

# Northern Highlights

We're on the Web!  
[www.accessnorth.net](http://www.accessnorth.net)

Center For Independent Living of NE MN  
Summer 2008

## Martha's Success Story

My name is Martha I am a 31 year old female working full time. Until recently I was living in adult foster care. I was sent to a foster home because I was pregnant & did not want to be alone all day and wanted to be in a safe environment for me and my baby. In the beginning I liked the support that I received. I eventually knew that I needed my independence. I had previously received Mental Health Services with an ARMHS worker, but when I started working full time it was hard to meet with her. I knew I needed support so I went out and got a new Mental Health worker who could meet with me in the evenings. I found out that my family members and case worker were filing a petition for guardianship over me. I did not want a guardian and it made me very angry. They were concerned about my relationship with my boyfriend. I felt that they really could not tell me what to do, it was my choice!

My Mental Health worker and I contacted Disability Law and were referred to AccessNorth Center for Independent Living. AccessNorth helped me stand up for my rights and appeal the guardianship. AccessNorth's advocate wrote a letter in regards to my ability to be independent and make my own choices. A lady from the court system came out to my foster home and wanted me to sign papers. She asked me if I wanted a guardian, I said no. She then asked me if I wanted a lawyer, I said yes. AccessNorth, my Mental Health Worker and I went to court and appealed the guardianship. The petition for guardianship was cancelled.



I felt good and was very happy with the support I got from AccessNorth. I was so happy that part was over with. I was now able to meet with an apartment manager and get into a completely accessible apartment. AccessNorth and my team set up an Independent Living plan and provided me with Independent Living and Mental Health Services in my home.

Now I do not have to worry about being in trouble with my foster home when my boyfriend comes to visit or I want to go to a movie.

I want people to know that if they understand their feelings and learn from their mistakes; they can increase their independence like I did.

## PCA Choice Changes

The Center For Independent Living is starting a new and exciting program that will change the way you will submit your time cards.

CILNM staff will be contacting consumers who are on the PCA Choice Program and will be training them on the new documentation requirements for recording time worked.

## Access North Alphabet of Services

Many people aren't familiar with all of the services provided by the Center for Independent Living of Northeastern Minnesota. Here is some information on our programs; from A to Z, and everything in between. If you're interested in more information on any of our programs please call the office closest to you.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| A- Assistive Technology                               | P- Peer Support Program  |
| B- Budgeting Skills                                   | Q- Questions?? If we don't have an answer, we'll do our best to refer you to someone who does! |
| C- Consumer Control                                   | R- Resource Center for Disability Information  |
| D- Disability Awareness                               | S- Support Groups  |
| E- Environmental Access and Accessibility             | T-Transition from High School  |
| F- Flexible Case Management Assistance                | U- Understanding Benefits  |
| G- Goal Setting Assistance                            | V -Vocational Services, such as resume writing, interview skills, completing job applications. |
| H- Housing List for Affordable and Accessible Housing | W- <a href="http://www.accessnorth.net">www.accessnorth.net</a>                                |
| I- Information and Referral                           | X- X-tra offices to serve rural communities  |
| J- Job Accommodations                                 | Y- You are in control  |
| K- Knowledgeable Staff                                | Z- Zero tolerance for inaccessibility  |
| L- Legislative Advocacy                               |  |
| M- Managing Independent Living Skills                 |  |
| N- Nursing Home Relocation                            |  |
| O- Opportunities                                      |  |



### VR/IL COLLABORATION

Projects are currently underway in Minnesota for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Centers for Independent Living (CIL's) to deliberately partner and assist people with disabilities to achieve their goals for working and living in the community. CIL's and VR originated from the same federal agency and are funded under the same legislation. Both are dedicated to improving the lives of people with disabilities. AccessNorth believes in a collaborative approach; merging the expertise and resources of both VR and CIL's can better integrate services and cooperatively address service gaps. This will ultimately produce better results for our joint consumers.

The formal collaboration between AccessNorth and VR aims to build a model of integrated service delivery for people with disabilities in all levels of vocational goals. Alice Prtine is our VR/IL liaison and will meet individually with each VR staff in AccessNorth's service area and with consumers who wish to participate in this program. It is our hope that this project will enable citizens of Northeastern Minnesota to find solutions to their independent living needs, which will remove many barriers to achieving successful employment outcomes.



## Iron Range MS Walk in Review

### People from across the region gathered on Sunday, May 4th to walk toward a common goal of freeing the world of Multiple Sclerosis (MS)

Registration for Walk MS, Christopher Banks Chisholm Walk 2008, presented by Anchor Bank began at 10:00am & people began to walk the trail around Longyear Lake with a choice of 1.5, 2.5 or 5 miles to walk. There were a total of 8 teams registered for the walk, totalling 96 people who brought in \$15,374.56 with more money yet to be counted and added in. There were nearly 200 people present including all the volunteers who helped make the walk a success. After the walkers returned lunch was served by Jim's Sports Club Bar & Grill.

The Bouncing Bean Team, lead by Corinne Fredrickson & started for her daughter, Renee Fredrickson who was diagnosed with MS in 2000; the team now walks for 8 members of the team who have MS, recruited a total of 64 members who raised \$10,780.54 & counting. Throughout Minnesota & Western Wisconsin there were 17 separate MS Walks, all with one goal in mind; finding a cure for MS so nobody will ever hear the words "you have Multiple Sclerosis" again.

MS is thought to be an autoimmune disease of the Central Nervous System (CNS), causing the body's own defense system to attack myelin, the fatty substance that surrounds and protects the nerve fibers in the CNS. Myelin helps to move nerve impulses along at very high speeds. When any part of the myelin sheath or nerve fiber is damaged or destroyed; nerve impulses traveling to and from the brain and spinal cord are distorted or interrupted, producing a variety of symptoms that can occur.

Some very common symptoms of MS include: Fatigue, Numbness, Walking (Gait), Balance & Coordination Problems, Bladder & Bowel Dysfunction, Vision Problems, Dizziness & Vertigo, Sexual Dysfunction, Pain, Cognitive Problems, Emotional Changes, Depression, & Spasticity. Less common symptoms: Speech Disorders, Swallowing Problems, Headache, Hearing Loss, Seizures, Tremor, Respiration/Breathing Problems, & Itching. A person with MS can have any one or a combination of many of these symptoms at any given moment. MS is forever changing.



## Great Way to Get A Cell Phone

There is a great way to get a cell phone for persons who have disabilities or low income through UniceL. IL Skill workers have had much success purchasing phones for their consumers who otherwise thought they could not afford a phone. This helps consumers to keep in touch with the outside world and can be a life saving tool in the case of an emergency. Many people with low incomes are unable to even have a phone in their home; this offer will help with that for a lot of people.

If you want more information on what UniceL has to offer or if you need any assistance with getting started on purchasing a new phone, please call Roberta at 218-262-6675.



## Senior Companion Program

The Senior Companion Program is a volunteer program through Lutheran Social Services (LSS). My name is Anita Beckman and I am the site coordinator for Hibbing, Virginia, and the surrounding area. I work at Access North/Center for Independent Living of NE MN and we coordinate this service with LSS in Duluth. The seniors we serve are referrals from Social Services, MSHO coordinators, family, friends, other agencies, and themselves. Many of the seniors served by our companions would not be able to remain in their home if it were not for our companions. Our companions are an awesome group who give of their time to help others and are rewarded with new friends. We are always interested in more volunteers and referrals.

### Bring your experience to the Senior Companion Program!

Spend just 15 hours a week and make new friends, receive a tax-free stipend, mileage reimbursement and the personal satisfaction of helping others. Senior Companions do what friends do for friends.

Senior Companions provide companionship, transportation and errand assistance to elderly community members, allowing them to continue to live independently in their own homes. To qualify: Be 60+ years old and willing to help others with just 15 hours a week. To get more information or to sign up as a companion, contact Anita at (800)390-3681 or Peg Kirsch Lee at 218-724-0648.

### Do you need help/companionship?

Senior Companions can listen and share experiences. Your senior companion can take you to the grocery store, doctor, post office, barber/hairdresser, pharmacy, or out for a drive if approved. Senior Companions act as a resource and advocate. Many of our seniors and their senior companions share hobbies and interests. There are no fees to the senior for this program.

**If you are interested in obtaining a Senior Companion, contact Anita at (800) 390-3681 or Peg Kirsch Lee at 218-724-0648.**

## 10 Tips To Help Make Friends & Keep Them

**Work At It:** To make friends and keep them it takes time and practice. Take a relationship class or practice your friendships skills.

**Less Is More:** Most of us go through life with hundreds of acquaintances. But, when it comes to cultivating true friendships, it's important to keep the circle small. Once you focus on a handful of people you really care for, it's important to find ways to celebrate and deepen those ties. You'll feel the difference.

**Be a Better Listener:** Always make eye contact with the speaker and nod occasionally to show you understand. Turn your body toward your friend. On the phone, avoid interrupting or finishing sentences. Minimize distractions on your end.

**Empathize, Don't Criticize:** Minimize advice, but be supportive and let them know that you are there when they need you.

**Open Up!** If a friend doesn't really know you, she can't really be there for you. Gradually let your guard down. Confide your fears. Let her know your vulnerabilities.

**Sweat the Small Stuff:** Show that you care by remembering the small details.

**Join the Information Age:** There's nothing like e-mail or even an unexpected funny postcard to draw friends closer.

**Remember the Golden Rule:** Do unto your friends as you would have them do unto you.

**Plan For the Future:** Make plans with your friends always try to set up meeting and fun things to do together.

**Enjoy! Have Fun!** In a healthy relationship having fun is an important part of that friendship.

## DID YOU KNOW THAT:



Minnesota is one of 3 regions (in the United States), that make up 95% of all new Lyme Disease cases yearly?



Lyme Disease is the fastest growing epidemic in the world, and can be fatal?



There are over 250,000 new Lyme Disease infections per year in the United States alone, (more than AIDS and West Nile Virus combined)?



Most testing for Lyme Disease is less than 40% accurate and fewer than 50% of the patients infected with Lyme Disease never recall ANY rash or tick bite?



Lyme Disease is the most frequently misdiagnosed disease, and it mimics (or could be the cause) of the following diseases: Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Fibromyalgia, MS, ALS, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, IBS, Lupus, Arthritis, Bells Palsy, ADHD, all Psychiatric Disorders, Autism, Heart problems, Multi-symptom/Multi-system illnesses, and many more?!



More difficult than diagnosing Lyme Disease is treating it successfully, and standard antibiotic's often fail, making Lyme Disease one of the most treatment resistant infection's on Earth?



## HELPFUL TIPS FOR TICK SEASON IN MINNESOTA

Approximately 50% of the Deer Ticks in our county and many counties surrounding us are positive for Lyme Disease. Many of these ticks could also be carrying co-infections.

Enjoy the outdoors, but please protect yourself and your loved ones. DEET should be applied to bare skin, but not on the face or hands.

Perform frequent, thorough tick checks; especially the scalp area and body crevices. Ticks love to nestle in crevices, i.e. behind the knee or ear and in the scalp.

If you encounter a tick attached to your body, never burn it, squash it or apply anything to it. This could actually force an infected tick's toxins into your bloodstream. "Do" remove the tick with a pair of tweezers. Get as close to the skin as possible, and pull the tick off gently and steadily. Clean the site with alcohol or any antiseptic.

Mark on the calendar the day you removed the tick. Remember, approximately 1/3 of those bitten get the traditional "bullseye" rash. Many get no rash at all, or a general atypical rash that may look like a prickly heat rash or sunburn. The rash does "not" have to be at the site of the bite. If you do get a bullseye rash, that is a 100% diagnosis of Lyme Disease, and no testing is needed. Proper treatment should begin "immediately". diagnosis of Lyme Disease, and no testing is needed. Proper treatment should begin "immediately".

Some signs of early stage Lyme may be: Flu like-fatigue, muscle and/or joint pain, headache, fever, chills, swollen glands and a stiff neck.

Signs and symptoms of "Late Stage Lyme" may occur weeks, months and even years after the bite, and the symptoms may come and go; for example, the symptoms may flair once a month, and with change of season. Symptoms can be: Continual Flu-like symptoms, depression, panic attacks, all psychiatric disorders, cognitive dysfunction, memory loss, muscle pain, weakness, numbness, tingling, stiff neck, headaches, loss of balance/coordination, irregular heartbeat, chest/rib pain, difficulty breathing, tremors, seizures, anxiety, sleep disorders.

**For more information go to [www.lymefighters.org](http://www.lymefighters.org).**

## Persons on SSDI Able to Get Fishing



### License For Free



If you get SSDI, you can take your award letter to any place that sells fishing licenses & get your fishing license at no cost. Free fishing licenses may be issued to Minnesota residents who are blind, have a disability, are receiving a supplemental income (SSI, SSDI), or receiving worker's compensation for total and permanent disability at no cost.

**To get SSI or SSDI benefit verification, call 1-800-772-1213, visit the following web site [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov), or visit your local Social Security office.**



## Pacer Puppets

Pacer Puppets is a great way to bring disability awareness to children in preschool to third grade. CILNM offers a team of people through the center who will come to your community and do a puppet show to train & give children some understanding of various areas of disabilities. It teaches children that just because you may use a wheelchair or look a little different, no child ever wants to be left behind or misunderstood. It's called the Count Me In Show, featuring the following puppets. Gina is blind, Jay is hard of hearing, Sally has Cerebral Palsy and uses a wheelchair, Mitch has a learning disability, Carmen has Epilepsy and Corey has Down's Syndrome. If you feel this is something that would make a difference in your community and would like more information and/or to schedule a show, please call the office nearest you today!

How to get a  
Hold of CILNM  
Satellite  
Offices!



### CILNM Pine City:

320-629-8179

P.O. Box 98

Pine City, MN

55063

### CILNM Two Harbors:

218-384-6461

P.O. Box 145

Two Harbors, MN

55616

### CILNM Cloquet:

218-879-0375

P.O. Box 55

Cloquet, MN

55720

### CILNM Walker:

218-547-3036

P.O. Box 1182

Walker MN

56484

For a list of activities and groups in your area, contact your local CILNM Office.

### Range Area Groups:

Multiple Sclerosis Support  
 Functional Fitness for Older Adults  
 Coffee / Crafts Group  
 Fibromyalgia and Chronic Pain Support Group  
 Men's Group  
 TBI Support Group - Virginia & Grand Rapids

### Duluth Area Groups:

Game of Life (Ages 14-22)  
 Kids Group (Ages 10-13)  
 Computer Basics  
 DTA Bus Training  
 Chronic Fatigue & Fibromyalgia For Women Only  
 TBI Group  
 Vision Loss Support Group  
 For Women Only

### Aitkin Area Groups:

Hope for the Future  
 MS Support Group  
 Coffee & Activities  
 New Challenge-Assistive Technology Group

### Coleraine Area Groups:

TBI Group

### Cloquet Area Groups:

People with Disabilities Support Group  
 Game of Life: Social/Recreational Group (Ages 14+)

**If you have any needs and/or ideas for a support group, please contact the CILNM Office closest to you and ask them for assistance in setting them up!**

## Our Offices

### Hibbing

2104 6th Ave. E.  
 Hibbing, MN 55746  
 Phone/TTY (218)262-6675  
 (800)390-3681  
 FAX (218)262-6677

## Branch Offices

### Duluth

118 E. Superior St.  
 Duluth, MN 55802  
 Phone/TTY (218) 625-1400  
 (888)625-1401  
 FAX (218)625-1401

### Aitkin

210 2nd St. NW  
 Aitkin, MN 56431  
 Phone/TTY (218)927-3748  
 (800)390-3681  
 FAX (218)927-3749

### Brainerd

17025 Commercial Park Dr, Ste 2  
 Brainerd, MN56401  
 Phone/Fax (218)829-9567

### Coleraine

308 Roosevelt Ave, Box 520  
 Coleraine, MN 55722  
 Phone/Fax (218)245-0211

### International Falls

MN Workforce Center  
 1501 Hwy 71 - SC 128  
 I Falls, MN 56649  
 Phone/Fax (218)245-0211

## Satellite Offices

### Cloquet

(218) 879-0375

### Pine City

(320)629-8179

### Walker

(218)547-3036

### Two Harbors

(218)384-6461

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## Center For Independent Living of NE MN

Serving people with disabilities in the  
Minnesota counties of

St. Louis  
Lake  
Cook  
Koochiching  
Itasca  
Aitkin  
Carlton  
Pine  
Cass  
Crow Wing

This publication is available in  
alternate formats upon request.

**OUR MISSION:**  
To assist individuals with disabilities to  
live independently, pursue meaningful  
goals, and have the same opportunities  
and choices as all persons.

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