

# COMMUNICABILITY



A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR OUR DISABILITY COMMUNITY

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*That which we persist in doing becomes easier. Not that the task itself has become easier, but that our ability to perform it has improved.*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

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**New Horizons Un-Limited Inc. (NHU)** is a non-profit organization based in Milwaukee with a mission to make information and life experiences more accessible to people with lifelong disabilities, their families and caregivers. To learn more about our mission and activities, please visit the NHU website at [www.new-horizons.org](http://www.new-horizons.org).

## National News

### **Recent study validates workers with disabilities; contradicts common misperceptions among employers**

**NEWSFLASH:** People with disabilities make dependable and productive employees. No kidding!

It's a shame that employers need a study to tell them so. All the same, this study serves as an important reminder that there is a huge untapped resource within our disability community. Employers that continue to fear and ignore this resource will only miss out on a talented pool of employees.

Commissioned by the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce's *disabilityworks* initiative, the study, released January 28<sup>th</sup>, found that employees with disabilities from the healthcare, retail and hospitality sectors in the region were just as dependable and productive as employees without disabilities. Additionally, accommodation costs associated with workers with disabilities were often minimal and well worth the expense.

The study, conducted by DePaul University researchers, compared work-related variables of 314 participating employees with and without disabilities and found:

*Participating employees with disabilities had nearly identical job performance ratings as participating employees without disabilities;*

*The amount of supervision required was similar for both groups;*

*Participants with disabilities from the retail and hospitality sectors stayed on the job longer than their counterparts;*

*Very few special accommodations were provided to participating employees with disabilities; and the average cost of the accommodations was only \$313.*

*disabilityworks* Executive Director Karen McCulloh stated "I believe these findings will help set the record straight about what people with disabilities can contribute to the labor force. We've learned that employees with disabilities are working in senior level positions, are pharmacists, nurses, managers of retail stores and work at all levels of jobs just like nondisabled workers. In the not so distant future, it will be increasingly important to recruit talent from this community as the workforce continues to evolve."

Despite these findings, employers involved with the study continued to express concerns about the productivity of workers with disabilities and the costs associated with providing accommodations to this group. It is the hope of Karen Tamley, Commissioner of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities that the "research findings will be a powerful tool to educate employers who may have been reluctant to recruit and hire people with disabilities based on perceived costs of accommodations, absenteeism or performance."

To read the study's results in its entirety, visit [www.disabilityworks.org](http://www.disabilityworks.org).

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## ***Do you qualify to receive the Economic Stimulus Tax Rebate?***

President Bush recently announced that eligible Americans can soon look forward to receiving a tax rebate check in the mail - \$300 or \$600 for individuals, \$600 or \$1200 for married couples. Additionally, those who qualify for the rebates may receive up to \$300 for each child, under the age of 17, in their household.

The rebates are meant to kick-start a slowing economy by encouraging more spending.

Now, the question is: Can you look forward to receiving the rebate?

To qualify you must:

- Have a valid Social Security number (SSN);
- Have at least \$3,000 in qualifying income; and
- File a 2007 federal tax return

While the first and third requirements are fairly straight forward, the second is a bit more complicated. While the definition of qualifying income is quite broad and includes earned income from a job, net self-employment income, Social Security benefits such as Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) and veterans-disability payments, there are some limitations.

For example, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) does not count as qualifying income. Dividends, interest and capital gains also do not count towards qualifying income.

If you typically do not file an income tax return you may want to consider filing this year if your income qualifies you for the rebate.

The IRS encourages everyone to file by the normal April 15<sup>th</sup> tax deadline. However, if you are filing solely to establish your eligibility for the stimulus payment, filing by October 15<sup>th</sup> will allow the IRS to process your return and issue a stimulus payment before the end of the year.

If you have questions concerning the tax rebate or need help in preparing or filing your taxes, contact your local Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA). The VITA Program offers free tax help to low- to moderate-income (generally, \$40,000 and below) people who cannot prepare their own tax returns.

To locate a VITA program near you, call (800) 829-1040.

## **Wisconsin News and Events**

### ***Join us at the Wisconsin Accessible Cabin Open Houses***

Wisconsin's newest wheelchair accessible cabins at Richard Bong State Recreation Area in Kansasville (near Burlington) and Kohler Andrae State Parks in Sheboygan are officially opening for business this spring! In celebration of these grand openings, each cabin will be hosting an Open House in April. Open House visitors will have an opportunity to tour the new fully accessible cabins and enjoy the new accessible nature paths. Refreshments will be served.

#### **Cabin Open Houses:**

##### **Saturday, April 12, 2008**

Richard Bong State Recreation Area  
26313 Burlington Road  
Kansasville, Wisconsin  
(262) 878-5600

10 a.m. Dedication at the Amphitheater  
(If it rains go to the Molinaro Nature Center)

11 a.m. Shelter #3 for Food & Music  
Shuttle to Cabin in groups of 20

For more information or to obtain directions, call the Richard Bong State Recreation Area office, or visit [www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/parks/specific/bong](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/parks/specific/bong).

##### **Friday, April 25, 2008**

Kohler-Andrae State Parks  
1020 Beach Park Lane  
Sheboygan, Wisconsin  
(920) 421-4082

1 p.m. Cabin Open House

3 p.m. Dedication at Cabin

3:30 p.m. Social, Refreshments at the Sanderling Nature Center

For more information, call the State Park office, or visit [www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/parks/specific/ka](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/parks/specific/ka).

For each Open House, check in at the Park Office to receive a day pass. If there are more than 30 people in your party, please RSVP with the park offices. Please dress appropriately, as many of the activities are outdoors and the grounds will likely be damp.

To learn more, please contact us at (414) 299-0124 or [horizons@new-horizons.org](mailto:horizons@new-horizons.org).

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## **5<sup>th</sup> Annual Benefit Golf Outing Wednesday, June 4, 2008**

If you or someone you know relishes a great game of golf, consider joining us on Wednesday, June 4<sup>th</sup> at Hawk's View Golf Club in Lake Geneva for an afternoon of great fun, great scenery, and 5-star golf. Of course there are also many sponsorship opportunities available. If you are or know a business owner that would like to support our mission of empowering our community members with disabilities, please contact us.

To learn more about the outing, please check out our 2008 brochure by visiting [www.new-horizons.org/glfbrc.pdf](http://www.new-horizons.org/glfbrc.pdf) or call (414) 299-0124.

### **Welcome H.O.M.E, a practical paradise**

If you can't make it to any the accessible cabins this spring – there is another option...

Welcome H.O.M.E. is a Bed and Breakfast located in Newburg, Wisconsin, 35 miles northwest of Milwaukee. Welcome H.O.M.E. is not your ordinary B & B, rather it is an 18-acre living laboratory designed to be visited and enjoyed by everyone, regardless of ability or disability.

The universal design demonstration home is equipped with varied adaptive devices and designed with accessibility in mind. All are encouraged to "come as you are."

During the spring, summer and fall months, you can enjoy wheelchair accessible hiking trails through the 18-acre woodland. Stop at a picnic table in the woods for a private lunch ... until a ground squirrel invites himself for a handout or while a doe and her fawns gracefully graze alongside you. As night falls upon Newburg, retreat to your accessible guestroom, each offering little touches of home and an abundance of charm throughout. Aside from experiencing the beauty of the great outdoors, you can also leisurely explore numerous and varied accessible home design ideas and adaptive equipment.

You can find this and more for just \$55 per night, for up to three guests. A small investment considering the peace, tranquility and practical opportunities you will find at Welcome H.O.M.E. To learn more, call (262) 675-2525. To view photos of the B&B, visit [www.hnet.net/~welcomehome/index.html](http://www.hnet.net/~welcomehome/index.html).

### **Employment toolkit offers guidance to service providers, job seekers with disabilities**

Employment Resources, Inc., a Madison-based, non-profit organization that assists people with disabilities prepare for and find employment, has recently published an online Employment Toolkit.

While the toolkit is aimed at service providers, individuals who are currently employed, or interested in employment will find many helpful tips, options, and practical information and resources.

Sections of the plan include:

- Accessing Work Incentives
- Benefits Planning
- Medicare & Medicaid
- PASS Plan
- Social Security Disability Insurance
- Supplemental Security Income
- Ticket to Work
- Medical Assistance Purchase Plan/Health and Employment Counseling

If you have been thinking about seeking employment, this toolkit is a must read.

The toolkit is available on the Employment Resources website at [www.eri-wi.org/work.htm](http://www.eri-wi.org/work.htm).



### **Join SHARE's Bits & Bites Computer Club**

Bits and Bites is a monthly Computer Club offered by SHARE Wisconsin. Each meeting offers refreshments, software tutorials, Q&A sessions, guest speakers, Internet topic tours, and more! All are welcome no matter your experience level.

Meetings are typically held one evening per month at SHARE's main office located at 13111 W. Silver Spring Drive in Butler, Wisconsin.

If you are interested in joining the club, contact Ben LeFort via e-mail at [blefort@sharewi.org](mailto:blefort@sharewi.org) or via phone at (800) 548-2124.

**Thank you for making our  
6<sup>th</sup> Annual Raffle & Silent Auction  
a Great Success**

Gold'n Treasures  
Best Buy  
Wisconsin Athletic Club  
Green Bay Packers  
Milwaukee Bucks  
Milwaukee Wave  
Milwaukee Admirals  
The Milwaukee Rep  
Next Act Theatre  
Milwaukee Ballet  
Sunset Playhouse  
Circus World Museum  
German Fest  
Polish Fest  
Milwaukee Art Museum  
Milwaukee Public Museum  
Barney's Brother Salon  
Zim's Bar  
Bartolotta Restaurants  
Gus' Mexican Cantina  
Rupena's Fine Foods  
Kopp's Frozen Custard  
Great Harvest Bread Company  
Med Alliance  
Stein LTD  
M Therese Gift Shop

Of course our wonderful volunteers make this event possible, thank you for your dedication!

**A Non-profit Story**

*Memorial Gifts Support Work of NHU*

We recently received memorial donations from the family of a gentleman that had, on several occasions, enjoyed a stay at Wisconsin's Accessible Cabins.

Thanks to this family's thoughtful gift in memory of their beloved brother and son, we will be presenting accessible fishing gear to several of the cabins this spring. This gift will provide accessible fishing opportunities to the hundreds of guests that visit the cabins each year.

While we welcome contributions for any reason, we are especially pleased to receive gifts in honor or memory of a special person.

If you would like to make a gift in honor or memory of someone special in your life, please mail your contribution and a quick note regarding that special person to:

NEW HORIZONS UN-LIMITED INC.  
811 East Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 937  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

Remember, as a non-profit organization we rely on the generosity of our community, on YOU, to ensure that we continue to expand and improve our services.

As always, we thank you for your support!