
CommunicAbility



A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY

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"Do what you can
with what you have, where you are."

~ Theodore Roosevelt ~

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New Horizons Un-Limited Inc. (NHU) is a non-profit organization based in Milwaukee with a mission to provide people with life-long disabilities, their families and caregivers increased access to information, communication and opportunity. To learn more about our mission and activities, please visit the New Horizons Un-Limited website at www.new-horizons.org or e-mail us at horizons@new-horizons.org.



Bring Springtime Cheer to Your Garden...



Support your disability community and bring the beauty of springtime blooms to your home and neighborhood with fall-planted / spring-blooming flower bulbs from **New Horizons Un-Limited's 2003 Flower Bulb Fundraiser**. Our fundraiser features quality, low cost, spring-blooming bulbs from Van Bourgondien, a trusted name in the gardening industry for over 100 years. Beauty abounds in the selection of Tulips, Daffodils, Hyacinths, Irises, Lilies and more!

Contact us today at (414) 299-0124 to receive your full color brochure.

An order form will also be available for download from the NHU website beginning July 18, 2003. Visit www.new-horizons.org/bulbof.html to view and order your bulbs.

National News

"America Works Best When All Americans Work"

It's not too early to start thinking about this October's National Disability Employment Awareness Month. This year's theme, "America Works Best When All Americans Work" embodies the idea that self-empowerment and economic opportunity for all Americans can be accomplished through job creation.

Many companies continue to have misconceptions about employing workers with disabilities. A variety of events are being planned now by local coordinators in every state to encourage a greater understanding of disability among employers and to spark enthusiasm among job seekers with disabilities.

An excellent way for job seekers and employers to learn more about each other is through participation in this year's Disability Mentoring Day (DMD), scheduled for Wednesday, October 15, 2003. DMD is a nationwide event designed to bring people with disabilities into the workplace to learn more about their chosen career field from volunteer business mentors.

For jobseekers, DMD offers an opportunity to evaluate personal goals, explore possible career paths, and develop lasting mentor relationships. Employers can benefit from the introduction to a pool of fresh talent while learning more about the experience of disability and demonstrating positive leadership in their communities.

To learn more, call the American Association of People with Disabilities at (800) 840-8844 or visit their DMD website at www.dmd-aapd.org/.

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

Businesses reminded of tax incentives for hiring employees with disabilities

Secretary of Labor, Elaine L. Chao and her Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) is reminding businesses "that there are large numbers of skilled people with disabilities who have the qualifications they seek." Aside from benefiting from the skill employees with disabilities bring to the company, businesses can also enjoy a variety of tax benefits offered by the federal government. These tax benefits include:

Work Opportunity Tax Credit - up to a \$2,400 tax credit for employers who hire certain targeted low-income groups, including people with disabilities.

Small Business Tax Credit: IRS Code Section 44, Disabled Access Credit – up to a \$5000 tax credit covering the costs of making businesses accessible.

Architectural/ Transportation Tax Deduction - up to a \$15,000 tax deduction for expenses relating to the removal of physical, structural, and transportation barriers for persons with disabilities at the workplace.

Further explanation of these, and other tax benefits, can be found in the Frequently Asked Questions section on the U.S. Department of Labor ODEP website: <http://www.dol.gov/odep/>.

If you are a small business owner and would like to offer work opportunities to people with disabilities, there are several helpful resources available to assist you.

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is a free consulting service that provides information about job accommodations, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the employability of people with disabilities. JAN can be reached toll free at (800) 526-7234 (V/TTY) or on the web at <http://www.jan.wvu.edu/>.

The Employer Assistance Referral Network (EARN), a nationwide cost-free referral and technical assistance service for employers, can assist you in locating and recruiting qualified workers with disabilities. EARN can be reached toll-free at (866) 327-6669 or on the web at <http://www.earnworks.com/>.

Find your inspiration to succeed in one man's journey

Robin Pritts, is a successful CPA...with Cerebral Palsy. It is not his disability that defines his success however, but his personal will to aspire and achieve.

No matter who you are, Rob's message is the same: "Don't be discouraged by the cards you've been dealt. Instead, make sure you've always got a winning hand by facing each day with a positive mental attitude - and a humble sense of gratitude."

It is this philosophy that has moved Robin Pritts forward in his life. It is this philosophy that will move you forward in yours.

His book, *From CP to CPA: One Man's Triumph over the Disability of Cerebral Palsy* is his story.

To learn more, visit www.cptocpa.com.

Toll Free DOT Hotline available to air travelers with disabilities

The U.S. Department of Transportation, since August 2002 has offered a helpful Toll Free Hotline for air travelers with disabilities. The Hotline serves two main purposes: (1) education and (2) assistance in resolving disability-related air travel problems.

Recognizing that many air travelers with disabilities are unaware of their rights, the hotline offers information on the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) and the DOT's implementing regulations 14 CFR Part 382.

The hotline also offers "real time" assistance in resolving issues in accordance with the ACAA and Part 382. If an air traveler has a current or foresees an upcoming issue with an air carrier, a Hotline Duty Officer will immediately contact that air carrier and attempt to resolve the issue. For example, there have been a number of incidents in which Hotline Duty Officers have contacted air carriers and resolved issues concerning the acceptance of service animals and electric wheelchairs on board flights.

The hotline is available from 7 a.m. until 11 p.m. (Eastern Time), seven days a week. To access the hotline, call (800) 778-4838 (Voice) or (800) 455-9880 (TTY).

Exploring the Outdoors in Wisconsin

Wheelchairs rolling along the sandy beach. Paths through the woods and fishing piers open to anyone with a longing to be outdoors. That's Wisconsin and her state parks. There is an exciting initiative in our state called, "Exploring The Outdoors," spearheaded by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and dedicated to making recreational areas accessible. "The outdoors is for everyone," according to Dotti Krieger, the DNR accessibility coordinator in the Facilities Management Section of the agency.

Krieger works with all DNR programs to research ways to meet the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines and to make recreational opportunities accessible to everyone. Dotti and partners throughout Wisconsin have been working out details that would make even more of our beautiful state accessible to all.

As part of this initiative, New Horizons Un-Limited, Arthur Miller of Miller Engineering, and Laverne Nall, of Strass-Maguire & Associates, worked closely with Dotti in designing a new template that will be used to build accessible cabins in many of Wisconsin's State Parks.

DNR currently has very popular accessible cabins at four locations: Kettle Moraine Southern Unit, Potawatomi State Park, Mirror Lake and Buckhorn State Park. The cabins are in great demand with very few openings for the rest of this season, which runs from May through October. The diaries left in each cabin bear testimony to the sincere appreciation that each family member has in being able to enjoy the outdoors through these cabins and accompanying accessible paths and piers.

For those that missed out on the fully accessible cabins this season, there are also Rustic cabins, which still have plenty of availability. The 'rustics' offer a camping experience to those who don't have a tent or an RV and who prefer a slightly more stable facility. One of the two rustic cabins is located in Copper Falls State Park in Ashland County in northern Wisconsin and the other is in Blue Mounds State Park in Dane County. Each small cabin has platform beds, electrical outlets and access to a nearby toilet and shower building. The cabins rent for \$18 a night for Wisconsin residents. For more information, contact Copper Falls State Park at (715) 274-5123 or Blue Mounds State Park at (608) 437-5711.

Next on the DNR's "Exploring the Outdoors" agenda is a visit to Harrington Beach State Park in Belgium on the shores of Lake Michigan. Once a quarry to mine blocks of stone, it has since been flooded and now offers an exceptional fishing location, regularly visited by local residents who have discovered the charm and beauty of the quarry trail and pristine waters. No boats or swimmers are allowed in the quarry waters, so the fish are a willing audience for anglers. People visiting Harrington Park will find miles of paved trail and roads offering beautiful (and level) exercise paths with wonderful nature viewing opportunities.

Since the trail naturally evolved along the rim of the quarry following an old roadbed used years ago, not much has been done to improve or bring it up to accessible standards. Both the path and the restrooms were being addressed for ADA accessibility and the DNR has gathered specifications for a project to improve the access while of course protecting the environment. They also have high hopes that with the proper funding, an accessible fishing pier and a shade shelter for picnics would be added to the shore.

So, what about people who are disabled, but willing (and able) to drag themselves through thickets, drop into bobbing boats and push themselves deep into the woods? "Does Wisconsin remember them, also?" She does indeed! The Chippewa Flowage near Hayward, Wisconsin, where an accessible campsite is under construction and will be available soon, involves dropping into that bobbing boat, riding the waves across a large expanse of the Flowage, and pulling up to an island with a clearing in the woods. Dotti had gone to the Chippewa Flowage to 'scope' the site for a level tent pad, access from the water to the tent area, an accessible picnic table, a fire ring and the toilet. The project will require a small pier and a trail for each of the features to become useable to all. The Chippewa Flowage is located just outside of Hayward and offers some of Wisconsin's most preserved and pristine waters for Muskie fishing. Camping information can be obtained by contacting (715) 634-4821. This is a wildlife and preservation area with free camping and strict rules for the protection of wildlife.

These are just a few of the projects underway by the DNR to bring the beautiful gift of the outdoors to all. To learn more about the DNR's Exploring the Outdoors Initiative, call (608) 266-2621 or visit them online at <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/>.

Great Lakes Festivals

Summerfest – a refreshingly disability-friendly entertainment venue on Milwaukee’s lakefront

Summerfest has long been recognized for the unique blend of entertainment and cuisine offered throughout their early summer music festival. What may have gone widely unrecognized however, is their dedication to accessibility.

Though not required to do so by law, Summerfest, in an effort to meet the accessibility provisions of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), formed the Summerfest ADA Task Force. The task force, comprised of local disability advocates, works to make Henry Maier Festival Park more accessible every year by actively seeking and implementing suggestions from Summerfest’s patrons with disabilities.

In past years, Summerfest has invited groups of people with various disabilities to rate the accessibility of the grounds. While many of the ratings were high, they carefully considered the concerns of each individual, ensuring that no issue go unresolved. Following are just a few of the accessible features that have resulted from the efforts of the Summerfest ADA Task Force:

Large print and Braille informational brochures are available throughout the festival grounds.

The National Spinal Cord Injury Association Respite Pavilion, a smoke free facility, located behind the Miller Oasis, is specifically designed for the comfort of those with disabilities. The pavilion includes fully accessible restroom facilities, an air-conditioned rest area, storage lockers, oxygen storage and a microwave for dialysis patients.

Family Restrooms offer large, private, unisex restroom facilities for families and patrons with disabilities and their companions.

Sign Language Interpreters are provided for specific performances upon request a minimum of two weeks in advance. A full-time sign language interpreter is also available through any information booth on the grounds.

Accessible public telephones are located outside of each restroom area. A TTY phone is available behind the Harley-Davidson Roadhouse next to the First Aid building.

Located on Henry Maier Festival Park, on Lake Michigan in downtown Milwaukee, Summerfest (June 26th - July 6th) is continuously striving to make the grounds barrier-free and wheelchair accessible.

They welcome your comments! You can reach them by calling (414) 273-2680 (voice), or by e-mailing information@summerfest.com.

Chicago’s Summer Festivals welcoming to people with disabilities

Chicago's lakefront festivals, enjoyed each summer by millions of local residents and visitors to the city, include services to assure accessibility for people with disabilities. The Chicago Blues Festival, the Chicago Gospel Music Festival, Taste of Chicago, the Chicago Country Music Festival, Viva! Chicago Latin Music Festival, the Chicago Jazz Festival, and Celtic Fest Chicago are city-sponsored and free to the public.

During this summer's "Viva! Chicago," the Latin Music Festival, the Chicago Jazz Festival, and Celtic Fest Chicago, the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) will have an information tent stationed at the corner of Jackson and Columbus, at which representatives will be available to answer any questions concerning accessibility throughout the lakefront music festivals. MOPD also offers limited access to personal assistance attendants.

Other accessible services include Braille and large-print brochures (or readers, upon request), as well as TTY phones, available at the north end of Columbus near Monroe.

For more information on festival accessibility, call MOPD at (312) 744-7050 (voice) or (312) 744-4964 (TTY).

For festival schedules and program information, call the Mayor's Office of Special Events at (312) 744-3370 (voice) or (312) 744-2964 (TTY), or visit the City of Chicago Special Events website at <http://www.cityofchicago.org/SpecialEvents/>.

Opportunity just a click away

The Internet, a powerful technology-based tool, provides an endless stream of virtual information, educational resources and social opportunities to millions of people every day in the United States. Unfortunately, this vast virtual world is largely inaccessible to the majority of people living with disabilities, the very population who can most benefit from this technology.

A recent study conducted by the National Organization on Disability reported that **only 28% of Americans with disabilities have access to the Internet at home or work**, compared to 56% of those without disabilities. What's more, almost **60% of Americans with disabilities have never even used a personal computer**, compared to less than 25% of Americans without disabilities.

In an effort to address this expansive gap in technology access, we have developed an initiative called Access Technology, aimed at making information on daily living accessible via technology and technology available in daily living. We believe that computer and Internet technology can serve as "the" equalizer, bringing people with and without disabilities together to work, live and learn in our communities.

Our Technology Redistribution Program

The primary objective of our Access Technology Initiative is to bring technology into the lives of people with disabilities. We have taken a three-fold approach in accomplishing this objective.

The first approach is to make technology available to local non-profit organizations, thereby encouraging the creation of easily accessible technology training programs throughout Southeastern Wisconsin for people with disabilities. We do so by offering a grant of refurbished computer equipment and free use of our training curriculum to those organizations that have made a commitment to serving their disability community.

Our second approach is to make technology available directly to individuals with disabilities. We do so by offering a grant of a refurbished, Internet-ready computer to any individual with a disability that has expressed an interest in this

technology and who, without assistance, would have no other means to obtain a computer for their personal use. We are currently finalizing application procedures and will launch our program for Wisconsin residents this summer.

Our third approach is to offer traveling computer workshops, serving both residents with disabilities and non-profit organizations throughout Southeastern Wisconsin. We bring the technology, the curriculum and even the instructors to an organization so that their clients may learn more about computer and Internet technology in a comfortable, relaxed environment.

Beyond Technology Distribution

In support of our Access Technology Initiative, we have developed a plan for a comprehensive on-line Resource Center. This Resource Center will serve as a clearinghouse of information concerning computer training for people with disabilities. Training organizations will benefit from the curriculum and training tips provided, while individuals will benefit from access to self-paced tutorials and adaptive technology reviews, among other information. We have partnered with an UW-Milwaukee Service Learning class to get our resource center online this summer.

Our Initiative in Action

In November of 2000 we began a partnership with the United Methodist Church of Whitefish Bay, who with a donation of refurbished computers from a corporate sponsor and coordination support from New Horizons Unlimited, began a computer training program for seniors and individuals with disabilities.

We have also recently placed a refurbished computer at Welcome H.O.M.E., an accessible bed and breakfast and demonstration home located in Newburg, Wisconsin. Welcome H.O.M.E. has been designed specifically to meet the needs of people with disabilities, encouraging the exploration of accessible home design ideas and adaptive equipment.

Our first traveling workshops took place in April 2003 at Welcome H.O.M.E. in Newburg, Wisconsin. With assistance from a volunteer computer trainer, we offered 4 workshops over a two-day period to 13 individuals. (Continued on p. 6)

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New Horizons Un-Limited Inc.
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Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53203

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"The future is not someplace we are going to, but one that we are creating. The paths are not found, but made, and the activity of making them changes both the maker and the destination."

~ John Schaar ~

(Continued from p. 5) **Opportunity...**

We are currently seeking out additional non-profit organizations that share our interest in making computer and Internet technology accessible to people affected by lifelong disability. We are also busy coordinating our traveling workshops with sites throughout Southeastern Wisconsin.

We are calling on you...

Non-profits – Have you been thinking about offering computer and Internet skills training to your members but aren't quite sure where to start? Call New Horizons Un-Limited today to learn more about how your organization can benefit from the placement of refurbished computers and free use of our curriculum.

Individuals – How long have you been waiting for "just the right time" to get a computer of your very own? Your time will soon arrive. If you are a Southeastern Wisconsin resident with a disability, are living on a limited income and believe that you can put a refurbished computer to good use, give us a call to learn the details of our giving program. We will soon have several Pentium II Microsoft Windows computers refurbished and available for distribution. Computers are available on a first-approved-first-served basis – so get your name on our list now!

Volunteers / Donors – of course we are always looking for support from our community. Following is a short wish list.

In-kind Donation and Sponsorship Opportunities:

- Pentium I (and higher) Computer Workstations
- Windows 98 (and higher) Operating Systems
- Microsoft Word
- Assistive Technology (mouse alternatives, keyboard alternatives, adaptive software, etc.)

Both, in-kind equipment and software donations and monetary sponsorships are welcome.

Volunteer Opportunities

- Equipment pick-up, delivery and set-up
- Equipment cleaning
- Equipment refurbishing and testing
- Curriculum research and development
- Teaching techniques research and development
- Computer Skills Tutors
- IT Helpdesk

No matter who you are or how you wish to participate in our Access Technology Initiative, please contact us today at (414) 299-0124 or by e-mail at horizons@new-horizons.org.
