

# The LINK

Changing Lives.

Changing Communities.

## A Publication of Disability Network Southwest Michigan

### Advocacy Makes a Difference: *What Every Driver Must Know* now in audio format

What started out as advocacy to help ONE person access the study guide to take the Michigan driver's license test became a project to ensure access for people with reading disabilities all across the State of Michigan!

A customer, Andre, who wanted to study to get his driver's license was given the booklet **What Every Driver Must Know** from the local Secretary of State office. Andre has a learning disability that makes reading printed material difficult. Andre asked for the document in an audio format so he could listen to it. He was told it was only available in print. They suggested that he "find someone to read it to him" - it is 148 pages long!

Andre told staff at Disability Network about this. We found out that this same situation had been happening to other people with learning disabilities who need to study for the driver's license exam.



Disability Network Southwest Michigan staff knew that under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) the State of Michigan is held to a very high standard of accessibility for all citizens, yet the staff at the Secretary of State's office did not understand their ADA responsibility to provide this essential booklet in a way that was accessible to people with learning disabilities.

We worked with the State of Michigan's ADA Coordinator and the staff in the Office of Communications to get **What Every Driver Must Know** recorded in an audio format. This audio recording is now available free through the Braille and Talking Book Library, part of the National Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

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#### Two Office Locations

2900 Lakeview Avenue  
St. Joseph, MI 49085  
(269) 985-0111

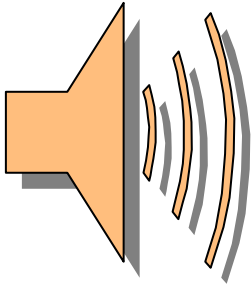
517 E. Crosstown Pkwy  
Kalamazoo, MI 49001  
(269) 345-1516

*This issue is available in  
alternative format upon  
request.*

[www.dnswm.org](http://www.dnswm.org)

**Disability Network is the first stop for people with  
disabilities and their families in Southwest Michigan.**

## WHAT EVERY DRIVER MUST KNOW, *continued*



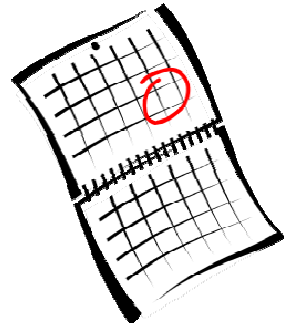
If you would like to borrow an audio copy of the booklet, you need to be registered with the Library. To get registered, or for more information, call 1-800-992-9012.

We continue to advocate with the Secretary of State to get information on their website so that everyone knows the audio format is available to people with learning disabilities.

If you have been denied ADA accommodations from a government office, call us. We can help you advocate for your rights.

## SEPTEMBER 16TH: ATTEND THE AARP HEALTH DECISIONS TOUR

AARP will host an opportunity to discuss current issues regarding healthcare reform, Medicare, long term care, and caregiving issues & solutions. Event is free. For more information and to register, contact Andrea Palmer at 517-267-8929 or email [apalmer@aarp.org](mailto:apalmer@aarp.org).



**Date: Tuesday September 16, 2014**

**Time: 6:00pm-7:30pm**

**Location: Kalamazoo County Expo Center, 2900 Lake Street, Room B, Kalamazoo, MI 49048**

## Nursing Facility Transition Program Needs Your Help

The Nursing Facility Transition Program is for residents of a nursing facility who are receiving Medicaid and have a desire to live in the community. Often residents need help with starting over again in the community. Not only do they need housing, but they also need furniture and many other household items to help with this transition.

The NFT Program has a limited budget to purchase household items. We are looking for new or slightly used items. We could use your help with the following wish list:

- ▶ Pots and pans
- ▶ Dishes, glasses and silverware
- ▶ Kitchen items: can openers, spatulas, measuring cups, mixing bowls, food storage containers, garbage bags, food storage bags, cutting boards
- ▶ Small kitchen appliances: coffee makers, toasters, microwaves
- ▶ Cleaning supplies: cleaning products, hand soap, dish soap, laundry detergent, brooms, mops, vacuums
- ▶ Clocks and lamps
- ▶ Small furniture: end tables, night stands



You can drop items off at either of our office locations. If you have questions, please contact Lisa Hansen at (269) 345-1516 x111 or [hansenl@dnswm.org](mailto:hansenl@dnswm.org). Thank you!

**To receive this newsletter by e-mail or to be removed from the mailing list, contact Kristen at (877) 674-5209.**

## Join National Expert Dan Burden in Kalamazoo for Walkability Audit

On Friday August 8th, Dan Burden and his team from the Walkable and Livable Communities (WALC) Institute will be in Kalamazoo helping us learn the benefits of designing walkable, livable communities. As part of his visit, we will have the opportunity to participate in a Walkability Audit in downtown Kalamazoo!

A **walkability audit** is an evaluation of the walking environment used to identify concerns for pedestrians related to safety, access, comfort, and convenience. Informal audits can be performed by any individual or community group.

Audits work best when a diverse group of people - city planners, elected leaders, older citizens, youth, advocates, police officers, persons with disabilities and public health officials—participate and give input. **We want YOU to be part of this exciting process!**

For more details or to receive registration information for the August 8<sup>th</sup> event, RSVP to Michele at (269) 345-1516 x116 or [mcgowenm@dnswm.org](mailto:mcgowenm@dnswm.org) today!

Dan Burden, WALC co-founder, was recently recognized by the White House for his work in transforming communities.



This project is funded by The Jim Gilmore, Jr. Foundation.

## ASSISTIVE DEVICE EMERGENCY FUND

**Kalamazoo County Residents:** If you have an assistive device that needs to be repaired but are having trouble paying to have it fixed, please call us. We have a small emergency repair fund for assistive devices. Examples might be replacing a battery on a scooter or fixing a tire on a wheelchair. The fund may also help to purchase assistive devices you need for safety or independence, like a shower or bath bench. Call Karen at (269) 345-1516 x115 or email her at [halstedk@dnswm.org](mailto:halstedk@dnswm.org).

Funded by the Lifeline Fund, a partnership of the Greater Kalamazoo United Way and Kalamazoo Community Foundation.



# Celebrate the 24th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act with us!

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Disability Network Southwest Michigan invites you to celebrate the 24<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) with free food, fun, and education at its Kalamazoo office location.

“We are thrilled to host a community celebration of this monumental civil rights law. The ADA has revolutionized the way we think about creating communities. It opened unprecedented doors of opportunity, inclusion and access for everyone”, says Joel W. Cooper, President & CEO.

For more information, please contact Kristen Potts at 269-345-1516, x119, or at [pottsk@dnswm.org](mailto:pottsk@dnswm.org). For accessibility, attendees are asked to refrain from wearing fragrances and other scented products to this event.

Date: Friday July 25, 2014

Time: 11:30 am – 1:30 pm

Location: 517 E. Crosstown Parkway, Kalamazoo

- ▶ A free lunch will be provided.
- ▶ Educational materials and presentations focused on the impact of the ADA will be available.
- ▶ A brief program will begin at 12:30 PM
- ▶ The program will highlight the Bob Davis Independent Living Award recipient, Mr. Mark Campbell, and the Jim Neubacher Lifetime Achievement Award recipient, Mr. Dale Hein, a longtime advocate of access for everyone.

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**BARRY ♦ BERRIEN ♦ BRANCH ♦ CALHOUN ♦ CASS ♦ KALAMAZOO ♦ ST. JOSEPH ♦ VAN BUREN**

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