

BE PREPARED: Home Fires are Highest in Winter Months

Home fires occur more during winter months than any other time of the year; be prepared with a properly functioning smoke detector. It's important to regularly test your smoke detector to be sure the batteries are still working. Some people get in the habit of checking their smoke alarms at the same time they are changing their clocks for daylight savings time—that way they are sure to be doing it twice a year.

Keep in mind, if you live in an apartment or condominium, your neighbors may not be as careful as you are. Renters insurance can protect you from loss regardless of where a fire started.

Make a plan!

It's a good idea to have an emergency plan ready in case you need to quickly and unexpectedly evacuate your home. For people with disabilities, there may be additional considerations regarding what you need to take with you and how you will evacuate.

Think ahead about a safe, accessible exit from any room in your home depending on various locations a fire may start.

Consider what items you would absolutely need to have if an emergency occurred. This might include medications or health-related devices. It's a good idea to pack an emergency "go bag" and have it ready to grab and take with you. In addition to personal and medical items, you might want to include information like important phone numbers and a list of bank and credit card accounts.

For more information about being prepared for an emergency, visit the Emergency Preparedness area of our website in the "Resources" section at www.dnswm.org.



The Red Cross will come to your home **AT NO COST TO YOU** to perform a fire safety inspection and install free smoke detectors. Call today to schedule your inspection. Below are the local phone numbers in our area:

- Kalamazoo: (269) 353-6180
- Battle Creek: (269) 962-7528
- St. Joseph: (269) 556-9619

Disability Network Southwest Michigan

Serving 8 counties in
Southwest Michigan:

BARRY
BERRIEN
BRANCH
CALHOUN
CASS
KALAMAZOO
ST. JOSEPH
VAN BUREN

Office Locations:

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

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

For the accessibility and well-being of our employees and visitors, Disability Network Southwest Michigan is a fragrance-free office. Please do not wear perfume, cologne or other scented products when visiting.

Mission Statement:

We educate and connect people with disabilities to resources while advocating social change.

Vision Statement:


Our vision is a community that values disability as human diversity, free of attitudinal barriers, where all people benefit with full access and inclusion.

www.dnswm.org

Helping People Connect to Services

Disability Network Southwest Michigan's Information & Referral department serves as a central clearing house for people with disabilities who need information on disability issues or assistance in getting connected to services in their community. Thousands of people each year call or stop by our offices for assistance connecting to resources.



 **5,893**
**Information
& Referral**

Disability Network Southwest Michigan is the first stop for people with disabilities in Southwest Michigan. In Fiscal Year 2015–16, we served 5,893 people through our Information & Referral department.

Meet Gretchen

Gretchen is a 60 year old woman who has difficulty hearing and speaking due to a stroke. Gretchen connected with Disability Network's Information & Referral department when her health care coverage lapsed. After Gretchen's stroke, she was no longer able to read or use a computer or phone so she needed assistance navigating the complicated system of Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

Disability Network's Information & Referral staff was able to provide the one-on-one assistance Gretchen needed to contact her caseworker and determine which forms needed to be completed to reinstate her health care coverage. Through the process, Disability Network's Information & Referral staff advocated for Gretchen with her caseworker to eliminate the phone interview requirement since Gretchen was unable to use a phone. With the help of Disability Network, Gretchen was approved for the benefits she needed to remain independent in the community.

When we invest in disability, the entire community benefits. Join Disability Network Southwest Michigan in creating a diverse and inclusive community by investing in people with disabilities. We cannot do this important work without your support.

 **Investing in
Disability**

RISE UP! Disability Resistance, History & Pride

Many of us in the disability community are unaware of the depth of our culture and history and feel shame and stigma instead of pride around our disability identities. Family, friends and human service professionals also have a lack of knowledge of disability history and struggle to find ways to support our journey to disability pride. Let's change that!



Join us

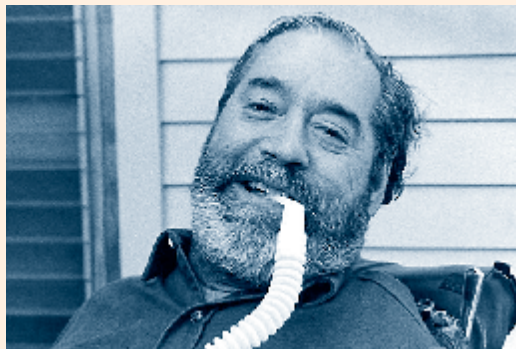
We are hosting a Lunch & Learn event on **January 23, 2017** from **12:00 noon to 1:30 PM** in both our Kalamazoo and St. Joseph offices. Join us for a free lunch with discussion and activities that promote knowledge of disability history and support the journey to disability pride. Everyone is welcome!

RSVP Kalamazoo

Miranda: (269) 345-1516 x120
grunwellm@dnswm.org

RSVP St. Joseph

Terezia: (269) 982-7761
harazinovat@dnswm.org



Ed Roberts Day January 23

“We are no longer asking
for charity.
We are demanding
our rights!”

Volunteer of the Year: Kevin Klute

Congratulations to Kevin Klute, our 2016 volunteer of the year! Kevin has demonstrated outstanding leadership and never-ending problem solving as a volunteer for Disability Network Southwest Michigan. Kevin is the Vice Chairperson on our Board of Directors, serves on numerous committees, and often participates in disability panel discussions. Thank you Kevin for your many hours of dedication to Disability Network!



Our Publications:

The **LINK** is our quarterly newsletter, available in printed format or emailed in electronic format.

Disability Digest is a monthly e-newsletter focused on Disability Rights issues and upcoming Disability Network happenings. Available in electronic format only.

You can sign up online for our publications at www.dnswm.org, or contact Dale at abbottd@dnswm.org or (269) 345-1516 x123.

Current and past issues of our publications are available on our website at www.dnswm.org.

This newsletter is available in alternative format upon request.



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Disability Network Southwest Michigan

517 E Crosstown Parkway
Kalamazoo, MI 49001

www.dnswm.org



Lunchtime Book Club!

Wednesday, March 1, 12 noon–1:30 PM

Meets in both our Kalamazoo and St. Joseph offices

Trigger by Susan Vaught

Jersey Hatch can't remember why he tried to kill himself. Coming out of rehab for the first time in a year, Jersey must piece his life back together, step by painful step—from relearning to tie his own shoelaces, to graduating high school, to repairing old friendships. With a fresh, compelling, and unique literary voice, Susan Vaught thrusts readers directly into the bitterly funny head of Jersey Hatch. An eye-opening story that expertly navigates the triumph of family, the depths of despair, and the humor of the most mundane details of life.

RSVP Kalamazoo:

Michele (269) 345-1516 x116 or mcgowenm@dnswm.org

RSVP St. Joseph:

Terezia (269)982-7761 or harazinovat@dnswm.org

For more information about the Lunchtime Book Club, visit www.dnswm.org.

