DISABILITY NETWORK OF MID-MICHIGAN

MARCH 2022 E-NEWSLETTER

**ARTICLE 1 – FEATHERS AND FEDORAS RETURNS**

**A Roaring 20s Gala**

On Saturday, Disability Network of Mid-Michigan hosted its annual fundraiser, Feathers and Fedoras at Horizons Conference Center in Saginaw. We are truly grateful for the support of those who attended and we were able to connect with many new faces. The challenges of 2021 led us to a virtual event, but when COVID numbers began to decline, we cautiously moved forward for this year’s event. Although attendance was just over half what it was in 2020, everyone had a roaring good time!  Classic gaming, music, and dancing consumed the evening, as we celebrated some great successes in our community with the help of our honorary chairs, Senator Ken and Veronica Horn. To add to the fun, we even added a few twists like a selfie contest, red-carpet photo booths, and 1920s era dance demonstrations.

Part of what made the evening so special is the overwhelming support received by the business community. I’d like to acknowledge the following businesses: Event Sponsor – Dow, Entertainment Sponsors – Garber Management Group, the Saginaw Spirit, Fabiano Brothers, and WSGW 100.5FM & &790AM, Auction Sponsors – Amigo Mobility Centers, DuPont, Michigan Sugar, Wildfire Credit Union, and Table Sponsors – BHS Insurance, Blasy Electric, Bill G. Schuette For State Representative, Chalgian & Tripp Law Offices, Gambrell & Associates, Gavin & Associates, the Great Lakes Loons, Horizon Bank, McCann Property Management, Servinski Sod Service, Shaheen Development, Three Rivers Corporation, and Warner Norcross & Judd.

Thank you to the following businesses for their in-kind contributions: Furlo Auction Service, Art Sample, Aster Michigan, Bavarian Inn Lodge, Bieri Hearing, Bronner’s Christmas Wonderland, Bucks Run Golf Course, Creative 360, Dance By Angela, Dow Gardens, Eastman Party Store, Greater Midland Community Centers, Grove Tea Lounge, The H Hotel, Ieuter Insurance Group, Maple Grille, Downtown Midland, Midland Center for the Arts, Midland Daily News, Northwood University, Outlyr Marketing, ReCreative Elements, Robert Spears Photography, Scientific Anglers, Tullymore and St. Ives Golf Clubs, Timbers Bar & Grill, University of Michigan Athletics, and Wines For Humanity.

As we plan for our spring and summer events, Disability Network will continue navigating the ever-changing landscape in the hopes we can get back to where we were pre-pandemic. We will continue working to create accessible and inclusive communities and we thank each of you who have supported these efforts.

If you would like to help us realize that vision and to make an impact in the lives of people with disabilities, you can make a donation by texting “DNMM” to 56651 or by visiting [www.dnmm.org/donate](https://urldefense.com/v3/__http%3A/www.dnmm.org/donate__;!!Ivohdkk!wmaBboJtz67fk9qNf_JJ469SpMbfkdnpn2KKZaRJ3U6Ewl-sesZsLqDQ-pI$).

Thank you again for supporting Disability Network of Mid-Michigan. We look forward to seeing you!

**ARTICLE 2 – WORKING FOR A JOB**

Bradley began working with Nora at DNMM two years ago. Among others, Bradley's goals were to finish high school and find a job so he began working on interviewing and other job-related skills. "He wanted to find his confidence and he wanted experience," said Nora. "He had the motivation to achieve the goals he set out for himself, he just needed a few supports along the way."

"He's discovered a passion for cooking," said Nora. "Bradley has gained experience through the Arenac Skills Center's Culinary Arts program and also his school's cafeteria. He even volunteered at a local restaurant just for the hands-on experience."

Bradley recently had a job interview with Meridian Public Schools. They offered him a co-op position and after finishing high school this spring, he'll be hired to work during the summer and for next school year. He has also Volunteered at a local restaurant to get some work experience.

"I've really seen Bradley come into his own these past two years," said Nora. "He is confident in himself, and has even taken on leadership roles by helping other students in his class. I look forward to seeing him on the job this summer."

**ARTICLE 3 - PLANNING FOR AN EMERGENCY**

Are you prepared to handle an emergency situation? Do you have a plan?

After the devastating floods in May of 2020, many Michigan residents faced the difficult challenge of trying to put the pieces of their lives back together. Many found themselves in the position of not having a plan for dealing with such an emergency.

DNMM is excited to once again offer MY3P (My Personal Protection Plan) - an emergency preparedness series that will help you Make a Plan, Build a Kit, and Be Informed.

Session dates and topics are:

* **Part Three - March 16  1:00-2:00pm**
"Advanced Care Directives"

All sessions are FREE of charge and will be conducted virtually on Zoom. Participants will be given flash drives with all the essential resources to customize their plan.

**Class size is limited so REGISTER TODAY!**

**ARTICLE 4 - It’s Tax Season – There Is Help Available**

Working American's making $64,000 or less are leaving money on the table every year during tax season. Many are unaware that they qualify for free tax preparation through United Way's MyFreeTaxes program.

"Only four in ten surveyed were aware of the Child Tax Credit (CTC)," shared a United Way official. "Fewer than six in ten know about the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and nearly 20% were not aware of any tax credits."

MyFreeTaxes is a free, safe, and easy way for anyone earning $64,000 or less to file their state and federal taxes.

Tax refunds help working Americans pay for everyday needs like food, housing and utilities along with providing a way to save for the future.

United Way also funds a tax assistance program at the Midland Community Center. They partner with AARP volunteers who provide on-site tax preparation for moderate- to low-income seniors and low-income individuals.

A free tax preparation program for local seniors and those with low to moderate-income.

Basic returns for seniors and those with low to moderate income.

Call to make an appointment. Leave your name and phone number and someone will call you back to schedule. No Walk-ins.

IRS trained volunteers will walk you through the process in two easy appointments

LOCATIONS

Greater Midland Community Center

(989) 832-7937 ext. 6

Click here to email GMCC for Tax Assistance

Greater Midland Coleman Family Center

(989) 465-2079

United Way of Saginaw County is once again offering free tax preparation services to individuals and families through its IRS-certified Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. Saginaw County residents can visit a VITA site to have their taxes prepared for free. Sites include Frankenmuth Credit Union (544 N. Main St., Frankenmuth) and at United Way's office (100 S. Jefferson Ave, Saginaw). The United Way of Saginaw County wants all individuals and families to move towards long term financial stability and independence.

VITA allows Saginaw County residents to process their returns efficiently and accurately at no cost to the taxpayer. Appointments are required. Call 2-1-1- to schedule. The United Way tax program is completely free of charge and returns will be e-filed with the IRS to provide a prompt refund without any fees.

Tax preparation assistance is offered through MidMichigan Community Action Agency in Clare and Gladwin Counties. Please call the office nearest you to schedule an appointment: Farwell: 989-386-3805 or Gladwin: 989-426-2801. Click here to view MMCAA Tax Assistance website.

The United Way of Bay County Tax Assistance and Filing for Low-Income Individuals, Families, Senior-Citizens, and Persons with Disabilities through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program. The program runs through April 15th. Call 2-1-1 to schedule an appointment.

**ARTICLE 5 – MARCH IS CEREBRAL PALSY AWARENESS DAY**

*"Embracing Life On Wheels"* by Jessica Grono

March is important and exciting for those of us with cerebral palsy because it’s Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month.

In March, we can educate, volunteer, and get to know others with CP. Green is the color for cerebral palsy awareness, so you should wear green on more than St. Patrick’s Day.

For the uninitiated, let’s shed some light on cerebral palsy. It’s a condition that affects movements of the limbs and overall body. With cerebral palsy, moving can appear to be stiff, jagged, or very active and sporadic. Moving in the right way, or right direction, can be challenging and take patience.

I like to compare having cerebral palsy with faulty wiring in a computer. You might hit Enter, but the computer thinks you’re hitting the Delete key. As you can guess, this is frustrating, but people with cerebral palsy can learn to adapt and lead normal lives.

There’s no cure for cerebral palsy yet. Some of those who have it use medications to help control muscles and relax. Physical, occupational, speech and water therapy are used to gain strength, be able to stretch, and improve overall quality of life.

Adults with cerebral palsy would benefit from these therapies, but unfortunately, they are expensive, even if covered under health insurance.

Cerebral palsy can’t fit into a one-size-fits-all box. There are several types of cerebral palsy. with many variations. No two people with the disability will have it in the exact same way.

Some cannot walk, while some can run. Some cannot speak, while some have the clearest speech you will ever hear. All patients are different, with unique personalities and different styles for choosing how to live, work, and be independent.

CerebralPalsy.org says over 700,000 people live with cerebral palsy. Among them, only a small percentage have intellectual and mental challenges as well as physical challenges.

Sadly, people in society tend to treat anyone with cerebral palsy as if they have an intellectual disability. The truth is that most people who have the condition have normal to above-average intelligence.

So what can you do for Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month? Whether you have cerebral palsy, know someone who has it, or don’t know anyone with it, there is always something you can do.

**ARTICLE 6 – 5 Women with Disabilities that Changed History**

**JILLIAN MERCADO**

Jillian Mercado is one of the first-ever signed models with a physical disability. When she started to consider modeling as her chosen career, she tried to find other models who used wheelchairs but had no luck. There barely any models with physical disabilities of any kind.

About six years ago, Mercado went to an open casting call that ended up changing her life and the modeling industry. She got hired for a Diesel Jeans ad campaign and was signed by IMG Models a year later. Since then, she has appeared in Beyoncé’s merchandise campaign for her Formation tour and starred in Target commercials.

**STELLA YOUNG**

Stella Young took over the media trying to normalize disability — she wrote articles, edited an online magazine, had her own comedy show and hosted Australia’s first disability culture TV show, No Limits. She even did a TEDx talk in 2014 called “I’m Not Your Inspiration, Thank You Very Much.”

With her TEDx talk, she opened up millions of people’s eyes and introduced the concept of “inspiration porn.” It’s when people see others with disabilities as “living, breathing feel-good memes” and as weird as it sounds, it’s not uncommon for someone with a disability to be told they’re an inspiration while they’re doing their daily routine.

**CLAUDIA GORDON**

Claudia Gordon is making changes in Washington, D.C., and is working with former President Obama to solve national disability issues. She has advocated for the deaf and disabled communities through all her work; Gordon has worked at the National Council on Disability, the National Coalition for Disability Rights and Homeland Security (where she worked on making sure the government has emergency preparedness plans in place for people with disabilities.) She currently works in the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs.

Claudia is the first black deaf lawyer in America and the first deaf student to graduate from American University’s law school.

**JUDY HEUMANN**

When Judy Heumann was sent home for being a “fire hazard” in elementary school, she realized how unfair the world can be and knew she needed to make a change. She ended up becoming the first wheelchair user to teach in New York City after the board of education initially denied her license. Heumann sued for discrimination when she found out she was only denied because of doubts she could help a student in an emergency or go to the bathroom by herself — she won and went on to teach for three years.

Judy became the U.S. assistant secretary of education for special education and rehabilitative services after teaching and now works for the State Department as a special advisor for international disability rights.

**Dr. Maya Angelou**

You may know her name, but what you probably didn’t know is that she grew up with a disability. That’s right! Dr. Maya Angelou, the author all of your favorite poems, had a hidden disability.

When she was a child, she was abused and sexually assaulted by her mother’s boyfriend. When she told someone about it, he was convicted, released and found dead. The trauma of being raped and thinking she caused her abuser’s death after she spoke up caused her to develop selective mutism (an anxiety disorder that causes a child to barely speak in certain situations.) For Angelou, this meant being completely silent for five years.

She was one of the most influential black women in history and turned her struggles into powerful life lessons. As a woman with a disability, I can’t thank Angelou and the rest of these women enough. They have impacted the life I now have and shown us that no matter what obstacles life may throw at you, you can’t give up. These women fought for the life they wanted and won. Now, let’s all follow their example and make our mark on the world.

**ARTICLE 7 – W**E CAN ANSWER YOUR MEDICARE/MEDICAID QUESTIONS

Do you need extra help paying for your Medicare Part D prescription plan?

Call us to see if you are eligible for the Low Income Subsidy for Medicare Prescription Drug coverage. Our certified MMAP Specialists can help you with screening questions and do the application over the phone in as little as 15 minutes!

Do you need help paying your Medicare premiums?

Call us today to see if you qualify for the Medicare Savings Program. We can assist you with checking your eligibility and doing the application over the phone.

Did you know that there are many preventative health and screening services included with your Medicare coverage?

Some of the things you may be eligible for include:

Screening:

* Diabetes
* Depression
* Lung cancer
* Prostate Cancer
* Testing and services:
* Nutrition Therapy
* Glaucoma
* Mammograms
* Tobacco Use cessation counseling

These are just some of the many services you could access. Call today for more information and a full list of preventative health benefits!

CALL US TODAY! WE'RE HERE FOR YOU!

1-800-782-4160

**ARTICLE 6 – The Spirit Is Back!**

As the leaves steadily fall and the air once again bites with that familiar chill, some folks long for the dog days of summer while others rejoice because hockey season has returned. And after a year-long absence during COVID, the return of our beloved Saginaw Spirit has never been more welcome.

DNMM is proud to be a small part of that return as a sponsor of accessible seating at the Dow Event Center. We look forward to working with the center and the Saginaw Spirit toward making hockey games and other events fully accessible. Come on out and enjoy a game with us! Catch the Spirit!

**ARTICLE 7 - STATEMENT OF INCLUSION**

At Disability Network of Mid-Michigan, inclusion is a universal human right for all people, regardless of race, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or any other discernible quality. To be inclusive is to promote a sense of belonging, respect, and value for who you are as a person. It is about equal access and opportunities for everyone. Inclusion is an integral part of our Independent Living philosophy and of our agency's vision of "Accessible and Inclusive communities that provide opportunities for individual choice."

In the twelve counties we serve in Mid-Michigan, Disability Network offices have been, and continue to be, places of solace, understanding, and information for all. We are committed to promoting and protecting diversity and inclusion, within our offices, among our community partners, and throughout the 15 Centers for Independent Living in Michigan.

**ARTICLE 8 – STATEMENT OF ACCESSIBILTY**

DNMM advocates for the removal of barriers to independence and full inclusion of people with disabilities throughout the Mid-Michigan area. DNMM pledges to ensure accessibility. Each year, DNMM conducts a review of its own architectural, environmental, attitudinal, employment, communication, transportation, and other barriers that may exist which prohibit full access to our services.

 If you have any issues of concern regarding the accessibility of DNMM services and facilities, we encourage you to share that information with us.

 Please send your concerns or suggestions to:

Executive Director
Disability Network of Mid-Michigan
1705 S. Saginaw Road
Midland, MI 48640