



## Stay in the Know

Hello Eastern Iowa Corridor! Summer is coming to an end. Fall is approaching. Access 2 Independence is here to provide services to the community. Our staff has been working hard on providing services to the people that live in our communities. We would like to share with you these announcements. A2I has added a new board member. Our staff has also taken part in some great events. Staff spoke at a major yearly event.

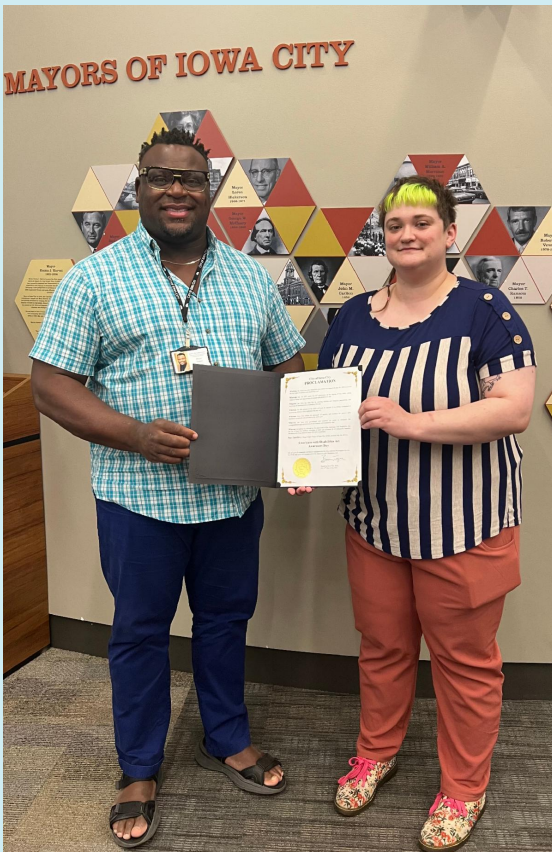
### Staff spoke at Make your Mark Conference

Our Administrative Assistant, Joel Wesselink, spoke at the Annual Make you Mark conference! The event this year was in Coralville Iowa on August 30th and August 31st. Joel spoke about their own personal life journey and his path to self-determination. Joel also provided a summary on what self-determination is. He gave a discussion on how to create an action plan. Joel spoke on August 30th during one of the morning breakout sessions. Joel was one of the many talented and informative speakers at this annual event. The event was at the Hyatt Regency in Coralville Iowa and the theme of this event was Lift off to Advocacy.

### Staff received a proclamation from Iowa City

Megz Stroback, our independent living specialist at Access 2 Independence, received a proclamation from Iowa City. The proclamation was to declare that July 11th be the American with Disabilities Act awareness day. Megz accepted the proclamation during the Iowa City council meeting on July 11th.

Megz gave a short speech after accepting the proclamation from Bruce Teague, the Mayor of Iowa City. In the speech Megz, said it was an honor of receiving this proclamation and mentioned how the ADA has helped people over the years. Megz stated that they wanted to honor and remember the people we lost during the pandemic and to the people that became disabled during the pandemic. They felt honored to receive this important proclamation.



Picture above is of Megz Stroback of Access 2 Independence and Bruce Teague, the Mayor of

Iowa City. They are both holding a black folder with a document proclaiming ADA awareness day as July 11th. Bruce is a black male with short black hair, gold trimmed glasses and a goatee. He is wearing a light blue and white button shirt. Megz is a white person with dark brown hair with green highlights up front. They are wearing a blue and white striped shirt.

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## A2I staff met with Iowa State Fair President

Megz Stroback, our Independent Living Specialist, travelled with members of the Olmstead Consumer Task Force to Des Moines on June 16th. They went to speak with the Chief Executive Officer, Jeremy of the Iowa State Fair. They discussed with the CEO about ways that the Fair can become more accessible to people with disabilities. The OCTF also did an ADA evaluation to see what the Fair has done towards accessibility.

The meeting was a positive, powerful and productive meeting. Jeremy listened to what the OCTF excursion had to discuss. Jeremy listened as the OCTF provided what feedback and suggestions on how to make the largest event in the state a more open and accessible event for people with disabilities.



Picture above is of Megz Stroback with the President of the Iowa State Fair. They are both sitting at brown conference table. Megz is a person with short dark brown hair and green highlights in the front. They are wearing a red shirt with Access 2 Independence on the front. The Iowa State Fair President, Jeremy is a male with short charcoal colored hair and is wearing a dark blue polo shirt.



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## Meet our newest Board Member: Christie Cellman

Christie Cellman (they/them) is a PhD student at the University of Iowa's School of Social Work. Their focus is on Public Health with their professional and research interests centered on health and disability-related research and policy, as well as advocating for and promoting the well-being of the disabled community as a disabled individual.

Christie graduated from the University of Iowa's Master of School of Social Work (MSW) program in 2023 and began their studies as a PhD student immediately thereafter.

Christie was nominated for a student advisor position on Student Disability Service's (SDS) Student Advisory Board (SAB), whose purpose is to consult and collaborate with SDS in order to better the experience for disabled students at the University of Iowa through advocacy, education, and awareness, and to promote the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion, during their undergrad and earned a seat on the board shortly afterwards.

Christie has been working at the Law, Health Policy & Disability Center as a Graduate

Picture above is of Christie Cellman. They are a white person with shoulder length brown hair. They are wearing a light blue t-shirt.

Research Assistant for a little over a year, analyzing Polk County data for seven area agencies serving people with disabilities. There, they are also completing their PhD research practicum which involves crafting a case vignette that outlines the significance and skill set of direct support professionals serving people with disabilities.

Christie also moonlights as the DEI Director at the Daily Iowan, working directly with Amplify editors to uplift marginalized voices.

Christie is also an avid volunteer, volunteering for organizations like Hospice, The Bird House, and Habitat for Humanity. They have given various speeches on behalf of organizations and in 2018, they spoke at the Integrated Voter Assembly hosted by the Johnson County Interfaith Coalition and the Iowa City chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) concerning the lack of affordable housing and resources in Iowa City. In their free time, they like to spend time with their family and friends, read, travel, and crochet.

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