DISABILITY NETWORK OF MID-MICHIGAN

March 2021 NEWSLETTER

**ARTICLE 1 – FEATHERS AND FEDORAS A VIRTUAL SUCCESS**

On Saturday, February 13, a virtual community of supporters logged on for our fifth annual Feathers and Fedoras fundraiser. The event, hosted virtually due to COVID-19 concerns, by honorary chairs Shauna and Paul Barbeau, featured a 45-minute presentation on DNMM services, a virtual live and silent auction, and a virtual casino.

Proceeds from the event benefited DNMM programs that assist young people with disabilities in building the necessary skills to live independently, individuals in rural areas in gaining access to disability resources, and people living in nursing homes in gaining knowledge and support to move back to their communities where they can live self-determined lives.

"COVID has demonstrated, perhaps now more than ever, the crucial need to support the independent living programs and core services we have built together over the past 30 years," said DNMM Executive Director Kelly PeLong. "People living in nursing homes have been subject to higher risks of contracting COVID, often without means or options to transition into community-based living arrangements. People with disabilities have not been able to gather with their peers or their peer mentors to enjoy Michigan's outdoors or to attend community events. Participants in our summer STAGES skill-building programs have not been able to tour local businesses or to gather together for confidence building exercises. And the need for access to information and community services has never been greater."

"The success of Feathers and Fedoras is due to a community of dedicated and diverse individuals," added PeLong. "From our corporate sponsors and champions throughout the Great Lakes Bay Region, to our passionate board, staff, and volunteers, we are working together to create accessible and inclusive communities where all people can fully participate and belong."

This year's event was even more successful due to a generous grant from the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Memorial Foundation. They provided a match of all donations up to $50,000.

Your support goes even further and there is still time to donate! Log on to www dot d n m m dot org slash donate to support Disability Network of Mid-Michigan!

And Thank You To Our Sponsors:

PRESENTING SPONSORS: Dow and Dupont.

EVENT SPONSORS: Garber Management Group, Michigan Sugar, Warner-Norcross-and-Judd, Bierlein Companies, Gavin & Associates, Gambrell and Associates, Fabiano Brothers, Spence Brothers, Great Lakes Bay Construction, Servinski Sod Service, Yeo and Yeo CPAs, QRP, Image Works, Midland Daily News, 1st State Bank, Isabella Bank, and the Great Lakes Bay Invitational.

**ARTICLE 2 -** MARCH is WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH: A Timeline of Women’s Disability Activism

Since March is Women's History Month, we felt it apropos to highlight women and their contributions to the disability rights movement. In 2017, Whitney Lew James of Texas Christian University compiled a timeline showcasing major women disability rights activists in the United States. Beginning with Elizabeth Packard's campaign for asylum inmate rights in 1869 and concluding with the recent women's Disability March on January 21, 2017, this timeline focuses on activism by women with disabilities for women with disabilities.

From Ms. James' introduction:

Physical, intellectual, and emotional difference is a fact of life. Whether the product of genetics, as with muscular dystrophy or down syndrome; illnesses, like multiple sclerosis or polio; life experience, such as injury or abuse; or simply the process of aging, every person will or has encountered disability. For this reason, disability scholars often argue that we are all temporarily able-bodied (TABs) and that the disabled community is the largest and most diverse minority in the world. In many ways, the experience of disability is something that unites us. However, due to cultural fear and misunderstanding, disability has historically been used to divide, discriminate, and oppress.

The history of disability activism is the topic of this timeline and project; in particular, I look at women's disability activists because women with disabilities are double subjugated due to their gender and ability making their lived experiences and their advocacy work more difficult to trace. Rejecting the notions that disabled individuals are less than, in need of cures and savior, and victims that should be pitied, the Women's Disability Activism timeline focuses on women with disabilities engaging in self- and communal-activism. While there is a complicated history of the non-disabled advocating on behalf of or with disabled communities, since the Independent Living Movement of the 1970s, disability activism has been driven by disabled activists.

The Women's Disability Activism timeline seeks to expand our knowledge of women's disability activism by looking at key figures, their arguments for disability and women's rights, and the connections among activists.

[PLEASE CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE TIMELINE AND THE ARTICLE BY WHITNEY LEW JAMES](http://whitneylewjames.com/disability-activism/).

**ARTICLE 3 - Virtual Peer Group Events**

New Event: Wednesday, March 24th - 12-1pm

"Prepare to Advocate"

Prepare for Legislative Day, meeting with legislators

Wed March 17th and 31st -  12-1pm

"Healthy Communication"!

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

St. Patrick’s Day Dance – Wednesday, March 17th – 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

March Activities include: Making "Green Food" for St. Pat's Day, A Virtual Tour - "Zoo Day," A Special Bingo day, and Easter Egg Dyeing.

"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! March selections include: Flora and Ulysses, The Seeker: The Dark is Rising, A Dog's Way Home, and Hop

**ARTICLE 5 – ABILITIES VIRTUAL IS BACK!**

PHOTO: Abilities virtual experience best way to boost independence without leaving the house

The ABILITIES VIRTUAL Experience is scheduled for March 26 and 27. Registration is FREE so sign up today to learn about innovative products and services and to attend virtual workshops and adaptive activities.

If you joined last time, you'll love this...legendary emcee Paul Amadeus Lane will be your host again! And we have a stellar new product section to help you find the tech or services to meet your needs.

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–**  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 a 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, disabled individuals 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 7 - VOICES FROM THE INSIDE:

Living in a Long-Term Care Facility During COVID

It's been almost one year since nursing homes shut their doors on March 13, 2020. DNMM joins the National Consumer Voice For Long-Term Care in marking the one-year anniversary by remembering residents whose lives have been lost, and participating in an advocacy campaign to open nursing home doors.

VIDEO LINK PREVIEW:

Voices from the Inside: What It's Like to Live in a Long-Term Care Facility During COVID-19 Pandemic

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

A Virtual Rally to Lift the Lockdown

Friday, March 12, 2021 at 12:00pm

Join Consumer Voice for a rally commemorating the one-year anniversary of the nursing home visitation ban. The rally will honor those we’ve lost and provide an opportunity to hear directly from residents and family members about their experiences during the lockdown. It will include a call to action - mobilizing family members, residents of long-term care, and advocates to ask their state and federal policymakers and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to safely "open nursing home doors."

[Click here to register for the Virtual Rally](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_mUxMMbU9QIq-jye2bzrtAw).

[Click here for more information from the Consumer Voice website](https://theconsumervoice.org/issues/other-issues-and-resources/covid-19/open-doors).

**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