



CommunicAbility

A Quarterly Newsletter For Our Community Members with Disabilities

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Articles

- Forest Bathing: Healing in Nature
- National Parks Access Pass
- Accessible Travel Resources

NHU Features

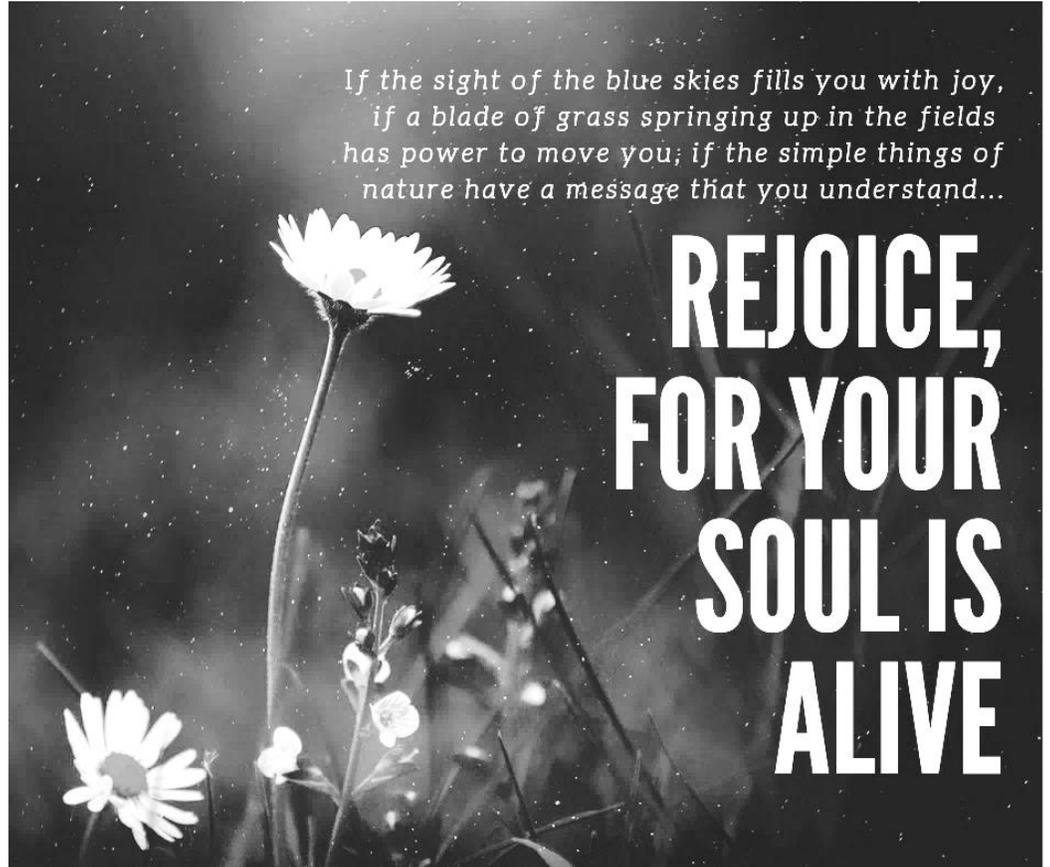
- Computer Grant Upgrades Available
- Create a Healthy Social Media Habit
- Find Peace: Word Search

“It is courage, courage, courage, that raises the blood of life to crimson splendor. Live bravely and present a brave front to adversity.” - Horace

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.



Forest Bathing: Healing in nature

Can simply being in nature really improve your health? Studies (and Japanese traditions) say yes. Of course escaping into nature for a few hours is not going to magically cure our chronic illnesses or erase disability, but the benefits of regularly “bathing” yourself in nature are clear.

Forest Bathing, known as *Shinrin-yoku* in Japan, was first recognized in the 1980s. It is a relatively new concept here in the United States. The idea is to enter a natural environment and become mindful of your surroundings. It is not hiking, or any other strenuous activity, rather, just taking in nature through your senses:

- ❖ The sights (the colors, the textures, the scale)
- ❖ The sounds (the rustling of leaves, the chirping of birds, the babbling brooks),
- ❖ The smells (the wildflowers, the bark, the leaves) and,
- ❖ The feel (the moss between your toes, the softness of a flower petal...)

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.



new-horizons.org



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Forest Bathing. Healing in nature *(continued from page 1)*

Aside from the mental and emotional rejuvenation many feel while escaping into nature, studies have also shown a link to an increase in helpful cells within our immune system, called NK or Natural Killer cells. These cells combat tumors and viruses. Sounds like the sort of cell we would want a lot more of, wouldn't you say?

The same studies also showed being in nature for an extended period leads to a decrease in depression, fatigue, anxiety, and confusion.

According to a 2018 report published by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the average American spends 90

percent of their time indoors. The EPA goes on to say that the concentration of indoor air pollutants are often 2 to 5 times higher than the concentration of pollutants outside.

All the more reason to get outdoors and breathe in that fresh air!

Of course, there are many factors keeping us indoors, disability, and chronic illness, being one of them. We get it. Sometimes getting out just is not in the cards! When it is possible, make a real effort to leave your home and city behind for a few hours and find some trees.

It does not have to be a true forest. A quiet local park will do just fine. Find a spot and use all of your senses to explore the environment. Wander slowly and aimlessly; you do not need a destination! Find a spot under a tree or the edge of a brook and just be.

Avoid the temptation to look at your phone. The idea is to disconnect from our everyday lives and truly connect with our natural world.

Are you willing to try it?

We would love to hear about your Forest Bathing experience!

“The only way to deal with an unfree world is to become so absolutely free that your very existence is an act of rebellion.” – Albert Camus

Find your space in nature with the Access Pass

Explore all of the natural beauty that our country has to offer! The National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Access Pass grants FREE entrance to more than 2000 federally managed recreation sites throughout the United States for American citizens with documented disabilities. For just a \$10 processing fee, you can have a lifetime of access to countless opportunities in nature.

Learn more about the Access Pass by visiting store.usgs.gov/access-pass

From National Parks and Monuments to National Scenic Trails, River ways and Lakeshores, many of these sites are closer than you think.

For a complete list of sites near you, visit recreation.gov

For accessibility information, visit nps.gov/aboutus/accessibilityforvisitors.htm

Travel tips and ideas from Curbfree with Cory Lee

The idea of travel with a disability may sound daunting, but it is certainly possible with proper planning. Cory Lee is an avid international traveler, visiting 33 countries on six different continents! As a traveler who uses a wheelchair, he not only offers advice on accessible destinations but also offers general travel tips to travelers with disabilities.

He also interviews fellow disabled travelers, providing a wealth of experiences and knowledge to the novice traveler.

If you are not quite ready to take the travel plunge, Cory's website provides endless documentation of his travels throughout the United States and the world. You may find some great accessible gems right in your own city.

Check out Curbfree with Cory Lee online: curbfreewithcorylee.com

Program Announcement: NHU Computer Grant Recipients may be eligible for upgrade to Windows 10

Over the past year, NHU has exclusively moved over to the Windows 10 operating system on our refurbished Windows computers. This move was to ensure that our refurbished workstations could handle the demands of modern software and hardware.

If you received a computer prior to that update, it is possible you are using a Windows 7 Operating System.

Microsoft will be eliminating support for the Windows 7 operating system on January 14, 2020.

What does this mean for you? After January 14, 2020, your computer will no longer receive important updates from Microsoft and will therefore be at higher risk for viruses and other performance issues. Eventually your computer will not be able to keep up with modern demands.

To find out which version of Windows your computer is running, do the following:

1. Select the **Start** Button  > **Settings**  > **System**  > **About** 
2. Under **Device specifications** > **System type**, see if you are running a 32-bit or 64-bit version of Windows.
3. Under **Windows specifications**, check which edition and version of Windows your device is running.

If your computer is still running the Windows 7 Operating System, contact us at 414-299-0124 to request your upgrade.

A \$20 membership fee will apply for most upgrades.

Developing healthy social media habits

Over the past several decades, with the advent of social media and hand-held smart devices, we have become increasingly connected to the world around us. Yet, studies show we are feeling lonelier than ever.

When social media platforms such as Facebook emerged, they offered a way to reconnect with long lost friends and out of state relatives. Since those early days, however, it has turned into a place to be seen, a place to curate a personal image that is often not at all close to the reality of everyday life...a highlight reel. We begin to compare our everyday lives to those of our "friends" highlights and we begin to feel left out.

It has also become a place of unfettered opinions and venting. With today's political climate it is hard to avoid controversial topics and even harder to avoid the countless trolls whose sole purpose is to pick fights and bring people down.

All of this can lead to increased anxiety, depression, and feelings of loneliness.

Read on for a few suggestions on how to have a healthier relationship with Social Media.

- Evaluate how and why you use social media and whether those reasons bring you joy or anxiety.
- If you notice greater anxiety, take a break. A week. A month. Maybe longer. Whatever it takes.
- After your break, limit your time to no more than 30 minutes a day on any given social media app.
- Track your screen time (often available in device) or via apps such as Moment. The results may shock you.
- Do not overshare. This will only bring you back, repeatedly, looking for likes and comments.
- Block or unfollow toxic people and leave toxic groups. You know who they are. Just do it.
- Use social media for good. Join groups that focus on positive interactions and actions.
- Always be aware of how social media makes you feel and repeat the above as needed.

Return Service Requested

Finding Peace and Balance

As this new season begins, let us take some time to reevaluate our priorities and start anew.

“If you cannot find peace within yourself, you will never find it anywhere else.”

- Marvin Gaye

BE STILL	FOCUS
CALM YOUR MIND	GET OUTDOORS
CHOOSE FREEDOM	HEAL
DECLUTTER	LET GO
DESTRESS	LIVE WITH INTENT
DETOX	MEDITATE
EMBRACE QUIET	RELAX
EXPLORE NATURE	SEARCH YOUR SOUL
FIND PEACE	TAKE A BREAK

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