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July is a month when we celebrate our freedom as a country, and as individuals, and recommit to protecting liberty for ourselves and our loved ones. Not only is it the month in which the Declaration of Independence was signed, but it is also the month in which the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed in 1990.



On July 26, 2020, the nation will say Happy 30th Birthday to the Americans with Disabilities Act. Since its passage in 1990, this landmark legislation has helped increase access and opportunity for people with disabilities in our nation's workplaces and communities. The ADA was a hard-won acknowledgement that people with disabilities are citizens like anyone else, and have the right to access not just buildings, but the activities inside them, employment in community businesses, life in the community, community transportation and so much more. Or, as Arlene Mayerson put it, "The ADA is radical only in comparison to a shameful history of outright exclusion and segregation of people with disabilities. From a civil rights perspective the Americans with Disabilities Act is a codification of simple justice (The History of the Americans with Disabilities Act, DREDF, <https://dredf.org/about-us/publications/the-history-of-the-ada>)."

Disability is an equal opportunity experience, one we may be born with, or acquire along the way from a health condition, the natural aging process, or an incident of some kind. The ADA, along with other complementary laws, has been instrumental in the momentous shift in the attitudes and expectations of the 61 million Americans with disabilities, their families, friends and communities.

As monumental as the ADA has been, however, more remains to be done. As more information and communication move online, accessibility features must become commonplace and simple for designers to implement. Young people with disabilities must receive the support they need to transition successfully into the adult world alongside their peers. Policy and attitudinal barriers must be knocked down for the more than 60 percent of working-age people with disabilities currently excluded from the work force, so

they can contribute their talents to our state. Segregation in some aspects of life is still tolerated, and sometimes encouraged by outdated policies that must be changed. Perhaps most glaringly, considering the times we are currently living in, the needs of people with disabilities are still an afterthought in disaster preparedness and emergency response planning efforts.

2020 has been quite the year. As our nation deals with chaos in several forms, we are reminded of the importance that civil rights laws play in the lives of minority groups all across the country, including in the lives of people with disabilities. During these times, we are confronted with the reality of what happens when those laws are not upheld or enforced. Unfortunately, for people with disabilities, the witnessing of civil rights laws not being complied with or enforced is an everyday occurrence...even as we prepare to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Americans With Disabilities Act.

The current COVID-19 pandemic that is ravaging our country has brought to light many of the shortfalls in emergency preparedness planning; especially for individuals with disabilities receive home and community-based services. Initial emergency preparedness planning efforts included protocols and procedures for nursing homes and other congregate care settings but virtually nothing for individuals living in the community or the direct care workers who assist them. Further, as states prepared to deal with an onslaught of hospitalizations, many states drafted what are known as "crisis standards of care," which are the standards that dictate whose life would be saved in the event of very limited medical resources and whose lives would not be saved. These "standards of care" should be ones that are well thought through and drafted over time with the utmost care to protect the lives of all Americans. However, what we saw is that many states quickly drafted their standards of care and within them, included lower scoring for people with disabilities because of their perceived lower quality of life.

In addition to the shortfalls in emergency preparedness, the COVID-19 pandemic has also exacerbated other

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What is Disability

By Bre Lopuch

Disability is a protected minority status in the United States, alongside race and gender. While we tend to think of race or gender as fixed-from-birth identities, disability is not at all a fixed aspect of identity.

Identity and status are rich sources of philosophical inquiry, but, generally, Americans tend to think of identity as highly stable. Think of how threatened we feel if, suddenly, we are stripped of our professional credentials, our livelihood, or our social status, and not just because these things are important for accessing opportunities and resources, but because these roles define us and give us a comfortably predictable perspective from which to approach and interact with the world.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) uses an unfortunate term to present data that 33% of infants in the US are born with a "birth defect." Though some individuals have a disability from birth or infancy, disability is one status that can happen to anyone at any time, leading disability advocates to use terms like 'temporarily able-bodied' and describe disability as a natural part of life. In Montana, 26.5% of adults have a disability, which is just a whisker over the national statistic. If you're wondering why you don't see 1 in 4 Montanans using wheelchairs and white canes, you're not alone. When we think of disability, we tend to think of what we call visible disabilities like a mobility impairment, blindness, or a prosthetic limb. Other disabilities are invisible, like many mental illnesses, sensory impairments, and a variety of physical conditions.

Given that so many human beings experience the transition from 'able-bodied' to disabled, it is not entirely unlikely that you or a loved one may one day identify as having a disability if you haven't already. But please do not let this statistical reality alarm you. Disability truly is a natural part of the human experience. Another reason the number seems higher than 1 in 4 of all the people you know is that disability can not only be acquired

but many individuals also return to 'able-bodied' status after some time.

For instance, think of a cancer patient undergoing intensive chemotherapy. This person may spend months or years battling for their life and health, requiring personal care to meet their basic needs, and unable to work or help support their family. Then comes a remission. They build up their health and return to work, caring for their family, and basically functioning as before their illness.

This isn't to say that disability equates to an inability to work: it doesn't. Even people with such significant mobility impairments as complete quadriplegia can work full time due to the benefits of technology. Current technology allows people with all types of disabilities to engage in all types of activities.

Studies on personality and outlook show that these traits stay remarkably stable in individuals after they acquire life-changing physical disabilities. People tend to feel devastated during a kind of grief process and adjustment period. Then, despite having an utterly different relationship with their physicality, many return to their former interests and generally happy way of life. The point is, acquiring a physical disability really needn't change a person's personality or general abilities, but can and does teach us how much of our physical infrastructure is designed with only 'able-bodied, average-sized' adults in mind.

During the struggle to acquire an education, people with disabilities were once often denied physical access to the rooms of educational buildings, the format of the material, and to be seen as equal individuals by policymakers and society. With the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, people with disabilities were granted legal protections that increased equality but have not erased inaccessibility or social stigma. I was shocked to discover, while researching rates of congenital versus acquired disabilities, that the CDC still uses the phrase "birth defects" when referring to congenital health conditions. My shock is over the ableism of the language: a health condition is seen as a defect, and "birth defect" sounds like the whole baby as if



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What is Disability (continued)

the whole individual is somehow defective and not a whole or complete human being. That dehumanizing language and treatment were what sparked the disability community's participation in the fight for civil rights, and ultimately led to the passage of the ADA.

Today, every county in the country has a Center for Independent Living to serve it. These Centers are meant to promote and defend the rights of individuals with disabilities through the offering of several core services. Summit Independent Living is

Western Montana's Center for Independent Living and in the past year we had over 400 participants in our classes, over 1000 information and referral calls, and we advocated for individuals and the greater disability community each and every day. We offer a wealth of services in a wide variety of settings, and the only eligibility requirement to receive our services is that an individual self-identifies as currently experiencing a disability of any kind. Our services could reach so many more people if our society understood more about what disability is, because the definition of disability is much, much broader than just using a wheelchair or a white cane.

ADA 30th Anniversary, continued...

areas in which people with disabilities still face barriers. As businesses begin to open back up, some businesses are implementing strict protocols that may have the unintended consequence of blocking access to, or making access difficult for, people with disabilities. Examples of blocking access to individuals with disabilities include: a business implementing a one way in and a one way out protocol with the one way in consisting of stairs and the one way out consisting of the facilities only ramp, a business blocking off their accessible parking to use as "outside seating," or even a business posting signs containing un-factual information claiming that the ADA allows anyone with a disability/medical condition to go against local and/or state face mask requirements...just because the business owner may not agree with it.

There are others, still, who gather up the precious resources of our country and use them to build structures or develop programs for the many in a way that shuts out the few. These people do not believe that disability is a part of life, but an affliction cast on those more unfortunate than themselves. These people will be untouched by arguments that people with disabilities have families to support, to entertain, to travel with. Families that will not use their services or purchase their goods, if made inaccessible. They will exclude, not with hatred, but with naivety, with their belief that they are choosing not to follow an unjust law.

It is in times like these that, despite the many barriers that still exist, people with disabilities must remain resilient,

must continue to educate, must pick up the torch and continue to fight...to be brave enough to continue the legacy of those who came before us. National, state, and local leaders, planners, and businesses must know that even in times of turmoil, perhaps especially in times of turmoil, that the promise of the ADA must be upheld. That people with disabilities must be at the table in all planning efforts, must be included in all business decisions, and must be treated as equals in a society where we value individual freedoms and have declared that all men (and women) are created equal with the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

After 30 years of waiting to fully realize the dream of the ADA, it is time to say, "enough is enough!" Enough with the excuses already, governmental entities and places of public accommodation have had 30 years to become accessible to and usable by people with disabilities, to ensure that people with disabilities are not discriminated against in employment, in accessing affordable and accessible housing, in getting to where they need to go to perform errands, worship, work, or simply visit loved ones...we can do better America. We must do better!

Because the ADA is not a cheap gimmick to tug at heartstrings, but a cloak of independence as real as those of us who grew up wearing it and those who fought so hard to get it passed. We must continue to stride into the world, determined to fully realize the dream of the Americans with Disabilities Act — our right to be citizens brave enough to demand our freedom.

Happy Birthday ADA!



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Summit Mental Health Counseling

These are unprecedented times, and Summit Independent Living is in the position to extend more services. Summit will provide time limited, solution focused mental health counseling at no cost during this pandemic. Our staff include those with Masters Degrees in Social Work, who operate under a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. In order to work within our areas of competence, we may need to refer to another mental health specialist outside of our agency.

Please contact Bre Lopuch for more information at blopuch@summitilc.org or 406-728-1630 x123.

B.O.S.S.

(Building Occupational Success Skills)

Would you or someone you know between the ages of 14-24 like support transitioning into the workforce? Summit Independent Living and BASE can help! Thanks to the Cross Charitable Foundation, John Howard and Becca Gervais are eager to help individuals from all of Summit's service area. They will be offering a FREE group called B.O.S.S. (Building Occupational Success Skills) in both July and August!

The group will be held over Zoom and will focus on job readiness skills such as filling out applications, cover letters, informational interviews, role-playing interviews, and much more! Additionally, individual meetings can also be scheduled if group format is not preferred.

Please email Becca at bgervais@summitilc.org for information on dates, how to register, and any other questions you may have!

Annual ADA Picnic and other ADA Anniversary events Canceled

Unfortunately, it's time to make this public announcement... The Summit ADA Picnic, which had been scheduled for July 7, 2020, was canceled to ensure the safety of our consumers, collaborators, staff members, friends, and fellow community members. We remained hopeful as long as possible, but had to cancel due to the coronavirus and state directive to adhere to strict social distancing and limit public groups to no more than 50 people as per Stage 2 of reopening. We were hopeful that we would move to Stage 3, but it doesn't look like that will happen in time. Because we usually enjoy more than 50 attendees and it's difficult to adhere to social distancing particularly in the food line, we decided to make the call.

However, there is great news and it's a great time to celebrate even though we may not all be together as planned. July 26, 2020 marks the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 which is the largest historical landmark event acknowledging the rights of individuals with disabilities and preventing discrimination on the basis of disability. It's a good time to recognize progress made by and for individuals with disabilities and acknowledge many who have contributed to these gains while remaining steadfast that there is still work to be done.



In recognition of this ADA Anniversary, Summit was also scheduled to be the Spotlight Sponsor of the weekly Out to Lunch on Wednesday, July 22 and Downtown Tonight on Thursday, July 30 both at Caras Park. However, the Missoula Downtown Partnership has likewise canceled those events throughout summer, 2020. As an alternative to the Out to Lunch and Downtown Tonight activities, the Missoula Downtown Association is hosting "Pop-Ups," which consists of 3 to 5 food trucks at Caras Park every Tuesday from 5:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m., every Wednesday from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m., and every Thursday from 5:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. Summit is proud to sponsor these alternative, Pop-Up events and encourage individuals to check these events out, of course while practicing social distancing and face covering, if you feel safe doing so.

To help celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Summit is hosting an online, Zoom get together to listen to the **Southeast ADA Center's ADA Live podcast: Celebrate. Learn. Share. The ADA turns 30. The Feature of Disability Rights with Lex Frieden, on July 24th at 11:00 A.M.** We will follow up the podcasts with a short group discussion about the ADA and what it means to you. If you are interested in participating, please register by going to Summit's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/SummitLC/events>) events and clicking the registration link in the ADA Live Podcast event description.

We at Summit are considering other creative ways in which we can all celebrate this anniversary while still following Governor Bullock's directive. Please stay tuned and watch Summit's website and social media outlets to receive any updates. Either way, we hope that you can take a little time to recognize how the ADA has positively impacted you personally, your friends, and/or your family members.

Thank you for your understanding, and let's look forward to an even bigger celebration next year!



Service Update

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Summit continues to provide independent living services by phone, email, and virtual means since we have not yet opened our offices to the public. We are monitoring COVID-19 activities in our local communities closely but are proceeding slowly with plans to gradually reopen our offices out of an abundance of caution. Many of Summit's staff members are at elevated risk for Covid-19, as are the individuals with disabilities we serve.

We are happy to announce that Summit has received grant funding through the **CARES Act** to provide vital independent living services to people with disabilities in our service area who have been impacted COVID-19. These services are in addition to our core services of information and referral, independent living skills training, peer support, individual and systems advocacy, youth transition services, and nursing home transition and diversion services.

The additional CARES Act services will allow Summit to provide limited financial assistance in the following areas:

- Access to affordable and accessible housing
- Helping individuals move from nursing homes or other institutions into the community
- Services to maintain community living and avoid institutional placement
- Access to technology resources to help consumers stay connected with vital services and improve their safety, health and overall independence
- COVID-19 supplies such as masks, gloves, hand sanitizer and disinfectants
- Assistance with access to food, which will include collaboration with local food banks

To be eligible for the CARES Act services, the following criteria apply:

1. An individual must have a significant physical or mental disability that impacts his or her ability to function independently in their home and community.
2. Consumers must also be open under a Summit Consumer Service Record (CSR) that identifies a specific goal or goals which the financial assistance will assist the consumer in achieving.
3. Consumers must demonstrate a need for the financial assistance due to negative impact on health, safety, ability to live independently, gain or continue employment, or participate in the community due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. Consumers must demonstrate a need for financial assistance based on financial hardship. A simple income and expense summary will be completed to determine financial eligibility.

For more information, contact your local Summit office in Missoula, Hamilton, Ronan or Kalispell by going to <https://www.summitilc.org/contact>

BASE EVENTS

725 West Alder, #4 Missoula, MT

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.



Attention!

All BASE in-person classes, gatherings, and events have been moved online until further notice due to COVID-19. To find out how to get involved, or If you have any other questions, please contact (406) 728-1630

For BASE schedule updates and additional events go to

www.summitilc.org/calendar

or check the BASE Facebook page at
<https://www.facebook.com/base725>

To get involved or to share ideas of new BASE programs, contact BASE

jhoward@summitilc.org

or by visiting

www.basemissoula.org

To donate to BASE go to:

www.basemissoula.org

phone: 406-215-1080

CLASSIFIED ADS

Silver Spring wheelchair ramp 10' L x 36" W

Made of high-strength light weight aluminum. \$297obo. Contact: tamera144@gmail.com or 406-363-4898

1997 Ford Econoline Wheelchair Accessible Van

Miles: 213,737
Call Twyla 231-818-0065

Victory 10 LX scooter

New! \$2500, Call or text Nina 880-2855

Smart Talker text scanner

Slightly used, \$700. Contact Larry at 406-633-4036 or ketch1969@gmail.com

Nova Walker, Quantum 600 power wheelchair, Commode, 2 Transfer Benches, Beezy Manual Wheelchair. Call Gary (406) 224-5527 or garylee032051@gmail.com

Symmetry Stander

Comfortable, easy-to-use seat stander Call Madison (406) 865-0221

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. \$300 OBO. Call John at 546-7003.

Permobil F3 Corpus Power Wheelchair

Seat is 16"x19" - call Spider at 406-924-1111, ext. 2 if interested

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/>

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Building Awareness, Advocating Change

THE SUMMIT INDEPENDENT

July 2020

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

LET'S KEEP FIGHTING COVID-19

We've all got to do our part.

PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH IN THE 406



Wash Hands
Use Hand Sanitizer



Don't
Touch Face



Cover Sneezes
& Coughs



Keep Social
Distancing



Wear a
Mask

IF YOU FEEL SICK



Stay Home from
Work/School



Call Your
Medical Provider



Quarantine as
Instructed

*Montanans get it,
and we've got this.*

dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/covid



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
(CDC):

<https://www.coronavirus.gov>

World Health Organization:

[https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/
novel-coronavirus-2019](https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019)

Montana Department of Public Health and
Human Services:

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/covid>

Social Security and COVID- 19:

<https://www.ssa.gov/coronavirus/>

The ADA and Face Mask Policies:

[https://www.adasoutheast.org/ada/
publications/legal/ada-and-face-mask-
policies.php](https://www.adasoutheast.org/ada/publications/legal/ada-and-face-mask-policies.php)

Caring for someone at home:

[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-
ncov/if-you-are-sick/care-for-someone.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/care-for-someone.html)

Your Local County or Tribal Health Department:

[https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/FCSS/
countytribalhealthdepts](https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/FCSS/countytribalhealthdepts)

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