



# CommunicAbility

A Quarterly Newsletter For Our Community Members with Disabilities

## Winter/Spring 2015

Vol. 15, Ed. 1

### Articles and Features

- Long-term care in WI
- Become an effective systems advocate
- ABLE accounts help save for the future
- Speak up, speak out word search

### NHU Highlights

- 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Raffle

#### GRAND PRIZE:

Two Roundtrip Airfare on Southwest Airlines

***“Listen with the intent to understand, not the intent to reply.”***

~ Stephen Covey

***“Great thoughts speak only to the thoughtful mind, but great actions speak to all mankind.”*** ~ Theodore Roosevelt

## Long-term care in WI hangs in the balance: Your voice needed

The 2015-17 Wisconsin State budget is calling for some major changes to the state's long term care programs (including Family Care, IRIS, and the Personal Care Program) that may directly impact you and your family.

Proposed changes include:

- Complete redesign of Family Care
- Elimination of the consumer-directed IRIS program
- Giving the Department of Health Services authority to make significant changes on what services might be available to people, and
- Taking away local control of the long-term care programs that were designed by Wisconsin residents to reflect the needs in their communities.

We fear that these changes will take control of your health care out of your hands and put it into the hands of privately-held Managed Care Organizations.

While the effects of these changes are still unclear, you can learn more about the proposed changes by checking out the FAQ Document created by the Survival Coalition.

**<http://wi-bpdd.org/docs/2015/Survival-FAQ-LTCGovBudget-2-2015.pdf>**

Join disability advocates across the state in their efforts to save IRIS!

### Contact Your Legislators

Go to the Wisconsin State Legislature page - <http://legis.wisconsin.gov> and type in your address to find your legislators. Call the number that is listed to connect with your legislator.

Here are some ideas of what to say to your legislators when calling:

- Hi, my name is [...]
- I live in [...]
- I am calling because I am very worried/concerned about the proposed budget's plan to eliminate the IRIS program.
- IRIS is important to me because [...] (Tell them briefly how IRIS has made a difference in your or your family member's life.)
- Ask your Senator/Representative to please take elimination of IRIS out of the budget and encourage more time and study to determine the impacts of such a big change.

Remember to be respectful. We are making allies to help us SAVE IRIS.

Follow the Efforts of the Save IRIS campaign on Facebook:

**<http://facebook.com/save.iris.wi>**

## No Internet?

If you do not have access to the Internet at home, and are unable to access the websites listed in this newsletter, we would be happy to mail you a printed copy of the information that is available online.

To request a printed copy, please contact us via phone 414-299-0124.

Thank you!

New Horizons Un-Limited is a Milwaukee-based, non-profit organization that provides individuals with lifelong disabilities increased access to the information, tools and life experiences that will enable them to improve their lives.



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*“The most courageous act is still to think for yourself; **ALoud!**” ~ Coco Chanel*

## **Become an effective systems change advocate**

Advocacy. Surely, as an adult with a disability, or family member of an individual with a disability, you've heard the buzzword. You surely know what advocacy is. It's sticking up for yourself and the people you care about. It's speaking up when you are unhappy with how things are unfolding.

At its core, Advocacy is about YOUR voice. Yet, it is much more than that. It isn't simply complaining about a situation, but taking action towards a desired outcome. It's about defining what you need and outlining what is needed to get it.

You need to have a thorough understanding of why you are taking action towards a specific outcome. You need to be able to explain how the outcome will impact you/your fellow community members. Particularly, when you are engaging in Systems Advocacy and dealing with legislators and other decision makers, it's important to have a firm grasp of the big picture.

Following are a few exercises you can do to help you prepare for an advocacy campaign.

### **1. Define the Desired Outcome**

What do you hope to accomplish with your advocacy? Be as specific as possible. For example: I want people with disabilities to have control over their own personal care.

### **2. Educate Yourself on the Issue as Thoroughly as Possible**

Connect with Disability Advocacy Organizations to stay on top of the details of the advocacy effort. Read both sides of the argument to determine the opposition's point of view. This will help you craft an effective case and allow you to counter the opposition with well informed arguments.

### **3. Craft Your Message**

Write down your personal experiences in regards to the issue. Explain how the desired outcome would impact you personally. At the same time, try to paint an overall picture of what could happen to you and your fellow community members if the desired outcome is not realized. Will quality of life suffer? If so, how would it suffer? Be specific.

### **4. Identify Specific Methods**

#### **Write an Op-Ed**

Writing an article for your local newspaper can often drum up awareness of and interest in an overlooked issue. When writing such an article, rather than simply complaining, approach it as an opportunity to educate people on the issue. Present possible solutions and arguments on why it is important.

#### **Create a list of contacts**

Who are the decision makers on this issue? Who can help you reach the decision makers? Will aligning yourself with an organization help you in your effort?

#### **Contact your legislators (if appropriate)**

If this is an official policy issue (such as changes to disability services) you will most certainly want to connect with your legislators. Share your story and help them understand the issue. Remember to be cordial and non-combative. You want them on your side.

#### **Recruit fellow advocates**

It's true that there is strength in numbers. The more people talking about an issue, the more attention it is going to get. Talk to your friends, peers, and family about the issue. Ask them to support you in your advocacy effort.

Get involved in organized advocacy via local organizations. In Wisconsin there is an annual Disability Advocacy Day in Madison (the 2015 event is on March 17<sup>th</sup>). This is your chance to be seen and heard.

Above all don't be afraid to speak out. Your voice matters and is needed. Always remember that!

### **ABLE accounts to help people with disabilities save for the future, remain independent**

Last December, President Obama signed legislation that created tax-free savings accounts that will allow people with disabilities and their families to save up to \$100,000 without jeopardizing disability benefits.

Savings must be used for disability-related expenses, including education, housing, transportation, personal support services, etc. To be eligible, individuals must have had the disability before the age of 26. Accounts are expected to go in effect sometime this year. We will keep you posted as more information is available.

To stay up to date on this and other disability-related news, be sure to like and follow our Facebook page.



[facebook.com/NewHorizonsUnlimited](https://www.facebook.com/NewHorizonsUnlimited)

**WANNA GET AWAY?**

**Southwest<sup>®</sup>** 

*Presents*

**The New Horizons Un-Limited  
13<sup>th</sup> Annual Benefit Raffle**

*Featuring*

**Two Roundtrip Airfare  
on Southwest Airlines**

*Up to an \$800 Value*

*Tickets:*

**\$3 each • 2 for \$5 • 5 for \$10**

**15 for \$20**

*Drawing:*

**March 26, 2015 at 3pm**

*US Bank Center Galleria*

*777 E Wisconsin Ave, Milwaukee, WI*

*Need Not Be Present to Win!*

**Questions?**

*Call:* 414.299.0124

*E-mail:* [potrykus@new-horizons.org](mailto:potrykus@new-horizons.org)

*Visit:* [new-horizons.org/raffle.html](http://new-horizons.org/raffle.html)



*Proceeds will support programs and services that  
promote the lifelong learning and growth of our  
community members with disabilities.*

**Return Service Requested**

## Speak Up, Speak Out

This word search edition focuses on advocacy. You cannot wait for change to happen, you must make it happen. Get involved! Speak up for the people and issues that you care about!

- |                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|
| ADVOCATE       | PROTEST         |
| BE BRAVE       | PUSH BOUNDARIES |
| CONNECT        | SEEK EQUALITY   |
| DEDICATE       | SHARE           |
| FIND SOLUTIONS | SPEAK           |
| GET INVOLVED   | TAKE ACTION     |
| LISTEN         | TEACH           |
| MAKE CHANGE    | VOTE            |
| MAKE HISTORY   | WORK TOGETHER   |
| NETWORK        | WRITE           |

J B G Q Z A W R I T E G P P P C E C J V  
 E O P E S B A W F R N U V O U K T J R B  
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Since 1994, New Horizons Un-Limited has supported our community members with disabilities on their personal journeys. We provide the information, tools, training, and personalized guidance they need to find purpose and fulfillment in their lives.

Nearly all of our services are offered completely FREE of charge to ensure that every individual may benefit. Your contribution will provide FREE consultations, FREE job skills development, FREE home computers, FREE computer training, FREE computer support services, and more. Please consider giving so that others may receive the gift of growth and progress. THANK YOU!!

**Via mail:** New Horizons Un-Limited, 811 E Wisconsin Avenue, Ste. 937, Milwaukee, WI 53202

**Online:** [new-horizons.org/donate.html](http://new-horizons.org/donate.html)