ON THE LEVEL

From the League of Human Dignity
August 2026

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 offers services in all 43 Nebraska counties and eight southwest Iowa counties, through our offices in Lincoln, Norfolk, North Platte and Omaha, Nebraska, and Council Bluffs, Iowa.

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. Our website: leagueofhumandignity.com

Celebrating Nebraska Disability Pride

Intrepid disability advocates and supporters braved the hot, muggy weather July 25, to enjoy this year's Nebraska Disability Pride Celebration at Antelope Park in Lincoln.

The annual event was the climax of Disability Pride Month, featuring a celebration of the 36th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act. For the fourth year in a row the celebration was held in and around Antelope Park's Auld Pavilion.

Scores of vendors and organizations — including the League of Human Dignity — were on hand to highlight the services that are available in the area for people who have disabilities. The celebration began at 9 a.m. The vendor fair ran through 11 a.m. and the party in Auld Pavilion continued through 1 p.m.

Two photos accompany this story. The top photo shows a row of outdoor information tables set up along a walkway in a park. The caption reads: Vendors and organizations staff information booths lining the walkways around Auld Pavilion in Antelope Park during the annual Nebraska Disability Pride Celebration Saturday, July 25.

The bottom photo shows two women speaking at an information table. The caption reads: Shawna Keller of the League of Human Dignity speaks with a visitor to the League booth.

CEO's Note

We at the League are pleased to announce that The Central Iowa Veterans Administration Medical Center entered into a Veterans Care Agreement with the League to provide Veteran Directed Care Services (VDC) to Central Iowa VAMC Veterans. We were delighted when the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs approved the Veterans Care Agreement July 15, 2026. During the past 90 days, League staff have been working through the rigorous application and approval process, with the able guidance of the Lewin Group, Central Iowa VAMC Staff, and Administration for Community Living to complete all of the necessary steps to become an approved VDC Provider. We were initially told by some people that the process from application to approval would take 6 months, so we feel fortunate to have been approved so quickly.

The League has been providing Veterans Directed Care Services under contract to the Center for People with Disabilities (CPWD), who is based in Boulder Colorado. The League made the difficult decision to terminate our contract with CPWD effective August 2, 2026, and become a direct contractor with the Central Iowa VAMC. This model of providing VDC services is called a Sole Proprietor Model. Under this designation, the League can provide VDC services to any VAMCs that choose to assign veterans to the League.

We are excited to have several Iowa Veterans that League Staff have been serving while under contract to CPWD, being directly assigned to the League by the Central Iowa VAMC August 1, 2026. These Veterans will now be served by the League as a Sole Proprietor. We also look forward to having the honor of serving more Central Iowa VAMC Veterans as these Veterans are referred to the League for VDC Services. We anticipate steady growth in the number of Iowa Veterans that we will be serving through the VDC Program, and we are hopeful that we will be able to serve some Nebraska Veterans through the VDC Program as well.

New Veterans Directed Care Program

The League of Human Dignity is now able to offer eligible Veterans and their families in Iowa the chance to direct their own non-medical care, in their own homes.

The League of Human Dignity has been approved as a Veterans Directed Care (VDC) provider under a sole proprietor model. That means League staff will manage and operate all aspects of the program in our service areas under direct agreement with Veterans Affairs Medical Centers. The three core roles and responsibilities of the VDC include administration, person-centered counseling and fiscal management services.

The League's VDC Program puts the veteran in charge and gives them the power to choose their own caregivers and decide the best mix of services to meet their needs.

If you want more information, or if you're interested in Veterans Direct Care, please call us today. We want to hear from you and our office in Council Bluffs, IA, is ready to help.

About VDC

- The League of Human Dignity's Veterans Directed Care (VDC) program is funded by the Veterans Administration, and allows Veterans to receive care in their homes.
- VDC gives Veterans choice and power — they can choose their caregiver, be it a family member, friend, or a team of service providers.
- VDC helps Veterans of all ages who need non-medical support with daily living (such as bathing, getting dressed, and cooking meals).
- VDC participants can select the support services that feel like the right fit and save money for equipment and residential modifications.
- VDC also gives Veterans' family members a chance to take care of their loved ones while maintaining an income.

Where to Find Us

LINCOLN
Center for Independent Living
1701 P Street, Lincoln, NE 68508
Phone 402-441-7871

OMAHA
Center for Independent Living
1343 S. 75th St., Omaha, NE 68124
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

NORTH PLATTE
2509 Halligan Dr., North Platte, NE 69101
Phone 308-532-4911

Online at: leagueofhumandignity.com
& Please follow us on Facebook and X (formerly Twitter)

Norfolk Golf Event Benefits League

For the third year, proceeds from District & Dudes Golf Tournament were donated to the League of Human Dignity's Norfolk Center for Independent Living.

The Harbor Bar and District Tap and Table in downtown Norfolk held their 6th annual four-player scramble on Saturday July 18, at Fair Play Golf Course in Norfolk, NE.

The League greatly appreciates and recognizes the time and effort that it takes to put on the golf event and the donation in support of our mission.

Three photos accompany this story. In the top picture, a golfer swings his club at a ball. The caption reads: A golfer tees off during the 6th annual District & Dudes Golf Tournament in Norfolk July 18.

In the bottom left photo, a man in an apron stands in front of a barbecue grill, smiling at the camera. The caption reads: Josh Speidel, owner of Dudes Harbor, cooking lunch. He and Andrew McCarthy, owner of District Table and Tap, sponsored the event.

In the bottom right photo, several people sit around tables in a large dining room. The caption reads: Event participants take a break from the heat.

2026 Lincoln Benefit Golf Event

Thursday, Sept. 17, 2026 at the Highlands Golf Course, 5501 NW 12th St., Lincoln, NE

This is an 18-hole 4-player scramble. Register a team online! Sponsorships and underwriting options also are available. For more information, contact The League of Human Dignity, 1701 P St., Lincoln, NE 69508. Call toll free 888-508-4658 or email janderson@leagueofhumandignity.com

Proceeds from this annual event will help the League's Lincoln Center for Independent Living fulfill its mission throughout the 19-county area it serves — promoting the full integration of people with disabilities into society. Thank you for your support!

Apple Movie Based on Life Story of Disability Rights Legend Judy Heumann

A movie has been made about the life of disability rights activist Judith Heumann

The film, produced by Apple Studios, will premiere at the 2026 Toronto Film Festival on Sept. 10. It is adapted from Heumann's memoir, Being Heumann: An Unrepentant Memoir of a Disability Rights Activist.

The film stars British actress Ruth Madeley as Heumann, who was one of the most influential leaders in the disability rights movement, known as the mother of the disability rights movement.

Heumann was born in Philadelphia in 1947, and became known early on for refusing to accept barriers created by discriminatory rules, inaccessible services, and unfair treatment in education and public life. Her work connected everyday struggles — like segregation in schools and exclusion from the workforce — with larger demands for civil rights.

Heumann's importance to disability rights lies in her role as both an activist and an organizer who helped shift the focus on disability from a problem that needs to be fixed — the "medical model" — to a question of equality under the law. She fought for practical changes, including accessible education and public services, as well as for systemic reforms. She insisted that people with disabilities should be able to participate fully in society on their own terms. Over decades, her advocacy helped build coalitions of activists, families, and allies who demanded enforceable rights rather than promises.

A major part of her legacy is the way her leadership influenced landmark disability rights policy. She was deeply involved in advancing the principle that disability protections must cover real-world access to schools, workplaces, transportation, and government programs, so that discrimination could be challenged legally. Her work helped strengthen the disability-rights framework in the U.S., including the broader movement momentum that culminated in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the most important civil-rights law for people with disabilities.

Heumann also served in international advocacy efforts, supporting disability rights as a universal human rights issue, promoting the idea that accessibility and equal participation are not optional extras but fundamental requirements. She is remembered not only her efforts on major legislation, but also for her enduring leadership style: clear-eyed, persistent, and focused on power, rights, and inclusion.

Heumann died unexpectedly on March 4, 2023, in Washington, D.C., She was 75.

Wheelchair Softball World Series Returns to Omaha

Omaha will again play host to the annual USA Wheelchair Softball World Series

The 2026 event is the 50th anniversary of the World Series, Aug. 13-15, at first Interstate SportsPlex in Valley, NE. This also will be fourth time Softball World Series has been held in the Omaha area.

The event will feature more than 17 teams, including the hometown Nebraska Barons, 300 athletes, and more than 70 games over the three-day competition

According to the Wheelchair Softball website, the sport originated in the Midwest with a few individuals with spinal cord injuries and lower extremity impairments, who still wanted to enjoy softball. They needed a way to play without the full use of their legs, that would allow easy maneuverability in a wheelchair and keep the fast pace of softball. So, the new game is played on hard surfaces, such as a parking lot, instead of the normal grassy infield, with a 16-inch softball, which allows wheelchair players to keep one hand one the wheelchair while catching a softball without a glove.

The National Wheelchair Softball Association (NWSA) was founded In 1976, and serves as the governing body for wheelchair softball in the United States and around the world. Teams throughout the U.S. compete on a regular basis and host several tournaments throughout the summer. NWSA holds the Wheelchair Softball World Series (WSWS) annually to determine the champion.

Nebraska Adaptive Sports is the main host organization of the 2026 event, along with the Elkhorn Athletic Association and AllPlay Miracle Baseball League. NAS helps people with disabilities participate in activities they love, including wheelchair softball, tennis, hockey, volleyball, goalball, rugby, basketball, bocce ball, track, and other sports.

For more information about the event, see www.wheelchairsoftball.org

Equipment Loan Program

If you or a family member should find yourselves recovering from an injury or medical procedure and in need of a specific piece of durable medical equipment, either short term or long term, where would you turn? For crutches? A shower chair? A toilet riser?

Through the League of Human Dignity's Equipment Loan Program, you can borrow many durable medical equipment items for a small fee, for as long as you need them.

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

There is a one-time $10 fee — $35 for Rollator Walkers — and the loan lasts as long as the items are needed. All loans are subject to availability.

We also have items for rent, including Manual Wheelchairs, Transport Wheelchairs, Rolling Shower Chairs, Knee Walkers, and Hoyer Lifts. Monthly rental and deposits vary by item. All rentals are subject to availability.

We do not loan or rent items that require special or custom fitting supervision by a doctor.

We also encourage donation of gently used equipment. All donated items need to be in good shape. We do not accept donations that need repair.

For details, about obtaining equipment or donating, call or visit the League of Human Dignity office nearest you.

Football Fans

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

The season starts at 11 a.m. Sept. 5 at home against Ohio, followed by home games Sept 12 against Bowling Green, Sept. 19 against North Dakota, Oct. 3 against Maryland, Oct. 10 against Indiana, Oct. 31 against Washington, and Nov. 21 against Ohio State.

League Services Promote Independence

Every day, people with disabilities face barriers to achieving and maintaining their independence.

The quality services that the League of Human Dignity provides at its four Centers for Independent Living in Nebraska and Southwest Iowa are designed to help them overcome those barriers. Services include:

- 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 next phase of life
- Training in personal assistant hiring and management
- Barrier removal grants
- Equipment loan and rental
- Veterans Independence Program, helping veterans receive care in their homes

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 by calling 402-441-7871. Contact our offices at 1701 P Street in Lincoln from 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.

The League of Human Dignity also operates an Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) in partnership with the Nebraska State Unit on Aging. The ADRC provides Nebraskans 60 or older or with disabilities or their family members, caregivers and advocates with information, referral and assistance in accessing community services and long-term care options.

Barrier Removal 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 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

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; 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.

There are no August classifieds.

The League of Human Dignity Building Corporation

The League of Human Dignity Building Corporation is taking applications for 1 & 2 bedroom ground-level apartments, wheelchair accessible, with roll-in showers in Lincoln, Omaha, Norfolk, Columbus & York.

These apartments are HUD Section 202 & 811 projects and are available to individuals who experience disability or who are elderly. Units come with a Section 8 Certificate. Eligible applicants must qualify under income guidelines established by the

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). To apply, or for more information, call Sandie Newsom 785-592-0336 or Brionna Cunningham 785-424-5764 at Wainwright Property Management

Equal Housing Opportunity