

ON THE LEVEL

From the League of Human Dignity

August 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

League Mourns Passing of Kevin Underwood

The League of Human Dignity is mourning the passing of Kevin Underwood.

Kevin, 62, was a long-time member of the League's Board of Directors and League volunteer. He died on Saturday, July 30, 2022.

A Lincoln native, Kevin was a graduate of Lincoln Southeast High School and attended the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where he graduated with a degree in Accounting and Finance. The League relied on Kevin's expertise as a financial consultant. He also provided accounting and bookkeeping services to many Lincoln small business owners.

Kevin experienced quadriplegia. At age 13, he was involved a trampoline accident, which damaged his C-4 vertebrae. After undergoing surgery, he received training in how to live with his disability at the Sister Kinney Rehabilitation Institute in Minneapolis, MN.

In 2008, Kevin was the recipient of the League's Ken Lindhorst Volunteer of the year Award. A League volunteer since 1972, it was said at the time that he had grown up with the league.

Family members include his mother, Eunice; sisters, Debbie (Norm) Hedgecock, Nancy (Les) Buckley; brother, Scott Underwood; nieces and nephews, Jon (Jenny) Hedgecock, Jake (Taylor) Hedgecock, Greg (Kerstin) Buckley, Beth (Matt) Breunsbach, Grant (Kelsey) Buckley, and George Underwood; and close friend and caregiver, Steve Foster. He was preceded in death by his father George and brother Gregory George.

Kevin was a member of Trinity Lutheran Church. A private service was held at Roper & Sons South Chapel in Lincoln on Tuesday, Aug. 2.

CEO's Note

July 26th was the 32nd Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The theme of this year's celebration: #ADA32 — Celebrate, Learn, Share.

Celebrate this landmark legislation that helped to transform the lives of individuals who experience a disability. The ADA made it law that businesses and public places have to be accessible to individuals and helped ensure reasonable accommodations to help employees perform the essential functions of their job.

We still see the results of the ADA being implemented today. In Lincoln, for example, curb cuts are being installed in the neighborhood near the Sunken Gardens. While I am thrilled to see that these sidewalks will be accessible to individuals with mobility limitations, I am disappointed that it has taken so many years for this to come to fruition. Even though the ADA has been an official federal law since July 26, 1990, many barriers to inclusion still remain.

I encourage you to learn more about the ADA. Learn how the ADA is enforced and who is exempt from complying with the ADA. The ADA does not apply to religious organizations, private clubs, and entities which historically have been exempt from federal civil rights laws. Historic properties are not exempt from ADA requirements. To the greatest extent possible, historic buildings must be as accessible as non-historic buildings. However, it may not be possible for some historic properties to meet the general accessibility requirements.

Visit the ADA.gov homepage to learn more about the it. This website includes technical assistance as well as general information about the ADA, its history and current legal cases.

And finally, share this information with others and local businesses. I encourage you to seek out patronize businesses that comply with the ADA. And, if you do go to a place that does not have an accessible entrance or bathrooms, make it a point to speak to the manager or the owner and ask them to consider making the establishment one that can be enjoyed or experienced by people of all abilities.

Celebrate, Learn and Share about the ADA on its 32nd anniversary. The unique law is the building block upon which inclusion starts for individuals with disabilities. This law provides equal access for individuals to so many elements of our American way of life. Know the ADA and make sure to be an advocate for the enforcement of this important disability rights law.

Kathy Kay
League Co-CEO

Students Take ‘Independent Chef’ Class

The League’s Norfolk Center for Independent Living recently held a cooking class for students making the transition to life after high school.

The class, “The Independent Chef”, was sponsored by Healthy Blue and taught by Beth Plisek and Brenda Johnson, Independent Living Advisors in the Norfolk CIL. In all, 18 students took part.

Classes included activities adapted to the students’ abilities and learning styles. They covered the safe use of toaster ovens, preparing food, safe food storage, making grocery lists and shopping for food.

Through Healthy Blue’s sponsorship, each student also received a cookbook, thermal gloves and a new toaster oven.

The curriculum was designed to teach “soft skills” through cooking that can be carried over into successful independent living, employment and continued education. Soft skills include cleanliness, the ability to read and follow recipes, working together, listening and following instructions.

The League looks forward to sponsoring with Healthy Blue again, helping students become independent and confident in their own abilities and desires.

Three photos accompany this article. In the top photo, a woman assists two students who are seated at a table with a bowl of cookie dough in front of them, forming cookies and putting them on a baking sheet. Students and a Norfolk Public Schools paraprofessional take part in “The Independent Chef” cooking class, sponsored by the League and Healthy Blue.

In the lower left, a woman stands with a seated student, helping the student arrange fruit on a plate. Independent Living Advisor Beth Plisek, left, works with a student.

In the lower right, a group of students pose in front of a Healthy Blue banner, some holding boxes. Healthy Blue’s Mindy Spray, right, with some of the students receiving their toaster ovens.

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!

Register one four-player team for \$400.

Eagle Sponsor \$5,000 Donation includes 3 teams, 2 months on League's outdoor electronic sign, plaque for sponsor's office and signage at League office, and feature newsletter article. Ask about underwriting opportunities and Social Networking option. Sponsor the "19th Hole" (putting contest)

Birdie Sponsor \$2,500 Donation includes 2 teams, 2 months on League's outdoor electronic sign, plaque for sponsor's office and signage at League office, special banner for sponsorship. Ask about underwriting opportunities and Social Networking option. Sponsor the "19th Hole" (putting contest)

\$1,100 Donation includes a team, hole sponsorship, name recognition in event program, at hole, on poster in clubhouse, social media and in League newsletter. Ask about Social Networking option for an additional \$150. Sponsor the "19th Hole" (putting contest)

\$800 Donation includes hole sponsorship and name recognition in event program, at hole, on poster in clubhouse, social media and in League newsletter. Social Networking option for an additional \$150. Sponsor the "19th Hole" (putting contest)

\$350 Donation includes name recognition in event program, on poster in clubhouse, social media and League newsletter

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.

2022 Health Observances

August

Children's Eye Health & Safety Month, Prevent Blindness
National Immunization Awareness Month, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
Psoriasis Awareness Month, National Psoriasis Foundation
Spinal Muscular Atrophy Awareness Month, Cure SMA

MedicAlert Awareness Month, MedicAlert Foundation
August 1 is World Lung Cancer Day, Forum of International Respiratory Societies.

September

Alzheimer's Awareness Month, Alzheimer's Disease International
Blood Cancer Awareness Month, Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, American Childhood Cancer Organization
Gynecologic Cancer Awareness Month, Foundation for Women's Cancer
National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, Prostate Cancer Foundation
National Cholesterol Education Month, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
National Healthy Aging Month, Healthy Aging Magazine
National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, National Alliance on Mental Illness
Duchenne Action Month, Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy
Sept. 7 is World Duchenne Awareness Day, Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy
Sept. 16 is National Concussion Awareness Day, Brain Injury Association of America

'Reinvent' Yourself During Healthy Aging Month

If you're over age 45, and want to improve your physical health, mental health and financial health, there's no time to start like right now.

September is National Healthy Aging Month, an annual observance focusing on the positive aspects of growing older. The event is meant to draw attention to the importance of healthy lifestyles.

As we age, it's easy to focus on the negative aspects of growing old. But there are just as many good things that come with age. September is Healthy Aging Month started in 1992. Its origins are credited to a TV special that inspired people to make lifestyle and dietary changes to prevent heart problems.

In 2000, Healthy Aging Magazine was launched featuring information on healthy lifestyle changes, and the Healthy Living website was launched in 2014.

Healthy Aging Magazine offers 10 tips for reinventing yourself:

1. Don't act your age — or at least what you think your current age should act like.
2. Be positive in your conversations and actions.
3. Drop your negative acquaintances.
4. Walk like a vibrant, healthy person.
5. Stand up straight
6. Smile more.
7. If you're lonely, do something about it —volunteer, take a class, whatever it takes.

8. Start walking.
9. Set up your annual physical and health screenings.
10. Find your inner artist.

For more information, visit the healthy aging website, healthyaging.net and navigate to the Healthy Aging Month page.

20-Year Anniversary

A photo shows five people sitting at a table. Behind them is another table with a cake and a poster congratulating Nita Sipple on her work anniversary. The caption reads Nita Sipple, far right, speaks during a party in her honor June 7 about the changes she's seen over her 20-years working as an Independent Living Advisor in the League's Lincoln office. Also shown are, from left, Services Coordinator Rochelle Reese, Independent Living Advisor Jennifer Duffek, Lincoln CIL Director Shawna Keller, and League Co-CEO Mike Schafer

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 you.

League Employees

Saying Hello:

Bil Roby-Tubach, Services Coordinator, Lincoln
Nyisha Thomas, Services Coordinator, Omaha
Tyler Briggs, Services Coordinator, Lincoln

Saying Good-Bye:

Nicki Hutson, Services Coordinator, Omaha
Pam Glen, Services Coordinator, Lincoln

Football Fans:

The League of Human Dignity Membership Group is selling parking spaces this season in our lot, 17th & P streets, on NU home football game days.

2022 NU Home Games

Sat. Sept. 3	North Dakota	2:30 p.m.
Sat. Sept. 10	Georgia Southern	6:30 p.m.
Sat. Sept. 17	Oklahoma	11 a.m.
Sat. Oct. 1	Indiana*	6 p.m.
Sat. Oct. 29	Illinois*	TBA
Sat. Nov. 5	Minnesota*	TBA
Sat. Nov. 19	Wisconsin*	TBA

* Big 10 Conference Games

Thank You Topsy Tina's Taco Cantina

For your generosity in hosting Tacos for a Cause at your Lincoln location, 800 Q Street, on July 13.

And thank you for supporting the mission of the League, promoting independent living for people with disabilities.

TAGG What You Buy & 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!

Uber Will Pay Millions to Settle Discrimination Suit

The ride-sharing company Uber has agreed to pay millions of dollars to settle a lawsuit claiming that it violated the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Department of Justice brought the suit in November 2021, claiming Uber violated the ADA by charging thousands of riders with disabilities discriminatory “wait time fees.”

Uber’s fee started two minutes after an Uber car arrived at a pickup location and was charged until the car began its trip. The suit charged that Uber violated the ADA by failing to reasonably modify the fee policy for passengers with disabilities, who may need more time to get in an Uber car.

Uber has committed to waive wait time fees for riders who certify that they need more time to get in a car because of a disability, and to refund riders who have not gotten a waiver beforehand. The company also will pay more than 65,000 riders double what they paid in wait time fees, will pay \$1,738,500 to more than a thousand riders with disabilities who complained to Uber about being charged the fee, and will pay another \$500,000 to others harmed by the company.

League of Human Dignity Building Corporation

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

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

COVID-19 On the Rise in Some Areas

Contrary to what many believe – or hope – the COVID-19 pandemic has not gone away.

In fact, we are in the middle of a big resurgence in infections across the middle of the country, due in part to new variants of the virus and a lack of mitigation efforts, like wearing masks and social distancing.

In Lincoln, the city's COVID-19 tracker had risen into the orange, or "High" range as of July 12, and the city reinstated a mask mandate for city employees.

Healthcare workers are noting that the increase – which is happening across the middle of the country – along with little if any mitigation points to a big surge in infections this fall.

Nebraska reported 3,535 new cases for the week ending July 8, up from 3,474 the week before. Hospitalizations were up 11 percent, with 168 – the highest since March – and there were three deaths as a result of the virus.

Nebraska saw a 28 percent increase in COVID cases over the two-week period ending July 8, the sixth-highest in the nation.

Iowa saw a 30 percent jump in new cases, with 5,187 new cases reported, up from about 3,900 per week for the previous four-week period. Of those, 229 were hospitalized, with 23 in intensive care and 15 deaths as a result of the virus.

Iowa reports 62.4 percent of its residents are fully vaccinated.

Keep Reading with Talking Book & Braille Service

People with 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.

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.

Classifieds

HELP WANTED: Services Coordinator - Omaha, Norfolk

The League of Human Dignity is seeking full time Services Coordinators in Omaha and 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: In Omaha, Lora Young, lyoung@leagueofhumandignity.com

In Norfolk, Jane Fink, jfink@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: Independent Living Advisor - Lincoln

The League of Human Dignity Lincoln Center for Independent Living is seeking to add to our team a full time Independent Living Advisor to provide services that assist people

with disability to live independently in the community, including but not limited to helping people secure transportation passes, and coordinating our Barrier Removal Program

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: Shawna Keller, skeller@leagueofhumandignity.com
EOE

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

Join Us on Social Media

Find us on Facebook — just click the logo in the print version of this newsletter or on our webpage or search for us from your own Facebook page.

Follow us on Twitter too. Just click the logo in the print version of this newsletter or on our webpage or find us @LHD68508.

League Services Promote Independence

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.

Services provided by the League 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 the experience and the expertise — we have been helping people achieve and maintain their independence since 1971.

Find out whether we can help you achieve or maintain your independence by calling 402-441-7871. Contact our offices at 1701 P Street in Lincoln, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, or call any of our other Centers for Independent Living, listed elsewhere in this newsletter.

Our Centers for Independent Living serve 43 Nebraska counties and eight counties in Southwest Iowa. We also serve all 93 Nebraska counties through the state's Medicaid Waiver Program for people who are aged or have disabilities.

The League is a statewide partner agency with Nebraska's Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC). The ADRC is a state agency providing information, referral and assistance for accessing community services and long-term care options.

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
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