

ON THE LEVEL

From the League of Human Dignity

August 2020

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

ADA Celebrates 30th Anniversary

July 26 marked the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The ADA is a landmark civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in all areas of public life.

Local celebrations included a series of videos and speakers each day from July 20 through 24, via the Zoom platform due to COVID-19 precautions. Sponsors included the League of Human Dignity, Nebraska Statewide Independent Living Council, Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, People First of Nebraska, Munroe-Meyer Institute, Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska, Disability Rights Nebraska, Nebraska Family Support Network, and the Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities.

The U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy also is having a yearlong celebration of the ADA, centered around the theme of "Increasing Access and Opportunity." The ADA anniversary will serve as a key component of this year's National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) observance in October.

Pres. George H.W. Bush signed the ADA into law in a 1990 White House ceremony in front of an audience full of activists, Congressional supporters, people with disabilities and their families and friends. He called it "the world's first comprehensive declaration of equality for people with disabilities."

The League of Human Dignity has been active in the Independent Living Movement since its founding in 1971 and has always promoted the full integration of people with disabilities into society.

We recognize that barriers persist, but we celebrate the many ways in which the ADA has transformed American society with the promise that Americans with disabilities can thrive. We recommit to our work of making the promise of the ADA a reality.

CEO's Note

The COVID-19 Pandemic has created a self-quarantine for many individuals. Across our country, we have isolated ourselves voluntarily and sometimes by directive from city or state government. This has been a unique and novel situation for many people. Ask almost anyone and they will tell you how hard it is to stay home and not go anywhere, to lose a job or to have to work from home. They will tell you that they miss shopping and socializing and eating out. There are no sports events to attend. People feel cut off, isolated, bored and lonely.

However, many people with disabilities have indicated that their life has not changed. They do not seem to be experiencing the increased stress of the self-isolation as others do. Consider that this is a way of life for many who are impacted by a disability. Being cut off and having to stay home, unfortunately, is nothing new to many individuals who have a disability. Unemployment is notoriously high for people who experience a disability.

So maybe COVID-19 and its impact give us a unique insight on the struggles that go on every day for so many. We have only been dealing with the Pandemic since March. For many individuals, social isolations and restrictions on where they can go and when have been going on for years. The barriers many people face every day on a physical, societal, and social level are just now being experienced by the vast majority of the population.

Let's hope we can come out of this with a new found respect and appreciation for so many people who have a continual struggle with isolation and barriers. Someday, we will put the COVID-19 Pandemic behind us. After COVID-19 ends, we will return to our "normal" lives, but others will remain in their "normal" lives. I challenge you to help create a solution for the isolation and restrictions that impact so many with disabilities.

Advocate:

- for more accessible transportation options
- for more accessible entertainment options
- to increase employment options.

There is no chance of a vaccine against disability. Disability is a family we can join at any point in our lives- if we are not already a member. I hope we can take an unpleasant situation, the COVID-19 Pandemic, and use it to create something good. Consider how you can be that change.

Stay safe; wash your hands and WEAR A MASK!!

Kathy Kay, League Co-CEO

Youth Transition 'Zooming' By

Our offices may be closed to the public during the COVID-19 pandemic, but that doesn't mean the League of Human Dignity has stopped providing services. Just one example, Lincoln Independent Living Advisors Nita Sipple and Jenny Duffek have been leading a Youth Transition course via ZOOM. Similar classes are under way during July and August at the Omaha and SW Iowa Centers for Independent Living.

Two photos accompany this article. In each a woman sits in front of a computer teleconferencing. ABOVE: Nita Sipple, Independent Living advisor (ILA) in the Lincoln Center for Independent Living opens a Youth Transition course July 14 using the Zoom video conferencing platform. RIGHT: Lincoln ILA Jenny Duffek also takes part in the class, which is designed to help young people with disabilities make the transition from high school into higher education, the workforce or independent living.

Sun Safety Month: Protect Yourself From Harmful UV Radiation

August is Summer Sun Safety month.

The annual observance encourages everyone to enjoy the summer but be careful to not overdo it — avoid the harmful effects of too much ultraviolet light on your skin,

UV radiation does have its benefits, including the production of vitamin D, a vitamin essential to human health. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends 5 to 15 minutes of sun exposure 2 to 3 times a week.

Risks include sunburn, a sign of short-term overexposure. Prolonged exposure can result in premature aging and skin cancer.

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States. They typically form on the head, face, neck, hands, and arms — the body parts most exposed to UV radiation. Most cases of melanoma, the deadliest kind of skin cancer, are caused by exposure to UV radiation.

Anyone can get skin cancer, but is more common in people who:

- Spend a lot of time in the sun or have been sunburned.
- Have light-color skin, hair, and eyes.
- Have a family member with skin cancer.
- Are over age 50.

To protect yourself from UV radiation:

- Stay in the shade, especially during midday hours.
- Wear clothes that cover your arms and legs.
- Consider options to protect your children.
- Wear a wide brim hat to shade your face, head, ears, and neck.
- Wear wraparound sunglasses that block both UVA and UVB rays.
- Use sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher.
- Avoid indoor tanning.

People who begin indoor tanning during adolescence or early adulthood have a higher risk of developing melanoma.

For more information about protection from UV radiation, visit the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Radiation and Your Health website.

A Note to Our Consumers

The ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic shows few signs of abating, so the League of Human Dignity is continuing its procedures to protect our consumers, staff and the community.

With this in mind:

-League offices will remain locked during business hours. League staff will continue to provide services to our consumers via phone, email, fax, mail or through other arrangements designed to emphasize minimal personal contact.

-If you need to drop off timesheets, correspondence or other documents please use the mail slot or the receptacle provided.

-If you need to rent or borrow durable medical equipment, please call the League and make arrangements by phone first, then you may sign the required documentation and pick up your equipment at the designated location.

If you have any questions or concerns, call your local League office. Thank you for your understanding.

And please protect yourselves — at the very least, practice social distancing, wash your hands and wear a mask.

Final Report on May Giving Days

The final results are in, and despite the COVID-19 pandemic, Omaha and Lincoln-area residents stepped up and raised nearly \$15.5 million for local nonprofit organizations during two May charitable giving days.

The ninth-annual Give To Lincoln Day, May 28, brought in \$6,950,800.57, from 30,873 donors. There were 449 nonprofits participating, including the League of Human Dignity.

The League received \$7,636.18 in donations from 28 donors – its best showing yet in the event.

The League donation totals include \$1,630 in online donations, \$5,420 in offline donations, and \$586.18 in matching funds. Matching funds were given proportionally from a pool of \$500,000, provided by the Lincoln Community Foundation and other event sponsors.

The eighth-annual Omaha Gives! and fourth-annual Pottawattamie Gives! May 20, raised \$8,528,221 from just over 65,000 donors. There were 1,010 nonprofits participating, including the League.

League Centers for Independent Living in Omaha and Council Bluffs will share \$460 in donations. The Omaha-Council Bluffs-area giving day is an online-only giving event.

Planning is already under way for next year's events. The 9th annual Omaha Gives! has been scheduled for May 26, 2021. The 24-hour giving days are held each year to raise awareness of local nonprofits and encourage local philanthropy. The Omaha-area

giving day has never offered an in-person giving option. The Lincoln event has — which has been a major part of the League's donations.

The COVID-19 pandemic made off-line giving more difficult this year but donors still stepped up. The League thanks everyone who gave!

New Art on Display at League

A photo shows a man hanging a still life painting that depicts a bowl of tomatoes. Dean Settle, owner of Metro Gallery at 1316 N St., in Lincoln, positions a painting in the League's Lincoln CIL conference room. The work is one of several pieces now on display throughout the office. Most of the art has been produced by artists who have disabilities and is from Settle's Metro Gallery collection. The League has been hosting art from the gallery since 2015. The collection is changed about every six months. Many of the pieces are classified as outsider art, which Mr. Settle said makes up about 15 percent of Metro Gallery's collection.

Social Security Remains Ready, Able to Help

Despite challenges government and businesses are facing right now, Social Security say they remain ready and able to help people with most Social Security matters by phone.

People can speak with a Social Security representative by calling their local Social Security office or the agency's national 800 Number. The Social Security website also provides local office phone numbers with its Social Security Office Locator.

Social Security offices are currently not providing service for walk-in visitors. But officials may be able to schedule appointment for limited, critical issues if phone or online services are unable to provide help.

Most business with SSA can be done online but because many people still rely on phone or in-person help, officials said they want to assure them that they can still count on the agency by phone.

Among other things, use online services to:

- Apply for Retirement, Disability, and Medicare benefits,
- Check the status of an application or appeal,
- Request a replacement Social Security card (in most areas),
- Print a benefit verification letter

Because medical and other documentation can be difficult due to the pandemic, agency officials also said they will extend deadlines wherever possible.

Loan & Rental Program

Have you ever had a family member suffer a minor injury that required the use of crutches or a wheelchair for a short time? Has a recent illness or accident made it necessary to use a walker, transfer bench or a commode? Do you have equipment that you no longer need?

The League of Human Dignity's Equipment Loan Program allows you to rent or borrow many durable medical equipment items for a small fee. We also encourage donations of these items.

We do not loan or rent items that require special or custom fitting and/or supervision by a doctor, such as braces or corsets.

All donated items need to be in good shape. We do not accept donations that need repair.

Items we loan include Tub Seats & Benches, 2-Wheel Walkers, Canes, Crutches, Commodes, Reachers, and Grab Bars.

A one-time fee of \$5 is required — \$25 for Rollator Walkers — and the loan lasts as long as the items are needed. All loans are subject to availability.

Items we rent include Manual Wheelchairs, Transport Wheelchairs, Rolling Shower Chairs, Knee Walkers, and Hoyer Lifts.

Monthly rental and deposits vary by item and rent includes all maintenance and servicing during rental period. All rentals are subject to availability.

For details, to see if we have what you need, or to see if you have what we need and would like to make a donation, call or visit the League of Human Dignity office nearest you.

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!

Keep Reading with TBBS

People who have 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 free audiobooks and audio magazines and braille through the mail and through digital download to individuals with a visual or physical condition, or a reading disability which limits use of regular print.

The collection consists of books and magazines similar to those found in a public library. The service is part of a nationwide network of cooperating libraries headed by the National Library Service, a division of the Library of Congress.

The program provides easy-to-use playback equipment on long-term-loan free of charge. Materials in the collection and the playback equipment are mailed to and from the library postage-free.

The service is available to individuals, as well as schools and other facilities, such as nursing homes, hospitals and senior citizen centers.

The program's in-house sound studios also record and produce audiobooks and audio magazines from Nebraska and regional authors as well as material about Nebraska and the Great Plains. The recordings from the Nebraska Collection also are made available for loan to patrons.

For more information, e-mail nlc.talkingbooks@nebraska.gov or call 1-800-742-7691. For more information, the Nebraska Talking Book & Braille Service main page is at the Nebraska Library Commission website, nlc.nebraska.gov.

Barrier Removal Program

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

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

COUNCIL BLUFFS

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

League Donors

June 4 through July 1, 2020

Builder (\$500 or more): Southern Heights Presbyterian Church-Pam

Supporter (\$250 to \$499): Les & Nancy Buckley

Century (\$100 to \$249): Dwain & Carol Leonhardt, Vince Powers, Anonymous (2),
Tim Poole

Believer (\$50 to \$99): Lisa Huff, Anonymous (2), Peter Larimer, Doby Haws,
Margaret Klein, Wynn Hjermsstad, Meagan Liesveld

Friend (\$25 to \$49): Suzanne Schreiber, Leslie Marquart, Brad Johnson, Ann
Cerveney, Progressive Electric, Leslie Tien, Blane Osterman

Other: Lisa Schmutte, Cecilia Rossiter, Emily Sutherland, Claudia Shaffer, Raymond
Danczek

Thank You All

For Your Generosity!

League Employees

Saying Hello:

Michelle Newman, Independent Living Advisor, Omaha.

Patti Pospisil, Services Coordinator, Norfolk.

Jeanne Brooks, Secretary, Lincoln.

Saying Good-Bye:

April Freeman, Services Coordinator, Omaha.

Jamie Holder, Transportation/Barrier Removal Advisor, Lincoln

Sheila Spanel, Secretary, Lincoln.

League Services Promote Independence

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 or from school to the next phase of life

-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.

Our CILs serve 43 Nebraska counties and eight counties in Southwest Iowa. We serve all 93 Nebraska counties with Medicaid Waiver services.

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

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."

We aim to keep the list as up to date as possible, so additions and suggested changes are welcome. Call the League at 402-441-7871.

TAGG Purchases, Support the League

Here's what you do:

Download the free TAGG 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.

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 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: Jazzy Elite 14 Motorized Wheelchair, 4 years old, used very little last 2 years, batteries 1 year old, great condition, \$1,900.00 402- 910-1357 (Columbus)

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

Fleece Vests

\$29.95 (includes sales tax) while supplies last! Blue or Gray, sizes large through 4XL.

Hooded Sweatshirts

Navy blue, sizes small through XL \$24.95; size 2XL \$25.75 (prices include tax). While supplies last!

Get Your League

Cotton Tote Bags

\$5.95 (includes sales tax) while supplies last! Only at the League of Human Dignity.

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 Nada Resnik-McNenny at 402-441-7871 or 888-508-4758 (toll free) V/TDD or email: nresnik-mcnenny@leagueofhumandignity.com
Equal Housing Opportunity

In Person or By Mail Don't Fail

A black and white block print is reproduced, showing three women, each wearing facemasks. At the bottom of the print are the words Vote 11.3.2020. This original block print is one of two prints donated to the League of Human Dignity by the artist, Ben Darling of Sydney, NE, to encourage voting in this year's general election on Nov. 3.

NESILC Council Meeting

10 AM to 2 PM; Friday, August 28, 2020; By Zoom or Telephone Conferencing.

Anyone interested in attending this quarterly meeting should email Kathy Hoell, kathy@nesilc.org for details.

To submit a comment, go to the NESILC website, www.nesilc.org; write to the Statewide Independent Living Council, 215 Centennial Mall South, Suite 519, Lincoln, NE 68508; or call 402-438-7979.

NESILC also is seeking candidates to serve as potential volunteer council members. Priority is given to qualified potential members who have disabilities. Those chosen would be appointed for 2 three-year terms.

Interested candidates can view the job description and application on the NESILC website.

The recommendation and appointment process takes several months. Any questions about the process or duties should be directed to the NESILC office or at info@nesilc.org.