

ON THE LEVEL

From the League of Human Dignity

December, 2017

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

The League of Human Dignity is a consumer-based, nonprofit 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 [League website] leagueofhumandignity.com.

Happy Holidays from the League of Human Dignity!

Employees Observe Work Anniversaries in 2017

Eight Staffers in Five League Offices Have Been On the Job 5 to 30 Years

Jane Fink and Stacy Curtis celebrate 30 years with the League of Human Dignity this year.

They lead a list of eight League employees with work anniversaries this year — a total of 100 years of combined experience helping people with disabilities remain

independent. Jane and Tracy each are invaluable in the successful operation of their respective offices.

Jane is the Independent Living Coordinator at the Center for Independent Living in Norfolk. She started work as an Independent Living Advisor on Jan. 5, 1987. Working one-on-one with consumers, an ILA helps them achieve and maintain their independent living goals, through advocacy, skills training and information and referral.

Jane was named coordinator, supervising a staff of three ILAs, in the summer of 2009.

Tracy is the secretary in the Omaha Center for Independent Living. She joined the League on Dec. 17, 1987, as a secretary in the Lincoln CIL. She transferred to the Omaha office in the fall of 1993.

Nita Sipple marked her 15th anniversary with the League in June. She joined the staff in the Lincoln office on June 3, 2002, as an Independent Living Advisor.

Kaci Viter is one of five employees who celebrate five-year anniversaries this year. She joined the staff in the North Platte Medicaid Waiver Office on Jan. 3, 2012, as a Services Coordinator. Kaci became North Platte Office Director in 2016.

Services Coordinators assist people with disabilities to remain in their homes and communities by coordinating a variety of services that support independence. They determine the eligibility of applicants for the Nebraska Medicaid Waiver Program for Adults with Disability, conduct needs assessments, and help consumers develop a plan of service. They help recruit in-home providers, negotiate rates, authorize and monitor services, and many other duties.

Sonya Kraft joined the staff at the Norfolk CIL on July 23, 2012 as a Services Coordinator.

Karen Harmony joined the staff in the Kearney Medicaid Waiver Office on Aug. 27, 2012, as a Services Coordinator. In October, 2017, she was hired as the League's Level of Care (LOC) Supervisor. She will be based in Kearney and will travel throughout Nebraska.

Under Nebraska's new managed care system, Level of Care refers to evaluating consumers' eligibility for Medicaid benefits relating to nursing facilities.

Theresa Scott joined the North Platte office staff on Dec. 10, 2012, as a Services Coordinator.

Ashlen Morten joined the Norfolk office staff as a secretary on Jan. 23, 2012.

League employees are recognized with length of service awards after their first five years of employment and each five years thereafter.

Congratulations everyone!

A small head-and-shoulders photo of each of the eight employees named accompanies this article.

CEO's Note

This is the time of year when we look back and are thankful for the people who have impacted our lives. We're thankful for their unique talents. We realize that we are better off because of them.

There are all kinds of talented people in the world who have entertained, educated or helped us — and many times they are people who just happen to have a disability. For example, here are just a few famous names and the disabilities they experience:

Pope John Paul II — 264th Pope of the Roman Catholic Church — Parkinson's disease

John Cougar Mellencamp — American Rock Singer and Songwriter — Spina Bifida

Heather Mills — English Activist and Former Model, former contestant on 'Dancing with the Stars' — Amputee

Bud Abbott — Straight Man in the Comedy Team of Abbott and Costello — Epilepsy

Dave Longaberger — Business person and founder of the Longaberger Company — Epilepsy & Stuttering

Linda Bove — Actress who played the part of Linda the Librarian on Sesame Street — Deafness

Doc Watson — Guitar Player, Songwriter and Singer — Blindness

Al Hibbler — American Vocalist best known for his million selling recording of 'Unchained Melody' — Blindness

Amy Davis — Miss Utah 2004 — Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

George Clooney — Actor — Cerebral / Spinal Fluid Leakage; dyslexia

John A. Mulheren — American Financier, Stock and Options Trader, Philanthropist — Bi-polar Disorder

Florence Nightingale — Nurse and Health Campaigner — Depression

Jack Welch — former chairman of General Electric who increased the market capitalization by more than \$400 billion —Stuttering

Ralph Teetor — a prolific inventor who invented cruise control — Blindness

Disability is just a part of life and does not define a person. We are very thankful to people — many whom we may have no idea experience a disability. People with disabilities can impact our lives in wonderful ways. Our talents and our contribution to others define our lives. And this time of year, we are thankful that there are organizations that celebrate and embrace the contributions made by persons living with a disability. At the League of Human Dignity, we advocate for the recognition of these talented individuals.

Kathy Kay, League Co-CEO

Follow Us on Social Media

Find us on Facebook — just click the logo in the electronic version of this ad or on our webpage or search for us from your own Facebook page.

Follow us on Twitter too. Just click the logo in the electronic version of this ad or on our webpage or find us @LHD68508.

State Treasurer Answers Common Questions about Enable

Nebraska's Enable Savings Plan is a great financial tool for people with disabilities. Questions still remain, though, about how it works. Here Nebraska State Treasurer Don Stenberg answers some of the most common questions:

What is the Enable Savings Plan?

The Enable Savings Plan is the result of the Achieving a Better Life Experience Act (ABLE) passed by the Nebraska Legislature in 2015. The law allows Nebraskans with certain disabilities to create tax-advantaged ABLE savings accounts to pay for qualified disability-related expenses. The Nebraska legislation followed the federal ABLE Act passed by Congress in 2014.

Who manages the Enable Savings Plan?

The Enable Savings Plan is sponsored by the State of Nebraska and administered by the Nebraska State Treasurer. State Treasurer Don Stenberg is Trustee of the plan, and First National Bank of Omaha is Program Administrator. The plan is for qualified disability expenses, pursuant to the ABLE Act of 2014 and Section 529A of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. Investment decisions are made by the account owner or his or her legal representative.

How do I know if I qualify to open an Enable account?

An eligible person of any age — child, youth, or adult — can open an ABLE account at any time if they have a disability at the time the account is opened and if the onset of the disability was before their 26th birthday. A disability benefits advisor at your local Social Security or Medicaid office or an advocate or medical provider can help you determine if you are eligible.

Specifically, a person is eligible if he or she is blind or disabled before age 26 and is entitled to Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Supplemental Security Disability Income (SSDI). Or, they must have a physician certification indicating that they have a marked or severe functional limitation diagnosed before age 26, which is expected to result in death or has lasted/may last for a continuous period of at least 12 months.

What counts as a Qualified Disability-Related Expense?

To be qualified, an expense must have occurred while the account owner is eligible and must relate to the person's disability experience. Qualified disability expenses include basic living expenses and expenses that enhance a person's quality of life. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Education: Tuition (preschool through post-secondary), books, and supplies
- Housing: Rent, mortgage, utilities, and repairs
- Transportation: Mass transit, vehicle modifications
- Employment training and support
- Assistive technology and related services
- Personal support services
- Health, prevention and wellness: Medical, dental, vision, mental health, medical equipment, rehabilitation, and long-term services
- Financial management and administrative services
- Legal fees
- Oversight and monitoring
- Funeral and burial expenses

May I write checks on my Enable account?

Yes. A Checking Investment Option is available and allows account owners to pay for Qualified Disability Expenses by check or debit card. The FDIC-insured Checking Investment Option is one of five investment options offered by Enable.

How do I make deposits and withdrawals?

Account owners and family members can contribute through a variety of methods, including mailing a check to the Enable Savings Plan, authorizing an electronic funds transfer from a personal bank account, and using payroll deduction direct deposit or the Automatic Investment Plan.

Withdrawals can be made by writing a check, using a debit card, arranging for automatic recurring withdrawals, logging into a secure Enable Savings Plan account online, sending a withdrawal form downloaded from EnableSavings.com, or calling the Enable Savings Plan customer service line at 1-844-ENABLE4 (1-844-362-2534). Account owners may view their transactions, track their balances, and view statements online at EnableSavings.com.

Do I need to keep my receipts?

Yes. When you request a withdrawal from your Enable Savings Plan account, you are not asked at that time to account for how the money was used — it is assumed the withdrawal is for a qualified disability expense. However, you should save all itemized receipts and other supporting documentation for every withdrawal. If you were to be audited by the IRS, you may need to prove your Enable dollars were used for qualified disability expenses. Example documentation may include the following:

- Receipts
- Bank statements (paper or electronic)
- Leases (rental agreements)
- Canceled checks (paper or electronic)
- Bills
- Invoices

Keep track of your account and withdrawal activity for your Enable Savings by logging into your online account at EnableSavings.com. You also may contact the Enable call center from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. CT Monday through Friday at 844-362-2534.

Will an Enable account affect my eligibility for resource-based benefits like Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Medicaid?

No. You can save up to \$14,000 annually – and \$100,000 overall – without your SSI benefits being reduced or suspended. The annual amount will increase to \$15,000 per

tax year, beginning in 2018. Account balances up to and including \$100,000 are disregarded for purposes of determining eligibility to receive SSI benefits. The \$100,000 limit does not apply to people receiving Medicaid.

Who owns an Enable account, and who can contribute to it?

The person with the disability owns the Enable account and is the beneficiary of its assets. But anyone can contribute to the account. Total annual contributions into the account, regardless of who contributed, cannot exceed \$14,000 per calendar year for the rest of 2017 and \$15,000 a year, beginning in 2018.

Total contributions in an account cannot exceed \$400,000; however, the total account balance — including the value of the total contributions plus any earnings on the investment — can continue to grow beyond that amount.

Are there tax benefits to having an Enable account?

Yes. Earnings in an ABLER account are not taxed by the federal or state government. Money withdrawn from the account to pay for qualified disability expenses also is not taxed.

What about tax benefits if I am a grandparent and want to put money into a grandchild's Enable account?

Grandparents, other relatives, or friends can claim a deduction up to \$10,000 on their Nebraska state income taxes if they are a couple filing jointly or an individual filing as a single. They must complete the contribution by Dec. 31 to qualify for the tax benefit for that year. All contributions in aggregate made to the account owner's Enable account, including contributions made by the account owner, cannot exceed annual limit.

Do you have any end-of-the-year advice for Enable families?

An account owner can save up to \$14,000 in his or her Enable account by the last day of this December. Contributions can come from the account owner or from family or friends, but all together cannot exceed \$14,000. That amount increases to \$15,000 per year beginning Jan. 1, 2018.

Can a person have an Enable account and a Special Needs Trust at the same time?

Yes. While an Enable account cannot fund a Special Needs Trust, a Special Needs Trust may be used to fund an Enable account. Consider annually withdrawing up to \$14,000 (\$15,000, beginning in 2018) from the trust to deposit directly into the Enable Savings Plan account. This would allow an account owner easy access to funds for qualified disability expenses.

Can I open an Enable account if I live outside Nebraska?

Yes. Nebraska's Enable Plan is open to residents of all 50 states.

How do I get additional information?

Call Rachel Biar, director of Enable in the State Treasurer's Office, at 402-471-1088. Or call the Enable call center at 1-844-ENABLE4. Email for information at clientservices@enablesavings.com. The Enable website is www.enablesavings.com and the Treasurer's website is treasurer.nebraska.gov/able/

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 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

leagueofhumandignity.com
& Follow us on Facebook and Twitter

Norfolk Thanks Volunteers

Jerald Kloppenborg is the League of Human Dignity's Norfolk Volunteer of the Year for 2017.

Jerald was presented the Ken Lindhorst Volunteer of the Year Award during the annual Norfolk Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon on Friday, Oct. 20, at the League's Center for Independent Living in Norfolk.

This year, 10 volunteers were honored. Tim Ruge received a pin for five years of volunteer service and Rhonda Kloppenborg a one-year pin.

Volunteers each were given a thank-you gift — a tote bag bearing the League logo.

Two photos accompany this article. In the first, a man, identified as Jerald Kloppenborg, smiles, holding a plaque. In the second, a woman stands behind a table at which several people are seated: Norfolk Independent Living Coordinator Jane Fink speaks during the Oct. 20 Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon in Norfolk.

York Chapter Recognizes Those Who Volunteered

The League's York Chapter held its annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon on Friday, Oct. 27, welcoming 15 volunteers and guests.

The event was held at the Chances R Restaurant in York. Chapter President Stan Dinkelman recognized each member and League CEO Mike Schafer presented each with a tote bag bearing the League logo as a token of thanks.

The chapter recognizes all its members who were able to volunteer throughout the year. There were 13 volunteers in attendance out of 16 invited. Allen Stuhr also received a pin for 10 years of service.

The League greatly appreciates that all our volunteers do.

One photo accompanies this article. In it, a man gives a canvas tote bag to one of three people seated at a table: Mike Schafer presents a volunteer gift to Jean Gibb (center), as her husband Dan Gibb looks on. At left is volunteer Yvonne Stuhr.

Barrier Removal Grants

Barrier Removal Grants are available to qualifying renters or homeowners and their family members who have mobility limitations.

Grants are available to:

- People in Omaha, Council Bluffs, and Lincoln & Lancaster County.
- People with low to moderate income, as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- People who need help removing 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:

Lincoln CIL, 1701 P St., Lincoln, NE 68508, Ph.402-441-7871

Omaha CIL, 5513 Center St., Omaha, NE 68106, Ph. 402-595-1256

SW Iowa CIL, 1520 Avenue M, Council Bluffs, IA 51501, Ph. 712-323-6863

A service of the League of Human Dignity

Lincoln CIL Shows Appreciation for 2017 Volunteers

Jerricho Parrat is the recipient of the 2017 Ken Lindhorst Volunteer of the Year Award for Lincoln.

Jerricho 15, a sophomore at Lincoln Northeast High School, was presented the award during the Nov. 16 Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon at the League's offices in Lincoln.

The annual luncheon is a way of saying "thank you" to the League's volunteers throughout the year. There were 15 volunteers, League staff and friends in attendance this year. Included were Jerricho's grandparents, Jack and Kathy Johnston, both long-time League volunteers, Board of Directors members, and last year's Volunteer of the Year Award winners.

Jerricho has been helping the Johnstons during the League Membership Group's parking fundraiser on University of Nebraska home football game days.

Two photos accompany this article. In the smaller photo, a woman stands, giving a canvas tote bag to one of three people seated at a table: League Co-CEO Kathy Kay presents League tote bags as gifts to, from left volunteers Steve Walline, Gene Matson and Tim Heinjes, during the Nov. 16 luncheon.

In the larger photo, five people stand facing the camera, with a teenager in the center holding a plaque: Jerricho Parratt (center) is shown with, from left, League Co-CEO Kathy Kay, his grandmother Kathy Johnston, grandfather Jack Johnston and Lincoln CIL Director Shawna Keller. Jerricho received the award during the Nov. 16 Lincoln Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon.

League Donors

Sept. 30 through Nov. 20, 2017

Builder (\$500 and above): Susan Weiderspan.

Century (\$100 to \$249): Hal Daub; BPOE DOES Drove 4.

Believer (\$50 to \$99): David Mueller.

Friend (\$25 to \$49): Teresa Ekstein

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: leagueofhumandignity.com/getinvolved and click on "Support Groups."

League Employees

Saying Hello:

Karen Harmony, LOC Supervisor, Kearney

Chassidy Veik-Beltz, Independent Living Advisor, Norfolk

Devin Hart, Services Coordinator, Lincoln

Saying Good-Bye:

Angela Cemer, Independent Living Advisor, Council Bluffs.

Melissa Stodola, Services Coordinator, Norfolk
Ray Janiak, Housing Design Specialist, Omaha
Janey Ulmer, Services Coordinator, Omaha
Chad Chapman, Youth Transition Coordinator, Lincoln
Cindy Tietgen, Services Coordinator, Lincoln

Transportation When You Need It

The Extended Hours Service is for people with disabilities in Lincoln who need accessible, affordable rides when other options are not available.

Service Times: 5 to 11 p.m. weekdays; 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. Saturday; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Holidays (Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas & New Year's Day)

Service Area: Lincoln, NE

Cost: \$4 per one-way ride

Reserve rides 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Call for reservations 1 to 7 days in advance. Same-day requests are subject to space availability.

A HandiVan or EHS identification is required: You can get both at the League of Human Dignity, 1701, P Street, in Lincoln. Stop in or call 402-441-7871 for more information, details about eligibility and registration.

Questions or complaints about EHS scheduling & service may be directed to Servant Cab Company: Kirby (owner) 402-770-3683.

A service of the League of Human Dignity.

Get Your League of Human Dignity Cotton Tote Bag

On Sale Now only at the League of Human Dignity. \$5 (Price includes tax) while supplies last!

Can You Spare Your Unused Durable Medical Equipment?

From time to time the League of Human Dignity puts out the call for donations of gently used durable medical equipment needed for our Equipment Loan & Rental Program – and this is one of those times.

The program has been active at the League's CILs for many years but now is expanding to League Medicaid Waiver offices in Kearney, North Platte and Scottsbluff.

While the League's Centers for Independent Living have an ample supply of many items, including lifts, wheelchairs, crutches, commodes and the like, shower benches and chairs and transfer benches typically are in short supply.

Anyone with equipment that is in good condition that they would like to donate, please call the League office nearest you to see what is needed.

People with disabilities – whether temporary or permanent -- in counties served by the League have access to the equipment, which can help them remain independent. Included is durable medical equipment used for daily living, bathing, personal mobility and more.

The program includes a small, one-time handling fee and is open to people who live in residential locations, including foster homes, boarding houses and fraternity and sorority houses. People who live in nursing homes, college dorms or halfway houses are not eligible.

Fall Is Here and Winter Is Just Around the Corner: Closing Information

We have designated KFOR Radio as our official weather station. In times of severe weather, please tune to KFOR 1240 AM or go to www.kfor1240.com for the latest word regarding cancellations.

KFOR 1240 AM - The one you depend on for winter weather information.

On Sale Now! Fleece Vests

Blue or Gray with League logo embroidered on left breast / Sizes medium through 4XL
WHILE SUPPLIES LAST - All sizes \$29.95 (price includes sales tax)

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 58508; 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: Golden LiteRider Power Wheelchair with Oxygen Tank Holder. Purchased new on 6/07/17 for \$1,927 and never used. \$800 OBO. Call Scott at 402-910-1915 (Columbus).

FOR SALE: Golden LiteRider Portable Scooter. Purchased new on 2/16/16 for \$1,933 and used very little. \$800 OBO. Call Scott at 402-910-1915 (Columbus).

FOR SALE: 2015 Pride Mobility Jazzy Select 6 power wheelchair, blue-black. Used very little, "like new." Call for info & price, 402-433-5146. (De Witt).

FOR SALE: 2011 Invacare Pronto M61 Sure-Stop wheelchair, red-gray. Asking \$950 OBO. Call for more details, 402-433-5146 (De Witt).

FOR SALE: ELECTRIC SCOOTER, like new 3-wheel Pride GoGo Elite Traveller, red, new batteries, \$650. WALKER, Invacare two-wheel, fold-flat, \$22. ROLLATOR WALKER, Medline, \$45. Offers welcome. Will deliver in Lincoln area. Call Mark, 402-488-3710 (Lincoln).

FOR SALE: 2000 Ford conversion van, equipped with wheelchair lift, swivel front seat. Good condition, 64,000 miles. Call Lorraine at 402-727-5873 (Fremont).

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.

The League of Human Dignity Housing 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

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY.

Bruno Lifts Ad

- In Stock, visit us at 1720 O Street in Lincoln
- Helps you maintain your independence
- Safe, economical, efficient way to overcome architectural barriers

Call MOBILITY OPTIONS at 402-441-7871 about this great product!

You Can Show Your Support for the League of Human Dignity

Support the League of Human Dignity When You Shop at Amazon By Buying Through AmazonSmile!

Go online to Amazon's AmazonSmile site, sign in and shop away - Amazon then will donate a portion of the value of your purchase to the League!

League of Human Dignity Long-Sleeved T-Shirts

from the League of Human Dignity
Sizes Small through 3XL
WHILE SUPPLIES LAST
\$13.95 (price includes sales tax)
Available at League offices