

We All Have A Story

ADA Celebration Newsletter

What is the ADA?

Celebrating three decades of progress in access and inclusion. On July 26, 1990, President George H. W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) into law to ensure the civil rights of people with disabilities. This legislation established a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities.

The Americans with Disabilities Act became law in 1990. The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation and all public and private places that are open to the general public.

The purpose of the law is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else.

The ADA gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities similar to those provided to individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age and religion. It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, employment, transportation, state, local government services and telecommunications. The ADA is divided into five titles (or sections) that relate to different areas of public life.

The ADA has expanded opportunities for Americans with disabilities by reducing barriers, changing perceptions and increasing full participation in community life. However, the full promise of the ADA will only be reached if we remain committed to continue our efforts to fully implement the ADA.

The Purpose of the ADA

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Disability Network advocates for the ADA, expanding opportunities for people with disabilities by reducing barriers, changing perceptions and increasing community participation.

Celebrating Three Decades of Progress in Access and Inclusion

At Disability Network, we are helping people with disabilities live fully engaged and self-directed lives in inclusive communities. Become a part of the nationwide ADA celebration by reading stories shared from those we serve.

We warmly welcome you to share your story that preserves, celebrates and advocates for the ADA online at disabilitynetwork.org/

Sign the ADA Pledge

Disability Network Northern Michigan invites you to become a part of the nationwide celebration of the Americans with Disabilities Act by signing the ADA Pledge online at <https://www.adaanniversary.org/pledge>.

Peer Support

Peer Support and Advocacy are two of Disability Network's core services. We are helping people with disabilities live fully engaged and self-directed lives every day.

According to Disability Network's Peer Advocacy Group Facilitator Demarie Jones, "While the ADA addresses many barriers for people with disabilities, there is still a lot of work to be done to build inclusive and accessible communities. Access is as individual as the person needing it."

Betsy was born on November 22, 1985, to Michael and Shelley Lyman and to an older sister named Cindy. When she was born, she had a birthmark that was considered a raised lump on her head full of fluid. It eventually went away. At the age of five years old she entered kindergarten and was bullied because she was in junior plus sized clothing, a bigger girl and very tall. She also was a tom boy and wore a lot of clothes that were boyish, but she persevered by turning to her loving family for support.

Her teacher in kindergarten noticed that when she wrote her name her letters were disformed, she wrote outside of the lines, her hands were very shaky and something was off. She went to the University of Michigan where she was diagnosed with benign tremors and had special education services in the form of a 504 plan where she received speech, physical and occupational therapy in and outside the classroom but was teased more. She still preserved turning to the love and support of her family and friends.

In 7th grade she went from being a straight A student to a straight D student. Her parents had her tested and found out she had Dyscalculia learning disabilities such as ADHD, Dyslexia and needed special help in the classroom. An IEP was formed from then on all the way up to when she graduated from college for special accommodations.

A lot of teachers called her stupid, but she still moved on and discovered if she sang, she felt better along with turning to her support system. Even in college she had the same accommodations as high school throughout the whole experience.

Real people and real stories that preserve, celebrate and advocate for the Americans with Disabilities Act.

"Keep dreaming and when life gives you lemons, make lemonade."



Betsy went to college at her local community college and earned her Associate of Arts Degree in General Studies and went on to Central Michigan University for her Bachelor of Science degree in Child Development. She worked in various child care centers for ten years. Due to Betsy's health issues, she had to stop working.

Betsy is our Peer Advocacy Group Storyteller.

Titles of the ADA

Title I Employment

Equal employment opportunity for individuals with disabilities.

Title II State and Local Government

Nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in government.

Title III Public Accommodations

Nondiscrimination on the basis of disability by public accommodations .

Title IV Telecommunications

Requires telephone companies to provide services



"Keep fighting the good fight, because you never know where it will lead you."

Billy's story began at the very young age of 22. He was having ridiculous headaches and couldn't figure out what was going on for days. He went to the chiropractor and when he was still experiencing headaches and no feelings in his extremities while there. The doctors recommend he go to urgent care in Traverse City.

While at Urgent Care, the doctors told Billy to go to the Emergency Room at Munson in Traverse City. From there he was referred to the Mayo Clinic. While at Mayo Clinic they found a brain tumor where they told him the best option would be surgery. The Mayo Clinic doctors told me that I only had two months to live at tops. Additional testing results showed that the brain tumor was not cancerous. The doctors were able to operate and remove 90% of the brain tumor.

The operation took place when I was 22 years old at the Mayo Clinic. Somewhere between Traverse City and the Mayo Clinic, something went awry resulting in losing my short-term memory. I still do not have it.

However, I beat the odds and I am still living at 30 years of age. Literally, every day I wake up with Taylor Swift's song '22' in my head reminding that I believe more and more in the fight each and every day.

Billy's story was written by Betsy.

Who We Are

Disability Network provides possibilities for individuals to participate in group activities, learn self-advocacy skills, recreational activities and a chance to develop friendships and share experiences in our community.

We assist with the development of self-advocacy skills in the areas of housing, transportation, civil and human rights, education, employment and other life situations. We also advocate for system change at the local, state and national levels.

What We Do

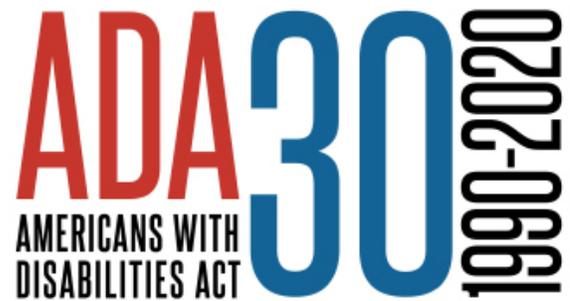
Most people equate disability with limitations. It is in our power to impact perceptions that prevent people with disabilities from sharing in inclusive communities. We provide training, mentoring and referrals to help people with disabilities and their families lead productive lives.

We also work on a larger scale helping government and businesses make changes that benefit everyone in the community because we believe that everyone should have the chance to participate, contribute and belong.

Support Us

Thank you for joining us in promoting personal empowerment and positive social change for individuals with disabilities.

Mail your donation to Disability Network Northern Michigan, 415 East Eighth Street, Traverse City, MI 49686.



Reuben was diagnosed with polio at eight months old. No vaccine was available at the time as it had not yet been developed. At the age of four, Reuben was one of the first children to get the polio vaccine. The following year, Reuben started kindergarten. Reuben was mainstreamed throughout his schooling.



In 1956 the family moved to Michigan due to the ore dock shutting down in Wisconsin. Reuben's new elementary school was one block from his home and very accessible on all one floor.

His Junior High School was a three-story building where he spent most of his time on first floor with the same teacher for three classes and a sort of remote teaching of math. Second time around for 7th grade in Battle Creek, where he learns to walk distance and climb multiple stairs. Back to Dowagiac to finish grades 8-12th grades and graduation!

After 1982 is where he really got involved in advocacy. Reuben did a little advocacy outreach in the upper peninsula, but nothing like the outreach work in Traverse City. In 1979, Reuben first got involved with Michigan Protection and Advocacy in Newberry with several trips to Marquette for meetings with other individuals with disabilities.

After he moved to Traverse City, he met up with Michigan Rehabilitation Services. He was there so much people thought he worked with them. Reuben met a local business owner who had problems with city accessibility issues. Reuben got a barrier free group started comprised of all disabilities to address city accessibility issues.

Reuben didn't start using a wheelchair until 1991. He walked for a number of years. After going into a wheelchair, his eyes were opened to accessibility issues. He started a polio group here and the Traverse City Association for a Barrier Free Environment.

In 1989, Reuben was one of the founding members of a Center for Independent Living as well on several boards and committees for disability issues. It wasn't until about five years ago that Reuben became involved with Disability Network. Presently, Reuben hangs out in the background until called upon. "I am retired from everything, including volunteering."

We're Here for You

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

Disability Network is providing services to customers and community members via phone, email and online. **Call (231) 922-0903, email infodisabilitynetwork.net or visit disabilitynetwork.org.**