

A2I NEWSLETTER

Quarterly Newsletter from Access 2 Independence

What is Independence, Really?

by Leah Zapf Donald, Executive Director

It's summer time! Often a time for vacations, sun & fun, summer time is also a time when we remember and celebrate several key historic moments in our nation's history and in particular the history of disabled Americans. On June 22nd, we marked the anniversary of Olmstead vs. LC that strengthen disabled persons access to community living. Later this month, on July 26th, we'll remember the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which remains our prominent civil rights law. These historic markers have paved the way for many in the disability community to celebrate the pinnacle summer celebration, the 4th of July or Independence Day with their family and friends in their chosen communities!

Independence is a word that we use often at our Center. We even chose it as part of our name, Access 2 Independence. Often we are asked questions about independence, and what that means to us. The first entry on Dictionary.com defining the word "independent" is "not influenced or controlled by others in matters of opinion, conduct, etc.; thinking or acting for oneself". We believe that independence is not doing everything by yourself, but a state of being empowered to think for yourself and make decisions that are best for you. Many of us when given the freedom to make our own choices, make the choice to be part of a community where we live, work, support, and celebrate together! Independence does not mean we don't need each other. In fact, we must continue to support each other in the day-to-day and also to maintain these hard fought rights to independence. As trailblazing disability advocate Judy Heumann one said, "Independent living is not doing things by yourself. It is being in control of how things are done."

We hope you enjoy this newsletter, we have some special articles in store including this month's board member spotlight: Amanda Sharp, our new board treasurer! We also have an informative guest article on accessibly housing tips from Patrick Young of Able USA.

As always, thank you for reading and if you haven't already, visit our website at www.access2independence.org and like us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/access2independence/!](http://www.facebook.com/access2independence/)



Caption: Access 2 Independence Logo

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Peggy Loveless, Vice Chair
Amanda Sharp, Treasurer
Amy Robasse, Voting Member
Scott Edwards, Voting Member

Access 2 Independence
will be closed on
September 3rd for Labor Day

Advocates in Action

by Chanel Prince, ILS

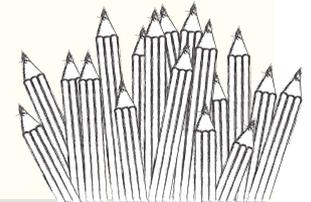


Access 2 Independence is committed in providing exceptional advocacy. As one of our five core services we provide, we take very serious to the fact that our consumers have their voices heard, and not only heard but that everyone's needs and rights are implemented. These last three months staff have dedicated their time and energy in advocating on two major focus areas: transportation and transitioning out of nursing home facilities. We are addressing the different barriers including both systematic and individual.

Access 2 Independence wrote advocacy letters to various legislators addressing the effects Managed Care Organizations have had on transitioning an individual out of nursing home facilities. The lack and difficulty of communication between the MCO's and the Department of Human Services (DHS) make the process that much more complicated in the the transitioning process.

Access 2 Independence also contacted Iowa City Councils, and Board of Supervisors outlining the transportation challenges which create further barriers to persons we serve in our communities. We believe it is vital that everyone has the opportunity to participate in giving back to their community whether that be by working, or leisure activity.

Access 2 Independence will continue to work hard and we are enthused to do so, ensuring everyone has a better chance to live independently! If there is a need and you need help speaking up, please let us know how we can be of any assistance to you!



Board Member Spotlight: Amanda Sharp

by Amanda Sharp, Board Treasurer

Please tell us a little about yourself: I grew up in Bloomfield Iowa as the oldest of 5 children in a crazy, active family that I am extremely grateful for. After graduating high school, I moved up to Iowa City and attended the University of Iowa majoring in Arts Management and Entrepreneurship. After college, like most people, I decided to stay in Iowa City and for the last 4 years I have been working at the Downtown branch of MidWestOne Bank as a Personal Banker.

Why did you want to serve on the board of A2I?: I have always enjoyed volunteering for different organizations and giving back to the community. When I saw the opportunity to serve on a board for an organization that helps people with so many different aspects of life I knew it would be a good match.

Please share anything you'd like about your family or pets: I live in Iowa City with my boyfriend of 5 ½ years and our two tiny dogs, Finley who is a 5-year old Papillion Mix and Charli, a 2-year old Mini Australian Shepherd Pomeranian. They can sometimes be a handful, but it's proven that puppy snuggles make everyday a great day! We love being outdoors and never turn down the opportunity to go on a long walk if the weather permits.

Do you have any special hobbies?: In the past couple years I've gotten really into calligraphy and have take several classes and try to practice as much as possible. With that, I really like anything that has to do with art, I own several intricate coloring books and own way more colored pencils and markers then I did when I was a kid. I love cooking and try to make as much of my food from scratch as I can! (But Velveeta Mac & Cheese you can never replace)



Pictured above:
Amanda Sharp, BoardTreasurer

A Moment with Nell

by Chanel Prince, ILS

Last quarter we looked at things that can make you happy. This quarter, I want to challenge you to dig deeper!

Happiness is temporary, it solely depends on what is happening. You will waste a lot of time trying to find what it is that makes you happy; searching aimlessly for things that will never fill that void. Instead, it is imperative to seek deeper within and focus on what brings you joy. Joy are things that are unmovable and unwavering. Things offered in this world are temporary fixes, they can go as quick as they come. If you take a moment and focus outside of what is happening in your present life, there you will find peace, there you will find solitude, there you will find a glimpse of hope. There you will find joy! My friend, I encourage you to keep pressing and keep fighting for there is greatness on the other side of your mountain. You may not be able to see it now. The beauty with that is, you don't need to see the change to say it, but you need to say the change you want in order to see it!

This has been a moment with Nell, until next time beloved, be free and keep love alive.



Upcoming Events

July

- 3rd:** Expressive Arts Group @ 4:30PM @ Uptown Bill's, Iowa City
- 10th:** Krafts with Kiersten @ 11AM @ Choices, 114 W 2nd St, Washington
- 11th:** Johnson County Aging in Place Forum: Future Tech @ 11:30AM @ Coralville Public Library, Coralville
- 14th:** Saturday Social for Autistic Teens & 20s @ 4:30PM-6PM @ Colonial Lanes, Iowa City
- 17th:** A2I @ Washington County Fair, Washington
- 18th:** Johnson County Transportation Improvement Plan Public Hearing @ 4:30PM @ Health & Human Services Building, Iowa City
- 21st:** Americans with Disabilities Act Celebration, Iowa City
- 27th:** Expressive Art Group @ 3PM @ RPlace, Iowa City
- 28th:** Americans with Disabilities Act Celebration, Cedar Rapids

August

- 3rd:** Cedar County Wellness Fair @ 9AM-1PM @ County Courthouse Lawn, Tipton
- 7th:** Expressive Arts Group @ 4:30PM @ Uptown Bill's, Iowa City
- 8th:** Johnson County Aging in Place Forum: Downsizing @ 11:30AM @ ICAAR 847 Quarry Rd., Suite 110, Coralville
- 14th:** Krafts with Kiersten @ 11AM @ Choices, 114 W 2nd St, Washington
- 24th:** Expressive Art Group @ 3PM @ RPlace, Iowa City

September

- 4th:** Expressive Arts Group @ 4:30PM @ Uptown Bill's, Iowa City
- 11th:** Krafts with Kiersten @ 11AM @ Choices, 114 W 2nd St, Washington
- 12th:** Johnson County Aging in Place Forum: Community Resources @ 11:30AM @ ICAAR 847 Quarry Rd., Suite 110, Coralville
- 21st:** Johnson County Senior Resource Fair @ 9AM @ Radisson Hotel, Coralville
- 28th:** Expressive Art Group @ 3PM @ RPlace, Iowa City

Info & Updates



- A) Chanel at ICATER accessibility training
- B) Chanel & Talor at the Benton County Fair
- C) Superhero themed Expressive Art Group
- D) Talor working with the League of Women Voters
- E) Chanel & Leah at the Autism Social
- F) Celebrating Gary's contributions to A2I

Getting Started: Tips for Finding a Handicapped-Accessible Home

A Guest Article by Patrick Young, ABLE USA

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development reports that only 5 percent of all homes in the United States are handicapped-accessible, so it's not surprising that it can be difficult to find one on the market. There are relatively few resources or websites, which means that people searching for accessible homes are often left to rely on word of mouth and a little luck. In fact, it can be so hard to find an accessible property that many people have to modify their search and focus on houses that can be modified or renovated. While search options are limited, there are some starting points that can help steer you in the right direction.

Realtors

There aren't many real estate agents who specialize in accessible housing, however, your realtor can provide advice and be a good source of information about your market. Before you engage an agent, look online for any accessible homes in your area and how they are priced. Make a complete checklist of features you need in an accessible home so a realtor can gauge your search along those lines. If your disability makes it difficult to conduct a search or you don't know where to start, contact the National Association of Realtors. They will work to provide the information and assistance you need to conduct a productive search. You can also tap into resources to find out what you can afford as you search for a home. Simply use information such as your household income and monthly spending to get an estimate of your monthly mortgage payment.

Online resources

The Internet is an obvious place to start. You can find information about helpful apps and platforms such as Zillow, Realtor.com and Barrier Free Home, which provide access to property information about houses that meet specifications and help you make an informed decision when it comes time to buy. While few sites offer search filters designed for a disabled buyer, you can enter search terms such as "handicap accessible" or "universal design," which can help narrow your search. In general, your realtor will be the best resource when it comes to finding a property with wide hallways, bathrooms with handrails and other handicap-friendly features.

Remodeling

You may find that adapting a house that possesses certain physical features is your best bet. For example, begin with single-story homes and search for properties that have doorways that are from 32 to 36 inches wide and at least one bathroom with enough square footage to accommodate a wheelchair. In additions, you may be able to make modifications such as lowering kitchen counters to make them accessible for food preparation if you are in a wheelchair. Or, you might focus on a house with enough space in the front to allow for an accessibility ramp to be installed. At the very least, a suitable home should have a stepless entry and at least one bathroom and bedroom on the first floor.

Factor in renovation costs

Bear in mind that you'll have remodeling costs to factor into your home-buying budget when purchasing a house that needs some work. It's a good idea to allow for more than you'll actually need to provide for any additional improvements that may become needed after you've lived there long enough to assess accessibility and your mobility.

Remember that there are grants, loans and various funding sources that can help people with disabilities make necessary home modifications. The Centers for Independent Living, Federal Housing Administration, Medicare, the Department of Housing and Urban Development and other public and private sources are good places to begin if you're in need of financial assistance. The real estate market is still catching up to the needs of disabled homebuyers, but there are some helpful search aids and financial assistance options at your disposal. Time spent doing your homework on the Internet can save you money and lead to a home that suits your mobility needs.

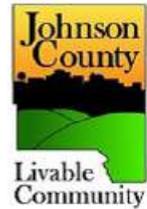
Johnson County Aging in Place Checklist: Accessibility for All Abilities

by Talor Gray, ILS

The Johnson County Livable Community Housing Action Team has been working together with the Iowa City Area Association of Realtors and the Iowa City Area Homebuilders Association to put together an Aging in Place Checklist for local builders, realtors, and overall community use. As Patrick Young mentioned in the previous article, having an accessibility checklist available can be a real asset when searching for that forever home. Additionally, many accessible features are incredibly useful for all abilities, such as wider doorways for moving furniture, and no step entryways for strollers and carrying in groceries. Accessibility benefits all abilities, so A2I is excited to see this focus on accessible housing options in Iowa, and we hope to see an increased interest in Aging in Place building projects. To find the checklist online, visit: <http://www.livablecommunity.org/Content/Information/Housing.aspx>

If you are interested in learning more about the checklist or the Livable Community Housing Action Team, Johnson County is hosting Aging in Place Forums through October that are free and open to the community. The next event is August 8, 2018 from 11:30AM - 1:00PM and will cover "Dealing with the Stuff - Downsizing and Resources in the Community". Check out this link for more information: <http://www.livablecommunity.org/>

HOUSING – AGING IN PLACE ITEMS TO CONSIDER



- 5 feet by 5 feet landing space outside and inside entrance door
 - Weather protection: Covering over entrance – roof, canopy, or awning
 - No step entrance to main floor living spaces
 - Kitchen
 - Bedroom
 - Laundry
 - Full Bathroom
 - Attached garage/covered parking with adequate space for maneuvering walker/wheelchair
 - 36" Doors
 - 42" Hallways
 - Accessible Bathroom
 - Curb-less shower
 - Walk-in shower
 - Grab bars
 - Hand-held showerhead and seat in shower
 - Comfort height toilet
 - Sufficient space (36" and 42" ideal) to use a walker or wheelchair and space that makes appliances accessible
 - Windows – 24" – 30" above floor
 - Nonslip floor/stair surfaces
 - Adequate Lighting (well lit)
 - Outlets and Jacks 18" – 24" above floor
 - Electrical panel on main floor
 - Open plan design - Avoiding loadbearing inside walls
 - Rollout storage shelves - Adjustable height closet rods and shelves
 - Pocket (sliding doors)
 - Stairways
 - 48" wide to allow for future chairlift
 - Sturdy handrails on both sides
 - Straight stairway that will accommodate chairlift
- Accessories**
- Rocker-style electrical switches
 - Lever door handles
 - Single-lever hot and cold water faucets
 - Appliances with front-mounted controls; front-load washer and dryer
 - Garage door high enough for to accommodate vans
 - Peep hole at low level with high window or side windows
 - Outside light sensors and way for visitors to communicate with residents
 - Multi-level work spaces in kitchen and space under sink for wheel chairs

Prevent winter falls with a covered entryway



Larger doors & hallways make moving furniture easy



Nonslip floors are great for toddlers taking first steps



Save space with pocket doors



Lever door handles help when carrying in groceries



Pictured on the right: Johnson County Aging in Place Checklist

Accessibility Abroad



by Leah Zapf Donald, Executive Director

Last fall, I had the privilege of visiting Italy for the first time. This was a dream trip for my husband and I and we enjoyed the sights, smells, and wonderful people of Rome, Venice, Florence, and Bologna. It was very interesting to note how the Italians, with their many ancient monuments and historic museums strive to make these landmarks and historical artifacts accessible to everyone. I snapped a few photos with my phone to share my experience.

A few of the things I saw:

- 1) This elevator at the Colosseum in Rome. Puts the tired excuse "this building is too old to make accessible" to bed.
- 2) Our local tour guide in Bologna explained that this line in the sidewalk is to assist blind pedestrians stay on their course by running their cane along the lined depression in the sidewalk.
- 3) These tactile exhibits at the IL Grande Mueso Del Duomo, one of many museums in Tuscany offering guided tours for the blind. Learn more about the accessible Uffizi gallery in Tuscany here: <https://www.visittuscany.com/en/ideas/uffizi-by-touch-the-tactile-art-route/>

by Talor Gray, ILS

Spring is a great time to visit Japan! This May a friend and I explored Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, and Kobe. Although we missed the cherry blossoms by a couple weeks, there were still plenty of beautiful views and exciting new experiences to enjoy.

Throughout our journey, I was surprised at how easy it was to get around from the hustle and bustle of downtown Tokyo to the relaxing mountainous areas of Kita-Ku, Kobe by Mt. Rokko.

A few things I saw:

- 1) The Hama Rikyu Gardens is a massive green space in the heart of Tokyo, with accessible routes throughout the area.
- 2) Textured and painted pavement throughout the cities are distinct enough to be felt through your shoes!
- 3) Street crossing buttons and chirping noises are used to signal when to cross the street. Train stations play beeping sounds to make them easier to locate.
- 4) Ramps to access the Onsen-Ji (Onsen temple) in the town of Arima, which was originally established in the year 724.
- 5) Shibuya crossing, where everyone safely navigates across one of the worlds busiest intersections thanks to Japan's extensive roadway safety planning.
- 6) Accessibility and inclusion poster spotted on the train in Tokyo in reference to Olympics 2020 in Osaka.

