July 2011

The Summit Independent

An Advocacy and Resource Center for Montanans with Disabilities

Western Montana Disability News and Views

Summit Independent Living Center, Inc. | (406) 728 - 1630 | www.summitilc.org

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2011 Montana Legislative Review

The 2011 Legislature was a mixed bag for programs and services that many Montanans with disabilities rely on, especially considering the budget reductions many of these programs took before the legislature even started.

Before the 2011 Legislature began, human services were looking at substantial budget reductions in key programs that threatened to reduce essential services and make it even harder for consumers to access the services they need in order to remain living in their own homes and their own communities:

- The 2% provider rate increase for FY 2011 that was approved by the 2009 Legislature had already been taken away,
- Providers were on track to lose another 2% of their budget on July 1, 2011,
- 96 home and community based waiver slots were lost during the interim, and
- An additional 80 waiver slots that had already been put into use were scheduled to end on July 1, 2011.

The beginning of the 2011 session came with even more bad news. The Legislature chose to adopt an additional 5% spending reduction plan as a starting point for all budget negotiations. This plan contained additional harmful cuts to human services, including a 2.22% reduction in home and community based waiver funding; a 2.22% reduction in personal assistance services, which would have reduced meal prep time for individuals who need it to 4 hours per week, or about 11.5 minutes per meal; and the elimination of the Big Sky Rx program; as well as several other harmful cuts.

Despite the disheartening budget reductions that garnered the majority of our attention, there was good news as well. The Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services approved $262,863 in ongoing funds to continue the Medicaid for Workers with Disabilities program and $1,081,866 to continue the Health Care for Health Care Workers program over the next biennium.

As the session grinded on, it wasn't looking likely that the human services programs people with disabilities rely on for basic necessities were going to be adequately funded. Many legislators worked hard trying to get at least some of the funding for vital human services restored and Sen. Caferro (D-Helena) finally made some headway when her motion to provide funding for 180 home and community-based waiver slots was approved. This funding was important because now the 80 waiver slots that were going to be lost at the end of the fiscal year will be able to continue over the next biennium and the individuals using them will not lose services. The additional 100 waiver slots that were funded also meant that some of the 400-plus people who are currently on the waiting list could begin receiving much needed services.

However, under pressure from the nursing home lobby, the legislature placed restrictions on the funding, requiring that it had to be used for: individuals moving out of nursing homes, maintaining individuals in assisted living facilities, individuals at immediate risk of nursing home placement, or nursing home bed day costs. Despite our efforts to get these restrictions removed, they still remain and the issue has been referred to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to see whether or not nursing home bed day costs are even an allowable use of funding that had been appropriated as home and community-based services funding.

Both chambers of the legislature ultimately passed the budget while restoring almost none of the human service programs they had slashed. They even blocked some federal funding for programs like SNAP (food assistance) and LIEAP (Low Income Energy Assistance Program), though they did approve a one-time-only wage increase for direct caregivers on the Senate floor. Any hope that many people had of at least maintaining the existing level of services was quickly diminishing. Luckily, the legislative leadership, Sen. Peterson (R-Buffalo) and Rep. Milburn (R-Cascade), reached a deal with Governor Schweitzer and some, but not all, of the funding that so many had been fighting for was restored.

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Spotlight On... Mitch McCabe

by Lorna Palin, SDPAS Coordinator

Mitch McCabe, Artist

Mitch McCabe used to fool around when he drew, never taking it seriously. But a motor vehicle accident in 1998 left McCabe, who was 15 years old, with a spinal cord injury. After the accident, McCabe was inspired by a fellow artist to give art another shot.

Today he paints. One can often find him in his wheelchair, a pencil in his mouth, creating beautiful landscape and animal pictures.

Drawing is still just a hobby for Mitch, although he's become darn good at it, and it isn't his career goal. In his apartment, where he lives independently, one can see his art hanging on the walls along with charcoal Native American drawings. He likes to go to markets to show others his pieces, and he has made postcards, cards and framed representations of his work. He plans on taking his easel down to the markets in Missoula to show others exactly how he draws one day.

McCabe grew up in Harlem, MT and moved to Missoula in 2002 to look for more opportunities. He knew nothing of services or community resources at age 19.

"I learned everything from other people," McCabe said.

He said loves meeting new friends and said he has met some great people as a result of acquiring his disability. He wants people to know that there is life beyond disability and that someone can still accomplish their life dreams after becoming disabled.

McCabe will be starting at the University of Montana this summer in journalism. He is also a Summit ILC peer advocate. McCabe said his intention is to help others and work on elements that he believes can still be improved in people's lives and in the community.

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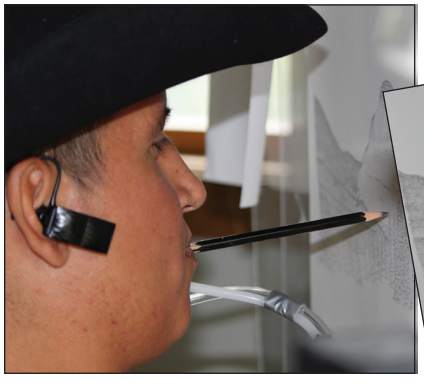

2011 Montana Legislative Review (cont.)

In the budget deal, the 2.22% reduction to the personal assistance program for meal preparation was restored with one-time-only funds, Big Sky Rx was fully restored, and aging services received $3,000,000 in one-time-only funding to help with programs like Meals on Wheels. The federal funding for the SNAP and LIEAP programs was also restored.

Unfortunately, the home and community based waiver program will still see a 2.22% plus another 2% rate reduction and the personal assistance program will also see a 2% rate reduction for the next biennium. For many providers, this means cutting back to 2009 funding levels and having to remain at that level until at least 2014.

Overall, human service programs that many people with disabilities rely on fared much better than was anticipated after the session, despite the significant losses that will occur in Medicaid provider rates. The 2013 legislative session will bring a new opportunity to seek funding for vital programs that allow people with disabilities and seniors to remain living in their own homes and communities at the lowest cost to the state.

Travis Hoffman, Advocacy Coordinator

Working Montanans Get Medicaid and Keep Their Jobs!

Hanna Hamaoka is a hard worker. As a day cleaner at the Good Food Store, Hanna busses tables, cleans restrooms, takes out the garbage and does other tasks. She has worked there since 2003, but until recently she was unable to receive the same employee benefits as other Good Food Store employees simply because Hanna needs Medicaid. To remain eligible for the program, she had to keep her financial resources under a certain limit. This meant she was unable to be a part of the store's 401(k) retirement plan. Then she signed up for Medicaid for Workers with Disabilities (MWD).

Hanna is one of many people with a disability in Montana who want to work. But until Medicaid for Workers with Disabilities took effect on July 1, 2010, being too productive meant losing a benefit many people rely on to survive. And while some people with disabilities are able to meet their needs through private insurance, Medicaid is necessary for people like Hanna because it pays for essential aid that private insurers aren't willing to cover including personal assistance, prescription medications and waiver services.

Medicaid also is helpful because it operates differently than private plans. Private insurance is typically unaffordable for people with disabilities if they wish to get on an individual plan. Additionally, private insurance has historically had pre-existing condition clauses that cause private insurance to not cover existing health conditions for people with disabilities. The Affordable Care Act, signed in March of 2010, has provisions that will phase out most pre-existing condition rules by 2014. Still, there are some private plans where the language has been grandfathered in. There is now a program called the Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan (PCIP) available as a temporary insurance until 2014, but in most cases it is preferable for people with disabilities to stay with Medicaid if it is available to them.

By making a monthly payment calculated from her income, Hanna is able to remain eligible for Medicaid, which she said she needs for health emergencies and other services. Hanna is also able to use the program's increased resource limit and unique retirement account disregard to safely enroll in her work's retirement plan. MWD's allowable resource limit is about four times higher than that of standard SSI-based Medicaid, and, unlike other Medicaid programs, it doesn't count a worker's retirement account savings against that increased resource limit. Thanks to the increased savings allowance, Hanna was able to replace her broken washer and dryer. She said she is also saving money towards buying her own home and for future vacations.

While the program is fairly new, Hanna is not the only person using MWD. In May, nearly 400 people in Montana were enrolled in the program.

Tina Hunt, Hostess

Another Medicaid for Workers with Disabilities consumer, Tina Hunt, is a hostess at the Russell Street Grill. She brings out food, cleans tables and says she enjoys chatting with customers. And while Tina says she loves her job, she would be unable to do it without taking prescription medication that she relies on Medicaid to afford. With MWD, Tina is able to stay on Medicaid and is now able to use her earnings to do things many Montana workers take for granted. She buys her own groceries and is saving up for a car. Tina said she also plans to use her savings to visit family in Bismarck with her brother.

Most of all, though, Tina is grateful that she has the opportunity to work without putting her health in jeopardy. She said she has no desire to sit at home and be isolated from the community.

"It would drive me crazy if I couldn't get out and do anything," Tina said.

To learn more about
Medicaid for Workers with Disabilities
contact:
jfield@summitilc.org

Hanna Hamaoka, Day Cleaner

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Lake County

Co-Coordinator
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Co-Coordinator
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Ravalli County Update

First, a big welcome to our new peer advocates Joel Peden and Rick Eakle. The Ravalli County peers will be enjoying an Osprey game on June 28 and plan on having a Peer outing at the Victor Steakhouse on August 12.

Kookie Karaoke Komedy Knight on May 14 was quite successful. We had a total of 27 people who attended and enjoyed all the singing, as well as the comedy of Mike Beers who came down from Missoula. We are now planning our next activity, a Picnic at Lake Como on July 14, 2011 at the Rock Creek Group Site. Come and join us for some fun in the great outdoors between 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Along with the usual swimming, fishing, hiking and games, you can join us for lunch around noon when we'll be grilling hamburgers and hotdogs. We're asking you to bring your favorite bag of chips. We'll have a variety of soft drinks and will be roasting marshmallows for S'mores. Give us a call at 363-5242 to let us know if you plan to attend, as we need a head count for the food and drinks. We also have other activities planned for the future, possibly another picnic in early fall and a Wii Bowling Tournament in early November. And we're always open to ideas and suggestions!

Our Summit Survivors Relay for Life Team is very happy to have completed the relay. We are very proud of our team who managed to raise over $ 1,600. The Relay took place at the Corvallis Track Field and started at 7 pm on June 17 and ended at 8 am the next morning. It was a long cold night, but worth all the time and effort.

The Bitterroot Valley People First Aktion Club has been busy. Everyone had fun at the Fishing Derby on June 11. We are also excited about our Emma's House project in which we are donating a bench from Trapper Creek, and planting a Klehm's Improved Bashful Crab Tree. The bench will be put in place on June 22 and the tree planted on June 25. We are also planning a prospecting party to encourage new members. Club members plan to help with the Kiwanis Pancake Breakfast on July 23, the Kiwanis food booth at the Ravalli County Fair, and are planning a shopping trip to Missoula on August 13.

Joanne Verwolf, Ravalli County Coordinator

Missoula County Update

This summer Summit facilitated three independent living skills training classes: a Self- Awareness & Assertiveness class, a Working Well with a Disability class and a Disability Awareness and Attitudes class.

The Self-Awareness and Working Well workshops both had six participants who set summer goals, and were led by Darren Larson and Jude Monson.

The Disability Awareness and Attitudes class was held at Big Sky High School and 25 students with disabilities participated. The four-week, two-hour Thursday class was led by Cara Wherley, Darren Larson and Jude Monson along with the following outstanding Big Sky teachers and para-educators: Laura Coulter, WyAnn Northrop, Aaron Fessler, Sandy Finch, John Parker and Jessica Wilsey. Thank you!

If you are interested in taking classes at Summit this autumn call 728-1630 and talk with Jude or Kathy to find out more about upcoming training opportunities!

If you ride the local Mountain Line regular bus route or would like to know more about paratransit door to door service, Summit has scheduled two talks with Jim Gibson. He will be sharing his experience with riding the bus as well as the latest Mountain Line information. The talks will be Wednesday, July 6, from 10-11 a.m. and Wednesday, July 20, from 3-4 p.m. in the Summit conference room. Come to Summit and hear about how to save money in your transportation budget and get to know your Missoula neighbors by riding the local bus!

The Safer and Stronger Program (SSP) pilot for women has been moved to September. Contact Susan Morris if you are interested in hearing more about this project. Summit board member Leanne Beers will be offering a Self-Esteem class and a Safety Awareness Program class this fall and winter. Please call Jude or Kathy to sign up for this class. Thanks to Rosemary Hughes and the Rural Insitute for working with us on all these projects!

Susan Morris and Andrea Dahl are meeting with nursing home residents to explain their local community living resources and the process of moving into the community. If you know someone who is having trouble maintaining their home life or is in a nursing home and has expressed an interest in living in their own home, please contact Susan or Andrea.

Kathy Boyer is Summit's representative on the Kidney Early Evaluation Program (KEEP) committee which meets monthly at Summit. This Missoula KEEP committee organized a free screening on April 16 at the University of Montana that had almost 100 participants. If you want to learn more about diabetes and kidney disease give Kathy a call at 728-1630.

The Missoula July 6 social event is at Bonner Park starting at 5:30 p.m. Summit, Home- and Community- Based Services and VSA are hosting a barbecue and will provide burgers, hot dogs and all the fixings. We ask you to bring a dish to share, as well as a something to drink. Starting at 8 p.m., the Missoula Community Instrumental Band will be playing at the pavilion.

Mary and the Peer Advocates have been following up on 2011 legislative issues, nursing home transition and friendly visits, Every Woman Matters poster education, access training and school panel presentations. Also, a big welcome to our two new peers: Tim Solem and Mitch McCabe!

Mike Beers and Mary Olson have been traveling this summer nationally to share their experience, knowledge and skills as Summit Independent Living Peer Youth Leaders. They were co-facilitator trainers for the new North Carolina Center for Independent Living during their second NC Youth Leadership Forum. They also will co-facilitate the Montana Youth Leadership Forum (MYLF) in Helena on July 18-22 with the statewide volunteer leadership crew, led by June Hermanson. At least 25 students from across Montana are scheduled to gather at Carroll College to be a part of this years Youth Leadership Forum!

Jude Monson, Program Manager

Lake County Update

Up here in Lake County we'll be busy preparing for all the August events during June and July. We will be attending the Native American Cross Cultural and IL Aspects workshop in Great Falls on Aug. 9 and 10. On Aug. 17 Mary Olson and Mike Beers will hold a short "Lead On" presentation for the Polson and Ronan People First chapter. The next day, consumers from Lake County will take part in the Accessible Recreation Rendezvous in Sanders County. The following week we will see everyone in Helena at the IL Symposium!

Michelle Williamson, Lake County Co-Coordinator

Flathead County Update

The Flathead County Peer Advocates provided a Game Night social activity on May 21. Twenty-six people were in attendance and everyone had a great time. There were several game tables with cards or other activities going on at the same time. There was also a Wii Bowling tournament which turned out to be a very popular event. Pizza was generously donated for the event by Pizza Hut and Domino's Pizza.

Our next social event will be a Rustic Cabin Retreat August 27 and 28 on Flathead Lake near Lakeside. Total cost to attend is $25, including meals and lodging for one night. Activities will include a Yoga class Saturday afternoon, swimming, fishing, hiking, games, socializing, campfire activities, and enjoying relaxing in the lodge by the lake. Registration must be received by August 3. Please call 257-0048 for more information and to register.

A new Men's Discussion Group is meeting the third Monday of every month at 6:30 p.m. in the United Way Conference Room at Gateway Community Center. The group is facilitated by Peer Advocate Rick Heitz.

Dianna Kintzler provided Summit services at Homeless Connect in Flathead County on June 16 and 17. There were a large number of consumers in attendance and seven appointments were made for follow-up services with Summit.

Sign language classes have concluded for the year. Informal practice sessions for any skill level have been scheduled for June 28, July 19 and 26 and August 30 at 1:00 p.m. in the United Way Conference room at Gateway Community Center. Continuing Sign Classes will begin September 13. Call 257-0048 to sign up for practice sessions or fall classes.

Flo Kiewel, Flathead County Coordinator

Sanders County Update

Summit hosted a picnic at Montana Power Park in Thompson Falls on June 23. Everyone who came had a great time! There were 15 people, including Representative Pat Ingraham. We had burgers, chili dogs, potato salad and cupcakes. The weather was fantastic!

On August 18 there will be an Accessible Recreation Rendezvous at Pilgrim Creek Park in Noxon. It starts at 10:00 a.m. and goes until after 2:00 p.m. There will be a BBQ lunch and people will be able to try out accessible recreational equipment. There will be learning sessions by Summit, Sanders County United for Disabilities (SCUD), AVISTA Corp. and MonTECH about disability and outdoor recreation.

Please contact John Gallaher at 827-3913 or Susan Morris at 1-800-398-9002 for more information, driving directions or transportation needs.

Susan Morris, Outreach Specialist

This newsletter is funded by the U.S. Department of Education grant #H132A30808. A total of $3,500 in Federal funding is budgeted for four issues of the newsletter for fiscal year 2011. Summit is also funded in part under an agreement with the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. Any statements herein do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Department.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program has been changed!

On March 1, 2011 DPHHS sent out a brochure detailing updates to SNAP, a program designed to help people afford healthy food.

Here are a few highlights from that brochure.

To qualify for SNAP, you need to meet two income guidelines (Effective Sept. 1, 2010 through Sept. 30, 2011):

1. The first step is meeting the Gross Guideline. If you meet this guideline, turn in an application to see if you also meet the Net Guideline.

Household Size	Gross Monthly Income
1	$1806
2	$2430
3	$3052
Add'l Members	+ $624

*Households with a previously disqualified member will need to meet a lower Gross Income Limit.

2. When you apply, your case worker will deduct a portion of your living expenses from your income to see if you meet the Net Guideline. Your Net Income for SNAP cannot be calculated until you submit an application.

Household Size	Net Monthly Income
1	$903
2	$1215
3	$1526
Add'l Members	+ $312

To apply:

- You can apply at any Office of Public Assistance (OPA).
- Apply online at www.app.mt.gov/mtc.
- Mail or fax your application to the OPA.
- Application can be printed at http://dphhs.mt.gov/publicassistance/hcs250.pdg
- You can call the OPA and ask if you qualify for a telephone interview.
- You can have another adult apply on your behalf.

Not sure if you want to apply?

Complete the easy and confidential pre-screening tool: www.app.mt.gov/mtc

When you have your interview you will need to bring:

- Personal identification (such as driver's license, library card, Medicare care or doctor's bill)
- Social Security numbers for everyone for whom you are applying (actual card usually not required)
- Proof of your rent and utility expenses (such as bills, receipts, lease agreement or mortgage)
- Proof of your income (such as pay stubs or verification of Social Secuirty, Disability, unemployment benefits, etc.)

For more information, please contact the
Montana Food Bank Network
Phone: **1 (800) 809-4752**
E-mail: **snap@mfbn.org**

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Tiffany Beehler, SDPAS Assistant

New SDPAS Assistant at Summit

Tiffany Beehler was hired as Summit's new SDPAS Assistant in April.

Tiffany is a single mom with two awesome kids and she enjoys traveling.

As an SDPAS Assistant, she helps with the Self-Direct program by filing paperwork, helping with payroll and keeping both the employee and consumer databases updated.

Youth Updates

MYLF

Montana Youth Leadership Forum (MYLF) will be held again this year July 18-22. We are expecting a record high of 25 students this year, with one from Ravalli County. The students have the opportunity to spend one week free at Carroll College in Helena, MT, with other students with disabilities from across the state, learning valuable resources and leadership skills. One of the days is spent at the state capitol learning about government and spending some time with actual legislators before taking the afternoon in session debating a mock bill.

This opportunity is open to high school students with all types of disabilities across the state, so please make sure to get your or your young person's application in for MYLF 2012, which will be available online following this year's forum at www.montanaylf.org.

MYTransitions

The MYTransitions project has set a date for their annual transition conference. Save the Date for Nov. 9, 10 and 11 in Great Falls. For more information contact June Hermanson at 406-442-2576 or mylfjuneh@bresnan.net.

Due to the legislature's cut in funding for the MYTransitions project, we will be holding an online auction on Nov. 4, 2011 in order to benefit the project and their goals, which include a statewide transition conference, a statewide transition website and Disability Mentoring Day. Some items that the project has secured already include MacKenzie River Pizza Coupons, Wolf framed photos, a Charlie Russell World Print, Hand-made jewelry and a Cancun trip. We would appreciate any items that you may have come across that you would feel comfortable donating to the auction. There are donation/sponsorship forms available upon request for items donated to the project. Some ideas that are good sellers include Montana Grizzly items, football tickets, Montana State Bobcat items, gift cards to chain restaurants and the like. If you are artistic, handmade items such as wood carvings, furniture, quilts, afghans and scarf/hat combos are also great additions. Contact June Hermanson for more information.

BALLS

Another successful year has been completed! We had the privilege of teaching Building Advocacy and Learning Leadership Skills at Big Sky, Hellgate and Sentinel schools in Missoula, Frenchtown and Florence schools. We also gave mini-presentations to Alberton School and Arlee School! This Fall we will start up with a new crop of students at all of these schools, as well as adding a Stevensville School to the list! If you would like to see a presentation or get information at your local school, please contact Mike Beers at (406) 728-1630 or mbeers@summitilc.org.

Mary Olson, Peer Advocacy Coordinator

Opinions from the Cheap Seats

Tom Thompson, Summit Peer

You don't need a lot of money to be entertained in Missoula.

As a native Missoulian, I want to point you in the right direction. Although boredom can creep up on everyone, there are things you can do to get out of the house to stay active and entertained. Independent Living is more than living where you want; it is also being able to enjoy what you want.

There are many opportunities available but it may take some research and planning. I have found some websites which keep track of local events but you also need to watch the weather and keep transportation in mind.

Here are a few sites you should know about:

Missoula City Band

http://missoulacityband.org

General Missoula

http://www.missoulaevents.net/

Downtown Missoula

http://www.missouladowntown.com/

Event Finder

http://eventful.com/

Mountain Line Bus System

http://www.mountainline.com

Finding cheap or free entertainment throughout Western Montana is something we at Summit want to help uncover. I ask everyone, no matter what entertainment opportunities exist in your community, to send links to local events or other entertainment suggestions to me at doublemsranch@bison-lee.com.

And More!

On May 10, 18 YODA members got together for a Nerf "capture the flag" team-building event. A few of the youth helped in the planning process and we had a great time. Chris Clasby from Montech hooked up a Nerf gun with a sip n' puff so a youth who could not grip the trigger could use it. On June 29 the group got together and watched the documentary Murderball, which is about a wheelchair rugby team.

The Youth Task Force now meets every second Tuesday of the month at 4:00 p.m. We are trying to improve youth transition outcomes statewide. If you would like to join this call please contact Mike Beers at (406) 728-1630 or Mary Olson at molson@summitilc.org.

On June 16, Jude Monson, Darren Larson and Cara Wherley started their first summer school class at Big Sky High School. We are teaching a disability awareness class. We will focus on disability awareness and attitudes toward disabilities and meet with the students every Thursday at 9:00 a.m. until July 7.

Cara Wherley, Youth Specialist

Our Mission

Summit's mission is to promote community awareness, equal access, and the independence of people with disabilities through advocacy, education, and the advancement of civil rights.

To further this mission, Summit has specialized employees and is involved with task forces that work toward improving communities in Montana. We also sponsor several independent groups who do their own work to help make Montana a better place. Here are a few of the projects we are undertaking:

Darren Larson, IL Specialist

Darren Larson and the housing task force crew are constantly working on improving visitability in Montana homes. To be visitable, a home must have one zero-step entrance, doors with 32 inches of clear passage space and one bathroom on the main floor you can get into with a wheelchair.

At a May meeting in Bozeman, Darren helped convince developers to suggest design changes to the Qualified Allocation Plan board that would require bathrooms in ground floor units to meet visitability guidelines. If the board approves the suggestions, ground-floor housing units that receive low-income housing tax credits that are built after July would have to meet all three visitability requirements!

In September, each CIL in Montana will also be sending a presenter to the American Institute of Architects Montana Fall Conference to increase visitability awareness for architects.

The self-determination task force has a plan to improve access in Montana. Twenty people from around the state participated in a training on June 28 with the DBTAC Rocky Mountain ADA Center to learn the ADA's current construction requirements. The task force will then investigate and document newly constructed buildings with access issues in several Montana communities.

Information and Referral is one of the core services of all the national Centers for Independent Living. Here are some examples of typical questions we get during the weekdays:

- Where can I find affordable and/or accessible housing?
- I need to find a bath bench for my grandmother. Where can I get one?
- I am working, but how do I ask for some assistance I need because of my disability?
- I receive both Medicare and Medicaid and need a personal assistant. Where do I start?
- I am no longer able to drive. What are my transportation options?

In Western Montana you can contact us by phone, stop by our office, make an appointment or e-mail any questions you have about our services.

PEOPLE FIRST MONTANA

Missoula People First, which has meetings on the first and third Wednesday of each month in Summit's conference room, has decided to help out some local teen moms.

Mountain Home Montana recently opened five new apartments, including one fully accessible apartment, for teens in its program to move into.

Jason Billehus, People First Member

Missoula People First will be buying a mop, bucket and cleaning supplies for the young women moving into these newly-opened apartments so they can keep their new places spic and span.

Go People First!

And Summit's IL Specialist Andrea Dahl had these words of wisdom for people laboring with their Social Security applications:

"Stick to it. So many people are applying, you can't afford to wait."

- Andrea Dahl

New Communications/Media Relations Specialist at Summit

New Summit employee Justyn Field

Justyn Field was hired as Summit's new Communications/Media Relations Specialist in April.

A recent graduate of the University of Montana, Field earned his degree in journalism. He had previously been a Summit volunteer in the Missoula office and was the Public Relations Intern last summer.

Field is now helping work on the Summit newsletter, Facebook page and other Summit media.

He also has been hired to teach informational workshops about the relatively new Medicaid for Workers with Disabilities program, which started July 1, 2010.

He will be offering MWD overviews throughout Summit's service area this summer and autumn.

If you have questions or comments about MWD or the newsletter please direct them to: jfield@summitilc.org or call 728-1630.

Non-profit Service Animal Training Opens in Missoula

Lou Hayes and her dog Nikki doing "paws"

Lou Hayes has been training dogs for much of her life and she's been training service animals for the last 12 years. But it wasn't until a year ago that she opened Service Animals For You, a non-profit organization that does one-on-one animal training, to the public.

Hayes is a retired police officer who used to do K-9 training for the police department. She now has one leg and a service dog of her own. She has taken Dog Whisperer leadership training, and is listed in the Delta Society service animal trainer directory.

Hayes said she used to tell people to go to the trainer site when they were looking for animal trainers, but started working with individual people and their animals to meet local demand.

"There is a big need for them," Hayes said. "People need an affordable animal." Hayes said that her training usually works out to 10 percent the cost of most out-of-state trainings and the dogs she helps train don't spend a year acclimating to another person. She said with non-local programs, an animal bonds with an out-of-state trainer and has to readjust to their primary owner when it's shipped to them. This period of readjustment is bad for the dog and the consumer, she said.

Hayes said the "most important thing" with service dog ownership, though, is picking the right breed for the work it will do. She said that people thinking about getting a service animal should contact her or another trainer before buying the dog, because fitting the right breed to the right task is crucial.

In addition to training service animals, Services Animals For You also offers obedience training.

Service Animals For You is located at 648 South Ave. E, Missoula, MT
Phone: (406) 210-9009 E-mail: serviceanimals4u@yahoo.com

2011 Legislative Session's Bill Abridged List

Montana CIL Supported Bills

HB 252: Prohibit Department of Transportation from recovering indirect costs for federal grants

HB 252 passed both chambers of the Legislature and was signed into law by the Governor on March 25, 2011.

HB 485: Funding for youth in transition

HB 485 failed to pass the House Appropriations Committee on a 10-11 vote and was tabled in committee. The bill did not pass the session.

HB 395: Consider housing needs in discharge plans from mental health facilities

HB 395 failed to make it out of the House Judiciary Committee and did not pass the session.

SB 351: Revise laws governing managed care

SB 351 passed both chambers of the Legislature and was signed into law by the Governor on May 6, 2011.

HB 625: Provide wage increase to direct care employees in community-based services

HB 625 was tabled in the House Appropriations Committee and did not pass the session.

Montana CIL Opposed Bills

HB 31: Prevent providing vehicle to person who does not have driver's license

HB 31 was tabled by the House Transportation Committee and did not pass the session.

HB 152: Revise proof of residency and identity requirements for voting

HB 152 passed both chambers of the Legislature but was vetoed by the Governor on May 5, 2011.

HB 139: Eliminate the Provider Rates Commission

HB 139 was tabled in the House Human Services Committee and did not pass the session.

HB 316: Redistribute certain revenue and income to the state general fund

Funding reductions for Section B (human services) programs were amended out of the bill. HB 316 went on to pass both chambers of the Legislature but was vetoed by the Governor on May 5, 2011.

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Or, list and find those hard-to-find items on the Montech item exchange website at:
http://montech.ruralinstitute.umt.edu/mtdb/

HB 375: Reduce certain general fund transfers

The funding reduction for TransAid was restored by amendment. HB 375 went on to pass both chambers of the Legislature but was vetoed by the Governor on May 5, 2011 and a veto override failed on June 10.

HB 180: Revise Close of voter registration

HB 180 passed both chambers of the Legislature but was vetoed by the Governor on April 13, 2011 and the bill did not become law.

HB 638: Referendum to require proof of citizenship to receive state service

HB 638 passed both chambers of the Legislature and, since it is a referendum, does not require action by the Governor. Language from HB 638 will appear on the 2012 general election ballot for voters to decide if it becomes law or not.

For a complete list of supported and opposed bills from the 2011 Montana Legislative Session and their descriptions, please visit

http://www.summitilc.org/mtcil.html

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New Board Members

Larry E. Riley is a trial lawyer and a senior partner in the 35 lawyer Missoula law firm of Garlington, Lohn & Robinson. He also serves as a Guest Lecturer at the University of Montana School of Law. Larry previously served 15 years on the Summit Board of Directors in two different terms. His daughter, Christine, works for The Lane County Independent Living Alliance in Eugene, Oregon. He has worked with a number of nonprofit organizations including Camp-Mak-A-Dream, the YMCA, Big Brothers and Sisters of Missoula, the Poverello Center and the Institute of Medicine and Humanity.

Larry, and his wife Dianna, are the parents of five children and the grandparents of five grandchildren.

Randy Morigeau is a semi-retired disability advocate who came to Montana in 1979 from the state of Washington. He is an original Summit Board member who has spent his life working for various tribal agencies and other organizational boards and committees. Randy has also spent time as a peer and a mentor. He has worked to improve building access in Montana and has spoken to the legislature about disability issues.

Randy is a Minnesota Vikings fan who says he enjoys his home in Polson and his wonderful friends and family.

Upcoming Events

July 6 - Social Event at Bonner Park, Missoula 5:30 p.m.

July 14/15/16 & 21/22/23 - Accessible Rafting Trips
Call Mark Cash at 728-7339 or
Chris Clasby at 243-2426 with questions.

July 28 - Potluck Social at McCormick Park, Missoula
3-6 p.m. Bring a potluck dish to share!

Aug. 9/10 - Native American Cross Cultural and
IL Aspects workshop in Great Falls

Aug. 18 - Accessible Recreation Rendezvous at
Pilgrim Park, Noxon 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.+

Aug. 22/23/24 - 2011 Independent Living Symposium
Red Lion Colonial Inn, Helena
{Alert: The Summit office will have minimum staff on these days, plan ahead!}

Aug. 27/28 - Rustic Cabin Retreat, Lakeside,
Flathead Lake