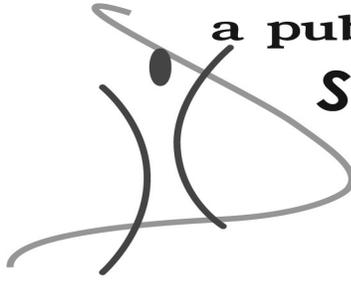


Centerpieces

a publication of

**Southwestern Center for
Independent Living (SWCIL)**

Serving People with Disabilities in Southwestern Minnesota



Big Wins Legislatively for the Disability Community in 2021

by Ted Stamp



Advocates testifying at a Senate committee in 2020, with Sen. Matthews

important because currently people with disabilities who receive services through the PCA program are not allowed to have their PCAs drive them anywhere (that is, PCA agencies are not allowed to pay their PCAs for providing this service). But now, as of January 1, 2022, this new amendment will allow people receiving cares through the PCA program to have their PCAs drive them wherever they need to (in accordance with their individual service delivery plan).

This year the Minnesota legislature finally passed several important provisions that will benefit the lives of people with disabilities across the state for years to come.

First, an amendment called Restoring Community Access to the PCA Program (HF 1431/SF 984) will expand the definition of Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs) under the Personal Care Assistant (PCA) program. This is extremely

Fall Issue 2021

In this issue . . .

*Board Member Spotlight
Consumer Success Story
AT Library Expands*

. . . and more

Big Wins Legislatively ... Continued from Page 1

This important change could not have successfully passed without the hard work of many advocates statewide.

The following are several other important provisions which also passed into law through the same Health and Human Services Omnibus Budget Bill (HF 33/SF 37):

- Reform of the PCA rate framework
- Increased pay for PCAs through a union agreement allowing more people to enter and remain in the profession to support people with disabilities
- Allows parents and spouses of people with disabilities to be paid for providing PCA services
- Pilot project to provide support to parents with disabilities who have PCA services
- Considers allergen-reducing products durable medical equipment (DME)
- Includes enhanced asthma care services
- Updates and expands telehealth coverage by health providers and insurance, improving access to health care for people with disabilities in rural areas, those with limited mobility, or those who prefer telehealth care
- Establishes the Minnesota Inclusion Initiative grant program to support the inclusion of Minnesotans with intellectual and developmental disabilities in their communities
- Adds “Informed Choice” policies and definition to Home & Community-Based Services policies and services

Source: Minnesota Council on Disability website – Public Policy/Legislative Update



Find us on Facebook and Like our page to keep up with all the latest SWCIL news and events.

Board Member Spotlight - Cody Seehafer



Picture of Cody

A little bit about me is I am 27 years old and live independently in my own apartment with my cat. I enjoy being outside and getting to know people. As to what brought me to SWCIL, I used to work there as a peer mentor. I am a big believer in anyone who wants to be independent. I have been a board member less than a year, and my experience so far has been positive. My duties on the board are basically behind the scenes stuff. I hope that when people see a person with a disability serving on the board it inspires them to serve in their own way. I live my life with that same attitude. I am still fairly new to the board, but I am happy to see that SWCIL has been able to serve people through the pandemic, which I think is a major accomplishment. I would encourage everyone to serve on a board, as it is a great way to serve others.

Consumer Success Story - Teri Woelful

Ben is 40 years old and just recently earned the right to drive. He has Autism and struggles with reading and sometimes understanding what he reads. He took the written driver's exam several times when he was much younger, but he failed repeatedly. So eventually he gave up.

Continued on page 4 ...



Picture of Ben

Consumer Success Story ... Continued from page 3

Ben works at a job approximately fifteen miles from his home. Because he wasn't able to drive, and there is no public transportation available from his home, his mom always drove him to and from work. She does this despite the fact that she struggles with long-term effects from polio and struggles with mobility, which affects her ability to drive some days.

Two years ago Ben and his mom reached out to SWCIL for help. Ben worked with me for a year to learn everything he needed to know for the driving exam. His mom and others close to him helped him learn some of the information by pointing out signs and road markings when he was riding with them and reminding him of what they meant or having him explain them to them. They would explain the ins and outs of different driving maneuvers and defensive driving techniques before, during, and after each one. This helped Ben a lot since he is a better visual, see-it-being-done type of learner.

It turns out the reason Ben was having difficulty passing the test was not because he didn't know the facts, but because of the format of the test itself, the way questions were worded. I explained to Ben that, because of his disabilities, he could request that the exam be given orally. He worked with me for several months, learning when and how to ask for clarification, definitions, and rephrasing if necessary to be able to completely understand the questions. When he took the exam again, this time orally, he missed passing by only one question. This motivated him to work on these skills a little longer, and the next time he took the test he was able to pass with flying colors.

Ben's first call after the exam was to me, as he proudly and excitedly told me he'd passed, laying out his plans for learning to drive well enough to pass the driving portion of the test. Since that day, he still occasionally calls to update me on his evolving driving skills and the driving he's been doing. When asked what being able to drive means to him, he says, "I can go where I want, when I want, once I get my license. I can drive to work so mom can stay home and rest. I can drive to get things for her, too." Ben's mom expressed immense gratitude for SWCIL services and the relief she feels because, "He has freedom and I have freedom. When I die, I have more hope for him." Ben is definitely an example of what can be accomplished with motivation, persistence, and the right help.

Upcoming SWCIL Events

**RSVP: 507.532.2221 OR 800.422.1485 (for MN Relay, dial 711)
swcil@swcil.com OR message us on Facebook**

All live events are smoke and fragrance free

Reasonable Accommodations upon request

2021 Social Rec Events (via Zoom)

**Changes to dates & times will be posted on
swcil.com and SWCIL's Facebook page**

Please call the office with questions

Oct. 11, Nov. 8, Dec. 13 — 4:30-5:30 P.M. Coloring Club

October 22 — 5:30-7:30 P.M. — Social Rec. Dance

Nov. 1 — 4:30-5:30 P.M. Craft Night — Pumpkin Painting

Community Education Classes

**Parents Supporting Parents — This group meets monthly via Zoom.
Please contact the office for dates.**

**To receive flyers by email, call or email swcil@swcil.com
Friends & family are welcome and encouraged to attend!**

Our Mission Statement: SWCIL is dedicated to working with and responding to the ever changing needs of persons with disabilities in Southwestern Minnesota to promote societal acceptance, inclusion, and equal access for all persons with disabilities.

Disability Awareness at the Lyon County Fair

Once again this year SWCIL hosted a disability awareness booth at the Lyon County Fair, where nearly 225 men, women, and children picked up gift bags.

Several Marshall businesses generously made donations that enabled the purchase of a variety of items for these gift bags. Each participant received a \$5 meal voucher, free milkshake voucher, and either an event ticket for the Rodeo or Demolition Derby or a ride wristband or a sensory bag. The sensory bags included no event or ride tickets but instead had additional sensory items such as stuffed animals, frisbees, stress balls and slime.

Approximately 260 people spun the Disability Awareness wheel in order to answer a question and receive a small prize. An example of some of the questions are: Can you name a celebrity with a disability? or When was the Americans with Disabilities Act passed?

People of all ages were happy and grateful to get their bags and to participate in spinning the wheel and interacting with SWCIL staff.



Picture of individual who received gift bag who came to the fair with his family.

SWCIL Assistive Technology Library Expansion

SWCIL is excited to announce that we are currently expanding our Assistive Technology (AT) Library with the additions of both high-tech and low-tech AT Devices.

One item is a Sensory Board which helps with developing hand/eye coordination or fine motor skills and can provide a calming activity when individuals are stressed or frustrated.

Continued on page 7



Picture of a Sensory Board

SWCIL Assistive Technology ... Continued

Additional sensory devices that are going to be added include the Connect 12 electronic magnifier for enhanced reading with zoom camera for enlarging objects at a distance. Another is a ubiDuo for real time communication for deaf or hard of hearing via real time messaging system. A Liftware steady is an alternative eating device that counteracts involuntary movements in the hands and wrist. And a Tobii Dynavox PCEye eye-tracking device, which can be connected to any PC for touchless control of your device.



Connect 12 Electronic Magnifier



Liftware Steady

These are some of the devices SWCIL will be adding to its library throughout the month of September. Items will be on display and available for demonstration at the SWCIL office. Please contact the SWCIL office for a complete list of items in our AT Library.

If you have poems, personal successes, letters to the editor or questions for our readers, send your submissions to: Deb at SWCIL 109 S. 5th Street, Suite 700, Marshall, MN 56258 or call the office at 507.532.2221 ext 101.

Southwestern Center for Independent Living (SWCIL) is a community-based, non-profit organization serving people with all disability types in the ten counties of southwestern Minnesota through: *Individual and Systems Advocacy *Cross-disability Peer Counseling *Information and Referral *Independent Living Skills Training and *Public Education. All of SWCIL's programs and services are consumer controlled with an emphasis on improving the quality of life for all people with disabilities. SWCIL's aim is to provide education and awareness to promote inclusion, acceptance and equal access in society for all people with disabilities.

For more information about SWCIL programs and services, please contact us at: 109 South 5th Street, Suite 700—Marshall, MN 56258 Phone: (507) 532-2221 or (800) 422-1485 (For MN Relay, dial 711) or fax (507) 532-2222.

Southwestern Center for Independent Living
109 South 5th Street, Suite 700
Marshall, MN 56258-1268
Phone: 507-532-2221 or 800-422-1485 (For MN Relay, dial 711)

Website: <http://www.swcil.com>
E-mail: swcil@swcil.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/SWCILMarshallMN
Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/US-xO75AFKykiFuz4EiVj9lw>
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/swcilmarshallmn>

PRST STD
US Postage
P A I D
Marshall, MN
Permit 20

Return service requested

SWCIL Board Members

Pamela Russell, Chair,
Cody Seehafer, Vice Chair
Leah Hastad, Secretary
Derek Klinkner, Treasurer
Tashauna Swanson
Maria Trejo
Carrie Stiernagle

SWCIL Staff

Adam Chandler, Program Manager
Jennifer Cox, Community Project Coordinator
Melissa Doherty, Executive Director
Sharlett Glidden, IL Specialist
Deb Gratz, Administrative Assistant
Linda Halbur, LSW, Program Manager
Ruth Hubbling, IL Specialist
Natasha Kruse, IL Specialist
Harry Remley, Peer Mentor
Ted Stamp, IL Advocate
Annette Swanson, Grants & Financial Manager
Jen Thovson, Program Manager
Shanda Walker, IL Specialist
Teri Woelfel, CAS, IL Specialist

Funding for Independent Living Services is provided by MN DEED-VRS from the State's General Fund and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.