

ON THE LEVEL

From the League of Human Dignity

June 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

Giving Day Sets New Record

Donors Raise More than \$7.6M for Local Nonprofits

Lincoln-area residents stepped up May 25, and raised \$7.6 million for local nonprofit organizations.

The 10th annual Give To Lincoln Day was sponsored by the Lincoln Community Foundation in association with West Gate Bank and other businesses. It capped a month of charitable giving with a 24-hour online event.

Preliminary figures show that the event brought in \$7,615,733, from 29,089 donors. That is more than \$700,000 more than last year's record. There were 455 nonprofits participating, including the League of Human Dignity.

The League received \$6,220 from 25 donors.

The 24-hour giving day is held each year to raise awareness of local nonprofits and ultimately to provide needed services and improve Lincoln.

Leading the list of nonprofits this year was the Food Bank of Lincoln, which raised \$357,770. Rounding out the top 10 were CEDARS Home for Children Foundation with \$204,229, Catholic Social Services \$195,681, Matt Talbot Kitchen and Outreach \$188,156, People's City Mission \$179,398, Center for People in Need \$166,247, Lincoln Children's Zoo \$153,081, Pius X Foundation \$150,803, Clinic with a Heart \$145,743, and Friendship Home of Lincoln \$138,848.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for charitable giving in support of nonprofits has never been greater. The League wishes to thank all those who donated in support of independent living and equal access for people with disabilities.

In addition to its on-line giving, Give To Lincoln day also has an offline and in-person giving component. Offline donations traditionally have been a major part of the League's donations. Donors were able to mail their gifts before May 25, and to drop off donations at the Lincoln Community Foundation and West Gate Bank locations during the business day.

The donation totals are preliminary and do not include matching funds, which will come proportionally from a challenge match fund of \$500,000 provided by event sponsors.

In addition to West Gate Bank, other event sponsors were Davis Design, Assurity, William J. Mueller & Kim M. Robak, Talent+, Pepsi, Bob & Jan FitzSimmons, Pinnacle Bank, US Bank, Joe W. & Ruth K. Seacrest Fund, Olsson, Cornhusker Bank, HBE, Runza, ABC Electric, Bill & Marilyn Cintani, Data Source, The family of Alfred A. Duteau, Firespring, WRK, and Mail Management Services Inc.

CEO's Note

Twenty two years ago, on June 22, 1999, the Supreme Court decided in *Olmstead v. L.C. (Olmstead)* that under the Americans with Disabilities Act, people with disabilities cannot be unnecessarily segregated and must receive services in the most integrated setting possible. The Supreme Court held that people with disabilities have a qualified right to receive state funded supports and services in the community rather than institutions when the following three part test is met:

1. the person's treatment professionals determine that community supports are appropriate;
2. the person does not object to living in the community; and
3. the provision of services in the community would be a reasonable accommodation when balanced with other similarly situated individuals with disabilities.

This has been one of the most important decisions in the Independent Living movement. Because of *Olmstead*, choice in where to live has been one of the major building blocks of the disability rights movement and is integral to independence, well-being, and the health of people with disabilities across their lives. For years, many individuals living with disabilities did not have any choice in where they could live. Institutional or hospital settings were the only option. Now, the least restrictive setting is possible.

Unfortunately, there are still people in the disability world unable to exercise the freedom of choice in where they live. Oftentimes, people are still living in institutions even when community placement would be more appropriate. At the League of Human Dignity, we fight for the rights of individuals to live in the community where they choose. There are many programs and supports nationwide to support independent living.

This now 22-year-old decision is at the heart of Independent Living.

Some courts have required that states provide Medicaid Waivers in order to be in compliance with Olmstead. A Medicaid Waiver is a package of Medicaid-funded services states can provide to specific types of people with disabilities in the community who meet the requirements for institutional level of care. These Medicaid Waivers enable individuals to live where they choose, at the same time receiving the necessary supports and services to be safe.

The League of Human Dignity provides the Medicaid Waiver for the state of Nebraska. If you want to learn more about Medicaid Waiver, please contact us at one of our Nebraska locations listed elsewhere in this newsletter.

The League of Human Dignity celebrates the anniversary of this monumental decision which has impacted the quality of life for so many persons with a disability. A major component of independent living is choice, and this decision has given people choice in where and how they want to live in their community.

Kathy Kay, League Co-CEO

Youth Transition Course

The League of Human Dignity is excited to announce a new course designed to help young people with disabilities find success in their lives after high school.

Whether your plans include continuing education, joining the workforce or simply living a productive, independent life as part of your community, this six-week course will provide the tools needed to help you make healthy changes, set and achieve goals, overcome obstacles, and advocate for yourself as you make the transition from high school.

6-Week Youth Online Transition Course

Tuesdays 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Class will be held on Zoom

Registration deadline June 4

To register, contact Shawna Keller at 402-441-7871

Class will focus on:

- Effective communication and dealing with negative emotions
- Acquisition and use of information
- Physical activity and healthy levels of exercise
- Maintaining a healthy diet
- Advocating for personal and healthcare system improvements
- Maintaining positive changes
- Work on and discuss setting goals and problem solving

Eligible students must be age 14-21 and have a disability

League of Human Dignity, 1701 P Street, Lincoln, NE 68508
402-441-7871, leagueofhumandignity.com

League Donors

Jan. 14, 2021, thru May 5, 2021

Builder (\$500 or more): Rohn Loyd, Lonnie Mueller

Supporter (\$250 to \$499): Connor Roofing Inc., David Knorr, Monica Balters,

Century (\$100 to \$249): Schneider Electric N. Amnerica Foundation, Sharon M.

Thorson, Eunice Underwood

Thank You All For Your Generosity!

League Employees

Saying Hello:

Beth Plisek, Independent Living Advisor, Norfolk

Jennifer Herrick, Secretary, Norfolk

Jane Fink, Norfolk CIL Acting Interim Director (formerly Independent Living Coordinator)

Saying Good-Bye:

Cindy Huelsdonk, Level of Care Specialist, Lincoln

Deb Anderson, Secretary, Norfolk

Jean Kloppenborg Ruge, Norfolk CIL Director

Save the Date . . .

Omaha and Southwest Iowa Centers for Independent Living 2021 Benefit Golf Event

Friday, August 20, 2021

Bent Tree Golf Club, Council Bluffs, Iowa

Four-Player Golf Scramble - Silent Auction - Buffet Dinner - And More!

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.

2021 LINCOLN Benefit Golf Event

Thursday, September 16, 2021

The Highlands Golf Course, 5501 NW 12th Street, Lincoln, NE

This is an 18-hole, four-player scramble. Register a team!

Sponsorship and underwriting options also are available. For more information, contact: The League of Human Dignity, 1701 P Street, Lincoln, NE 68508, call toll free: 1-888-508-4658 or email janderson@leagueofhumandignity.com

Proceeds from this annual event will go to the Lincoln Center for Independent Living, to help promote independent living and the full integration of people with disabilities into society.

Community Living Skills Youth Transition Course

The League of Human Dignity, Norfolk office is excited to announce a new course designed to help young adults with disabilities find successes in their lives after high school. Whether your plans include continuing education, joining the workforce, or just living an independent life as part of your community, this course will provide you with tools needed to make this transition a bit easier.

Classes will Focus On:

- Disability Identity
- Self-Advocacy
- Healthy Communication
- Healthy Reactions
- Healthy Relationships
- Time Management
- Goal Setting
- Technical Skills

Eligible Students Must:

- Be ages 14 to 21
- Be a young adult with a disability
- Be enrolled in high school or an educational program

All classes will be held via Zoom

Classes will be held from 2 to 3 p.m. on July 12, 14, 19, 21, 26, 28, Aug. 2, 4, 9 and 11

If you would like to attend this course, or to learn more, contact Jane at 402-371-4475 or email jfink@leagueofhumandignity.com Class size will be limited to 15

Strategies for a Healthy Summer

People who have disabilities are twice as likely to be physically inactive as people without disabilities, according to the U.S. Surgeon General.

As a result, they are less likely to stay heart healthy and maintain strong muscles and bones. But with warm weather upon us, it's time to think about healthy activity and more time outdoors.

Having a disability doesn't mean a person is unhealthy or that he or she can't be healthy. Being healthy means getting and staying well so we can lead full, active lives. We need the tools and information to make healthy choices and to know how to prevent illness.

For people with disabilities, it also means knowing that health problems related to a disability can be treated. These problems, also called secondary conditions, can include pain, depression, and a greater risk for certain illnesses.

To be healthy, people with disabilities require health care that meets their needs as a whole person, not just as a person with a disability. Most people with or without disabilities can stay healthy by learning about and living healthy lifestyles.

And remember: despite the fact that vaccinations are proceeding and most people want life to get back to "normal", COVID-19 is still with us.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, until we know more about how vaccines will affect the disease, even people who are fully vaccinated should keep taking precautions in public places. That includes wearing a mask when necessary, staying six feet apart from others, avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated spaces, and washing your hands often.

Once you are fully vaccinated — which means it's at least two weeks since your second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine or two weeks after your single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine — you may be able to start gather indoors again without masks with other people who are fully vaccinated.

Some of us may have a harder time getting and staying healthy, but there are things we can all do. Here are some tips to help prevent chronic disease and have a healthy summer:

1. Be physically active every day.
2. Wear sunscreen and insect repellent
3. Keep cool and hydrated in extreme heat
4. Eat a healthy diet
5. Drink water instead of sugary drinks or alcohol
6. Don't use tobacco

Source: 2005 Surgeon General's Call to Action: To Improve the Health and Wellness of Persons with Disabilities; and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention Tips for a Healthy Summer and Benefits of Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine

Use of Mental Health Services Drops in 2020

At a time when data shows mental health conditions have worsened nationwide due to the COVID-19 pandemic, use of mental health services declined among people insured by Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) in 2020.

That's the word from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), based on findings from a Medicaid & CHIP data analysis released May 14. From March through October 2020, use of mental health services dropped sharply among Medicaid and CHIP beneficiaries, which may have a substantial impact on long-term health outcomes, CMS officials said..

Children under age 19 used mental health services 34% less during the period, and adults age 19 to 64 used services 22% less. That translates to about 14 million fewer mental health services for children and 12 million fewer for adults.

To help close this gap in services, CMS is emphasizing mental health care in its new Connecting Kids to Coverage National Campaign, a national outreach and enrollment initiative funded under the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) and the Affordable Care Act. The outreach is meant for families with children and teens eligible for Medicaid and CHIP.

"This new data provides a window into the impacts of the pandemic for marginalized communities – particularly children and other vulnerable people – and is critical as we work towards meeting the needs of those that rely on Medicaid and CHIP," said CMS Acting Administrator Liz Richter.

More than 100 million people, 43 million of them children, relied on Medicaid and CHIP for healthcare in 2020.

Community Living Skills Youth Transition Course

The League of Human Dignity, Omaha office is excited to announce a new course designed to help young adults with disabilities find successes in their lives after high school. Whether your plans include continuing education, joining the workforce, or just living an independent life as part of your community, this course will provide you with tools needed to make this transition a bit easier.

Classes will Focus On:

- Disability Identity
- Self-Advocacy
- Healthy Communication
- Healthy Reactions
- Healthy Relationships
- Time Management
- Goal Setting
- Technical Skills

Eligible Students Must:

- Be ages 14 to 21
- Be a young adult with a disability
- Be enrolled in high school or an educational program

All classes will be held via Zoom

Classes will be held from 2 to 3 p.m. on July 12, 14, 19, 21, 26, 28, Aug. 2, 4, 9 and 11

To register or to learn more, contact Stephaney at 402-595-1256 or email ssprinkel@leagueofhumandignity.com

Celebrate Achievements of DeafBlind Workers

The achievements of people who are deaf-blind are being celebrated during a national advocacy campaign in June and July.

This year's Helen Keller DeafBlind Awareness Week is June 27 through July 3. The theme is "DeafBlind Employees Can Help Businesses Grow with Unique Insights and Perspectives. TrailBlazer, BigThinker, GoGetter, DeafBlind"

The awareness week is under the direction of the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults.

The essence of this year's message is that 2020 was a landmark year for improvements in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I), and people with disabilities have experienced the benefits of this progress. Talented employees who are deaf-blind are more than doing their part to assist companies grow.

A recent study provided by Accenture, "Getting Equal 2018: The Disability Inclusion Advantage", found that businesses that employed individuals with disabilities achieved, on average, 28 percent higher revenue, 30 percent greater economic profit margins and twice the net income of their industry peers.

DeafBlind Awareness Week has been observed each year since 1984. That year, Pres. Ronald Reagan proclaimed the week surrounding June 27 — Helen Keller's birthday — Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week and called upon government agencies, health organizations, communications media, and people of the United States to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

For ideas on how to observe the week, visit www.helenkeller.org

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?

Through the League of Human Dignity's Equipment Loan Program you can rent or borrow 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 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.

Community Living Skills Youth Transition Course

The League of Human Dignity, Southwest Iowa office is excited to announce a new course designed to help young adults with disabilities find successes in their lives after high school. Whether your plans include continuing education, joining the workforce, or just living an independent life as part of your community, this course will provide you with tools needed to make this transition a bit easier.

Classes will Focus On:

- Disability Identity
- Self-Advocacy
- Healthy Communication
- Healthy Reactions
- Healthy Relationships
- Time Management
- Goal Setting
- Technical Skills

Eligible Students Must:

- Be ages 14 to 21
- Be a young adult with a disability
- Be enrolled in high school or an educational program

All classes will be held via Zoom

Classes will be held from 2 to 3 p.m. on July 12, 14, 19, 21, 26, 28, Aug. 2, 4, 9 and 11

To register or to learn more, contact Jessica at 712-323-6863 or email jjohanns@leagueofhumandignity.com

We're Looking for More Readers

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A publication of the League of Human Dignity.

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 changes are welcome. Call the League at 402-441-7871.

TAGG Purchases & Support the League

Here's what you do:

1. Download the TAGG mobile app.
2. Choose us & Upload a photo of your receipt from a participating business.
3. The business will make a donation to us AT NO EXTRA COST TO YOU!

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.

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

League of Human Dignity Branded Apparel

Fleece Vests

Blue or Gray, sizes Large through 4XL
While Supplies Last
\$29.95 (price includes sales tax)

Long-Sleeved T-Shirts

Navy Blue, sizes Small through 2XL
While Supplies Last
\$13.95 (price includes sales tax)

Hooded Sweatshirts

Navy Blue, Sizes small through XL \$24.95
2XL \$25.75, While Supplies Last
(Prices include sales tax)
Get Your League of Human Dignity Cotton Tote Bag
\$5.95 (price includes sales tax)

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 Nada Resnik-McNenny, 402-441-7871 or 888-508-4758 (toll free) V/TDD or email: nmcnenny@leagueofhumandignity.com

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

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

A Note to Our Consumers

While more and more people are getting vaccinated against the ongoing Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic still has not quite gone away. 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 above. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

And please follow your local directives with regard to COVID-19 precautions.