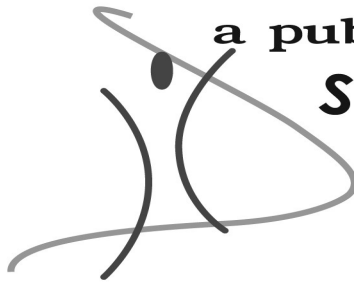


Centerpieces

a publication of

Southwestern Center for Independent Living (SWCIL)

Serving People with Disabilities in Southwestern Minnesota



Air Carrier Access Act by Ted Stamp

It was interesting to learn recently of a young travel blogger and wheelchair user who, upon landing in Georgia after a long international flight, was pressured by flight attendants to get off the plane in the aisle chair and wait for his power chair at the baggage claim.¹

But since this world traveler knew his rights under disability law, specifically the Air Carrier Access Act, he stood his ground and politely requested to stay on the plane until his chair was brought to the jet bridge. This apparently aggravated the flight attendants, who even resorted to threatening him with being forcefully removed. But eventually another staff came along and de-escalated the situation, allowing the young man his rightful, lawful preference.

This story highlights how important it can be to know your rights as a person with disability when it comes to having your needs met with respect to public facilities and accommodations. In this case, even The U. S. Department of Transportation website itself says: “You can request that your wheelchair or walker be returned to you on the jetway at your destination airport and not the baggage claim area. Airlines are required to return wheelchairs to users as closely as possible to the door of the aircraft if requested.”¹

But the Air Carrier Access Act has much more than the above to say about the rights of passengers with disabilities, and you can find a great summary of the most important components of this law at WheelchairTravel.org,² the main headings of which are listed below.

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Air Carrier Access Act ... Continued

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- * Transportation of Personal Wheelchairs and Mobility Equipment
- * Accessibility features of Aircraft
- * Accessibility of Airport Facilities
- * Notifying Airlines of Needed Services
- * Care Attendants
- * Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals

The following information is also taken almost verbatim from the same source:

The Air Carrier Access Act of 1986 (ACAA) was designed to prohibit any discrimination against passengers with disabilities by air carriers. It was meant to open the skies and the world to persons regardless of any physical or intellectual disabilities. The specific rights of disabled air passengers were outlined by the U. S. Department of Transportation in 1990 in 14 CFR Part 382. The guidelines were most recently updated in 2008, and changes took effect in May 2009. For a full copy of 14 CFR Part 382, visit www.ecfr.gov.

Travelers should note that the ACAA is a law of the United States of America. The rights and protections outlined here do not apply to all flights in the world. The law applies only to the following flights:

- * Any flight departing from an airport in the United States, regardless of carrier.
- * Any flight arriving to an airport in the United States, regardless of carrier.
- * Any flight operated by an air carrier registered in the United States of America – this includes flights between two international destinations. For example, a United Airlines flight between Hong Kong and Singapore would be subject to the ACAA, because United Airlines is a U.S. flagged carrier.

Continued on page 3...

Air Carrier Access Act ... Continued

For further information about any of this, see the following websites, cited above:

¹ <https://www.foxnews.com/lifestyle/delta-flight-attendant-tells-wheelchair-passenger-tsa-make-him-get-plane-guns>

² <https://wheelchairtravel.org/air-travel/air-carrier-access-act-summary/>

Monster Mash Bash Social Rec Event by Angela Algood



Monster Mash Bash participants in Halloween costumes

The Monster Mash Bash that was held October 28th at St. Stephen's Church was a success! We had several participants in the costume contest with several categories that everyone voted on. People were busy showing their moves on the dance floor, visiting with friends, enjoying snacks, coloring some Halloween pictures, taking pictures by the photo booth, and trying out a new craft. It was great to be able to be in-person and indoors!

Partnering to Improve Accessibility by Ted Stamp

For the last decade or so, SWCIL has been performing annual pedestrian accessibility assessments of Marshall's main intersections (there are currently sixteen), sidewalks, and bike paths. This involves assessing the condition of any related signage, pedestrian ramps (i.e. curb cuts), and the working condition of the buttons and audio/visual signals that aid safe crossing of the street.



Picture of pedestrian crossing signage

If any of these need fixing or if large cracks, branches, or other debris obstruct any of these walkways, these findings are shared with the City and the MN Department of Transportation, who implement improvements as soon as their busy construction schedule allows.

Recently, Marshall also installed several "pedestrian refuge islands" with Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) signage and Dynamic Speed Feedback & School Zone Speed Limit signage, which aim to facilitate safer crossing conditions for pedestrians near school zones.

The City has always been very receptive to receiving feedback and responsive in implementing needed changes. This partnership between the City and SWCIL benefits both the community at large and the disability population in particular, encouraging the expansion of independent living beyond the home.

If you ever encounter obstacles to accessibility in the community, please don't hesitate to reach out either to SWCIL or the City engineer's office.



Picture of pedestrian refuge islands and rapid flashing beacon signage



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 – This group is currently on hold

GAME NIGHT:

Virtual Bingo – This group is currently on hold

Driver's Education – Driving into Success

Feb. 7, 14, 21, 28 – 4:00-6:00 p.m.

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

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.

Weatherization Assistance Program

The following information is taken mostly verbatim from the Minnesota Commerce Department website but is arranged differently (For complete information, visit: <https://mn.gov/commerce/consumers/consumer-assistance/weatherization>).

The Minnesota Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) is a predominantly federally funded, statewide, residential assistance program for income-eligible households run by Minnesota's Department of Commerce. WAP services are comprehensive in nature, utilizing a whole-house approach in order to achieve, on average, 20-30% in permanent energy reduction through the implementation of energy efficiency measures.

The WAP provides free home energy upgrades to income-eligible homeowners and renters to help save energy and make sure your home is a healthy and safe place to live. The WAP uses the past three months of household income to determine eligibility. Households that have received Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) within the last 12 months are eligible. Priority is given to households with elderly or disabled members, households with children under age 19, and households determined to be high energy consumers.

If your household qualifies, an energy auditor may evaluate your home to determine if weatherization is needed. The auditor will look for opportunities to make your home more energy efficient by sealing air leaks, adding insulation and checking if the furnace is working properly.

Weatherization works closely with its companion program, the Energy Assistance Program, to help permanently reduce the energy bills for low-income Minnesotans.

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.

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.

New SWCIL Staff



Picture of Amy Illies & husband

My name is Amy Illies. I have lived in SW Minnesota the majority of my life with my husband of twenty-five years. I am a mother of five children and a grandmother of eight. I have an adventurous and curious personality, with no fear of a challenge. My hobbies include baking, gardening, and spending time with my family. My greatest joy has been becoming a grandparent.

I have worked as an administrative assistant for twenty years. I have a background as a Certified Nursing Aid and as an LPN. I am very excited to join the SWCIL team!

I look forward to sharing my passion for working with our

dedicated team to respond to the needs of our community. This team of professionals truly have a love for everyone they assist. So very proud to be a part of this team.

Hi, my name is Ashley Reynaga, and I am looking forward to joining SWCIL as an I & R Specialist! I grew up north of Houston and have been living in Minnesota for the last 7 years. In 2017, I rescued my dog, Skiba, thru the Tracy Area Animal Rescue (TAAR). He is a rat terrier and wonderful lap dog! Some hobbies include: spending time with my family, watching movies, and walking my dog. For the last five years I have been working as a CNA in memory care and the hospice field. I enjoy helping people and giving back to my community!



Picture of Ashley Reynaga



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

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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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