

Renovated Community Building Provides Access For All!

At the Kalamazoo Disability Network Southwest Michigan office we have an auxiliary building that we refer to as the “Community Building.” We call it that because we make it available as a community resource for area organizations to use free of charge as a meeting and gathering space.

Due to our location, over the years our buildings have suffered the effects of several floods, not the least of which were last October and again this February. Susceptibility to flood damage, combined with the availability of more efficient building practices and advancements in technology, prompted our Board of Directors to make an investment in renovating the Community Building this year. We took this opportunity to make the space as accessible as possible so that the building could truly provide “Access For All!” Renovations were made possible in part by the generous support of area funders.

On June 25, after months of renovation, the Board of Directors were very pleased to unveil the new and improved, fully accessible Community Building at an official ribbon cutting ceremony. “Our decision to remodel the Community Building provided the



CEO & President, Joel Cooper, along with Board Chair, Kevin Klute, join the Board of Directors in performing the official ribbon cutting.



perfect opportunity to incorporate needed flood controls as well as state of the art technology and components to create the most accessible space possible,” said CEO and President, Joel Cooper. “We are excited to share this space with others and lead the way in accessibility in our community.”

Accessibility features incorporated in the renovated Community Building include:

- Hands-free microphones
- Lightweight tables on wheels
- Motorized window shades with remote control
- Wheelchair height cabinets & work stations in the kitchen area
- Under counter kitchen storage – no upper cabinets
- Talking microwave
- Oven with swing out door

The Community Building is available at no charge to any organization needing a meeting or gathering space. To reserve the Community Building, contact Margaret Thurmand at thurmandm@dnswm.org or 269-345-1516 x101 to check availability and schedule your time.

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.

REV UP:

Register! Educate! Vote! Use your Power!

The American Association of People with Disabilities' (AAPD) REV UP Campaign aims to increase the political participation of the disability community while also engaging candidates and the media on disability issues. REV UP stands for Register! Educate! Vote! Use your Power!



Full political participation for Americans with disabilities is a top priority. AAPD works with state and national coalitions on effective, non-partisan campaigns to eliminate barriers to voting; promote accessibility of voting technology and polling places; educate voters about issues and candidates; promote turnout of voters with disabilities across the country; engage candidates and the media on disability issues, and protect eligible voters' right to participate in elections. Learn more at www.aapd.com/revup.

Volunteer of the Year: Hayley

Hayley Kreg was recently presented with Disability Network Southwest Michigan's 2018 Volunteer of the Year Award. Hayley has been volunteering at Disability Network as a receptionist since 2016. She is always willing to help out anytime she can with extra shifts at the front desk or helping to organize the library.

Hayley is a recent Kalamazoo Valley Community College graduate with a degree in Technical & Occupational Studies and loves to cook and read in her spare time.



Resource Development Director, Kristen Potts (left), presents Hayley with the 2018 Volunteer of the Year Award.

AT Loan FUND Can Help!

The Assistive Technology Loan Fund (ATLF) is available to help people pay for tools for independence. The ATLF is a low interest loan available to people with disabilities and their family members to help purchase items like wheelchair accessible vehicles, hearing aids, mobility devices, communication devices, or adapted recreation equipment. The ATLF can also pay for home modifications, including ramps, to make a home more accessible. For more information, contact Lewis Whalen at whalenl@dnswm.org or (269) 345-1516 x107.

Community Transition Services Program Paves the Way to Independent Living For Many

The goal of Disability Network's Community Transition Services program, formerly Nursing Facility Transition, is to provide individuals, regardless of their disability or age, the opportunity to choose community-based living as a viable alternative to nursing facility residency.

Our staff work with individuals to explore in-home care options, connect to personal care providers, and assist with the housing application process. The Community Transition Services program can assist with expenses associated with moving and establishing a safe environment for the person's individual care needs.



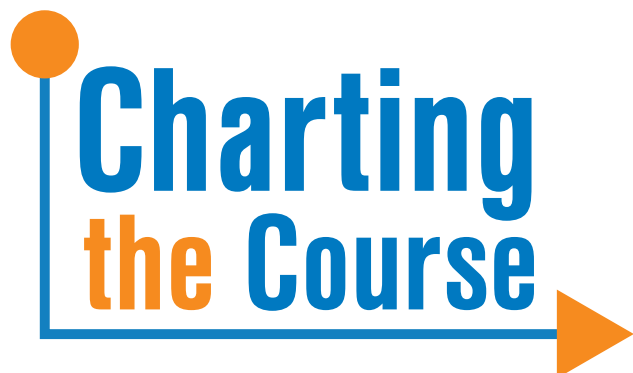
Disability Network Southwest Michigan assists with Community Transition Services throughout our eight county service area. Contact Lisa Hansen for more information at hansenl@dnswm.org or (269) 345-1516 x111.

Charting the Course: Meet Calvin

Calvin connected with Disability Network Southwest Michigan through our Community Transition Services program at the age of 57. He had been living in a nursing facility for two years because of wound issues and hypertension. Prior to the nursing facility, Calvin lived with his father for many years and occasionally rented rooms in his friends' homes. He was eager to get a place of his own for the first time. He had a girlfriend and they wanted to move into an apartment together.

Over the course of several months, our staff assisted Calvin through the apartment application process. When Calvin was accepted at a local apartment complex, our staff coordinated his move and helped to provide some basic home furnishings and household goods to get started. We also assisted Calvin in acquiring necessary in-home medical equipment which was covered by his insurance but not readily available to him. Staff helped Calvin submit the necessary paper work to establish his Social Security and food benefits. Once he was settled, staff assisted him in establishing a budget for his monthly expenses, including transportation.

As a result of moving out of the nursing facility, Calvin is walking outdoors much more and has lost weight and feels much better. He is happy to be on his own and thankful to have his independence again.



Our Community Transition Services Program is one way Disability Network helps prepare people for their path forward. At Disability Network Southwest Michigan, we are helping people with disabilities chart their course to increased independence in a more inclusive community. We cannot do this important work without your support. To learn more about our programs and services, visit our website at www.dnswm.org or find us on [Facebook](#).

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month

The US Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy conducts a campaign each October to bring attention to the importance and value of people with disabilities in the workforce. Reflecting a commitment to a robust and competitive American labor force, this year's National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) theme is "America's Workforce: Empowering All."

For more information about NDEAM visit: www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam.



WORKSHOP

Disability & Employment: How, When & Why to Talk About it

In celebration of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, we are offering a FREE Disability and Employment workshop in each of the eight counties in our region during the month of October. At this workshop you will learn about when you are (and are not) required to tell an employer about your disability or medical condition and the best way to ask for an accommodation at work. We will also discuss your rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act and where you can find helpful resources.

These workshops are free; however, we ask that you pre-register by contacting Miranda at grunwellm@dnswm.org or (269) 345-1516 x120. Let us know if you need an accommodation to participate.

Kalamazoo: Tues., October 2, 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Disability Network Southwest Michigan
517 E. Crosstown Parkway

Dowagiac: Wed., October 3, 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Michigan Works
601-D Front Street

Hastings: Wed., October 9, 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Michigan Works
136 E. State Street

Paw Paw: Wed., October 10, 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Michigan Works
32849 Red Arrow Highway

Three Rivers: Tues., October 16, 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Michigan Works
6587 Enterprise Drive

St. Joseph: Wed., October 17, 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Disability Network Southwest Michigan
2900 Lakeview Avenue

Coldwater: Tues., October 23, 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Michigan Works
210 Vista Drive

Battle Creek: Wed., October 24, 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Michigan Works
200W. Van Buren Street

WORKSHOP



DO'S & DON'TS: Assistance Animals

There is a lot of confusion about what qualifies as a Service Animal and how they differ from Emotional Support Animals. There are specific laws regarding what type of assistance animals are allowed in different places and whether an establishment can deny access to an assistance animal. Join us to learn more!

The workshop is free; however, we ask that you pre-register by contacting Miranda at grunwellm@dnswm.org or 269-345-1516 x120.

- Kalamazoo:** **Monday, November 5 | 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.**
Disability Network Southwest Michigan
517 E. Crosstown Parkway
- St. Joseph:** **Wednesday, November 14 | 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.**
Disability Network Southwest Michigan
2900 Lakeview Avenue
- Battle Creek:** **Thursday, November 29 | 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.**
The Kool Family Community Center
200 W. Michigan Avenue

WORKSHOP

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!

Disability Network has partnered with Van Buren Intermediate School District to present this workshop to raise awareness of disability rights and pride. Everyone is welcome to join us for this workshop which will include discussion and activities that promote knowledge of disability history and support the journey to disability pride.

This workshop is free; however, we ask that you pre-register with Miranda at grunwellm@dnswm.org or 269-345-1516 x120.

- Lawrence:** **Wednesday, November 7 | 9:00–11:00 a.m.**
Elberta Rm - Van Burn ISD Conference Center
490 S. Paw Paw Street

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.

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
[Facebook](#)



Disability Network Southwest Michigan
517 E Crosstown Parkway
Kalamazoo, MI 49001

www.dnswm.org



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

Let's Talk . . .



**Emergency
Preparedness**

**Have you been affected
by a natural disaster?**

Were you ready for it?

Disability Network Southwest Michigan will be holding discussion groups throughout Southwest Michigan to discuss how the disability community is affected during times of emergencies. If you are a person with a disability and have had to face an emergency such as fire, flood, tornado or other disaster, how did you handle it? Were you prepared? Do you have a stay/go kit in your home ready? How does your disability impact your ability to respond in an emergency?

We want to hear from you! Watch our website and Facebook page for more information about focus groups scheduling in your area to discuss emergency preparedness in the disability community, or contact Pam Burpee for more information at burpeep@dnswm.org or 269-345-1516 x116.