

The LINK



A publication of Disability Network Southwest Michigan

ADA Thirtieth Anniversary Celebration A different kind of celebration

2020 marks the thirtieth anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Disability Network Southwest Michigan holds an annual event each

July to celebrate the landmark legislation which granted rights and provided independence to so many people. This year, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, our celebration will look a little different—a virtual, online celebration has been planned for Friday, July 24; participants are invited to log in or call in at 11:45 before the program starts at 12:00 noon.

In addition to this celebratory event, we are holding a host of community education events focused on the Disability Rights Movement. Find details about those events inside.

During the virtual event we will be sharing our newly created video presentation of “2020/30,” a fully accessible timeline of major events in the Disability Rights Movement. Participants will have an opportunity to share their thoughts about what they would like to see next in the future of the



Disability Rights Movement. As we do each year, we will be presenting the following awards: Community Inclusion Award, Jim Neubacher Lifetime Achievement Award, Bob Davis Independent Living Award, and

Volunteer of the Year. The virtual celebration will conclude at 1:30 PM.

Participants must register for the event to receive the logon information, visit www.dnswm.org to register or contact Laurie Grimm (see below). All registrants will be entered in a drawing for one of four \$25 Amazon gift certificates; must be present to win.

For all event details, please visit our [website](#). If you have any questions regarding this event, please contact Laurie Grimm at: grimml@dnswm.org or 269-345-1516 x115.

This event is funded in part by ADA Michigan, an affiliate of the Great Lakes ADA Center, through grant #90DP0091-01-00 from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research.

Phasing In Office Operations & Customer Contact

As of July 6, Disability Network Southwest Michigan offices are beginning a phased-in process of resuming face-to-face meetings with our customers. We are taking every precaution to protect our customers and staff from further spread of Coronavirus. See article inside for details.

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Meeting with our Customers Again . . .

Over the past three and a half months, Disability Network staff have done an outstanding job of staying connected to our customers and community while working remotely from our homes. Following directives from Governor Whitmer's office and recommendations from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), we have developed a [COVID-19 Preparedness & Response Plan](#) which outlines processes for a phased-in plan of resuming operations in our offices.



As of July 6, we will be entering Phase Three of the Plan which allows for face-to-face interactions with our customers. While we are very pleased to be making this giant step toward returning to normal operations, we are cautiously taking this step by initiating new protocols and processes for visiting with customers, including:

- Meetings must be scheduled in advance. Walk-ins will not be allowed.
- Customers will be asked to assess their health and any known exposure to a person with COVID-19 in advance of the meeting, which may result in rescheduling the appointment.
- Masks will be worn during face-to-face interactions; Disability Network will provide a mask if needed.
- A minimum 6-foot distance will be maintained between people, and a Plexiglas barrier will be used when available.
- Hand washing and sanitation before and after sessions will be practiced.
- Customers who arrive early for their appointment must wait in their vehicle until their scheduled appointment time.
- In the Kalamazoo office, meetings will take place in the the Community Building; there will be no customer access to the main office building.

During Phase Three of our COVID-19 Preparedness & Response Plan, Community Education, Peer Support Groups, Advocacy Groups and other group gatherings will continue to happen online via video conferencing.

Disability Network's management team and Board of Directors will continue to monitor the success of Phase Three and stay informed of the recommendations of the CDC and the status of the spread of Coronavirus in our communities to determine our continued path forward. We look forward to returning to full service operations while ensuring the health and safety of our customers and staff.

Celebrating Disability Rights in July

In addition to our ADA Anniversary Celebration event, we are hosting a number of disability rights themed events during the month of July. Due to COVID-19, these events will all be held online. Participants can join using a computer or call in on a phone. Pre-register for the events you want to participate in and you will be sent the needed information to connect to the event.



Web Movie: **The Great Fight For Disability Rights**

Based on the acclaimed documentary “Lives Worth Living”, The Great Fight for Disability Rights is an abbreviated introduction to the history of the disability rights movement in the United States. We will be hosting the movie online followed by a discussion of the issues raised in the film.

- Tuesday, July 7, 2:00 to 3:30

Visit our website to [register online](#) or contact Miranda at grunwellm@dnswm.org or 269-345-1516 x120.

Webinar: **What is the ADA?**

Disability Network Southwest Michigan has developed this NEW presentation to help celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the ADA. In this interactive webinar, you will learn about the disability rights advocacy that led to the passing of the ADA, the five titles of the ADA and what they cover, and why the ADA is called “the civil rights law for people with disabilities.”

- Tuesday, July 14, 2:00 to 4:00 PM
- Thursday, July 16, 9:00 to 11:00 AM

Visit our website to [register online](#) or contact Miranda at grunwellm@dnswm.org or 269-345-1516 x120.

Webinar: **Disability Pride**

This workshop is for people with disabilities and presented by a person with a disability. Society sends messages to people with disabilities that disability is “bad” – something we should fix, change or hide. We don’t agree! In this interactive webinar we will explore and celebrate our disabilities as an important part of who we are. Join us to celebrate disability.

- Tuesday, July 21, 9:00 to 11:00 AM
- Thursday, July 23, 2:00 to 4:00 PM

Visit our website to [register online](#) or contact Miranda at grunwellm@dnswm.org or 269-345-1516 x120.

Book Discussion: **Being Heumann**

We are coordinating efforts with the Kalamazoo Public Library to co-host an online Book Discussion event on the recently released book “Being Heumann: An Unrepentant Memoir of a Disability Rights Activist” written by Judy Heumann. One of the most influential disability rights activists in US history, Judy Heumann tells her personal story of fighting for the right to receive an education, have a job, and just be human.

- Thursday, July 30, 2020, 5:30 – 7:00 PM

Visit our website to [register online](#) or contact Leatrice at fullertonl@dnswm.org or 269-345-1516 x118.

RAMP-A-THON supports our Ramp Up program

Disability Network's annual RAMP-A-THON kicks off at our ADA celebration on July 24. RAMP-A-THON raises money to construct or purchase ramps for people with mobility disabilities in 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 vacate in the event of an emergency. Ramps allow everyone equal opportunity to be a vibrant part of their community.

Make a RAMP-A-THON donation of \$5 or more on or before our ADA Celebration on July 24 to receive a RAMP-A-THON insulated lunch bag!



You can make a [donation online](#) or drop a check in the mail to:
RAMP-A-THON / Disability Network, 517 E. Crosstown Parkway, Kalamazoo, MI 49001

Special Thanks to our RAMP-A-THON corporate sponsors:

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Your RAMP-A-THON dollars at work: Meet Lynn

Lynn is a World War II veteran who lived at home with his sons until he had a stroke. Following his stroke, he was moved to a nursing facility and his family wasn't sure that he would be able to live at home again. Lynn is a big University of Michigan fan; every week he would host a family gathering at his house to watch the U of M game. His sons contacted Disability Network Southwest Michigan to inquire about having a ramp built on Lynn's house so that he could come home on the weekends and keep the family tradition going which was so important to Lynn.

Through our Ramp Up program, Disability Network partnered with Battle Creek Habitat for Humanity to build a ramp on Lynn's home, allowing Lynn to come home and spend quality time with his family.



Clear face masks assist many with communication

Face masks have become ubiquitous worldwide since the COVID-19 pandemic arrived. While they are a great aide to reducing the spread of germs and viruses, they create a problem for many people who are deaf or hard of hearing who rely on reading lips and facial expressions to communicate. COVID-19 has added distance between people as well as a reluctance to pass paper or electronic devices back and forth which puts even more emphasis on the need to read someone's lips and expressions when conversing, and face masks create a significant barrier to this.

In response, several companies have developed transparent face masks which allow people to view the person's mouth movements while they are speaking. Clear face masks are a form of assistive technology which help everyone with better communication.



Funds available for assistive technology

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 about ATLF, contact Leatrice Fullerton at fullertonl@dnswm.org or (269) 345-1516 x118.

New ways of “getting the job done” may open opportunities for people with disabilities

If there is a silver lining to experiencing a modern-day pandemic, it may be the shift in how people think about alternative ways people can work. With main-stream America (and the rest of the world for that matter) turning to a “work from home” environment, the traditional model of “office work” is being challenged. Disability Rights advocates are hopeful that this shift in thinking will have a positive effect on employment for people with disabilities who may need an accommodation, like remote work, to be successful in employment. Thinking outside the box of what the “workplace” is may pave the way for people with disabilities in the business world.

Our Publications:

The LINK is our quarterly newsletter, available in print or emailed in electronic format. And is available in alternative format upon request.

Disability Digest is a monthly e-publication 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.





Disability Network Southwest Michigan

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www.dnswm.org



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Community Education Online

Our Community Education programming will remain online through the summer. See information inside for details of Disability Rights programming through the month of July. Below is a list of Community Education events for August and September—look for details on our [website](#) for these events as they get closer.

August

- Webinar: [How to Make a Difference in Your Community](#)
- Webinar: [What to Do When an Employee Discloses a Disability](#)
- Web Movie: [Who Cares About Kelsey?](#)

September

- Web Movie: [Crip Camp](#)
- Webinar: [Ableism 101](#)
- Webinar: [Disability Language & Etiquette](#)



**Community
Education
Online**

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.