

Drive-through decision is pulling ahead

by Jane McClure

People with disabilities who use drive-through services in St. Paul will know this summer how new services will fare, or if any new ones will be allowed at all. The Planning Commission is expected to make its recommendations in July, and send those on to the City Council for a final public hearing and vote. One proposal before the Planning Commission would limit where new drive-throughs could go and what kinds of businesses could have them. Another option would be a total ban on new drive-throughs. Existing businesses would be grandfathered in. But new regulations would make it more difficult for new businesses to open with drive-through service. The June 7 hearing brought out a range of opinions. But disability voices were largely missing.

The St. Paul Mayor's Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities discussed the proposal in the spring. The group lacked a quorum or full group of members, and couldn't formally take a stance on the proposal. Committee members raised several concerns. Jillian Nelson and Baya Clare raised issues of safety. With banks, safety can become an issue for people crossing a parking lot with cash. With pharmacies, ill people could be forced inside.

Angie Whitcomb, president and CEO of the statewide group Hospitality Minnesota, urged the Planning Commission to step back from the proposal. "Please go back to the drawing board and engage with the hospitality industry," she said. Zachary Zelickson of Border Foods said his company would oppose a total ban. Border Foods operates Taco Bell restaurants in St. Paul and other restaurants throughout the region. Industry trends indicate that more consumers use drive-throughs to get food. "Year after year those numbers increase for us," he said. More than 80 percent of customers use drive-through services with his company. McDonald's and Starbucks weighed in via written testimony. Not allowing restaurants to reconfigure drive-through services would mean keeping dated infrastructure in place, and could inadvertently cause more problems in the long run. Zelickson asked city officials to consider a case-by-case approach. Amenda Duerr, vice president for governmental affairs for the St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce made several point for drive-through services. One point made is that drive-throughs are often the only food option for night shift workers. Another is that curbside delivery of food, especially at night, can pose safety issues for workers. The only person to testify for the changes was former Planning

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Self-advocate Karen Loven congratulated U.S. District Court Judge Donovan Frank after he received the Charlie Smith Award.

Save the Date Consider making your nominations for two awards from Access Press

Save the evening of Friday, November 1 and make plans to attend the annual Access Press Awards celebration. Minnesota's disability news source invites everyone to submit nominees for our two awards. A regular event guest, U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar, always uplifts those who attend the event and all Minnesotans with disabilities who support Access Press. Last year she said, "You are all here because you believe in standing up for people with disabilities and you

believe in freedom of the press." The award event began in 2003. After a hiatus of five years, the event returned in 2023. About 250 members of Minnesota's disability community enjoyed a festive evening hosted by the Access Press Board with staff and community partners including the University of Minnesota Institute on Community Integration.

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She works for 'change' in public accommodations

by Jan Willms

Linda Hood is still running marathons. They may not be on a race track, and she is not using her legs. But the effort and the goals are the same. She is proving to herself that what she does matters, and she is putting all the energy of a long-distance runner into her task. Hood, a scientist, has spent her life running marathons, climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro, competing in triathlons and skiing all over the world. Her physical activities stopped in 2018, when she ate some bacteria-laced chicken and was stricken with paralysis. She spent eight months in a hospital and nearly died. Hood emerged as paraplegic, with her nerves and speech affected. In 2022 she was named Ms. Wheelchair Minnesota, with a platform tied to her longtime goal of getting adult-sized changing tables in public restrooms. The need became obvious after her hospitalization ended. "It is embarrassing and humiliating to be changed on a filthy floor in a public restroom," Hood said. "This is something that has been long overdue." Adult changing tables are already offered at places including US Bank Stadium and the Minnesota State Fair. A 2023 federal law calls

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Linda Hood is shown with a changing table, something she'd like to see in public restrooms everywhere.

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 EDITORIAL

Intermittent and episodic disability protections are now in place for us

As we make our late summer plans, some might consider a trip to the Minnesota State Fair. We don't think of the fair as a place where gains in disability rights are made. Now we should.

The fair's operator, the Minnesota State Agricultural Society, recently played a role in a major state law change. That role was not by choice. But it is important because of the gains made.

As of August 1, what are described as "intermittent" or "episodic" disabilities are protected under the Minnesota Human Rights Act. The expansion of disability protections for these disabilities and health-related issues is a major step for us as a community.

The human rights act is Minnesota's anti-discrimination statute. It already prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability, race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, familial status and age.

Definitions of protected classes covered by the act were expanded this spring at the capitol, as were remedies and enforcement capabilities for the Minnesota Department of Human Rights. That is the state agency tasked with enforcing state law.

Many conditions can cause intermittent or episodic disabilities, including cancer, diabetes, epilepsy and multiple sclerosis. Those of us who live with such disabilities may be fine one day and struggling the next day.

Our daily life activities can be greatly affected. We welcome periods of remission and brace for the next go-round with our disabilities.

The Minnesota State Fair becomes part of the story thanks to a federal lawsuit filed in April 2021 by former employee

Mell's claim that the fair violated the state human rights act and didn't provide reasonable accommodations was dismissed. The presiding judge ruled that her condition didn't qualify as disability under the act and that "impairment" didn't include transient conditions.

Josianne Mell. Mell began working for the Agricultural Society in 1983 as a seasonal parking operations worker. She continued her employment with the fair and moved into a full-time administrative post in finance. She had positive job reviews during that time.

A cancer diagnosis in late 2019 led to Mell's job loss. On returning from medical treatment, Mell was moved from her office job to a role as a "floating laborer." Some work placed her in the fair's greenhouse. Her ongoing cancer recovery took place at times in high heat and humidity.

Court documents indicated that Mell would sometimes vomit as a result of greenhouse conditions. She also sold cups in the ticket office, folded T-shirts and did other

manual tasks. It was a far cry from her full-time work. Her hours were cut and she was terminated in October 2020

Mell filed suit, focusing on what were seen as limited protections under the state human rights act. Another allegation she made was of discrimination under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

Fair officials countered that Mell's leave had expired and she couldn't return to her old job.

Mell's claim that the fair violated the state human rights act and didn't provide reasonable accommodations was dismissed. The presiding judge ruled that her condition didn't qualify as disability under the act and that "impairment" didn't include transient conditions.

Mell reached a confidential settlement with fair administration two years ago. She cannot speak about the case.

Others took up her cause. The Minnesota Council on Disability for the past two legislative sessions championed changes to the state human rights act. The human rights will now cover intermittent and episodic disabilities, which can limit daily life activities.

How disability is defined in Minnesota has been expanded to mean "an impairment that is episodic or in remission and would materially limit a major life activity when active."

The change has broad implications and will likely provide civil rights for many more people. One aspect of the change centers on cancer, which was at the center of Mell's case. The Minnesota Department of Health estimates that four in 10 people will be diagnosed with cancer at some point in their life. That is a major group that will now be protected.

The changes also bring the state act into line with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

It will also protect small business workers, extending protections to businesses with fewer than 15 people.

Thanks to all who worked toward this important change. We appreciate efforts to provide a more supportive and inclusive work environment for all Minnesotans. We appreciate that we now see a recognition of the total spectrum of what it means to live with a disability. We are proud that our state has made a huge step in disability rights, to make sure that Minnesotans with episodic or intermittent disabilities will receive the legal protections they deserve.

 HISTORY NOTE

Volunteers stepped up to provide children with camp experience

For many children, summertime means packing a suitcase and sleeping bag and heading off to camp. Children with disabilities have long enjoyed the chance to go to adaptive camps with swimming, games, crafts, songs around a campfire and other activities.

But more than 60 years ago, some young Minnesota campers with disabilities faced a dilemma. Camp Courage, which was then operated by the Minnesota Society for Crippled Children and Adults, had to turn away many children who wanted to attend camp.

The crowd of young campers was part of a large children and youth population. The U.S. Census Bureau has defined "baby boomers" as people born between 1946 and 1964. The rapidly growing group of youngsters put a strain on all kinds of programs and services. Schools, clubs, children's activities and summer camps were full.

As an experiment the society hastily set up

eight additional camps around Minnesota in the summer of 1963. The camps operated as day camps, mostly with volunteers in charge.

Winona was one of the sites selected, with a day camp organized on Prairie Island. Its headquarters opened at the Izaak Walton cabin near there. A local woman, Mrs. Roger (Peg) Zehren, became the volunteer camp director.

Gretchen Lamberton, columnist for the *Winona Daily News*, wrote about the camps and the need for volunteers in June 1964. "This seems to be one of the most heart-warming and worthwhile projects ever undertaken in Winona," Lamberton wrote.

Seventeen local children between the ages of 6 and 14 attended the Winona camp in summer 1963, according to the *Daily News*. The camp and others like it around the state were so successful, 30 camps were set up statewide for the summer 1964.

Winona again was a host for a 10-day day

camp, with Zheren again in charge. She had three adult staffers and four student assistants as camp prepared to opened, but sought more helpers.

One goal was to have a helper for each child on Tuesdays and Thursdays, when campers went to Latsch Beach for swimming and sunbathing.

The Winona camp pulled in volunteers from the community. The Winona Lions Club provided transportation. Student volunteers from St. Mary's College provided nature studies, along with adult community members. Others stepped up to teach handicrafts and lead playtimes. One local man brought his pet otters, to the delight of the campers.

After a sack lunch, more activities were offered. One treat was a trip to Kiddieland, courtesy of the Winona Jaycees. Campers also enjoyed a riverboat ride on another day. Many had never been on a boat before.

As of mid-June a dozen children enrolled in the 1964 camp. The ranks include four children with cerebral palsy, two deaf children, three with visual disabilities, one child with muscular dystrophy and two children who were post-polio. Lamberton wrote that there was room for more children to attend.

Today, setting up a camp takes careful planning with consent forms and detailed health histories for campers, extensive staff and volunteer training, accessible facilities and carefully thought-out activities. The notion of volunteers quickly pulling together a camp experience, especially for children with disabilities, is likely not something we'd see again.

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



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Despite its nickname, COVID-19 variant ‘FLiRT’ should be taken seriously

Could the United States see a summer COVID-19 surge? The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which carefully tracks the virus, has seen an uptick in several states. While the states don’t include Minnesota, neighboring states are included. Summer travel can also bring an increased risk of the virus coming here.

The virus is often monitored through wastewater testing, which can determine COVID levels in a community. Those tests have shown a recent sharp uptick of the virus in several states, including Alaska, California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Montana and New Mexico. That is according to the publication *The Hill*.

Another measure is emergency room visits related to COVID, which recently have also increased, spiking almost 13 percent in one week. The biggest jumps were in Delaware, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Nebraska, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia and West Virginia, though they still account for only 0.6 percent of all ER visits nationwide.

The CDC’s own measures show that the number of COVID infections is growing or likely growing in 34 states. Minnesota is a state where cases are deemed as likely growing.

Experts point to new dominant ‘FLiRT’ subvariants such as KP.3 for the apparent summer surge. FLiRT variants, which include KP.3, KP.2 and KP.1.1 or any of those starting with KP or JN, combined for more than 47 percent of all COVID cases in the past two weeks in the U.S.

Such mutations are to be expected, the CDC pointed out.

“Viruses constantly change through mutation and sometimes these mutations result in a new variant of the virus. Some changes and mutations allow the virus to spread more easily or make it resistant to



treatments or vaccines. As the virus spreads, it may change and become harder to stop,” the agency said on its website.

People with disabilities, especially those with compromised immune systems, need to be specially mindful of virus and variant trends.

One bit of positive news is FLiRT variants do not appear to cause more severe illness than previous variants. The pattern of infection appears to be the same. Several health websites indicate that people typically develop symptoms five or more days after exposure, though symptoms can appear soon. People are contagious one or two days before they experience symptoms and a few days after symptoms subside. But as with previous variants, the virus and its status can vary person to person.

Common symptoms for FLiRT include:

- Sore throat

- Cough
- Fatigue
- Congestion
- Runny nose
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Fever or chills
- New loss of sense of taste or smell
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Everyone is encouraged to keep current on vaccinations, as the COVID-19 virus continues to evolve and change.

Access Press has provided COVID-19 coverage in a partnership with the Minnesota Department of Health.

TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT!

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FROM OUR COMMUNITY

We celebrate the anniversary but also await the promises of the ADA

by Jane Larson

On July 26 we celebrate 34 years since the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). *Access Press* was founded that same year, in response to a need to ensure for our community news they need to live and work independently.

In looking backward, it is important to look ahead. Today, it is estimated that 44 percent of the population is under the age of 35. That means that nearly half of all Americans have always lived with the ADA in place. Everyone benefits with inclusion. This hit me in the face last summer when I joined the Board of *Access Press* and served as chair for our 2023 *Access Press* Awards event

A journalism student, Lucy Zhao, volunteered to work on the event. Lucy still had to go through an interview. I didn't know if Lucy has a disability. Because of the ADA, I focus on what individuals can bring to us and how they can be a part of our team. But we are *Access Press*, so I did ask about her experience with disability. She blew me away because she lives in a world where difference is the norm and diversity is valued. Among other experiences, she spoke about her early years as an English language learner, what it meant then and how it affects her now. Each



of us has our own life experience that makes us unique. It mirrored my own experience with language delays, and I was sold.

This is a far cry from the experience of the other half of us who grew up in a world of imposed norms, a world of sameness. In the 1950s and 1960s, to fit in meant to conform. Being different often meant not

being included. If you were different and it did not show, you often hid that difference. My generation did not have the benefit of living and working comfortably with diversity. We did not have the ability to celebrate difference. We did not have the guaranteed protection of civil rights laws, including the ADA.

More people became educated with the passage of the ADA, learning how to hire people based on meaningful criteria, even learning how to interact with people who do things differently and sometimes better. Necessity is the mother of invention and many people figured out individual accommodations for individual needs. And then there were examples where a perceived disability proved to be an asset, such as an employee with autism who excelled at working with details.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 had already prohibited discrimination of people with disabilities by any organization receiving federal funds, including many public employers and educational institutions. In 1986, the National Council on the Handicapped, now called the National Council on Disability, recommended enactment of a comprehensive equal opportunity law, maybe calling it the

Americans with Disabilities Act. This came to fruition through involvement of a huge cast of characters from both parties, including Sen. David Durenberger of Minnesota and Sen. Tom Harkin of Iowa. The support was overwhelming, and the act was signed into law in 1990 by President George H.W. Bush. In 2008, the ADA Amendments Act was signed into law by President George W. Bush.

The ADA came at a time when collaboration and negotiation was more the political norm. It seems to be the exception now. Governing has become a game of tug of war with a winner-take-all outcome. The idea of a representative democracy seems too often to be threatened, with pressure on politicians to support a national agenda decided by a few, rather than representing the very people who elected them. It seems unlikely that the ADA would be enacted today, but progress is not linear. There are actions and reactions, and while progress is not uniform, we do move forward over time.

I am optimistic about our future because of Lucy, and many others like her, who will work toward a better future for themselves and the generations to follow. We still have a big job to do.

Active allies, actions are needed to make the promise of the ADA a reality

by Barb Metzger

Every time an electric door opener doesn't work or is absent; every time your wheels are stopped by a two-inch edge going from one slab of sidewalk to another; every time you are forced to sit in "handicapped seating" in a section distant from the action because you use a cane and can't climb stairs; every time the accessible route to your parking spot is locked early and you can't reach your car; your value to society is denied by the majority. Yes, each of those things are illegal and immoral, but because so few are impacted the rest can just shrug and say there's nothing to be done. In America we've been trying to change that attitude for forty-some years. We've failed.

Good people, who have engaged in political activism on other subjects, listen to me discuss the obstacles disabled people face daily with empathy and concern for my well-being, but with no sense that they should be involved in any sort of solution... or even that solutions might be feasible. Minorities can never win political issues without active

allies.

I want to suggest a course of action, not a new organization or something to belong to, but things we can do in our regular routine that will turn those otherwise good-hearted political activist able-bodied types into real allies that make change happen. Unless we do that, we will remain the unseen minority. Ironical that our anti-discrimination law, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), is one of the few having built-in enforcement apparatuses, but also one of the least often enforced.

Last week I listened to a Metro Mobility official telling a virtual audience of 34 listeners that they were functioning at 97 percent efficiency and meeting most federally mandated efficiency goals. I was puzzled because that has not been my experience with Metro Mobility. Then I remembered, Metro Mobility isn't late until 30 minutes after your pick-up time, and it doesn't matter at all if they drop you off after your event has started because they don't keep statistics on that. It also doesn't seem to

matter if you're on the bus for 1 and ½ hours or two hours, even if you drove right past your stop on the way to pick up passenger number three. Efficiency is determined by statistics, not reality.

We need to create our own statistics and deliver them to sympathetic people who can be "radicalized" by real information into becoming active allies. Key individuals taking specific actions can change the obstacles we face every day. We must act in order to make them do it. Most of us have a phone with a calendar or notes, the rest can use a notebook; keep notes and pictures about every obstacle. Where is the door opener that never works? Where are the sidewalks impassable? Where is the only "handicapped" parking spot farthest from the entrance because that's where the city supplied curb cut is located? How often is Metro Mobility late? How often are you picked up at 28 minutes after your scheduled time, or dropped off after your event has started? How often do they take you from Little Canada to West St. Paul to Maplewood

before they drop you off at the capitol?

We need enforcement. We need government enforcement of existing laws. We need a government office of enforcement of disability access laws attached to someone with real authority. The governor is perfect, because Greater Minnesota has greater obstacles, and they need metropolitan disabled people to be their active allies. Every disabled Minnesotan must know a phone number, e-mail address and mailing address for an enforcement office that will receive documentation of existing obstacles and dispatch a municipal, county or state public official to see to its correction. Period.

Take notes, take pictures, keep a diary. Watch for details as we prepare to take our "statistics" to the governor's office in September. Let's roll/stroll into the governor's office, maybe monthly, and share our "statistics" and ask for his help.

Barb Metzger is a disability rights activist from the St. Paul area.

AWARDS

From page 1

Nominations are due

This year's event location will be announced soon. In the meantime, the *Access Press* Board and its event committee urge everyone to submit worthy nominees for the Charlie Smith Award and the Timothy Benjamin Award

Access Press Board of Directors President Jane Larson encourages everyone to consider nominees for the two awards.

"This November, *Access Press* will present the 17th Charlie Smith Award and the second Tim Benjamin Award at our annual celebration," she said. "Of course, we skipped a few years since the first *Access Press* awards event in 2003. But in 2023, we decided to bring it back and we are doing it again. While we honor all of you for your contributions, the awards is our opportunity to give a spotlight to people and organizations who have made an exceptional contribution to our community."

"You can help by nominating a person or organization for an award. This is a wonderful way to honor a friend or colleague for a job well done. You will be giving credit to someone who deserves a boost, perhaps motivation to continue what they do, and give recognition. Other than time and effort, the nomination is free. It may even inspire tomorrow's leaders."

Larson added, "We at *Access Press* look forward to your nominations, and our learning about programs and activities we were not aware of. To celebrate one is to celebrate all."

The event is also a celebration of *Access Press*. "And we hope you can join us as we celebrate the 34th anniversary of *Access Press*. We celebrate our community but we also celebrate *Access Press*. This is a unique and important resource for Minnesota's disability

community. We ask your support to keep this available to those who need it. Thanks for your support," she said.

Editor Jane McClure said it's always gratifying to see the nominations as they come in. "It's amazing to see the many things Minnesotans with disabilities are doing, to make the community a better place," she said. "Reading the nominations and putting together our stories about these people and groups is an annual highlight for me."

The awards honor different roles that an individual or group has played in outstanding service to Minnesota's disability community.

The Charlie Smith Founders Award honors those who have founded or were innovators in an organization or movement that benefited Minnesota's disability community. The Charlie Smith Award is named in honor of the late Charlie Smith, founding editor of *Access Press*. He was a well-known Minnesota disability rights advocate. Smith died in 2001.

The Timothy Benjamin Sustainers Award honors those who have sustained an organization or fostered the growth of a movement benefiting Minnesota's disability community. The late Tim Benjamin was editor and executive director of *Access Press* from 2001 to 2021.

The *Access Press* Board of Directors reviews nominations and chooses the award winner.

The nomination period is open and continues through midnight, August 10, 2024. Email us at CSAnominations@accesspress.org to receive a form. A link to the form is also on the website, www.accesspress.org

If help is needed with a form call 651-644-2133 ext. 1 for assistance or accommodations.

The award winners and finalists will be honored in the September issue of *Access Press*.

A diverse group of Minnesotans has been

honored over the years. Benjamin was honored with the first award in his name in 2023.

Here is a list of the past Charlie Smith Award winners:

- 2023 – U.S. District Court Judge Donovan Frank
- 2017 – Mark Braun, Paralympian
- 2016 – Cliff Poetz, Institute on Community Integration
- 2015 – Jessalyn Akerman-Frank, Minnesota Commission for Deaf, Deafblind and Hard of Hearing
- 2014 – Christine Marble and Wendy Devore, Career Ventures
- 2013 – Cal Appleby, Augsburg College
- 2012 – Charles "Chuck" Van Heuvel, St. Paul School District
- 2011 – Jeff Bangsberg, Minnesota Department of Health

- 2010 – Steve Kuntz, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
- 2009 – Anne Henry, Minnesota Disability Law Center
- 2008 – Pete Feigl, Co-Founder of Tilting at Windmills
- 2007 – Jim and Claudia Carlisle, People Enhancing People
- 2006 – John Smith, University of Minnesota ICI
- 2005 – Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (MNCCD)
- 2004 – Rick Cardenas, Co-Director of Advocating Change Together (ACT)
- 2003 – Margot Imdieke Cross, Minnesota State Council on Disability

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FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Staff shortages lead to less-than-desirable living situations for some

by L.A. Reed

These are things that happened in the last few years to members of our disability community, during COVID-19. Two of my friends and I lost our homes. I became homeless, and ended up in a long-term care nursing home. Two of my friends, long-time advocates for our community, were forced out of their independent and assisted living situations and into group homes. This is a bit of our stories.

My name is L.A. Reed. I have been on a Section 8 voucher for more than 20 years. I could not find another SAFE place to move to. So I was evicted for complaining too much about broken washing machines when I had no way to go to a laundromat or wash my clothes. I often had no PCA to help me. I was evicted and became homeless. A nursing home was a better option than the street or shelter, with my physical disabilities.

Last year two of my friends, with more profound disabilities than mine, were forced out of their long-time homes. One had lived 25 years independently. My other friend left

a long-term assisted living situation. The ongoing lack of PCAs in our community, which worsened during COVID-19, resulted in our housing losses.

One friend told me that in group homes, they have to give over nearly all of their money to the control of the facility. They have almost no control over their finances, or many other aspects of their lives. Both are people who have been actively involved in disability politics for years.

All three of us are people who have the ability to make our own decisions about our own lives and our bodies.

The nursing home I was forced into had a reputation for years of a history of abuse and neglect. I decided, out of necessity to protect myself, to become an in-house advocate. I have made many reports through the Health Department's Abuse and Neglect hot-line and also through the state's ombudspeople. I complained and documented the problems I was experiencing here, which other patients didn't have the ability to do.

This situation happened to me due to increased discrimination against those of

us with vouchers, by independent building owners. Often, even if a living situation were bad or became worse, I could not find another safe place to live in. In this case, I looked for 10 years. Last year I even worked with a state housing transition specialist. After six months of looking at 40 buildings, I could not find one that either took my voucher, or was safe for my physical toilet setup with decades-long back injuries (I need a frame over the toilet – it takes up space!) Oofda! This has not been fun.

Funny, people say we are lazy. We should be able to work. (Many of us do, we just are not paid for it!) And many work situations don't allow for the diversity of disabilities a lot of us have.

Then they feel sorry if we are homeless. Which is it? Even if we are physically able to find jobs, and afford housing we choose, we might still be disabled enough to need ongoing PCA/DSP care to live there. Without that care, we still might not be able to live in places we choose.

In fall 2023 I learned there was a community speak-out through the

Metropolitan Council to discuss issues of accessibility and affordability housing in the disabled community. The council took testimony on why and how so many of us disabled folks were dealing with bad housing situations. They wanted to know our experiences, and come up with solutions.

I didn't find out about it until it was over. Knowing that I had A LOT to say about this, I called Met Council, and ended up spending an hour with one of the lovely folks involved with that meeting, telling her my story. By time we were finished, she was crying about my disability issues, my long search for housing, ongoing discrimination and discouragement and why I ended up homeless and in a dangerous nursing home. Oofda again.

When I asked her how long it would take for the Metropolitan Council to create solutions for affordable and accessible housing, meaning physically safe housing, she said two years. I lovingly told her that is not soon enough.

L.A. Reed is a disability rights activist who lives in the Twin Cites.

Children and families saw gains at the capitol in 2024 but much work remains

by Jane McClure

Children and families living with disabilities saw several gains at the 2024 Minnesota Legislature. But their advocates need to think now about issues to bring forward for the 2025 session.

“So often, families are left out of the loop when it comes to policy issues,” said Carolyn Allshouse of the nonprofit Family Voices. She and many others have worked to change that.

More than 50 people attended a June 24 virtual legislative update organized by Family Voices, Gillette, the Multicultural Autism Action Network (MAAN) Minnesota and the Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (MNCCD). MNCCD in recent years has worked with children and family service-focused organizations on their issues, in a united effort.

Family members on the call expressed

appreciation for the work advocacy groups do, and asked how they could be involved. Yet many families are very focused on caring for a child or children with disabilities, and don't have hours of time to spend at the capitol. Advocates said there are ways to be effective and work for change, even with limited time.

One big ask for the 2025 session is to seek an ombudsperson for special education, to help families through what can be very difficult processes. This post could function in a manner similar to other state ombudspersons who work with elders and people with disabilities.

Another focus will be on the change to a separate state department of children, youth and families, with functions pulled together from human services and education.

But the 2025 session will have a different look, said Anni Simons of Fredrickson and

Byron. All 100 Minnesota House seats are on the ballot. There will be a special election for one in the Minnesota Senate. DFLers hold a one-person majority in the Senate. The veteran lobbyist noted that the Senate could flip to Republican control.

Speakers June 24 noted that while 2023 was a historic session with gains on many fronts that aided children and families, 2024 was more muted. While some gains were made this past session, attention was also focused on laying groundwork for 2025.

One historic note is that for the first time, the word ableism appears in a state law. That law is meant to encourage educators to receive training about ableism and disability justice from a person with a disability, as part of the licensure process.

One focus is that ongoing change from the personal care attendant or PCA program

to Community First Systems and Supports (CFSS), with policy changes made this session. The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) is working on the many changes for that program transformation. A big need cited during the June 24 session is for continued efforts for overtime hours and for more flexibility for staffing.

Staffing continues to be a challenge on many fronts. During the COVID-19 pandemic emergency, parents and spouses had more options to provide care in the wake of many staffers leaving their work. That variance went away when the pandemic emergency ended.

Language was passed this session to provide family members reimbursement for care but that doesn't take effect until October 1. That

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CHANGE

From page 1

for all new public buildings to be required to have adult changing tables in restrooms.

Hood's latest involvement was in a new law that requires airports to have restrooms with adult changing tables. Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport has already added the equipment.

The bill has passed the House and Senate and is expected to be signed by the president shortly. “We wanted to have a signing ceremony, but there is so much going on with campaigning, He will probably sign it while he's on a plane,” Hood said.

Many people worked on the newest bill, including all the people tired of being changed on the floor or having a family member in that

situation. “Now all the airports in the United States have to have an adult-sized pull-down table. I'm very happy about it.”

It will make a big difference for all the people who travel, whether to visit or for an emergency, to have these tables available.

Hood paid for her trip to Washington, DC, to meet with lawmakers. She said that when she visited DC, she announced her appearance. She went through Congressional and Senate office doors like royalty.

“I spent two days knocking on doors,” she said. “I would just ask them for 15 minutes of their time. I gave them my cards, and when I got home I wrote them back and reminded them I had been in their office and asked for their support.”

She compared the work of lobbying to a tennis game, with back and forth until a bill is

signed into law.

Hood told legislators she was there to represent the million people who need adult changing tables. “I represent the parent, the aunt, the sister, the mom, across the board, all of us in the same situation,” she said.

She is continuing with her campaign to improve public restrooms with adult changing tables, at sports stadiums and at highway rest stops.

“When you are traveling, you should not have to check into a hotel to be able to use the restroom,” she said.

Hood wants the movement to go international. She plans a trip to the Paris Olympics and the Paralympics.

Hood was 59 when she acquired the virus that put her in a wheelchair. “Suddenly I was thrust into a different world,” she said. “I was

looking through the eyes of someone who had never been disabled or differently abled, and how society sees them and how they are treated, overlooked and denied opportunities.

“There is nothing wrong with my brain and my heart,” she said, "but I don't receive the same respect I did before. It's like since I am in a wheelchair, I might not understand what people are saying.”

Hood has written about her experience in the book *The Cross Carries Me* and is working on a second book.

“Things are not easy, and I am still in pain, but I just put it aside,” she said. “It's nice knowing you can do something. All of us have something to give. Every last one of us can make a difference.”

DRIVE-THROUGH

From page 1

Commission member Bill Lindeke. He said that drive-throughs take away from the experience people should have of getting out of their vehicles and patronizing local businesses.

“The second you put a drive-through in, that business becomes an island,” said Lindeke.

The study of drive-throughs is tied to the 2040 comprehensive plan and the desire to make the city more walkable. Another impetus is problem drive-throughs, such as one that was at the Snelling and Marshall Starbucks for a few years.

Drive-through services are usually found at fast-food restaurants, coffee shops, banks and pharmacies. St. Paul has about 77 of businesses with drive-throughs, including 36 restaurants, two coffee shops, 31 banks, and eight pharmacies, out of a total of about 640 restaurants, 51 coffee shops, 40 banks and 17 pharmacies here.

Since March 2020, city officials have approved site plans and/or conditional use

permits for three new drive-throughs, for two banks and a coffee shop. Also approved were at least five drive-through reconstructions or redesigns, all for fast food restaurants.

Motor vehicle off-site queuing that blocks sidewalks, bike lanes, or traffic lanes were cited as reasons to restrict drive-through services. Exhaust from idling vehicles, noise and challenges with pedestrian access in reaching a business were also cited in the city staff report.

Under the St. Paul proposal, new drive-through services banned in some parts of the city and still allowed in others.

New drive-through services would be banned in the downtown central business district. In areas zoned for traditional neighborhoods use, including several arterial streets, new drive-throughs would be limited to banks and pharmacies.

Design requirements are proposed, with additional motor vehicle waiting or “stacking” spaces and design of businesses’ pedestrian access in a way that shields pedestrians from crossing a drive-through

lane on foot or with a mobility device.

Another idea is to prohibit drive-through lanes and their driveway access points in traditional neighborhoods district within 300 feet of transitway stations. Transitways

include light rail, bus rapid transit, arterial bus rapid transit and modern streetcar, but not regular route bus lines.

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PEOPLE & PLACES



Minnesota hockey player is honored with USA Hockey award

Rylynn Zanon basically grew up in hockey rinks. However, because of several mild issues that affected her physical and cognitive development, it took her some time to hit the ice for good and find her own place in the game. Now more than seven years into her playing career, Zanon was honored by USA Hockey with the 2024 Disabled Athlete of the Year Award. The award was presented June 7 at the at the 2024 USA Hockey President’s Awards Dinner in Denver..

That came as quite a surprise to her. “Honestly, I wasn’t expecting it,” Zanon said. “We were all pretty shocked.” Receiving the award won’t slow down her drive to get better, as she continues to work on her game. “I feel like I’ve gotten better throughout the years,” she said. “We’ve done more drills, like game drills and just doing a lot more stick-handling drills.”

Growing up, Zanon certainly didn’t have to look far to find a hockey role model. Her father, Greg Zanon, spent nine years as a defenseman in the NHL.

“She was [his] No. 1 fan for a long time,” said Jen Zanon, Rylynn’s mother. “We bounced around with him for a few years while he did his thing. And during that time, she did take some skating lessons when she was 5 or 6.”

As Jen remembered, that was a challenge for her daughter. “It wasn’t really her thing when she first started,” Jen said. “She enjoyed being at the rink, but the actual skating part of it was a little bit difficult and uncomfortable for her.”

Jen noted that Zanon hadn’t developed physically the way typical children do. Just finding skates for Zanon was difficult.

According to Jen, part of the problem might have been having her daughter start skating in full hockey gear at the outset.

“It was right into you’re learning to skate as a hockey player,” Jen said. “It was maybe not the best route to go with that, but that’s the route



Rylynn Zanon is shown on the ice.

we took.” Zanon got off the ice and was content with watching her dad, sister and brother play for a time. After the family moved to Minnesota, she finally got an opportunity to play at age 12. The family saw one of Zanon’s friends play with the Minnesota Special Hockey Program. They then quickly signed Zanon up to the program as well.

Zanon, now 19, continues to play in the program, which partners directly with the NHL’s Minnesota Wild.

Jen noted that the league matches players of equal talent on an A, B or C line. She said Zanon typically plays on the A or B line.

“The league itself is incredible,” Jen said. “It’s open to anybody and everybody regardless of age. I think the minimum age is 8, but there is no maximum age. It’s open to everybody regardless of their abilities. I don’t foresee her

walking away from it anytime soon, as long as it’s available for her to continue playing.”

Through the opportunity with Minnesota Special Hockey, Zanon thrived in her new community, making new friends, learning leadership skills and witnessing the power of inclusion firsthand. The skills she learned on the ice have propelled her to new heights both on and off the ice.

She was a four-year captain of the Stillwater Area High School Ponies adapted floor hockey team and a three-year captain of the adapted soccer team, leading both squads to state titles in 2021-22, and a repeat title with the floor hockey team in 2022-23.

She was co-president of the high school’s TRUST Club, an all-inclusive after-school club that brings students with and without disabilities together.

She had to balance hockey with her first year



Rylynn Zanon

at Century College this year. Zanon is studying special education and made the dean’s list.

“It wasn’t hard, knowing that hockey was on Sundays,” she said. “I usually didn’t have much homework on Sundays, so it was nice not to have to worry about that. I can enjoy just going to hockey.”

Zanon also competes in the Special Olympics track and field program. She runs sprints and does the standing long jump.

Zanon serves Minnesota Special Olympics away from the track, as well. She is on its board of directors and is a co-vice president. Last summer, she became a Special Olympics U.S. Youth Ambassador, promoting inclusive opportunities for children through sports.

“It’s a two-year program,” said Zanon of the ambassadorship. “This year we’ve been to Washington, D.C., and now at the end of June, we’re going out to Madison [Wisconsin] for a conference.”

Story from Red Line Editorial, Inc. with additional information from USA Hockey.

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PEOPLE & PLACES



Several new Bush Fellows will work on disability issues

The 2024 Bush Fellowship Program has announced its 2024 fellows. Many of this year’s fellows will work on disability-related issues.

The fellowships given by the Bush Foundation provide support to accomplished community leaders. The fellowships allow these leaders to take their efforts to the next level and ultimately have even greater impact within and across communities.

Up to 24 Bush Fellows are selected each year for a two-year program. Each receives a grant of \$100,000 to fund their leadership plan. Fellowships can last anywhere between 12 and 24 months.

Nineteen Minnesotans, two North Dakotans and three South Dakotans are this year's winners of the Bush fellowship. More than 600 people applied for the program.

Fellows with a disability focus in their work include:

Mari Tototzintle Avaloz wants to ensure Latine communities have access to culturally specific support needed to navigate complex health care systems involved with cancer. Being a primary caregiver to her sister, Maria, who died in 2019 from a rare form of ovarian cancer, exposed her to challenges her family faced, and even greater challenges experienced by other Latine families to receiving quality care when there are language, documentation and familiarity with navigating systems barriers.

She plans to enroll in an intensive Spanish immersion program, obtain a graduate social work license, learn from other healthcare leaders in the Latine and cancer community and complete courses to expand her leadership.

Adrean Clark is breaking communication barriers as an American Sign Language-speaking (ASL) deaf woman, forging her own path as an artist and writer. She co-founded a publishing company to showcase the work of sign language speakers, regardless of hearing status, after seeing few places for ASL deaf creatives to publish their work.

Clark established an online dictionary for written ASL that eventually became the ASLwrite method. She hopes to create opportunities for deaf communities to heal from the trauma of linguicism, and will pursue a Ph.D. at Concordia University in Montreal, Quebec, to expand her research on how ASL is represented on paper.

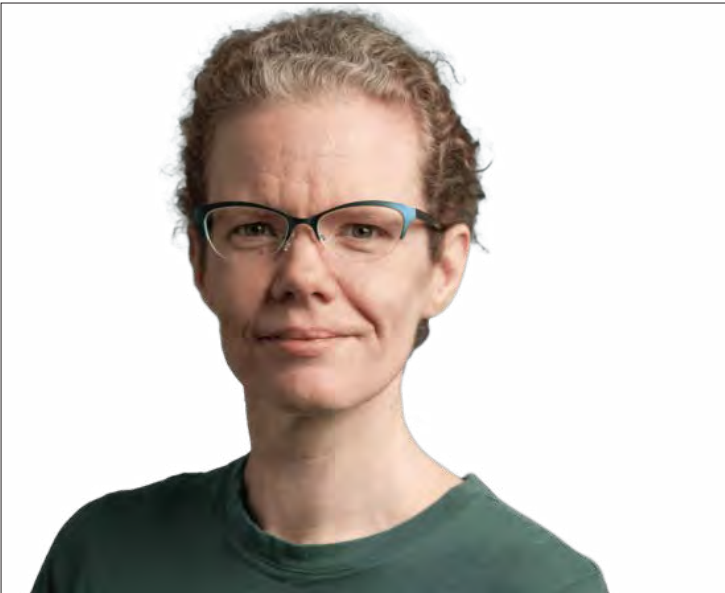
Arlene Krulish has a calling to end drug addiction in tribal communities. Growing up on the Spirit Lake Reservation, she saw an inadequate health care system and its harmful effects on Indigenous communities. Earning a degree from the University of North Dakota School of Nursing, she returned to her tribe, working for decades to improve access to and quality of health care on the reservation.

She focuses on helping people overcome addiction, drawing from Western medicine and ceremonial practices. Through her fellowship, she plans to enroll in a nurse practitioner program with a psychiatric mental health specialization, which would make her the first nurse practitioner enrolled in the Spirit Lake Tribe.

Manka Nkimbeng uses research and policy to address health inequities in African immigrant communities. She was raised by her grandparents in Cameroon where access to healthcare was limited. Living here, she continued to see ways in which healthcare systems don’t work well for everyone. That inspired her career working as a researcher and assistant professor at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health. She developed a dementia education program for African immigrants and implemented public health education for Black immigrants. Her fellowship will enable her to continue closing equity gaps in healthcare through coalition-building and conflict resolution. She also will develop an advisory committee for feedback and build her self-care practices.

Dr. Kasim Abdur Razzaq is dedicated to helping others achieve mental health and wellbeing. As a mental health professional, he has long been fascinated by how people understand complex ideas. He works to find ways to give people language and meaning for their personal experiences.

His experiences as a Black Muslim man have helped him understand the importance of cultural context and roots for the people he helps. He believes true healing for Black communities is tied to understanding the traumas that have affected all Black people. During his fellowship, he will focus on his own health practices as he works to build his



Adrean Clark



Arlene Krulish



Jamil Stamschror-Lott



Dr. Kasim Abdur-Razzaq



Manka Nkimbeng



Mari Tototzintle Avaloz

capacity to inspire and support more Black mental health professionals.

Jamil Stamschror-Lott became a mental health therapist with the hope of preventing Black students from being misdiagnosed and wrongfully placed in special education systems. During his initial years of practice, he realized there were additional systemic challenges in the

mental health care industry that specifically impacted marginalized groups.

He and his wife started a private practice, Creative Kuponya, to provide culturally responsive services – outside of the traditional medical model – to address these issues and better support his community. He is now

working to build a pathway for more Black men in Minnesota to become therapists. During his fellowship, he will build coalitions, consult with leaders who have similar ambitions and seek personal training in fields like operations, nonprofit management and culturally specific therapeutic models.

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Phoenix Alternatives, Inc. (PAI)	V-651-846-9274	mduffy@paimn.org	www.paimn.org
VISION IMPAIRMENT			
Minnesota Commission of the Deaf,	V-651-431-5961	mncdhh.info@state.mn.us	www.mn.gov/deaf-commission
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2

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3

Take a COVID-19 test when needed. It is important to get tested if you have symptoms or were in close contact with someone who has COVID-19. If you test positive and are at higher risk, medications are available. The medications are most effective within 5 days of when symptoms begin, which is why you should get tested.

4

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5

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Check for vaccine appointments using [VACCINES.GOV](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/prevention.html) or contact your primary health care provider or a local pharmacy.

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REGIONAL NEWS



Metro Move provides option for riders

Will Metro Move address issues that have affected Metro Mobility? That remains to be seen as the new service got rolling in May.

Metro Move is a new transit service of the Metropolitan Council that is designed to give people who have a disability and are served by a waiver another choice to connect to day support services, jobs and community resources. The service will open up access for those receiving waiver services to reach many communities across the Twin Cities region.

Metro Move will phase in existing Metro Mobility customers attending day support



service locations through August 2024. Recurring work and community activity trips can be requested through a lead agency.

Metro Move has partnered with the Minnesota Department of Human Services

and its lead agencies to build and design the alternate transit option. The goal is to provide greater independence and access through expanded days and consistent hours of service. Metro Move serves people who have a

disability and are served by a brain injury (BI) waiver, community access for disability inclusion (CADI) waiver, or a developmental disability (DD) waiver. The service links waiver participants to day support programs, work and other community destinations.

Lead agencies will authorize the trips.

There will be no standby trips for anyone using Metro Move. Learn more about the service, its hours of operation and other details by calling 651-602-1900 or email MetroMove@metc.state.mn.us

(Source: Metro Moves)

Disability waiver changes raise concerns

People who must move from private apartments and homes into group homes face many losses of independence and choice. Advocates fear that Minnesotans with disabilities will be forced to leave their homes and move into group homes or assisted-living facilities under a proposed state overhaul of disability waivers.

Minnesota is reworking its Medicaid waiver system, used by roughly 70,000 people with disabilities to cover vital services, including employment support, transportation and assistance with such daily activities as bathing, eating and dressing.

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) is rethinking the waivers to try to simplify the system and give people "more choice and control over their services." Department officials said their proposed model would make more money available for the vast majority of waiver recipients.

However, early budget figures have triggered an outcry among some who rely on the aid. They show people living in group homes would be eligible for far larger sums than those in their own homes or living with family. That is seen as "incentivizing institutionalizing people."

The pushback recently prompted legislators to strengthen requirements that DHS officials collaborate with people who will be affected by the Waiver Reimagine process. But many Minnesotans with disabilities and advocates remain wary.

session. It mandates that the advisory group must be able to "collaborate in a meaningful way" in the waiver rethinking process and in a revision of MnCHOICES, the state's tool for assessing people's needs and determining what services they require to live well.

"We need to fundamentally revamp how we're doing engagement," Natasha Merz, the DHS assistant commissioner of Aging and Disability Services, said at a legislative hearing this spring. "We need to hear from people. We need to show them that their input has changed the arc of this project."

The state is trying to make the waiver system easier to navigate, Merz said. She said officials want more people to be able to self-direct their dollars, meaning they are in charge of a budget and can design a plan to meet their needs and employ workers. They are also trying to create consistency across the state, Merz said.

The state agency had planned to debut the reimagined waiver system in January 2026. It is now eyeing spring 2027 due to delays in the assessment system update, as well as community members' questions and concerns

(Source: Star Tribune)

Licensing requirements eyed

State officials say a new Minnesota law tightening licensing requirements for classroom teachers will stave off a threat by the federal Department of Education to cut off \$219 million in special education funding.

But some education advocates say that the new law goes too far, and will make it difficult for some teachers of color to stay in the classroom.

The law aims to satisfy a corrective action plan with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs. In a May 2023 memo, the federal government warned that Minnesota could lose special education funding if it did not make changes to parts of its licensure system for special education teachers.

The change affects special education teachers with Tier 1 and Tier 2 licenses, which represent alternative pathways to teaching rather than traditional teacher preparation programs. About a quarter of Tier 1 and Tier 2 licenses are held by teachers of color.

The law will require professional development and mentorship of those teachers; progress toward a professional license; and a three-year cap for special education teachers with a Tier 1 license.

"This is good for the teachers, it's better for kids because these teachers will be supported and prepared," said Laura Mogelson, the legislative liaison for the Minnesota Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. "We need to keep teachers in longer and stop this revolving door of underprepared teachers."

But some education advocates say the new bill is too broad. Josh Crosson, the executive director of education reform group EdAllies, said that while he agreed with OSEP's direction to the state, the new law went beyond what the federal government required Minnesota to do.

Child's death highlights dangers

The body of a missing 4-year-old boy from Hopkins was found in Minnehaha Creek. The child, who had autism, had run from his home the day before. That launched a massive search the first weekend of June.

Waey's Ali Mohamed was found by a searcher, Hopkins Police Capt. Craig Kreiling said.

"We believe this was an accident and that he did drown," he said. "We will do our due diligence and will work with our partners to determine the exact cause of death."

Addressing rumors of foul play, Kreiling said, "We have evidence that (he) left the apartment building of his own accord and there is no room to try to blame anybody else right now. This is a horrid, tragic accident from what we can determine."

Kreiling said it wasn't clear when the child entered the creek.

Hundreds of people, including volunteers and law enforcement from neighborhood agencies, Ramsey and Hennepin counties and the FBI, helped in the search.

The sad incident marks the second drowning in three years involving a young child with autism. A child drowned a few years ago in an Edina water retention pond.

Drowning is cited as one of the leading causes of death in young children.

(Source: KSTP-TV, Pioneer Press)

A controversial ceremony

Officials with Fairview Health Services and Acadia Healthcare gathered a few blocks north of the state capitol in St. Paul in June for a ceremonial beam signing -- a way to highlight the ongoing construction of what will soon be one of the state's largest purpose-built inpatient mental health hospitals.

The future hospital's steel girders form a commanding sight at 559 N. Capitol Blvd., but given the project's politically sensitive history, the absence of public health and state, city or county elected officials from the symbolic signing was notable.

Located at the former site of Bethesda Hospital, the 144-bed Capitol Park Mental Health Hospital will offer inpatient, intensive outpatient and "partial hospitalization" mental health treatment, including services for patients who are ready to leave an acute care setting but who may still need in-hospital services for three to six hours per day, three to five days per week.

"We are all pioneers in this work," said Jeffrey Woods, an Acadia operations executive and former psychiatric nurse, noting that the Franklin, Tenn.-based healthcare and hospital chain operates 260 hospitals and treatment centers nationally and is now the largest provider of mental health treatment in the country.

Fairview officials said the three-level

facility will open next summer at a time when inpatient mental health services are in high demand statewide and many youth and adults have been unable to access needed services.

That said, the hospital -- which will not have ambulance bays for emergency transport -- has not been without controversy. Citing the need for new mental health beds, the Minnesota Department of Health approved the facility in September 2022 while acknowledging at the time "significant concerns" with its lack of an emergency room.

The Minnesota Psychiatric Society and other mental health experts have raised concerns that many patients will be transferred from other in-network hospitals, allowing for-profit Acadia to effectively cherry-pick the wealthiest patients, leaving poorer, uninsured and harder-to-treat crisis cases to emergency rooms at outside hospitals.

Notably absent from the beam signing on Wednesday were officials from the governor's office, the Ramsey County Board and Ramsey County Social Services, the St. Paul mayor's office and the St. Paul City Council, as well as the National Alliance on Mental Illness and other vocal advocates for the mentally ill.

(Source: Pioneer Press)

Prison policy is changing

As of July 1, prison policy is changing to ensure Minnesota inmates, with hearing loss, will get the same critical messaging that hearing prisoners get over the public address (PA) system. This is just one concession of a settlement agreement, following a lawsuit filed by Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid's Minnesota Disability Law Center on behalf of two inmates -- one deaf, the other hard of hearing.

Attorney Sonja Peterson of the Minnesota Disability Law Center said both men at the Minnesota Correctional Facility in Stillwater were missing critical announcements necessary for day-to-day living and long-term health needs.

"The prison system dictates when inmates line up at the front of their cell to be counted, eat and get medication," she said. "If they miss these announcements, which also include time for work, recreation and visitors, they can be disciplined. The impact is not only detrimental to their well-being and rehabilitation, it's inhumane. It's like being in a prison inside of a prison."

Prior to the lawsuit, the Minnesota Department of Corrections, urged by Legal Aid, provided pagers to help corrections staff bridge the communication gap.

"We learned, however, staff were not using the pagers," said Legal Aid Deputy Director Jenn Purrington. "That prompted us to take legal action."

The settlement agreement requires the Minnesota Department of Corrections to issue a new policy stating that pages must be made

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PEOPLE & PLACES



ICI veteran, alumnus Charlie Lakin receives university's highest honor

Charlie Lakin, former director of the University of Minnesota Institute on Community Integration (ICI) Research and Training Center on Community Living, received the University of Minnesota’s highest alumni honor. Lakin accepted the Outstanding Achievement Award from Bo Thao-Urabe, a member of the university’s Board of Regent, at a June 6 ceremony.

“Dr. Lakin led a ground-breaking research agenda, raising the profile of the University of Minnesota as a leader and resource in the disability services field,” Dean Michael Rodriguez of the College of Education and Human Development told invited guests, including family, longtime neighbors and friends, and former colleagues.

Lakin spent more than 30 years at the university, earning a Ph.D. in educational psychology before helping to create ICI as a beacon of research and training to improve the quality of services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. He authored or co-authored 300 publications and directed research projects that contributed significantly to the national shift from institutional care to community living.

In 2011, at age 65, he joined the U.S. Department of Education as director of the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, leading that institute until his retirement in 2014. Phillip Beatty, NIDILRR’s director of the Office of Research Sciences, was one of several speakers for the evening. Other dignitaries attending the McNamara Alumni Center event included John Tschida, executive director



Charlie Lakin

of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities; Valerie Bradley, founder and president emerita of the Human Services Research Institute; and former University of Minnesota President Robert Bruininks, who co-founded and led ICI until 1991.

“We had the privilege of working together more than 40 years ago,” Bruininks told the gathering, referring to serving as Lakin’s Ph.D. adviser. “This award is conferred on very few people, for an enduring lifetime of contribution and achievement, and I believe Charlie Lakin

richly deserves this award. Charlie has been recognized as one of the most influential scholars in shaping public policies in the United States and internationally...to enhance the independence and quality of life for individuals with disabilities and their families.”

Though his work far surpassed the boundaries of Minnesota, a deeply held love for his alma mater shone through the event. During his remarks, Lakin noted that every member of his immediate family has attended or worked at the university. Several longtime

neighbors from the Como neighborhood near campus were present, along with ICI and other colleagues from the disability education and advocacy field.

“Much of what we learned from Charlie is ingrained in the soul and the organizational culture of ICI today, and for that I am forever thankful,” said Amy Hewitt, the institute’s director, who said she joined the university community in 1988 in large measure because of Lakin’s passionate commitment to people with disabilities, his humble nature, and his research credentials. She praised his early leadership in partnering with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in research that would affect change in policy and practice in the field, and his role in shaping the careers of so many colleagues. “He showed by his actions what it meant to treat all people, including those with disabilities, with dignity and respect.”

Lakin thanked his many colleagues in the room and beyond.

“I’ve never done anything alone; I always did it with you,” he said, recalling several major initiatives accomplished over the years and remarking on the current leaders in the disability field who have come from ICI. “Bob laid a strong foundation for the institute and what it has grown into since the early days is nothing short of amazing. So, whatever merits got attributed to me for this award, it is a product of the environment I was lucky enough to find myself in almost 50 years ago. It’s been an honor to participate in this very kind, committed community that focuses on the wellbeing of people with disabilities.”

REGIONAL NEWS

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immediately after the PA announcement (except in the case of an emergency); to give a memo to the Stillwater correction officers about the policy; and to detail protocols for training staff, investigating complaints and taking disciplinary action, should staff fail to follow the new policies.

The Minnesota Department of Corrections is also ordered to pay Legal Aid \$66K for attorney fees.

(Source: Legal Aid)

Class-action is settled

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) will pay \$3.2 million to settle a class-action lawsuit alleging the state illegally cut short special-education services to as many as 3,200 students.

The suit involved two students whose services were halted on July 1 after they turned 21 years old. It was taken up in 2020 by the Minnesota Disability Law Center, which argued that federal law requires instruction be provided to special-ed students up to their 22nd birthday.

U.S. District Court Judge Patrick Schiltz ruled in the students' favor last summer, and the two sides commenced talks leading to a settlement agreement filed in May.

Students will not get cash payments but instead are eligible for classes and other supports designed to help them to live independently, said Sonja D. Peterson, staff attorney for the Minnesota Disability Law Center, who cited as examples: "Courses like maintaining your home. Using your bank account," she said.

Peterson added that the classes are likely to be taught by organizations like the PACER Center and Arc Minnesota, which would be reMDE continued to deny wrongdoing as part of the settlement, but it agreed that students who turned 22 between 2020 and 2023 stood to "benefit most by receiving compensatory services as soon as possible," the settlement agreement states.

At the time of Schiltz's ruling, Maren Hulden, then the supervising attorney of the Disability Law Center, noted that the students had been denied services during the COVID remote-learning lockdown.

"Negative impacts for special education students meant their learning was cut in two ways: One, they were denied the experiential settings inherent to transition learning, and two, their eligibility timeframe was less than what federal law requires," she said in a September 2023 news release.

Hulden now serves as general counsel for MDE.

In its defense, MDE had argued that students with disabilities were treated the same as students without disabilities under state law at the time, and that Minnesota offered traditional

secondary schooling to students without disabilities only until their 21st birthdays.

State law has since been changed to comply with the federal law.

MDE now is preparing to release the names of students who may be eligible to take part in the agreement to Continental DataLogix LLC, the firm that will handle the claims.

Students have until July 15 to notify MDE that they do not want their information disclosed or that they object to the agreement. Details are at: <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/about/prod084332>.

According to the agreement, 20 percent of the settlement fund, or \$640,000, will go to attorneys' fees and administrative expenses, leaving \$2,560,000 to cover the claims being filed. Any funds that remain six-plus months after the distribution period will be split equally between Arc Minnesota, the Autism Society of Minnesota and the Multicultural Autism Action Network, the agreement states.

(Source: Star Tribune)

In Memoriam Prohofsky was beloved teacher

Edward "Ed" Prohofsky was a beloved gym teacher and pioneer in adapted sports in the Minneapolis Public Schools. Prohofsky died in June. He was 90 years old.

He was described as always being an educator and coach, saying that there is truly no “I” in team. He made sure that everyone was welcome and included.

Prohofsky was a leader in to opening the doors of inclusivity for kids with physical and cognitive disabilities to participate alongside their peers in athletics, right up to including adapted sports as a sanctioned activity by the Minnesota State High School League. It was important to him that adapted sports athletes be allowed to letter like everyone else.

He coached an Army team to a division championship, and also coached a fabled

Minneapolis Marshall-University High School Championship team, among his many coaching duties over the years.

He was inducted into seven various Halls of Fame, but always remained humble. The first thing he said to people he met and spoke with later in life was, if everyone had a family like mine, there would be no problems in the world.

Prohofsky made a difference for many people, with his coaching at all levels of sports and his teachings.

He was preceded in death by several family members including his wife. He is survived by a sister, four children and their families, and a niece and nephew and their families. Services have been held. Memorials preferred to donor's choice or Beth El Synagogue.



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PEOPLE & PLACES



Adaylia Borgmeier raced to another win.



Nelson Remington received one of his medals.



Ana Berry reacted after a shot put throw.

State track and field competition wraps up prep athletes’ season

Wheelchair athletes had their day in the spotlight at the Minnesota State High School League’s track and field championships. St. Michael-Albertville High School hosted the championships the first weekend of June.

Returning athletes defended their titles and in some cases set state records. Adaylia Borgmeier, a Mankato East freshman, broke her own Class AA record in the 100 meter wheelchair dash.

Borgmeier defended her 100 and 200 meter dash crowns from 2023 at the state meet, and also won the 400 meter dash. She holds the Class AA and all-time records for those events.

Borgmeier is a veteran of international wheelchair competitions. Her summer schedule includes the Paralympic trials in Florida in July.

Fairmont junior and repeat state champ Nelson Remington set two Class AA records and brought home with three first-place medals. He set Class AA records in the boys 100-meter wheelchair dash and the boys 800-meter wheelchair run. He also won the state 400 meter dash title. Remington opted not to defend his 200 meter wheelchair dash title from 2023.

Athletes compete in three classes at the state meet. Class A wheelchair dash champion and state record holder Tyler Gunnarson of St. Charles defended his 2023 100 and 200 meter wheelchair dash titles. Terrek Jenniges of Lakeview placed second behind Gunnarson in both events.

Gunnarson also won the 400 meter wheelchair dash event.

Lucas Taylor of Lakeview defended his

wheelchair discus throw crown. Gunnarson placed second. Two other Lakeview athletes, Borden Stensrud and Terrek Jenniges, placed third and fourth in the discus throw.

In Class A girls’ competition, Ana Berry of Mille Lacs was the lone competitor in the 100 meter and 200 meter wheelchair dash events. She was also the lone competitor in the wheelchair shot put throw.

The Class AA competition had more girls competing than any other class. In the 100 meter wheelchair dash, Madison Harbarth of Mankato East placed second, Isabella Angell of Monticello placed third and Emily Scheidegger of Milaca placed fourth. Angell and Scheidegger placed second and third in the 200 meters. Scheidegger placed second in the 400 meters.

Taylor Gassman of Big Lake defended her

wheelchair shot put title, with Harbarth placing second and Addison Swenson of Zimmerman placing third.

Devin Filzen of Winona won the 200 meter dash and the 1,600 meter title. Filzen capped his meet by winning the wheelchair discus throw

In the 100 meter Class AAA wheelchair dash, it was a one-two finish for Wayzata’s Michael Allen and Macalister Hedtke. Hedtke defended his 2023 200 meter wheelchair dash title and also won the 400 meters. He also was the repeat champion in the wheelchair discus throw.

Allen defended his 2023 800 meter and 1600 meter wheelchair run crowns.

Class AAA, which is for the largest high school, had no girls’ wheelchair competitors.

Garden projects make an impact

The City of Minneapolis is committed to reducing climate pollution by 2030. To help accomplish this goal, the Minneapolis Health Department has announced funding of more than \$315,000 for 16 community-led projects related to urban agriculture and preventing wasted food. As part of the City’s Climate Legacy Initiative, the funding will support efforts to create a fair and climate-resilient food system in Minneapolis.

Some of the Homegrown Minneapolis project will serve residents with disabilities and chronic illnesses.

“Tackling climate change demands a united front,” said Mayor Jacob Frey. “That’s why we’re thrilled to support over a dozen local organizations through our groundbreaking Climate Legacy Initiative. From fostering urban gardens to preventing food waste, these groups are making a real difference. Together, we’re building a more sustainable future for Minneapolis.”

Each organization’s project is building healthier communities by addressing one or more of the following areas, by growing food using sustainable production methods; using energy-efficient controlled environments to extend the growing season into the colder months; and reducing wasted food through distribution to food shelves and other programs as well as composting.

Grapevine Collective will receive \$5,000. As part of its effort to organize a community-led organic gardening project, the Grapevine Collective is helping to build handicapped accessible raised garden beds in New City Center.

Open Arms of Minnesota will receive \$22,536. The funding will support Open Arms’ community garden program, Open Farms, which supplies their core meal program as well as their new Cultural Meals Program.

The program produces vegetables and herbs used in the meal program for clients living with critical and life-threatening illnesses. The funds will support North Minneapolis and South Minneapolis gardens, allowing installation of a drip irrigation system, establishment of a compost system, and increasing growing space.

The Aliveness Project will receive \$15,000 to increase the food waste prevention activities of its food shelf program. This will expand the availability of the program’s nutritious food

options.

“Thanks to the City of Minneapolis’s Homegrown initiative, the Aliveness Project will expand food rescue efforts, thereby increasing the availability of fresh, nutritious food offerings to individuals living with HIV/AIDS and their families, said Matt Toburen, executive director. “Our food shelf and hot meal program will continue to meet the increasing food insecurity needs of the community and ensure people living with HIV can live long and healthy lives.”

Weggemann will be Olympics host

Five-time Paralympic medalist Mallory Weggemann will serve as a host for NBCUniversal’s Paris Olympics coverage on CNBC and E!, becoming the first Paralympian to host Olympic coverage for NBCU.

Weggemann, a U.S. Paralympic swimmer, will host alongside Cara Banks, Laura Britt, and Trenni Casey, before attempting to represent Team USA at the 2024 Paralympic Games, beginning August 28.

This will be Weggemann’s third assignment for NBC Sports and first on the Olympics, following the 2018 PyeongChang and 2022 Beijing Paralympic Games, where she served as a reporter.

“Still in the midst of a decorated athletic career herself, we’re thrilled to have Mallory – also an accomplished broadcaster -- bring her unique perspective to our coverage of the Games,” said Rebecca Chatman, vice president and coordinating producer of NBC Olympics Production.

Weggemann has enjoyed a decorated athletic career. In her Paralympic debut at the 2012 London Games, she won gold in the 50m freestyle S8 and bronze in the 4x100m medley relay. She has since competed at both the Rio and Tokyo Paralympics, winning three more medals (two gold) at the latter. Additionally, Weggemann is a 15-time world champion and twice has been named World Disabled Swimmer of the Year (2009, 2010).

This summer, Peacock is set to distribute Watershed, a new documentary co-directed by Weggemann and her husband, Jay Snyder, produced by their company, TFA Group. The film chronicles Weggemann’s training period for the Tokyo Paralympics through the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the couple’s journey to parenthood, shining a light on

their struggles with infertility and IVF when starting a family.

Appointees named to boards and commissions

Gov. Tim Walz and Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan have announced numerous appointments recently. Many of those appointments are to boards, commissions and committees that serve people with disabilities.

Several people were named to the One Minnesota Council on Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity. John Cunningham replaces Alice Roberts-Davis. Jean Kim Maierhofer replaces Jim Schowalter. Seth Strong replaces Dennis Olson. Winnie Sullivan replaces Heather Mueller. Halkeno Tura replaces Jan Malcolm, Mai Vang replaces Steve Grove.

Jennifer Ho, Rebecca Lucero and Tarek Tomes were reappointed.

The One Minnesota Council on Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity focuses on ensuring that those who are most affected by state government decisions are involved and centered in the decision-making process.

Appointments were announced to the Minnesota Assistive Technology Advisory Council. David Shaw, Apple Valley is the center for independent living representative, replacing Chanell Calhoun. The Minnesota Assistive Technology Advisory Council provides consumer-responsive, consumer-driven advice to the state for the planning, implementation, and evaluation of activities carried out under the federal Assistive Technology Act grant.



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The Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities has returning members, . Abdi Matan, Mankato, was reappointed as a private nonprofit representative. Katie McDermott, St. Paul, was reappointed as a consumer member. Jenny Arndt, Waseca, and Jennifer Santema, Milaca, were reappointed as parent members.

Christine McVey, St. Paul, was reappointed as a parent representative.

The Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities works to ensure that people with developmental disabilities and their families receive the necessary supports and services to achieve increased independence, productivity, self-determination, integration, and inclusion in the community.

The State Rehabilitation Council has new and returning members. Nick Holzthum, Minneapolis, is a current or former recipient of vocational rehabilitation services. Holzthum replaces Delawoe Bahtuoh. James Ross, Red Wing, replaces Tyler Sadek as a business, industry and labor representative.

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Chautauqua*

Monday – Friday 6 a.m.

On Class, nonfiction by Deborah Dundas, 2023. An examination of what happens when we don't talk about poverty or class—and what will happen when we do. Read by Pat Kovel-Jarboe. Five broadcasts; begins Mon, July 8.

The Cat's Meow, nonfiction by Jonathan B. Losos, 2023. The past, present, and future of the world's most popular and beloved pet, from a leading evolutionary biologist and great cat lover. Read by Yelva Lynfield. 17 broadcasts; begins Mon, July 15.

Past is Prologue*

Monday – Friday 11 a.m.

Empire, Incorporated, nonfiction by Philip J. Stern, 2023. A history that places the corporation—more than the crown—at the heart of British colonialism, arguing that companies built and governed global empire. Read by John Potts. 16 broadcasts; begins Wed, July 17.

Bookworm*

Monday – Friday 12 p.m.

Olav Audunsson 4 Winter, fiction by Sigrid Undset, translated by Tiina Nunnally, 2023. The fourth and final volume in the Nobel Prize-winning author's tumultuous, epic story of medieval Norway—the first new English translation in nearly a century. Read by Don Lee. 14 broadcasts; begins Mon, July 1.

Barbara Isn't Dying, fiction by Alina Bronsky, 2023. A bittersweet and hilarious novel about a marriage whose decades-old routine is suddenly upended. Read by Bonnie Swenby. Seven broadcasts; begins Mon, July 22.

Sentimental Education, fiction by Gustave Flaubert, 2023. A new translation of the classic novel about the romantic life of a young man at the time of the French Revolution of 1848. Read by Silvester Vicic. 19 broadcasts; begins Wed, July 31.

The Writer's Voice*

Monday – Friday 1 p.m.

Pocketful of Happiness, nonfiction by Richard E. Grant, 2023. Academy Award-nominated actor Richard E. Grant's moving

All times listed are Central Standard Time.

Abbreviations V – violent content R – racial epithets L – strong language S – sexual situation G – gory descriptions

and entertaining memoir about finding happiness in even the darkest of days. Read by Stuart Holland. 10 broadcasts; begins Mon, July 8. – L

A Wild Path, nonfiction by Douglas Wood, 2023. A soul-satisfying journey through the wilderness that uncovers hope, healing, and the abiding grace of wild things. Read by Anna Pliner. Nine broadcasts; begins Mon, July 22.

Choice Reading*

Monday – Friday 2 p.m.

Jonathan Abernathy You Are Kind, fiction by Molly McGhee, 2023. A magical-realist workplace satire infused with millennial anomie and a lot of heart. Read by Tom Speich. 11 broadcasts; begins Mon, July 8. – L

The Librarianist, fiction by Patrick deWitt, 2023. The story of Bob Comet, a man who has lived his life through and for literature, unaware that his own experience is a poignant and affecting narrative in itself. Read by Philip Lowry. 10 broadcasts; begins Tue, July 23. – L

Afternoon Report*

Monday – Friday 4 p.m.

Broken Code, nonfiction by Jeff Horwitz, 2023. A behind-the-scenes look at the manipulative tactics Facebook used to grow its business, how it distorted the way we connect online, and the company insiders who found the courage to speak out. Read by John Potts. 14 broadcasts; begins Tue, July 2. – L

The Call of the Tribe, nonfiction by Mario Vargas Llosa, 2023. The intellectual autobiography of Mario Vargas Llosa, winner of the 2010 Nobel Prize in Literature. Read by Nancy Johnson. 11 broadcasts; begins Mon, July 22.

Night Journey*

Monday – Friday 7 p.m.

Killing Monarchs, fiction by Cary J. Griffith, 2023. Two dead bodies and too many coincidences to ignore—in this outdoors mystery, special agent Sam Rivers must stop a murderous conspiracy. Read by Tom Speich. 10 broadcasts; begins Mon, July 2. – L

The Taken Ones, fiction by Jess Lourey, 2023. Two girls vanished. A woman buried alive. Between two crimes lie decades of secrets yet to be unearthed in a pulse-pounding novel. Read by Jodi Lindskog. 12 broadcasts; begins Tue, July 16. – L

Off the Shelf*

Monday – Friday 8 p.m.

North Woods, fiction by Daniel Mason, 2023. A sweeping novel about a single house in the woods of New England, told through the lives of those who inhabit it across the centuries. Read by Dan Sadoff. 13 broadcasts; begins Wed, July 10. – L, S, V, R

The English Experience, fiction by Julie Schumacher, 2023. Beleaguered Professor Jason Fitger chaperones Payne University's annual "Experience: Abroad" to London and beyond, with eleven undergrads in tow. Read by Therese Murray. Seven broadcasts; begins Mon, July 29. – L

Potpourri*

Monday – Friday 9 p.m.

All the Leaves Are Brown, nonfiction by Scott G. Shea, 2023. A biography of the iconic 1960s folk-pop group, The Mamas and the Papas. Read by Robb Empson. 18 broadcasts; begins Wed, July 18. – L

Good Night Owl*

Monday – Friday 10 p.m.

The Only One Left, fiction by Riley Sager, 2023. A Gothic chiller about a young caregiver assigned to work for a woman accused of a Lizzie Borden-like massacre decades earlier. Read by Julia Brown. 13 broadcasts; begins Wed, July 17. – L

RTB After Hours*

Monday – Friday 11 p.m.

After Hours on Milagro Street (rebroadcast), fiction by Angelina M. Lopez, 2022. A professor and a bar owner in small town forced-proximity find sparks and more. Read by Jodi Lindskog. 13 broadcasts; begins Tue, July 2. – L, S



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- ★ Additional ASL and audio description services available upon request with two weeks advance notice
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- ★ Two locations with adult-size changing tables, including the Momentum Refresh Universal Changing Room with Hoist
- ★ Two sensory friendly spaces
- ★ Sensory-Friendly Morning on Monday, Aug. 26 at Kidway (10 a.m.-noon) and Mighty Midway (9-11 a.m.)
- ★ Free Park & Ride lot and shuttle service exclusively for those with disabilities and their companions
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Our Accessibility Guide has all the details!
mnstatefair.org/general-info/accessibility-guide/





Aug. 22 – Labor Day, Sept. 2, 2024



Celebrate Minnesota Disability Pride Month at the ACT event

Minnesota's Second Annual Disability Pride Festival is 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thursday, July 18 at the state capitol in St. Paul. Advocating Change Together (ACT): The Center for Disability Leadership, a statewide Minnesota nonprofit organization, is organizing this year's event.

July is Disability Pride Month. Disability pride is a time for recognition and celebration of the disabled identity and the unique culture of disabilities communities. Disability Pride is an opportunity for everyone to show off their whole selves and be proud of who they are.

Disability Pride began as a celebration of the passing of the ADA in 1990 and has blossomed into a worldwide celebration in the disability community. ACT hosted the first Minnesota celebration in 2023.

For almost 50 years, ACT has partnered with individuals and their families who have experienced the full spectrum of disabilities and subsequent challenges.

ACT is seeking Disability Pride Festival sponsor. Sponsorship opportunities enhance ACT's ability to sustain our current programs and services, while meeting our future goals and objectives.

Help ACT expand its outreach and fulfill its mission to promote, protect and advocate for the rights of individuals with intellectual, physical, and all disabilities through advocacy,

empowerment, education, accessibility, community outreach, justice, and leadership initiatives.

2024 Pride Partner sponsorship levels are:

- \$2,500 Red Stripe Sponsor
- \$2,000 Gold Stripe Sponsor
- \$1,000 White Stripe Sponsor
- \$750 Blue Stripe Sponsor
- \$500 Green Stripe Sponsor
- \$250 Black Background

Each color of the Disability Pride Flag represents a different category of disabilities. Together, these colorful bands represent a light that cuts through the darkness. Each color stripe has a meaning:

- Red - physical disabilities
- Gold - neurodiversity
- White - invisible disabilities and disabilities that have not yet been diagnosed
- Blue - emotional and psychiatric disabilities, including mental illness, anxiety, and depression
- Green - for sensory disabilities, including deafness, blindness, lack of smell, lack of taste, audio processing disorder, and all other sensory disabilities
- The faded black background represents mourning and rage for victims of ableism

Information about the event is on the ACT website. FFI: <https://www.selfadvocacy.org/>



Prairie Thunder

The Prairie Thunder Off-Road Rally is all day Sat, July 13 at Appleton Area OHV Park, Appleton. The park is one mile northeast of Appleton on Highway 59. Along with a mud run, scavenger hunt and obstacle course, this year's even features the all-terrain track chair for people with disabilities. Demonstrations of the chair are offered. Admission is free. Hosted by Swift County and Prairie Off-Roaders.

Deja Moo

Cow Tipping Press hosts Deja Moo, a disability literary arts festival, at 4-8 p.m. Mon, Aug, 1 at Springboard for the Arts, 262 University Ave., St. Paul. Enjoy music, food, new books and readings by more than 30 of Cow Tipping's authors. The free indoor/outdoor event is fully accessible, with ASL interpretation and quiet spaces available. FFI: www.cowtippingpress.org

CHILDREN

From page 5

means families will still struggle with a gap in coverage until then and until CFSS is fully implemented.

There were also changes made in area where more stakeholder engagement is sought, on MnCHOICES 2.0 and the controversial Waiver Reimagine work to revamp the disability waiver system.

A positive change was made with MnCHOICES, to extend the validity of a MnCHOICES assessment. Under current law the assessment was good for just 60 days. As of July 1, 2025, a MnCHOICES assessment will be good for a whole year. This change should help address situations where a child is MnCHOICES assessed and a family works to get services in place. By the time they can get everything in place the MnCHOICES assessment has expired.

The group also discussed changes to the Consumer-Directed Community Supports or CDCS program, with more information to be provided by the state when a person is authorized or reauthorized for that service. That is thanks to language passed this session.

Another gain is in the area of electronic visit verification and its implementation. DHS is to look at what advocates see as a challenging

situation around implementation of electronic visit verification. The difficulty is in cases where a caregiver is delivering services to a person that the caregiver lives with, typically a family member. The process of logging on and out of the electronic system through the course of a typical day can be cumbersome, so efforts will get underway to see how that can be changed.

Another effort community members should watch for is a state survey about peoples' experience in accessing all sorts of different disability services in Minnesota. The vendor chosen for the survey must show a record of engagement with people with disabilities. Reports and recommendations from that survey are due in January 2026.

Marine Falk of Gillette covered many health-related legislative issues, including welcomed reforms of prior medical authorizations. Another win is full funding for the state's Rare Disease Council.

One gain is for people who need orthotic and prosthetic devices. Effective January 1, 2025, state-regulated health plans must cover secondary orthotic and prosthetic devices including devices for physical activities, including but not limited to running, swimming and biking, and devices for showering and bathing,

Another welcome change allows for Medical

an advance reservation is needed for an accessibility service.

Accessible events can be submitted to the MNAA Calendar (and MinnesotaPlaylist.com)

To receive a free monthly events calendar, email mactfactor@icloud.com and/or info@mnaccess.org. Ask for the entire events list or specific lists for ASL interpreting, captioning, audio description, sensory-friendly accommodations or disability-related topics.

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

Post your event online

Access Press is moving more event and opportunity listings online. There is a word limit and we require that those posting information include event costs as well as accommodations. Are ASL and AD offered? Is there companion seating? A quiet room? Fidgets? COVID-19 protocols?

Accommodations are much more than a ramp for many of us. That kind of information can help someone decide whether or not to attend an event.

To post an event, go to www.accesspress.org, click the resources tab at top right, and go to the post an event line.

This is for Minnesota-focused, disability community events. it is not for business advertising for events that aren't sponsored by a disability group or organization or that do not have a disability focused.

Consider that a small web or print ad can also generate interest in an upcoming event. For questions about ads, email ads@accesspress.org

Access Press reserves the right to reject events if they do not meet our guidelines. Call the editor at 651-644-2133 ext. one or email jane@accesspress.org with events questions.

Assistance payments to direct support professionals during acute hospital stays, for services provided through disability waiver plans. This starts January 1, 2025 or upon federal approval, and comes about after change at the federal as well as the state level.

DHS is required to draft a plan to also include CFFS and home care services to allow the payment of direct support professionals during acute hospital stays and present this to the legislature by January 1, 2025.

Maren Christenson Hofer of MAAN reviewed education changes. One is updates to the READ Act, which addresses the way reading is taught in the state of Minnesota. It is part of a national movement focused on redesigning how reading is taught.

The prone restraint law was repealed to create an exception for law enforcement, to resolve concerns that came up after the 2023

session. The concerns led some communities to pull their school resource officers out of their jobs.

The net effect was that the prohibition on prone restraint applies to school agents including teachers, staff and administrators.

Other significant changes include providing some paid training for paraprofessionals in schools, and providing the ability for school social workers to have their services covered by Medical Assistance. Families may see requests from schools to be able to bill a child's Medical Assistance for school-based services.

Another area of law that changed with improving the teacher pipeline, so there were programs to develop apprenticeships for teachers, scholarships for teachers of color, and funding to develop a special education teacher pipeline programs.

RADIO TALKING BOOK

From page 14

Molly Molloy and the Angel of Death, fiction by Maria Vale, 2023. A weird, adorable stunner of a romance where the Grim Reaper falls in love. Read by Lisa Bromer. Nine broadcasts; begins Mon, July 22. – L, S

Weekend Program Books

Your Personal World, 1 p.m. Sat, presents *Life in Light* by Mary Pipher, read by Bev Burchett.

For the Younger Set, 11 a.m. Sun, presents *First-Year Orientation*, edited by Lauren Gibaldi and Eric Smith, read by

MaryBeth Redmond. – L.

Poetic Reflections, noon Sun, presents *Raised by Wolves: Fifty Poets on Fifty Poems*, a Graywolf Anthology, read by Jim Ahrens.

The Great North, 4 p.m. Sun, presents *The Lincoln Dell Cookbook* by Wendi Zelkin Rosenstein and Kit Naylor, read by Jill Wolf.

The Great North, 4 p.m. Sun, presents *Confluence: A History of Fort Snelling* by Hampton Smith, read by Yelva Lynfield followed by *The Lincoln Dell Cookbook* by Wendi Zelkin Rosenstein and Kit Naylor, read by Jill Wolf.

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