

# COMMUNICABILITY



A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR OUR DISABILITY COMMUNITY

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"Sometimes we have the dream but we are not ourselves ready for the dream. We have to grow to meet it."

☞ Louis L'Amour ☞  
Author

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**New Horizons Un-Limited Inc. (NHU)** is a non-profit organization based in Milwaukee with a mission to make information and life experiences more accessible to people with lifelong disabilities, their families and caregivers. To learn more about our mission and activities, please visit the NHU website at [www.new-horizons.org](http://www.new-horizons.org).

*If you do not have access to the Internet and cannot visit the websites listed in this newsletter, please contact New Horizons Un-Limited directly at (414) 299-0124 and we would be happy to mail you the information available online.*

## Employment 101

### ***In a tough economy employment preparation is key***

As news of layoffs and job cuts continues to splash across our television screens it is easy to become discouraged at the thought of finding employment. Do not let this news discourage you - the economy will recover. What's more, millions of baby-boomers are set to retire in the very near future - making your future employment prospects better than ever.

Now is the time to do a little soul searching. What is your dream job? What do you need to do to win that job? Now is the time to perfect your skills (or gain new ones), fine tune (or create) your resume, and practice your interviewing skills.

Your time will come. Make sure that you are ready to go when it does! Following are a few things you can do now to ensure that you will reach your goal of employment.

### **Improve Your Computer Skills**

Many jobs now require the use of a computer. Beyond the obvious benefits, learning how to use a computer can help you improve your critical thinking skills, which will prove useful in both your personal and professional life.

Check out your local library or technical college for low cost, if not free computer training. Or, if you have a computer at home, check out the FREE online classes offered by GCF Learn Free. You can learn at your own pace and have the benefit of an instructor that is available via a private message board. After successfully completing the training, you will earn Continuing Education Credits and a Certificate of Completion.

Classes are being offered in Microsoft Access (database), Power Point (presentation), Excel (spreadsheet), and Word (word processing), among others. To participate, you must have these programs installed on your computer. To learn more, visit [www.gcflearnfree.org/classes](http://www.gcflearnfree.org/classes).

### **Gain Experience Through Volunteer Work**

Volunteer work will show potential employers, that you have continued to use and improve your skills despite your unemployment. Volunteering will also help you test your ability to work.

Many non-profit organizations and churches are in need of reliable volunteers to fulfill their missions. Volunteer work can range from mail preparation or event coordination to mentoring or tutoring. Some positions will require several days per week, while others may require just a few hours.

To ensure that your volunteer experience will be of benefit, look for a long-term position that offers at least one day's worth of work per week.

To ensure that you gain a valuable reference, you must treat your volunteer job just as you would a paid job. Show up on your scheduled days, act and dress professionally, take care to do the job accurately and thoroughly.

Find volunteer opportunities by visiting Volunteer Match online at [www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org) or by contacting your local volunteer center.

### **Use Your "Ticket to Work"**

If you are receiving disability benefits from the Social Security Administration, you are very likely eligible for their Ticket to Work Program. Your ticket can be used to obtain employment services such as skills training, resume development, job placement and more. Chances are you have already received a Ticket without even realizing.

To learn more, contact MAXIMUS, the Ticket to Work Program administrator, toll-free at 1-866-968-7842 (TDD: 1-866-833-2967).

### **Take Advantage of Social Security's Other Work Incentives**

Special rules make it possible for people receiving Social Security disability benefits or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to work and still receive monthly payments. And, if you cannot continue working because of your medical condition, your benefits can start again—you may not have to file a new application.

Social Security work incentives include:

- Continued cash benefits for a time while you work;
- Continued Medicare or Medicaid while you work;
- Help with education, training and rehabilitation to start a new line of work.

The rules are different under Social Security and SSI. To learn more about the various work incentives available, read Social Security's publication Working While Disabled – How We Can Help, by visiting [www.ssa.gov/pubs/10095.pdf](http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/10095.pdf).

For a more in depth look, check out Social Security's Red Book – A Guide to Work Incentives, by visiting [www.socialsecurity.gov/redbook](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/redbook).

## **National Interest**

### ***Obama administration seeking your input***

On January 20, 2009 America watched as our new president, Barack Obama, was sworn into office. Throughout his campaign, Obama focused on the idea of change. What exactly this change will be, and how it will impact you, remains to be seen.

What is certain, however, is that you, as an American with a Disability, have a huge stake in the future direction of the President's policies. With a new administration taking the helm, there is no better time than now to reflect on the past and to take part in the change you want to see.

President Obama has outlined his plan for the future of America and has made it available on the official administration website - [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov). Among the Obama Administration's priorities are: reviving the economy; providing affordable, accessible health care to all; and strengthening our public education and social security systems.

To read more about Obama's agenda, visit [www.whitehouse.gov/agenda](http://www.whitehouse.gov/agenda).

The Obama Administration is stressing the importance of an "Open Government" and wants to hear from you. There are numerous opportunities to share your thoughts and ideas throughout the website. Don't miss out on your opportunity to participate.

### ***Home Buying Guide for People with Disabilities: Financial Considerations and Options***

If you have been dreaming about owning your own home, check out the NHU Home Buying Guide. Our guide covers everything from credit issues and budgeting to financial assistance and special mortgage programs.

Preparation and patience is key. By starting the process now, you will know exactly what you will need to do to ensure that homeownership becomes a reality for you.

Our Home Buying Guide is available online at: [www.new-horizons.org/qdbaht.html](http://www.new-horizons.org/qdbaht.html)

If you do not have Internet access, contact us at (414) 299-0124 to request a paper copy.

## Wisconsin Interest

### ***Milwaukee volunteer program sets its sights on adults with disabilities***

If you are looking to gain practical experience while giving back to your community, check out the DOORS initiative offered by the Volunteer Center of Greater Milwaukee.

DOORS: Disability Outreach Offering Resources is more than just a volunteer matching service. Its aim is to increase the employability of people with disabilities by providing practical, hands-on volunteer work experiences. Through these experiences participants can gain new skills, explore career options and build their resume. Past volunteer opportunities have included: Financial Educator, Tax Preparer, Workshop Facilitator, Urban Greenhouse Assistant, and Credit Union Teller.

If you have a disability and wish to take advantage of the opportunities presented by this initiative, contact Lisa Anderson of the Volunteer Center, via e-mail at [LAnderson@volunteermilwaukee.org](mailto:LAnderson@volunteermilwaukee.org) or via phone at (414) 273-7887.

### ***Goodwill On the Move recreation program***

Want to put a little more 'kick' in your weekends? Check out the Goodwill "On the Move" program. Open to individuals with disabilities, this program has a variety of fun weekend activities to suit the tastes of one and all. Through this program they offer three different types of opportunities

**Full Day Outings:** Activities like sporting events, festivals, museums and tours. Full Day Outings are active and require independence with personal care.

**Half Day Outings:** Shorter activities like plays, smaller festivals and museums and seated tours. Half Day Outings are slower paced and appropriate for participants who need some help with personal care.

**Workshops:** Art, music and movement activities. Workshops are the slowest paced and appropriate for participants who need some help with personal care.

For more information, contact Karyn Halmstad, "On the Move" coordinator, via phone at (262) 970-6042 or via e-mail at [onthemove@goodwillsew.com](mailto:onthemove@goodwillsew.com).

Information can also be found on the Goodwill website at [www.goodwillsew.com](http://www.goodwillsew.com).

## **New Horizons Un-Limited 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Raffle**

### **Grand Prize: Ladies White Gold Square Diamond Pendant**

*Set with Four Princess Cut Diamonds (0.26 ctw)*

### **\$750 Appraised Value**

#### **Donated by**



A complete list of prizes is available online at [www.new-horizons.org/09raff.html](http://www.new-horizons.org/09raff.html)

### **Drawing: Thursday, March 26, 2009**

*Need Not Be Present To Win*

**Tickets:**  
**\$3 each      2 for \$5      5 for \$10**

### **Contribute Prizes**

If you manage a business, frequent a business, or simply have a knack for fundraising, you could be a great help in collecting prizes for our event. Please contact us to arrange your donation or join us in asking area businesses for a contribution to our event. Contact us at (414) 299-0124.

### **Purchase Your Raffle Tickets**

To request your tickets, mail your payment, along with a note indicating your name, contact information and number of tickets requested, to:

NEW HORIZONS UN-LIMITED  
811 E. Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 937  
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Requests must be received by Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup> for entry into the drawing.

### ***PC Pro Schools an ally in improving computer access among those with disabilities***

Last spring, New Horizons Un-Limited had the good fortune of meeting Laura, the Campus Director of PC Pro Schools' Brookfield campus, at a Brew City HDI chapter meeting.

At the meeting, NHU expressed a need for volunteer technicians to assist with our computer refurbishing and help desk activities. Seeing this opportunity as a way to give back, while also supporting the career goals of her students, Laura quickly recruited students to help NHU.

Over this past year, NHU has welcomed nearly a dozen PC Pro Schools students as volunteers. While all of the student volunteers have had a solid technical foundation, many of them were lacking that all important professional experience to help them win their dream job.

What NHU provides in experience to the students is exceeded by what they, as volunteers, have contributed to our program. They have expertly refurbished dozens of computers, which, in turn, have been donated to dozens of individuals that would not have otherwise been able to afford a home computer.

Just like our student volunteers, our computer recipients are trying to improve their lives through technology. A computer means more to them than most of us could ever imagine.

To many of our recipients, a computer is *the* tool they need to pursue *their* dream job and ultimately *their own* financial freedom.

Our refurbishing program is run entirely by volunteer technicians. It simply would not be possible without the expertise and dedication of our volunteers.

Our most recent group of volunteers will be graduating from PC Pro Schools in just weeks. It is our hope that the experience we have provided will help them reach their career goals.

We would like to extend a special thank you to Craig, Dan, Fred, Jim and Jonathan for their dedication to seeing that all people, no matter their income, may have access to a home computer.

### ***Technology mentoring opportunities available to people with disabilities***

If you have a disability, live in the Greater Milwaukee area, and are interested in further developing your computer repair skills, contact NHU to learn more about the possibility of a mentorship. We are looking for dedicated individuals with an interest in (and general knowledge of) computer repair.

Contact us via phone, (414) 299-0124 or via e-mail, [horizons@new-horizons.org](mailto:horizons@new-horizons.org) to learn more.

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