DNMM Text-Only Newsletter – September 2024

**Article 1: It’s Okay to Talk About Suicide**

September is Suicide Prevention Month – a time to raise awareness, spread hope and share vital information.

Among those who die by suicide, 46% have a diagnosed mental health condition, but research suggests that 90% may have experienced symptoms of a mental health condition. If you or a loved one need support services, contact us at (989) 835-4041 or info@dnmm.org.

**Article 2: 51st Anniversary of the Rehabilitation Act**

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a landmark civil rights law prohibiting disability discrimination in the activities of the federal government.

The passing of this historic legislation laid the groundwork for advancing equity, access, and inclusion for people with disabilities in programs conducted by federal agencies, programs receiving federal financial assistance, in federal employment, and in employment practices of federal contractors. It also laid the foundation for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, which prohibit disability discrimination beyond the federal government, guaranteeing individuals with disabilities equal opportunity and full participation in many areas of everyday life.

Disability Network Mid-Michigan is committed to combat discrimination and fight for equal opportunities for individuals with disabilities. To learn more about how we do this, or our services, contact us at 989-835-4041 or info@dnmm.org.

**Article 3: Saginaw Spirit Kick-Off 2024-2025 Season**

The Saginaw Spirit home opener is on September 25th at the Dow Event Center, just a few months after winning the Memorial Cup on home ice, and Disability Network Mid-Michigan will be there!

We are proud to once again sponsor accessible seating at the Dow Event Center and we look forward to working with them to make hockey games, and other events, more accessible.

[Visit us online](https://www.dnmm.org/) to learn more about what we have to offer!

**Article 4: Disability Awareness Literacy Program**

Disability Network Mid-Michigan is collaborating with local groups to promote awareness and education to break stigmas about people with disabilities.​

“Our goal is to start conversations about disabilities with children at a young age. We hope to get students thinking about disability as being a natural part of the human condition, to teach acceptance and inclusion, and to increase thinking about diversity,” said Kelly PeLong, DNMM Executive Director.

Each Child & Classroom Receives:

* A book highlighting a disability topic and featuring individuals who have a disability
* A packet of activities related to the book
* A volunteer to read to your class
* Books donated to your school library
* A book for every student to keep

Call [989-835-4041](tel:989-835-4041) or [fill out this form to sign up your classroom](https://www.dnmm.org/disability-awareness-literacy-program/#book-signup)

**Article 5: Let’s Celebrate Direct Support Professionals**

Direct Support Professional (DSP) Recognition Week is a week-long celebration of the direct support workforce that supports people with disabilities. This year, it takes place from September 8 – 14.

This week is the perfect opportunity to highlight the dedicated direct support workforce and the often unsung work of these incredible professionals. It’s also a time to show your support for fair wages and benefits – direct care workers in Michigan bring home very small paychecks, and often have no medical or other benefits. Let’s recognize and pay these caregivers like the heroes that they are. Learn more at www.dcwmichigan.org

**Article 6: Join Us in September**

Join us throughout the month of September at the following events and meet new people, be a part of the community and learn about what Disability Network Mid-Michigan offers!

Project Community Connect Midland

Trinity Lutheran Church. 3701 Jefferson Avenue in Midland

September 5 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Community resource fair that links people with services, like childcare, education, employment, health, housing, food and utilities.

Wild about Families!

Deep River Township Hall in Sterling

September 10 from 5 to 6:30 p.m.

Family networking event for Arenac County families with children ages pregnancy to 5, with food, fun and prizes.

Rockn’ for Hope Music Fest

Irons Park in West Branch

September 14, 1 to 5 p.m.

An afternoon of music in the park to raise awareness for suicide prevention. Free hot dogs, chips, water and apples.

Mridha International Institute of Peace and Happiness Peace Walk & Expo

Montague Inn, 1581 S. Washington Avenue in Saginaw

September 21 at 2 p.m.

Features live music, food trucks, activities and participation from local organizations that contribute to a peaceful community.

**Article 7: Disability Etiquette Tips**

One in four Americans live with a disability that affects their daily life. By following a few simple guidelines, we can all help make welcoming spaces where everyone is included.

To celebrate National Spinal Cord Injury Month, the United Spinal Association has published a Disability Etiquette Guide that you can download.

<https://form.jotform.com/240184992129058>

**Article 8: We would like to welcome two new board members and thank them for their time supporting DNMM.**

Lisa Berrie

Dow–Senior R&D Leader

Disability Advocate

Lisa Berrie works for Dow as a leader in Research & Development where she is responsible for technical strategy, budget management, and the individual development of her team members. Lisa is deeply passionate about inclusion and doing what she can to enable those around her to thrive. She is a Midland focal point for Dow’s Disability Employee Network and has supported training, advocacy, and acquisition of resources for local organizations. Lisa has also been an active literacy tutor with The Legacy Center since 2020. These experiences have deepened her passion for supporting and enabling others. In her spare time, Lisa enjoys reading and traveling with her husband.

Eric Olgaard

Saginaw Spirit

Disability Advocate

Eric Olgaard is a native of Bay City, MI and works for the Saginaw Spirit Hockey Club as the Director of Corporate Partnerships and Group Sales. Prior to joining the Spirit, he served as the Director of Ticket Sales for the Chicago Steel Hockey Team in Geneva, IL. Eric joined the Board of Directors in 2024, and is a strong proponent of disability awareness and advocacy as he has lived with Spina Bifida from birth and Type 1 Diabetes in adulthood. Eric and his wife Brittney reside in Saginaw with their cat, Olaf.

**Article 9: Statement of Inclusion**

Inclusion is a universal human right for all people, regardless of race, age, 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.

DNMM 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: Accessibility Statement**

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 that prohibit full access to our services.

If you have any issues or concerns 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 Mid-Michigan

1705 S. Saginaw Road

Midland, MI 48640

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Disability Network Mid-Michigan provides services in Alcona, Arenac, Bay, Clare, Gladwin, Gratiot, Iosco, Isabella, Midland, Ogemaw, Roscommon, and Saginaw counties.

989-835-4041

dnmm.org

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