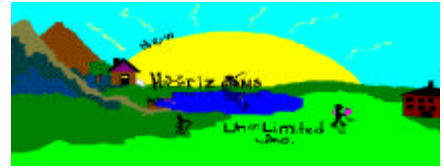

CommunicAbility



A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY

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"The great thing in this world is not so much where we are, but in what direction we are moving."

- Oliver Wendell Holmes

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New Horizons Un-Limited Inc. (NHU) is a non-profit organization serving individuals with disabilities, their families and caregivers since 1994. To empower people with disabilities, we provide accessible information, promote accessible communication and encourage the exchange of ideas and solutions to common problems. In support of our mission, we have developed specific programs and projects that serve to further our ultimate goal of removing barriers that impede the full realization of independence.

To learn more about our mission and activities, please visit the New Horizons Un-Limited website at: <http://www.new-horizons.org>. You may also contact us by e-mail at: horizons@new-horizons.org.

CommunicAbility is intended to bring timely information on such topics as employment, independent living, recreation and legislation into the lives of people who have been affected by disability. It is our hope that this information may affect change within their lives and the lives of others.

National News

Your "Ticket to Work" is on its way

The United States Social Security Administration has recently launched the first phase of the Ticket to Work Program, created under the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999.

The program, designed to assist people with disabilities in obtaining and maintaining full-time employment, will include the distribution of "work tickets" to Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) beneficiaries. Individuals can redeem the tickets for employment training and support services at any community service provider who has been designated as an Employment Network.

The ultimate purpose of the program is to increase participants' self-sufficiency and decrease their dependency on Social Security benefits.

Returning to work is a big decision, not to be taken lightly. A reduction or stoppage of disability benefits can be very frightening, and has perhaps prevented many people from realizing their employment dreams.

However, the Ticket to Work Program, paired with other government work incentive programs, such as Medicaid Buy-in, has made the transition to employment a more feasible option for many.

If you received a ticket in the mail and would like to learn how you can put your "ticket" to work, call Maximus, Inc. at (866) 968-7842. You can also learn more about this program online at <http://www.yourtickettowork.com/>.

To learn if the ticket to work program is the best option for you, contact your local Center for Independent Living (CIL). Your CIL offers many individualized work support programs and can even offer a benefits analysis. To find a CIL in your area, visit New Horizons Un-Limited online at <http://www.new-horizons.org/astcil.org>.

NHU assumes no responsibility in guaranteeing the services, programs or conditions as described.

Your state's Assistive Technology Project may be in jeopardy

The Assistive Technology Act, for over a decade, has provided federal funding for the development of an Assistive Technology (AT) Project in all 50 states and United States territories. As originally written, the Act implemented a 10-year grant program to establish systems within each state and territory for improving access to assistive technology for individuals with disabilities.

The Act did include a "sunset provision" however, indicating that after the 10-year grant period, states or each individual AT Program would be responsible for the funding of their AT projects. While the initial 10-year grant period was extended in 1998, the Act again calls for a cease of funding to all 50 states by 2004, and to 23 states by September of this year.

A cut-off of federal funds could mean the loss of AT advocacy services, the loss of low-interest revolving loan programs, the loss of AT training. It could also mean the loss of independence for the millions of Americans that experience barriers on a daily basis.

On March 21, 2002, the Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness of the Committee on Education and the Workforce held a hearing for the first time in nine years to gather information that will help committee members assess whether continued funding is needed to help the programs fulfill their intended purpose. This hearing is a clear indication that our representatives recognize the value of this Act's provisions.

Take action now! Thank committee members for holding the hearing. Tell them how you or your disability community will be affected by the demise of your state's AT Program. Better yet, share your suggestions on how each state program can be strengthened.

To read hearing testimony or to learn how you can contact committee representatives, visit the Committee on Education and the Workforce online at <http://edworkforce.house.gov/>.

If you do not have a representative on the committee, direct your comments to Representative Buck McKeon at (202) 226-0683 or tellbuck@mail.house.gov.

Take control of your life through self-determination

Do you feel in control of your life? What about your future? Have you been able to wade through the seemingly endless sea of barriers that have stopped you in your trek toward independence time after time? If you have answered "no" to any of these questions, it is time you realize self-determination.

Self-determination means taking control of your life, taking control of your future. It is a self-directed initiative in which you gain the knowledge and resources necessary to obtain your life goals. Self-determination can only be found within. Are you ready to discover it?

If so, there are a number of initiatives that can help you throughout your discovery. One such national initiative is the Center for Self-Determination. The Center, based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, is dedicated to seeing that all individuals realize self-determination in their daily lives. In support of this mission they have recently published a training manual entitled "Self-Determination – Understanding the Core Principles Needed for People with Disabilities to Control their Own Lives." The manual, which is short and very easy to follow, defines self-determination, addresses issues that affect people with disabilities, and outlines emerging strategies on how an individual can achieve self-determination in their everyday lives. This is your first, simple step towards true independence.

To obtain a copy of this manual, please call (734) 213-5220 or send an e-mail to selfdetermination@earthlink.net. To learn more about the concept of self-determination, visit the Center for Self-Determination online at <http://www.self-determination.com/>.

The Four Principles of Self-Determination

Freedom to choose how to live and lead your life.

Authority to control and direct your finances.

Support, not supervision, in achieving your goals.

Responsibility to act as a contributing citizen.

Wisconsin News

How much are you paying for prescription drugs?

Are you an individual with a disability that pays for prescription drugs out-of-pocket? If so, the Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities (WCDD) is interested in hearing your story. There are an estimated 30,000 people with disabilities that are forced to pay for expensive prescription drugs out-of-pocket, due to a lack of coverage under private and government funded insurance plans.

With the recent passage of SeniorCare, a program providing drug coverage to people 65 or older, there has risen great demand for a similar program for younger people with disabilities. Unfortunately, legislators have not yet fully grasped the need for a prescription drug program for people with disabilities. If you could benefit from prescription coverage, it is important that you share your story. Let your legislators see the face behind the issue.

To share your story, contact WCDD at (608) 266-7826 (Voice), (608) 266-6660 (TTY) or e-mail wiswcdd@dhfs.state.wi.us. You are also encouraged to contact your legislators directly. Visit the Wisconsin Legislature online at <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/waml/> to find your local legislators.

Join Welcome, H.O.M.E., experience spring on the prairie

Welcome, H.O.M.E., House of Modification Examples, an accessible Bed and Breakfast and adaptive technology demonstration home located in Newburg, Wisconsin, will be hosting an Open House on Saturday, May 18, 2002 from 1 p.m. until 4 p.m.

Guests can tour the home, st“roll” through several acres of accessible hiking trails, roast marshmallows, enjoy a refreshing glass of lemonade or paint t-shirts with wheelchair tires and crutch tips. Guests are also encouraged to speak with representatives from New Horizons Un-Limited Inc., Adaptive Technology Resources, and Bruno Independent Living Aids, who will be sharing information on their varied products and services for people with disabilities.

In support of an initiative to introduce a larger percentage of people with disabilities to computer technology, New Horizons Un-Limited is pleased to offer computer and Internet demonstrations to open house guests.

If you are interested in attending the Welcome H.O.M.E. open house, call (262) 675-2525 or e-mail dmiller@hnet.net for more information. You are also encouraged to visit Welcome H.O.M.E. online for a virtual tour at <http://www.hnet.net/~welcomehome/>.

Welcome H.O.M.E. is located at 4260 Hwy Y in Newburg, Wisconsin, 1/4 mile north of Hwy 33 on Hwy Y (between No No's and the Riveredge Nature Center).

High Cliff State Park soon to be home to a new accessible cabin

Overlooking the northeast shore of Lake Winnebago, High Cliff State Park offers the serenity and beauty any outdoor enthusiast would come to expect. Located just eight miles east of Appleton, Wisconsin, High Cliff, an all season park, has been one of the most visited parks in Wisconsin.

No wonder the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources chose High Cliff as the site for their fifth fully accessible cabin. The building of this cabin will now provide enriched opportunities for people with disabilities and their families to experience the beauty that can only be found at High Cliff.

Miller Engineering Inc., electrical and mechanical consultants, Strass Maguire and Associates, structural consultants, and New Horizons Un-Limited were pleased to gift a concept development plan to the Wisconsin DNR. Months of collaborative planning and consideration of varied accessibility issues is reflected in the cabin design, ensuring that all people with disabilities can freely use the cabin and the park's amenities without fear of hidden barriers.

As a non-profit organization for people with disabilities, we were thrilled to have been involved in this initiative. It is our hope that the insight we provided throughout this project will result in an environment that people with disabilities and their families will be happy to call home – for a few days anyway.

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Ideas must work their way through the brains and arms of men, or they are no better than dreams.
~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Do you have an interesting disability story to share?
Can you offer insight into common issues that affect people with disabilities?

If so, we want to hear from you! Please e-mail us with your thoughts and suggestions:

horizons@new-horizons.org
