

# ON THE LEVEL

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*From the League of Human Dignity*

**February 2021**

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](http://leagueofhumandignity.com)

## **PCP Training Sessions Gets Under Way**

Personal choice, direction, control — people living full lives on their own terms. That's what the Independent Living Movement is all about.

Nebraska's Person-Centered Planning Initiative is a system for implementing and supporting those values. It's a process that is designed to help a person with disabilities identify what they want their life to look like and then start to work to achieve that goal.

The initiative is under the direction of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services and the Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities. Person Centered Planning is used to create service plans for all Medicaid Home and Community Based Services waivers — Aged and Disabled, Developmental Disabilities, and Traumatic Brain Injury.

Free training sessions for those who are on a waiver, their families, and service providers are getting under way in February. For details, see page 3 of this newsletter.

Person-Centered Planning is designed to support “people living the lives they want to live in the community, who they want to be with, where they want to live, what communities they want to be part of, what they want to do in those communities —

that's the goal. That's the purpose of the system," said Shawn Terrell of the Administration for Community Living during a 2017 workshop.

The training involves development of methods and resources that enable people to choose their own pathways to success. The consumer may choose another person to help them to figure out where they want to go and how best to get there.

According to the ACL website, the person-centered planning process also should include family members, legal guardians, friends, caregivers, and others the person or their representative wishes. The role of agency workers, such as options counselors, support brokers, is to enable and assist people to identify and access the services they need, and to provide support during planning. The person receiving services should be involved in PCP to the maximum extent possible, even if they have a legal representative.

## Legislative Sessions Begin

The new year has brought with it the start of new legislative sessions in Nebraska and Iowa.

Senators gathered at the State Capitol in Lincoln Jan. 6, for the first day of the 107th Nebraska Legislature. Iowa Senators and Representatives gathered in Des Moines on Jan. 11, to open that state's 89th General Assembly.

Bills are being introduced and assigned to committees. Lawmakers will be grappling with many issues of interest to residents — including state budgets and redistricting legislative and other voting districts based on the nation's 2020 census.

The League of Human Dignity intends to keep an eye on bills introduced in both states that may especially impact people with disabilities.

So watch this space — we intend to report back to our consumers.

## CEO's Note

As I write this we are two weeks into 2021. I think everyone is in agreement that 2020 was a big disappointment. 2020 was dominated by the Coronavirus and the New Year has continued with the pandemic in full swing.

But there is encouragement! In Nebraska and Iowa, the health departments are rolling out the Coronavirus vaccines. Many individuals, including health care workers, first responders, vulnerable or at risk, have started to receive the vaccine. Staff in one of the League's offices has already received their vaccinations and personnel in another office will be receiving their shots on Saturday, the 16th.

Even though we will still continue to social distance and wear masks, this is an energizing time. We have the belief that the vaccinations will create the required results and some normalcy will reappear. We know this will not be overnight — it may be 8-9 months, maybe more. But just knowing that action is being taken to win the battle

again the Coronavirus gives us a glimmer of hope. And this glimmer will be enough to make all the past inconveniences, isolation and hardships over the past year worth it. The idea of being able to hug a parent, a child, a grandchild or a friend is such a welcome thought.

We must still stay diligent and keep up the safe habits of mask wearing, social distancing and washing our hands. Now is not the time to become lax in our response to the virus, but it is the time to feel that all our efforts have not been in vain. What a great feeling to have a glimpse on the horizon of better days ahead!

We welcome you 2021, good riddance 2020!

Stay safe everyone!

Kathy Kay, League Co-CEO

## Person-Centered Planning & You

### Multi-session workshops for Participants, Families and Providers

Discover how Person-Centered Planning can help you and your family.

- Are you a person with a disability who wants to achieve your dreams and vision?
- Are you an older adult who is looking for a way to stay active and healthy?
- Are you a young parent worried about your child's future?
- Are you an aging parent worried about who will take care of your loved one after you're gone?
- Are you wondering what your child will do after they age out of school? Will they stay home? Will they get a job or volunteer?

Person-Centered Planning is a group process to help people with disabilities, older adults, and their families achieve their goals and dreams.

### Register online for morning or evening training sessions

#### Round 1: Thursdays, 10-11:30 AM CST

Week 1      2/11: PCP and YOU!  
Week 2      2/18: Build a lasting support circle  
Week 3      2/25: Employment & volunteering  
Week 4      3/4: Reaching your dreams & vision

Register online at

[us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwrd-ugqTkuEtQ-yZewLPoiboXmhMzxHUsV](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwrd-ugqTkuEtQ-yZewLPoiboXmhMzxHUsV)

#### Round 2: Thursdays, 7-8:30 PM CST

Week 1      3/11: PCP and YOU!  
Week 2      3/18: Build a lasting support circle  
Week 3      3/25: Employment & volunteering  
Week 4      4/1: Reaching your dreams & vision

Register online at

[us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMrDOGhrDotEtM7C6Xerfv4dtoy8J6v3hqDt](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMrDOGhrDotEtM7C6Xerfv4dtoy8J6v3hqDt)

Participants who attend all four sessions will receive a certified certificate of achievement from the State of Nebraska.

Spanish Translation and Closed Captions are available.

Person-centered planning training is provided for free.

The training is sponsored by the Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Money Follows the Person Program. Collaborators include: Nebraska DHHS, Statewide Independent Living Council, League of Human Dignity, Brain Injury Alliance, People First of Nebraska, The Arc of Nebraska, Disability Rights Nebraska, Munroe-Meyer Institute - UCEDD, Nebraska Association of Service Providers (NASP), Parent Training and Information (PTI) Nebraska, Nebraska VR, and Nebraska Brain Injury Advisory Council.

For more information visit [dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/DD-Person-Centered-Planning.aspx](https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/DD-Person-Centered-Planning.aspx)

## **Bus Across Nebraska Takes 35 to 2020 Black Hills Ski for Light Event**

This year's Black Hills Regional Ski for Light event has been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but sponsors are planning for double the fun next January.

What would have been the 42nd annual event was scheduled for Jan. 23 through 29, at Deadwood, SD. Ski for Light is designed to teach cross country skiing basics to people with visual and mobility disabilities. The Deadwood Ski for Light also has a downhill skiing component.

The League of Human Dignity Membership Group donates each year to the "Bus Across Nebraska" trip to Deadwood for the event.

The bus ride is organized with the help of Ward and Kathy Kinney of Fontanelle Tours and Arrow Stage Lines. Participants work together each year to raise money for the round trip, which makes stops across Nebraska to pick them up on the outbound trip and drops them off on the way back.

Last year marked the sixth annual bus ride, with 35 participants, including then-Mrs. Wheelchair Nebraska, Aubrey Freeze. The bus took off from Omaha, overnights in Chadron, and reached Deadwood in time for the event's orientation. There were a total of 114 participants and 200 volunteers at the event in Deadwood.

Apart from skiing, participants enjoyed a barbecue buffet put on by local residents, slot machine contest, bonfire and awards banquet.

The 2021 event will be held Jan. 24-27, 2022, as the "42nd and 43rd Annual Black Hills Ski for Light Event."

# Health Observances

## February

AMD/Low Vision Awareness Month, organized by Prevent Blindness

American Heart Month, organized by the American Heart Association; and National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

Feb. 7-14 is Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Week, organized by the American Association for Respiratory Care

Feb. 4 is World Cancer Day, organized by the Union for International Cancer Control; Prevent Cancer Foundation

Feb. 7 is National Wear Red Day, organized by the American Heart Association; and National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

## March

Brain Injury Awareness Month, organized by Brain Injury Association of America

National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, organized by the Colorectal Cancer Alliance; and Prevent Cancer Foundation

National Kidney Month, organized by the National Kidney Foundation

National MS Education and Awareness Month, organized by the National Multiple Sclerosis Society; and Multiple Sclerosis Foundation

March 15-21 is Brain Awareness Week, organized by the Dana Foundation

March 11 is World Kidney Day, organized by the International Society of Nephrology; International Federation of Kidney Foundations

March 21 is World Down Syndrome Day, organized by Down Syndrome International

March 26 is American Diabetes Alert Day, organized by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

## Think Heart Health before It's Too Late

More than 600,000 Americans die from heart disease each year — it's the number one cause of deaths for most groups.

Heart disease affects all ages, genders, and ethnicities. Risk factors include high cholesterol, high blood pressure, smoking, diabetes, and excessive alcohol use.

You can take an active role in reducing your risk for heart disease by eating a healthy diet, engaging in physical activity, and managing your cholesterol and blood pressure. This is a great chance to start some heart-healthy habits!

## NCIL Conference Set for July

The 2021 Annual Conference on Independent Living for the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) will be July 19-22, at the Grand Hyatt Washington, in Washington, DC.

NCIL's annual conference is the largest independent living event of the year. The organization regularly hosts more than 1,000 people, including grassroots advocates, CIL and SILC leadership, members of Congress, government officials, and representatives from other organizations that work for justice and equity for people with disabilities.

NCIL leaders say we must fulfill the promise of the Independent Living Movement through discussions and real work to include and elevate individuals with disabilities who have not been welcomed or included.

For more details, visit [ncilconference.org](http://ncilconference.org)

## ADA Symposium On-Site & Virtual

Registration opens in March for the 2021 National ADA Symposium.

The symposium will be held both on-site and virtually this year. The on-site event is July 25-28 at the Marriott Desert Ridge Resort in Phoenix, AZ.

The virtual event will be Aug. 2-5.

As of this writing, further details were to be announced.

The annual event is the organized as thr premier conference on the Americans with Disabilities Act. It is designed to provide comprehensive information on all areas of the ADA. The National ADA Symposium is a project of the ADA National Network — celebrating its 30th anniversary this year — and is hosted by the Great Plains ADA Center in Columbia, MO. For more information, visit [www.adasymposium.org](http://www.adasymposium.org)

## Community Healthy Living Class

**Free via Zoom – from the comfort of your home**

The League of Human Dignity's Norfolk Office, is excited to announce a new course designed to provide tools to enhance skills to advocate for and be a part of the community in which you live.

Classes will focus on:

- Goal setting and Problem solving
- Receiving and using information
- Advocacy

- Physical activity
- Sustain a healthy diet
- Maintain positive changes

Classes are one hour each week for 6 weeks by Zoom!

If you are interested in the class, please contact Jane Fink at 402-371-4475 for more information to participate in this wonderful opportunity.

## Keep Sidewalks Clear, Passable

Winter is well under 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 — or parking in a space that's used for dumping snow — imagine the difficulty for someone with mobility issues. The League reminds everyone to keep that in mind this winter and please keep your sidewalks and curb cuts clear and passable.

Sidewalks and clear handicap parking spaces are a lifeline for people with disabilities and seniors with mobility issues. When snow or ice makes them inaccessible, 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.

So let's do what we can to keep sidewalks, curb cuts, ramps and handicap parking spaces clear of ice and snow this winter.

This is an issue of good citizenship and neighborliness — but 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.

## ADA Center Offers Tips

How well a small business owner provides snow removal has a big impact on consumers with disabilities.

The Great Plains ADA Center is offering a mini slideshow on its website, with snow removal quick tips for small businesses. The slide show can be used for programs, shared with employees, or just reviewed quickly on a smartphone.

Access the slide show at [www.gpadacenter.org/learning-center/snow-removal-and-accessibility](http://www.gpadacenter.org/learning-center/snow-removal-and-accessibility).

The center also is making available a 24-page booklet highlighting strategies used by U.S. and Canadian communities to improve accessibility during winter weather.

The booklet, *Effective Snow Removal for Pathways & Transit Stops*, is available in PDF and Microsoft Word formats at [www.nadtc.org/resources-publications/resource/effective-snow-removal-for-pathways-and-transit-stops-easter-seals-project-action/](http://www.nadtc.org/resources-publications/resource/effective-snow-removal-for-pathways-and-transit-stops-easter-seals-project-action/)

## League Employees

### **Saying Hello:**

Jenna Kock, Services Coordinator, Omaha.

### **Saying Good-Bye:**

Lynn White, Secretary, Lincoln.

Ashlen Morten, Secretary, Norfolk

Margaret Llewellyn, Secretary, Omaha

## League Services for Independent Living

People with disabilities have the same rights to live independently as anyone else. That's why the League of Human Dignity is here — and has been for nearly 50 years — the services provided by the League's Centers for Independent Living help people 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. The League serves all 93 Nebraska counties with Medicaid Waiver services.

## League Donors

**Nov. 24, 2020, thru Jan. 14, 2021**

Builder (\$500 or more): Joyce Holtmeier

Supporter (\$250 to \$499): Johnson's Plumbing & Heating, Caretech Inc., Norman Hedgecock, Connor Roofing Co.

Century (\$100 to \$249): Tom Poole, Jeff Patterson, Mary Steiner, Marcia Knuth, Edward Roche, Frank Velinsky, Lincoln Landscaping, Charles Francis, Tim Keelan, Barbara Greise, Jo Adams, Honda Cars of Bellevue

Believer (\$50 to \$99): Mark Zach, Frank Andelt, The Granary Inc., Dan Zach, Noel Engineering Inc., Applied Connective Technologies, Denise Wiemer, Julie Joyce, Ken Mayberry

Other: William Vernon, Lorene Ludy, Charles Bills, Tim Lockwood, Grant Hrabovsky, Paula Luther, Rosanne Staniford

Thank You All For Your Generosity!

## Keep Reading with TBBS

People with a limited ability to read, hold a book or turn pages still can enjoy their favorite books and magazines, through the Talking Book and Braille Service (TBBS), a provision of the Nebraska Library Commission.

The program provides free audiobooks and audio magazines and braille through the mail and through digital download.

The program's collection consists of books and magazines similar to those found in a public library. The service is part of a nationwide network of 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.

For more information, e-mail [nlc.talkingbooks@nebraska.gov](mailto: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](http://nlc.nebraska.gov).

## 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](http://leagueofhumandignity.com) & Please follow us on Facebook and Twitter

## 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/](http://leagueofhumandignity.com/getinvolved/) and click on "Support Groups."

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

## 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: Several items, including ceiling mount lift, hospital bed, hand pump lift, wall mount lift, shower chair. For details call Darla, 402-750-7838 (Norfolk).

## The League Building Corp. Is Taking Applications

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, 402-441-7871 or 888-508-4758 (toll free) V/TDD or email: [nmcnenny@leagueofhumandignity.com](mailto:nmcnenny@leagueofhumandignity.com)

Equal Housing Opportunity

## League Bids Farewell to Long-Time CFO

A photo shows a woman wearing a face mask standing next to a table full of cupcakes with "Happy Retirement" signs on the wall. A retirement reception in honor of Jodi Mason was held Nov. 30, 2020, at the League of Human Dignity's Lincoln office. COVID-19 precautions kept the event relatively low key. Jodi, who joined the league on Dec. 9, 1996, retired after 24 years of dedicated service as Chief Financial Officer. We wish Jodi well. Chris Grandgenett has transitioned from accounting assistant to the CFO position.

## A Note to Our Consumers

While vaccines are rolling out, the ongoing Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic currently still is going strong. 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. Our phone numbers are listed on page 8. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

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