DISABILITY NETWORK OF MID-MICHIGAN

OCTOBER 2021 E-NEWSLETTER

**ARTICLE 1 –** National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Today, Disability Network of Mid-Michigan announced its participation in National Disability Employment Awareness Month, an annual awareness campaign that takes place each October. The purpose of National Disability Employment Awareness Month is to educate about disability employment issues and celebrate the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities. This year's theme is "America’s Recovery: Powered by Inclusion"

The history of National Disability Employment Awareness Month traces back to 1945 when Congress enacted a law declaring the first week in October each year "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week." In 1962, the word "physically" was removed to acknowledge the employment needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities. In 1988, Congress expanded the week to a month and changed the name to National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

“Our national recovery from the pandemic cannot be completed without the inclusion of all Americans, in particular people with disabilities,” said U.S. Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh. “Their contributions have historically been vital to our nation’s success, and are more important today than ever. We must build an economy that fully includes the talent and drive of those with disabilities.”

Reflecting this year's theme, throughout the month, DNMM will be showcasing employment success stories on behalf of the individuals they serve and they will be providing information on how area businesses can foster a disability-friendly workplace.

"People with disabilities are experienced problem solvers with a proven ability to adapt," said DNMM Executive Director Kelly PeLong. " As we emerge from the pandemic, flexibility remains important for both workers and employers. National Disability Employment Awareness Month celebrates the ingenuity people with disabilities bring to America’s workplaces. As we celebrate NDEAM and as we continue down the road to recovery, DNMM will spread the important message that a strong workforce is one inclusive of the skills and talents of all individuals, including individuals with disabilities.”

Employers and employees in all industries can learn more about how to participate in National Disability Employment Awareness Month and ways they can promote its messages — during October and throughout the year — by visiting www.dol.gov/NDEAM.

**ARTICLE 2 – TIME TO COOK: Building Independent Living Skills**

Being able to live independently takes a wide range of skills. One of DNMM's fundamental services is assisting people with disabilities in developing those skills. And one of the fundamental independent living skills is being able to prepare meals. So when an opportunity came to provide fifty people with an appliance to help with cooking, we jumped at the chance.

DNMM purchased 50 rice cookers and presented them to individuals in our STAGES Youth Program and our Peer Support program. Rice cookers were chosen due to their value, their versatility, and their convenience in terms of accessibility.

Three two-hour cooking classes have been held over the past few weeks. The peers decided what they wanted to cook and then recipes and shopping lists were sent out to all participants. Everything from spaghetti, macaroni and cheese, to oatmeal, frittatas, chili, and cakes. As part of the cooking classes, DNMM staff demonstrated several assistive technology devices used in the kitchen such as rocker knives, guided-cutting boards and more.

The participants have enjoyed the classes and are already begging for more. We look forward to incorporating more demonstrations and cooking demos with each group as part of their programs' on-going activities.

**ARTICLE 3 – ADAPTIVE COSTUMES: Creative Ideas For Halloween**

Halloween is just around the corner and it can be difficult to find a costume that can be adapted for a person with a disability. If you are looking for a way to help your child with a costume, a little internet searching and a little creativity is all it takes to make Trick-Or-Treating accessible for all.

Take a look at the videos below for some costume ideas and some potential contacts.

[Click here to view a blog with lots of costume ideas!](https://www.180medical.com/blog/adaptive-halloween-costumes/)

[Click here to view ideas from AbilityTools.org](https://abilitytools.org/blog/happy-halloween-creative-costume-ideas-for-people-that-use-a-wheelchair/)

Whether you purchase an adaptive costume or make it yourself, we encourage you to share photos of the final product with us. We'll post your creations on our Facebook and Instagram sites and one lucky Trick-or-Treater will receive a $50 gift card or their choice!

This week, we're showcasing our information and referral program. Our I&R team can connect with you resources to help you access your community and so much more.

We'd love to have you share with us an example of a resource that helps you access your community: from bus tickets to assistive technology devices! If you share a photo, you'll have a chance to win a $50 gift card of your choice! Let's have some fun as we celebrate Loons Baseball and efforts to make our communities accessible and inclusive!

**ARTICLE 4 - HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH**

Each year, Americans observe National Hispanic Heritage Month by celebrating the histories, cultures and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America.

The observation started in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week under President Lyndon Johnson and was expanded by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 to cover a 30-day period starting on September 15 and ending on October 15.

57.5 million people or 18% of the American population are of Hispanic or Latino origin. Hispanics have had a profound and positive influence on our country through their strong commitment to family, faith, hard work, and service. This influence is as varied as their people; from politics to pop-culture, from athletics to cuisine, from commerce to charity, and from literature to the silver screen. They have enhanced and shaped our national character with centuries-old traditions that reflect the multi-ethnic and multicultural customs of their communities.

**ARTICLE 5 - My Personal Protection Plan**

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

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

The seminars take place on the third Wednesday of each month starting this October 20th. Topics Include:

"Creating My Action Plans and Support Network"

"Creating My Go Kit and Evacuation Plan + Assistive Technology For Your Go Kit"

"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!

[**Click here to register for the MY3P Seminar**](http://www.dnmm.org/my3p)**.**

**ARTICLE 6 - 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 7 – SAVE THE DATE FOR FEATHERS AND FEDORAS

Feathers and Fedoras is back an IN PERSON!

Saturday, February 12 from 6-11pm.

NEW LOCATION! Horizon Conference Center, Saginaw, Michigan

For more information, please visit www.dnmm.org/faf

**ARTICLE 8 - 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 9 – 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