

# The LINK



A publication of Disability Network Southwest Michigan

## Join Us to Celebrate the 26<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ADA!

Disability Network Southwest Michigan will host a community-wide celebration of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act, now in its 26th year. Please join us on July 22 at our Kalamazoo office (517 E. Crosstown Parkway) from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. for a free barbecue lunch, presentations and awards ceremony.

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 discrimination to people with disabilities.

We will be running continuous accessible shuttle service from 11:15 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. between the event and the following designated parking locations: Senior Services of Southwest Michigan (918 Jasper St.), Kik Pool at Upjohn Park, the skateboard park (off Walter St.), and the Kalamazoo Farmers Market (corner of Lake & Walter St.)

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

**ADA26** Americans with Disabilities Act Anniversary Celebration



## 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.

## ADA Compliance Services

**ADA Accessibility Assistance Ensures Access for All!**



Disability Network Southwest Michigan offers ADA Compliance Assistance services. Staff and volunteers work with businesses, organizations, and municipalities to determine if their public spaces are fully accessible and give recommendations for improved accessibility. The level of service involved can range from answering questions on the phone, to doing an on-site visit and providing recommendations, to a full accessibility audit report.

Disability Network provides ADA Compliance Assistance throughout our eight county region. In Kalamazoo County we also have two volunteer groups, ACCESS and TAG (Transportation Advocacy Group) which assist with evaluating sites for accessibility. The TAG team focuses on public transportation, while ACCESS looks at a broader range of accessibility issues.

Recently, Disability Network's staff and advocacy teams have worked with the Fetzer Center, Kalamazoo County Parks Department, Cass District Library, Kalamazoo County Transit Authority, the YMCA, and Oshtemo Township, just to name a few.

If you are interested in having an ADA Compliance audit done anywhere in Southwest Michigan or are interested in joining one of our Kalamazoo area advocacy groups, please contact Michele McGowen at [mcgowenm@dnswm.org](mailto:mcgowenm@dnswm.org) or (269) 345-1516 x116. You can also learn more on the ADA Compliance page of our website ([www.dnswm.org](http://www.dnswm.org)).

ADA Compliance Services is just one example of how Disability Network Southwest Michigan is bridging the gap for people with disabilities. We assist people in connecting to the resources they

need to reach their independent living goals—whatever they may be. This is at the heart of each of our core services: Information & Referral, Independent Living, Transition, Peer Support, and Community Education and Advocacy.



The logo features a blue brushstroke arching over the text "Bridging the Gap" in a bold, orange, sans-serif font.

Be sure to check out ALL of Disability Network's publication options and use the enclosed return postcard to let us know what you want to receive!

## Information Resource for Benefits

MMAP is Michigan's State Health Insurance Assistance program (SHIP) and Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP). MMAP provides local help for people with Medicare and Medicaid as well as those participating in MI Health Link plans. For answers to general questions about MI Health Link enrollment options or assistance regarding Medicare and Medicaid, you can call MMAP at 1-800-803-7174 or find them online at [www.mmapinc.org](http://www.mmapinc.org).

## Financial Assistance for A.T. Devices

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 your home more accessible. For more information, contact Lewis Whalen at [whalenl@dnswm.org](mailto:whalenl@dnswm.org) or (269) 345-1516 x107.

# RAMP-A-THON



## Ramp-a-Thon Kicks Off!

Disability Network's annual Ramp-a-Thon kicks off at the ADA Celebration on July 22. Ramp-a-Thon raises money to construct or purchase ramps for people with mobility disabilities across our service area. Imagine the difference a ramp makes to someone who needs one. The difference between getting to their mailbox, or not; getting to a doctor's appointment, or not; socializing with others or not; being a vibrant part of their community, or not.

Please consider a donation to Ramp-a-Thon between now and August 31. You can donate online at [www.dnswm.org](http://www.dnswm.org), or drop a check in the mail to:

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

Or bring your checkbook to our ADA celebration on July 22 and help us kick off the campaign in person!

## Our Publications:

**The LINK** is our quarterly newsletter, available in a 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.

**Business & Disability Bulletin** is a bi-annual e-newsletter directed at businesses and organizations wanting to stay informed about regulations and best practices regarding disability employment. Available in electronic format only.

You can sign up online for any of our publications at [www.dnswm.org](http://www.dnswm.org), or contact Dale at [abbottd@dnswm.org](mailto:abbottd@dnswm.org) or (269) 345-1516 x123.

Current and past issues of our publications are available on our website at [www.dnswm.org](http://www.dnswm.org).

This newsletter is available in alternative format upon request.



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## Disability Network Southwest Michigan

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Kalamazoo, MI 49001

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



# LUNCHTIME DISCUSSIONS

## Lunchtime Book Club

**Wednesday, September 7, 12:00 noon – 1:30 p.m. (Kalamazoo & St. Joseph)**

**Icy Sparks** by Gwyn Hyman Rubio

Icy Sparks is only 10 years old the first time it happens. The sudden itching, the pressure squeezing her skull, and the “little invisible rubber bands” attached to her eyelids are all symptoms of Tourette’s syndrome. Whenever the impulses become too much to resist, she goes to her grandparents’ root cellar and gives in, croaking, jerking, cursing, and popping her eyes. Icy soon becomes “a little girl who had to keep all of her compulsions inside.”

## Lunch+Movie+Discussion

**Tuesday, September 27, 12:00 noon – 2:30 p.m. (St. Joseph)**

**Wednesday, September 28, 12:00 noon – 2:30 p.m. (Kalamazoo)**

**Concussion**

While conducting an autopsy on a former NFL football player, forensic pathologist Dr. Bennet Omalu (played by Will Smith) discovers neurological deterioration that is similar to Alzheimer’s disease and publishes his findings in a medical journal. As other athletes face the same diagnosis, the crusading doctor embarks on a mission to raise public awareness about the dangers of football-related head trauma.

**For more information or to RSVP, visit the Events page of our website  
[www.dnswm.org/events](http://www.dnswm.org/events) or call 877-674-5209**