



# NEWS

July 2009

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.

## In This Issue:

- Letter from the Executive Director
- Volunteers make a difference
- Peer Group
- Disability Awareness Night
- Happy Birthday ADA
- Agency Spotlight
- The Red, white and blue

## Letter from the Executive Director

The hallways at Disability Network are noisier than usual due to the fact the Summer STAGES program is in full-swing. Each morning the kids arrive either by public transportation or other means to spend a day learning important independent living and employment skills.

The best part about the program is the fact the learning opportunities are disguised in fun activities. The Program Leader, Lowell Gisel and his staff work really hard to make each learning opportunity a fun experience. Their philosophy is that the more fun the activities are; the more activities they will attend and the more they learn.



Sara Kristal, MA, C.R.C.  
Executive Director

What they learn throughout the summer is career exploration, team building skills, social skills, job seeking skills and accessing our communities. In addition to spending time in the community they spend a lot of time at our skills CITE, which is our apartment designed to teach people how to live independently. But what I enjoy most is seeing them at the end of the day when I can stop and chat for a while to find out how their day went. That always sends me home with a smile on my face; sometimes bigger than the smile they have on theirs.

## Volunteers make a difference

As Ann works on the labels for a mailing to go out, she reflects on her years of volunteering in the community. Ann has been volunteering since 1996. She has found this to be a great way to meet new people and also a great way to learn about what is going on in the community. "I love being able to pick and choose the days I volunteer. I have also made some great friends in the past few years. I also found out about the Peer Support Group at Disability Network, and I have met some great people, and have great friends in that group. This is a win win situation. Volunteering keeps me active, and I learn so many new things too.

I volunteer more than 20 times month. I encourage anyone who is thinking about being a volunteer, to give it a chance. It is really worth it. Besides it is a great reference if you ever need it." Ann said. If you want to volunteer for Disability Network, call 835-4041.



### Peer Group

Disability Network has a Peer Group that is growing in leaps and bounds. Currently they meet in Midland and Saginaw and are now expanding to Gladwin. The Peer group meets once a month and each month they have different activities, and speakers of interest come in and speak about a variety of topics.

The Midland Peer Group meets in Midland at Disability Network the 1st Wednesday of every month from 3pm-4pm.

The Saginaw Peer Group meets in Saginaw at the Butman Fish Library the 3rd Monday of every month from 10am-11am.

The Clare-Gladwin support group meet the 1st Thursday of every month from 1pm-2pm, at MI Works Harrison.

If you are interested in participating in the Peer Group, meeting new people, making new friends, or just learning something new, please contact Andrea Sneller for more information. There is no cost to join, and the time you spend could build lasting friendships. Also, if you'd like to start a Peer Group in your community we'd be happy to assist.

Call 989-835-4041 for further information

## FREE TRAINING..... Sign up today!!

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT: WHAT EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES NEED TO KNOW.** July 8, 2009 9a.m-12p.m at the Strosacker Building 220 W Main Street, Midland. Great for Human Resource Departments, new managers, and anyone interested in expanding their understanding of the ADA. Call 989-835-4041 to register.



## Disability Awareness Night

Be sure to join Disability Network for Disability Awareness Night at the Dow Diamond, July 28, 2009. The evening will be filled with great information and lots of great things to do for the whole family.

The evening will be on a Tuesday during Family Feast night. Hot dogs, coke products, and ice cream sandwiches are all \$1.00 each! If you would like ticket information please call the ticket office at 837-2255

## Happy Birthday ADA

On July 26, 2009, Americans will celebrate the 19th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Its purpose is to end discrimination, reduce barriers to employment, and ensure access to education for people with disabilities. Since the ADA was signed by President George H. W. Bush in 1990, many changes have been made, creating a more accessible environment for America's 50 million plus people with disabilities.

The ADA has increased the visibility of people with disabilities. It also has led to the reshaping of the physical environment and improved communications access. In fact, the greatest impact of the ADA to date is in two areas: the empowerment claimed by people with disabilities and changes in how our nation's institutions conduct routine business: in stores, on buses, in the office, and in our use of telecommunications.

At Disability Network, we continue to work toward making the intent of the ADA become reality. We teach people about disability. We empower people. We offer accessibility reviews so that the businesses are aware of barriers and how to remove or reduce them. We promote and encourage independence for all people with disabilities. The ADA is alive and well at Disability Network. Come and see what we can do for you!

## WWII Veteran and the VA Program

The VA program at Disability Network, has been a great resource for an 88 year old WWII Veteran. He lived on a low income because he wasn't eligible for Social Security. Disability Network was able to advocate, and now the veteran receives 100% of his disability benefits. He is a talented musician and can now enjoy playing his new guitar that was purchased through the VA. If you know a Veteran who has questions about our program, please have them call 989-835-4041.

## DO YOU HAVE A DONATION?

If you would like to donate any items such as, wheel chairs, walkers, Amigos,..etc, please call 989-835-4041. We also take household items for our Nursing Home Transition Program. The items can be dropped off at Disability Network Mid Michigan 1160 James Savage Suite C, Midland Mi 48642.

# AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

## Special Tree Rehabilitation

Over the past 30 years, Special Tree has been a consistent and strong leader in supporting the brain injury and rehabilitation movement in Michigan. Special Tree started in 1974 as Woody's rest home. They found as time went on they were getting a lot of patients with brain injuries, and brain injury as a result of a car accident. So the focus changed. Special Tree is now the leading brain injury rehabilitation center in the state of Michigan. They provide Respiratory Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Social Work, Massage Therapy, Speech Language Pathology, Psychology, Nutrition Services, Internal Case Management, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Nursing. If you are interested in learning more about Special Tree and the services they provide, please visit the web site [www.specialtree.com](http://www.specialtree.com) or you can call 989-631-1100. You can also tune into MCTV Wednesday at 10:00 PM or Thursday at 10:00 AM. to watch the latest edition of Access America, where we featured Special Tree. You can also check you local listing guide.

## The Red White & Blue

For more than 200 years, the American flag has been the symbol of our nation's strength and unity. It's been a source of pride and inspiration for millions of citizens. And the American Flag has been a prominent icon in our national history. Here are the highlights of its unique past.



- In May of 1776, Betsy Ross reported that she sewed the first American flag.
- Between 1777 and 1960, Congress passed several acts that changed the shape, design and arrangement of the flag and allowed for additional stars and stripes to be added to reflect the admission of each new state.
- June 24, 1912 - established proportions of the flag and provided for arrangement of the stars in six horizontal rows of eight each, a single point of each star to be upward.
- January 3, 1959 - provided for the arrangement of the stars in seven rows of seven stars each, staggered horizontally and vertically.
- August 21, 1959 - provided for the arrangement of the stars in nine rows of stars staggered horizontally and eleven rows of stars staggered vertically.

Today the flag consists of thirteen horizontal stripes, seven red alternating with 6 white. The stripes represent the original 13 colonies, the stars represent the 50 states of the Union. The colors of the flag are symbolic as well: Red symbolizes Hardiness and Valor, White symbolizes Purity and Innocence and Blue represents Vigilance, Perseverance and Justice.

### Disability Network of Mid-Michigan

1160 James Savage Road, Ste. C  
Midland, MI 48640  
[www.disabilitynetwork.org](http://www.disabilitynetwork.org)

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](mailto:info@dnmm.org)

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

