

ON THE LEVEL

From the League of Human Dignity

December, 2019

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; and our Medicaid Waiver offices in Scottsbluff, Kearney and North Platte, Nebraska.

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: leagueofhumandignity.com

League Employees Reach Work Milestones

Four League employees are celebrating work anniversaries in 2020.

Co-CEO Mike Schafer and Accounting Assistant Marilyn Iversen each reached the 40-year milestone during the year.

Mike joined the League in February of 1979. He was the guest of honor at a celebration at the League's Lincoln office in March, and his story appears in the April issue of this newsletter.

Marilyn, an Accounting Assistant in the Lincoln office, joined the League in September of 1979. A celebration in her honor was held at the Lincoln office in September, and was reported in the October issue of this newsletter.

Mark Walker celebrated his 10-year work anniversary. Mark is a custodian in the Lincoln Center for Independent Living. He started working for the League in December 2009.

Lisa Spellman celebrated five years with the League in May. She works as a Services Coordinator in the Kearney Medicaid Waiver office.

The League honors its employees who have reached five years of employment, and every five years thereafter.

CEO's Note

I take this time of the year to reflect upon how much we have to be thankful for at the League of Human Dignity. I am so thankful for all the dedicated and passionate staff that has such an impact on the people we serve. Regardless of what the position, everyone at our offices plays a part in the ultimate result of helping make lives better. I am also grateful for all the community partners who support the mission of independent living. The agencies and organizations that support the League play a key role in creating a network to assist individuals.

I realize that the support of those who give to League is key to our mission. I take this time of year to recognize the volunteers who so generously give of their time to help develop resources to support our Center for Independent Living. Without their support we would not be able to have successful fundraisers in both Nebraska and Iowa. And finally, we are thankful for all the wonderful people who we meet along our way of promoting independent living for individuals.

I hope this newsletter instills thankfulness in the reader. May you find reasons to be thankful for at this time of year.

Wishing you a great Holiday Season!

Kathy Kay, League Co-CEO

Support the League with New TAGG App

Friends of the League in Omaha and Lincoln can now easily show their support through the TAGG app.

Together a Greater Good is an app-based giving platform that benefits Omaha and Lincoln area non-profits without any extra cost to the consumer.

To get started, download the free app to a smartphone and select the League of Human Dignity from the list of participating causes. After purchasing goods or services from a participating business, take a photo of the receipt. The business then will donate a percentage of the purchase to the League.

Participating businesses in Omaha include local restaurants, retail outlets including Hy-Vee supermarkets, beauty salons, fitness centers and other providers of services. TAGG has been around in Omaha since at least 2016. In Lincoln, which is still relatively new to the app, participating businesses include local restaurants, hair salons and gas stations like U-Stop.

The list of participating businesses is growing. And consumers can refer businesses to TAGG for a chance to earn \$25, or request businesses they want to see on the app.

Check the app for a full list of participating businesses and causes to support or visit the website at togetheragreatergood.com

The TAGG app is available free on the App Store for Apple devices and on Google Play for Android.

Norfolk Area Supports the League

The League's Norfolk Center for Independent Living went directly to supporters in 2019, raising money for the operation of the center from April through August.

Donors who gave at least \$500 were presented with a wall plaque for their place of business, in recognition of their donations.

Five area businesses donated at least \$500, Elkhorn Valley Bank and Trust, Promedcare, Nucor Detailing Center, Cornhusker Motors, and Waste Connections.

Others who donated money to the League were Home for Funerals Inc., Johnson's Inc., Norfolk Motor Company, and Winner's Circle.

Five photos accompany this article. All show people standing, facing the camera, holding a large plaque:

Jarvis Otten, center, of Elkhorn Valley Bank and Trust, receives a plaque from League Co-CEO Kathy Kay, left, and Jane Fink, right, Independent Living Advisor at the League's Norfolk CIL.

Andrew Foxhoven, center, of Promedcare, receives a plaque from Norfolk CIL Director Jean Kloppenborg Rugge, left, and Independent Living Advisor Jane Fink, right.

Nucor Detailing Center received a plaque for its financial support of the League. From left are Eric Retzlaff of Nucor, Jane Fink of the League's Norfolk CIL, and Metka Kolm, Tyler Godfrey and April Martens, all of Nucor.

Al Rajae of Cornhusker Motors receives a plaque from League Co-CEO Kathy Kay, left, and Jane Fink, right, Independent Living Advisor at the League's Norfolk CIL.

Bret Davis, left, of Waste Connections receives a plaque for his company's support of the League from Jane Fink, right, Independent Living Advisor at the League's Norfolk CIL.

AmazonSmile

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

Do you already shop online at Amazon? Please try AmazonSmile! It's the same great Amazon you love, but a percentage of the value of your purchase will automatically be donated to the League of Human Dignity. You shop. Amazon gives!

Just go online to AmazonSmile, sign in and start shopping!

Increase Coming in Social Security

Americans who receive social security benefits will see a raise starting in January.

Benefits will go up 1.6 percent per month for nearly 69 million Americans, thanks to a cost of living adjustment (COLA). The adjustment is made nearly every year when the cost of living rises, as measured by the Department of Labor's Consumer Price Index.

Other changes starting in January reflect the increase in the national average wage index. For example, the maximum amount of earnings subject to Social Security payroll tax goes up to \$137,700 from \$132,900.

In addition, the earnings limit for workers who are younger than "full" retirement age will increase to \$18,240. Full retirement age is 66 for people born from 1943 through 1954. Earnings above that limit result in a reduction in Social Security benefits of \$1 for each \$2 earned.

The earnings limit for people turning 66 in 2020 will increase to \$48,600. There is a deduction of \$1 from benefits for each \$3 earned over that limit until the month the worker turns 66.

Social Security COLA notices will be posted online in December for retirement, survivors, and disability beneficiaries who have a "my Social Security" account.

Log into or sign up for a my Social Security account at www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount to get more information about your new benefit amount. Choose to receive an electronic notification by email, text, or both under "Message Center Preferences."

More information about the 2020 COLA is available at www.socialsecurity.gov/cola.

Lincoln CIL Appreciates 2019 Volunteers

Dennis Kremer is the League's 2019 Volunteer of the Year for Lincoln.

Dennis was presented with the Ken Lindhorst Volunteer of the Year Award Nov. 14, during the annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon at the Lincoln Center for Independent Living. CIL Director Shawna Keller presented the award.

The luncheon is a way to say "thank you" to the League's volunteers throughout the year. There were 18 in attendance this year, including 12 volunteers, friends and League staff. Each volunteer was presented with a gift, a League-branded solar cell phone charger, for their service during 2019.

Dennis has volunteered for the past two years to help out at the League's Benefit Golf Event. He has been there to help with setup, to man the event's putting contest, and to help with cleanup after the event.

“Darrin takes the initiative while setting up for the tournament,” Shawna said in presenting the award. “He would have a positive attitude and smile and worked well with staff and players.”

Darrin is the husband of League Metro Housing Manager Terri Kremer.

Three photos accompany this article

In the top photo, a man and woman face the camera, both holding onto a small plaque. Darrin Kremer, left, receives the 2019 Ken Lindhorst Volunteer of the year award from Lincoln Center for Independent Living Director Shawna Keller, right.

In the middle photo, a woman gives a small white box to a man seated at a table. League Co-CEO Kathy Kay, standing, presents a thank-you gift to volunteer Tim Heinjes, in red. At right is League Board of Directors Member Mitch Miller, and at far left is former board member Kathy Parker.

At bottom, a woman stands, gesturing toward another woman seated at a table. League Co-CEO Kathy Kay, standing, introduces Lincoln CIL Director Shawna Keller, left, during the annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon Nov. 14. Also shown is volunteer Jeff Filbrandt, center, and new Board of Directors member Bonnie Faimon, right.

League Employees

Saying Hello:

Katy Mikels, Independent Living Advisor, Council Bluffs
Jeff Kallweit, Metro Housing Maintenance Technician, Lincoln
Myles Peterson, Level of Care Specialist, Kearney (formerly Services Coordinator)
Dayna Phillips, Services Coordinator, Kearney
Ashley Clark, Level of Care Specialist, Lincoln
Lara Thomas, Services Coordinator, Norfolk
Terri Groteluschen, Services Coordinator, Norfolk

Saying Good-Bye:

Terri Munter, Services Coordinator, Norfolk
Karen Harmony, Level of Care Specialist, Kearney
Chassidy Veik-Beltz, Services Coordinator, Norfolk
Bob Timme, Accounting Assistant, Lincoln.

League Donors

Aug. 18, 2019 to Nov. 5, 2019

Supporter (\$250 to \$499): Richard Hargesheimer, First Baptist Church of Lincoln

In Memory of Doris Greise: Jerry Luce, Ruth Schultz, Susan Warsocki, Barbara Greise, Heron Bay, Donald Ojeski, the Dehner Company, Traci Schwartz, Joy Depetro, Gary Smolinski, and David Eledge.

Thank You All

For Your Generosity!

BRP 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

Keep Sidewalks Clear, Passable This Winter

Winter is on the way and with it chances for snow and ice, making it harder for everyone to get around.

If you find it difficult walking through snow or on ice, imagine the difficulty for someone using a wheelchair, walker or other mobility device. The League reminds everyone to keep that in mind this winter and please keep your sidewalks and curb cuts clear and passable.

Sidewalks are a lifeline for people with disabilities and seniors. When snow or ice makes them impassable, that may prevent people from getting to work, to the store, or to the doctor. If someone using a wheelchair is forced into the street because of a blocked sidewalk, that puts them at the mercy of traffic and could become a matter of life or death.

This is more than an issue of good citizenship and neighborliness – it's also the law. Lincoln, Omaha, Council Bluffs, Norfolk, and most other cities and communities have ordinances that require snow removal on public sidewalks within a specified period of time. Fines may result for not abiding by the ordinances. Contact your local city government for more information on snow removal ordinances.

Snow Closing Info

We have designated KFOR radio as our weather station. In times of severe weather, please turn to KFOR 1240 AM, or go online to www.kfor1240.com for the latest word on cancellations.

Let's Keep in Touch . . .

Get **ON THE LEVEL** in your email box!

Subscribe at <http://eepurl.com/BAQz1> or at leagueofhumandignity.com/newsletter or send your email address to janderson@leagueofhumandignity.com

A publication of the League of Human Dignity.

Promoting independent living for people with disabilities since 1971

CMS Announces Medicare Premiums, Deductibles

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is increasing premiums, deductibles, and coinsurance amounts for Medicare Parts A and B again in 2020.

The Part B monthly premiums will be \$144.60, an increase of \$9.10 from 2019. The annual deductible for all Medicare Part B beneficiaries is \$198 in 2020, an increase of \$13 from 2019. The CMS announced the increases on Nov. 8, 2019.

Medicare Part B covers physician services, outpatient hospital services, certain home health services, durable medical equipment, and certain other medical and health services not covered by Medicare Part A.

The increase in the Part B premiums and deductible is largely due to rising spending on physician-administered drugs, CMS officials said.

The Medicare Part A deductible that beneficiaries will pay when admitted to the hospital will be \$1,408 in 2020, an increase of \$44 from 2019. The Part A inpatient hospital deductible covers beneficiaries' share of costs for the first 60 days of Medicare-covered inpatient hospital care in a benefit period.

Medicare Part A covers inpatient hospital, skilled nursing facility, and some home health care services. About 99 percent of Medicare beneficiaries do not have a Part A premium since they have at least 40 quarters of Medicare-covered employment.

Medicare Advantage premiums are expected to decline to their lowest in the last thirteen years, while plan choices, benefits and enrollment continue to increase.

2020 Omaha/Southwest Iowa Benefit Golf Event

Save the date

Friday, May 29, 2020, at Miracle Hill Golf Course, 1401 N. 120th St., Omaha, NE

Proceeds from this annual fund-raising event go to the League's Omaha and Southwest Iowa Centers for Independent Living, helping fulfill their mission: promoting and supporting independent living and the full participation by people with disabilities in their community.

If you would like to help out as an event planner, player, underwriter, sponsor or all of the above, contact the League of Human Dignity: 402-595-1256 in Omaha or 712-323-6863 in Council Bluffs.

ADA Symposium Set for Kansas City

Registration for the 2020 National ADA Symposium opens on Jan. 8.

This year's symposium is May 10-13, in Kansas City, MO. The annual four-day conference is the largest conference on the Americans with Disabilities Act and the source for latest information on regulations and guidelines, implementation strategies, and best practices related to the ADA. Presenters include nationally recognized representatives of agencies and organizations that are involved with the ADA.

This year marks the 29th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the 23rd annual ADA Symposium.

The event is coordinated and hosted by the Great Plains ADA Center, based in Columbia, Mo.

The venue and fees for this year's symposium are yet to be announced. For the most up-to-date information, visit www.adasymposium.org.

League Services Promote Independent Living

People with disabilities need the services provided by the League of Human Dignity's Centers for Independent Living to achieve and maintain their independence.

Services include, but are not limited to:

- Individual and systems advocacy
- Information and referral
- Independent living skills training
- Peer counseling and support
- Transition from institutions to 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 come to our offices at 1701 P Street in Lincoln, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Or contact any of our other Centers for Independent Living.

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 68508; call Jim at 402-441-7871; 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: Indoor/outdoor Acorn chair lift, like new, 4 step, swivels at top, electric, 2 remotes, 300 lb. capacity, easy to install. Call Judy 402-750-9642 or Gary 402-750-1663 (Norfolk).

FOR SALE: Like new Golden MaxiComfort 505 Medium Lift Chair, purchased in August 2018 & seldom used to early November 2018. \$500, call after 10 a.m. 402-464-7871 (Lincoln).

FOR SALE: 14' aluminum wheelchair ramp with 5' x 5' platform, made by PVI Industries, Fairbury, NE, very good shape.

Bruno 12-step stairlift, like new condition.

Bruno Valet Auto & Truck Seat, swings out & down for easy entry & exit of vehicle, very good condition. Call 402-525-1907 (Lincoln).

FOR SALE: Bruno Stair Lift, very good condition. Call Jane, 402-261-3265 (Lincoln).

FOR SALE: Bruno SRE 3000 stair lift, lightly used 4 years, rated for up to 300 lbs, 12-foot long, \$750. Also, Jazzy Select 6 electric scooter, lightly used 4 years, needs new batteries, \$400. Call Gayle, 402-429-3444 (Lincoln).

RECYCLING: We are recycling electric wheelchairs and scooters. Will pick them up if needed. Call 402-890-8235 (Lincoln).

The League of Human Dignity Building Corp.

The League of Human Dignity Building Corporation is taking applications for one and two 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 on 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 information, call Terri Kremer at 402-441-7871 or 888-508-4758 (toll free) V/TDD or email: tkremer@leagueofhumandignity.com

Equal Housing Opportunity

Living Well with a Disability

10 2-hour sessions, 3-5 p.m. on Thursdays, Jan. 16 through March 19, 2020

at the League of Human Dignity, 1520 Avenue M, Council Bluffs, IA

Sessions and training materials are free of charge for people who have disabilities

For more information, contact the League of Human Dignity's Southwest Iowa Center for Independent Living, 1520 Avenue M, Council Bluffs, IA 51501

Email cinfo@leagueofhumandignity.com or call 712-323-6863 and ask for Jessica

A sign language interpreter and reasonable accommodations will be provided on request. Refreshments will be provided. If you experience disability, this free 10-week class, sponsored by the League of Human Dignity, can help you steer yourself onto the road to healthy living in every aspect of your life.

Topics include:

- Setting goals
- Problem solving
- Healthy reactions

- Beating the blues
- Healthy communication
- Seeking information
- Physical activity
- And much more

Sign Up Today!

The healthier you are, the more you will be able to do.

Where to Find Us

LINCOLN

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

OMAHA

Center for Independent Living
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

SOUTHWEST 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, Suite 2
Kearney NE 68845
Phone 308-224-3665

NORTH PLATTE

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

Online at: leagueofhumandignity.com & Please follow us on Facebook and Twitter