

CommunicAbility

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY



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Our greatest glory consists not in never falling,
but in rising every time we may fall.

~ O. Goldsmith

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New Horizons Un-Limited Inc. (NHU) is a non-profit organization serving individuals with disabilities, their families and caregivers since 1994. To empower people with disabilities, we provide accessible information, promote accessible communication and encourage the exchange of ideas and solutions to common problems. In support of our mission, we have developed specific programs and projects that serve to further our ultimate goal of removing barriers that impede the full realization of independence.

To learn more about our mission and activities, please visit the New Horizons Un-Limited website at: <http://www.new-horizons.org>. You may also contact us by e-mail at: horizons@new-horizons.org.

CommunicAbility is intended to bring timely information on such topics as housing, employment, education, independent living and legislation into the lives of people who have been affected by disability. It is our hope that this information may affect change within their lives and the lives of others.

Support New Horizons Un-Limited while shopping at Boston Store!

Boston Store's Community Day sale is approaching! You can purchase your money saving packet from New Horizons Un-Limited Inc. The packet, which costs just \$5.00, includes six money saving coupons that can save you up to \$65.00 during Boston Store's next Community Day Sale, scheduled for Saturday, March 2, 2002. The entire \$5.00 purchase price will benefit New Horizons Un-Limited Inc., thereby serving to strengthen our disability community. To purchase a packet, either call us at (414) 299-0124, or mail a check in the amount of \$5.00 made payable to New Horizons Un-Limited Inc., Post Office Box 510034, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53203-0011.

National News

Parents with disabilities are sought for national survey

Through the Looking Glass (TLG) is conducting a nationwide project to learn more about families in which a parent with a disability is raising a teen (11-17 years old). They are gathering information via a national survey of parents with disabilities and their teenage children. The surveys are available in a variety of formats, including Spanish, over the phone, and in a version specific to Deaf parents. Families residing in the San Francisco Bay area

are also encouraged to participate in a 12-week solution-focused family therapy program. Additionally, deaf parents can participate in a face-to-face interview in ASL if living in or near one of the following cities: San Francisco, Seattle, Santa Fe, New York, Kansas City, or Washington, DC. Teens of parents with disabilities are also encouraged to participate in a hosted Teen Bulletin Board (Participation will earn your teen \$5.00.)

To learn more about this project and survey opportunity, please call (800) 644-2666 (Voice) or (800) 804-1616 (TTY). You can also e-mail tlg@lookingglass.org or visit the TLG website at <http://www.lookingglass.org>.

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

The Americans with Disabilities Act and you

A recent Harris Survey reported that nearly half (46 percent) of all people with a disability have not heard of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the very legislation designed to protect their rights. Even fewer understand its provisions. An alarming truth given that the Act was passed in 1990, nearly 12 years ago.

Given that individuals are the driving enforcement behind this act, it is essential that those for which the ADA was created understand the provisions. Following is a brief discussion of the Act's five titles, each addressing a different section of society including, employment, public services, public accommodations, and telecommunications.

Title I (Employment) requires employers with 15 or more employees to provide qualified individuals with disabilities with equal opportunity employment. It states that businesses must provide reasonable accommodations to allow individuals with disabilities access to the same opportunities available to non-disabled employees. Reasonably altering facilities, job functions, and equipment is required under this title. Additional protection is provided to employees throughout the recruitment, hiring, promotion, and training processes. Additionally, medical examinations for employment are highly regulated, so not to allow individuals with disabilities to unnecessarily be denied employment.

Title II (Public Services) prohibits government agencies from denying services to an individual based upon disability. These programs and services include public education, employment, transportation, recreation, health care, social services, court access, voting, and more. Any program that a non-disabled person can participate in also must be accessible to people with disabilities. A major component of this section is the requirement that public transportation must be fully accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Title III (Public Accommodations) states that all new construction and modification of existing public accommodations must adhere to accessibility standards as set forth by the ADA.

For existing facilities, barriers to services must be removed, so long as doing so will not cause undue hardship on the party making the modification. Public entities required to make accommodations under this title include restaurants, hotels, retail stores, and general use facilities.

Title IV (Telecommunications) ensures access of telecommunications equipment to the disabled by addressing telephone and television access for people with hearing and speech disabilities.

Title V (Miscellaneous), a little-known provision, prohibits coercion or retaliation against individuals with disabilities or their advocates for asserting rights under the ADA.

There is very little pro-active enforcement of this Act from our nation's protective agencies; therefore enforcement is left up to the individual. Seek out the appropriate agency or agencies and let your voice be heard. Public awareness, your awareness, is necessary to make this law work.

For more information on this and other disability laws, visit the National Council on Disability's Guide to Disability Rights Laws at <http://www.ncd.gov/newsroom/publications/disabilityrights.html>.

Olmstead report released

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson, on December 21, 2001, submitted the first multi-agency collaborative report ordered by President George Bush in June 2001. The report, entitled "Delivering on the Promise: Preliminary Report of Federal Agencies' Actions to Eliminate Barriers and Promote Community Integration," provides a summary of proposed agency actions in such key areas as health care structure and financing, caregiver and family support, employment, housing, and education.

Each of the proposed actions will serve as an effort to better integrate people with disabilities into their communities. In the near future, each individual agency will submit a report outlining specific ways in which they plan to carry out President Bush's Executive Order.

It is more important than ever for people with disabilities, their caregivers and loved ones to be involved in this planning process. If you have a disability or know someone with a disability, please follow the development of this report closely; share your concerns with advocates and members of your local and federal government. Do not let your future be decided without you! To locate your district's representative online, visit the United States House of Representatives online at, <http://www.house.gov/writerep/>.

To view the full preliminary report online, visit, <http://www.hhs.gov/newfreedom/prelim/>.

Freedom Scientific now offering technology scholarships

Freedom Scientific, a company providing assistive technology products for people with sensory impairments and learning disabilities, offers a technology scholarship program to legally blind college students in the U.S. and Canada.

Each year, 50 students will receive vouchers in amounts of either \$2,500 or \$1,500 to apply toward the purchase of Freedom Scientific's full line of products, including hardware, software, accessories, training and tutorials. Applications for this scholarship cycle must be received no later than March 31, 2002. To learn more about this opportunity, please call (800) 444-4443 or visit the company's website at www.freedomscientific.com/.

Wisconsin News

Return to Work Advocacy Project introduced in Wisconsin

Wisconsin Coalition for Advocacy (WCA) the protection and advocacy system for Wisconsin residents with disabilities has announced a new advocacy program. The Return to Work Advocacy Project is dedicated to protecting the rights and advocating for beneficiaries of Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and / or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). This program offers free, confidential assistance for beneficiaries throughout Wisconsin who are interested in learning more about returning to work.

The program will offer a wide range of services that will support an individual in returning to the workforce. To learn more about this program, call (414) 342-8700 or (800) 708-3034 or visit the WCA website at <http://www.w-c-a.org/>.

TEPP Program and UniversaLink – invaluable resources for those in need of communication equipment

The Telecommunications Equipment Purchase Program (TEPP) is a program designed to assist people with disabilities in acquiring equipment to better access basic telephone services. TEPP offers financial assistance vouchers to Wisconsin residents who are deaf, hard of hearing, speech impaired or mobility / motion impaired and who require special equipment to use the telephone independently. There are no income or age restrictions, simply fill out the application and mail it in.

The amount of the voucher depends upon the severity of the disability and a minimum \$100 co-payment will be the responsibility of the individual in need of the equipment. The program's vouchers will cover costs relating to the purchase of the following equipment: TTY, amplified handsets or phones, Braille/TTY units, TTY with large visual displays, special modems, hands-free speaker phones, puff activators, and phone signaling systems. Other specialized equipment may be approved on an individual basis.

So, you don't know what equipment will best meet your needs – no problem – just stop by UniversaLink, a program of the Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, serving Milwaukee and surrounding counties.

UniversaLink provides a trained staff, who can work with you in evaluating and determining your communication technology needs. Evaluations are free of charge. They also offer a variety of equipment for trial and purchase to individuals who are hard of hearing, deaf, speech impaired and mobility or motion impaired.

To learn more about TEPP and the services mentioned above, call UniversaLink at (262) 790-9200 (Voice) or (262) 790-1940 (TTY).

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**If you or someone you care about has been affected by disability,
please read our newsletter and pass it on to all those you know who may benefit!**

Wisconsin Getaways

Welcome H.O.M.E. offers unique get away for people with disabilities

Welcome H.O.M.E. is a Bed and Breakfast located in Newburg, Wisconsin. But, it's not your ordinary B & B. It's so much more. Welcome, H.O.M.E. was built to be visited and enjoyed by everyone, regardless of ability or disability. Equipped with varied adaptive devices and designed with accessibility in mind, all are encouraged to "come as you are."

On cold winter nights, you can cozy up next to the fireplace while sipping on a warm mug of hot chocolate. Or you can enjoy a country sunset overlooking the prairie from your private guestroom.

During the spring, summer and fall months, you can enjoy wheelchair accessible hiking trails through the 17-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 along side 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. A more recent amenity, one that we at New Horizons Un-Limited are pleased to provide through our collaboration with Welcome H.O.M.E., is the use of a computer and Internet service.

You can find this and more for just \$50 per night, per room. A small investment considering the peace, tranquility and practical opportunities you will find at Welcome H.O.M.E. Daily tours are also provided. To reserve your room or to schedule a tour, call (262) 675-2525 today.

Wisconsin DNR now accepting applications for accessible cabins

Did you know the Wisconsin State Park System offers accessible cabins for use by people with disabilities and their families? Indeed, there are six accessible cabins, four fully equipped with kitchens and bathrooms and two rustic, for the true camping enthusiasts.

The cabins, located in parks throughout Wisconsin, fill up fast. Make your reservations today. To learn more about the cabins or to receive a reservation form, visit the DNR website at <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/>, or call (608) 266-2621 (Voice) or (608) 267-6897 (TDD).