DNMM Text-Only Newsletter – January 2025

SUBJECT LINE:

**Article 1: World Braille Day – January 4**

January 4th is World Braille Day, which is the birthday of the inventor of this tactile reading and writing system, Louis Braille. It is a day to celebrate the importance of accessibility and independence for people who are blind or visually impaired. It provides the opportunity for literacy to millions of people around the world.

You can help raise awareness by offering your documents in accessible formats like Braille. To learn more about accessible digital documents, visit <https://brailleworks.com/accessible-documents/>

If you need help making your business accessible with Braille or some other functionality, contact us for a consultation!

**Article 2: If You Are Working and Have a Disability, You May Qualify for PASREP**

Are you employed but struggling to make ends meet? Is the cost of personal assistance a barrier to your employment? PASREP can help!

If you have a significant disability, pay out-of-pocket for personal assistance, and work at least 24 hours per week you might be eligible for PASREP.

The Personal Assistance Services Reimbursement Employment Program (PASREP) is a statewide initiative in Michigan that reimburses eligible individuals with disabilities for personal assistance costs required to gain or maintain employment. These individuals could not continue to work without personal care assistance. PASREP helps individuals maintain their employment, enhancing their quality of life and fostering independence.

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By covering out-of-pocket personal assistance costs, PASREP helps eliminate barriers to returning to work, helping to offset lost benefits. Recipients of PASREP can receive reimbursements for personal assistance services up to $1,000 each month.

[Apply Online Now](https://www.dnmm.org/pasrep)

**Article 3: Celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr.**

On November 2, 1983, the King Holiday Bill was signed into law, designating the third Monday in January as a federal holiday in observance of civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The legislation to recognize Martin Luther King Jr. Day was first introduced just four days after his assassination on April 4, 1968, but it would take 15 years of persistence by civil rights activists for the holiday to be approved by the federal government and an additional 17 years for it to be recognized in all 50 states.

Today, it is the only federal holiday designated as a national day of service to encourage all Americans to find common causes, volunteer, and improve their communities.

**Article 4: Welcoming Our New Board Member**

Shannon Zilska is from Auburn and has been a wheelchair user for over 20 years due to a motor vehicle accident during her senior year of high school. She has contributed to injury prevention in schools through the Think First program, served as a peer mentor for individuals who have sustained spinal cord injuries and advocated for others with disabilities. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her family, being outdoors, and camping with her husband and son. She is thoroughly enjoying her boy-mom era.

**Article 5: Ed Roberts Day – January 23rd**

Ed Roberts is often celebrated as “the father of the Independent Living Movement” because of his unwavering commitment to advocating for disability rights. Despite being paralyzed from the neck down since childhood, he started fighting for his rights early on when his high school threatened to withhold his diploma for not completing driver’s education and physical education.

Ed continued his journey at the University of California–Berkeley, where his advocacy truly blossomed. He rallied fellow students with disabilities to form a group called the “Rolling Quads.” Their impactful work on campus inspired them to extend their advocacy into the wider community, eventually leading to the founding of the Berkeley Center for Independent Living (CIL) – the very first independent living service and advocacy program created by and for people with disabilities.

Today, advocacy remains the heartbeat of the Independent Living Movement. Centers for Independent Living across the country proudly embrace the motto, “Nothing about us, without us,” highlighting the essential idea that people with disabilities must be included in discussions and policies that affect their lives.

As a federally funded Center for Independent Living (CIL), Disability Network Mid-Michigan works to eliminate barriers and create accessible and inclusive communities.

**Article 6: Stay Active**

More than 1 in 4 U.S. adults 18 – 64 years of age has a disability. These are adults with serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs, hearing, seeing, or concentrating. And, adults with disabilities are **three times** more likely to have heart disease, stroke, diabetes, or cancer than adults without disabilities. Aerobic physical activity can help reduce the impact of these chronic diseases, yet nearly half of all adults with disabilities get no leisure time aerobic physical activity.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that daily moderate physical activity can provide significant health benefits. For people with disabilities, they recommend 30-40 minutes of moderately intense activity, or 20 minutes of strenuous activity, every day. People with disabilities who regularly exercise experience physical, mental and emotional benefits.

Join us for some physical activities! Check out our events calendar and come dance, walk, or go bowling with us, or sign up for REV Up Your Morning with Alicia for 30 minutes of stretching and light chair exercise via a virtual link. Check out our calendar of events here:

https://www.dnmm.org/events-calendar/month/2025-01/

**Article 7: Representative O’Neal’s Town Hall**

Join us for a conversation on post-election themes and a discussion for a collective path forward.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Amos O'Neal

With Special Guest:

SECRETARY OF STATE

Jocelyn Benson

Tuesday • January 7

5:30 to 7 P.M.

Buena Vista Community Center

1940 S. Outer Drive • Saginaw

For more information

<https://www.facebook.com/share/18EpPf6mj9/>

**Article 8: National Mentoring Month**

January is National Mentoring Month, and we’re excited to shine a light on the powerful impacts of mentoring and raise awareness around the vital importance of empowering people through nurturing relationships.

January is packed with special days that highlight the essential aspects of the mentoring movement, bringing mentorship to the forefront through joyful celebration.

* 1/7: I Am A Mentor Day
* 1/14: Thank Your Mentor Day
* 1/17: International Mentoring Day
* 1/20: Dr. Martin Luther King Day of Service
* 1/23: Youth Voice Day
* 1/27: Thank Your Mentee Day
* 1/29: Capitol Hill Day

Take a moment to think of everyone who helped guide your path and remember to thank your mentor and mentee. Pay it forward and start your new year with a sense of purpose.

To learn more about mentoring opportunities with Disability Network Mid-Michigan, contact us (button?)

**Article 9: Saginaw Community Foundation Symposium 25**

This symposium is designed to ignite lasting change. By bringing together diverse voices and perspectives, we aim to:

Inspire: Explore innovative strategies and best practices for fostering belonging and understanding.

Empower: Equip attendees with the knowledge and tools to drive meaningful change within their local communities.

Collaborate: Build a strong community of like-minded individuals committed to advancing inclusion and diversity.

Act: Encourage participants to translate ideas into action through tangible initiatives and measurable outcomes.

Date:

Wednesday, January 29, 2025

Location:

Saginaw Valley State University Curtiss Hall

7400 Bay Rd., University Center, MI 48710

Time:

8 A.M. – 5 P.M. (Reception to follow)

Explore 16 Exciting Workshops

Register Now $30/person

https://form.jotform.com/243183757031152

More Information:

https://saginawfoundation.org/symposium25/

**Article 10: 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 11: 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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