

The LINK



A publication of Disability Network Southwest Michigan

Join Us for a Celebration of the 27th Anniversary of the ADA



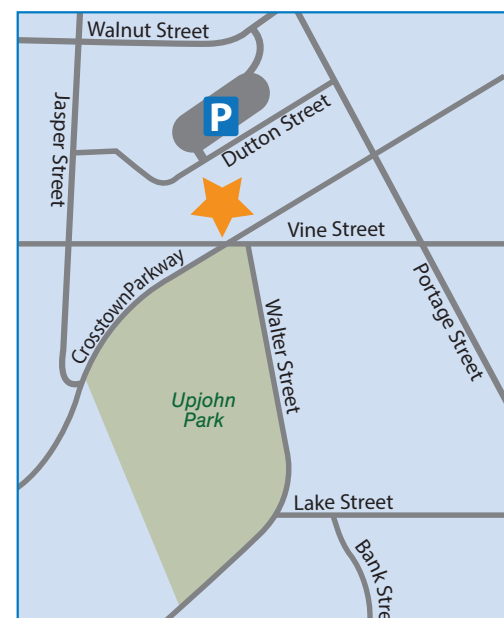
Disability Network Southwest Michigan will host a community-wide celebration of the 27th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Please join us on **Friday, July 21** at our **Kalamazoo** office (517 E. Crosstown Parkway) from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. for a free lunch, presentations and awards ceremony. This year we are pleased to welcome RoAnne Chaney, Executive Director of Michigan Disability Rights Coalition, as our keynote speaker.

The ADA anniversary celebration has become an annual tradition at Disability Network as we gather with our customers, community partners, neighbors and elected officials to celebrate the passage of this important civil rights legislation which grants protection against the discrimination of people with disabilities.

Each year at our ADA celebration, Disability Network awards the Bob Davis Independent Living award to an individual with a disability who has made great progress in meeting their independent living goals. We are pleased to present the award to Robert Schindler from Berrien County who has successfully secured employment, moved into his own apartment and continues to reach out for new opportunities in his community. Please join us at our ADA celebration to congratulate Robert on his accomplishments and on winning the Bob Davis Independent Living Award.

Thank you to Kalamazoo Valley Community College for allowing us to use their parking lot just behind our building on Dutton Street for this event. Look for the ADA event parking signs.

You can find more information about our ADA Anniversary celebration on our website (www.dnswm.org). This event is free and open to the public. If you have questions, contact Kristen Potts at pottsk@dnswm.org or (269) 345-1516 x119.



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.

Annual RAMP-A-THON kicks off at our ADA Celebration!

RAMP-A-THON

Disability Network's annual Ramp-a-Thon kicks off at the ADA Celebration on July 21. Ramp-a-Thon raises money to construct or purchase ramps for people with mobility disabilities across our service area. A ramp makes it possible to do something as basic as getting to the mailbox, as important as getting to doctor appointments, and as critical as being able to get out of their home in the event of an emergency. Ramps allow everyone equal opportunity to be a vibrant part of their community.

Please consider a donation to Ramp-a-Thon between now and August 31. You can make a donation at our ADA celebration on July 21, donate online at www.dnswm.org or drop a check in the mail to:

Ramp-a-Thon / Disability Network
517 E. Crosstown Parkway, Kalamazoo, MI 49001

Meet Patricia . . .

Patricia has a mobility disability; she can walk very little and usually uses a power chair when she is in the community.

Patricia's house has four steps at the entrance which doesn't seem like a lot, but if you can't navigate stairs, four steps presents a significant barrier. Patricia often

needed to be carried out of her home, and the lack of access created a significant safety hazard in the event of an emergency.

Disability Network coordinated volunteers from Harbor Habitat for Humanity and funding used from our Ramp Up program and St. Joseph-Benton Harbor Rotary Foundation to build a ramp for Patricia so she can now independently come and go and feel safe in her home.



**Investing in
Disability**

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.

Summer & Fall Lineup of Events at Disability Network

MOVIE+LUNCH+DISCUSSION: *The Music Within*

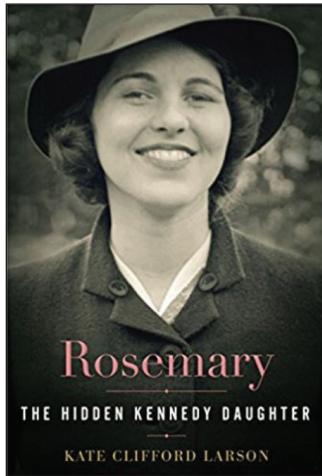
Join us on Thursday, **July 13**, 12:00–2:00 p.m. at our **St. Joseph** office for lunch and a movie. We'll be watching *The Music Within*, the true story of Richard Pimentel who played a pivotal role in creating the Americans with Disabilities Act.

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

More info: www.dnswm.org/event/lunch-learn-music-within



LUNCHTIME BOOK CLUB: *Rosemary: The Hidden Kennedy Daughter* by Kate Clifford Larson



Join us at either our **Kalamazoo** or **St. Joseph** offices on Wednesday, **August 23**, 12:00–1:30 p.m. to discuss this book about Rosemary Kennedy. The book is available in alternative format. A light lunch is provided, please be sure to RSVP.

RSVP Kalamazoo: Leatrice (269) 345-1516 x118 or fullertonl@dnswm.org

St. Joseph: Terezia at (269) 982-7761 or harazinovat@dnswm.org

More info: www.dnswm.org/connect/book-club.

SPEAK UP! Basic Skills of Self Advocacy Workshop

Using interactive and fun activities, this workshop is designed to introduce the skills of self advocacy to people with disabilities. This workshop is being offered at our **St. Joseph** office on Wednesday, **September 20**, 1:00–3:00 p.m.

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

More info: <http://www.dnswm.org/event/speak-up>



LEARN, KNOW, ACT: Disability Advocacy Series

See the back panel of this newsletter for information about the disability advocacy workshop series we are offering in Battle Creek.

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 abbotttd@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.

Support Our Work:

You can help support the work we do with a tax-deductible donation to Disability Network. Visit our website to donate online or call Kristen at (269) 345-1516 x119.



Find us on
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Advocacy Academy Provides Valuable Experience for Youth

This summer marks the sixth year Disability Network has offered Advocacy Academy—an eight-week paid internship program for young adults that features experiential advocacy training. Each year, six young adults with disabilities are selected through an interview process to participate in Advocacy Academy. Additionally, one former Advocacy Academy graduate is selected as a mentor for the team.

The group spends the first weeks of the internship learning about the disability rights movement and the role of advocacy in creating change. Through consensus, the group self-selects a disability-related issue they will work on over the remainder of the internship. They develop an advocacy plan and work toward implementing the plan. Depending on how involved the topic or the advocacy plan is, sometimes the end goal cannot be achieved within the time frame of the program. Advocacy is a long, involved process and we tell the interns they shouldn't expect to resolve the entire issue they're addressing during their eight-week internship. The goal of Advocacy Academy is to give the interns experience and teach them valuable skills. As far as their project goals are concerned, at the very least, awareness of the issue will be raised, and that's always the first step in effecting change.

With that said, some of the past projects have succeeded



in doing far more than raising awareness. One group met with state legislators and got a bill to the senate floor; another group developed and implemented an emergency preparedness plan for a Senior Housing Center and educated the local fire department on the unique needs of evacuating people with disabilities. Each year it seems a couple of the interns become impassioned with the issue they are working on and vow to stay connected to the cause and pursue it on their own.

Each year the Advocacy Academy interns travel to Lansing for a day to visit the State Capital and meet with legislators from our region.

In addition to learning about disability rights and the advocacy process, the interns learn other valuable skills such as working in a team setting, group communication, and basic

workplace etiquette and conduct. Advocacy Academy becomes a great addition to their resumes and gives them confidence to take that next step to employment.

We have stayed in touch with a number of the Advocacy Academy graduates over the years; several have moved on to jobs and/or post- or secondary educational settings. A couple of the interns became interested in pursuing politics; one is now working at her state representative's office and another is in Washington D.C. working on Capitol Hill as a Congressional Leadership Intern.

Every year, we rely on funding from the community to ensure we can offer Advocacy Academy. This year we are grateful for the support of the Kalamazoo Community Foundation, Fetzer Institute and Youth United Way.

Meet our Newest Staff Members



Please help us welcome the staff members we have added to the Disability Network Southwest Michigan team in the past year (from left to right):

- **Stacy Klein** is a Nursing Facility Transition Outreach Coordinator in Barry, Kalamazoo, and St. Joseph counties.
- **Jackie Wellington** is a Travel Trainer in Kalamazoo County.
- **Terezie Harazinova** is a Community Educator & Systems Advocate in our Berrien/Cass office.
- **Kathy Flores** is a Nursing Facility Transition Outreach Specialist in Berrien, Cass & Van Buren counties.

STAR Award Goes To Patti Townsend, Disability Network Volunteer

Volunteers from the Kalamazoo area were honored for their contributions at the annual STAR Awards (Sharing Time And Resources) celebration. Disability Network Southwest Michigan was very proud to nominate Patti Townsend who won this year's STAR Award in the category of Adult Volunteer of the Year.

This year, Patti is celebrating 30 years of volunteer service dedicated to Disability Network Southwest Michigan. Over the years she has been a passionate advocate on behalf of people with disabilities and has had many different roles that have

supported the work and mission of Disability Network. In 2016 her main role has been as a member of Disability Network's Human Resources Committee. This Committee focuses their expertise and time providing consultation and guidance to ensure the most effective and appropriate employment and administration policies and procedures.

Patti also volunteers with many other organizations in the Kalamazoo community where she has made a huge impact. Patti's passion for volunteering started when she was a teenager in high school and has grown over the



years. Patti has a large heart with a great passion for making the community a better place.



Disability Network Southwest Michigan

517 E Crosstown Parkway
Kalamazoo, MI 49001

www.dnswm.org



sign up for our
**electronic
publications!**
Details inside

Learn, Know, Act

Disability Advocacy Series

This workshop series is being offered in **Battle Creek** and invites you to challenge your assumptions and grow your advocacy skills! Join us for the entire series or pick and choose the workshop(s) you like best.

- July 24 2:00-3:30 pm Movie: The Great Fight for Disability Rights
- August 28 2:00-4:30 pm Speak Up! Skills of Self Advocacy Workshop
- September 18 2:00-4:30 pm Making a Difference in Your Community Workshop
- October 23 2:00-3:30 pm Disability Disclosure at Work Workshop

All events are held at the **Kool Family Community Center** located at 200 W. Michigan Ave in Battle Creek.

RSVP to Miranda at (269) 345-1516 x120 and let us know your accommodation needs.

For more information about this series or a particular event, visit our website:

www.dnswm.org/learn-know-act.

This advocacy series is made possible in part by a grant from the Battle Creek Community Foundation.