**April 2015** Vol. 44 No. 2

# ON THE LEVEL



Promoting independent living for people with disabilities for more than 40 years. Serving Nebraska and Southwest Iowa

# Mobility Options Again Earns Accreditation From HQAA

Mobility Options has again achieved the Award of Accreditation from the Healthcare Quality Association on Accreditation (HQAA), based in Waterloo, Iowa

Mobility Options is a subsidiary of the League of Human Dignity that sells and services durable medical equipment.

It received notice of the award on Feb. 20

An HQAA spokesman said the award is achieved only when a medical equipment provider demonstrates a high level of quality in all its business operations and services. Mobility Options earned accreditation after completing a comprehensive review process focusing on quality standards and operational prac-

tices and procedures. The review covered financial stability, human resource training, patient care, delivery services, billing practices and maintenance of products and equipment. Accreditation by the HQAA assures Medicare and other health payers that a company practices the highest levels of quality in all areas of its operation.

HQAA accredits businesses for three-year periods. Mobility Options was first accredited in 2009, and again in 2012.

HQAA was founded in 2005 and deemed an authority by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to accredit providers of durable and home medical equipment. HQAA and Mobility Options seek to ensure that patients receive honest, ethical treatment.

Mobility Options has been a subsidiary of the League of Human Dignity since 1990. The company specializes in the sales and service of scooters, wheelchairs, lifts, accessible vehicles and other durable medical equipment. For more information, please visit Mobility Options at 1720 O Street in Lincoln or call 402-441-7871.

# League's Lincoln CIL Welcomes New Director

Shawna Keller will become Lincoln CIL Director, on May 1, after outgoing Director Marlene Brondel retires.

Shawna joined the League of Human Dignity staff in 2009, starting out as a Services Coordinator in the Lincoln CIL. Since 2012 she has been the League's Education and Quality Assurance Manager.

The entire League staff wishes Shawna the best of luck.

Marlene, whose retirement is effective April 30, has worked for the League for 34 years (see CEO's Note on page 2).



Shawna Keller

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**ON THE LEVEL** is the bi-monthly newsletter of the League of Human Dignity, Inc.

The League of Human Dignity is a consumer-based, non-profit organization, dedicated to promoting independent living for people with disabilities, in their own homes instead of nursing homes. To this end, we will advocate for the rights and needs of people with disabilities, while providing quality services to assist them in becoming and remaining independent citizens.

Established in 1971, the League now offers services in all 93 Nebraska counties and eight Southwest Iowa counties, through our Centers for Independent Living in Lincoln, Norfolk and Omaha, Nebraska, and Council Bluffs, Iowa; our Medicaid Waiver offices in Scottsbluff, Kearney and North Platte, Nebraska; and our Mobility Options shops in Lincoln and Omaha.

**ON THE LEVEL** is available online, by email subscription, Braille and on audio CD. To subscribe in any of these formats, contact the Public Information Office in Lincoln or your nearest League of Human Dignity office. The newsletter also is archived on our website: <a href="https://www.leagueofhumandignity.com">www.leagueofhumandignity.com</a>

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#### **CEO'S NOTE**

Spring appears to finally be on its way. For some reason it seems to me that this winter has been unusually long. This is probably a function of my age!

I am pleased to be able to inform you that the League of Human Dignity, and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services(NDHHS) have entered into an agreement for the League to continue to provide services coordination, and resource development services for the Nebraska Aged and Disabled Medicaid Waiver program through March 31, 2018.

This contract allows the League of Human Dignity to continue playing a significant role in collaborating with the NDHHS to help divert people with disability from having to go to nursing homes, and helping people who live in nursing homes to transition back into their homes and communities.

Marlene Brondel, long time Lincoln Center for Independent Center Director, will be retiring on April 30. Marlene has been a trusted and loyal employee of the League for over 34 years.

Words cannot describe Marlene's impact on the development of the League, and independent living movement in Nebraska. During Marlene's career, she has worked tirelessly to assist thousands of people with disability to live independently. It is well known among those who are close to the League and Marlene, that if you drive by the Lincoln CIL at night, or often on the weekend, you are likely going to see Marlene's vehicle in the parking lot, and her office light will be on.

Marlene's knowledge, expertise, all out commitment to people with disability, the independent living philosophy and movement, her passion, and her savvy will be sorely missed.

We at the League wish Marlene all of the best as she transitions to another phase of her life!

I might add that, I've asked her to attend a May 1 statewide planning meeting for the State Plan for Independent Living, and I think she has agreed to do so. I won't push my luck though.

Mike Schafer, Leágue CEO

#### Keeping an Eye On Lawmakers

### Pending Bills We're Watching in Nebraska, Iowa Legislatures

The 2015 legislative sessions are well under way in Nebraska and lowa and disability advocates are keeping an eye on several pieces of legislation.

Bills of interest in the Nebraska Unicameral include:

LB 16 would implement the Purchasing from Persons with Disabilities Act. The act would foster employment by requiring political subdivisions in the state that have their own purchasing agencies to purchase appropriate commodities and services from people with disabilities.

LR 33 calls for a special legislative committee known as the ACCESSNebraska Special Investigative Committee of the Legislature. The committee will continue the investigation of ACCESSNebraska that started last year. The bill was adopted March 2.

LB 287, introduced on behalf of the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, would expand license requirements for community sign language interpreters as well as video remote interpreters for the state.

LB 320 would create Aging and Disability Resource Centers that would serve as information clearinghouses for Nebraskans who are aging or who have disabilities and their family members. The services provided would include information and referral, options counseling, streamlined eligibility determination for public programs, personcentered transition support, partnerships with providers and quality assurance.

2015 LEGISLATURE

During a ring Council E private citizer private citizer LB 591 were considered.

LB 472 would adopt the Medicaid Redesign Act. It would expand Medicaid to those earning between 50 and 100 percent of the federal poverty level and insurance premium assistance in the healthcare marketplace for those earning 100 to 133 percent of the federal poverty limit.

LB 518 would provide for changes to the medical assistance program. The bill would gut the Medical Assistance Program and services. It would establish a Nebraska Health Savings Account

Plan to provide state funds for benefits for eligible recipients based on income and total assets.

LB 643 would adopt the Cannabis Compassion and Care Act, which would regulate the use of marijuana for medical treatment. A similar bill is under consideration by the lowa Senate, designated SSB 1243.

LB 607 would adopt the Home and Community Based Health Care Consumer Bill of Rights.

LB 490 would adopt the Provider Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment Act. Disability rights advocates consider the bill could be somewhat related to the area of assisted suicide and are paying attention to its progress from that standpoint.

According to a description by Syracuse Sen. Dan Watermeier, a Provider Order for Life-Sustaining Treatment

or frailty. Its purpose is to improve end-of-life care by converting a patient's treatment preferences into medical orders that are transferable amongst home and health care settings. Use of a POLST form would be voluntary, meaning it would be used only if a patient chooses to complete it. It also could

be reviewed and revised as needed.

During a recent hearing, Nebraska Statewide Independent Living Council Executive Director Kathy Hoell testified on the bill as a private citizen with a disability. She testified in a neutral.

LB 591 would create the state's Achieve a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Program and provide for adjustments to taxable income. The ABLE Act was passed by the federal government last December.

A similar bill is under consideration by the lowa Senate, designated SSB 1210.

LB 366 would change the personal needs allowance under the

See PENDING LEGISLATION on page 4

#### PENDING LEGISLATION

#### continued from page 3

Medicaid Assistance Act. It would require the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to include at least a \$75 a month personal allowance for eligible people in alternative living arrangements who are elderly or persons with disabilities.

LB 641 would amend Nebraska's Rules of the Road statutes, giving persons with disabilities operating manual or motorized wheelchairs or anyone operating a bicycle on a sidewalk, across a roadway or shoulder in a crosswalk the same rights and duties as pedestrians.

Other bills of interest in the lowa legislature include:

HF 198 would allow special needs trusts to be used in ways that are "no more restrictive than what is specified in federal law." Such trusts are not to be confused with ABLE accounts, although the trusts would be another tool to help people with disabilities pay for non-covered expenses without losing state or federal assistance.

HF 218, the Iowa Telehealth Act, would provide for Medicaid-reimbursable medical teleconferencing. The act would be a real benefit especially for Iowans with disabilities who live in rural areas.

HF 247, Public Assistance Programs Eligibility **2015 LEGISLATURE**Determination. Under the bill, Iowa's Dept. of Human Services would set up a computerized eligibility determination hospitals to possible system to verify eligibility for all public assistance programs.

HF 257 would modify the criteria for businesses claiming tax deductions for employing people with disabilities.

HF 543 would begin the process of permanently reducing the number of beds at State Resource Centers.

HF 579 states that applications for new or newly purchased health care facilities, elder group homes, assisted living programs and adult daycare centers can be denied if the applicants have repeatedly failed to operate other facilities in compliance with the law.

HSB 205 would eliminate removable windshield parking placards that do not have an expiration date for people with disabilities. The bill is intended to combat fraud, requiring that the placards would expire after five years.

SF 306 would allow persons under guardianship to be allowed to decide who can visit or communicate with them, under reasonable rules set by their guardians.

SF 372 would establish a Board of Durable Medical Equipment Providers and would require the licensing of providers.

SF 396 would require that gas stations comply with ADA regulations, including refueling assistance and call buttons at pumps, and provides for tax credits to help businesses to make the changes.

SF 92 would exempt persons who work for nonprofits and provide services to people with disabilities from paying individual income tax.

SSB 1082 would change how fines are collected for unauthorized parking in disability accessible parking spaces. The bill would authorize cities and counties to assess civil or criminal penalties -- \$100 or \$200 for violations.

SSB 1182 would enact the Caregiver Advise, Record, Enable (CARE) Act. The act would require hospitals to provide patients the opportunity to choose caregivers to provide after-care; require hospitals to give designated caregivers advance notice before discharging patients; and require

hospitals to provide live demonstrations of any medical tasks that would need to be done by patients or their guardians at home.

SSB 1253 would establish the Medicaid Treatment and Oversight Commission to provide legislative involvement and oversight of the state's transition to a Medicaid managed care system. Among its many provisions, the bill would require Medicaid managed care contracts to include non-emergency medical transportation.

This story includes information provided by the Nebraska Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities and infoNET, a disability policy resource for Iowa.

#### "...equal justice under the law is not a privilege — but a fundamental birthright in America."

—Edward M. Kennedy, 1990, during Senate passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act

## Please Show Your Support for the League on May 20, 28

# Giving Events in Omaha, Lincoln To Benefit Nonprofit Organizations

The League of Human Dignity is taking part in two area giving days this spring, In Omaha and Lincoln.

The Omaha and Southwest Iowa Centers for Independent Living are asking their friends and supporters to give during this year's Omaha Gives! on Wednesday, May 20. The event will raise money for nonprofit organizations in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro area.

All funds donated to the League during the event will specifically benefit the Omaha CIL, which serves consumers in Douglas and Sarpy counties, and the Southwest Iowa CIL in Council Bluffs, to support services in Council Bluffs and Pottawattamie County.

The minimum online donation is \$10, and hourly drawings, prizes and bonus dollars will boost gifts. The official website, www.omahagives24. org, features a list of all nonprofits and their updated donations totals throughout the day.

This will be the third year for the event, sponsored by the Omaha Community Foundation. The League has taken part in each giving day and asks that all residents keep nonprofits in mind, especially the League, and give what they can.

Last year, Omaha Gives! raised more than \$6.3 million from 18,000 donors, supporting 569 nonprofit organizations.

The League's Lincoln Center for Independent Living is again asking all its friends and supporters to keep the League in mind and please give



#### What:

24 hours of giving to benefit nonprofit organizations in Douglas, Sarpy & Pottawattamie counties

#### Where:

Give online from 12 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. at www.omahagives24.org.

#### Who:

This third annual event is Sponsored by the *Omaha Community Foundation*.



#### What:

24 hours of giving to benefit Lincoln & Lancaster County nonprofit organizations

#### Where:

Give online from 12 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. at www.givetolincoln.com or in person

from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Lincoln Community Foundation office, 215 Centennial Mall South in Lincoln

#### Who:

This fourth annual event is Sponsored by the *Lincoln Community Foundation*.

during this year's Give To Lincoln Day.

Give To Lincoln Day starts at midnight on Thursday, May 28 and runs throughout the day. Sponsored by the Lincoln Community Foundation, the annual giving day asks residents to go online and give during the 24 hour period, showing financial support for the nonprofits serving Lincoln and Lancaster County.

The purpose of the event is "to raise awareness of philanthropic needs and opportunities in the community, increase public awareness of local nonprofit organizations, build the capacity of local nonprofits and inspire donors to support the causes that mean the most to them," Lincoln Community Foundation officials said,

Donations primarily will be made online at www.givetolincoln.com from 12 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. May 28.

In the past, the foundation also has accepted gifts from those who prefer to donate in person, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., at the foundation office, 215 Centennial Mall South. Each donation will be matched proportionally from a challenge match pool.

Give to Lincoln Day is in its fourth year and the League has taken part each year. In is taking part in the event for the second year. Last year, the event raised about \$2.7 million in the form of 13,000 donations to 302 local nonprofits.

Links to the two giving day website soon will be available on the League's website, www.leagueofhumandignity.com and Facebook page. And follow the league on Twitter (@league68508) for the most up-to-date information.

# 2015 LEAGUE OF HUMAN DIGNITY Omaha/SW Iowa Benefit Golf Event

18-Hole
4-Player Scramble
& More!

★ Mulligans 2 for \$20
★ Silent Auction
throughout event
★ Dinner & Awards
★ Hole Prizes
★ A Chance to Win
A Car!!!

Register a 4-player team for \$300, or support the event through one of our event sponsorship levels: \$1,000, \$750 or \$250.

Proceeds will go to League of Human Dignity's Omaha and Southwest Iowa Centers for Independent Living, to help them fulfill their mission: Promoting independent living and the full integration of people with disabilities in their communities.

To register or for more information about the 2015 Omaha/SW lowa Benefit Golf Event, contact the League of Human Dignity:

- ★In Omaha at 5513 Center Street, phone 402-595-1256, email oinfo@leagueofhumandignity.com
- ★in Council Bluffs at 1520 Avenue M, phone 712-323-6863, email cengland@leagueofhumandignity.com

Visit us online at www.leagueofhumandignity.com and please "like" us on Facebook



### **April Is Fair Housing Month**

Each April the nation joins together to celebrate the anniversary of the passing of the Fair Housing Act and recommit to the goal, inspired following the assassination of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968: the elimination of housing discrimination and equal opportunity in every community.

This year marks the 47th anniversary of the act. Pres. Lyndon Johnson signed it into law on April 11, 1968, as a follow-up to the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Fundamentally, fair housing means that every person can live free, that communities are open and welcoming, free from housing discrimination and hostility. It also means each one of us, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, familial status, and disability, has access to neighborhoods of opportunity, where our children can attend quality schools, our environment allows us to be healthy, and economic opportunities and self-sufficiency can grow.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)describes its commitment to fair housing is a living commitment, reflecting the needs of America today and preparing for a future of true integration.

For more information on fair housing, including how to file a fair housing complaint, visit www.hud.gov.

(Based on information from the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development)

## Of Local Interest . . .

### Adaptive Sports & Rec at Madonna

Madonna's Adaptive Sports and Recreation program offers opportunities for people with activity limitations to enjoy a new sport or get back into a sport they once enjoyed.

The program provides monthly open practices, periodic workshops and competition opportunities. Instruction and adaptive equipment are available.

For more information, go to www.Madonna.org, click "news/events" and then "events calendar. Or contact Rick Haith at 402-413-3722 or send e-mails to rhaith@madonna.org.



#### **LEAGUE EMPLOYEES**

#### Saying Hello:

Shawna Keller, CIL Director, Lincoln (formerly Education & Quality Assurance Manager)

**Genette Albertsen**, Transportation/Barrier Removal Advisor, Lincoln

**Shannon Peterson**, Education & Quality Assurance Manager, Lincoln

**Sherri Eads**, Services Coordinator, Scottsbluff **Peg Baxter**, Services Coordinator, Omaha

#### Saying Good-Bye:

Charlotte Breuer, Independent Living Advisor, Norfolk Marlene Brondel, CIL Director, Lincoln

#### **LEAGUE DONORS**

Jan. 29, 2015, through Feb. 20, 2015

Century (\$100 to \$249): Eleanor Sack, Southwest Iowa Labor Council

Other: Jan Thelen, Velma Bower, Rosalind Morris

#### THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

### **Associations & Support Groups**

The League maintains a list of associations and support groups in Nebraska, Southwest Iowa, the region and the nation for people with disabilities and their loved ones.

To see the complete list, in pdf format, please visit our website: <a href="www.leagueofhumandignity.com/getinvolved.html">www.leagueofhumandignity.com/getinvolved.html</a> and click on "Support Groups."

#### Talking Book & Braille Service:

### No Need to Give Up Reading

People with limited ability to read, hold a book or turn pages still can enjoy their favorite books and magazines, through to the Nebraska Library Commission's free Talking Book and Braille Service.

The program provides easy-to-use playback equipment free on long-term loan. Patrons can have audio books and magazines mailed directly to them and all materials can be returned postage free.

Online application forms can be printed, completed, and then mailed to the Talking Book and Braille Service. The Web site is www.nlc.state.ne.us/

TBBS/applyforservice.aspx

For more information, e-mail nlc.talkingbooks@nebraska.gov or call 1-800-742-7691.

On the third Wednesday of each month,
Dairy Queen at
540 S. 32nd Ave. in
Council Bluffs gives
a portion of its proceeds from 5 to 8
p.m. to benefit the
SW lowa Center for
Independent Living.
Come on out and enjoy
a delicious treat and
support the League of Human Dignity!



#### Mark Your Calendar:

## **2015 League of Human Dignity LINCOLN BENEFIT GOLF EVENT**

Thursday, September 17, 2015 at The Highlands Golf Course

To register or for more information, contact The League of Human Dignity 1701 P Street, Lincoln, NE 68508 Call 402-441-7871 (V/TDD); Fax 402-441-7650 or email crigoni@leagueofhumandignity.com

Proceeds for our 7th annual **Lincoln Benefit Golf Event** will help the League fulfill its mission in the 19-county area served by the Lincoln Center for Independent Living.

#### **ADA Symposium Set for June in Atlanta**

This year's National ADA Symposium is May 10 through 13 at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta, 2654 Peachtree St. NE, in Atlanta, GA.

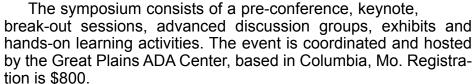
The annual four-day conference is the source for latest informa-

National

ADA Symposium

tion on the Americans with Disabilities Act. Presenters include nationally-recognized representatives of agencies and organizations involved with the ADA.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the ADA and the 19th annual ADA Symposium.



Seating is on a first-come first-served basis, so it's best to register as soon as you can. For more information call Lisa Tucker at 352-669-0076, email Tuckerli@missouri.edu or register online at www.adasymposium.org.



# **Barrier Removal Grants Available from League**

Barrier Removal Grants are available to qualified renters or homeowners who have mobility limitation or who have someone in their family who does.

The League offers grants in Omaha, Council Bluffs, and

Lincoln and Lancaster County. The program is for people with low to moderate income, based on U.S. Housing and Urban Development guidelines, who need funds to remove barriers in their homes

Examples of eligible modifications include outside ramps and lifts, grab bars, handrails, widened doorways, accessible tubs and showers, and reachable sinks and counters.

League staff offer a variety of services to assist in making homes more accessible to people with disabilities. For more information or for an application for a Barrier Removal Grant, contact:

Omaha Center for Independent Living 5513 Center St., Omaha, NE 68106 Phone 402-595-1256

Lincoln Center for Independent Living 1701 P St., Lincoln, NE 68508 Phone 402-441-7871

**SW lowa Center for Independent Living** 1520 Avenue M, Council Bluffs, IA 51501 Phone 712-323-6863

#### WHERE TO FIND US

## LINCOLN Center for Independent Living & Mobility Options

1701 P Street, Lincoln, NE 68508 Phone 402-441-7871

## OMAHA Center for Independent Living & Mobility Options

5513 Center Street, Omaha, NE 68106 Phone 402-595-1256

#### **NORFOLK Center for Independent Living**

400 Elm Avenue, Norfolk, NE 68701 Phone 402-371-4475

#### SW IOWA Center for Independent Living

1520 Avenue M, Council Bluffs, IA 51501 Phone 712-323-6863

#### **PANHANDLE Medicaid Waiver Office**

17 E 21 St., Scottsbluff, NE 69361 Phone 308-632-0470

#### **KEARNEY Medicaid Waiver Office**

3811 W. 29th Avenue, Ste 2, Kearney NE 68845 Phone 308-224-3665

#### **NORTH PLATTE Medicaid Waiver Office**

2509 Halligan Dr., North Platte, NE 69101 Phone 308-532-4911



www.leagueofhumandignity.com www.mobility-options.com and Follow us on Facebook and Twitter

# The League of Human Dignity **Building Corporation**

Is taking applications for 1 and 2 bedroom apartments with roll-in showers in Lincoln, Omaha, York, Columbus, Norfolk and Hastings.

These units come with Section 8 certificates and rent is based upon income. Eligible applicants must qualify under income guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Applicants must experience disability to qualify.

To apply or for more info, call **Paula Shufeldt** at 1-888-508-4758 V/TDD

or email pshufeldt@leagueofhumandignity.com



# **CLASSIFIEDS**

Classified ads cost \$5 for the first 25 words and 25 cents for each additional word. To place an ad, write to: On The Level, League of Human Dignity, 1701 P Street, Lincoln, NE 56508; call Jim at 402-441-7871 v/tdd; call toll free at 888-508-4758; or fax: 402-441-7650. Equipment, supplies and other items for sale must be accessible to, or for the use of, people with disabilities.

**FOR SALE:** Six adjacent cemetery plots in Westlawn-Hillcrest Cemetery in Omaha. Section 8, Lot 24R spaces 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12. \$1,000 each or \$5,000 for all six. Call the League of Human Dignity, 402-441-7871.

**FOR SALE:** Power chair, great condition, asking \$1,700 or best offer. Call Teresa, 402-517-8216 (Council Bluffs).

**FOR SALE:** Ford E150 Van, wheelchair accessible, wheelchair lift, lowered floor, new hand controls, zero effort steering, \$4,500. Call 402-890-8235 (Lincoln).

**FOR SALE:** 2012 Dodge Van, wheelchair accessible, 14-inch lowered floor both passenger and drivers side, hand controls, zero effort steering, \$32,000. Call 402-890-8235 (Lincoln).

**FOR SALE:** Electric wheelchair Like New, full recline, tilt, foot elevate, attendant control on back, Lester charger, \$2,500. Call 402-890-8235 (Lincoln).







# League Centers Offer Services to Achieve, Maintain Independence

The League of Human Dignity's Centers for Independent Living provide services that people with disabilities need to achieve and maintain their independence.

Services provided at League CILs in Nebraska and Southwest Iowa include, but are not limited to:

- Individual and systems advocacy
- Information and referral
- Independent living skills training
- Peer counseling and support
- Transition from institutions into the community
- Training in personal assistant hiring and management
- Barrier removal grants
- Equipment loan and rental

Call the League at 402-441-7871 to find out more. Or drop by our offices at 1701 P Street in Lincoln, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Or contact any of our other Centers for Independent Living.

Through our CILs and Medicaid Waiver offices, the League serves all 93 Nebraska counties and eight counties in Southwest Iowa.

#### Join Us on Social Media

Find us on **Facebook** — just click the logo at left or on our webpage or search for us from your own Facebook page.

Follow us on **Twitter** too. Just click the logo at right or on our webpage or find us @LHD68508.

