DISABILITY NETWORK OF MID-MICHIGAN

 April 2021 NEWSLETTER

**ARTICLE 1 – April is Child Abuse Prevention Month**

DNMM staff put together this photo collage, sharing a message of hope in recognition of Child Abuse Prevention month.

IMAGE DESCRIPTION: collage of 28 dnmm staff members each wearing blue and holding one word of the poem

The quote is from The Hill We Climb by Youth Poet Laureate Amanda Gorman.

"The new dawn blooms as we free it,

For there is always light;

If only we're brave enough to see it,

If only we're brave enough to be it."

DNMM invites you to join us in wearing blue each Monday in April and by placing a blue pinwheel in your yard as a reminder that all children deserve a happy and safe childhood.

Help protect Michigan children by visiting www.michigan.gov/ctf for more information on how to help.

**ARTICLE 2 -** Join us for a discussion: Children’s Therapeutic Foster Care and Serious Emotional Disturbance Waiver

Do you have questions about resources to support youth with mental health needs in your home?

Are you a parent, guardian or caregiver of someone in need of psychiatric supports?

Are you interested in becoming a foster care provider?

DNMM will be hosting an expert from Community Mental Health to discuss the Serious Emotional Disturbance Waiver & Children's Therapeutic Foster Care. And we hope you'll join us.

If you are interested, we invite you to join our meeting on Tuesday, April 20th at 2:15pm. The meeting will be held over Zoom. Please click here if you wish to participate in the meeting.

**ARTICLE 3 - April and Autism Acceptance Month**

The Autism Society of America, along with leading disability organizations across the country, recently announced that it is formally shifting references of "Autism Awareness Month" to "Autism Acceptance Month" and is calling on the media to reflect this in their ongoing coverage.

April has widely been known as "Autism Awareness Month" in the United States as a way to empower autistic individuals and their families. Today, the autism community is calling on all media outlets to shift their language to match the growing need for acceptance within the community in preparation for any news coverage in the weeks ahead.

The shift in the use of terminology aims to foster acceptance to ignite change through improved support and opportunities in education, employment, accessible housing, affordable health care and comprehensive long-term services.

"While we will always work to spread awareness, words matter as we strive for autistic individuals to live fully in all areas of life," says Christopher Banks, President and CEO of the Autism Society of America. "As many individuals and families affected by autism know, acceptance is often one of the biggest barriers to finding and developing a strong support system."

Autism community advocates across the country have a long-standing history of using the term "acceptance" as a means of more fully integrating those 1 in every 54 Americans living with autism into our social fabric. The Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN) has been framing April as Autism Acceptance Month since 2011, stating "Acceptance of autism as a natural condition in the human experience is necessary for real dialogue to occur."

Other groups that have been using 'acceptance' through the month of April include the Administration for Community Living, Association of University Centers on Disabilities, Autistic Women and Non-Binary Network, Easter Seals, First Place AZ, National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD), and The Arc.

There has never been a formal designation for the month, regardless of terminology. Therefore, as part of this shift, the Autism Society of America is leading a significant effort for the federal government to officially designate April as "Autism Acceptance Month."

This will coincide with their campaign to #CelebrateDifferences, which encourages individuals with autism and their families to live full, quality lives through connection and acceptance.

**ARTICLE 4 - Virtual Peer Group Events**

Special Wednesday Events:

April 7th - 12-1pm

“Prepare to Advocate” - Tell your story

April 21st – 12-1pm

“Simon Says” – Come play the classic game

April 14th and 28th - 12-1pm

"Healthy Communication"!

Learn together to communicate over email, text and in person in a better way. Share your experiences with everyone.

Spring Fling Dance – Thursday, April 15th – 7:00-8:30pm

Come out and get your groove on! Meet up with friends virtually for some dancing and socializing! Show off your dance moves. Maybe even meet some new friends! [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER FOR THE DANCE](http://www.dnmm.org/dance)!

Standard Events:

 “Just Dance!” Mondays at 11:00 a m

"Social Lunch" Tuesdays - 11:30am - 1:30pm

Grab a bite to eat and join us for a friendly chat about whatever topics you want. A chance to get together - virtually - and hang out for a while!

"Amazing Women" Group - Tuesdays from 3:00 - 4:30pm

Women need to talk to each other! Here is a chance to get on and share your day, ask each other what they think about something or share your experiences with other peers. Come join us twice a month to talk and hang out!

"Bingo!" Wednesdays – 3:00 pm Just a little friendly competition!

 "ACTIVITY GROUP" Thursdays - 2:00pm

April Activities include: a virtual demo on making chocolate chip cookies, a virtual tour on how chocolate is made and where it comes from, and a fun Karaoke day!

"MOVIE MATINEE" Mondays and Fridays - 1:00pm

Pop some popcorn and join your peers for an afternoon at the movies! Classic 80s comedies, recent Pixar classics, always something fun! April selections include: Guardians of the Galaxy, Luca, Riding the Bus with My Sister, and Wonder.

**ARTICLE 5 – Covid relief program for independent living needs**

Do you know someone with a disability who lost a job due to COVID-19 closures and is struggling to make ends meet?

Is someone with a disability feeling isolated due to a lack of access to technology and/or the internet?

Is someone with a disability experiencing poor health due to lack of food or access to telehealth visits?

Is someone at risk of going to a nursing facility or is someone currently in a nursing facility needing assistance to go back home.

Does someone with a disability need safe, accessible, and affordable transportation to a COVID-19 testing or vaccination site

Disability Network of Mid-Michigan has received funding to assist individuals with disabilities facing hardships due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Funding is designed to assist with life-sustaining, emergency relief in the form of food and utility assistance, assistive technology to prevent social isolation, or help with rent payments.

For more information, contact our Information and Referral Department. 1-800-782-4160.

Funding is limited and requests are considered on case-by-case basis.

Did we mention the new one-on-one video chat capability? Yep, that too! It's all online so [click here to register for all the fun](https://reg.unityeventsolutions.com/se/ABILITIESV32021/ATT/EN/Process.aspx?ut_SGU=EC4FB0B2-42AA-4784-B119-DA014076A54E&ut_CST=587DC67B-5BB4-4C8A-8640-0A22306FEEF3&utm_campaign=ve3-Mar2021-preshow1&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_source=email). Don't forget to tell your friends!

**ARTICLE 6 - World Parkinson’s Day**

April 11 is World Parkinson's Day, and a moment in time to come together to raise awareness and advance research toward better therapies and a cure for Parkinson's disease.

Right now, more than ever, we have an opportunity to make real strides toward our shared goal. In fact, there are many ways you can make a difference and form meaningful connections without leaving home:

Living in the Moment When the Moment is Unprecedented: The Michael J. Fox Foundation is hosting an upcoming webinar on April 16 that will offer strategies, including mindfulness and meditation, to care for yourself and your loved ones while living with Parkinson's in a time of uncertainty. Click here to register now.

Weekly Facebook Watch Parties: Join the Michael J. Fox Foundation for a shared viewing experience of new films and some favorites from their archives. Like, comment, and react in real time. Click here to view a watch party.

While this World Parkinson's Day looks different, it's clear that action we take today to lift each other up, exchange ideas and stay engaged will work to our advantage when it comes to ending Parkinson's for good.

**ARTICLE 7 – MEDICARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

WE 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. We 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 8–**  TAX ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Greater Midland Community Centers, in partnership with AARP, is offering the Tax Assistance Program for 2021. Even though it will look a little different this year, this is an important opportunity for those that qualify and need tax assistance.

The program is primarily for seniors (age 55 and over) with low to moderate income and those with disabilities.

Services will be offered on Thursdays and Fridays through April 9th. Free tax preparation is provided in the Barstow Shipps Wing of the Midland Community Center from 8:00 am to 4pm. Qualified people can begin calling the Community Center at 832-7937, then press 6 or email taxhelp@greatermidland.org for their initial tax client appointment. Tax preparation will be virtual and social distancing will be enforced.

SAGINAW TAX ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program is offered at the following locations:

Frankenmuth Credit Union, 544 N. Main St., Frankenmuth. Call 211 for dates and times.

United Way of Saginaw County, 100 S. Jefferson Ave., Saginaw. Call direct to schedule appointment (989-326-5290).

PLEASE CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION ON SAGINAW ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.

BAY COUTY TAX ASSISTANCE

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program is a FREE income tax return assistance program available to those in the ALICE population or below, senior citizens, individuals with disabilities or retired veterans. The program has been provided by United Way of Bay County for over 12 years and has proven to bring money back to the residents of Bay County through millions of dollars in tax credits and refunds. For information, please call 989.893.7508.

**ARTICLE 9 - 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 10 – 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
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Midland, MI 48640