

The LINK

Changing Lives.
Changing Communities.

A publication of Disability Network Southwest Michigan

Disability Pride: A Journey to Self-Acceptance

What is Disability Pride?
(Hint: It's different for everyone.)

People with disabilities get a lot of messages about how disability is a "bad" part of who they are, something they should fix, change or hide.

Curious? Confused? Disagree? Well, come and check it out for yourself! Find out what **PRIDE** could mean for you.

Disability Network Southwest Michigan hosting two events

These free workshops, by and for people with disabilities, are about exploring and celebrating our disabilities as an important part of who we are. Disability Network is offering the workshop at both our St. Joseph and Kalamazoo offices. Lunch will be provided. Select the location that works best for you and RSVP to let us know you're coming.

St. Joseph:
Thursday, May 19
10:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
 2900 Lakeview Ave., St. Joseph
 RSVP: johnsonj@dnswm.org
 or (269) 982-7761

Kalamazoo:
Wednesday, May 25
10:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
 517 E. Crosstown Pkwy., Kalamazoo
 RSVP: grunwellm@dnswm.org
 or (269) 345-1516 x120

Cass County Disability Pride Workshop Scheduled

Michigan Family Voices is hosting, in partnership with the Cass County ISD and Disability Network, a *Pride: Journey to Self Acceptance* workshop in Cass County. This training will be open to individuals with disabilities, as well as their family members, school staff, and people who support them.

Cassopolis:
Tuesday, May 10
9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
 Cass Council on Aging, 60525 Decatur Road, Cassopolis
 Look for registration details at www.michiganfamilyvoices.org or call (800) 292-7851 for more information.

Please let us know when registering for any of these events if you need an accommodation.

These are fragrance-free events. Please do not wear perfume, cologne or other scented products to these events.

Two Office Locations

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

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

*This issue is available
 in alternative format
 upon request.*

www.dnswm.org

Rampin' Up for our Ramp Up Program!

Spring is the time of year we start getting busy with our Ramp Up program. Last year Disability Network Southwest Michigan helped coordinate the construction of 16 ramps in our region—this year we hope to do even more. Ramps make community-based living possible for many people. For people with mobility disabilities, a ramp provides freedom and independence; it allows for people to engage in their community more fully and have access to health care and other needed services.

If you are someone who is in need of a ramp and would like to learn more about our Ramp Up program visit our website (www.dnswm.org) or contact Karen at halstedk@dnswm.org or (269) 345-1516 x115.



You can help us Ramp Up!

If you or a group you belong to are looking for a **volunteer** opportunity, please contact us. We have worked with youth groups, church groups and other service organizations.

Building ramps is fun, educational and rewarding. It's a great opportunity to give back to the community and make a meaningful difference in someone's life. Contact Karen (above) to discuss volunteer opportunities in our Ramp Up program.

Even with volunteer labor, which is not always available, ramps are expensive to construct and often those who need a ramp are living on a limited income. Your **financial contribution** would provide much needed assistance to the Ramp Up program. Visit the "Donate" page of our website or contact Kristen at pottsk@dnswm.org or (269)-345-1516 x119 to learn how you can give the gift of freedom and independence by making a designated donation to our Ramp Up program.

Disability Network is Bridging the Gap

The Ramp Up program 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 that may be. This is at the heart of each of our core services: Information & Referral, Independent Living, Transition, Peer Support, and Community Education & Advocacy.



Disability Q & A

We're takin' the mystery out of disability history!

Follow us on Facebook to play along with Disability Q & A. Each week we post a disability related trivia question with a link to the answer. It's a fun and easy way to test your knowledge of disability history and learn some new, fun facts.

To view previous Disability Q & A posts visit the "News" page of our website (www.dnswm.org/connect/news) and sort on the "Q & A" category.

Speak Up! Basic Skills of Self-Advocacy

Join us for this **FUN** and **FREE WORKSHOP** for people with disabilities to learn about self-advocacy. Through interactive activities you will learn:

- What advocacy is
- What your rights are and the laws that protect your rights
- How to make an action plan for advocacy
- Disability history and the fight for disability rights



This workshop is being offered in two locations. Choose the location that works best for you and RSVP to let us know you're coming.

St. Joseph: Tuesday, April 12, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

2900 Lakeview Avenue, St. Joseph, MI

RSVP to Joanne at johnsonj@dnswm.org or (269) 982-7761

Kalamazoo: Friday, April 15, 1:00 – 4:30 p.m.

517 E. Crosstown Parkway, Kalamazoo, MI

RSVP to Miranda at grunwellm@dnswm.org or (269) 345-1516 x120

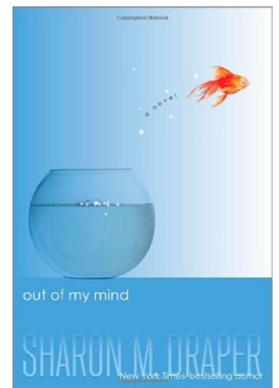
Please let us know when registering if you need an accommodation.

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Disability Network Book Club

Join us Wednesday, June 1, 12:00 noon – 1:30 p.m. at both our Kalamazoo and St. Joseph Offices. Please RSVP to Dale at abbottd@dnswm.org or (269) 345-1516 x123.

In June we will be discussing the book **Out of My Mind** by Sharon M. Draper. This is the story of a brilliant girl who cannot speak or write. She's the smartest kid in her whole school but no one knows it. Being stuck inside her head is making Melody go out of her mind—that is, until she discovers something that will allow her to speak for the first time ever. At last Melody has a voice—but not everyone around her is ready to hear it.



The Disability Network Book Club meets quarterly (March, June, September, December) in both our Kalamazoo and St. Joseph offices. We meet at Noon and provide a light lunch. For more information visit the "Book Club" page of our website (www.dnswm.org/connect/book-club).

This is a fragrance-free environment. Please do not wear perfume, cologne or other scented products to these events.



We're Social. Are you? Like us on Facebook.

To change or update your information on our mailing list, contact Dale at abbottd@dnswm.org or (269) 345-1516 x123.

ADA CELEBRATION

Mark your calendars and join us for a celebration of the twenty-sixth anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act on Friday, July 22 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. We are hosting a community-wide event at our Kalamazoo office including a free lunch, awards, and speakers.

We invite all community members and organizations to join us!



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



Disability Network Southwest Michigan

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