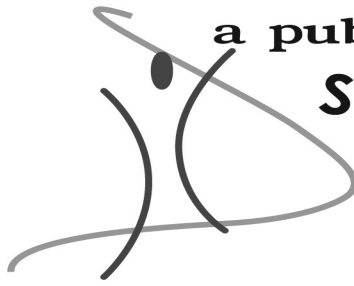


Centerpieces

a publication of

Southwestern Center for Independent Living (SWCIL)

Serving People with Disabilities in Southwestern Minnesota



Annual State Capitol Trip - by Ted Stamp

Once again this year, SWCIL staff and consumers made what has become an annual trip to the State Capitol, this time in mid-March.

Two youth consumers, one parent, and four SWCIL staff attended in-person meetings with the following legislators: Senators Lang, Weber, and Dahms (Legislative Assistant Wendy Haavisto met in Dahms' place), and Representatives Fogelman, Schomacker, Swedzinski, Torlkelson, and Urdahl.

Consumers observed and practiced sharing about themselves, their goals, and the services they utilize. As always, opportunity was provided to learn about legislative processes and ask and respond to questions from legislators.

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SWCIL staff and consumers with Rep. Fogelman

Spring Issue 2023

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Annual State Capitol Trip - Continued

SWCIL staff provided outreach, education, and accountability, including outcomes to legislators. Each senator and representative received a 2022 SWCIL Annual Report demonstrating accountability and outcomes for funding received from the State. All were also provided an opportunity for viewing the State Capitol building.



SWCIL staff and consumers with Sen. Dahm's LA

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.



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

2023 Lyon County Fair



Lyon County Fair sign

If you plan on attending the Lyon County Fair this year (Aug. 9-13), we hope you will plan on stopping by our SWCIL disability awareness booth, which will be open Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday (Aug. 9-11).

Individuals with disability may register beforehand online to receive gift bags made possible by the generous donations of several Marshall businesses. Last year's bag included a \$5 meal voucher, a free milkshake voucher, and either an event ticket for the rodeo or demolition derby, or an amusement park ride wristband or a sensory bag (the sensory bags include no event or ride tickets but instead have items such as stuffed animals, frisbees, stress balls, etc.).

Anyone visiting the booth can also play a quick Disability Awareness game for a small prize, answering questions like: Can you name a celebrity with the disability? or When was the Americans with Disabilities Act passed?

So make sure to stop by this year and say hello!

Legislative Successes of the 2023 Session ... by Ted S.

This year saw HUGE wins for people with disabilities at the state legislature, with many bills being passed with less resistance than usual. Some of these bills have been advocated for for years and will have important implications for the lives of Minnesotans with disabilities seeking to live as independently as possible within their communities. The following summary (provided by the MN State Council on Disability) describes just a few of these. To see all the bills that passed that were bills which MCD advocated for during the last session, see the MCD website:

<https://www.disability.state.mn.us/about-our-public-policy/legislative-updates/>

PCA/CFSS Rate Framework (SF 2934 Article 1 Section 53)

Personal Care Assistance (PCA) rate increased to \$23.80 on 1/1/24 and \$24.84 on 1/1/25 with additional increases for worker experience. Consumer Directed Community Supports (CDCS) and Consumer Support Grant (CSG) budget increases are: 8.49% on 1/1/24 and an additional 4.53% on 1/1/25.

Allowing PCAs to Drive Clients (SF 2934 Article 1 Section 12 Subd. 1 paragraph i)

Revisiting the PCA Driving language that was passed in 2021. The original language was passed with Consumer First Services and Supports (CFSS) arriving on schedule; CFSS is now postponed, so this bill will allow PCA's to drive as a billable service within the existing DHS services 90 days after federal approval.

Homecare Workers Union Contract (SF 2934 Article 9 Section 2 Subd 16 paragraphs e-j)

Personal Care Assistants (PCA), Family Caregivers, and Homecare Clients across Minnesota negotiated a new two-year Union contract with the state of Minnesota. The new contract, passed by the legislature, will bring increases to wages, benefits, training, and standards for all PCAs in PCA Choice, CDCS, and CSG, all of which will address the crisis-level worker shortage.

Continued on page 5 ...

Legislative Successes ... Cont'd

Minnesota Employment and Retention of State Employees with Disabilities (*HF 1830 Article 8 Sec 1-23*)

This bill codifies into state statute the recommendations from the Task Force for the State Employment Retention of Employees with Disabilities. This includes improving the Connect 700 disability affirmative action program, providing better oversight over disability workplace accommodations, and extensive training on the hiring and retaining of people with disabilities for hiring managers.

Lift the 40-hour Cap (*SF 2934 Article 1 Section 23 paragraphs c-e*)

Parents of minors and spouses for the CDCS and CFSS programs (upon federal approval) can now work 80 hours for parents (40 hours/parent or 60 hours for 1 parent) and 60 hours for spouses.

Improving Medical Assistance for Employed Persons with Disabilities (MA-EPD) (*SF 2934 Article 3 Section 3*)

The MA-EPD asset limit was removed and a new notice requirement for people accessing MA of the existence of the MA-EPD program. The MA-EPD premiums remain unchanged as well as other administrative changes to the program.

Phasing out Subminimum Wage for People with Disabilities (*SF 2934 Article 1 Section 22*)

All funding recommendations from the Task Force on Subminimum Wages included in the Governor's bill passed. It establishes a Technical Assistance Center to assist providers to transition away from subminimum wage employment, training for case managers, changes to the MnCHOICES assessment to ensure people are being offered true informed choice in employment and services to support with employment goals, grants to lead agencies to build capacity in supporting people with competitive integrated employment options. There is also funding for reporting on people in Minnesota being paid subminimum wage to track employment outcomes.

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.

Fond Farewell to Deb Gratz



Deb Gratz with gift

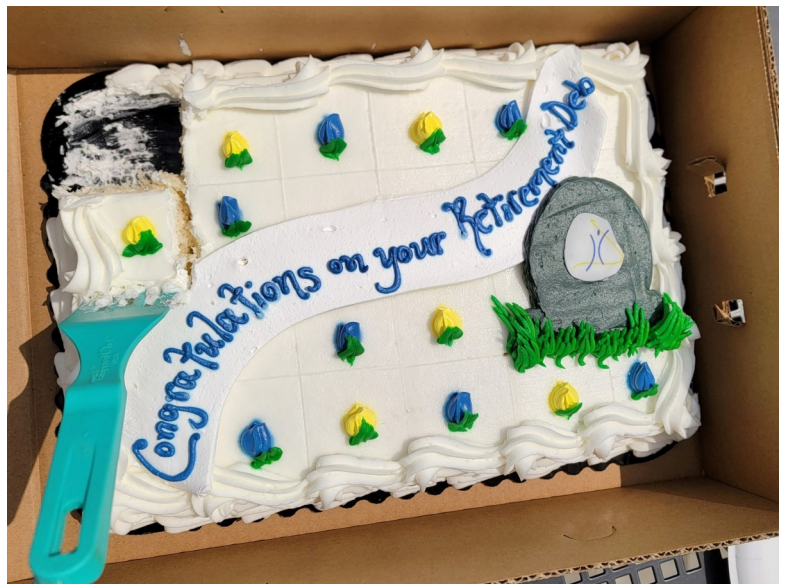
SWCIL has seen administrative assistants come and go over the years, but Deb Gratz is among the most beloved and will be greatly missed! Deb has worked for SWCIL for the last nine years and has become an integral part of what makes the agency stay afloat. And not only has she effectively undertaken the numerous duties of her demanding position, she has always done so with cheerfulness, humor, and as a team player.

Deb has a lot to look forward to in her retirement, which she describes below with some reflections on her years at SWCIL:

It was with mixed emotions that I gave a six-month notice of an approaching retirement that would end my

SWCIL career. Happy and excited for this new change, I have eagerly anticipated more time to work on household

projects with my husband, to sew and work on crafts, or to spend time with kids and grandkids, doing some camping and travel to visit family. But it's also sad to end nine years working with a bunch of great people, doing a job I really liked: answering phones, ordering supplies, planning and assisting with social rec events and craft nights, sitting in on interviews with new hires and training them, not to mention handling the detailed documentation involved in agency activity reporting. It's also been sad watching some employees leave the agency to move on to course changes of their own. But overall I have enjoyed supporting staff as they work in the field to make a difference in the lives of the people we serve. I am thankful for the opportunity to have been able to work at a Center for Independent Living. I am going to miss you all. God bless you.



Retirement cake

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:

**Driving Into Success (online driver safety instruction) – July 11, 12, 13 –
3:00-4:00 p.m. (Zoom) – RSVP by July 11 (rachel@swcil.com)**

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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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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