

CommunicAbility



A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY

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"You must do the thing
you think you cannot do."

~Eleanor Roosevelt~

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New Horizons Un-Limited Inc. (NHU) is a non-profit organization based in Milwaukee with a mission to provide people with life-long disabilities, their families and caregivers increased access to information, communication and opportunity. To learn more about our mission and activities, please visit the New Horizons Un-Limited website at www.new-horizons.org or e-mail us at horizons@new-horizons.org.

National News

Access Loans make daily lives of people with disabilities more accessible

The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) is working with the Digital Federal Credit Union (DCU) to offer Access Loans, available for any product, device, or building modification designed to assist persons with a disability in their daily lives.

DCU members may obtain Access Loans for 100% of the purchase amount, from \$1,500 to \$25,000 and with repayment terms up to 72 months. Qualified purchases include, but are not limited to: powered-non-vehicle transportation, manual transportation, adaptive computer and communications equipment, durable medical equipment, rehabilitative equipment, as well as accessible building modifications. DCU also offers Mobility Vehicle Loans for the purchase of modified vehicles. Loans are offered from \$5,000 to \$100,000 with up to 120 months to repay.

There is no cost to join DCU; you need only open a savings account with \$5.00. For more information, visit the DCU website or call them at (800) 328-8797.

Individual Development Accounts, a tool for economic independence

Nearly 40% of working-age people with disabilities live in poverty. In an effort to address this growing economic inequity, Individual Development Accounts (IDA) will help individuals save for greater economic

independence. The IDA savings program provides an opportunity for low-income people to receive saving matches for an education, a home of their own or creation of a small business. Every dollar you save will be doubled, perhaps even tripled or quadrupled.

Unfortunately, though IDAs are a tremendous tool in bringing people with disabilities out of poverty, research suggests that very few are taking advantage of these programs. IDAs are currently available in 44 states. Be sure to check if your state offers such a program. To learn more about IDAs, visit the IDA network on-line at www.idanetwork.org/ or call them at (919) 688-6444.

Don't let opportunity pass you by... participate in Disability Mentoring Day

Since 1999 Disability Mentoring day has brought students and job seekers with disabilities into the workplace where they can learn firsthand, via job shadowing and hands-on career exploration about **real** career opportunities. This day provides a first step to building relationships with mentors in your career field. Don't let this opportunity pass you by!

This year's Disability Mentoring Day (DMD) scheduled for Wednesday, October 15, 2003 is just weeks away. Contact your local coordinator today!

To find out who your local coordinator is, visit www.dmd-aapd.org/docs/coordlist.html or call the American Association for Persons with Disabilities at 800-840-8844 (V/TTY).

NHU assumes no responsibility in guaranteeing the services, programs or conditions as described.

"The last group of people in this country who could keep the economy going for all of us, with low inflation, are Americans with disabilities-who want to work, who can work, and who are not in the work force."

President Bill Clinton ~ June 4, 1999

Disability Employment Awareness Month

Did you know every October is Disability Employment Awareness Month? Since 1945, October has served as the month in which the talents, skills, and dedication of disabled Americans, a vital part of the American workforce are recognized. It also serves as a reminder to all those people with disabilities who want to work to seek the training they need to achieve their goal.

There are many programs and services available to make this goal a reality. Following are just a few:

Ticket to Work is a national initiative designed to assist people with the training and support they need to go to work. SSA beneficiaries with disabilities can find employment, vocational rehabilitation (VR) and other support services from public and private providers. Chances are you have or soon will receive your Ticket to Work. Use it! For more information on this initiative, call (866) 968-7842.

Medicaid Buy-in offers continued Medicaid coverage, for a small premium, to working people with disabilities whose income or resources would otherwise make them ineligible for Medicaid benefits. To learn if your state offers this option, call the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid at (877) 267-2323.

State Centers for Independent Living (CIL) often offer employment services such as skills training, resume development, job coaching and shadowing among others. CILs are located throughout all 50 states. To locate the CIL nearest you, visit Virtual CIL on-line at www.virtualcil.net/cils/.

Are you looking to start your own business?

Small Business and Self-Employment Service (SBSES), a service of the Office of Disability Employment Policy of the U.S. Department of Labor provides information, counseling, and referrals about self-employment and small business ownership opportunities for people with disabilities. SBSES, located at the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is available through JAN's toll-free number (800) 526-7234 (V/TTY).



Remember, if you shop at Pick 'n Save, you can earn \$\$ for NHU and your disability community!

Simply add NHU's charity number - **#542100** to your Advantage Plus Savers Club Card and use your card every time you shop your local Pick 'n Save.

It takes just minutes! You'll save on your groceries and earn valuable dollars for NHU and your disability community.

It's simple and costs you nothing! For more information, call us at (414) 299-0124 or stop by your local Pick 'n Save Service Desk for an Advantage Card application or change form.

We do not receive government funding and typically do not charge for services provided. We rely on the generosity of our neighbors to ensure that we continue to serve our disability community. Please help in any way that you can. Thank you.

Wisconsin News

Wisconsin one of 14 states to pilot disability employment program

The United States Department of Labor and Social Security Administration have created a new position, the Disability Program Navigator, within the nation's One Stop Career Centers. Wisconsin is set to receive federal funding to establish this position at several of the state's One Stop Career Centers. "The Navigator will work directly with customers with disabilities to access, facilitate and 'navigate' the complex provisions under various programs that impact their ability to gain, return to, or retain employment," said Governor Doyle. "The goal of this initiative is to increase employment and self sufficiency for people with disabilities by linking them to employers and by facilitating access to programs and services for successful entry or reentry into the workforce," said DWD Secretary Gassman.

To learn how you can benefit from this new program, visit your local One Stop Career Center or call the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development at (608) 266-3131.

Computer training is more accessible than you think...

We know there are quite a few of you out there looking for accessible computer training opportunities. As such, we thought it would be a good idea to round up a list of organizations that offer such training.

Following are a few organizations that offer computer training programs to persons with disabilities. We encourage you to contact each of them to learn about the program specifics.

Goodwill Industries of Southeastern WI, via their Business Career Training Center, offers one-on-one instruction in computer literacy skills including Windows, word processing (Word & WordPerfect), spreadsheets (Excel), databases (Access) and presentation programs (PowerPoint). For more information, call (414) 353.6400.

IndependenceFirst offers one-on-one training on such topics as typing and computer basics, Microsoft Word basics and e-mail and Internet basics. For more information, call (414) 291-7520.

Milwaukee Achiever Literacy Services offers computer literacy training. Computer literacy courses are open to the public (18 years or older). Classes are held at two locations in the city of Milwaukee. Applicants are accepted on a case by case basis. For more information, call (414) 643-0320 ext. 108.

Milwaukee Center for Independence offers a keyboarding and clerical training program designed to prepare individuals for employment in office settings. The program teaches typing skills and offers training in the Microsoft Office suite including Word, Excel and Access. For more information, call (414) 272-1344.

Milwaukee County Library System offers free hands-on computer workshops on such topics as computer basics, Internet and e-mail basics, word processing and more. Classes are available at many locations throughout Milwaukee County. For more information, call (414) 286-3070.

United Methodist Church of Whitefish Bay offers introductory computer classes to adults with varying disabilities. Classes are typically held in the fall, early winter and spring months. For more information, call (414) 964-2424.

Catch the Wave. Choose Work! - 2003 Wisconsin Statewide Supported Employment Conference

The Wisconsin Association for Persons in Supported Employment is hosting their second annual Supported Employment Conference for Wisconsin residents and employers. The conference, scheduled for Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, October 15, 16 and 17, 2003 at Antiqua Bay Resort in Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin, will feature discussions on topics beneficial to individuals with disabilities and their families and employers alike. For individuals, topics include working and living in the community, the impact of assistive technology on employment, employment rights, social security, person-centered transition planning and job club creation. For employers, topics include employer incentives, recruiting, hiring, and retaining quality employees, and many others. Registration rates vary from \$60 to \$90 for consumers and \$99 to \$155 for others. For more information, visit the WIAPSE website at wiapse.tripod.com/, e-mail wiapseconf@hotmail.com or call (608) 345-0693.

A "Powerful Journey" in pictures

Several Wisconsin Independent Living Centers (ILCs) are sponsoring a photo contest entitled "A Powerful Journey: People with Disabilities in Our Community." The contest is calling for photos that feature people with disabilities in their communities – at work, at school, at home or at play.

In addition to possibly having your work published in a calendar or other print media, your photo may also qualify for one of four cash prizes, including a grand prize of \$500. A panel of volunteers, who will focus on composition, overall impact and image quality, will judge photo entries.

To enter, complete an entry form (available from any participating ILC), and submit it with your photo, labeled with your name and a photo caption. All photos must be at least 3x5 but no larger than 5x7. Entries must be received by Friday, October 17, 2003. To obtain an entry form, contact IndependenceFirst at (414) 291-7520 (Voice/TTY).

If you received this newsletter from a friend and would like to receive *CommunicAbility* on a regular basis, please join our mailing list.

Please contact us with your mailing or e-mail address.

New Horizons Un-Limited Inc.
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(414) 299-0124

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**There are those who fall but get back up. Lose, but don't accept loss.
And succeed because they will not fail. These people don't teach by words, they inspire by example.**

~ Sports Illustrated ~

Ordinary Achievements Make Great Role Models

By Phil Pangrazio

Since September 11th, many stories have been written about heroes. They have described the many acts of heroism by fireman, policeman, and civilians who attempted to save innocent lives in the face of horrific conditions. Ironically, I have also read many stories recently about amazing achievements by people with disabilities. Many of these stories were presented as portraits of courage and heroism. For instance, an amputee who climbed to the summit of the world's highest mountain, or a wheelchair athlete who completed a 26 mile marathon. I always find it interesting how the non-disabled world views these feats as heroic. That they somehow are deserving of adulation. That the doers are role models. Please do not get me wrong, I view these acts as wonderful achievements worthy of praise. Challenging and overcoming physical limitations is a constructive endeavor for people with physical disabilities. It not only improves physical stamina and fitness, but also enhances mental health as well. I myself have enjoyed 12 years of wheelchair rugby. Competing in wheelchair athletics has been extremely beneficial to me. In fact, I am not sure if I would feel as satisfied with my life had I not participated in wheelchair sports. But these achievements are by far not the most important.

In truth, I am far more proud of other achievements. Like earning my bachelors and masters degrees from Arizona State University. Like going out and getting my first job...after my injury. Like building marketable skills that have allowed me to compete in today's workforce. Like not letting my disability stop me from participating in all aspects of society...not just social, but political and economic as well. These are the feats I would hope others with disabilities would want to emulate. These are the feats that prove that **adjustment to disability leads to really "living" with a disability.**

In fairness, I realize that not all people with disabilities can return to work or ever work. However, there are many that can and choose to not even try. The fact that only 1 in 500 people who get onto Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) ever get off, return to work, and earn above SGA (substantial gainful activity) seems to be some validation of this opinion. I am not suggesting that newspapers should not write stories about remarkable athletic achievements by [people with disabilities]. They are inspirational for everyone. I do, however, think we need more stories about achievements that many of us with disabilities view as ordinary and normal, but would serve as inspiration for those trying to climb out of the tangled web of disability and unemployment.