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# CommunicAbility

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A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY



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*"If you can imagine it, You can achieve it.  
If you can dream it, You can become it."*

*~ William Arthur Ward ~*

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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 accessible to people with life-long disabilities, their families and caregivers. To learn more about our mission and activities, please visit the New Horizons Un-Limited website at: [www.new-horizons.org](http://www.new-horizons.org).

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*"I'd rather be a could-be if I cannot be an are; because a could-be is a maybe who is reaching for a star. I'd rather be a has-been than a might-have-been, by far; for a might have-been has never been, but a has was once an are."*

*~ Milton Berle ~*

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## National News

### ***HomeChoice can make your dreams of homeownership a reality***

Community HomeChoice, a program offered by Fannie Mae, offers a flexible mortgage option designed to meet the needs of low-to-moderate-income people with disabilities or who have a family member with a disability. The program offers flexibility in loan-to-value ratios, sources of downpayment and credit history.

Eligible borrowers will have a disability, as defined by the Fair Housing Amendment Act, and have income, not to exceed 115 percent of the area median income (AMI) where the property is located. Additionally, borrowers must contribute at least \$500 from his or her own funds.

This program is administered through various state housing coalitions. Your local housing coalition may also offer options for down payment and closing cost assistance.

To identify your housing coalition, please refer to the list of Housing Coalitions within this newsletter.

### ***N.O.D. releases national survey of Americans with disabilities***

On June 24, 2004, the National Organization on Disability released its national survey of Americans with disabilities. The survey found that Americans with disabilities continue to be at a critical disadvantage compared to other Americans in ten key areas of life: employment, income, education, health care, access to transportation, entertainment, socializing, religious and political participation, and life satisfaction. Key findings include:

***Only 35% of people with disabilities are employed, compared to 78% of those who do not have disabilities.***

***Three times as many people with disabilities live in poverty.***

***People with disabilities are twice as likely to have inadequate transportation (31% vs. 13%).***

***Just 34% of people with disabilities report they are very satisfied with life compared to 61% of those without.***

"Progress is too slow, and the gaps are still too large," said N.O.D. President Alan A. Reich. "Our goal of full participation is a dream deferred. I hope that the findings we are releasing today will inspire legislators, public officials, and the American people to rededicate themselves to this goal." To view additional findings, visit the N.O.D. website at [www.nod.org](http://www.nod.org).

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

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## **Justice Department publishes ADA checklist for polling places**

The U.S. Department of Justice, which regulates and enforces the accessibility requirements set forth by the Americans with Disabilities Act, has issued an accessibility checklist for polling places. This checklist is designed to help voting officials determine whether a polling place has basic accessible features needed by most voters with disabilities. With the checklist, users can identify barriers to access and determine how best to address them. The checklist focuses on those areas of a facility that are important to voting, including parking for voters, a drop off or loading area, the entrance to the polling place, and the pedestrian routes (both exterior and interior) that voters use to get to the voter check-in and voting area. Make sure your polling place has a copy of this checklist!

The checklist can be downloaded from the DOJ website at [www.ada.gov/votingck.htm](http://www.ada.gov/votingck.htm). Print copies are also available and can be ordered through the DOJ ADA information line at (800) 514-0301 (Voice), (800) 514-0383 (TTY).

## **Accessible voting machines rolled back for November's elections**

Due to controversy concerning the reliability of recently approved accessible electronic touchscreen voting machines, many polling places are removing the machines, while others have cancelled plans to offer accessible voting. Referred to as the "paper trail debate," critics are concerned that the electronic touchscreens will not provide a sufficient paper back up in the event that the electronic tallying of votes is inaccurate.

According to an article from the American Association of People with Disabilities, "instead of accessible touchscreens, counties and states have purchased inaccessible optical scan machines," even though these machines could present the same problem. This decision will only make voting all the more difficult for the millions of Americans with disabilities of voting age.

To learn more about this issue and to learn how you can advocate for equal access during this year's elections, either call Jim Dickson of AAPD at (800) 840-8844 or visit the following web blog: <http://equalvote.blogspot.com/>.

## **Wisconsin News**

### **Student leaders sought for grant to improve schools**

The Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities (WCDD) is seeking a few talented student leaders who want their school to be a better place for students with disabilities. They have grants of between \$250 and \$500 to give to students who want to create a project to improve their schools for students with disabilities. Students can use the grants to educate others on the vast and unique abilities that students with disabilities have to offer. To apply for a grant you must form a team including at least one student leader with a disability and one faculty support person. Applications for grants are due October 15, 2004.

Applications can be found on the WCDD website: [www.wcdd.org/grants\\_contracts/teen\\_grants.cfm](http://www.wcdd.org/grants_contracts/teen_grants.cfm). If you have any questions or need assistance on your application, please call Kathryn Mazack at (608) 266-5395.

### **Governor launches on-line Prescription Drug Resource Center**

*Excerpted from the Prescription Drug Resource Center website.*

Just across the border, citizens in Canada can walk into their corner drugstore and buy the same safe prescriptions we have here, but at a fraction of the price. Yet citizens of this country are forced to make unbearable choices between food and medicine. If the federal government isn't willing to take on the drug companies and fight for more affordable prices, states like Wisconsin will have to lead the way.

The Prescription Drug Resource Center gives you the ability to buy certain prescriptions at significantly lower prices directly from Canadian pharmacies that our state has visited and found to be safe, reputable, and reliable.

The goal is to let consumers make an informed choice among all of the available options - including local pharmacies, lower price generics available domestically, and safe Canadian pharmacies.

You can visit this resource center on-line at [www.drugsavings.wi.gov/](http://www.drugsavings.wi.gov/).

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## **ARC-Wisconsin 2004 State Conference**

The ARC of Racine is hosting the ARC-Wisconsin 2004 State Conference on Friday and Saturday, September 24th and 25th at the Racine Marriot. The conference will discuss the most pressing issues that impact persons with developmental disabilities, offer motivational programs and speakers, self-advocacy training, numerous exhibits and much more. To learn more, contact ARC Wisconsin at (877) 272-8400 or visit their website at [www.arc-wisconsin.org/](http://www.arc-wisconsin.org/).

### *What's Happening. . .*

#### *July 15, 2004 - Festa Italiana VIP Day*

Festa Italiana will open its 27th annual celebration with VIP Day for people with disabilities. From 11 a.m. until 2 p.m., Thursday, July 15, Festa will be closed to the general public, while thousands of citizens with disabilities will be able to enjoy everything Festa has to offer as guests of the festival. To receive your free admission ticket, call (414) 223-2808.

#### *August 5, 2004 - Quest for Immortality*

Thanks to a generous contribution, New Horizons Un-Limited is offering discounted admission tickets to the acclaimed exhibit at the Milwaukee Public Museum *The Quest for Immortality: Treasures of Ancient Egypt*. This exciting exhibit highlights the largest selection of Egyptian antiquities ever to travel outside of Egypt. While these tickets are valued at \$18.50, we are offering tickets for only \$7.00 to adults with lifelong disabilities for admittance on **August 5, 2004 at 1:30 p.m.** Tickets are offered on a first-come, first-serve basis and availability is limited, so don't hesitate. To request your registration packet, call (414) 299-0124.

#### *August 11, 2004 - NHU Benefit Golf Outing*

On Wednesday, August 11<sup>th</sup>, NHU will be hosting our 2004 Benefit Golf Outing at the Silver Spring Country Club in Menomonee Falls. We have a fun-filled day planned, complete with a pre-golf putting contest, a variety of challenging on-course events, a scrumptious lunch, after-round hors d'oeuvres and silent auction and of course an opportunity to catch up with friends and colleagues. Via this event we hope to not only raise crucial funds for our programs, but also educate our community on the disability experience. To learn more, call (414) 299-0124.

## **DNR breaks ground on Wisconsin's fifth fully accessible cabin**

In early Spring 2004 the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources broke ground in High Cliff State Park on Lake Winnebago to make way for Wisconsin's fifth fully accessible cabin. With demand for the other four fully accessible cabins at an all time high, this cabin, with an expected opening in August 2004, will be a welcome addition for many families impacted by disability.

In late 2002, in support of this project, New Horizons Un-Limited (NHU) founder Arthur Miller gifted architectural drawings to the Friends of the Wisconsin State Parks for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' "Cabin in the Woods" project. NHU contributed in the conceptual design of many of the accessible features, while Miller Engineering and Strass-Maguire & Associates worked on the overall structural and mechanical design of the cabin.

While these plans will be utilized in building the High Cliff Cabin, Wisconsin's fifth fully accessible cabin, we are thrilled to know that they will also serve as a template for future "Cabin in the Woods" projects in Wisconsin's state parks.

Dotti Krieger, Accessibility Coordinator for the Wisconsin DNR, attributes the success of the project to the residents of Wisconsin who, through their generous donation of funds, building plans, furniture, equipment, time and talent, have made the cabins a reality.

The High Cliff Project can still benefit from your support, however, as furnishings are still needed. To learn how you can lend your support to the High Cliff Cabin, please contact Dotti Krieger, DNR Accessibility Coordinator at (608) 267-7490 or the High Cliff State Park Manager, Joe Hennlich, at (920) 989-1106.

We applaud the Friends of Wisconsin State Parks and the Department of Natural Resources for continuing this wonderful program and for providing Wisconsin residents with disabilities the opportunity to experience all that our State Parks have to offer. We are so grateful to have been part of this project and are confident that the High Cliff cabin will be enjoyed for years to come.

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**Return Service Requested**

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*Access Technology, access opportunity*

In June 2003, we announced our Access Technology Computer Redistribution program. Via this program we grant refurbished, Internet-ready computers to adults with lifelong disabilities whom, without assistance, would not otherwise have access to computer and Internet technology.

Thanks to the donations of many and the dedication of our volunteers, we granted our first refurbished, Internet-ready computer on January 12, 2004. We addressed our entire waiting list by mid-May 2004 and now have a very short wait-time for computers. To date, we have distributed more than 30 computers to Southeastern Wisconsin residents with disabilities. We have an additional 20 computers refurbished and ready to go and hope to find new homes for each of them shortly.

If you believe you could benefit from a computer in your home, please contact us to request an application.

**To qualify as an individual, you must:**

- ✓ Be a resident of Southeastern Wisconsin.
- ✓ Be an adult with a lifelong disability OR the in-home caregiver of an individual with a disability.
- ✓ Have limited income.
- ✓ Have a commitment to learn about and embrace computer technology.

Non-profit organizations are also eligible to receive donated computers for use in their organizations. To learn more, give us a call at (414) 299-0124.



*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 the New Horizons Un-Limited 2004 Flower Bulb Fundraiser.

Our fundraiser features quality, affordably priced, 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!

We hope that you and a friend or two can find a spot in your gardens for a few bulbs that will not only brighten your spring day but also support a very worthwhile endeavor.

Contact us today at (414) 299-0124 to request your full color brochure. The brochure and order form will also be available for download from the NHU website beginning July 1, 2004.

Visit [www.new-horizons.org/04bulb.html](http://www.new-horizons.org/04bulb.html) to view the selection of bulbs and to download the order form.

*Shop at Pick 'n Save, earn \$\$ for NHU*

Add NHU's charity number **(542100)** to your Advantage Card and use it every time you shop your local Pick 'n Save. You'll not only save on your groceries, but also earn valuable \$ for NHU and your disability community. **It's simple and costs you nothing!** For more information, call us at (414) 299-0124 or stop by your local Pick 'n Save Service Desk.