

Making Community Connections

DISABILITYnetwork

Northern Michigan



Fall 2021

**GOING
TUESDAY**
November 30, 2021

Together, we
can be a part
of something
bigger.



DISABILITYnetwork

Northern Michigan

Ways YOU Can Get Involved

Together We Give is an online fundraising campaign that empowers you to raise awareness and be directly involved in the donation drive. Join us as we change attitudes and perceptions about disability and maintain our digital strengths so everyone can connect and participate.

Fundraising

Share with your friends and family on Facebook and social media why you believe in our work by writing what inspires you about Disability Network. Be a change agent today and encourage others to support us by doing the same! Please consider fundraising on our behalf on your social media channels or send personal email messages to those within your circle of influence.

Events

Disability Network supports a community of people with disabilities and their families. We have the tools and weekly online virtual events to support you during this challenging time. We hope you will consider making a donation or a monthly gift to support our mission. Please help ensure that everyone who wants to virtually join us for peer support and connection has that opportunity!

Together We Give Thanks

By becoming a supporter, donors directly impact the lives of people with disabilities as we work to build inclusive communities.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to promoting personal empowerment and positive social change for persons with disabilities. We simply could not do this without you!

Director's Corner



It can be challenging to stay active and safe in the cold winter months. Disability Network is here to assist. Consider joining our SPIRIT Club for online exercise moves that are accessible and challenging for all. Do you enjoy online games? Consider joining our online gaming groups to play or just hang out. You can register for these free events by visiting our web site at

disabilitynetwork.org.

Staying safe this winter can also mean getting your COVID-19 vaccine or booster shot. With the high incidence of COVID-19 in Michigan, it is strongly recommended to get your vaccine or, if eligible, your booster dose. If you are having difficulty planning for a shot or are having difficulty finding transportation to a vaccination site, let us know. We would like to help.

Are you a person with a disability who has a need to connect to your health care provider over the internet to stay safe but does not have a device to do that? Please let us know, we would like to see if we can be of assistance.

Another safety fact, we know that winter weather can cause a loss of power to our homes. In this case, it is important to be ready for emergencies. Please contact us if you would like us to go through an emergency preparation checklist with you. We may be able to help you with items that can keep you safe and protected during the winter. To get in touch, please call us at 231 922 0903.

We at Disability Network wish you a safe, healthy and happy holiday season!

Jim Moore
Executive Director

Building Relationships

Peer support is one of the core services at Disability Network. Who better knows the issues that individuals face than another person with a disability. Peer mentors provide role modeling and share experiences, feelings and awareness of disability issues. We strive to support engagement and relationship building by connecting people. We welcome you to virtually join us for peer support and connection online at disabilitynetwork.org/events.

November Peer Support Events

Men's Group | he/him/his | they/them/theirs

Disability Network invites you to virtually join us on Mondays at 10:00 am for our Men's Group. This group is for men in our community seeking support, an opportunity to learn new skills and a chance to connect with other men with disabilities. We will work on managing stress, frustrations and issues they may be experiencing around social distancing.

Quarantine Cooking

Virtually join us for Quarantine Cooking on Tuesday, November 9, at 2:00 pm as we demonstrate how to prepare and cook food using different adaptable tools making cooking accessible for all. It does not matter what your kitchen skill level is, Quarantine Cooking is open to beginners and master chefs alike. Come learn, share and connect with your peers!

Virtual Accessible Gaming Group

Disability Network is excited to share the Virtual Accessible Gaming Social Group as a way for people with disabilities to connect online and play together. Visit online at disabilitynetwork.org/events/ for current virtual gaming group event descriptions and registration details.

Adult Peer Advocacy Group

Disability Network invites you to virtually join us for our online Adult Peer Advocacy Group Zoom Meeting on Thursday, November 4, at 2:00 pm. Learn how to advocate for your needs and the needs of others. Learn leadership skills. Voice what is important to you!

Youth Peer Advocacy Group | Be the Influence

Disability Network Northern Michigan invites you to join us on every other Thursday from 4:00 to 5:00 pm starting on October 7, for our Youth Peer Advocacy Group, *Be the Influence*. The Youth Peer Advocacy Group will teach youth with disabilities the skills needed to advocate for their needs and to empower them support those with disabilities within their community. Registration details online at disabilitynetwork.org.

SPIRIT Club

Are you looking for an opportunity to move your body? Have you lost access to exercise programs and gyms due to COVID-19 or are you just looking for a fun group of people to find the motivation? Virtually join us on Wednesdays and Fridays at 10:00 am for this free program that will provide you with experienced, certified instructors guiding you through exercise moves that are accessible and challenging for all.

Parent Network

Parent Network guides families with youth and adults with disabilities to the many supports available through healthcare and educational resources. We welcome you to virtually join us on Tuesday, November 16, at 7:00 pm for our Parent Network meeting.

Staff Publications

Independence and Our Youth

by Disability Network Independent Living Specialist Katy Fisher

At Disability Network, we teach youth with disabilities that independence is different for everyone based on individual needs, abilities and desires. Becoming as independent as possible requires practice in self-advocacy, and for the youth we work with, a better understanding of their disability and how it affects them.

One barrier that independent youth with disabilities face is having others define what independence may look like for them, and not provide opportunities for them to realize their fullest potential. While it may be uncomfortable for parents or caregivers of vulnerable youth to encourage their children to be independent and to learn the skills required to successfully transition into adulthood, we also understand how important this step is to supporting growth towards self-sufficiency and self-directed living.

One of the many programs we offer to youth with disabilities, is the opportunity to learn independence through the Community L.I.F.E. (Learning Independence from Experience) program. Community L.I.F.E. is community-based, hands-on learning to practice self-advocacy skills. Some of those experiences include safely navigating downtown both on foot and using public transportation, volunteering at local organizations to mimic employment, learning employer expectations, working with coworkers and visiting housing facilities within the community to understand what it takes to live independently. Additionally, students in the Community L.I.F.E. program gain skills budgeting, dining at local restaurants and shopping at stores to practice money management, as well as communication, social and safety skills. Throughout the day, instructors take the time to review and discuss the details and nuances of each community experience to ensure that there are relevant learning opportunities to teach youth the skills to advocate for themselves and to navigate similar situations in the future.

Here's how parents can help children become empowered:

Give your youth a list of household tasks at home. Let your kids help you make meals and set the table. Have your youth find items at the grocery store and assist with scanning items at self-checkout. Talk to your youth as you walk through your community about safety, streetlights and crosswalks. Use public transport, if available, and let your youth take the lead. Practice managing money and the difference between wants and needs when budgeting. Allow your youth to order their own meal at a restaurant and stay within a set budget. Encourage young people to attend meetings that are relevant to them and to express their needs. Talk to your youth about their disability, what it means to them and the effects it has.

Raising children with disabilities can be challenging and intimidating. At Disability Network, we encourage you to reach out to us for support and guidance. Please find more information on our youth, peer and parent support programs on our website at disabilitynetwork.org.

Community Connections Podcast



Episode 2



Successful Youth Transition
with Jim Moore and Nicole Miller
www.disabilitynetwork.org

Listen



Options Counseling

Options Counseling is a free service which helps you and your family explore the long-term support service options while considering your: medical needs, personal values, personal budget and housing needs.

Per Options Counselor Kevin Lozo, "Options Counseling can be provided over the phone, through online video conferencing, by email or in person. This can be a one-time connection or a series of meetings depending on the person's desires."

Our goal is to make sure that you and your loved ones make the best choices in supporting your independence in moving home or into a community-based living arrangement. We can assist with creating a care plan and connect you to service providers that will allow you to reside safely in your independent living situation.

Connect with Independent Living Resource Specialist and Options Counselor Kevin Lozo for details on how you or a family member can participate in Options Counseling at 231 922 0903 ext 330 or by email at kevin@disabilitynetwork.net.

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Faith's Story

Disability Network is happy to feature and share Faith's story with Options Counseling. It first began a decade ago when Faith became a volunteer with Disability Network. Faith has a long history of advocating for accessibility for individuals with disabilities. Whether if Faith was found in the community, volunteering at various events or assisting others with disability challenges; Faith always wore her smile and expected nothing in return.

As the pandemic spread across northern Michigan, Faith hunkered down like many of us did. In the summer of 2020, Faith was hospitalized then discharged to a short-term rehabilitation facility. Rehabilitation lasted for nine months with limited visitors, which made for an exceptionally long winter.

It was in the Spring of 2021 when Options Counselor Kevin Lozo was made aware of Faith being in a health care facility. Kevin introduced the new Options Counseling and aided Faith weekly by phone, texting, emailing and even Facetiming. Options Counseling was able to work with Faith, her family, facility social workers and physical therapy to ensure a safe and well-planned discharge home.

The Options Counseling Program was able work with Faith and facility dischargers to obtain recommend assistive technology, medical supplies and equipment not covered by insurances at no cost under the Cares Act Funding to help Faith with everyday functions at home. In August of 2021, Faith was reunited with her pets, parents and her own bedroom again.

We Care About You Let's Connect

Disability Network supports a community of people with disabilities and their families. We have the tools to support you during this challenging time.

Please visit disabilitynetwork.org for up-to-date information on our community's response to COVID-19 and our weekly virtual online events.