

The LINK

*Changing Lives.
Changing Communities.*

A Publication of Disability Network Southwest Michigan

2013 Michigan Deaf Association Conference MDA/MIRID Unity in the Community—Together We Soar

September 5-8, 2013

Radisson Plaza Hotel, Kalamazoo, MI

Disability Network Southwest Michigan is proud to support the 2013 Michigan Deaf Association Conference. This conference has something for everyone!

Conference workshops include:

- ▶ Knowing Your Rights When Asking for An Accommodation
- ▶ Working With the Deaf Transgender Community
- ▶ Community Action Plan – The Legislative Process
- ▶ “Don’t Interpret That!” – Ethical Decision Making in the Healthcare Setting
- ▶ Everything You’ve Always Wanted to Know About DeafBlind Interpreting
- ▶ And much more!



Sean Forbes



Keith Wann



Fred Beam



**Windell Smith Jr.
AKA Wink**

For a detailed schedule of workshops, keynote speakers, entertainment and costs visit the conference website: http://www.mideaf.org/mdaconf_007.htm

For more information contact Elizabeth Bystrycki at widibits@aol.com.

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

This issue is available in alternative format upon request.

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

INTERNET ACCESS & THE ADA

When websites are not accessible, people who are blind or who don't read printed text due to a learning disability cannot use the internet to apply for jobs, buy clothing, or even plan a vacation. It can mean that people who are Deaf cannot access video instructions, training material, or web-based movies online because many videos posted do not have closed captioning.

The ADA is a law that prohibits discrimination based on disability. It was enacted in 1990 before the Internet was widely available. The ADA requires accommodations be made in public areas for people with disabilities. Advocates argue that the internet and websites are public areas and should be covered by the ADA.

There are lawsuits that will be decided soon that will give businesses better guidance about the accessibility of their websites. There will also be new federal regulations that should clear the way for better access to the internet by disabled users under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Stay tuned!



THE NEXT FRONTIER: ACCESSIBLE PRESCRIPTION LABELS?

While not law yet, new guidance is now available from the Access Board on how to make prescription drug container labels accessible to people with vision disabilities or who are elderly.

The important information on prescription medication labels, including dosage and other instructions, side effects, and expiration dates, is often inaccessible to those unable to read print or small type. The released recommendations are contained in a report, "Best Practices for Making Prescription Drug Container Label Information Accessible to Persons Who are Blind or Visually-Impaired or Who are Elderly," which is available on the U.S. Access Board's website.



This guidance is advisory only and not mandatory. Pharmacies are not obligated to follow the best practice recommendations.

SAVE THE DATE

Disability Network Annual Meeting
Monday October 28, 2013
@ Holiday Inn West – Kalamazoo
Contact Kristen for more information
(269) 345-1516 x 119 or pottsk@dnswm.org

VISIT DISABILITY NETWORK STAFF AT A COMMUNITY OUTREACH EVENT



We will be at a variety of community outreach events this summer. Please stop by our table, say hello, and ask your disability-related questions.

- ▶ **Aug 6:** National Night Out, Edison Neighborhood Association, Kalamazoo
- ▶ **Aug 10:** Health & Disability Resource Day, Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Kalamazoo
- ▶ **Aug 13:** Sensational Senior Day, Lawrence
- ▶ **Aug 14:** Barry Community Resource Fair, Hastings
- ▶ **Aug 17:** School Supply Spectacular, Brookside Learning Center, Cassopolis
- ▶ **Sept 7:** Festival of Families, Berrien County Fair Grounds, Berrien Springs

RAMPS PROVIDE SAFE ACCESS TO HOME AND COMMUNITY

Once again we have had a wonderful ramp building season with our fabulous volunteer builders and donors. We have had volunteer builders from our partner church First United Methodist Church of Kalamazoo, the dedicated youth from Impact Kalamazoo coordinated through Haven Reform Church, and Red Arrow Ministries in Van Buren County. The program also mentored a Boy Scout to organize a ramp construction project to complete his Eagle Scout service project.

We have built 10 ramps this year, increasing accessibility for people who are living at home and desire access to the community and a safe living environment. We are thankful to our donors and volunteers who help us build a more accessible community.



MEET THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS IN THE DISABILITY RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Our Advocacy Academy summer internship program has been a huge success with 12 young adults gaining valuable work experience while advocating for the issues they are passionate about.



The Berrien Advocacy Academy chose the name **Make A Change**. They are advocating for emergency evacuation policies and plans that include people with disabilities in apartment complexes in Watervliet.



The Kalamazoo Advocacy Academy chose the name **Equal Education**. They are working to develop practices that ensure students with disabilities are accommodated to get a high school diploma and not get steered toward receiving a certificate of completion.

STATEMENT OF ACCESSIBILITY

Disability Network Southwest Michigan is committed to the full inclusion of people with disabilities in Southwest Michigan and in our own services. We want your input about the accessibility of our services and buildings. We are conducting a review of the architectural, environmental, attitudinal, employment, communication, transportation and other barriers that may exist that prohibit full access to our services. Please send your concerns or suggestions to:

Michele McGowen
Disability Network Southwest Michigan
517 E. Crosstown Parkway
Kalamazoo, MI 49001
mcgowenm@dnswm.org

2013 Volunteer of the Year: James Ivey

James Ivey has been a dedicated volunteer with Disability Network Southwest Michigan for over 3 ½ years. A regular presence at local Transit Authority Board meetings, James has shown himself to be an eloquent and powerful speaker.

James' passion isn't limited to transit; he has advocated on a variety of issues, including Medicaid supports, mental health parity, and accessibility in our community. James has traveled to Lansing to speak with legislators, and we know we can always count on him to speak "from the heart." He is willing to step outside his comfort zone to make change, and he uses his talents to encourage others in their advocacy.

Disability Network Southwest Michigan is honored to have James Ivey give so much of his time and talent. We could not ask for a more dedicated, passionate, "I'll be there!" volunteer. Congratulations, James!



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



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