

ON THE LEVEL

From the League of Human Dignity

April 2022

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

Support Nonprofits During May 26 Event

Online charitable giving days are a great opportunity to show support for local nonprofits like the League of Human Dignity.

And the annual Give To Lincoln Day is just such an opportunity. The event starts at 12 a.m. on Thursday, May 26 and runs throughout the day. The event is presented by the Lincoln Community Foundation and several local sponsors, including West Gate Bank.

During the annual giving day, residents go online and give during the 24-hour period, donating to the nonprofits serving Lincoln and Lancaster County.

Donations primarily will be made online at www.givetolincoln.com from 12 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. on May 26. There donors can easily find the nonprofit of their choice. But the foundation also has in the past made arrangements for in-person donations.

Each donation on May 26 will be matched proportionally, based on dollars raised by each nonprofit, from a \$500,000 match fund, provided by the Lincoln Community Foundation and other event sponsors.

Links soon will be available on the League's website, leagueofhumandignity.com and Facebook page. And follow the League on Twitter (@league68508) for the most up-to-date information.

The League has participated in each of the past 10 Give To Lincoln Days.

League Fundraisers a Chance to Give

It's the season for golf and giving.

League Centers for Independent Living in Omaha, Southwest Iowa, and Lincoln are again planning their golf event fundraisers this year. The annual events resumed last year after skipping 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Planning is just getting under way for this year's events, but the dates have been set.

The Omaha and Southwest Iowa CILs normally hold their golf event together. This year, it's planned for Friday, Aug. 12, at Bent Tree Golf Club just east of Council Bluffs, Iowa. For more details, see the box on page 3.

The Lincoln CIL will hold its event on Thursday, Sept. 15, at the Highlands Golf Course in Lincoln. For more details, see the box on page 4.

The proceeds from the two benefit golf events will go to their respective CILs, helping them provide Independent Living services for people with disabilities in their areas.

CEO's Note

Throughout the month of March, we celebrated National Social Worker's Month. In 1984, the United States Government formally recognized March as National Social Work Month. It was introduced by Democratic Senators and was co-sponsored by a Republican. Ronald Regan then signed it into law, and the rest is history. The theme for 2022 is "The Time is Right for Social Work". During Social Work Month take time to learn more about the many positive contributions of the profession.

Through our Social Work, the League of Human Dignity, Inc. creates opportunities so that people may experience their best quality of life. We provide services and programs to increase the independent living skills so that individuals can build their confidence and improve the various skills they need to live, learn and work in their communities.

The League has been operating for over 50 years and continue to offer community-based, consumer-driven programming for people with all types of disabilities. Many of these programs are provided at no charge.

Besides working with individuals, we also try to make communities more accessible for people with disabilities. We build relationships with other agencies and business to advocate for the people we work with. We also continue to educate the public on how to make improvements in our communities to increase the accessibility of businesses, recreational opportunities and transportation options for people with disabilities. We also work to change the public perception of people with disabilities. Our goal is that individuals with disabilities will be integrated into society as equals.

A single social worker can influence an entire life and generations of them have shaped all of us. The time is always right for this crucial element of our society. Social workers have an essential role in society. Please make sure to recognize the people around you who have picked social work as their life's work. They go to work each day to make a difference in other people's lives.

Kathy Kay
League Co-CEO

Proposal Could Make Airline Bathrooms Accessible

The U.S. Department of Transportation has announced that it plans to implement rules requiring accessible bathrooms on single-aisle airliners.

The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking was announced March 18.

“Far too often, travelers with disabilities don’t have the opportunity to fly to their destinations because they can’t access the lavatories on most airplanes,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. “This rule would make airplane lavatories more accessible for passengers with disabilities, and bring us one step closer to the day when air travel is possible for everyone.”

Single-aisle aircraft now operate the vast majority of domestic flights, including a large share of long, cross-country flights. The proposed rule would require airlines to make at least one lavatory on new single-aisle aircraft with 125 or more passenger seats large enough to permit a passenger with a disability — with the help of an assistant, if necessary — to approach, enter, and maneuver within the aircraft lavatory, use all facilities in that lavatory, and leave, using the aircraft’s onboard wheelchair.

The down side is that it could be decades before any actual change. The proposed rule would apply to new aircraft ordered 18 years after the effective date of the final rule or delivered 20 years after the effective date of the final rule.

That timetable is the result of a 2016 negotiation that produced a consensus among a cross-section of stakeholders. The department is seeking comment, though, on whether accessibility improvements could be implemented more quickly.

Save the Date . . .

Omaha and Southwest Iowa Centers for Independent Living 2022 Benefit Golf Event
Friday, August 12, 2022, 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.

Social Security Offices to Begin Reopening

The Social Security Administration has announced that it is preparing to open its offices to more in-person visits.

Local offices will begin adding more in-person appointments and offer in-person service for people without an appointment beginning in early April, according to a Social Security release.

In-person appointments have generally been limited to emergencies since March of 2020. At that time offices closed to the public and switched to primarily remote services due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“During the pandemic, millions of people used our secure and convenient online services and received help by phone and in our offices by appointment,” said Social Security Associate Commissioner Jeffrey Buckner.

“For people who can access our services online or by phone, we ask that they continue to do business with us online or by phone and schedule an appointment, when possible, which will better allow us to timely serve people who cannot use those options.”

Opening up the offices to the public again is welcome news and couldn't come soon enough for many Social Security recipients. The switch to primarily remote services has apparently not been entirely problem free. The move reportedly has created a systematic backlog as well as administrative issues that will need to be fixed, according to news reports.

2022 Lincoln Benefit Golf Event

Thursday, September 15, 2022, 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.

Fair Housing Act Turns 54 on April 11

Each April marks the celebration of the anniversary of the Fair Housing Act in this country. The observance highlights the country's efforts to end housing discrimination and raises awareness of fair housing rights.

This April marks the 54th anniversary of the Fair Housing Act — officially designated as Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 — and a a recommitment to the goal of eliminating housing discrimination in every community.

After a long, difficult legislative process, Pres. Lyndon Johnson signed the act into law on April 11, 1968, following the assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. The law was a follow-up to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Its enactment was such an achievement

that its first anniversary in 1969, and each year since, has been designated as a time for celebration.

Fair housing means that everyone has the same right to buy or rent safe, decent housing without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, familial status, and disability. While progress has been slow and much still remains to be done, the law at least keeps alive the dream of communities that are open and welcoming, free from discrimination and hostility

For more information on fair housing, visit www.hud.gov. For questions about discrimination or to file a complaint in Nebraska and Western Iowa, contact the Fair Housing Center of Nebraska and Iowa in Omaha at 402-934-6675 or toll free at 800-639-5853.

People who believe they have experienced discrimination may file a complaint by contacting HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity at 800-669-9777 (voice) or 800-877-8339 (Relay). Housing discrimination complaints may also be filed by going to hud.gov/fairhousing.

View Official Housing Month Ceremony Online

The official ceremony celebrating this year's Fair Housing Month is set for 2 p.m. on April 5.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is celebrating the 54th anniversary of the Act with events highlighting the impact and significance of this landmark civil rights law.

The theme of this year's Fair Housing Month is "Fair Housing: More Than Just Words." It is a call to take action to end housing discrimination and to raise public awareness for fair housing rights and responsibilities, according to the announcement of the event on the HUD website.

The ceremony is part of the virtual Fair Housing Month, via webcast, from 2 to 3:05 p.m. Eastern Time — 1 to 2:05 p.m. Central. The event is hosted by the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO).

Those interested in watching the Opening Ceremony can register by visiting the FHEO website, www.hud.gov/fairhousing and clicking on the Fair Housing Month Opening Ceremony rotator link.

2022 Health Observances

April

April is Irritable Bowel Syndrome Awareness Month, International Foundation for Gastrointestinal Disorders

Medicaid Awareness Month, MedicaidAwareness.com

National Autism Awareness Month, Autism Society

Occupational Therapy Month, American Occupational Therapy Association

National Sarcoidosis Awareness Month, Foundation for Sarcoidosis Research

Parkinson's Awareness Month, Parkinson's Foundation

April 22-28 is World Immunization week, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

May

Arthritis Awareness Month, Arthritis Foundation

Hepatitis Awareness Month, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Lupus Awareness Month, Lupus Foundation of America

Mental Health Awareness Month, National Alliance of Mental Illness

National Celiac Disease Awareness Month, Beyond Celiac

National High Blood Pressure Education Month, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

National Stroke Awareness Month, American Stroke Association

Cystic Fibrosis Awareness Month, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

May 4 is World Asthma Day, WorldAsthmaDay.org

May 12 is Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Day, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

May 20 World Autoimmune/Auto-inflammatory Arthritis Day, International Foundation for Autoimmune and Auto-inflammatory Arthritis

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Each year millions of Americans face the reality of living with a mental illness.

In fact, nearly 450 million people worldwide are living with mental illness, says the Anxiety & Depression Association of America. And nearly two-thirds never seek treatment.

To raise awareness of mental illness and fight the stigma still attached to mental health disorders, each year advocates in the United States, including the National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI), observe Mental Health Awareness Month during May.

“Each year we fight stigma, provide support, educate the public and advocate for policies that support people with mental illness and their families, said a NAMI release. “Together, we can realize our shared vision of a nation where anyone affected by mental illness can get the appropriate support and quality of care to live healthy, fulfilling lives.”

For 2022’s Mental Health Awareness Month, the theme is “Together for Mental Health.”

In Pres. Joe Biden 2021 Mental Health Awareness Month proclamation, it was recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic crisis has impacted the mental health of millions of Americans and increased the need for mental health services.

But even before COVID-19, Biden said, mental health conditions in the country were on the rise. In 2019, nearly 52 million adults experienced some form of mental illness. Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates that one in four adults reported experiencing symptoms of an anxiety or depressive disorder in February 2021.

League Employees

Saying Hello:

Susan Johnson, Services Coordinator, Omaha
Jesse LaMaack, Housing Manager, Lincoln
Brandy Brown, Level of Care Specialist, Lincoln
Shanika Colbert, Services Coordinator, Omaha
Niki Hutson, Services Coordinator, Omaha
Ceah Midder, Services Coordinator, Omaha
Lisa Hobbs, Services Coordinator, Norfolk

Saying Good-Bye:

Nada Resnick McNenny, Housing Manager, Lincoln
Kelli Neiman, Level of Care Specialist, Lincoln
Bonnie Jolly, Independent Living Advisor, Omaha

League Donors

Jan. 14, 2022 through March 8, 2022

Builder (\$500 or more): Sandhills Global

Supporter (\$250 - \$499): Michael J. Balters

Century (\$100-\$249): Honda Cars of Bellevue

Thank You 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

Try the League's Equipment Loan & Rental Program

Have you or a family member ever suffered 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 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

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

Report: ACA Stronger Than Ever

Health care coverage is up for millions of Americans and prices are down, according to a new federal report.

The “State of the ACA” report, published by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), was released on March 23, the 12th anniversary of the Affordable Care Act. The report shows that the Affordable Care Act, sometimes known as Obamacare, is the strongest it has ever been, due to Pres. Biden’s investments in it through the American Rescue Plan.

Nationwide, 2.8 million more consumers are receiving tax credits in 2022 compared to 2021. These tax credits help families keep more money in their pockets for essentials as the nation recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.

“President Biden promised to build on the success of the Affordable Care Act, and just one year into his Administration, we have already broken records with all-time high enrollment numbers and all-time low prices,” said HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra. “We will continue working to deliver on that promise until we make health care a right for all.”

During the first year of the Biden-Harris Administration, nearly 6 million new consumers signed up for coverage through the Marketplaces nationwide during the 2021 Special Enrollment Period and this year’s Open Enrollment Period. Marketplace plans were more affordable, contributing to a record-breaking 14.5 million consumers nationwide signing up for health care coverage – a 21 percent increase from last year.

The uninsured rate for the U.S. fell to 8.9 percent for the third quarter of 2021 (July – September), down from 10.3 percent for the last quarter of 2020.

The Biden-Harris Administration has said it is making it a priority to continue to strengthen the ACA.

The Biden-Harris Administration also has announced a new enrollment opportunity for low-income consumers. This new special enrollment period will make it easier for low-income people to enroll in Marketplace coverage throughout the year.

HHS celebrated the ACA's 12th anniversary, March 21 through 25. The celebration highlighted the impact of the law and the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to building on its success. The theme of the celebration was "ACA: 12 Years of Advancing Health Equity for All Americans."

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!

League Services Promote Independent Living

People with disabilities often face barriers to achieving and maintaining their independence.

The services provided by the League of Human Dignity's four Centers for Independent Living in Nebraska and Southwest Iowa are designed to help them overcome those barriers.

- These 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

The League has been helping people achieve and maintain their independence for 50 years.

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.

WE'RE LOOKING FOR MORE READERS!

Get ON THE LEVEL in your email box —

Subscribe at leagueofhumandignity.com or send your email address to janderson@leagueofhumandignity.com

On The Level is a publication of the League of Human Dignity.

TAGG Your Purchases & Support the League

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.

HELP WANTED:

Part Time Maintenance Technician

The League of Human Dignity Metro Housing Corp. seeks part time maintenance technician to maintain our buildings and apartments. Degree in a relevant field or at least two years' experience required.

Qualified candidates with disability strongly encouraged to apply. Open until filled. Send printed cover letter and resume to Bryan Kubicek, League of Human Dignity, 1701 P Street, Lincoln NE 68508; email to kkay@leagueofhumandignity.com. EOE

HELP WANTED:

Independent Living Advisor - Omaha

The League of Human Dignity Omaha Center for Independent Living is expanding and seeking to add to our team a full time Independent Living Advisor to provide services that assist people with disability to live independently in their homes and communities.

Applicant must have a degree in a human service field or experience working with individuals with disability.

Qualified candidates with disability are strongly encouraged to apply. Open until filled. Send cover letter and resume to: Lora Young, lyoung@leagueofhumandignity.com EOE.

HELP WANTED:

Services Coordinator - Norfolk

The League of Human Dignity is seeking full time Services Coordinators in Northeast Nebraska to assist adults with disability to remain in their homes and communities.

Baccalaureate or graduate degree in human services fields required AND at least two years full-time experience in long-term care, teaching, gerontology, rehabilitation, community health, working with individuals with disabilities, or closely related social human services.

Qualified candidates with disability are strongly encouraged to apply. These positions remain open until filled. Send cover letter and resume to: Jane Fink, jfink@leagueofhumandignity.com EOE.

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

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 are HUD units, and rent is based on income.

Eligible applicants must experience disability and must qualify under income guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

To apply, or for more information, call 402-441-7871

or 888-508-4758 (toll free)

or email:

kkay@leagueofhumandignity.com

Equal Housing Opportunity

A Note to Our Consumers About COVID-19 Precautions

While more and more people have been getting vaccinated against the Coronavirus (COVID-19), and precautions are loosening up, the illness still has not quite gone away. In fact, new variants cause increased infections nationwide from time to time.

With this in mind, the League of Human Dignity is continuing some of its precautions:

- 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.