

**NHU Outlook** is published by **New Horizons Un-Limited Inc. (NHU)**, a 501(c)3 tax exempt non-profit disability advocacy organization that connect those impacted by disability to the information, tools and experiences that encourage lifelong learning and community, so that we may work together to create a more inclusive, accepting society.

Our programs are possible through the generous contributions of our community partners, member and donor families and many in-kind donors. To contribute to New Horizons Un-Limited, please see our flyer inside this newsletter.

To learn more about NHU, visit our website at [new-horizons.org](http://new-horizons.org) or e-mail us at [horizons@new-horizons.org](mailto:horizons@new-horizons.org)

***“We know we are on the right path. Our journey is not finished, but we have come a long way.”***

– Muhammadu Buhari

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January 2025

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## NHU is Celebrating 30 Years of Service

30 years ago, when New Horizons Un-Limited (NHU) first opened our doors, in December 1994, we lived in a nation where disabled people were not an integral part of our communities.

Disabled individuals rarely held full-time jobs, rarely participated in anything other than “special” activities; indeed, we rarely even saw disabled individuals in our communities. The disabled did not have a voice in their futures.

In 1994, we were only a few decades into creating laws that granted disabled individuals rights.

***Disabled Americans were just beginning to understand what freedom meant, and now, 30 years later, freedom still, in the truest sense, remains just outside of their grasp.***

Since the beginning, NHU has prioritized connecting individuals impacted by disability to each other, as well as to the information and tools they need to find their voice and use it for the betterment of their own and others’ lives.

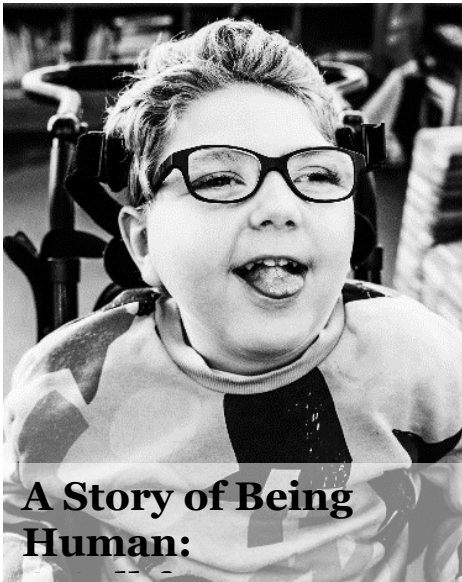
Over these past three decades, our organization has evolved with the needs of our disabled family, friends and neighbors.

In 1994, information was hard to come by, so we created a national online resource directory accessed by millions of visitors over its 30-year history.

We soon realized that internet and computer access was just as difficult to come by, so we collaborated with businesses and schools to create a computer-refurbishing program that granted computers to thousands of homes in Southeast Wisconsin.

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## A Story of Being Human:

"There are so many things that I never thought about before having a child that's disabled. Now it's something I have to think about every time we leave the house. If a group of friends wants to meet up at a park I have to think ahead of time. "Do they have anything there that Benjamin could actually do? What is the parking like? Are there woodchips?"

All of those things add up...it's just tiny barrier, after tiny barrier. I would love to be able to be more spontaneous and on a whim say "today, let's go here." But you just can't. You have to do so much planning ahead. It's surprising how many places are still inaccessible or claim to be accessible but are not." – Benjamin's Mom

## A Story of Being Human

shares the lived experiences of kids, adults and families impacted by disability. We hope that we may create a better understanding of what it is like to navigate a world that is not built for everyone.

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## NHU is Celebrating 30 Years of Service

After hearing from so many of our community members of their desire to work, we partnered with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to create temporary work experiences through which we could offer job training and assess the job readiness of potential job applicants.

We hired several of these temporary workers and they remain with us today.

Seeing a strong need for remote work opportunities, we reached out to our business partners and advocated for increased work-from-home opportunities and the untapped pool of talent within the disability community. While we were met with skepticism at the time, during the Covid-19 Pandemic, many companies adopted a remote workforce, and continue to offer hybrid work schedules that benefit all workers.

The Covid-19 Pandemic revealed a sharp contrast between healthy Americans and those who are disabled or chronically ill. It was then that we realized that no matter how much we work to prepare individuals for opportunities, it is for naught, if the opportunities simply are not there. This is when we shifted our focus to advocacy.

We have come full circle back to the early days of NHU. We know that we cannot speak for those impacted by disability. They must speak for themselves.

***We will continue to stand alongside our family, friends and neighbors with disabilities for as long as it takes, and we hope that we can count on you to do the same!***

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Change never happens at the pace we think it should. It happens over years of people joining together, strategizing, sharing, and pulling all the levers they possibly can. Gradually, excruciatingly slowly, things start to happen, and then suddenly, seemingly out of the blue, something will tip.

- Judith Heumann



## 2025: A Year of Anticipated Change

The past year has witnessed significant global transformations, encompassing geopolitical conflicts in the Middle East and Ukraine, along with remarkable advancements in artificial intelligence and electoral shifts affecting political landscapes.

The outcomes of 2024 are poised to have a profound influence on the priorities of the new Congress as it shapes economic policy. Many industry experts are forecasting substantial cuts to discretionary spending, which could jeopardize crucial support systems such as Medicaid—an essential lifeline for nearly every individual with disabilities.

The importance of Medicaid programs and services often goes unnoticed by the general population. It plays a vital role in providing necessary medical services within the recipient's home or community, including home health visits, therapy services, and medical supplies. Furthermore, Medicaid offers long-term care options, such as personal assistance, housekeeping, and nursing services in diverse settings, including private residences, residential care facilities, group homes, and nursing facilities.

Medicaid is underfunded and that's why nationally, there are 692,000 disabled people languishing on waitlists for services. Instead of cuts, we need more funding. Disability is a part of our shared human experience – we all know someone in our family and community that has a disability and it affects every generation regardless of political party affiliation.

In light of anticipated budget cuts and program terminations, New Horizons Un-Limited (NHU) is committed to advocating for the preservation of these vital services.

### Understanding Our Advocacy Efforts

Advocacy refers to the act or process of supporting a particular cause or proposal and encompasses three main types: Self Advocacy, Individual Advocacy, and Systems Advocacy. ***In the upcoming year, with your collaboration, NHU aims to allocate resources toward creating educational material focused on Self-Advocacy as well as Systems Advocacy.***

Our initiative will involve the development of various educational resources, such as articles on our website, updates on social media platforms, newsletters, and brochures, aimed at empowering individuals and communities to advocate effectively for their needs. At NHU, we also recognize the importance of meeting with our state legislators, making calls and submitting research to congressional committees.

In the meantime, we will continue to provide support for our Computer Grant recipients and have introduced a new initiative dedicated to training individuals with disabilities in AI applications. Given that artificial intelligence is becoming increasingly integrated into various aspects of daily life, it is essential to enhance the skill sets of disabled individuals seeking employment by incorporating knowledge of AI.

Additionally, we have launched a storytelling project across our social media platforms. This initiative serves as a



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*There is one thing you  
have got to learn  
about our movement.  
Three people are  
better than no people.*

- Fannie Lou Hamer

personal narratives, which is a crucial component of our advocacy efforts. By facilitating a space for these voices to be heard, we are empowering individuals to share their "disability stories" and play a role in fostering awareness and understanding.

***We would like to express our gratitude for your support, which enables us to make a meaningful impact in the lives of many individuals.***

***Thank you!***

**Winter2024**

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For resources on everything disability, visit NHU's website: [new-horizons.org/datcat.html](http://new-horizons.org/datcat.html)

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