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## OCTOBER IS

# NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

By Gavin Workman

As we recognize October as Disability Employment Awareness Month, let's take a retrospective look at employment pre-pandemic, and a possible solution moving on from the pandemic layoffs. In 2019 and early on in 2020, overall unemployment had reached a record low where a majority of people within working age demographics were securely employed. The one segment of individuals not equally represented in this job market was people with disabilities, where 2/3 of working aged disabled individuals remained steadily unemployed. Recent studies have shown this is due to persevering high levels of stigma related to people's ability to obtain and maintain employment with a disability. This stigma stretched across all spectrums of management including CEO's, corporate directors, middle and lower management, co-workers, and people with disabilities themselves (self-stigma). This was also prevalent amongst those in the helping professions, including medical professionals, people in employment services, social workers, therapists, and even on a state and federal level among Vocational Rehabilitation counselors. The one key component tying these individuals together is the medical model approach to providing disability employment services and a focus on what employees cannot do in the workforce or within certain professions.

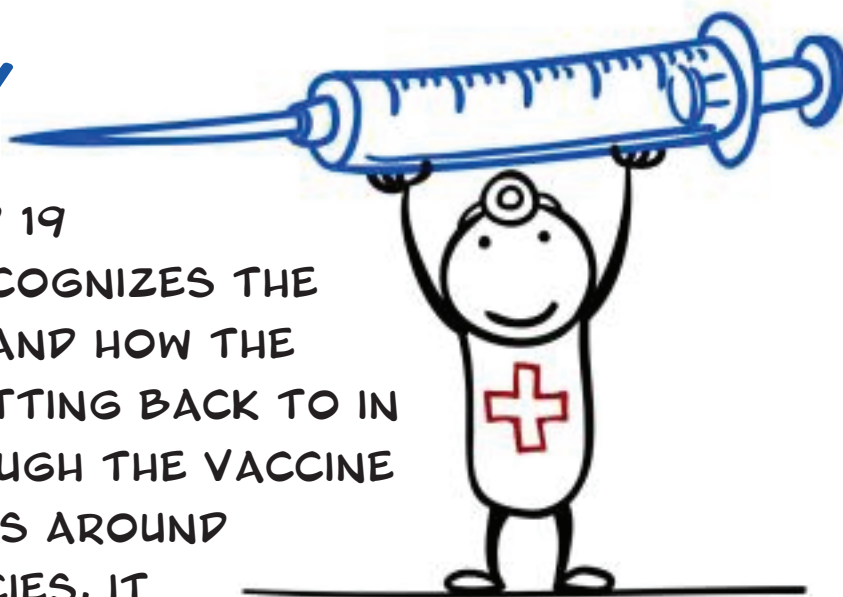
As we move forward towards a post-pandemic job market, we are currently looking at a labor shortage where there are more jobs available than there are job seekers in the job market. A higher emphasis on disability employment services and

putting people with disabilities back to work could assist with finding a labor force to combat this labor shortage. Current research has shown that creating environments that are disability friendly can be achieved with a combination of things including top-down stigma reduction through greater training for the heads of companies on accommodations, hiring, and retention of people with disabilities coupled with a strengths-based approach to employment that focuses on all employees' abilities as opposed to inabilities. If these are set in place, along with employment policies that allow for accommodations for all employees regardless of disability, it can reduce the stigmas, increase the disability employment rate, and help with the labor shortage.

In conclusion, we are currently facing a labor shortage across all professions and increased recruitment of people with disabilities could help with combating this shortage. We cannot return to the pre-pandemic stagnated disability employment rate, we need to heed the lessons we've learned during this pandemic in regard to what is possible in accommodating employees if we think even just a little outside of the box. If we continue to grow and change as we move towards a post pandemic job market, perhaps we can finally see a correlating employment rate of people with and without disability instead of just those without disabilities. 30 years of promises under the ADA have gone largely unfulfilled, its well past time to give people with disabilities a chance to work parallel with everyone else.

# COVID-19 Vaccine Assistance!

HAVE YOU RECEIVED THE COVID 19 VACCINATION YET? SUMMIT RECOGNIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF THE VACCINE AND HOW THE VACCINE IS OUR TICKET TO GETTING BACK TO IN PERSON ACTIVITIES. EVEN THOUGH THE VACCINE IS OFFERED AT NUMEROUS SITES AROUND MONTANA AND MOST PHARMACIES, IT CAN BE DIFFICULT FOR SOME TO ACCESS THE VACCINE. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN GETTING THE VACCINE BUT HAVE SOME BARRIER THAT IS PREVENTING YOU FROM RECEIVING IT, PLEASE CONTACT SUMMIT AT (406) 728-1630. WE MAY BE ABLE TO HELP WITH TRANSPORTATION, ATTENDANT CARE, OR OTHER SUPPORT.



## *Links to reliable information related to COVID-19*

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

<https://www.coronavirus.gov>

World Health Organization:

<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>

Your Local County or Tribal Health Department:

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/FCSS/countytribalhealthdepts>

# Fall Word Search

F	R	B	G	G	J	K	T	U	W	X	A	Y	G	Z
O	O	B	T	I	J	D	M	C	B	V	R	U	N	L
K	I	O	M	A	L	E	J	O	B	E	H	C	A	C
D	C	J	T	J	G	U	X	W	T	F	Y	N	W	O
N	Q	O	N	B	N	D	F	S	J	I	M	G	V	L
Q	F	Z	U	A	A	Z	U	I	Z	U	Q	L	B	D
B	Y	Z	K	T	R	L	R	P	T	Z	M	W	W	E
K	F	E	I	X	B	A	L	U	C	N	R	C	D	R
E	P	P	T	S	L	E	A	V	E	S	U	O	S	E
V	D	Y	T	U	A	A	Z	Q	V	R	J	O	E	T
H	Y	S	C	H	O	O	L	R	V	L	G	K	B	A
Y	Y	E	K	R	U	T	E	I	U	B	J	S	C	E
U	L	O	V	R	N	I	K	P	M	U	P	I	E	W
Z	F	O	P	R	E	B	M	A	Q	R	C	R	A	S
Q	Y	Y	D	N	I	W	X	K	S	S	D	B	T	J

Leaves  
Turkey  
Pumpkin  
Football  
Sweater  
Colder  
Autumnal  
Brisk  
Windy  
School  
Bountiful  
Amber  
Blustery



## SUMMIT BOARD

Mark Cash  
Jenny Montgomery  
Molly Blair  
Peter Drakos

Michelle McLane  
Susanne Meikle  
Kelly Sellars  
Gabrielle Broere



## SUMMIT STAFF

### Missoula County

#### Executive Director

Mike Mayer

#### Program Support Specialist

Mike Giddings

#### SD-CFC/PAS Program Manager

Beth Anderson

#### SD-CFC/PAS Coordinator

Patti Montgomery-Stewart

#### SD-CFC/PAS Coordinator

Carrie Dyrud

#### SD-CFC/PAS Assistant/Insurance

Jessica Workman

#### Advocacy Coordinator

Travis Hoffman

#### Peer Advocacy Coordinator

Bronwyn Troutman

#### Independent Living Specialist

Donna Graham

#### Independent Living Specialist

Tyler Stosich

#### Community Living Specialist

Vacant

#### Youth Coordinator

Michael Beers

#### BASE Coordinator

John Howard

#### Pre-ETS & Employment Services

Gavin Workman

#### Administrative Assistant

Laurie Swanson

#### Financial Officer

Scott Fels

#### Accounting Assistant

Jon Vivas

### Flathead County

#### Coordinator

Lynae West



#### Independent Living Specialist

Vacant

#### Independent Living Specialist

Dianna Kintzler

#### SD-CFC/PAS Specialist

Aleyna Raymond

### Ravalli County

#### Coordinator

Becky Fleming-Siebenaler

#### Independent Living Specialist

Anna Barnes

#### People First Advisor/IL Specialist

Mary Millin

### Lake County

#### Coordinator

Susan Morris

#### Independent Living Specialist

Betty LaFountain

#### Independent Living Specialist

Mariah Armstrong

# New Summit Staff

## Laurie Swanson

### Administrative Assistant, Missoula



Laurie Swanson just joined the Summit team as the new Missoula Administrative Assistant. She has been with Summit for 9 ½ years as a peer advocate working part-time on call. Her first introduction to Summit was in the early 2000's when Laurie needed some advocacy. Summit guided Laurie as she met multiple goals. In early 2012 she was brought on as a Peer Advocate and served in that role until taking on the administrative assistant position.

Laurie is a social worker by trade and her emphasis has always been in the medical field as a medical social worker. She received a Bachelor degree in Social Work from the University of Montana in 1989 and practiced for 13 years until her disability forced her to leave the field.

Laurie is a life-long resident of Missoula and enjoys everything that Missoula has to offer (especially the farmer's market!). She also enjoys creating textile arts, mixed media arts and mosaics, cooking, watching crime shows and listening to true crime podcasts.

Laurie loves working with people, helping solve problems and facing challenges head on. She is eager to dive in to her new job!

## Madison Morgan

### Development and Community Outreach Director, Missoula



Madison is responsible for Summit's branding and marketing, and acts as Summit's public liaison. She also manages Summit's fundraising efforts, including those going toward Summit's future home on Russel St.

Madison previously worked at the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society as a Campaign Manager for their Pennies for Patients campaign in Washington State. She has served on the Board and the Fundraising Committee for All Heart Infusion, an infusion care organization based in Spokane, WA. Madison is a Griz alum, earning her B.A. in Cultural Anthropology with a Business Administration minor in 2017. While in school, she worked as a barista, and was a member of the Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority.

When Madison is not busy with her Summit duties, you can find her with her three cats and husband at home, cross-stitching and likely listening to a true crime podcast, or out grabbing a drink and sharing a cheese plate with friends and family.

## Jon Vivas

### Accounting Assistant, Missoula

## 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 who we serve.

We are happy to announce that Summit has received grant funding through the **CARES Act** to provide **additional independent living services** to people with disabilities in our service area who have been impacted by COVID-19. These services include access to affordable and accessible housing, transitioning from institutions or nursing homes into the community, access to necessary technology, improving safety and independence, and access to PPE ...

**For more information or questions regarding eligibility, contact your local Summit office in Missoula, Hamilton, Ronan or Hamilton.**

Visit [www.summitilc.org/contact](http://www.summitilc.org/contact) for local Summit office contact information.



## Summit Virtual Social Security Orientation Schedule 2021



If you need assistance applying for disability benefits, we ask that you take part in a Social Security orientation prior to scheduling your appointment.

Orientations are held on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month from 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM.

### 2nd Thursday Monthly

**Meeting URL:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89388805948?pwd=Zy91QjduVEVhUlkxWmZUcTZKVHh0UT09>

**Join by phone:** 1 (669) 900-9128

**Meeting ID:** 893 8880 5948

**Passcode:** 705752

### 4th Thursday Monthly

**Meeting URL:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86789824245?pwd=RkwzYnMlRU9pdC9ob2wyb2xmTVl1dz09>

**Join by phone:** 1 (253) 215-8782

**Meeting ID:** 867 8982 4245

**Passcode:** 165841

**For more information please go to [www.summitilc.org](http://www.summitilc.org) or call your local office.**

Missoula: 406-728-1630

Ronan: 406-215-1604

Hamilton: 406-363-5242

Kalispell: 406-257-0048





## Senior Companion Program

The Senior Corps Program at Missoula Aging Services is an alliance of hundreds of volunteers in Missoula County who are improving our community as Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions or RSVP volunteers. They use a lifetime of experience to help solve critical problems in the areas of education, human needs (at risk-youth, homeless families, etc.) environment, veteran's and public safety.

The Senior Companion Program offers income eligible people age 55 and older the opportunity to provide supportive person-to-person services to assist older adults and adults with disabilities remain independent and promote increased quality of life. Senior Companions may also provide much needed respite for families or caregivers who may have the responsibility of 24 hour a care. Senior Companions volunteer a minimum of 15 hours weekly in a variety of settings.

If you are interested in being a Senior Companion or learning more about receiving services from a Senior companion contact:

**Donna Graham, @ 406-728-1630 x116.**

## A SUMMER OF CELEBRATION



# 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.

## BASE Virtual Activities

Mondays, April 12 CHEW cooking class from 1pm to 3pm.  
Cooking healthy French toast, pancakes, and crepes.

YODA (You Opening Doors through Advocacy)  
Tuesdays 4-6pm on Zoom

All Abilities Yoga  
Wednesdays 4-5pm on Zoom

BASE Wrestling Foundation BWF  
1st and 3rd Wednesdays monthly 5-6pm  
On Zoom

Virtual Photography Group  
2nd and 4th Wednesday monthly 5-6pm on ZOOM

BASE Virtual Game Night  
Thursdays from 1-4 pm (call for dates and times)

BASEment Improv  
Thursdays BASEment Improv 5-6:15pm.  
Join us for Improv, games, and laughs.

**For BASE schedule updates and additional events go to**

[www.summitilc.org/calendar](http://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](mailto:jhoward@summitilc.org) or [mbeers@summitilc.org](mailto:mbeers@summitilc.org).

## CLASSIFIED ADS

### Adult Tricycle

Schwinn 26" tricycle, bike pump included.  
\$500obo (406) 721-1698

### Wheelchair Lift

Ricon wheelchair lift model #S1231  
G00100100. \$400obo.  
Contact: Cory (406) 471-3314

### Silver Spring wheelchair ramp 10' L x 36" W

Made of high-strength light weight  
aluminum. \$297obo. Contact: [tamera144@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:jfrancom@troyk12.org), (406) 295-4520.

### Acorn Stair lift

For going up to 6 stairs while seated. \$300  
OBO. Call John at 546-7003.

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

Or, list and find items on the MonTECH  
exchange:

<http://montech.ruralinstitute.umt.edu/mtdb/>

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Any statements herein do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Department.

# SUMMIT INDEPENDENT LIVING

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](http://www.summitilc.org)

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*Building Awareness, Advocating Change*

THE SUMMIT INDEPENDENT

October 2021

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



## Fresh Food Box

Summit Independent Living and Missoula Food Bank & Community Center are working collaboratively to make the Fresh Food Box program available to more people with disabilities.



### Eligibility requirements:

- must have a physical or mental disability that impacts your ability to live independently;
- live in Missoula
- sign up for Summit service;
- be experiencing challenges to your health, safety, ability to live independently, receive vital services, gain or continue employment, or participate in community activities due to COVID-19;
- be experiencing food insecurity due to lack of income, and
- need home delivery of food due to sheltering in place or lack of transportation/assistance to obtain food in the community.

For more information or to apply please call the Summit office at 406-728-1630 or send an email to [missoula@summitilc.org](mailto:missoula@summitilc.org).

You can always sign up to get this newsletter by email by visiting [www.summitilc.org](http://www.summitilc.org) and signing up