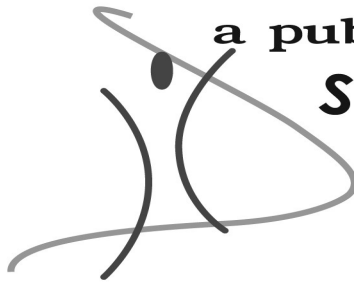


Centerpieces

a publication of

Southwestern Center for Independent Living (SWCIL)

Serving People with Disabilities in Southwestern Minnesota



Disability Awareness at the Lyon County Fair



SWCIL staff at Disability Awareness booth

Once again, SWCIL had a booth at the Lyon County Fair, with a focus on disability awareness. As always, the booth proved popular, both for kids interested in playing the Disability Awareness trivia game to win a small prize, and others to pick up the gift bags for which they had pre-registered, made available for people with disabilities.

This year SWCIL distributed 295 of these gift bags! Among these, 42 were sensory bags

containing a variety of items such as fidget toys, stress balls, “infinity cubes,” “pop its,” etc. Instead of these sensory bags, 151 people chose bags containing tickets to the grandstand for either the rodeo or demolition derby. A hundred others chose tickets for fair ride wristbands. All of the bags included five cloth masks, coloring pages and crayons, stickers and handouts from the Pacer Center regarding bullying, a SWCIL brochure, and a partial sheet inquiring of the accessibility level of people’s home/work/school.

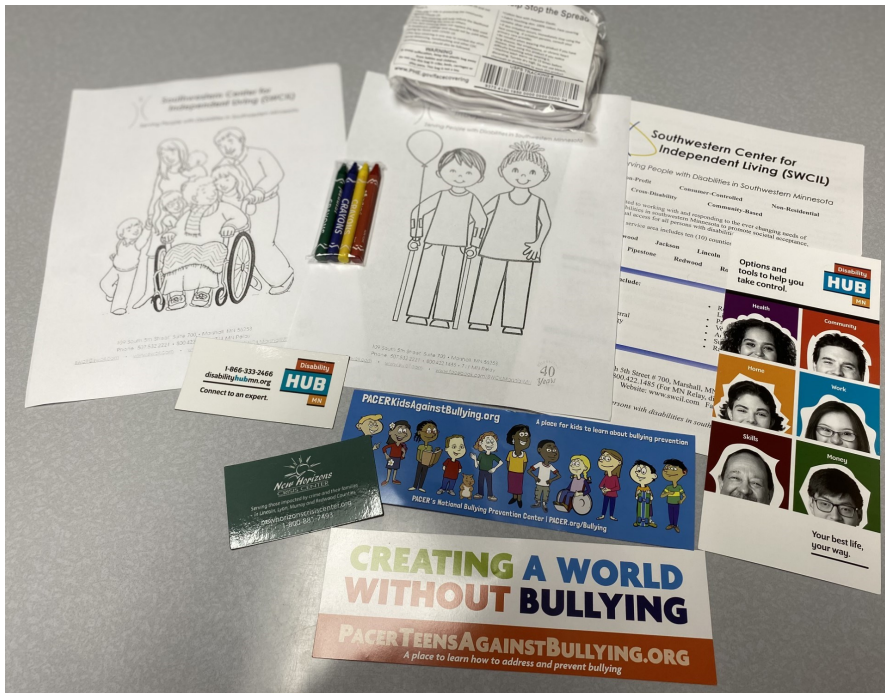
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Disability Awareness ... Continued



Contents of SWCIL gift bag

language, while others tried to pick up items off the ground with a reacher. There were also several assistive technology items on display for people to look at, such as an Amazon Echo Dot or an adaptive alarm clock.

The contents of these bags were made possible by the generous contributions of several sponsors, including Lutheran Campus Ministries at SMSU, Buffalo Ridge Concrete, New York Life (insurance), the Women's Rural Advocacy Program (WRAP), the 3D Fund Factory, New Horizons Crisis Center, and Lincoln Lyon Electric Cooperative. We greatly thank all of these sponsors for making these gift bags possible, which the people we give them to so enjoy and appreciate.

The Disability Awareness trivia game mentioned above intrigues many younger folks who approach the wheel to spin it and answer a disability-related question, some of which are related to facts about specific disabilities like cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, or muscular dystrophy, while others touch on facts of disability or independent living history.

Others had a chance to try to spell their name using sign



Contents of SWCIL sensory bag

Workplace Accommodations Not An Undue Hardship

If you are someone with a disability who works, have you ever been reluctant to ask your employer for a reasonable accommodation? If so, the findings of a recent news release shared by the U. S. Department of Labor (DOL) should encourage you not to be shy about asking for such.

But regardless of the results of the above report, under the Americans with Disabilities Act, covered employers must provide reasonable accommodations for applicants and employees with disabilities, when requested, unless doing so would cause “undue hardship.” Though an employee or prospective employee may for whatever reason feel reluctant to ask for a reasonable accommodation, this is established law, therefore there is no good reason for such a person to feel at all disinclined.

On top of that, this newly published report just mentioned, titled “Accommodation and Compliance: Low Cost, High-Impact,” which was spearheaded by the Job Accommodation Network (JAN), makes clear that the vast majority of reasonable accommodations are *not* in fact an “undue hardship” to employers. This report is the result of survey data collected from employers from 2019 to 2022, which not only gathered information about the cost of workplace accommodations, but about the benefits they produced, and about the motivations of employers for making them.

According to JAN,¹ a service funded by the DOL’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) that provides free, expert and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and other disability employment issues, about half of the employers participating in the survey who provided cost information reported that the accommodations they made for their employees cost nothing to implement. A little over forty percent of the surveyed employers said the accommodations made involved only a one-time cost (the median expenditure being \$300).

Not only that, according to a DOL press release,² almost 70% of employers said the accommodations made were either very effective or extremely effective. The benefits of such accommodations included “the retention of valuable employees, improving productivity and morale, reducing workers’ compensation and training costs, and increasing workforce diversity.”

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

Workplace Accommodations ... Cont'd

In this regard, Assistant Secretary for ODEP, Taryn M. Williams, comments, “This report reinforces what Job Accommodation Network has repeatedly in its work observed, which is that accommodations for disabled workers are indeed a low cost, high-impact strategy for supporting and retaining valued talent.”

These findings should allay any reticence employees or prospective employees with disabilities may feel when asking for reasonable accommodations in the workplace. Advocates worked long and hard for decades to see implemented policies and laws like this one, so why not make the most of these opportunities?

¹ <https://askjan.org/topics/costs.cfm>

² <https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/odep/odep20230504>

Meet the Latest SWCIL Staff & Board Members



New staff David Haen

My name is David Haen. I am a graduate of Southwest State University with a degree in Music Education and have lived in the Marshall area for the past 25+ years. Before joining the SWCIL team I worked for over 20 years in the restaurant world and three and a half years for the Boy Scouts of America. My wife, Lisa, and I have a daughter, a son, and one foster child (who we consider one of our own). My hobbies consist of woodcarving, photography, camping, hunting, and about anything outdoors.



New board member, Jessica Coil

Hello! My name is Jessica Coil. I moved here 14 years ago, which is also when I got married. I have three amazing kids and have been a stay at home mom. I also volunteer at the YMCA or in the community. I just graduated from Ridgewater, in Willmar, this past May, and because I like to be around people and help them out as much as I can, one of SWCIL's board members recommended I join SWCIL's board. So I look forward to helping people out in this new respect.

Our Success Story by Chad Knutson

When you have a disabled child, there is a lot of “learning on the fly.” There are books, there are doctors and specialists, there is information on the web. But most of that information is on how to care for your child, what therapy may be beneficial, medication suggestions, etc. The part that is missing – how to prepare for your disabled child becoming a disabled adult. Maybe that information is out there, but I guess I missed it.

When our son, Reggie, was in high school, parent-teacher conferences and IEPs (Individualized Education Plans) started leading to questions about his future. It isn't that we hadn't thought about it, but we were taking one step at a time – get him through high school and graduation. The reality of school not being a part of our daily routine sunk in, and we realized we needed help, we needed information, we needed guidance.

I'm pretty sure it was at one of these school meetings that we first heard the term swizzle (referring to SWCIL but I didn't know that). No matter what the discussion was, SWCIL frequently came up as an option that could provide assistance. Our county social worker agreed, SWCIL would be a good partner as we took our next steps.

The first “project” with SWCIL was to prepare to apply for a Medical Assistance waiver and Supplemental Security Income for our son. My contact was Teri, and she was amazing. We were in COVID, so everything was done with phone calls and Zoom meetings. Weekly contacts were made, forms were filled out, information was gathered. After months of working with Teri, we felt we were properly prepared.



Chad & Reggie Knutson fishing on dock

Continued on page 6...

Our Success Story ... Continued

Long story very short, going through the application for the MA waiver and SSI was simple – everything that was needed had already been covered with Teri. These processes can take weeks if not months, we had everything buttoned up in a much shorter timeframe. And there was a great ending to the story - both applications were successful! The MA waiver has been granted, and SSI payments are being received.

The second contact we had with SWCIL was to prepare for CDCS (Consumer Directed Community Supports) and write a CSP (Community Support Plan) and HSP (Health and Safety Plan) for our son. My contact was Rachel, and she was also amazing. For



Knutson family

our benefit, Rachel agreed to do pretty much everything remotely, which really helped. She was thorough and detailed and had several suggestions and ideas to help create our “plans.” I wouldn’t have had a clue without her help.

We are now on our second year with CDCS, which Rachel again helped us write. Pretty harmless process, she really did most of the work. Most importantly, our son is doing well, and is receiving meaningful support from various resources. Swizzle or SWCIL, we couldn’t have done it without you!

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.

If you have poems, personal successes, letters to the editor or questions for our readers, send your submissions to: Ted at SWCIL, 109 S. 5th Street, Suite 700, Marshall, MN 56258, or call the office at 507.532.2221, ext. 107.

Upcoming SWCIL Events

**RSVP: 507.532.2221, ext. 111 OR 800.422.1485 (MN Relay, dial 711)
swcil@swcil.com OR message us on Facebook
All live events are smoke and fragrance free
Reasonable Accommodations upon request**

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

2023 Social Rec Events

Changes will be posted on swcil.com and SWCIL's Facebook page

COMMUNITY EDUCATION:

**Welcoming Week at Justice Park, in Marshall—Tuesday, September 19,
5:00-7:00 p.m.**

**Tie Dye at Independence Park—Monday, September 25 – sign up for ei-
ther the 2:30-3:30 p.m. or the 3:30-4:30 p.m. session**

Community Bike Safety via Zoom—Tuesday, October 10, 3:00-5:00 p.m.

**Halloween Dance at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church—Monday, Octo-
ber 30, 5:30-7:30 p.m.**

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>

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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.