Landmark court case is recalled
by Luther Granquist

Fifty years ago this month Judge Earl R. Larson issued his first decision in Welch versus Likins, a class action brought by residents confined in six Minnesota state institutions for persons with what was then called mental retardation. This lawsuit challenged the lack of appropriate treatment, in large part because of wholly inadequate staffing, and the failure to provide services in the least restrictive environment. In this order Larson declared that the claims had a sound legal basis. But whether more staff were needed or whether changes had to be made in the institution’s programs required the plaintiffs to prove that mere custodial care was not good enough.

Custodial care was the most the state system offered, as the Minnesota Association for Retarded Children (Arc Minnesota name then) had reported after surveying actual on-duty staff at Cambridge, Brainerd and Fairbank State Hospitals in September 1964. In early 1965, Dr. H. P. Bobb at Brainerd said that 39 percent of the residents there received only custodial care “assuring that the resident will not suffer serious injury or physical neglect and attempts to maintain him as he is” but does not enable him “to learn and grow as he should”.

Far more, 59 percent, received only what he called “survival care” (“provides residents with the physical care and supervision necessary to preserve life but cannot ‘assure that residents will not suffer serious injury or physical neglect”). As community-based services expanded, the state hospitals’ populations dropped. Most of the persons discharged were the more capable residents who provided significant help in operating the institutions. Nevertheless, in 1971 the Minnesota Legislature, emphasizing this population reduction, eliminated hundreds of positions throughout the entire state hospital system.

Larson’s order in February 1974 followed the first trial in the Welch case, one that dealt only with Cambridge State Hospital. Expert witnesses presented this thoughtful and compassionate jurist with testimony about the potential of the men, women, boys and girls living there and about the conditions they faced.

Those witnesses included Gunnar Dybwad, who had observed institutions and services for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities around the world, and James Clements, who had been a key witness in cases involving Partlow State School in Alabama and the infamous Willowbrook State School in New York. Other witnesses were Bruce Balow and John Rynders from the University of Minnesota; Travis Thompson, who testified about his work with men languishing in Dakota Building at Fairbank State Hospital, and Mary Hubbard, who told how Project Teach, before it was terminated, gave young boys and girls at Cambridge State Hospital the opportunity to learn and grow.

Larson listened as Eleanor Welch quietly told him and a hushed courtroom about how she and her husband, Dick, alternately left their daughter, Patricia, at Cambridge State Hospital and struggled to care for and to teach her at home.

This evidence, Larson wrote, was “overwhelming and convincing” that “everyone, no matter the degree or severity of retardation, is capable of care for and to teach her at home. Everyone, no matter the degree or severity of retardation, is capable of "everyone, no matter the degree or overwhelming and convincing" that care for and to teach her at home.

Session’s start brings a focus on capital assets and policy

The curtain rises on the 2024 Minnesota Legislature February 12, for a bonding and policy year. Gov. Tim Walz released his bonding recommendations January 18. State academies and other access-related needs were cited, but many local requests were left out. It’s also an election year for the Minnesota House. That means several members have already announced their retirements at year’s end. In one case, there is a resignation taking effect the day before the session’s start.

Rep. Kurt Daudt (R-Crown), who served as Speaker of the House from 2013 to 2019, announced in January that he will resign his District 25B seat effective February 11. Details on a special election haven’t been announced.

Daudt, who represents portions of several counties in east-central Minnesota including the city of Princeton, said in a statement that serving the people of Minnesota “has been the greatest honor of my life.” He thanked his friends and neighbors for their trust in him during his time at the capitol. Daudt was first elected in 2000.

The upcoming retirements include lawmakers who have been champions of disability issues. As Access Press went to press, 13 House members announced that this will be their final session. The list includes Representatives Jamie Becker-Finch (DFL-Roseville), Brian Daniels (R-Fairbank), Pat Garofalo (R-Farmland), Matt Grossell (R-Clearbrook), Shaine Houlihan (R-Hastings), Debra Icel (R-Crookston), Michael Nelson (DFL-Duluth), Jerry Newton (DFL-Duluth), Liz Olson (DFL-Duluth), Gene Pelowski (DFL-Winona), John Petersberg (R-Waseca), Brian Pfarr (R-Lester) and Laurie Pryor (DFL-Minnetonka).

While the retirements have drawn attention, much focus has been on bonding. Walz proposal is for a $683 million public infrastructure plan. It’s much smaller than the $2.6 billion bonding package approved in 2019. That package set a state record.

At a news conference Walz called his bonding proposal, “my big show for this legislative session.”

Legislators will doubt doubtpecly to get projects from their districts in, so the list is a work in progress at this point. The list also leaves out many state needs. It’s estimated that the state has about $6.4 billion in deferred capital

BLIND, Inc. announces services suspension, future uncertain
by Jane McClure

A mainstay of Minnesota’s disability community has suspended operations. Leadership of Blindness: Learning in New Dimensions or BLIND, Inc. announced that the nonprofit has temporarily suspended all of its programs and services. What is described as a temporary shutdown began January 1. The nonprofit’s leadership issued a statement: “We take this action with heavy hearts. After extensive deliberation over our current financial and organizational obligations, we believe suspending operations at this time in order to make future plans is the best and most responsible available course of action. This decision comes after a review of compounded circumstances that have developed over a period of years, leaving our organization with inadequate resources to advance our mission at this time.”

Social media posts brought an outpouring of sadness as well as support for BLIND, Inc. Concern was expressed for program clients, more capable residents who in 1971 the Minnesota Legislature, emphasizing the institutions. Nevertheless, in 1971 the Minnesota Legislature, emphasizing this population reduction, eliminated hundreds of positions throughout the entire state hospital system.

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We're still waiting for equitable ways to participate in our communities

Hi, remember us? We're back with a familiar plea for the 2024 Minnesota Legislature.

Back in December 2021, Access Press made the case for changes to the Minnesota Open Meeting Law. At that time we were in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We said, “If the COVID-19 pandemic has had any kind of bright spot, it is in the area of remote work and virtual accommodations. People with disabilities have fought for such work and community access for many years.”

We also said, “Many of us lost out on opportunities for meaningful work and to be involved in our communities. Our health and disability needs were all too often pushed aside.”

If the pandemic has had any kind of silver lining, it is that we Minnesotans with disabilities and our peers around the world can fully work and participate virtually. In recent months we said that virtual work options were cut back or eliminated by many companies. This leaves us, people with disabilities out of job opportunities.

We at Access Press are just as concerned that nothing has been done at the state level to open other doors for people with disabilities. The Minnesota Open Meeting Law needs to change. It hasn’t.

State lawmakers must be open to change which allow full community participation, especially by people who cannot physically get to a meeting.

The pandemic allowed an array of groups, including local government advisory committees, to meet virtually. The ability to virtually join a local planning commission or library board or advisory committee on disabilities was a great thing for many of us. We could more easily have a say on issues that affect our lives, be those issues a zoning change, a new city regulation or a policy discussion. Pandemic restrictions gave people the option to be on groups and to present testimony. We appreciate and praise the Minnesota Legislature and many city councils and county boards around the state that allow virtual testimony. But we’d like to see other boards, committees and commission able to have this option. We’d also like to see more options to have members be able to participate virtually.

Minnesotans with disabilities already deal with so many barriers. The doors to the halls of power sometimes don’t open for us, literally and figuratively. When we can get to a meeting, we may deal with a lack of American Sign Language interpretation, closed captioning or accessible agendas. We might not even be able to use the podium if it is too high.

Our editor recently had to leave a city meeting she was covering because too many people were drenched in scent, in spite of a sign on the meeting door asking people to be mindful of wearing excessive scent and how it affects others. She got very sick. Yet she cannot stay home and watch every meeting because all meetings aren’t livestreamed.

Livestreaming more meetings and allowing more people to more broadly participate in government need to happen. It would not only help people with disabilities. It would help working parents, elders and people whose work hours would otherwise prevent them from getting involved.

We continue to hear of and see first-hand groups that cannot meet quorum and do business, because they do not have a virtual meeting option. Not having a quorum delays important decisions. Can we argue this on the basis of the Minnesota Human Rights Act and/or federal Americans with Disability Act (ADA)? The choice is at everyone’s disposal really don’t need to have to settle for virtual accommodations as they should. We said it in 2021 and in 2023 and we’ll say it again. We really do need to have virtual accommodations.

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The Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities (MNCDD) website has lots of case history. Go to https://mn.gov/mnccc for the main website.

Another good resource is the website Disability Justice. Here is a link to some case history. Go to https://mn.gov/mnccc/extra/welsh-g4th.html

We hope to see more about Welsch versus Likins? The Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities (MNCDD) website has lots of case history. Go to https://mn.gov/mnccc/extra/welsh-g4th.html

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.mndd.org

Learn more about the historic Welsch versus Likins court case

This issue of Access Press contains a story by Luther Granquist about a landmark court case for Minnesotans with disabilities. Granquist wrote the newspaper’s History Note for several years and worked at the Minnesota Disability Law Center. He was counsel for the plaintiffs in the case.

He was pleased to welcome him back for this issue, to recount the history of the Welsch versus Likins. His daughter, Patricia Marie. She was a resident of the Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis for his daughter, Patricia Marie. She was a resident of Cambridge State Hospital.

Granquist said, “Many of us lost out on opportunities for meaningful work and to be involved in our communities. Our health and disability needs were all too often pushed aside.”

Failure to provide an adequate program of habilitation violated the residents’ right to treatment under the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, as was the failure to develop less restrictive, community-based alternatives for care and treatment. Certain restrictions and conditions at the institutions violated the cruel and unusual punishment clause of the Eighth Amendment.

Richard Welsch in 1972 sought help from the Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis for his daughter, Patricia Marie. She was a resident of Cambridge State Hospital.

A trial in 1990 involving Faribault, Moose Lake, Brainerd and Fergus Falls State Hospitals led to a settlement that included Rochester, St. Peter and Willmar State Hospitals. Another settlement in 1990 led to a final dismissal of the case in 1996.

Coverage of the court case gave people an open-eye viewing picture of the difficult and at times tragic lives of people who lived in state institutions.

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State lawmakers must be open to change which allow full community participation, especially by people who cannot physically get to a meeting.
January not only brought a blast of cold to Minnesota, it also brought our annual rise in respiratory illnesses. The advent of COVID-19 and its variants has increased risk for many people who have gone without vaccines or boosters. State health official report that as of mid-January, 1,086,066 people were vaccinated against COVID-19.

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) would like to remind everyone that COVID-19 can provide safe and free on-site COVID-19 vaccines. COVID-19 vaccines continue to be very good at preventing hospitalization, severe illness, and death. The vaccines are available for those ages 60 and up and should also get an RSV vaccine.

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) is keeping cumulative statistics on COVID-19 since January 20, 2020. As of deadline for this issue of Access Press, they are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total deaths</td>
<td>14,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total cases requiring hospitalization</td>
<td>65,010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total cases hospitalized ICU</td>
<td>15,557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, deaths, and more can be found on the website at <a href="https://mn.healthy.phil.org/covid19">https://mn.healthy.phil.org/covid19</a>.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The page also includes a map of counties with confirmed cases, data by race/ethnicity, and more information. This total reflects only the results from laboratory testing. There are more cases in Minnesota, and the virus is circulating in communities. It is important for everyone to take steps to protect themselves and others through vaccination, testing, staying home when sick, and more.

The Minnesota Reformer website recently posted a story about U.S. Sen. Tina Smith (D-MN) and her efforts to get federal support to research long COVID-19 during a hearing that highlighted patients suffering from the disease as well as experts studying its impacts.

Smith criticized health insurance companies for not better providing for long COVID patients. "I often feel that our insurance companies are designed to figure out how to deny care rather than provide care," Smith said. "And I think these stories illustrate what that means for people living with long COVID.'

The Health Education Labor and Pensions Committee broke up the hearing into two panels. The first featured three patients speaking about their struggles getting diagnosed, finding the right providers and then finding medications or treatments that can actually help them address their symptoms. They also detailed the challenges they’ve faced with private health insurance companies and Medicaid as well as the mounting costs of treatment.

Rachel Beale, a long COVID patient who lives in Southtown County, Minnesota, told senators the disease forced her to leave her career as a human resources director at a community college.

The ongoing symptoms of extreme fatigue, chronic pain and neurologic issues, among others, still hamper her ability to function normally or plan for family events, she testified.

"I've been sick for almost three years and it feels like there hasn't been much progress with long COVID research," Beale said. "I hope that Congress can help with that to move the research forward. But for now, I'm trying to make peace with my situation."

Beale spoke about how her application for Social Security Disability Insurance has been denied twice, though because the agency isn’t required to tell her why, she doesn’t know if she’ll ever be able to access the program.

Read the full story at https://minnesotareformer.com/2023/10/16/patients-struck-by-long-covid-pleaded-with-a-senate-panel-for-more-research-funding/.

The story is provided under Creative Commons license BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Access Press provides coverage of COVID-19 through a grant from the Minnesota Department of Health.

**DISABILITY SERVICES DAY AT THE CAPITOL**

**MARCH 19 • 10 AM**

**You Are Invited**

**YOU WILL LEARN**

- How to access services through the Minnesota Department of Human Services
- How to make progress on selecting the best service providers
- How to work with your case manager

**YOU WILL NETWORK**

- With representatives from the MN Department of Human Services
- With professionals in the disability field

**YOU WILL TAKE ACTION**

- To make Minnesota a more accessible state for people with disabilities

**WHO**

- Any individual with disabilities
- Any advocates for people with disabilities
- Any family members of an individual with disabilities

**WHAT**

- Build awareness and knowledge about our state’s disability services system
- Illustrate the challenges and successes faced by people with disabilities in accessing state services
- Empower you to make the changes you want in your life

**WHEN**

- March 19, 2024
- 10 AM

**WHERE**

- Minnesota State Capitol
- Civic Center Plaza
- Free parking near the Capitol

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, GO TO**

- https://mn.gov/accessservices
- https://accessservices.state.mn.us/policies/disability-services-day-at-the-capitol/

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT**

- Disability Services Program
- 651-296-5074
- www.accessservices.state.mn.us/policies/Disability-Services-Day-at-the-Capitol
Outdated notions about marriage, work must be addressed by Congress

by Pam Shlemon, executive director, Commission on Rehabilitation Counseling Certification

The Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Program was developed to provide financial assistance to disabled individuals. In 2023, 14,930 Americans benefited from SSI. Though there are millions of American citizens with disabilities, eligibility requirements prevent many individuals from accessing SSI assistance. I am the executive director at the Commission on Rehabilitation Counseling Certification (CRCC). CRCC designs and administers the internationally renowned certification examination. Our Commission on Rehabilitation Counseling Certification Program to recognize mastery of well-defined bodies of knowledge within the field of rehabilitation counseling. CRCC assesses and evaluates clients to cultivate an environment where they can achieve their goals with the support of professionals. Self-efficacy and autonomy, develop a sense of belonging within their communities, and live fully integrated lives.

CRC’s also advocate for its clients and help them understand how to navigate complex systems. They help disabled individuals is just $2,000. Anyone with more than $2,000 in a bank account is not eligible to receive SSI benefits. For married couples, the limit increases to just $3,000. This is known as the “marriage penalty” because it is more difficult for married couples with disabilities to receive assistance from SSI than individuals. The federal asset limit for disabled individuals is just $2,000 in a bank account is not eligible to access SSI benefits. For married couples, the limit increases to just $3,000. This is known as the “marriage penalty” because it is more difficult for married couples with disabilities to receive assistance from SSI than individuals.

Congress intends to address this issue with the introduction of H.R.6405, or the Marriage Equality for Disabled Adults Act. This piece of legislation would increase the federal asset limit to $7,000 for individuals, and $9,000 for married couples. This bill was introduced in January 2022, and has stalled in the halls of Congress since. In September 2023, 20 couples gathered at the National Mail to rally in support of H.R.6405.

Looking at economic conditions, it is easy to understand why both individuals and couples want something to change. The average national rent price in the United States is $1,572 (Forbes), and U.S. households containing an adult with a disability spend about $28 percent more income to obtain the same standard of living as a household with no disability (National Disability Institute). Financial instability is a common struggle among clients of CRCs, and a lack of access to education and training far from the only reason for this. When an already stressed economy is compounded with additional expenses for disabled individuals, the community is put at a distinct financial disadvantage. The Federal Labor Standards Act permits employers to pay workers who have disabilities less than minimum wage. This practice is known as subminimum wage, which advocates call exploitative and discriminatory. In November 2023, more than 20 disability advocacy groups signed a letter to the U.S. Department of Labor demanding action to do away with this discriminatory practice. The discussion of the policy that says the end of the program would limit employment opportunities for disabled individuals.

After hearing arguments from both sides, 35 states have rolled back subminimum wage policies. Additionally, the Department of Labor is currently undergoing a comprehensive review of the program. As society moves away from outdated schools of thought regarding disability policy, more people are realizing that disability is not a barrier, but a driver to a healthy marriage.

It is increasingly understanding that disabled Americans cannot be ignored. Regardless of where you stand on these issues, it is important to educate yourself and make your voice heard in an election year by supporting candidates who trust you to take action.

To learn more about CRCC, visit www.crccertification.com

Doctor-prescribed suicide groups present one side of the story; act cautiously

by Katherine Ware

Here we go again. The wealthy, white, disproportionately powerful lobby groups that promote fake science and provide for people with disabilities are back at it in Minnesota. So bold, they even buy advertisements in our own state newspapers. I have seen no evidence that publicize to woo people into supporting politicians or politicians’ ads that led me and you. They don’t want “equity at the end of life” or equity at any time during the lives of people with disabilities and their families. They don’t want “equity” for disabled people. They don’t want “equity” for people with disabilities and their families. They are not about promoting the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Integration Mandate. They are not about ensuring that our children and our disabled are provided for. They are not about providing prescriptions for suicide during a catastrophic staffing crisis. I have watched them-without end-demanding that people have actual choice in where they live, who they live with, and who provides their care.

Compassion & Choices members and other groups want to be able to end their lives through a doctor’s diagnosis, truly killing millions to become people with disabilities. Many of those with disabilities are killed for not being able to receive a disability. The state government and society does not have the power to restrict this privileged lobby. People with physical disabilities lack the autonomy to get out of bed and provide transportation to attend press conferences or to testify in Minnesota, or to live in supportive care environments that just won’t do this.

Doctor and Practitioner-prescribed suicide without a family and friends whose community and their families are already against my son Kylen and his peers. We are all looking at society and a drain on resources and finances. Let’s be clear and agree that it is poverty, not pain, that drives people to doctor prescribed suicide. It is lack of direct staff care providers to help people with disabilities to bathe, and get dressed, transfer, and position themselves. Caregivers that lead disabled families to enable themselves so that they are not “burden to their family.”

Doctors for years have been promoting the Olmstead Decision is available to everybody with disabilities. People with disabilities experience autonomy without staff. People with disabilities lose autonomy when they are forced to live in a congregate care institutional facility that the state calls ‘community’ living. People with disabilities feel like a burden on their mom, dad, aunt, uncle, brother, spouse, siblings, and friends when they do not have staff help. People with disabilities feel economic financial burden when the system forces them to live in poverty and their family members cannot be gainfully employed because there are no staff to provide the direct care for activities of daily living. People cannot enjoy activities in their lives without staff to assist them. People with disabilities experience incontinence. The stigma, embarrassment, and undignified nature of incontinence can be reduced or eliminated with the right staff to provide this assistance.

The Department of Labor is currently undergoing a comprehensive review of the program. As society moves away from outdated schools of thought regarding disability policy, people are realizing that disabilities are not barriers, but drivers to a healthy marriage.

Regardless of where you stand on these issues, it is important to educate yourself and make your voice heard in an election year by supporting candidates who trust you to take action to protect our lives.

Katherine J. Ware, RN BSN PHN

South St. Paul
It’s not clear how many residential and non-residential students were affected by the suspension of service. The BLIND, Inc. website indicates that there were fewer than a dozen staff members when services were suspended.

Vision Loss Resources (VLR) responded to the temporary shutdowns, noting that the decision leaves it at the region’s only comprehensive provider of services for people with visual disabilities. “Our student enrollment has grown and I’m pleased to report that we are ready and willing to take on this new challenge,” said Matt Kramer, VLR president. The Little Canada-based nonprofit reported that we are ready and willing to take on the additional Metro Mobility buses for the historic character.

Unfortunately, we have determined that we are not in a position to undertake the necessary building renovations while still providing quality adjustment-to-blindness training,” the nonprofit stated. “We recognize that this decision will be painful to our students, our dedicated staff, and to all of our supporters in the community . . . . We were not able to find a viable way to alter the timing of this decision.”

“We deeply appreciate all of the work everyone affiliated with BLIND, Inc. has done over the past three decades to help blind people build the skills and confidence to live the lives they want. Our high-quality training has impacted thousands of people, not only the many students that have walked with us, but also the blind community who connect with the positive philosophy and high expectations demonstrated from our alumni and friends. With the continued support of our board, partners and community, our goal in the coming months is to re-imagine what adjustment to blindness training can be, and to reopen our doors with fresh approaches and insights and on a sound financial footing.”

During the transition, BLIND Inc. leadership is working with the National Federation of the Blind (NFB), Louisiana Center for the Blind and Colorado Center for the Blind. Chris Danielon, an NFB spokesperson, said there aren’t more details to announce at this time. The suspension of services is intended to be temporary. Community members should wait for more announcements.

This is a fluid situation,” Danielon said. “BLIND, Inc. was established in 1986 as a training center and community of blind and low-vision people. Its programs have done highly regarded work as one of the top training centers of its kind on the United States. It has provided training programs for people of all ages, combining hands-on classroom instruction in topics such as Braille, home-management, industrial arts and the use of technology with community-based lessons. An example of a lesson is navigating public transportation independently and travel with a cane. Mentorship has long been a key part of BLIND, Inc.’s work. Many staff members have visual disabilities. The largest program has been a nine-month comprehensive programs, with full-time students preparing for careers, and learning home management and public transit use.

BLIND, INC.

From page 1

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BLIND, Inc.’s longtime home

22nd Street in Minneapolis. The English Gothic style house was built in 1912 for the son of the flour milling company founder, at a cost of $300,000. The mansion was occupied by the Pillsbury family until 1939. It was then used by the Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts and the Guthrie Theatre before its acquisition by BLIND, Inc. in 1993.

The mansion is on the National Register of Historic Places, which is a factor with any needed building improvements. The BLIND, Inc. leadership explained that the building needs millions of dollars in renovations, to be done in a manner that preserves its historic character.

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This is a fluid situation,” Danielon said. “BLIND, Inc. was established in 1986 as a training center and community of blind and low-vision people. Its programs have done highly regarded work as one of the top training centers of its kind on the United States. It has provided training programs for people of all ages, combining hands-on classroom instruction in topics such as Braille, home-management, industrial arts and the use of technology with community-based lessons. An example of a lesson is navigating public transportation independently and travel with a cane. Mentorship has long been a key part of BLIND, Inc.’s work. Many staff members have visual disabilities. The largest program has been a nine-month comprehensive programs, with full-time students preparing for careers, and learning home management and public transit use.

BLIND, INC.

From page 1

who had to scrape to find other services. It’s not clear how many residential and non-residential students were affected by the suspension of service. The BLIND, Inc. website indicates that there were fewer than a dozen staff members when services were suspended.

Vision Loss Resources (VLR) responded to the temporary shutdowns, noting that the decision leaves it at the region’s only comprehensive provider of services for people with visual disabilities. “Our student enrollment has grown and I’m pleased to report that we are ready and willing to take on this new challenge,” said Matt Kramer, VLR president. The Little Canada-based nonprofit reported that we are ready and willing to take on the additional Metro Mobility buses for the historic character.

Unfortunately, we have determined that we are not in a position to undertake the necessary building renovations while still providing quality adjustment-to-blindness training,” the nonprofit stated. “We recognize that this decision will be painful to our students, our dedicated staff, and to all of our supporters in the community . . . . We were not able to find a viable way to alter the timing of this decision.”

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Two disability service providers honored on King Day

Two disability service providers were honored with Champions of Change Awards, as part of the 2024 One Dream, One Minnesota event January 15. The 38th annual state celebration of the life and legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was held January 15, with Gov. Tim Walz and Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan as hosts. The event featured speakers and performances, as well as an awards ceremony.

Metro Deaf School is one of the 2024 honorees. The St. Paul based school is the first deaf charter school in the United States and the third charters school to open its doors in Minnesota. The school serves a population of 155 students, ranging in age from births to 21 years. Students come from 43 different residential school districts. Many districts directly place students at the school work in partnership with Metro Deaf School.

Students reflect the full diversity of Minnesota and experience the life-changing opportunities to be educated in a bilingual English/ASL setting where they can communicate directly with every staff member and peer.

Workabilities Inc. was another award recipient. The day training and habilitation program has served clients with disabilities since 1954. Clients range from those who are medically fragile with complex physical needs to those who need minimal coaching and supervision, and benefit from paid work opportunities.

Workabilities provides day training and habilitation, pre-vocational and structured day services. The non-profit has more than 200 workers and provides a reliable and dependable workforce. It provides services that are unique in that the non-profit is able to provide training and support to adults with developmental disabilities with the widest range of needs and abilities. This is accomplished through four separate groups, each with its own program focus and staffing capability. Clients are provided paid work opportunities, (primarily in-center with community job sites available), opportunities to volunteer within our community as well as work skill training to develop and maintain skills. Activities are offered that focus on social and recreational skills as well as functional independence.

Other honorees are Sen. Jamie Becker-Finn, Pilgrim Baptist Church of St. Paul, Bo Thao-Urbale of the Coalition of Asian American Leaders, the Minneapolis-based Monitors Club, Henry Jimenez of the Latino Economic Development Center and Kelly Drummer of Migizi Communications.

Grant provides adaptive sports gear

A grant from the Kelly Brush Foundation has helped a Gaylord resident start the new year with adaptive sports gear.

Kristin Burgess of Gaylord will enjoy new sports equipment that will help her achieve her goals for an active lifestyle, despite her spinal cord injury. She has been an active member of Minnesota’s disability community. Sports and an active lifestyle help many people stay healthy and connected to friends and family. For people with mobility challenges, however, being active can be difficult to access, due to the high cost of adaptive sports equipment, which is almost never covered by insurance. To help people lead active, engaged lives, the Kelly Brush Foundation provides funding, resources, and experiences to people with spinal cord injuries, helping them find ways to engage or reengage with sport.

Burgess loves to be active, and her new Handcycle will empower her to reconnect with a loved activity and a healthy lifestyle. It will also make it easier to spend time with family and friends, and create a deeper connection with others in the community.

She was awarded this grant as a part of the Kelly Brush Foundation’s Fall 2023 grant cycle. “It’s exciting to help Kristin kick off 2024 with her new Handcycle, helping her stay active and healthy,” said Kelly Brush Foundation Executive Director Edie Perkins. “While Kristin and others with spinal cord injuries work hard at their recovery, the process can be tedious and prescriptive.

Adaptive sports are a way to break free of the structure, physical therapy clinics, and doctors’ offices, helping people enjoy life in ways that we’re all meant to – by moving our bodies and experiencing the full world around us. I can’t wait to see how this new equipment helps Kristin enjoy life and make new connections.”

The Vermont-based Kelly Brush Foundation was founded in 2006 by Kelly Brush and her family after she sustained a spinal cord injury while racing in an NCAA alpine ski race. To date, the Kelly Brush Foundation has awarded more than 1,700 adaptive sports equipment grants.

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Joe Mauer is a Minnesota sports icon and Twins Hall of Famer. But long before he was one of the best-ever Major League Baseball players, he was making an impact with kindness and compassion. Based on true stories, the new book The Right Thing to Do follows Joe Mauer as he grows from a child athlete to a high-school superstar and eventually becomes one of the best-ever Major League Baseball players.

Readers will learn valuable lessons about making good choices, choosing kindness, and telling the truth. They will enjoy heartwarming examples of healthy friendships and uplifting messages about following your dreams, and all proceeds benefit Thumbs Up and Highland Friendship Club, Minnesota nonprofit organizations that serve people with disabilities.

Joe Mauer is a Minnesota sports icon. Born and raised in St. Paul, Mauer was the number-one pick in the amateur baseball draft chosen by the Minnesota Twins in 2001. After a stellar 15-year career, the Twins retired his number and inducted him into the Minnesota Twins Hall of Fame. He is a six-time All-Star, three-time batting champion, three-time winner of the Golden Glove Award, and the 2009 American League MVP.

In his collaborative, debut children's book, Mauer partnered with Thumbs Up and Highland Friendship Club, donating all of the story's profits to support the nonprofit organizations and their missions. He continues to be a community leader and embodies the message in The Right Thing to Do: Joe Schmit is it a sports broadcaster, keynote speaker and author. He has won 19 Emmy awards from the National Television Academy and is a member of the Minnesota Speakers Hall of Fame. Dedicated to inspiring others toward meaningful work, Schmit has published two books on purpose and significance: Silent Impact and The Impact Blueprint. In collaboration with Mauer, Schmit made his children's book debut with The Right Thing to Do. As part of his ongoing commitment to community involvement and charitable contributions, all proceeds from the book benefit Thumbs Up and Highland Friendship Club.
Disabled veterans close Duluth brewery

After three years in business, Duluth’s Warrior Brewing has announced that it will close. The brewery, which is in the Lincoln Park neighborhood, is one of the city’s most popular spots, featuring a variety of beers and a lively atmosphere. The decision to close was made after a difficult period for the brewery, which had struggled to find its footing in the competitive local market.

In a sign of how much demand there is for such settings, all of the units by the Duluth project were leased within a week of construction. The developer, Trellis Management, put together a $1.5 million package to fund the new units, and the tenants will pay $500 for a single tenant, $700 for a couple, and $1,200 for a family of four. The units are designed to be affordable, with rents ranging from $37,000 to $57,000 for a family of four.

A federal court case that resulted in more than $111 million being awarded to a former patient in a case involving Anuj Thapa. Thapa was awarded more than $111.25 million in damages after receiving care from the defendant in Minnesota – only a dozen units statewide – but those facilities have closed 3,000 beds for residents who might otherwise be able to afford the upkeep on the campus.

Economic damages.

To instead proceed with a new trial for non-economic damages from $110 million to $10 million and to instead proceed with a new trial for non-economic damages.

The veteran-owned brewery officially began brewing with the local nonprofits serving veterans and first responders to take part in brewing with the company, with a portion of proceeds from the collaboration being given back to the nonprofits.

The veteran-owned brewery officially began brewing with the company, with a portion of proceeds from the collaboration being given back to the nonprofits. (Source: Star Tribune)

One block from George Floyd Square, an affordable housing complex has blossomed on the site of the historic Calvary Lutheran Church in south Minneapolis.

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MDI announces expansion to new Roseville location; program to grow

MDI has announced the expansion of its operations to a new location in Roseville. Located at 1751 Bayway Dr. W., 4,000 square feet of additional office space will support the continued growth of the nonprofit's flourishing Unified Work program and the employees who make it possible.

The location – where MDI will advance its mission of empowering people with disabilities – is about one mile from MDI’s Minneapolis headquarters. An expansion of MDI’s existing operations, where the team creates plastic containers to ship, pack and store products for organizations across the country. About half of MDI’s employees are people with disabilities. Click here to download photos of the new space.

Launched in 2017, MDI’s signature Unified Work program offers in-person and virtual classes to equip individuals with disabilities across Minnesota with the soft skills necessary for success in the workplace. More than 800 people have graduated from a Unified Work Academy class since the program began. In addition to being offered in MDI employees with disabilities, Unified Work is open to outside organizations and community members facing employment barriers.

Schneider’s residential treatment programs include ReEntry House in Minneapolis and Carlson Drake House in Bloomington. He and business partner Tom Paul launched what is now RADIAS Health. He was a supporter of outreach to the homeless part of RADAIS’s broad range of services. He also was an adjunct professor at St. Olaf College.

In Memoriam

Terry Schneider’s pioneering years working in community mental health spanned more than 40 decades of change. Schneider died in December after heart surgery. He was 67 and lived in Eden Prairie.

He grew up on a farm near New Ulm, in a family of nine children. He became interested in mental health during a high school career day. Schneider began opening small residential treatment facilities in the 1960s, helping people live as independently as possible. He was seen as someone at the forefront of mental health systems change, seeking ways to enrich the lives of clients and help people overcome barriers.

He spent his career in community mental health advocating for people with developmental disabilities. He held positions at the local, state and national levels. Attending the White House celebration of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was a highlight in his volunteer life.

Dunn served in many posts

The Arc Southeastern Minnesota had a dedicated volunteer in David “Dave” Dunn. Dunn died in January. He was 68 and lived in Rochester.

Born in Huron, South Dakota, Dunn graduated from Yankton High School in 1953 and attended Yankton College for one year. He then enlisted in the U.S. Army, serving stateside and in Japan as a photographer.

After service Dunn graduated from the University of South Dakota in Vermillion. After marriage he taught in Sioux Falls, S.D., and Rochester. He became director of the Olmsted County History Center in 1964, later moving to IBM where he spent most of his career. He was also an adjunct professor at St. Mary’s and ran a management training firm.

This born educator held many volunteer opportunities for our community. We’re incredibly excited by the many opportunities ahead to advance our vision.

The new Roseville space was formerly home to a Dunn Brothers Coffee Service Center. It includes added space and amenities for future experiential learning opportunities – like a coffee shop with employment opportunities for Unified Work participants and community partners, open for business during MDI’s operating hours.

MDI is a manufacturer and nonprofit social enterprise with the mission to provide employment opportunities and services for people with disabilities. The company creates high-quality plastic containers to ship, pack and store products, and offer unparalleled product assembly and packaging services for organizations across the country, from small businesses to Fortune 500 companies.

MDI has five facilities throughout Minnesota in Minneapolis, Roseville, Grand Rapids, Hibbing and Cohasset. For more information about MDI, visit mdi.org.

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All about Radio Talking Book

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

Hear 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.

The sampling published monthly in Access Press doesn’t represent the full array of programming. Listen to RTB’s live or archived programs online at www.mnssb.org/rtb, and learn more about programs.

Missed a book broadcast? Access it for one or five following weeks in the online weekly program archive.

For help accessing the channel, contact Robin Very, 651-539-1624 or SSB EQUIPMENT@state.mn.us.

If the book’s broadcast is no longer available in the archive, contact staff librarian Dan Gauzman at 651-539-1422 or dan.gauzman@state.mn.us.

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.mnlib.org. Click on the Link the Library Catalog. Call the Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library at 800-722-0550, Mon–Fri, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. CST.

For updates, go to the Facebook site Minnesota Radio Talking Book.

For information about the daily book listings is on the National Federation for the Blind (NFB) Newsline. Register for NFB NEWSLINE at www.nfb.org/newsline.

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

Chautauqua*

Monday – Friday 6 a.m.

Outline, notification by Peter Attia, 2023.

A groundbreaking manifesto on living longer and better that challenges the conventional medical thinking on aging.

Read by Carol McPherson. 21 broadcasts; begins Mon, Feb. 5.

Bookworm*

Monday – Friday 12 p.m.

The Ski Jumper (rebroadcast), fiction by Peter Geyer, 2022. A writer and former jumper facing a terminal diagnosis takes on more leaps—into a past of soaring flights and broken family bonds. Read by Tom Speich. 14 broadcasts; begins Mon, Feb. 5.

You Are Here, fiction by Karin Lin- Greenberg, 2023. A local shopping mall limps to its final closing, its employees and customers face the transition and discover their connections. Read by Carol McPherson. 11 broadcasts; begins Mon, Feb. 26.

The Writer’s Voice*

Monday – Friday 1 p.m.


Love, Pamela, nonfiction by Pamela Anderson, 2023. The actress, activist, and once infamous Playboy Playmate reclames the narrative of her life in a memoir that defies expectation. Read by Jill Wolf. Six broadcasts; begins Thu, Feb. 29. – L

Choice Reading*

Monday – Friday 2 p.m.

A rip-roaring adventure full of blood, guts, and camaraderie set in 1346 during the Hundred Years’ War between France and England. Read by Gary Rodgers. 16 broadcasts; begins Wed, Feb. 7. – L, S, V, G


Afternoon Report*

Monday – Friday 4 p.m.

Nine Black Robes, nonfiction by Joan Biskupic, 2013. An urgent and inside look at the history-making era in the Supreme Court during the Trump and post-Trump years. Read by John Potts. 15 broadcasts; begins Mon, Feb. 5.

The Persuaders, nonfiction by Anand Giridharadas, 2022. An insider’s account of activists, politicians, educators, and everyone citizens working to change minds, bridge divisions, and fight for democracy. Read by Phil Rosenbaum. 16 broadcasts; begins Mon, Feb. 28. – L

Night Journey*

Monday – Friday 7 p.m.

Every Man a King, fiction by Walter Mosley, 2023. A carefully plotted mystery about a black private detective investigating whether a white nationalist is being unjustly set up. Read by Dan Sadoff. 10 broadcasts; begins Mon, Feb. 12. – L, S, V, R.


Potpourri*

Monday – Friday 9 p.m.

Munger at Minnesota Point, nonfiction by Jeffrey M. Sauve, 2022. The sensational true story of a young, unidentified woman found slain on the isolated sandy shores of Minnesota Point, Duluth, in 1894. Read by John Schmidt. Four broadcasts; begins Thu, Feb. 8.


Your Table is Ready, nonfiction by Michael Cecchi-Azzolino, 2022. A front-of-the-house kitchen confidential from a career maître d’hôtel who manned the front of the room in New York City’s hottest and most in-demand restaurants. Read by Gregorich. 13 broadcasts; begins Mon, Feb. 28. – L, S

Angels of Mercy*, nonfiction by Pamela Greenberg, 2023. As a local shopping mall limps to its final closing, its employees and customers face the transition and discover their connections. Read by John Beal. 10 broadcasts; begins Thu, Feb. 15.

For help accessing the archive, contact Robin Very, 651-539-1624 or SSB EQUIPMENT@state.mn.us.

In the online weekly program archive.

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Two Harbors  218-595-1018
Wayzata 952-473-0502

recreation Team. FFI: 612-775-2311,
opportunities. It is held at the University of
about adaptive sports and recreational
students, volunteers and more to learn
in Minnesota. Organizers hope to have
Save date for expo
Save the date of Sat, April 20 for the
opportunities in Minnesota on hand.
and professionals with disabilities,
but also bringing their work into
be among the many special activities
understanding of the artists’ vision of the
eight day – Feb. 1 and March 7. Virtual join artists with disabilities and supporters to share
visual art, writing, music, theater and artistic
features. Facilitators are Tasa Immon and Adam Sturdevant from Springboard for the
Arts. Anyone needing accommodations including ASL interpreting or captioning should contact
Sturdevant at Springboard. Funding is available for access needs. FFI: 651-294-0907, resources@springboardforthearts.org,
openforum@mnaccess.org.

Resources to Enjoy!
The listings are for arts events as well as
bar carts, fundraisers, walks and other fun
events by and for disability services
organizations. Schedules may be subject to
change, so check for the most current
organization before making plans. Arrange. For
disability accommodations well in
advancing to the event.

Disability service organizations typically send e-news blasts and have social media. Basic
ways to find out about events.

The Minnesota Access Alliance (MNA) sponsors an Arts & Culture Calendar for arts patrons who use accessibility accommodations such as
low vision, as well as those
desiring ASL interpreting and sensory-friendly
accommodations. Link to more details at

The 35th anniversary Fishing Ball Gala,
celebrating Can Do Cottage, was a sold-out
Blu Mall of America is on Sat, Feb. 17.
Enjoy dinner, inspiring stories, games, and
silence the live auction – all benefits the
American Songbook, and others
resistance is needed for an accessibility

Accessible events can be submitted to
the MNA Calendar (and MinnesotaPlaylist.org).
To receive a free monthly events
calendar, email info@mnaccess.org.

Post your event online
Further details and more event
listings online. There is a word limit
and we require that those posting
information include event costs as well as

Low Vision Tools to Support Independence is 2-3:15 p.m, Wed, Feb. 7. Online. The workshop will provide
an overview of technologies and apps to support individuals who are blind or visual impaired. Tools will assist
participants in communicating with text-to-speech, and daily living.
Planning an IEP Team Meeting When Your Child Has a Mental Health Challenge is noon-1p.m. Wed, Feb. 15. Online. Focus is the executive
function ability to ignore distractions, write attention is an active awareness on
something specific. The workshop will
explore tools and strategies that can
boost both of these abilities. FFI:
1-888-624-6436.

Boost Focus and Attention with.
Assistive Technology is 10:30-11:30 a.m., Thu, Feb. 16. Online. Focus is the executive

Tools and Resources to Help Build Social Skills is 1-2 p.m, Wed, Feb. 21. Online. Join this workshop to learn about
the importance of social skills and how to build them. Tools and resources covered in this workshop will be appropriate for all ages.
Tech for Teens : Learn How to Use a Glowforge is 10:30-11 a.m, Sat, Feb. 10 at PACER Center. The Tech for Teens
workshop will introduce participants to the Glowforge, a laser cutter. Learn the basics of
creating and cutting artwork and practice

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workshop will introduce participants to the Glowforge, a laser cutter. Learn the basics of
cutting and cutting artwork and practice
design and produce a final product. FFI:
PACER, 952-838-9000, 800-537-2337,
tech4teens@pacer.org.

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