



NEWS

October 2008

To Promote and Encourage Independence for All People with Disabilities. That is our purpose - our mission.

As we seek to grow, and to increase the number of people we are able to help, we will strengthen our network, allowing us to provide increased services to those who need them.

At the Disability Network, we believe that it's not the disability that prevents people from participating in our communities... it's the barriers placed in front of them.

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Letter from the Executive Director

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month. This month allows us all an opportunity to reflect on the importance of employment for people with disabilities, and to learn more about the benefit of employing people with disabilities.

We have close to a 70% unemployment rate of people with disabilities in our country. And most of those people WANT to work, if only employers would give them a chance.

People with disabilities often have a better attendance record than their co-workers without disabilities. They often work harder than others because they are grateful for the job employers have offered them. Plus, they offer a diverse perspective about life that can be a benefit to an employer. So the bottom line for employers is better with people with disabilities in the workplace.

Please enjoy the return of our monthly e-news...filled with great articles about training opportunities, information on the ADA Restoration Act and the agency spotlight on Michigan Rehabilitation Services.



Sara Kristal
M.A., C.R.C.
Executive Director

Training Opportunity

Americans With Disabilities Act

The **Disability Network of Mid-Michigan** is proud to present :
Americans With Disabilities Act And Related Laws. Topics include: Employer and Employee rights, reasonable accommodations, Alternative Formats, & Accessibility. Get your questions answered!!

WHERE: Horizons Conference Center

WHEN: November 10, 2008

TIME: 8:00am-11:00am

Full FREE breakfast served with coffee, water, juice

Please call 989-835-4041 FOR RESERVATIONS BY NOVEMBER 5, 2008

Disability Mentoring Day

Disability Mentoring Day is a national annual day set aside for career exploration and career mentoring aimed at students with Disabilities. The 7th annual Midland County celebration was held on October 15, 2008 with Disability Network of Mid-Michigan leading the effort along with our sponsoring community partners of The Dow Chemical Company and the Midland County Educational Service Agency (MCESA).

The day kicked off with students spread out across Midland at businesses representing their expressed career interests where they were job shadowing people who are involved in those careers. Twenty Six (26) students were hosted by twenty (20) businesses for the morning. After the job shadow the students were invited to a luncheon at the Dow Chemical Company where 25 Dow employees served as one on one mentors to the students. Together the students and their mentors, reviewed the morning's experience and listed concrete "next steps" in the career journey. While a few students concluded that their initial career interest might not be really what they wanted, the majority had their interest increased and expanded as a result of this experience.

At the luncheon some of the students commented that they were surprised to learn all that was involved in that in their career, others realized that it would take hard work to get to where they had hoped to be. All the students agreed it was a great experience and certainly worth the effort expended.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO VOTE NOVEMBER 4, 2008

National Disability Employment Awareness

Across America, individuals with disabilities are making important contributions in the workplace. This month, we celebrate their accomplishments and reaffirm our commitment to ensuring that the opportunities of America are available and accessible to every citizen.

Our country has made great progress to ensure that opportunities are accessible to everyone who is willing and able to work. Access to jobs was significantly expanded in 1990 when President George H. W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) into law. This important legislation has served as a foundation for strengthening our Nation's workforce and advancing innovation and American leadership in a global marketplace.

The theme for 2008 National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM),
America's People..... America's Talent..... America's Strength!



Agency Spotlight Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS)

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) has a mission to partner with individuals and employers to achieve quality employment outcomes and independence for persons with disabilities. Located in every county in Michigan, MRS strives to assist people with disabilities identify barriers to employment, overcome those barriers and find appropriate employment in their community.

The first steps in applying for MRS Services is to attend an orientation at your nearest MRS office. After orientation and filling out the application for services. MRS will need to determine your eligibility. This process is conducted by appointment with an MRS counselor. Eligibility for services is based on the following:

- Existing physical/mental impairment
- Vocational or work related barriers due to a disability; and
- The requirement of MRS Services

For more information about the closest MRS office please contact Disability Network at 989-835-4041.

AND JUSTICE FOR ALL

On September 25, 2008, the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 was signed in to law by current president George W. Bush. The Act restores initial protections against discrimination of people with disabilities that were provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Rulings from the Supreme Court since that time, as well as some frivolous lawsuits, slowly stripped away some of those protections. Law makers were picking apart the wording of the initial Law, rather than focusing on the broader picture, as was the intent. Those who authored or were a part of creating the initial document and advocates around the country have been working since 1990 to assure those protections were afforded to all Americans with disabilities.

The ADA Amendments Act clarifies who is covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act, clarifying that the term 'disability' should be construed broadly. In fact, it instructs the Supreme Court to act "in favor of broad coverage". The Act also addresses mitigating measures (medication, prosthetics, even eye glasses), major life activities, episodic disabilities and those in remission, and reasonable accommodations and to whom they should be provided.

President George H. W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act into law on July 26, 1990. Over 18 years later, as his father stood nearby, President George W. Bush signed the ADA Amendments Act in an effort to recapture these essential civil rights for all Americans with disabilities.

Additional information on how these changes will be uniformly implemented is expected over the next few weeks. Keep an eye on our web site www.dnmm.org for updates. Let this be a reminder that although advocacy can be a slow process, your words are never wasted. This is civil rights victory not only for 54 million Americans with disabilities, but for all Americans.



*Michigan Assistive
Technology
Loan Fund*

The Michigan Assistive Technology Loan Fund allows people with disabilities and seniors (or their family members) to purchase assistive technology devices or services, including modification of vehicles and homes. Loans may also cover cost of training to use the purchased equipment, warranties, and service agreements. For more information, or to apply, call:

1.800.782.4160



Michigan TeleWork Loan Fund
making it possible to work from home

Have you ever wished you could work from home? Michigan residents with disabilities can apply for loans for equipment and home modifications to do just that! If you or someone you know requires low-interest credit financing for computers and other equipment, including adaptive equipment and/or home office modifications, contact Andrea today!

1.800.782.4160

Disability Network of Mid-Michigan

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The Disability Network eNewsletter will be distributed monthly, via electronic format. Alternative formats are also available, upon request. Call: 989.835.4041 or info@dnmm.org

The Disability Network is a United Way non-profit Agency.

