ACCESS GUIDEBOOK

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LAUNCHING OUR FIRST DISABILITY NEWSLETTER

"It's about time" was the feedback we heard when we first started telling people that the ADRC was creating a newsletter specifically geared for the disability community. When the suggestion to publish this newsletter came earlier this year from our Advisory Committee member Sarah Winn, we couldn't have agreed more. The longstanding Senior Life newsletter is very popular in La Crosse but it does not pertain directly to the interests of the roughly 6.7% of county residents under the age of 65 who have a disability, their families and caregivers. So here we are. This is the debut of Access Guidebook—your source for disability resources and support!

August 2023

Quarterly

Keep in mind, this newsletter is a work in progress. It will be a process of trial and error to create a product that is relevant, informative, and accessible. And that process will depend in part on you! If you have any trouble reading this newsletter, we want to know. If you have ideas, new resources and stories that deserve to be shared, we want to know. Nothing about you without you, is our motto.

> Get on the Access Guidebook mailing list. Call: 608-785-5700 Email: adrc@lacrossecounty.org

Submit your feedback about Access Guidebook Survey link: https://forms.gle/rNuFUHBZ2x5TGgtW8

YOUR INPUT IS NEEDED! CITY OF LA CROSSE ACCESSIBILITY

The City of La Crosse needs to hear from you about accessibility! The city is evaluating all cityowned buildings, parks, programs, and services to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Information provided from the public will be used to create an ADA Transition Plan. This plan aims to make the city fully accessible. The survey is open through August 5th. Survey Link: <u>https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LaCrosseADAPublicSurvey</u>

LA CROSSE COMMITTEE FOR CITIZENS WITH DISABILITIES

The Committee for Citizens with Disabilities is working closely with the Mayor and ADA Coordinator to develop the accessibility Transition Plan. Jeff Nylander, Chair of the Committee for Citizens with Disabilities says there have been 10 site inspections so far focused on city buildings and parks with beaches. These inspections "will point out the ADA issues and help the city prioritize what needs to be done" - anything and everything from signage to heights/widths, ramps, automatic doors, and access to the beach for wheelchair users. This is a huge endeavor that will result in a lot of time, effort, and cost. "You have to pick your battles", Jeff says, yet the committee has an eye on many areas needing improvement. One of the committee's focus areas is mobility. It is no secret that La Crosse is not the most pedestrian friendly. It can be difficult for anyone to cross the road let alone using a wheelchair, walker, or white cane. Consequently, members of the committee are working to ensure that La Crosse installs audible crosswalks and pedestrian crossing lights at major throughways. They are voicing concerns about safety for people with disabilities when crossing at roundabouts. Jeff Nylander says he plans to ensure that accessibility is at the forefront of local decision-making by collaborating with other groups such as the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. Thanks to Jeff's advocacy, any new plans regarding mobility need to be brought to the Committee for Citizens with Disabilities as well as the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. Both groups will make recommendations before a decision is made. Another example of the collaboration needed with other departments involves snow removal during the winter months. The committee is having ongoing conversations with the Parks, Public Works, and Streets departments to address concerns about improper snow removal

on sidewalks and at curb cuts. Part of the solution is identifying "emergency access routes" which Jeff explains are "essential routes that must be cleared to ensure access to grocery stores, bus stops..." and other necessities. The committee needs public input to identify what streets and corners should be included.

CALLING ALL ADVOCATES!

If you have a disability and work, reside in, or visit the City of La Crosse, your voice needs to be heard! The Committee for Citizens with Disabilities welcomes you to join their meetings and present any issues or concerns – this includes individual and community matters. The committee is also looking for people of all ages who can be **advocates** in working groups.

Meetings on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 9am.

Attend virtually or in person. Location: Council Chambers in City Hall 400 La Crosse St., La Crosse, WI 54601

A little history...

Created by the City of La Crosse on December 12, 2019, the Committee for Citizens with Disabilities consists of nine La Crosse city residents: seven who have disabilities or family members with disabilities, and two who work for organizations that assist people with disabilities.

Their mission is to ensure that city owned and operated facilities and resources are accessible to all. The committee strives to create a community that values and respects people of all disabilities and those who are regarded as having disabilities.

Questions? Contact Committee Chair Jeff Nylander

jnylander62@charter.net 608-780-6756

See page 10 for more advocacy opportunities.

SAVE THE DATE 2023 Self-Determination Conference



Be Curious: Explore the Possibilities October 16-18, 2023

Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells, WI & virtual conference option

For more information visit: www.WI-SDC.com

Questions or need assistance? Call: 920-723-5571 Email: selfdetermined@incontrolwisconsin.org

Session Topics:

Community Connections

- Technology
- Employment
- Mindfulness
- Relationship Building
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Advocacy
- Emotional Health
- Transition to Adulthood

Registration costs:

Person with a disability is \$100 (early bird \$85) or \$50 for virtual conference Family member is \$150 (early bird \$100) or \$50 for virtual conference *Scholarships are available!

Early bird registration ends on August 25, 2023 Registration deadline is September 15, 2023

Who should attend? Self-advocates Transition-age students Family members Educators Advocates Service providers

FIND A JOB. KEEP A JOB. GET A BETTER JOB.

The Wisconsin Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) helps people with disabilities find employment. You are eligible if your disability makes it hard for you to find or keep a job and you need help to address your disability limitations so you can reach your job goal.

What does DVR do?

- Provide employment services and counselling
- Provide/arrange for services that enable a person to work
- Provide training and technical assistance to employers regarding disability employment issues

Apply for services online or call the local office. Website: https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/referral/ Phone: 608-405-4120 / 1-800-523-2139



Department of Workforce Development

To help us continue providing this valuable newsletter, please consider making a donation.

Donate online at www.lacrossecounty.org/adrc Find the yellow "donate" button toward the bottom of the page. Mail a check to: ADRC of La Crosse County 300 4th St. N, La Crosse, WI 54601 Write "Access Guidebook" in the memo line.

Thank you for your support!

Benefits of Employment (other than a paycheck):

Learn new skills

Meet new people

Meaning

Purpose

Sense of identity

Challenge

Connection

Employment can lead to more happiness and greater wellbeing.

LOCAL RESOURCE HIGHLIGHTS

STAR Center

Physical fitness, adaptive and therapeutic recreation, parasports

The STAR Center programs are for youth, adults and seniors. Parasports or adaptive sports are designed for people with physical and developmental disabilities. They make adjustments to a game or sport so that everyone can play! **Fall & Winter Programs 2023:** Parkinson's Disease programs

Adaptive Soccer Adaptive and Para Badminton Adaptive and Para Pickleball Adaptive and Para Strength & Conditioning Wheelchair Basketball Adaptive Flag Football Wheelchair Football Sled hockey



Website: www.starcenterlacrosse.org Email: info@starcenterlacrosse.org Phone: 608-797-6718

Adaptive Kickball League

@ Features Fieldhouse, 1425 WI-16, West Salem, WI 54669 Adult & High School League. Middle & Elementary School League. \$60/athlete.

Sign up at: www.featuresfieldhouse.com

Livin' Ona Spare! Adaptive Bowling

August 14 @ Coulee Golf Bowl, Onalaska September 11 @ Features, West Salem For adults 18+ with cognitive or mobility challenges \$8 for 2 games and shoes Contact Keri: meske@onalaskaschools.com

YMCA Inclusion & Adaptive Programs

Various sports and programs offered throughout the year for children and adults with disabilities.

Website: https://www.laxymca.org/inclusion/ Phone/Text: 608-782-9622

Special Recreation Programs

La Crosse Parks & Rec

Game Club Movie Nights BINGO Nights Craft Club

Nature Walks Beach Party Fishing Club

More information at: www.cityoflacrosse.org/parks Phone: 608-789-2489

Special Olympics Sports

Winter Season (December—February) Downhill Skiing Snowboarding Bowling (September—December) Spring Season (January-April) Basketball Swimming More information and register online at:



More information and register online at: www.cityoflacrosse.org/parks Phone: 608-789-2489

HorseSense

Therapeutic horseback riding lessons with additional activities offered for individuals who have physical or medical complications that prohibit assisted mounting and dismounting. Private lessons—group lessons—group outings Financial assistance available. Website: www.horsesensewi.org Email: info@horsesensewi.org Phone: 608-518-5356



North American Squirrel Association (N.A.S.A.) Outdoor recreational therapy

N.A.S.A. provides outdoor opportunities for people with disabilities. Activities include: fishing, pontoon rental, hunting, shooting clinic, skiing, golf, kayaking, sled hockey, bicycling, and free Action Trackchair rentals.

Website: www.nasasquirrel.org Email: nasasquirrel@yahoo.com Phone: 608-234-5988



TEPP helps people with disabilities buy specialized equipment needed for the telephone. Must be hard of hearing, Deaf, have a speech disability, or a mobility/motion disability. No income or age requirements. A \$100 copay applies but there is assistance if you cannot afford that. Examples of equipment that can be purchased with TEPP vouchers:

Amplified telephone Amplified headset Captioned telephone Hands-free speaker phone Refreshable Braille display

Eye gaze device Mobile phone Tablet Telephone signaling/alert device

Want more information? Visit: https://psc.wi.gov/Pages/ForConsumers/TEPP.aspx Or call: Independent Living Resources 608-787-1111



Able Reads Collection Books for all abilities

- Nonfiction
- Picture cookbooks
- Graphic novels
- Easy to read novels
- Picture books for adults

Check out these books at the Onalaska Public Library or on the county library website.

Website: www.lacrossecountylibrary.org Email: onalaskalibrary@lacrossecounty.org Phone: 608-781-9568

Best Buddies

Friendship, mentorship

If you are between 18 and 40 years old, you can join Best Buddies. You get matched with a student from the college, and you meet with your buddy at least 2 times per month. This program is offered by Aptiv and UW- La Crosse.



BEST BUDDIES

Website: www.aptiv.org/events/best-buddies-with-uw-lacrosse Email: denise.lorenz@aptiv.org Phone: 608-784-9450

Tell us what you think!

Take our survey and tell us what you want to see in future newsletters. Let us know how we are doing and if we can make any improvements.

Survey link: https://forms.gle/rNuFUHBZ2x5TGgtW8



RESOURCES CONTINUED

Home Accessibility Grants

Up to \$10,000 available to assist eligible homeowners and long-term renters with accessibility modifications to their homes in order to maintain or find employment for themselves or other household members.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Live in La Crosse, Monroe, Vernon or Crawford County
- Household income must be at 80% county median income or lower
- Participate in a home assessment provided by Independent Living Resources

The \$10,000 includes assessment fees and is granted to the client. Additional repair funds may be available pending eligibility.

Contact Sara Berger at CouleeCap sara.berger@couleecap.org



INDEPENDENT LIVING RESOURCES, INC.

Assistive Technology Needs?

Independent Living Resources has a technology loan and demonstration program including a donation closet with safe, gently-used devices and durable medical equipment. Call: 608-787-1111 Email: advocacy@ilresources.org

AccessOurCity.org

Community access

Access Our City helps people locate inclusive stores, restaurants, and local businesses with information on the accommodations provided at each place as well as a helpful map. You are encouraged to leave reviews that will help others know more before they go!

Website: www.accessourcity.org



Neurodiverse Connections

Speed-Meeting Event Coming Fall 2023—Date, time, location to be determined Ages 18-30 and 30+

Are you interested in meeting other neurodivergent individuals? You can decide who you want to connect with and whether you would like to be friends or date. Your preferences are kept secret unless a match is made!



Contact Jenna @ ADRC of La Crosse County for more information.

Email: jjuve@lacrossecounty.org Phone: 608-785-6203

Healthy Relationships & Sexuality Workshop

Skills building & education

Part 1: General Relationships

Learn about different types of relationships, communication skills, internet and social media communication, being in a relationship and more.

Part 2: Sexuality and Advanced Topics

Learn about sexual feelings and attraction, body parts, caring for your body, talking about sex, having children, avoiding pregnancy and more.

Open to transition age youth (ages 13-17)

Adult sessions may be available in the future.

Sessions starting Fall 2023 Mondays & Wednesdays 3-5pm @ Aptiv in La Crosse ONLY 8 SPOTS AVAILABLE!

To register or learn more, contact Aptiv. Website: www.aptiv.org Phone: 608-785-3527

Youth to Adult Transition Resource Website General Information

Website: https://www.laxctytransitioncommunity.org/

Are you preparing for life as an adult with a disability? This website provides information to youth and their families on a range of topics including:

- Long-term care options
- Employment

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- Transportation
- Benefits & financial planning
- Health care
- Housing
- Guardianship & other options
- Post-secondary education
- High school transition planning and programs

Remember, the Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) is your partner in the transition-planning process. We can help you explore your options and make informed choices. Ask your high school transition coordinator if it is time for a referral to the ADRC!

<u>Coffee Connect for Visually Impaired Persons (VIP)</u> Meeting Friday, August 4th 10:45am

Open to people with visual impairments and their caregivers.

Meets 1st Friday of the month 10:45am—12pm Harry J. Olson Senior Center 1607 North St., La Crosse, WI Zoom option available **Contact Jeannie Nylander for more information Phone: 608-781-3361 Email: mjnylander61@charter.net**



<u>Diabetes Support Group of the Coulee Region</u> Virtual Meeting Tuesday, Nov. 14th 5:30pm-6:30pm

For prediabetes, Type 1, Type 2, and caregivers Offers education, tips, recipes, success stories and more.

Registration encouraged. Phone: 608-775-6870 Email: wellness@gundersenhealth.org

Emergency Planning for Caregivers

Tuesday, Sept. 12th 3pm—4pm *Register by Sept 8th MERIT Centre North, 1020 Windsor St., La Crosse, WI 54603

Life is unexpected. What happens if a crisis stops you from being able to care for your loved one? A good emergency plan includes all the information that someone else will need in order to take over temporary care. This class will help you start your plan.

Contact the ADRC to register or find out about future classes. Phone: 608-785-5700 Email: adrc@lacrossecounty.org

Disclaimer

The Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of La Crosse County acknowledges that the resources provided in this directory are not all inclusive to the options available in La Crosse County. Furthermore, the ADRC of La Crosse County has no affiliation with, endorsement of or contract with the entities listed. This listing is not intended to be a marketing tool; it is intended exclusively for the sole benefit of assisting individuals in locating services, classes or programs.

The ADRC of La Crosse County is not responsible for any changes that may have been implemented after publication. It is the sole responsibility of individuals to personally contact the agencies listed to confirm details and check availability.

Miss RemarkAble Pageant Applications Now Open!

Saturday November 18, 2023 UW La Crosse, Union Bluffs Room Doors open at 2:30 pm



You could be the next Miss RemarkAble!

Eligible candidates are females age 13 years and older. To request an application, email: foundation@aptiv.org Applications are due by Friday, September 15 2023.

Miss RemarkAble is a pageant for women with disabilities ages 13 and older. It provides an opportunity to build life skills, confidence, and self-esteem through educational workshops, one-on-one interviews, and an on-stage pageant.

During the pageant, contestants will introduce themselves, answer a question, and show their RemarkAble Me videos. Contestants will also receive a personalized title, crown, sash, and flowers.

For more information, call: 608-785-3560 Email: foundation@aptiv.org

This event is a fundraiser for the Aptiv Foundation. All proceeds are used to fund facility improvements, new programming, and equipment for services provided to people with disabilities.

Western Technical College Presents: SUPERFEST Disability Film Festival Coming this fall! Date TBD



For questions or accommodations, contact Kris Follansbee Email: follansbeek@westerntc.edu

Two (or Three) Wheel Tuesdays! 10am on August 8, 15, 22, and 29 Chad Erickson Memorial Park, 3601 Park Lane Dr., La Crosse

Join the ADRC for a bike ride on Tuesdays at 10am during the month of August beginning August 8th. Riders may bring their own bike, or use a Drift Cycle bike or trike located at Chad Erickson Memorial Park.

To register to participate and/or reserve a bike or trike, call the ADRC at 608-785-5700 at least 24 hours in advance. Bikes and trikes will be available first come first serve and free of charge for individuals who register in advance.



How to rent a bike:

- 1. Download Drift App from Apple or Google Store
- 2. Setup an account and input payment info
- 3. Scan QR code or enter number on the back of the bike
- 4. Enjoy riding and return to a hub location

\$1 for 30 minutes of riding. Membership plans and promotions available. Map of hub stations online.

Website: www.driftlax.org Phone: 608-571-3791



Medicare Open Enrollment Oct. 15—Dec. 7

MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT | OCT. 15-DEC. 7



Now is the time to find the best fit for your needs and budget! www.medicare.gov/plan-compare makes it easy to compare coverage options, shop for plans, and feel confident in your choice.

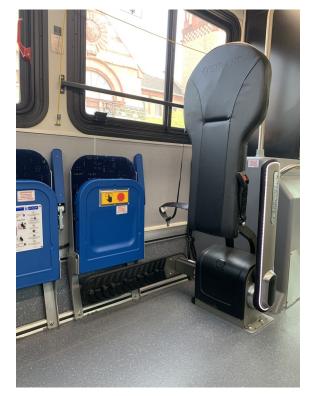
Contact a Benefit Specialist at the ADRC if you have any questions about your Medicare or other health insurance coverage. 608-785-5700

MTU Paratransit Service

City residents who have a disability and who cannot get to or use the MTU bus may qualify for paratransit. Paratransit is a door to door van service. Contact MTU at 608-789-7350.

UPDATED WHEELCHAIR ACCESS ON MTU

La Crosse Municipal Transit (MTU) has equipped two buses with QUANTUM automatic wheelchair securement stations. These stations allow wheelchair users to independently dock and lock their chairs with just the touch of a button. Bus drivers can stay in their seats and once the passenger arrives at their destination, the driver uses their dashboard control to unlock the system so no manual assistance is required. On Thursday, June 29, MTU debuted the new system at a public event where people could test it out. One person timed the process to see how long it would take for them to board the bus and secure themselves in the station. It took just under ninety seconds. Currently, two buses each have one rear-facing automatic securement station and one manual wheelchair station. So two wheelchair users can ride at the same time, but only one can use the automatic option. Images below show the QUANTUM station (left) and the ADA-friendly button that engages the locking system (right). MTU Operations Manager, Tim Koterwski hopes that these new features give mobility passengers greater independence and desire to use the bus system. Questions about the QUANTUM securement stations? Call MTU at 608-789-7350





DATA ON DISABILITY IN WISCONSIN & U.S.

People with disabilities constitute the nation's largest minority group, and the only group that anyone can become a member of at any time.

1,055,434 adults in Wisconsin have a disability (this is equal to about 23% or 1 in 4 adults).

10% of adults in Wisconsin have a mobility disability.

11% have a cognition disability.

5% are deaf or have serious difficulty hearing.

6% have a disability that affects independent living.

2% have a vision disability.

3% have a disability that affects self-care.

Up to 1 in 4 adults in the United States have some type of disability. (CDC, May 2023)

Healthcare costs for Wisconsinites with disabilities account for up to 34% of the state's annual healthcare spending. This breaks down to about \$18,320 per year, per person with a disability.

On the other hand, Americans with disabilities have a huge economic footprint. As consumers they account for more than \$200 billion in discretionary spending—not including their extended families and support networks.

Calling All Advocates!

Are you interested in creating inclusive communities and taking action on issues that are important to people with disabilities? Consider joining the Disability Action Network.

Disability Action Network (aka DAN) is a grassroots organization of community members, service agencies, and local organizations whose mission is to develop an inclusive and engaged community, support impactful activities, and promote disability awareness and advocacy. DAN hosts the annual Disability Pride Fest in La Crosse.

Meetings held the 3rd Wednesday of the month Virtually 3-4pm Email: dancommittee@gmail.com

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@DisabilityActionNetwork



FOCUS ON: SUPPORTED DECISION-MAKING

Supported decision-making helps individuals with disabilities to make their own decisions about their lives and to get help from the people they trust, where and when they need it. In a supported decisionmaking agreement, individuals identify "supporters" who can help them gather and understand information, compare options, and communicate their decisions to others. In those agreements, they also decide what kinds of decisions their supporters can help with, and how they are going to help. The agreements are legal documents that can be used in various situations like at school, at the doctor's office, or at the bank. Agreements can be short-term or longterm. They can also be changed at any time.

Supported decision-making is an alternative to guardianship. It is a safe and effective way for people to get help with making decisions without having their decision-making powers or legal rights taken away. Actually, it is normal for people to make decisions with some help regardless of having a disability. And sometimes as humans, we do not make the best decisions. That is normal, too. Learning is a lifelong process that does not end. We learn new skills over time and through experience. Over time, we get better at making our own decisions without help or input from others.

Would you like to know more about supported decision-making agreements and other ways to support people with disabilities when it comes to medical, financial, and other life decisions?

> Contact the ADRC of La Crosse County. Email: adrc@lacrossecounty.org Phone: 608-785-5700 OR

Find more information online at the Guardianship Support Center https://gwaar.org/guardianship-resources Email: guardian@gwaar.org "Supported decisionmaking promotes self-determination, control, and autonomy. It fosters independence."

> -Center for Public Representation

Having the **right** to make our **own decisions** can lead to increased **pride**, **self-confidence**, **happiness**... Aging & Disability Resource Center of La Crosse County 300 4th St. N La Crosse, WI 54601

Phone: 608-785-5700 Fax: 608-785-5790 E-mail: adrc@lacrossecounty.org

The next issue of Access Guidebook will be available in November.



FROM THE ADRC

The Aging & Disability Resource Center has information about disability services and programs in the community. We can help with:

- transportation
- health insurance
- Social Security
- home care
- supported decision-making
- guardianship
- transition planning for youth graduating from high school

and more!



If you are caring for a friend or family member, we can help you, too! We are always here for you.

Call, email, stop by our office or visit our website.

608-785-5700 lacrossecounty.org/adrc adrc@lacrossecounty.org 300 4th St. N La Crosse, WI 54601 Open weekdays for walk-ins 8-3:30

Wed 10:30-3:30