The Force is Always with Us!
Sometimes in Unexpected People, Places and Positions!
By Jude Monson, Summit Program Manager

2018 was a surreal year, full of unexpected twists and turns and of weekly national events. However, as we move into 2019, Summit would like to give a huge shout-out to two men, both national leaders, who passed away in 2018, after leaving our world a better place through their existence!

One man was George H.W. Bush, an American pilot in World War II who was a hero. He had joined the military at the age of 18 and returned home to eventually become our President. This is the President who signed the American’s with Disabilities Act (ADA) into law on July 26, 1990. He sat at a table on our White House lawn in solidarity with 2,000 people with disabilities and their families and friends who were invited to celebrate the landmark law from an accessible seat or spot to witness this event.

President Bush was surrounded by some of our finest ADA leaders who had fought for over a decade to explain why the civil rights law was necessary. A fellow Texan, Justin Dart, sat next to him in his wheelchair wearing his iconic black cowboy hat. Justin was both a large business owner of Tupperware and a super-advocate of the ADA. Justin had traveled to all 50 states to rally people with disabilities to write and share their stories about how hard it was to secure and maintain employment in America. The two Texans had become friends over the years, had both came from families of wealth and prestige, and both personally believed what is good for one American is good for all Americans! Also at the table was Evan Kemp, Chairperson of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Standing were Sandy Parrino, Chairperson of the National Council on Disability (NCD) and the Rev. Harold H Wilke, who used his feet to write.

In December, when President Bush’s multiple memorial services were shown on TV and the social media, my favorite vision was Sully, his well-trained service dog, lying in vigil by his casket. It reminded me of the story of Shep of Montana lore. President Bush had acquired Parkinson’s disease in his last years, after his wife Barbara had passed away. He had secret service agents and his family for company, but the love and dedication of a service dog is worth remembering. President Bush had named this dog after his hero, the famous Captain Sully, a lifelong pilot who had saved everyone aboard when he performed an emergency landing on the Hudson River. We know that “safe and sound” isn’t always a reality for all of our friends and family with disabilities, but the ADA has given us HOPE! Thank you, President George H.W. Bush for a job well done!

Summit also wants to recognize Senator John McCain of Arizona. He was our hero in 2017 when he came to the US Senate floor with the final vote on eliminating Affordable Care Act. Many worried that the Republican Senator would follow party lines and eliminate the law. Having been a POW in the Vietnam era, he had chosen to stay in the prison camp with his servicemen, even when given the chance to come home after his captors learned that his father was a US military commander. As a true leader, he chose to endure the challenges and torture and ultimately returned with a disability. He did so as a more determined and stronger person, who in his last years, while diagnosed with cancer, voted to support the Affordable Care Act. Many American’s were shouting out a huge WHOOP at that moment! When John McCain died in 2018, he too was memorialized as an elder Senator in his own state of Arizona as well as in Washington DC. The Senator had planned his own funeral services in which he shared his own belief in America through his daughter, Meghan, who said, “My father believed America has always been great and will always be great!” Through this man and through his daughter’s statement at his funeral, I once again found HOPE in an unexpected person in 2018!

As a women who will always be a proud American and Montanan, and as one who has experienced invisible disabilities, I want to say we are all warriors and leaders. I respect the women and men who fought for disability rights and health legislation, continue to improve our policies by fighting the good fight! Looking ahead to 2019, I remind all Montanans of the need to rise up once again and share your stories about life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness from the viewpoint of living & working well with our disabilities. Our HOPE lies in being equal partners in our homes, communities, the workforce, and the life force of Montana and America!

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Summit’s Pre-ETS programs are designed to assist students as they begin their journey toward their chosen future. Services are available to students 14 years of age through their exit from high school.

**IL Core Services**

**Information & Referral**
Learn about community resources for an informed choice.

**Advocacy Individual & Systems**
Learn your rights & take responsibility for services!

**Peer Advocates**
Find an experienced peer to help you achieve your goals.

**Skills Training**
Personal growth & life skills classes to promote independence.

**Transition Skills**
Basic skills for your successful life transitions.

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**Instruction in Self-Advocacy:**
- Building Advocacy and Learning Leadership Skills
- Self-directed 504, IEP, & Individual Transition Plan
- Civil Rights, Disability History & Culture
- Living Well with a Disability
- Wellness Recovery Action Plan
- Youth Opening Doors Through Advocacy
- Communication Through Improv

**Job Exploration Counseling:**
- Job & Apprenticeship Exploration
- Career Exploration & Development
- SMART Goal Plan

**Work-Based Learning Experiences:**
- Job Shadows
- Pre-Apprenticeship
- Work-based Learning Skills/Internship

**Counseling for Post-Secondary Education:**
- Differences between high school and college
- College & training program exploration
- Reasonable accommodation
- Application process

**Workplace Readiness Training:**
- Interpersonal Work Skills
- Job Disclosure, Accommodation, ADA, & JAN
- Work Application, Resume, & Interview Process
- Working Well with a Disability
- SSDI/SSI, Redetermination
- Employment and disability benefits
Help create the future of Downtown Missoula
Downtown Missoula Master Plan Public Design Workshop

OPEN DESIGN STUDIO
Tuesday, Jan. 15 – Thursday, Jan. 17 10 am – 7 pm
The Public House, 130 E. Broadway, Missoula
Stop by the studio any time to share your ideas and work with the design team.

WORK-IN-PROGRESS PRESENTATION
Friday, Jan. 18 4 – 6 pm
The Wilma, 131 S. Higgins, Missoula
See all of the week’s work come together at the “wrap-up” presentation.

KICK-OFF & HANDS-ON DESIGN
Monday, Jan. 14 Session 1: 5 – 7 pm or Session 2: 7 – 9 pm
Doubletree Hotel, 100 Madison, Missoula
Learn about town planning & community revitalization then work alongside your neighbors to draw your vision for the future of Downtown Missoula.

For questions or to give input online: call 406.543.4238, email info@missouladowntown.com, or visit https://www.missouladowntown.com/downtown-master-plan.

2019 Social Security Cost-of-Living Adjustments

Social Security (Retirement and SSDI):
2.8% increase

Medicare Part B Monthly Premium:
$135.50 (or higher depending on your income)

Supplemental Security Income (SSI):
2.8% increase
Individual - $771  Couple - $1,157

Substantial Gainful Activity Guidelines:
Blind - $2,040  Non-blind - $1,220

Trial Work Period Threshold:
$880

SSI Resource Limits:
Individual - $2,000  Couple - $3,000

For more information on Medicare changes:
www.medicare.gov

For more information on Social Security adjustments:
www.ssa.gov/cola

To check or create your online Social Security account:
www.ssa.gov/myaccount
Ravalli County Update

The Summit crew in Hamilton is excited to be implementing a joint Work Experience Diversion Program with the Ravalli County youth court and probation offices. This program’s purpose is to provide youth exposed to the youth court, probation services, and juvenile systems with valuable work experience during their terms of community service. Replacing traditional community service with work experience through this program is intended to help troubled and underserved youth gain work experience and employment skills while promoting goal setting. The program was implemented in November, 2018.

Looking for Summit Events?

To make it easier to find Summit events that are being held throughout Western Montana, we are now listing all of our events on our website. To find a Summit event or class happening near you please go to:

www.summitilc.org/calendar
The 2019 Montana Legislative Session is now upon us. A major focus of the 2019 Legislature will be the reauthorization of the Medicaid Expansion program. However, Montana’s Centers for Independent Living (MTCIL) will primarily be focused on disability specific programs and other pieces of legislation that are important for people with disabilities all across Montana.

Over the past two years, services for people with disabilities have been decimated by budget reductions and, while some funding for some services has been restored, disability services as a whole remain underfunded. These underfunded programs include the Community First Choice program, HCBS Medicaid Waiver programs, Vocational Rehabilitation, Independent Living, Mental Health, and others. We will be working hard to increase funding for these programs to ensure that individuals with disabilities have the services they need to live successfully in the community.

In addition to these budgetary items, MTCIL’s will also be working on legislation to update accessible parking language in Montana law, restore funding for a temporary rental assistance housing bridge program, clarify funding disbursement mechanisms for senior and disability transportation, ensure that voters with disabilities have full and equal access to the voting process, and more. We will also jump in to support or oppose other legislation that could benefit or be detrimental for Montanans with disabilities.

Former Summit employee and current MILP advocacy coordinator, Joel Peden, will be the full-time lobbyist for Montana’s four Centers for Independent Living during the 2019 legislative session. However, we will not be able to do all of this alone. We need your help to ensure that programs for people with disabilities are fully and adequately funded as well as to ensure that other legislation that would improve the lives of people with disabilities passes and that legislation that would harm people with disabilities fails. We need your help to send emails and letters, make phone calls, and to show up in Helena and testify when the time comes. Legislation that passes or fails in Helena has a great, direct impact on our lives and it is important that people with disabilities and our allies show up in great numbers and make sure that our voices are heard.

A great way to stay up to date on legislation that may impact the lives of Montanans with disabilities is to join the Montana Centers for Independent Living Action Alert System! Our action alert system will provide you with email notifications about upcoming hearings, updates about disability related legislation, as well as provide you with an avenue to easily submit written testimony through our online action alert portal.

Registering is easy. You can register for our action alert system directly on Summit’s website by going to https://www.summitilc.org and clicking on the blue “Become an Advocate” button or by going to the Montana Centers for Independent Living Action Alert site, which can be found at https://cqrcengage.com/mtcil.

To learn more about the 2019 Montana Legislature, you can also visit the Montana Legislative website at https://leg.mt.gov. On the Legislative website you can watch or listen to committee hearings, look up bill information, find and contact your legislators, and more.

By subscribing to the MTCIL Action Alert system and looking up legislation information on the Montana Legislative website, you will be able to stay well informed and ready to help advocate on behalf of Montanans with disabilities.

We will be counting on you to help make a difference!
Hi! My name is Alli LaBuff and I describe myself as an easy-going, outgoing, and funny person. In my free time I enjoy playing bingo at the Missoula Senior Center, cooking, and giving back to the community. I love ice fishing with my family, nature in general, swimming and traveling in the summer, and taking and editing photos. At every opportunity, I love to try new things.

I was born in Butte and moved to Missoula at age three where I was raised with three sisters and a brother. I love to spend time with my family, especially having bonfires and making s’mores. In 2016 I became a proud graduate of Big Sky High School. GO EAGLES!! I also really enjoy helping and meeting others.

I recently started a work-based internship at Summit’s BASE Missoula Community Center as a youth Peer Advocate in training. One part of the amazing job I really like is learning more about Missoula’s diverse community.

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**New BASE Peer Advocate Intern**

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**YODA**

_Youth Opening Doors Through Advocacy_

Meet other young people with disabilities.
Discovery community/learn about disability culture.
Have food and fun!
Serve others and improve yourself.
Join a group run by young people for young people.

**YODA Schedule:**

**BASE**

2nd and 4th Tuesdays from 4 PM to 6 PM

**Sentinel High School**

1st Wednesday from 11 AM to 11:45 AM

*bring your lunch*

**Big Sky High School**

3rd Wednesday from 11 AM to 11:45 AM

*bring your lunch*

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**The Eagle’s Nest Thrift Store has Moved!**

The Eagle’s Nest Thrift Store has moved from Big Sky High School to the Jefferson Center, located at 1700 South Ave. W. in the closest modular to South Avenue behind the Jefferson building.

The store was formed in 2011 and is run by Vocational Preparation II students with the objective to ready student employees for competitive employment in the real world. There are a variety of items for sale including gently used clothing for men, women, juniors, children, and infants, knickknacks, jewelry, shoes, and more. To learn more, check out their website at [https://www.mcpsmt.org/domain/1230](https://www.mcpsmt.org/domain/1230) or find them on Facebook.

The Eagle’s Nest officially opened on Monday, December 17, 2018. Their hours of operation are Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 11:30 a.m. until 2:45 p.m.

Make sure to check it out and support Big Sky High School and their Missoula store!
BASE stands for home base, like in hide and go seek. In life, you have to establish a BASE first, that’s where we come in.

**BASE EVENTS**

**Game Night (GN)**
- Thursdays weekly, 2 p.m.- 6 p.m.

**Youth Opening Doors through Advocacy (YODA)**
- 2nd & 4th Tues. monthly, 4p.m. - 6 p.m.

**Base Art Group (BAG)**
- Fridays weekly, 1p.m. - 4 p.m.

**Adaptive Yoga**
- Wednesdays 4:15 p.m. - 5:15 p.m.

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To donate to BASE go to: www.basemissoula.org
Phone: 406-215-1080

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The Force is Always with Us!
Sometimes in Unexpected People, Places and Positions! - *Continued from Page 1*

Please join us in proactively speaking up, writing, sending pictures and social media messages, and traveling in person to the Montana legislative session starting January 7th in Helena.

You can follow legislative bills’ progress online or join Summit’s Action Alert System at: https://www.summitilc.org or https://cgcengage.com/mtcil.

*Breath deeply, and Remember, The Force Will Always Be With You!*

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CLASSIFIED ADS

**Spitfire ex1420 Mobility Scooter**
Almost new $200obo, call Deloris 777-7089

**Nova Walker, Quontum 600 power wheelchair, Hurricane Mobility Scooter, Commode, 2 Transfer Benches, Beezy Manual Wheelchair**
call Gary 224-5527

**Wheelchair Accessible Duplex**
For Rent - Brand new, 3 bedroom 2 bath, roll in shower, $1400/mo. Call Glenn 544-1361.

**Quickie Wheelchair**
$500 OBO. Call Janet (406) 721-3751

**Symmetry Stander**
Call Madison (406) 670-9388

**Braun Vangater Wheelchair Lift**
Almost new wheelchair lift with 600 LB capacity. $2000 OBO. Call or text Tyler 406-925-9846

**Summit Pinnacle Chair stair lift**
Gently used, works great. 2 remotes. Straight line - mount rope L. Pick up in Missoula. $1,300 OBO. Call Diane at 360-4061.

**Garaventa Super-Trac Portable Wheelchair Lift for stairs.** Purchased new for $12,000 and used only a few times. Will sell for $2,500 OBO. Contact Jacob Francom, Troy Public Schools, jfrancom@troyk12.org, (406) 295-4520.

**Acorn Stair lift**
For going up to 6 stairs while seated. $500 OBO. Call John at 546-7003.

To get listed contact Tyler Stosich at (406) 728-1630 or email tstosich@summitilc.org.

Or, list and find items on the MonTECH exchange:
http://montech.ruralinstitute.umt.edu/mtdb/

To get involved or to share ideas of new BASE programs, contact BASE jhoward@summitilc.org or by visiting www.basemissoula.org

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Opportunities to Participate in Research Projects!

Participants must have a physical disability, age 21 or older, and live in the Missoula area or Ravalli County. We are accepting participants into both of the studies until March 31, 2019.

**The Home Usability Program:**

Help UM researchers learn about barriers experienced by people with disabilities.

Answer survey questions about how you live in your home and community.

Receive up to $110 over a 6-month period for completing surveys.

**The Out and About Program:**

Meet with Summit staff members for goal setting skills training.

Set 2 goals related to increasing community participation.

Receive $30 for completing 3 surveys over a 6-month period.

For more information call: 406-728-1630