmacies and other types of businesses. Existing uses can stay but new ones aren’t allowed. This was not wholly unexpected as the city in the past restricted drive-thru services in post zoning districts. The Minneapolis ban is touted as part of the city’s 2040 plan to decrease greenhouse emissions 80 percent by 2050. Reducing vehicle noise and greenhouse emissions 80 percent by 2050 was not wholly unexpected as the city in the past restricted drive-thru services in post zoning districts.

In September 2019, Mower County families attended a Minneapolis conference on developmental disabilities. A key focus was to form the National Association of Parents and Friends of the Mentally Retarded. Several community partners made the school possible, including the St. Olaf Hospital physical therapy staff, the local United Fund and the Austin Cerebral Palsy Association. Many private donations and fundraisers supported the school, including the sale of Christmas cards. No state money was used to operate the school.

In 1956, it was known as the Austin Friends of Retarded Children in 1952 and Austin Association for Retarded Children in 1956, with other names adopted later. The name LIFE Mower County was adopted in 2019. LIFE stands for Learning, Inclusion, Fun and Empowerment.

Education and training were major focuses in the Mower County group in its early years. A groundbreaking effort there was Oak Grove, located one mile east of Austin on Highway 16 in the former Oak Grove Public School. Oak Grove was believed to be the second school sponsored by an ARC or similar organization in Minnesota and one of the few in the United States.

Oak Grove was used for other local ARC activities, including gatherings of Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts. The school served children and adult training and classes. Association members used the school for meetings, guests speakers, and parties and potlucks. A lot of volunteer work went into building upkeep and maintenance. One newspaper photo showed volunteers busily wielding paint brushes.

The Austin Daily Herald reported that more than 150 people and who must walk by eye every driveway we can understand the need for pedestrian safety as well. So are children and you need to remember this. Not all of us walk. For many of us, drive-thru services are how we get our medication, do our banking, pick up our dry cleaning and laundry, and get our food. We note how many people have relied on these services as the COVID-19 pandemic has gone on. We understand the need for communities that we can easily walk and wheel through. But changes to the community landscape that ban drive-thru services and eliminate accessible parking make it harder for some of us to stay in our home communities.

Yet during too many public policy discussions of drive-thru service bans, of eliminating parking spots and of other changes to a community’s landscape that directly affect us, the needs of people with disabilities are not even mentioned. It’s beyond disrespectful. Is there more ways to reduce vehicle idling? Many places already offer the option to order and pay ahead. Our “drive-through dilemma” can be solved in ways that don’t exclude us.

**EDITORIAL**

Remember that in drive-thru debates, not all of us walk alike.

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**HISTORY NOTE**

Oak Grove’s contributions to education, training are remembered

Seventy years’ service is being celebrated in 2022 by LIFE Mower County. To mark the anniversary, Access Press looks back at the pioneering Oak Grove school. LIFE Mower County and other Minnesota groups have their roots in developmental disability advocacy organizations that formed in the 1940s and 1950s. The early groups tended to organize around a specific issue, such as recreation or education for people with developmental disabilities.

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In 1956 Oak Grove took shape. The association worked with the Austin School Board, agreeing in 1957 to a $10,500 purchase price and payment plan. Parents and community members shared ideas for programs and services.

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**EDITORIAL**

Editorial submissions and news releases on topics of interest to persons with disabilities, or persons serving those with disabilities, are welcome. We reserve the right to edit all submissions. Editorial material and advertising do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor or publisher of Access Press.

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SUBSCRIPTION $30 per year. Low-income, student and institutional rates available.

ABOUT ACCESS PRESS: A monthly newspaper published for persons with disabilities by Access Press, LST.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Access Press, PO Box 40006, Industrial Station, St. Paul, MN 55104-8006.

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We've all heard that anything can happen in the blink of an eye. Well, Patti Dee certainly knows that is true. Pregnant with her son, Joey, she was driving her daughter to preschool one morning when out of nowhere, a truck slammed into the driver side of her car. Her daughter was OK, but Patti was knocked unconscious and went into labor. She was taken to the hospital where doctors successfully prevented her from having a premature birth. It seemed as if everything was going to be alright.

“When Joey was born, he was cute as a button,” reflects Patti. “Our first boy, after three girls! We didn’t know all the damage that was done to his brain and insides.” In April, Joey is going to be 33, and his brain is like that of a six-month-old. He has suffered from esophageal reflux problems throughout his life and dystonic seizures that didn’t start until puberty. They used to be once or twice a month and now they happen multiple times every hour. Despite the challenges Joey faces, he brings joy to his family, friends and those lucky enough to know him. “He’s just a joy to be around,” says Patti, “we always say; if you take the ‘e’ out of Joey you get ‘Joy.’”

Joey’s family, which includes his parents Dan and Patti and his sisters Reina, Rieanna, and JaNaye, have banded together to care for and create a fulfilling life for him at home. “The doctor said he would never walk but my mom, Pearla, was bound and determined to help him. She would tie a big white dish cloth around his chest and walk him around like a puppet.” It worked; Joey started to walk after the age of two. “We never had any outside help until after he was 18. We actually thought, we can do things on our own.”

Then one day, a friend at church recommended Patti look into services to help support Joey as he and the rest of the family got older. “I’m glad we took her advice,” remarked Patti. Not long after, she was having her first meeting with MRCI Client Directed Services in her own home. Her program specialist told her how MRCI-CDS could help Joey and her family. “Here we are almost 20 years later and everyone at MRCI-CDS feels like part of the family.”

Through working with her county resources and MRCI-CDS, Joey was able to start PCA Choice services. This program allows his family to hire their own staff to care for Joey, that includes his parents and his three sisters. “It helps to have people that know Joey so they can understand what he needs because he can’t talk to them.” Patti was later able to add respite services through MRCI-CDS that allowed her and Dan to take a well-deserved break knowing that Joey would be taken care of.

Most recently, Joey began Night Supervision services which allows for an awake staff to provide care overnight. “The partnership with MRCI-CDS has definitely been a blessing to help Joey have the best life!” Joey spends his days at home with his family while receiving the care he needs. He enjoys outdoor activities like hiking, ice fishing, gardening, and his favorite thing in the world: riding in a boat or on a jet ski.

MRCI Client Directed Services (CDS), a division of MRCI, is a leading provider of Financial Management Services (FMS) for the State of Minnesota. Since 1998, MRCI-CDS has worked with families throughout the state to provide self-directed services to individuals and families who choose to self-direct their own services. MRCI-CDS offers 10 different programs under five different waivers including the PCA Choice, and 245D licensed programs that Joey’s family uses. If you are interested in our services, or have questions, please call 800-829-7110 or visit mrcicds.org.
Children’s day treatment services on verge of collapse in state

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) estimates that as of this year, there are approximately 130,000 children and youth, birth to age 17, in need of treatment for serious emotional disturbances. Children and families depend on day treatment and therapeutic services to provide consistent and intensive interventions where they can thrive in future relationships in school, work and everyday settings.

Children’s day treatment is a site-based mental health program, consisting of group psychotherapy and skills training services, intended to stabilize the child’s mental health status and develop and improve independence and socialization skills (DHS). This daily classroom structure with a low provider to child ratio offers intensive therapeutic intervention that cannot be offered via telehealth.

These services, which have already reduced capacity during the pandemic, are at risk of collapse in Minnesota. Like other healthcare and intensive therapeutic service programs since 2020, day treatment does not receive payment when a child is not in attendance. Coupled with staffing shortages which has caused further disruption to treatment, the financial losses have been detrimental. At a time when children are most in need of mental health supports, the reduced capacity and turnover has resulted in long, inappropriate treatment delays, causing severe, extreme effects.

Day treatments are a critical preventative measure to support children, teens and families out of emergency rooms and hospital settings. As we have all heard over the past two years, these systems are also completely overwhelmed. We cannot and should not lose sight of this vulnerable population that benefits from a site-based support system providing stable relationships and life skills.

As a collective of leading day treatment providers in Minnesota, we are coming together to share this urgent need for relief with the community. The Department of Human Services understands the gravity of the situation and is supportive of our mission. However, without additional funding to close the gap in which we are all already operating, we are at serious risk of losing these programs altogether.

We don’t have the funds to act before child and adolescent day treatment faces a more permanent collapse. Join us in lifting up the lives of thousands of families who need access to critical day treatment services. We are asking the state of Minnesota to provide emergency funding to day treatment providers so that we can stay alongside families in their time of need. Please reach out to your legislators and ask that they support this crucial work.

This was drafted and endorsed by leaders from the following organizations: Cansus Health; Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis; Ferndale Family Center; Fraser, Greater Minnesota Family Services; Headway Emotional Health; Light of the Child and Family Services; Northeast Youth and Family Services; Nexus Family Healing, People Inc.; St. David’s Center for Child and Family Development; Therapeutic Services Agency; Washburn Center for Children; and Amherst H. Wilder Foundation.

Editor’s note: Self-advocate Joy Rindels-Hayden has had a long journey since her 2017 accident, working to ensure she was exiting a bus in Minneapolis. She has worked to bring forward the closing of drive-through restaurants, intended to stabilize the child’s mental health status and develop and improve independence and socialization skills (DHS). This daily classroom structure with a low provider to child ratio offers intensive therapeutic intervention that cannot be offered via telehealth.

Joy Rindels-Hayden testified for the first time in January, before the Senate Transportation Finance Committee. This is her testimony:

My name is Joy Rindels-Hayden and I live in south Minneapolis. My accident happened at 3:40 p.m. January 9, 2017. I was coming home from the bus on physical therapy. My bus stopped at 38th, and Chicago, and I got off the bus to make the transfer. Because of the timing of the buses, I didn’t have a lot of time to make the transfer. The bus stop is near a convenience store. The store’s parking lot and gas pump area were cleared of snow. But much of the snow was pilled on the sidewalk.

I use a walker. The bus driver used a hydraulic ramp so that I could get off the bus. The ground was covered with snow. The sidewalk did not clear properly and the ramp wasn’t on the sidewalk. I stopped over landing my walker’s front wheels. The back wheels got caught. I pulled and pulled. Suddenly the wheel came free over the top, and I fell backwards and landed on Chicago Avenue.

The injury caused me to lose consciousness. I sustained a brain bleed and had an ischemic stroke. The stroke affected my speech. I was very fortunate that my speech and my cognitive abilities came back. I spent 17 days in the hospital and had to undergo rehabilitation. They wanted me to stay in the hospital for another week, but I didn’t have the money for that.

In response to ads promoting accident prevention and safety at 38th Street Station, I called Metro Transit. The person I spoke with understood how the accident happened. I offered to use my teaching skills to write a curriculum and work with committees to educate the drivers, such as in cases for walker users.

There are similar situations moving forward because of the angles of the bus ramps. This incident did not have to happen. I have partnered with the Minnesota Brain Injury Network to include training for bus drivers to increase passenger safety, especially in inclement weather. That is what this bill does and I hope you will support SF 2910.

The accident had a deep impact on my life, physically, emotionally and financially. I am here because the accident was preventable and I want to do everything I can to keep it from happening to anybody else. Joy Rindels-Hayden

More transit driving training is sought to prevent accidents like hers

In the St. Paul case, a few people with disabilities aired their viewpoints on concerns over these locations. From page 1

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Disability issues come into focus at session’s first two rallies

Making disability community voices heard at the Minnesota capitol continues to be a virtual process. Two of the regular session’s largest rallies, Disability Day at the Capitol and Mental Health Day on the Hill, are in the books for 2022.

Both groups emphasized the need to draw on the state budget surplus and to have projects included in the 2022 bonding bill. As both gatherings need were voiced for support and accessible housing at all types. Continuing to build the state’s mental health system was a key theme for the February 24 Mental Health Day on the Hill. More than 500 people statewide heard an update on legislation and words of encouragement from Gov. Tim Walz and lawmakers.

Shannah Mulvihill, executive director of Mental Health Minnesota and cochair of the Mental Health Legislative Network, said the challenges are significant, but not unsurmountable. “We know what works, and we need to continue making progress in building our mental health system,” she said.

Community leaders, state lawmakers and Walz said they are well aware of the mental health challenges created or amplified by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

“We know this pandemic is taking a toll on Minnesotans’ mental health across all ages and types of conditions,” said Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan.

A hospital dedicated just to psychiatric health care at all ages and types of conditions. In-patient beds, there are red flags over a range of health care supports and services. A hospital dedicated just to psychiatric health care at all ages and types of conditions.

“Disability services should be among the top priorities for the state’s mental health system, which is sometimes coupled with systematic racism. The jail and probation systems lack resources to help people with mental illness. We may be accepting applications for our large number of mobility impaired accessible units. Please call us for more information.

Suicide prevention is also important. There are calls for increased funding for suicide prevention, training, targeted support to communities that are experiencing high rates of violence.

Another focus is 9-8-8, designated by federal law in 2020 as the new nationwide, three-digit number for the national suicide prevention. The care-staffing crisis, the need for the state to have more people with disabilities and an array of changes to accessibility were among topics discussed. One sweeping effort led by the Minnesota Consortium for citizens with disabilities (MNCCD) addresses accessibility in a wide range of sensory, cognitive and physical ways, and across a wide range of state, county and school district programs and services.

Criticism was aimed at programs including the Individualized Education Program or IEP, which is meant to guide education for children with disabilities. “Disability services should be among the most accessible but that’s not the case,” said Jillian Nelson of the Autism Society of Minnesota (AuSM).

Much focus was on making playgrounds more accessible and safer for children with disabilities including autism. Making sure that parks are safer, in terms of location and with fencing installed, are among the needs raised by groups including the Multi-Cultural Autism Action Network. The issue came to the forefront last year when a child with autism drowned in a suburban park. Too many children are drawn to lakes and other bodies of water.

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**TRELLIS MANAGEMENT MAY BE ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS**

For our accessible waiting lists at the following affordable communities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>BR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veteran’s East Apartments</td>
<td>Minneapolis</td>
<td>612-208-1712</td>
<td>EFF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veteran’s &amp; Community Housing</td>
<td>Minneapolis</td>
<td>612-333-0027</td>
<td>EFF</td>
</tr>
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We may be accepting applications for our large number of mobility impaired accessible units. Please call us for more information.
The fishing is fine at William O’Brien State Park, which has accessible features.

An accessible trail.

Another disability-focused proposal that made the cut in Walz’s budget is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation fund Walz recommends $1 million to correct physical issues in state buildings that hinder the public’s access to state services and employment. If this approved MCOD will review and recommend state governmental entities’ requests for project funds. That is still much less than what is actually needed.

In transportation recommendations, the governor proposes $5 million for active transportation infrastructure projects that improve safety and encourage walking and hiking. Project examples include new or enhanced sidewalks and bicycle trails, ADA improvements, traffic diversion and speed reduction, and enhanced crosswalk devices and markings. A portion of the funding is for partnerships with Minnesota tribes to develop active transportation projects on reservations.

Accessibility needs are likely to be met in other projects, both for state agencies, local units of government and private nonprofits. One example of this is the city of Minneapolis. Walz recommended Minneapolis receive $5 million to upgrade pedestrian curb ramps, for current ADA compliance. The work could include accessible pedestrian signals and signal modifications. The total project cost is $10 million.

Human services projects eyed

Some state human services facilities that serve people with disabilities were also included in the governor’s pass at the bonding bill. One recommendation is for $17.8 million to design, remodel, construct and equip buildings for the Minnesota Sex Offender Program on the St. Peter campus. This project would renovate 63,335 square feet in the Senate and Tomilinson building and expand capacity in the program’s Community Preparation Services. This additional capacity would permit more individuals to be served in less restrictive settings, allowing the Department of Human Services (DHS) to comply with court-ordered transfers out of the secured perimeter and additional clients to participate in reintegration programming.

Another $10.4 million is earmarked to replace sewer and water systems at St. Peter campus, and $475,000 to demolish Johnson Hall, a 23,822 square foot building that is in poor condition. It has been vacant since 2011.

A $13.45 million allocation is eyed for the Anoka Metro Regional Treatment Center, to remodel the north and south wings of the Miller building. Remodeling would allow the vacant space to be used to serve patients with substance use disorder. The project is phase I of a multi-phase effort to remodel the building. Phase I renovations allow for safety and clinical, service improvements without disrupting operations.

Walz also recommended $5.484 million to add new and or upgrade current security systems, communications and security monitoring systems at Direct Care and Treatment (DCT) facilities. The improvements would enhance the security and safety of patients and staff within the state operated facilities, to add new and or upgrade current security systems, communications and security monitoring systems. Improvements would enhance the security and safety of patients and staff within the state operated facilities.


An accessible trail.

The fishing is fine at William O’Brien State Park, which has accessible features.
Longtime disability services provider Chrestomathy has opened a new day services facility in Minnetonka. The move marks the end of an era, as the nonprofit left its longtime Minneapolis location. Chrestomathy began in Minneapolis in 1985.

It serves individuals with complex needs and various levels of intellectual disabilities. Many clients have challenging behaviors. “We’re bringing back as many of our pre-COVID participants as we can and also dedicating a few openings to others, notably those who are isolated at home with their parents and/or close matches with existing participants,” said Executive Director Paula Moore.

The last two years have been difficult for everyone in society, but particularly difficult for people with intellectual disabilities and comorbid conditions,” said Moore. “They can’t see the big picture. Their lives were disrupted, their relationships disrupted, and their health was disrupted.”

The new location is in a former call center in the Opus Business Park. Chrestomathy serves 22 individuals with disabilities and is licensed by the state to work with up to 50.

Klaber wins award

The Council of Administrators of Special Education has awarded John Klaber the Harrie M. Selznick Distinguished Service award. Klaber is executive director for the Minnesota Administrators for Special Education (MASE).

MASE is organized to promote professional leadership, provide our opportunity for study of problems common to its members, and to communicate, through discussion and publications, information that will develop improved services for exceptional children. Its purpose is to foster high quality programs of professional development for members, to make studies of selected programs that relate to services to children with disabilities, improving the leadership of administrators for special education and to be active in the legislative process.

Klaber’s service to the field of education spans over four decades. He began his career in 1975 as a high school teacher and varsity basketball coach. He then moved through various roles including school psychologist, school administrator, director of human resources, and director of special education.

In addition to being a career-long leader in the field of special education, Klaber has made significant contributions on a state and national levels. He has led MASE since 2013.

Klaber has an unwavering commitment to the field of special education and the immense support of special educators and administrators. His calm and graceful approach has helped MASE build partnerships with legislators, superintendents, business managers, and parent advocates.

During his tenure as the MASE executive director, the organization has grown by more than 20 percent. He was instrumental in establishing the MASE Business Partnership Program, which supports professional development throughout the state while also providing consistent and tight revenue. As the Face of MASE, he has created a collaborative relationship with the Minnesota Department of Education.

Klaber’s dedication to the field of special education and his history of service has led to other awards, including the 2018 MASE Distinguished Service Award and the 2021 MASE Legacy Award.

NAMI Minnesota announces board officers

New officers have taken the helm at NAMI Minnesota (National Alliance on Mental Illness of Minnesota). NAMI Minnesota is a non-profit organization that works to preserve the lives of children and adults with mental illnesses and their families through its programs of education, support and advocacy.

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– Kathy W. | Client Representative | St Paul, MN

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There are beautiful views, the Minnetonka trail system, restaurants and coffee shops, and a few of our clients work nearby at one of the high rises for United Healthcare,” said Moore.

Individuals with disabilities each have an office cubicle to decorate with personal items and store their things. Program Director Nathan Fryett said the cubicles have a stabilizing effect on many of the participants, much like having one’s own desk.

Cooking, karaoke, in-house work, and in-community employment are among Chrestomathy’s offerings. Clients range in age from 20s to late 60s, with some being involved since Chrestomathy’s beginning.

Demand for such services is high. Moore said a great challenge is finding additional quality staff to assist these individuals and this is holding back the resumption of services. Some participants have been isolated at home for nearly two years and have lost ground both physically and socially.

Chrestomathy is on the move to new quarters in Minnetonka

Chrestomathy is on the move to new quarters in Minnetonka. The move marks the end of an era, as the nonprofit left its longtime Minneapolis location. Chrestomathy began in Minneapolis in 1985.

It serves individuals with complex needs and various levels of intellectual disabilities. Many clients have challenging behaviors. “We’re bringing back as many of our pre-COVID participants as we can and also dedicating a few openings to others, notably those who are isolated at home with their parents and/or close matches with existing participants,” said Executive Director Paula Moore.

The last two years have been difficult for everyone in society, but particularly difficult for people with intellectual disabilities and comorbid conditions,” said Moore. “They can’t see the big picture. Their lives were disrupted, their relationships disrupted, and their health was disrupted.”

The new location is in a former call center in the Opus Business Park. Chrestomathy serves 22 individuals with disabilities and is licensed by the state to work with up to 50.

Klaber wins award

The Council of Administrators of Special Education has awarded John Klaber the Harrie M. Selznick Distinguished Service award. Klaber is executive director for the Minnesota Administrators for Special Education (MASE).

MASE is organized to promote professional leadership, provide our opportunity for study of problems common to its members, and to communicate, through discussion and publications, information that will develop improved services for exceptional children. Its purpose is to foster high quality programs of professional development for members, to make studies of selected programs that relate to services to children with disabilities, improving the leadership of administrators for special education and to be active in the legislative process.

Klaber’s service to the field of education spans over four decades. He began his career in 1975 as a high school teacher and varsity basketball coach. He then moved through various roles including school psychologist, school administrator, director of human resources, and director of special education.

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The 2022 slate of board officers will work to support NAMI’s mission and improve accessibility and inclusivity throughout the organization and to improve public and professional understanding of mental illnesses for all communities. President Mariah Owens is owner of Nave Partners, a communications company that specializes in corporate and non-profit communications. She has family members with mental illness. Owens is NAMI Minnesota’s first African-American board president.

First Vice President Jessica Gourneau, PhD, is a psychologist and clinical director at the American Indian Family Center. She has worked for more than 23 years providing mental health services to the American Indian community.

Second Vice President Susan Holter is chief development officer at the University of Minnesota.

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State announces COVID-19 changes

Changes in testing and resources are coming to the fight against COVID-19. Tests Edward said, are being cut in some cases or making changes in the types of tests offered. More at-home tests are available.

Behavioral health hours expanded

City of Minneapolis Behavioral Crisis Response (BCR) teams are now operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The teams are part of a pilot project led by the City’s Office of Performance and Innovation with Canopy Response Inc., a national crisis intervention and support services. They initially operated Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to midnight. Today, those hours operate throughout Minneapolis. Each has a team of two, and the teams can receive calls through various outreach channels, such as water, socks, snacks and toiletries. Minneapolis 911 dispatches the teams. The dispatchers can’t be called directly by residents.

The response teams are an alternative to police response. The Minneapolis Police Department will only be on scene if dispatch determines the need to clear the scene. If the response teams request assistance to complete their work.

People having a behavioral crisis or reporting an overdose, should dial 911 for help. 911 dispatchers will gather information and direct the individual to an available team. MDH can request assistance from the Behavioral Crisis Response teams to complete their work.

Fairfax Prepares For Increased COVID-19 Cases

Fairfax Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Dennis Blazek said that the school district has plans in place to handle an increase in COVID-19 cases.

The district has established a COVID-19 response team that includes members from various departments and is working on a plan to handle an increase in cases. The response team includes district administrators, teachers, and other staff members.

The plan includes steps to support students and staff, such as providing additional support and resources, offering flexible learning options, and increasing health and safety measures.

Fairfax Public Schools is committed to providing a safe and healthy learning environment for all students and staff. The district will continue to monitor the situation and adjust its plan as necessary to ensure the well-being of the entire community.
inVISIBILITY has been published by the Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities (MNCDD). It is a 110-page visual history of the journey to increase the independence, productivity, self-determination, integration and inclusion of Minnesotans with developmental disabilities and their families. Images from the Minnesota Historical Society from the first half of the twentieth century provide an often poignant glimpse into the lives of people with developmental disabilities. Most photos focus on children who elicted feelings of pity and compassion. Rarer still are pictures of infants and adults with developmental disabilities who may have been hidden away.

The photos reflect a time when state officials were focused on building state institutions through Minnesota, and on the eugenics movement. This was an attempt to build a “better” human race by segregating individuals with developmental disabilities from society. In 1923 the Board of Control urged opening a new state hospital to prevent crime, vice, pauperism, and mental and physical disease, with their untold costs to the state materially, morally and socially.

Pictures also show the changes starting in the 1960s and 1970s, when participants in the Parent Movement collectively fought for legislative changes, initiated critical court challenges, worked with the media on exposure about poor living conditions for people with disabilities, pressed for their children’s educational rights, and sought access to vocational training for them. It also details the two major court cases arising from that era, the Welsh case from 1972 to 1989 and the Jensen lawsuit from 2009 to 2020.

The Welch case alleged that conditions in the institutions violated the constitutional rights of residents under the Eighth and 14th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. In February 1974, the court held that people with intellectual disabilities have a constitutional right to treatment in the least restrictive environment.

The Jensen lawsuit was filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Minnesota alleging that the now-closed Minnesota Extended Treatment Options (METO) program used restraint and seclusion in a way that violated residents’ constitutional rights. These rights include the Eighth Amendment to be free from cruel and unusual punishment, under the 14th Amendment under the due process clause, as well as their rights under federal and state statutes, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

The book also details how education, employment and housing have changed, and details the self-advocacy movement. It also shares many personal stories. See the book at https://open.mn.gov/mods/50th/GCDD_Invisibility_FNL.pdf.
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The pandemic has forced some of the Minnesota Olmsted Plan out of step with its goals called plan amendments, with updates released for public review. Input will impact the 2022 Olmsted Plan for the next five years. Updates and take the survey. There are many areas to weigh in on. FFI: https://mn.gov/ olmsted-plan/amendment-survey-2022

Attends rally days

The Minnesota Legislature is in session so it’s time to sign up for rallies and events. In 2022 the events will again be virtual. Some events will be available as livestreamed so check with sponsoring groups.

Disabled Services Day is Tue, March 8, led by ARRAF and MDHHR. The day includes a policy briefing, 10 a.m., rally, and meetings with legislators, FFI: 651-653-0640, 3 BR

Children & Families

E.X.C.I.T.E. stands for Exploring Interests and Technology in Engineering. The free five-day camp is offered by PACER Center for middle school students (6th-9th grades) in the fall with disabilities who identify as girl or non-binary. Camp leaders educate girls about real-world careers, and Camp will be held virtually through Zoom. Opportunities to participate in engineering projects that students can bring to local events and create life-long friendships await. Application deadline is Fri, May 20, 2022. FFI: PACER; 651-832-9900, 800-537-2277, www.pacer.org

PACER workshops sampling

Free workshops are offered four or low-cost workshops and other resources for families of children with disabilities. Workshops are offered at no cost during this time. Advance registration is required for all workshops. At least 48 hours notice is needed to cancel. Check out the PACER website and link to the newsletter of statewide workshops that allows participants to pick and choose workshops that best fit their needs.

Inspiring Possibilities : Learning, and Early Learning for All.

Open Forum

The Artists with Disabilities Alliance meets Via Zoom the 2nd Thu of each month. Upcoming dates Thu March 3 and April 7. Virtually join artists with disabilities and supporters to share information about music, theater and artistic efforts or disability concerns. Facilitators are Tara Innmon, Kip Lewis, and Shane, writers planning creative writing workshops for families and friends of individuals living with a mental illness. The group meets 6:30-8 p.m. on second and fourth Thu at St. Andrews Lutheran, 1400 St. Robert Group Membership is required for workshops. Masks and follow COVID-19 protocols. FFI: Carol, 518-313-8099, or communityArtistNetworks@gmail.com

Open Forum

The System of Technology to Achieve Results (STAR) Program has a new website for its library of loanable devices. Visit Minnesota

visit the site for more information. Funding raised from the Gala will build on the Arch’s 75-year grassroots legacy and co- create a new and improved facility.

The Arts for a New Minnesota centers on the website and link to the newsletter of statewide workshops that allows participants to pick and choose workshops that best fit their needs.

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Less to Enjoy!

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Centers for independent living statewide

Minnesota centers for independent living statewide have gone to more in person opportunities. Locally the Access Board and local boards are offering many of classes, training programs and other services remotely, including training programs for procuring PCA, homemaker and other staffing for clients continue to do that in person. Check with a local center for open hours. FFI: www. macil.org/ New website announced

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