



Greetings to All!

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the newly hired Executive Director of Access North - Center for Independent Living of Northeastern Minnesota (that's a mouthful). My name is Don Brunette and I am currently (at this writing) enjoying my 4th day on the job. I still have very few emails, voice mails and I can still see the wood grain on my desktop. Soon this will all change and I'll be knee deep in emails, voicemails and workload like anyone else but for now, it's the calm before the storm.



I wasn't sure what I'd have to offer as any message of substance so soon after starting the new job but I just read the year-end report and was overwhelmed with the results! What a tremendous year of achievements for Access North! I am excited to share some of the results with you.

- In 2013 CILNM staff provided information and referral services to 3302 people. As you can imagine, navigating the health care system or finding information on disability resources can be critical and daunting! CILNM staff are experts at this and their efforts have helped many people in 2013.
- In 2013 CILNM staff provided services to 1503 people! There were 830 new consumers served in 2013.
- Independent Living Skills Training was provided to 1354 people throughout the 9 county service areas.
- Advocacy and legal services were provided to 701 people, another 402 people received personal assistance services.
- Home modifications were completed for 286 people and another 144 people received some form of assistive technology supports. Did you know that Access North has provided over 1330 ramps to people in need throughout northeastern Minnesota over the years? Amazing!

The CILNM is also now providing Nursing Home Relocation and Homemaking services! We are all excited about surpassing all of these service goals in 2014 and making a positive impact upon the people of Northeastern Minnesota. If you would like to explore how we can be of service to you or someone you know, please give us a call at 218-262-6675. Now...on to day 5.

Don Brunette
Executive Director

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY SUPPORT GROUP

Hibbing Office looking for interested people to attend group.

If you or someone you know is interested in attending a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) support group in the Hibbing area, please give us a call - (218) 262-6675 to put your name on our list.

A TBI can be from any injury to the head - a fall, accident, stroke, disease, tumor, infection, aneurysm or anything that can or has injured the brain. TBI can cause changes in a person's ability to think, control emotions, walk, or speak and can also affect sense of sight or hearing.



We currently have a TBI group that meets in the Grand Rapids area that has been very successful for many years in providing resources, socialization, educational speakers, comradery in a safe environment of understanding. Please contact us if you would like to be attend.

NAME OUR NEWSLETTER!!

Give us your ideas!

We are looking for your suggestions to give this Newsletter a name something catchy, witty, fun, meaningful. Send your suggestions to info@accessnorth.net. We look forward to hearing from you!



WINTER WEATHER CHECKLIST FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES OR HEALTH CHALLENGES

Take precautions to stay warm and prepare for emergencies.

- Have an emergency supply kit that includes: A battery-powered or hand crank-powered radio, extra flashlights and batteries, and at minimum a week's supply of food and water. If you rely on home-delivered meals, be certain to stock nonperishable food at home in case meal deliveries are suspended during an emergency.
- Adequate cold-weather clothing and blankets.
- First aid supplies.
- Plan for accessible transportation in case you have to evacuate your premises.
- If you receive home-based care, be certain to include caregivers when you develop your plan. Familiarize yourself with your petcare agency's emergency plan. Plan now about how you're going to deal with pets and service animals in a situation that requires transportation or temporary relocation.
- Wear multiple layers of clothing, including a scarf around your neck, a winter hat, lined boots and two pairs of socks.
- If you're able to carry a cell phone, do so.



WINTER SAFE DRIVING TIPS

Stay safe while on the road this winter with these safe winter driving tips from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety

- Avoid unnecessary travel if conditions are too poor.
- Buckle up, and make sure child restraints are secured tightly.
- Drive at safe speeds according to road conditions, and provide for plenty of travel time.
- Increase safe stopping distance between vehicles.
- Use extra precautions when driving around snowplows by keeping at least five car-lengths behind plows.
- If skidding, remain calm, ease foot off the gas, and turn the steering wheel in the direction you want the front of the vehicle to go.
- If vehicle has an anti-lock braking system (ABS), apply a steady firm pressure to the brake pedal. Never pump ABS brakes.
- Clear snow and ice from vehicle windows, hood, headlights, brake lights and directional signals.
- Headlights must be turned on when it is snowing or sleeting.
- Do not use cruise control on snow/icy/wet roads.
- Equip vehicles with a scraper/brush, small shovel, jumper cables, tow chain, and a bag of sand or cat litter for tire traction. Blanket(s), heavy boots, warm clothing and flashlights are also important, as are storing high-energy foods such as chocolate or energy bars.
- Be sure cell phones are charged for long trips, and inform family of destination plans and schedule.
- If stranded, stay in the vehicle.



For weather-related road condition information, call 5-1-1 or visit www.511mn.org.

PEOPLE FIRST LANGUAGE

To ensure inclusion, freedom and respect for all, it's time to embrace the impact of language on people with disabilities and make this change NOW. (This is an exceptional resource to explain the lives of disabled people and make this change part of our lives. Every person needs to read this for a better understanding of disability language and respect. Taken from "People First Language" by Kathie Snow and used with permission)



Did you know that people with disabilities constitute our nation's largest minority group (one in five Americans has a disability)? It's also the most inclusive and most diverse group: all ages, genders, religions, ethnicities, sexual orientations and socioeconomic levels are represented.

Contrary to socioecnomical wisdom, individuals with disabilities are not:

- People who *suffer* from the *tragedy* of birth defects.
- *Paralegic heroes* who *struggle* to become *normal* again.
- *Victims* who *fight* to *overcome* their *challenges*.

Nor are they the *retarded*, *autistic*, *blind*, *deaf*, *learning disabled*, etc. - *ad nauseam!*

They are people: moms and dads; sons and daughters; employees and employers; friends and neighbors; students and teachers; scientists, reporters, doctors, actors, presidents, and more. People with disabilities are people, *first*.

EXAMPLES OF PEOPLE FIRST LANGUAGE

- Say: People with disabilities. Instead of: The handicapped or disabled.
- Say: Paul has a cognitive disability (diagnosis). Instead of: He's mentally retarded.
- Say: Kate has autism (or a diagnosis of...). Instead of: She's autistic.

There are many other examples in the entire article which you can read [here](#). Let's change ourselves and our world and generate positive change in the lives of people with disabilities. Browse over to the Disability is Natural [website](#) for many more resources on People First Language.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY CORNER

EZ Eyes Large Print Keyboard

The EZ Eyes large print keyboard makes typing easy with improved readability for less eye strain and better accuracy. It has 4 times larger letters and higher contrast colors, spill resistant and is PC and Mac compatible. Connects with a USB port with no software or setup required.



The Assistive Technology Lab offers a means for people with disabilities to try, demonstrate and even borrow some Assistive Technology to determine what best fits their needs. Center for Independent Living staff will also assist people in locating funding for needed Assistive Technology.



Assistive Technology can be a common tool and purchased off the shelf or it can be a device that is specifically designed for the individual.

The Demonstration and Lending Lab is available to people with disabilities, family members, providers and other interested groups. Although the Lab is located in the

Hibbing and Duluth office, demonstrations and lending can be arranged off-site.

The Assistive Technology Lab includes a variety of pieces of equipment designed to showcase the wide assortment of items available.

If you would like to try out one of these keyboards, please call Jason in the Hibbing office at (800) 390-3681 or Sheri in the Duluth office at (888) 625-1401.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Candy Cane Kisses

- 115 Square Pretzels
- Approximately 1/2 cup plain holiday M&Ms
- 2 bags Candy Cane Hershey's Kisses
- wax paper
- cookie sheet

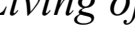


Preheat your oven to 175 degrees. Unwrap all the Kisses, sort your M&Ms (if you only want one color only). Cover a cookie sheet in wax paper. Line up your pretzel squares on the paper and top each one with a Kiss. Carefully put in oven. Watch them carefully for 4-6 minutes, remove from oven when the surface of the Kisses look glossy, their Kiss shape is still somewhat intact, but they're softened - not melted. Right after removing from oven, carefully put one M&M onto each Kiss. Chill in refrigerator or let sit on the counter until set.



FROM THE STAFF AT

AccessNorth - Center for Independent Living of Northeastern Minnesota



Wishing you health and happiness this Holiday Season and prosperity in the New Year. We value our consumers and community service partners and look forward to continuing our partnership in the coming year.

