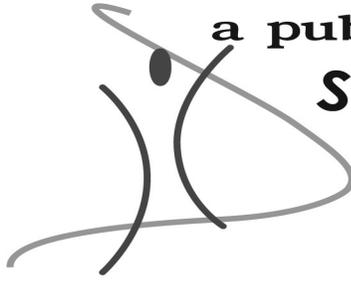


Centerpieces

a publication of

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

Serving People with Disabilities in Southwestern Minnesota



2022 Lyon County Fair

Once again this year SWCIL had a booth at the Lyon County fair, and once again we were able to provide some light entertainment, education, and gift bags to lots of happy people.

As usual, we provided a wheel to spin with a number of questions on it about disability awareness, which by itself seems to draw people in. Those who participate, mostly children, have their knowledge tested by questions like: Who was the founder of the disability rights movement? When was the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) passed into law? Are all disabilities visible? Can you name a famous person who has a disability?

Whether or not participants get the right answer, they earn the right to choose a small prize (donated by local businesses.) And though the fun and novelty of participating, along with the promise of a prize, is what initially motivates people to participate, it is satisfying to witness the light go on in their eyes sometimes as they hear the answers to questions they did not know. Or even as they think through a question like *Are all disabilities visible?* The hope, and the very reason for hosting such a booth, is that such a simple exercise has opened their eyes to think in a different way about people with disabilities.

Come visit us again next year!

Fall Issue 2022

In this issue . . .

Fire Prep/New Staff	p. 2-3
Reduce Internet Bill	p. 4
Is Braille Dead	p. 6-7

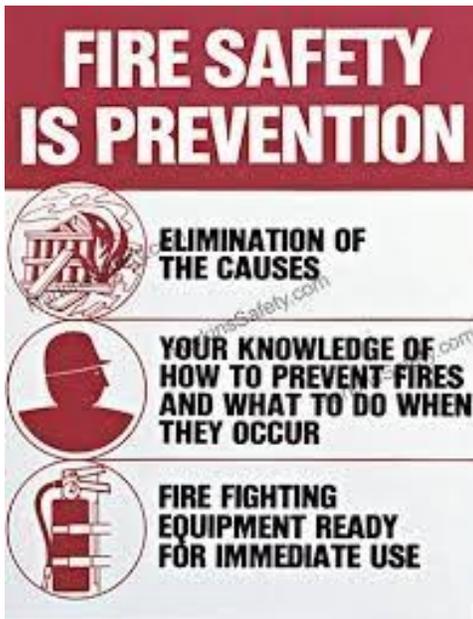
And more ...

Are You Prepared for a Fire?

According to the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA), about eight people per day die in fires, many in the home. Some of these are persons with physical or cognitive disabilities, and so it is important to be reminded regularly of the importance of proactive preparedness planning before such an emergency happens.

A website offering fire prevention and preparedness tips and information (<https://uphomes.com/blog/fire-preparedness/>) notes that temperatures from a house fire can reach 1100°F in only three and a half minutes. It also mentions that having a working smoke detector doubles the chances of surviving a residential fire.

Though most household fires start in the kitchen, they may happen in any room of the house. There are many precautionary measures you can take to reduce the likelihood of fires.



(Picture of Fire Safety poster)

preparedness plan. For more information on creating a written plan for you and your household, there are many websites online, but a good starting place might be the Minnesota Council on Disability's emergency preparedness page (<https://www.disability.state.mn.us/information-and-assistance/emergency-plan-for-people-with-disabilities/plan-of-action-checklist/>).



(picture of fire prevention sign)

Persons with physical or mental disabilities may need to take special precautions to increase their chances of surviving a fire. For example, persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may need devices that alert them in other ways, such as via strobe lights or vibrating pillows. Blind and visually impaired persons, as well as people with physical mobility limitations, may need to prepare similarly, and there are all kinds of assistive technology devices available these days to help.

But beyond incorporating assistive technology to help prepare yourself and your family, a personal support network of family, friends, or neighbors is an equally important part of any emergency

Welcome New SWCIL Staff



(Photo of Rachel)

My name is Rachel Thalacker. I grew up in Southwest Minnesota and am excited to be taking on this new opportunity as an Independent Living Specialist and CDCS Support Planner for SWCIL! I have a passion for helping others and working in the Human Service field. I have worked in the disability field for 10 years, and in employment services for 3 years. I am a wife, mom, and stepmom to 3 beautiful children and absolutely love my family! My hobbies include spending time with my family, gardening, cooking, books, and being outdoors.

My name is Sherry Olson, and I have lived in Southwest Minnesota the majority of my life. I am married and have two adult children and two grandsons, as well as one spoiled dog. I love to read, spend time with my family, spend time outdoors, and reap the benefits of my husband's gardening. Since I started working in the healthcare field supporting people with disabilities 28 years ago, I realized my passion of advocating for others and supporting them to live their dream. I am excited to join the SWCIL team as an Independent Living Program Manager, as they put the people we serve as a top priority, supporting them in the pursuit of their goals.



(Photo of Sherry)



(Photo of Angela)

My name is Angela Algood. I am an Independent Living Specialist working out of the Marshall office. I have over 20 years of experience working with people with disabilities. I am a dog mom to a spoiled rescue dog. I enjoy spending time with family and friends.

Reduce your Internet Bill

There is a new program to make broadband internet access more affordable. It is the Affordable Connectivity Program, from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

Here's how the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) can help:

- If you qualify, you can get up to \$30 off your internet service per month.
- If you live on qualifying tribal lands, you can get up to \$75 off your internet service per month.
- Plus, you can get a one-time discount of up to \$100 for a laptop, tablet or desktop computer (with a co-pay of \$10-50).

Do you already get the Lifeline discount for your phone line? You can also get the ACP discount for internet service. If you would like to learn more about the program and how to qualify, you may visit the Federal Communications Commission website at www.fcc.gov/acp.

You can apply for the program at affordableconnectivity.gov. If you are a TED client or have applied for the TED Program, the TED Program can help you apply for the ACP (video phone: 651-964-1514; voice or preferred relay service: 800-657-3663).

Most of the above information was taken from an email from the MN Department of Human Services.



(logos for Federal Communications Commission and Universal Service Administrative Company)

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.

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**

2022 Social Rec Events

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

CRAFT NIGHT:

Coloring Club – Oct 10/Nov 11/Dec 12 – 4:30-5:30 p.m.

**Gnome Holiday Ornament (St. Stephen's Church) – Dec 5 5:30-7:00 p.m.
RSVP Nov 28**

GAME NIGHT:

Virtual Bingo – Oct 27/Nov 17/Dec 22 – 4:30-6:00 p.m.

Community Education Classes

PARENTS SUPPORTING PARENTS

Meets monthly. Please call for times and dates.

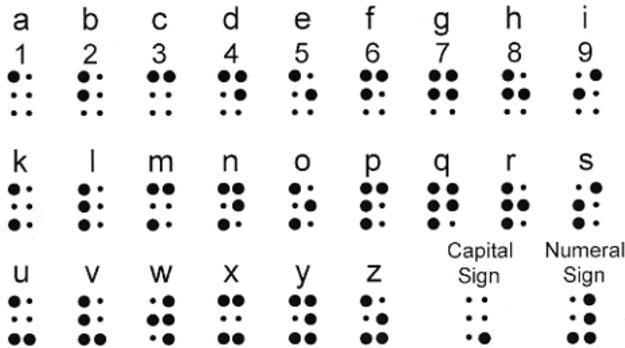
**To receive flyers by email, call or email swcil@swcil.com
Friends & family are welcome and encouraged to attend!**



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

Is Braille Dead? by Ted Stamp

Perusing a handful of articles recently on the upsides and downsides of Braille, I was made aware of many things I had not previously considered in this regard, which I thought I would share, since I'm sure most of you out there are just as ignorant as I was in this respect.



(picture of a braille chart)

The bottom line of each of the articles was essentially the same, namely that while Braille has its downsides, it certainly has its upsides too, and therefore should not be overlooked, neglected, or forsaken altogether.

First consider some of its downsides.

Braille books are bulky, and in many cases require multiple volumes, which is inconvenient not only for transporting

but for storing them. Braille books are also expensive to produce and purchase, which means they are not as widely available as most books, since the market for them is small. Memorization of Braille is also difficult, and there is some stigma related to Braille in general (think of the student or employee having to carry around multiple volumes, or the simple fact of having to do things differently than everyone else).

On the positive side, many who use Braille appreciate it simply as literature, the enjoyment of reading for its own sake. This includes the ability to have more intimate access to the spelling, grammar, and syntax of words and phrases, which proves to be a better teacher than simply listening to audiobooks (for example, consider trying to distinguish by audio the difference between words like *there*, *their*, and *they're*, or *to*, *too*, and *two*). Audiobooks may be more convenient, especially since multiple volumes (even entire bookshelves) can now be stored on one small device. But according to an article by Ruby Ryles, PhD, Braille affords more superior benefits (see the article: *The Impact of Braille Reading Skills on Employment, Income, Education, and Reading Habits* – <https://nfb.org/images/nfb/publications/bm/bm98/bm980204.htm>). Unfortunately, however, only about 10% of American blind children learn Braille, which is partly because it is hard to find qualified teachers and proofreaders of Braille.

Continued on page 7

Is Braille Dead? ... continued

Moreover, while screen readers and text-to-speech products may be simpler to use, they are not natural sounding and have some of the same downsides as audio-books, mentioned above. Braille is also apparently useful for math and scientific and musical notation in a way that audible helps are not.

For more information and the particular context from which the above is been taken, the following articles:

Braille Is Not Dead (So Stop Trying to Kill It) – anonymous blogger

<https://wheresyourdog.com/2015/05/29/braille-is-not-dead-so-stop-trying-to-kill-it/>

Is Braille Dead? Long Live Braille! – Lisa Larges

https://www.jp.onkyo.com/braille_essay/2012/nac03.htm

Is Braille on Life Support? – Kane Brolin

<https://nfb.org/images/nfb/publications/bm/bm17/bm1707/bm170704.htm>

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.

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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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