

COMMUNICABILITY



A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR OUR DISABILITY COMMUNITY

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"Human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives."

~ William James ~

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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 more accessible to people with lifelong disabilities, their families and caregivers. To learn more about our mission and activities, please visit the NHU website at www.new-horizons.org.

National News

New Website encourages long-term care planning

The National Clearinghouse for Long-Term Care Information is a new web site developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to provide information and resources to help you and your family plan for future long-term care needs. While the website is aimed at the senior community, there is much information that can be helpful for families of younger people with disabilities. The website offers three sections, including: Understanding Long Term Care, Planning for Long Term Care and Paying for Long Term Care. The site also offers a planning guide for download.

This site can be visited at www.longtermcare.gov.

Free Tax Return Preparation

Don't let those important tax credits slip through your fingers. The IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program can ensure that you receive every dime you have coming to you. Trained community volunteers will prepare your returns and help you identify special credits, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Child Tax Credit, and Credit for the Elderly for which you may qualify. In addition to free tax return preparation assistance, most sites also offer free electronic filing (e-filing). There are volunteer sites throughout the United States. To find a location near you, call 1-800-829-1040.

Reduce your home energy bills for good - Check out the Federal Weatherization Assistance Program

The U.S. Department of Energy, via their Weatherization Assistance Program, enables low-income families to permanently reduce their energy bills by making their homes more energy efficient. It is this country's longest running, and perhaps most successful energy efficiency program.

Through this program, eligible homeowners can have energy efficient features installed in their homes **free of charge**. These are not expensive upgrades — the average expenditure limit is \$2,826 per home — but they are effective, and energy savings pay for the upgrades within a few years. On average, weatherization reduces heating bills by 31% and overall energy bills by \$358 per year at current prices.

With energy efficient features in place, homeowners would no longer have to rely on the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, a program that helps pay for home heating and cooling bills. These funds can instead be allocated towards programs addressing more pressing family issues.

While this is a federal program, each state maintains its own guidelines. To find the agency that administers the weatherization program in your state, visit the U.S. Department of Energy website online at www.eere.energy.gov/weatherization/state_contacts.html and click on your state on the map.

A New Year: A New You

4 Keys to Developing Your Courage

By Dr. Janette Marie Freeman
www.janettemariefreeman.com

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Courage is not the absence of fear. It is the strength to be who and what you are -- despite the fear! Here are steps we can take to develop courage and let go of the fears that stop us from achieving our goals.

1. Recognize the fear.

Don't make excuses and call it something else. You cannot overcome or move through your fear if you don't recognize it as such. You can blame someone else, you can call it impossible or you can just admit that you are afraid. Once you admit that fear is operating, you can begin to change it.

2. Gain understanding from the fear.

What am I basing this fear on? Choose to see a deeper truth. We experience fear when we believe the lies that our ego is telling us. We believe what we have accepted as truth either consciously or unconsciously. What do you believe as true? What rules have you set for yourself? Do you want to keep living by them? You are the chooser.

3. Commit to Courage.

Declare the deeper truth. Persistently reprogram yourself for success and courageous actions.

Remember that great love and great achievements involve great risk.

4. Face the fear.

Feel the fear and do it anyway. Honor your courage. Take action. Honor yourself every time you face a fear. Especially the little ones.

Remember...

Courage is built one success at a time. You are successful every time you try!

Once you have admitted it is only fear holding you back, you can move through it.

Parachutes weren't proven trustworthy by having people carry them around on their backs. The device showed its worth once someone jumped.

Don't Make Depression Your Disability Depression - You Can Feel Better!

By Bobbie Ratcliff

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*The following is excerpted from the article, "Depression - You Can Feel Better!," the beginning chapter to **Don't Make Depression Your Disability**, written by Bobbie Ratcliff. Bobbie has given us a way to look at life that can turn our lives around for the better. Having sustained an injury and subsequent illness, pain and disability, Bobbie has experienced first hand the extreme down side of disability. Bobbie and Anne, his wife of 24 years, have made their journey together which has brought them to this place and time. Now he has shared their remarkable, yet simple, everyday solutions, their "Cookbook for a Healthy Emotional Diet." With humor and humanity, he persuades us to make the most of life with his self-enlightened ideas to cope with illness and disability.*

* * *

If there is any symptom that all illnesses or disabilities share, be it psychological or physical, it's depression! Many of us who face change, hardship of life or suffer from uncontrollable pain from illness or disability will inevitably deal with depression. With ratings between 1 and 10, one's pain can be as slight as a pinprick or severe enough to lose consciousness to cause depression. Like the physical disability or chronic illness that we now face on a daily basis, depression is one more symptom that's shared by one and all.

Caring physicians offer medications, empathetic psychologists listen with educated intellect, while family and friends show their loving concern as they, too, share in the frustration with the suffering that often exceeds the disability itself.

If you're seeking for a way to alleviate, dissipate, or eliminate those hours, weeks and months of feeling downright lousy, there is a restoration, remedy and cure. Depression can be a thing of the past, and no longer your daily companion. It can be gutted from your life, once and for all.

In order to eradicate any symptoms of depression, one must first define, diagnose, and recognize it for what it is. Only then can an effective therapy plan be formulated for each and every sufferer, great or small, with mild or severe symptoms.

Definition: Sometimes depression is a way you feel when you just don't feel the way you use to feel. To feel depressed is to feel disharmonious with oneself, an experience of sadness that exceeds just how bad it really is, our inner core eroding into itself.

NEW HORIZONS UN-LIMITED

5th Annual Raffle for Opportunity

1st Prize

Rectangle DIAMOND PENDANT on 18" Chain

14kt White Gold, 23 diamonds, 0.28 CTW

\$588 Value

A variety of other valuable prizes will be offered.

Tickets:

\$3 each • 2 for \$5 • 5 for \$10

Drawing:

March 22, 2007 • You need not be present to win.

Our Annual Raffle is one of our major fundraising events of the year, raising thousands of dollars annually to support our initiatives, through which we make information and life experiences more accessible to individuals with lifelong disabilities and their families. To request a complete list of prizes, or if you are interested in purchasing or selling raffle tickets, please give us a call at (414) 299-0124.

We would like to extend a very special thank you to Gold 'n Treasures for their continued support!



Hales Corners, Wisconsin

"Depression - You Can Feel Better!," Continued from p. 2

Diagnosis: To obtain a diagnosis one must undergo a process of subjective observations by both professional and caring participants on how one feels. This process usually entails a thorough and comparative analysis of patterns, old and new. It always includes observations of physical and verbal communications and a whole lot of gut instinct. Most often, it's the persons themselves who know, plain and simple, the severity of their suffering.

All too often, I've seen ill and disabled people seek attentive physicians who immediately start a pharmaceutical therapy solution as soon as feelings of melancholy appear on the horizon. Filling shelves that line our drugstores, medicines abound that ease or eliminate. It's easy to see why even well trained doctors become firm believers in prescribing just one more pill.

Now **please don't disregard the importance of utilizing the services of highly trained medical**

professionals, but instead, see them as a part of the solution to a healthier state of mind, not the whole. **In many instances that care is a starting point to future wellness.**

Evaluate the abilities within yourself to help yourself. Because you just might be surprised at the healing powers within. Sometimes it's only when the need is greatest that the inner self can most clearly understand the areas of your life that are stopping you from loving every single minute without the dragging force of depression.

Recognition: This comes to us when we find ourselves in a state in which we just can't stand feeling this darn lousy one more minute! It's when the days stretch out with hopelessness and the nights go on forever; it's when we know that something has got to change, and the time is NOW! When you understand in full the invasive force of emotional darkness, you'll start your walk towards the light.

Making headway: There is help! There is a solution! You can make all those morbid feelings of worthlessness and emptiness erode into nothing more than a bad day, yesterday. Today can be brighter and filled with purpose for no other reason than, "Today is always worth something, if we're willing to give or find value in it." You're in it! That in itself makes it special! Now, it's what you decide to do with this day that's going to make today count, so let's start doing some math.

The best prescription I've found, and hopefully you'll find too, for ridding yourself once and all from depression is:

1. Stop thinking about yourself: Instead, replace that with thoughts of someone else, anyone else, as long as those people are a positive force in your life. Yep, you got it! That's all it really takes, but with a bit more context and a lot more effort.

We're all guilty of it. I sure know that I am. Whenever we seem to have an extra minute or two, our minds inevitably seem to focus on whatever is going on, in, with, or around ourselves. It's a topic of which we just can't seem to get enough. Of course, there really can't be anything much more interesting than me - or is there? Self-care and ego are two mighty close neighbors. Caring for ourselves, so we can care about others, is humanism. Ego unchecked can mutate into caring more about only "one", "me." "Me" can fuel the fires of depression hotter than any other fuel source.

Tomorrow morning when you get up, the first thing you'll say to that spouse, family member, friend, or even God is, "How are you doing today?" You will not ask yourself how you're feeling or doing. That's a no-no! You will not make any type of subtle inquiry facing inward. Tomorrow you're not going to care about you. Instead, you'll let others have that joy. You see, the same pleasure and jubilation you experience in caring about others goes both ways! Allowing others to care about you is just as beneficial to them as it is for you to care about them.

Amazing isn't it! When we care about others, our whole body seems to care more about us. It's supposed to. That's how it all works. With endorphins rushing throughout, newfound energies, and lust for life will replace those down-turned, dog-eared feelings of sadness and despair. Even as I type,

"Today is always worth something, if we're willing to give or find value in it."
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That in itself makes it special!

experts in white lab coats are running around test cases as they tabulate the positive effects of care and love for others.

When we give of ourselves, we inevitably find ourselves on the receiving end as well. This symbiotic relationship allows us to enjoy one another's company, another's amazing thought processes, morality, wellness of spirit and overall goodness. This is a sure fire way to set off what I call the "**Domino Endorphin Effect**," and all it takes is to care about someone else, more than you do yourself. **Best part is - everyone wins!**

2. Care with all your heart about others: No matter what your health condition is, tomorrow you will figure out a way to show your love and caring heart for someone else, but it's one thing to say it, another to show it.

Inactivity is a killer. We must work our hearts both emotionally and physically. It doesn't matter what part of your body improperly functions, so long as you keep moving the parts that still can get up and get out.

If you're like me, you now reside in the classification of being 100% disabled. The United States Government, Department of Social Security has determined it, and your body is always around to remind you of it. In all probability, you will remain gainfully unemployed for the rest of your life. So now, you've got to figure out what to do with this newly discovered time. Instead of seeing your disability as disabling, I propose that you view it as the greatest opportunity to become more of the person you've always wanted to be. Now is the time, this very moment, to show others your appreciation, love, and care. Give of yourself from this day forward in brand new ways never dreamed of before; your heart will love you for it.

On those days when the body just can't seem to get out of park, you can always take your brain for a walk.

© 2006, **Bobbie Ratcliff**

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To read Bobbie's article in its entirety, please visit our Disability Experiences: Writing and Perspectives web section: www.new-horizons.org/prsdp1.html.

We hope to make additional chapters of his publication **Don't Make Depression Your Disability** available on our website in the coming months.

Wisconsin Events

Break out of your shell, Learn the secrets of forming great friendships



The Milwaukee Center for Independence will be hosting a six-session workshop on friendship. They will discuss easy steps you can take to meet new people and help them see what a wonderful person you are! You will learn interpersonal skills, including: greeting others, listening, holding conversations, offering help, and

keeping friends. You will also learn coping skills, including what you can do about: feeling left out, negotiating with others, peer pressure and expressing anger. The workshop will take place on Wednesdays from 6-7 p.m. February 7, 14, 21, 28 & March 7 & 14 at the MCFI campus at 2020 W. Wells Street in Milwaukee.

There is a \$30 registration fee. For more information or to reserve your spot, call (414) 937-2092.

Wisconsin News

New website helps you identify public health and nutrition programs

The Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) recently launched a new web tool for low-income Wisconsin residents. ACCESS is a convenient and secure, easy-to-use internet tool that can help you identify which low or no-cost health, nutrition and other programs for which you might be eligible.

This site also provides you with the opportunity to:

- ✓ Apply online for FoodShare, Medicaid/BadgerCare and the Family Planning Waiver Program.
- ✓ Get up-to-date information about the status of your FoodShare, Medicaid/BadgerCare, Family Planning Waiver Program, SeniorCare or Caretaker Supplement benefits.
- ✓ Get answers to common questions about benefits.

Visit <https://access.wisconsin.gov> to access this helpful online tool.

Program encourages volunteerism, opens doors to employment

DOORS: Disability Outreach Offering Resources Through Service is a relatively new initiative of the Volunteer Center of Milwaukee aimed at increasing the employability, and therefore the economic self-sufficiency of people with disabilities in the Greater Milwaukee area. The program links volunteers with disabilities to a variety of volunteer opportunities. Through the volunteer experiences, participants gain important work skills, while also serving our community. Previous opportunities have included: Financial Educator, Tax Preparer, Workshop Facilitator, Urban Greenhouse Assistant, and Credit Union Teller.

If you have a disability and wish to take advantage of the opportunities presented by this initiative, contact Lisa Anderson of the Volunteer Center, via e-mail at **Landerson@volunteermilwaukee.org** or via phone at (414) 273-7887. Transportation assistance is available to participants.

SPEAKING OF VOLUNTEERING...

New Horizons Un-Limited is in need of a few good men and women to keep our programs thriving in 2007. We encourage our community members with disabilities to become involved.

Following are a few volunteer opportunities...

Office Assistants

Responsibilities include, filing, information packet and application assembly, mailings, and database entry, among other tasks. The ideal volunteer will have good organizational skills as well as some experience on a computer.

Computer Set-Up

We need assistance in assembling computer workstations for our Computer Grant Applicants. Responsibilities include, identifying a matching monitor, keyboard and mouse and connecting each to the PC. Volunteers may also perform simple tests to ensure functionality. The ideal volunteer will be able to lift up to 30 pounds comfortably and have a general knowledge of computers.

Computer Clean-Up

Responsibilities will include the cleaning of hardware: PCs, monitors, keyboards, mice, etc.

All volunteer activities take place at our downtown Milwaukee office. Reimbursement for transportation and parking is offered. For more information on any of these opportunities, please call (414) 299-0124.

New Horizons Un-Limited Access Technology Program Grows by Leaps and Bounds in 2006

Thanks to countless hours donated by our volunteer computer refurbishers and of course the computer donations from many, many caring individuals and businesses, we served a record number with our Computer Redistribution Program this year. More than 130 individuals with disabilities and their family members received a refurbished computer via our program in 2006. That is a 40% increase over last year.

While a seemingly simple tool, a computer has for many of our recipients proven to be **the tool** they needed to rediscover their self-confidence and pursue their personal goals. Since receiving training and a computer of their own, so many of our students and computer recipients have proclaimed, "I am so proud of myself...I had no idea I was capable of this."

From the artist that is learning how to create a digital library of her work, to the writer that has successfully submitted his editorials for publishing in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, to the student that is successfully preparing college-level essays, we have seen, first-hand, the accomplishments and pride made possible by their computers.

Of course, behind every success there stands a legion of individuals and businesses, without which we simply could not have accomplished all that we have this past year.

While every contribution has added a great deal of value to our program, there are a few standout contributors this year that we would like to acknowledge.

Medical Associates, Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin

Upon recently upgrading computers at their area offices, Medical Associates was in search of a home for their recently "retired" computers. Thanks to one of our dedicated golf outing sponsors, Good Electric, Medical Associates learned about our program and was impressed by its mission. In late October, with the help of Good Electric, we picked up more than 100 Pentium III Gateway desktop computers. We've already refurbished and distributed nearly 30 of these systems to applicants that may not have otherwise received a computer this year.

Roundy's Supermarkets, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Our "next door neighbor" for several years now, we would often hustle past Roundy's with carts full of computers. Sam, the security guard at the time, took notice and extended the use of the loading zone in front of their building - a much-appreciated offering. Upon moving into Office Services, Sam recalled our program and suggested that Roundy's consider donating their recently retired PCs to our organization. After a little coordination, we eagerly accepted the donation of more than 40 Pentium III and IV Dell desktop computers in mid-December. We have already begun preliminary refurbishing and look forward to distributing these rather robust PCs in early 2007.

We simply cannot say thank you enough. These contributions have and will continue to make such a tremendous difference in the lives of our recipients!
