The 2015 Montana Legislative Session will be coming to a close later this month. Montana’s Centers for Independent Living entered this session with the budgetary goals of addressing the Medicaid medically needy standout threshold, securing additional funding for Montana’s four Centers For Independent Living, the Montana Youth Leadership Forum, and the Montana Youth Transitions Project, re-establishing funding for the MFP housing bridge program, and to re-base the funding for the senior physical disability Medicaid waiver program.

Unfortunately, only one of the goals that we set out prior to the session to achieve has been accomplished. The Montana Youth Transitions Project was able to secure funding in the amount of $50,000 per year. Although none of our other goals have yet been achieved, there is still time to make them become a reality as the budget bill heads to the Senate for another round of hearings. We will continue to advocate for these important programs.

We have had great success on other bills that have been heard this session. Bills that we have supported that are currently on their way to being passed include:

**HB 337** – a bill that would increase the resource limits for the Medicaid for Workers with Disabilities program from $8,000 for an individual and $12,000 for a couple to $15,000 for an individual and $30,000 for a couple. This bill would also make retirement accounts that participants in the Medicaid for Workers with Disabilities save into while they are participating in that program from being counted as resources if they have paid to transition into other Medicaid eligibility categories.

**SB 180** – a bill that will change the funding mechanism for senior and disability transportation (TransADE) in order to ensure that senior disability transportation services have an adequate and secure funding source.

**HB 400** – a bill that would allow voters with disabilities to be able to receive an electronically fillable ballot via their email so that they may have access to an accessible means of voting absentee.

Other bills of note that the Montana Centers for Independent Living have been involved in working on include SB 399, the Montana Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act, which would allow some individuals with disabilities to save through a 529 account that could be used for purchasing necessary items, and HB 616, a bill that would appropriate funding to be used for increasing the accessibility of playgrounds across the state.

There are also many other bills currently making their way through the legislative process that we do not have enough room to list here. If you are interested in following our legislative activities to see what other bills we have been working on, we encourage you to visit our website at: [www.summitilc.org/mtcil.html](http://www.summitilc.org/mtcil.html).

To all of you who have called or written to your legislators in support of the many issues we have faced during this legislative session, Montana’s Centers for Independent Living would like to extend a big thank you and urge you to keep up the good work; the end is in sight.

If you are interested in keeping up with issues that affect the lives of individuals with disabilities and to watch for opportunities to contact legislators, please join the Montana Independent Living Action Alert Listserv by sending an email to: [montana-il-action-alert+subscribe@googlegroups.com](mailto:montana-il-action-alert+subscribe@googlegroups.com).
Upcoming Events

Flathead County

Social Security Orientation - First Friday monthly 9 a.m. and third Friday monthly 1 p.m.
Women’s Discussion Group - meetings suspended, re-organization pending.
YODA - youth group meets once a month.
Living Well with a Disability - Wednesdays, Apr 29 - July 1 1:30-3:30 p.m.
Share Fair – Saturday, April 11, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Kalispell Center Mall. Come and browse the booths.
Beach Party! - Friday, May 8, 4-6:30 p.m. Potluck dinner, everyone welcome.
ADA 25th Anniversary Arts & Crafts Fair - Saturday, June 13, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Kalispell Center Mall. If you want a table, contact Flo at (406) 257-0048 ext. 140.
Independence Day Parade - July 4. We will gather behind ADA 25th banner and travel down main street in Kalispell as part of parade wearing red, white and blue with ADA 25 gear.
Climb Big Mountain Fundraiser for Flathead Industries - July 18. Summit and Flathead Industries will be celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the ADA at this event with activities and cake. If you would like to be part of our climb team, call (406) 257-0048 ext. 140. For more information about Climb Big Mountain go to http://flatheadindustries.org/fund-raising-events.html

Social Activities - We get together four times a year for social activities. Call the office to put your name on the mailing list so you won’t miss the next fun and exciting adventure!

Unless otherwise noted, classes and groups meet at:

Gateway Community Center, United Way Conference Room
1203 Hwy 2 West, Kalispell

Call Lynae at (406) 257-0048 ext. 142, for more information or to register.

Ravalli County

Man Cave - Third Thursday monthly.
People First - Tuesdays, 3-4 p.m.
Women on the Move - Wednesdays of April 22, May 27, June 17
TGIAF - Thank Goodness It’s Activity Friday - Fridays, 1-3 p.m.
Summer Solstice Picnic - June 25, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Three Sisters Campground, Como Lake.

Unless otherwise noted, classes and groups meet at:

Human Resources Council Building, Summit Conference Room
316 N 3rd St., Hamilton

Call Joel or Mary at (406) 363-5242 for more information or to register.
This new Summit space will allow an expansion of many of our services and increase cooperation with many other local nonprofits and community programs!

Our youth group YODA and several activities, Video Game Night and Art Group, have already begun holding their activities in this space.

Watch for more activities and events to be available at B.A.S.E. soon!
UPCOMING EVENTS
MISSOULA COUNTY

Summit Closed - Apr. 3

Summit Orientation - First Fridays monthly, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

SSA Orientation - Apr. 10, 10-11 a.m., Apr. 21, 1-2 p.m., May 8 10-11 a.m., May 19 1-2 p.m.

ADA Films: “Sins Invalid” & “For All” - Apr. 15, 3-4:30 p.m. UM – UC Theater.

People First - First and Third Wednesday of each month, 4-5 p.m.

Alzheimer’s Support Group - Second Wednesday of each month, 12-2 p.m.

Blind Low Vision Support Group - Second Tuesday of each month, 1-2:30 p.m.

Epilepsy Support Group - First Monday of each month, 2-3:30 p.m.

Video Game Night - Second and fourth Thursday of each month, 3-6 p.m.

Now meeting at B.A.S.E., 725 West Alder #4 across from St. Pats and next to Draughtworks in the Warehouse Mall.

Youth Opening Doors through Advocacy (YODA) - Fourth Wednesday of each month, 3:30-6 p.m.

Now meeting at B.A.S.E., 725 West Alder #4 across from St. Pats and next to Draughtworks in the Warehouse Mall.

Art Group - Second and fourth Thursday of each month, 2-4 p.m.

Now meeting at B.A.S.E., 725 West Alder #4 across from St. Pats and next to Draughtworks in the Warehouse Mall.

Missoula Job Fair - April 21, 3-6 p.m., Hilton Garden Inn

Give Local - Cinco De Donate, May 5 (All Day!) - Be a Superhero In Your Community. Give Local!

https://www.givelocalmissoula.org/#npo/summit-independent-living-center

ADA Legacy Bus Tour - July 4, 10 A.M. - 2 P.M. Caras Park. Meet advocates from all over the country, check out the bus and celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the ADA with us!

Summer Picnic - July 14, 5-9 P.M. McCormick Park. People with disabilities, their family and friends can come eat and celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the ADA.

Unless otherwise noted, classes and groups meet at:

Summit ILC, Summit's Conference Room
700 SW Higgins, Suite 101, Missoula

Call Kathy, (406) 728-1630, for more information or to register.
Our Ronan Office Has Moved!

We are now in a beautiful location at:

124 Main Street
Ronan, MT 59864

Phone:   (406) 215-1604
Toll Free: (866) 230-6936
Fax:      (406) 552-1028
Email:   smorris@summitilc.org

Formerly Springs Daycare, we hope this new location will give us more opportunities to serve you.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

BULLETIN BOARD

See our website at: newsletter.summitilc.org for more ads

**Stair lift to give away.** Call Ralph at 295 5668.

**Car lift for wheelchairs/scooters.** Sits behind back of vehicle on hitch. $800 OBO. Call Jon at 360-7997.

**EZ Carrier Electric Lift with Swing Away Attachment (Class III hitch mounted).** $1000 OBO. Call Karen at 257-3269.

**FreeStyle 5 Portable Oxygen Concentrator with battery and charger.** $2800 OBO. Call Karen at 257-3269.

**Power scooter - Golden Companion 2.** 3-wheels. $500 OBO. Call Jon at 360-7997.

**Pride Victory 10 Scooter.** 4-wheels. $1500 OBO. Call Karen at 257-3269.

View more classifieds at:

www.summitilc.org/newsletter/classified-ads/

Have something you want to sell or give away or are you looking for a hard-to-find piece of equipment?

If so, list it here by contacting Justice Ender at (406) 728-1630 or email justice@summitilc.org.

Or, list and find those hard-to-find items on the MonTECH item exchange website at:

http://montech.ruralinstitute.umt.edu/mtdb/
In Memorium

The disability community mourns the loss of two great advocates.

Gay Moddrell was a former board member for Summit Independent Living Center and Disability Rights Montana. She was also the longtime director of the Special Friends advocacy program in Kalispell, and served with numerous other disability organizations. Her fire and kindness touched the lives of many people across Montana.

Elizabeth Varnum was an Independent Living Specialist in Summit’s Hamilton office since 2011, and served as a peer advocate there for several years beforehand. She was an avid photographer, and her spirit and enthusiasm will be missed by her coworkers and the many people she helped.

And while this is a time of grief, disability advocates all over Montana and the United States will do well to carry the spirit of these two great women forward as we continue to fight for the rights of people everywhere.

Elizabeth and Gay, you will be missed.

Elizabeth Varnum
Financial Changes Shift Landscape for Millions of People with Disabilities

Several recent laws and programs, most notably the ABLE Act and Medicaid Buy-in, have significantly changed the financial outlook and expectations for people with disabilities across the country.

And while these laws are in no way perfect, both provide options for savings and asset holding previously unavailable to many people on needs-based assistance such as SSI or Medicaid.

The ABLE Act has been hailed as the most significant law impacting people with disabilities since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990, while the Medicaid Buy-in program, known as Medicaid for Workers with Disabilities in Montana, offers tremendous incentives for people with disabilities to actually become more self-sufficient through working.

Both of these programs are in flux, as in Montana and across the nation, state legislatures debate changes and enhancements to both programs.

It is important for people with disabilities who seek to use one or both of these programs to seek professional benefits planning assistance.

To learn more about either of these programs, please contact: justice@summitilc.org or call (406) 728-1630 ex. 117.

Summit welcomes several new board members!

Joe Stone: Joe was injured in a speed flying accident in 2010 and sustained a partial spinal cord injury. As an avid athlete and outdoor lover, he later founded the Joe Stone Foundation, a nonprofit organization that works to promote adapted outdoor recreation for all people with disabilities as a way to promote a healthy lifestyle and enjoy a higher quality of life. He lives in Missoula and also works part-time as a research assistant with the Rural Institute on Disabilities.

Meg Rogosinski: Meg works as the Outdoor Recreation Supervisor for Missoula Parks and Recreation. She has a BS in Outdoor and Therapeutic Recreation from Radford University, and Masters in Recreation Management from University of New Hampshire and has a passion for assisting people of all abilities with pursuing outdoor recreation activities.

Suzanne Meikle: Suzanne owns and manages Montana Work Solutions, an agency that provides employment services and independent living supports for people with disabilities who live in the Bitterroot Valley. She has a teaching background and extensive experience with marketing, writing business plans, employment search and placement for high-school to senior aged individuals, and managing staff and volunteers.

Thank you to outgoing board member Leanne Beers for her two years of service on the board as president and six total years of service. Your guidance and support is appreciated, and Summit wishes you luck wherever life may take you next!
SUMMIT INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER, INC.
700 SW Higgins, Suite. 101
Missoula, MT 59803

Return Service Requested

Phone: 406-728-1630
Toll-Free: 800-398-9002
Fax: 406-829-3309
Website: www.summitilc.org

AN ADVOCACY AND RESOURCE CENTER FOR
MONTANANS WITH DISABILITIES

THE SUMMIT INDEPENDENT  APRIL 2015

This publication is available in alternative format on request. Please call 1 (800) 398-9002.

Remember, you can always sign up for the electronic newsletter by contacting: missoula@summitilc.org

ADA 25
MT
FREEDOM
AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

CELEBRATE THE
25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ADA
WITH US!

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Farmers Market - Every Saturday starting May 21.
Summer Solstice Picnic - June 25, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
Three Sisters Campground, Como Lake.

Kalispell
Share Fair - April 11, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Kalispell Center Mall.
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