Redefining What’s Possible

Profiles of Our Community

Annual Magazine & Directory of Community Resources
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Serving the Ann Arbor area for over 40 years.

University of Michigan Home Care Services provides a full range of products and services for people with disabilities. We’re continually expanding our offerings with new and innovative products designed to help you live a more comfortable and independent life.

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note from the president
4

about the ann arbor CIL
5

highlights of 2010
34

annual gala & benefit auction
35

staff listing
37

special education

Equal Education for All Learners:
Special education making an impact in our community

select ride
33

business leadership network

news from the ann arbor center for independent living

feature

6 mia
“Swoosh” - Proving what’s possible on and off the court

9 david

12 gardy

SPINAL CORD INJURY SUPPORT PROGRAM

14 ken

15 madelyn

NURSING FACILITY TRANSITION PROGRAM

16 ben

YOUTH ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP

19 renee

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SUPPORTS

20 danetta

HOUSING ASSISTANCE

22 cynthia

ARMS

24 pete

SPORTS & FITNESS

26 special education

SPECIAL FEATURE

30 amanda

CAREER SERVICES

32 aata

ADVOCACY & EDUCATION

33 select ride

bUSINESS LEADERSHIP NETWORK

staff listing
WE ARE WITH YOU ALL THE WAY

The University of Michigan Spinal Cord Injury Model System Model System is one of only 14 Centers in the United States designated as SCI Model System by the National Institute of Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) and the U.S. Department of Education. The U-M SCI Model System is part of one of top 20 Departments of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation in the country, as ranked in 2010 by US News & World Report.

The U-M SCI Model System also supports numerous innovative research projects focused on understanding and improving factors that impact quality of life while our educational materials and outreach activities are developed to increase access to information and resources for individuals with SCI and their family members.

For more than 20 years, the U-M SCI Model Systems has been proud to partner with the Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living to help people become more independent and to adjust to life with SCI.

"Access is a breath of fresh air. As someone with a disability, it is refreshing to see people sharing their lives with a disability in a genuine way. There is no 'look at me, I'm a superhero,' or people saying 'have pity on me because of my struggles.' It presents real people in real ways, acknowledging the challenges we go through, while embracing and celebrating our journeys. It's empowering to have a connection to others like myself through it."

Amanda Helppie, Ann Arbor
note from the president

In 1976 six remarkable people, each with a very personal experience with disability, leveraged their hopes and dreams and created the Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living. Their hope was for a more accessible and inclusive community. Their dream was to establish an organization by, of, and for people with disabilities. And their vision was to create a gathering place for the disability community. Thirty-five years later, that spirit and purpose is living on in great ways at the Ann Arbor CIL.

Over the years many remarkable people have served on our Board of Directors. One such person, who also has his own very personal experience with disability, is Dr. Paul Uslan. In 1999, after serving for six years on our Board of Directors, Paul shared the following with me in a thank you note:

“In the coming years, both the board and staff will find themselves in a very challenging position. With the change in political climate, they will be charged with looking at alternative, even non-traditional, sources of funding in order to help the CIL prosper in the future. I am confident that with a strong vision and staying true to your mission, you will succeed.

Please remember that your most valued commodity is the hope you provide for the people you are here to serve. This hope shines in the faces of the people whose lives you touch and does more to secure independence than you could ever imagine.

That hope which you so freely give is something that will be cherished for a lifetime. Through your efforts, so many will become free and able to live full, happy, richly rewarding, and independent lives.”

This 21st Edition of Access Magazine is filled with the stories of remarkable people who, as Paul so eloquently predicted, are living “full, happy, richly rewarding, and independent lives.” They do this because thirty-five years ago, six people put their hopes and dreams on the line and dedicated themselves to do whatever it took to help children, youth, adults, and seniors with disabilities achieve success at home, at school, at work, and in their community. Hope, it seems, is very powerful indeed.

Jim Magyar
President and CEO

areas of service

Each year, the Ann Arbor CIL improves the lives of over 4,000 people with disabilities and their families and friends.

Through individualized counseling, classes, advocacy efforts, and recreational programming, we help individuals build their skills, advocate for what they need, find friends, and feel at home.

In this, our 21st Annual Edition of Access Magazine, we are proud to share the stories of some of the individuals we impacted during the past year.

- Assistance Accessing Community Resources
- Career Services
- Community Advocacy
- Disability-Related Training
- Independent Living Coaching
- Occupational Therapy Assessments
- Peer Support
- Rehabilitation Engineering
- Small Business Development Supports
- Sports, Recreation & Arts
- Staffing Resources for Employers
- Transitions from Nursing Facilities into the Community
- Volunteer and Training Opportunities
- Youth Programming
“At school, I feel like I’m the only one who has a wheelchair. At basketball, I don’t feel different. I can do what everyone does.”

Mia Lewis is a powerhouse basketball player. At 10 years old and 50 pounds, Mia Lewis is a powerhouse basketball player. As she moves quickly around the court, passing balls to her teammates and making baskets, her skills more resemble a seasoned adult player than a beginning youth.

“It’s fun,” Mia says. “I like dribbling, shooting, and passing. Shooting is the hardest part. But I can make five baskets in a row now.”

Mia plays on the Ann Arbor CIL-sponsored Junior Thunderbirds Wheelchair Basketball Team in Southfield, which practices weekly and competes in wheelchair basketball leagues throughout Southeast Michigan and surrounding states.

“The wheelchair basketball program has been great for Mia,” says her mother, Andrea Munzenberger. “She has always loved being physically active, but before we learned about adaptive sports programs, we didn’t know how she could be active outside the house. The Thunderbirds team has been a big part of opening new opportunities for her.”

Mia says she likes playing basketball with other kids who use wheelchairs. “At school, I feel like I’m the only one who has a wheelchair. At recess, kids run around me, and I can’t always play. At basketball, I don’t feel different.”

“IF YOU BELIEVE IN YOURSELF AND ARE WILLING TO STRETCH YOURSELF, YOU CAN DO ANYTHING.”
all the same. We can play faster and throw and catch together.”

A fourth-grader at Hoover Elementary School in Livonia, Mia has a condition called Transverse Myelitis, which means the covering over certain nerves in her spine are gone. “It’s like having an electrical cord without any insulation on it,” says Lonnie Lewis, Mia’s father. Because of damage to her nerves, Mia is paralyzed from the waist down.

“Doctors don’t know exactly what originally caused the condition. She came down with it when she was four,” Andrea says. Mia has a very small amount of sensation in her legs but no muscle movement in them.

“Since Mia became paralyzed, it’s been a long process of learning how to live a regular life,” Andrea says. “There was no training at the hospital on independent living. We had to figure it all out ourselves. Over the years, we’ve come a long way.”

Andrea says the biggest challenge they’ve dealt with is accessibility at buildings. “Most people don’t think about how they’re going to get into a building or use it. We constantly think about it,” she says. “Restrooms are often the biggest challenge. The ‘handicapped’ bathroom is not always accessible. Until you go through it, you never think about it. Living with a disability requires so much more planning. It changes your perspective on the world around you.”

Andrea says that as parents, she and Lonnie have challenged Mia to push herself and do things she didn’t think she could do. “For example, when Mia was young, we challenged her to figure out how to hoist herself onto a counter-height kitchen chair. She didn’t think she could do it at first, but we were patient with her and eventually she was able to do it. It was such a great accomplishment. Mia is more independent now because of it.”

Andrea says now when they go to buildings, Mia is in charge of finding the accessible entrances and door openers. “She’s learning to do more and more things by herself. Sometimes it would be easier to do things for her, but she’s gotten stronger and more independent from doing more things on her own.”

That strength and independence shows on the court. “She’s fearless,” says Claudia Brewer, the coach of the Thunderbirds team. “She has a great spirit. She’s not afraid to dive right in and make the play.”

Mia is now also involved in other adaptive sports, including sled hockey, quad rugby, wheelchair tennis, swimming, and handcycling. She says basketball is her favorite, though: “I love everything about it.”

“The wheelchair basketball program has been wonderful for her,” Andrea says. “She’s found a way to excel at being an athlete, and it’s enabled her to get out with other kids who use wheelchairs. She sees that she’s not that different. To know that she’s not the only one with a wheelchair is important.”

“Mia shows people that a disability doesn’t have to hold you back from anything,” Andrea adds. “She shows that if you believe in yourself and are willing to stretch yourself, you can do anything.”

“MIA SHOWS PEOPLE THAT A DISABILITY DOESN’T HAVE TO HOLD YOU BACK FROM ANYTHING.”

“HAVING THE STROKE IS NOT A PATH I WOULD HAVE CHOSEN, BUT NOW I’M THANKFUL FOR IT. I WANT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ALL THE OPPORTUNITIES IT’S GIVEN ME.”

“To be able to run and be on my two feet is amazing to me now,” says David Moilanen, 22. “The fresh air, the physical exertion, there’s nothing like it. I feel so lucky to be able to be out here. I go at a turtle’s pace compared to what I used to do, but I feel like I could run forever. I’m like Forest Gump – I just like to go.”

“Having the stroke is not a path I would have chosen, but now I’m thankful for it. I want to take advantage of all the opportunities it’s given me.”

continued from page 7
David also hopes to return to school soon. With significant memory problems, though, along with not being able to write and an ability to learn only in an auditory way, David says he needed help figuring out how he could do it. He went to Michigan Rehabilitation Services and was referred to the Ann Arbor CIL for help with Assistive Technology. The CIL’s Rehabilitation Engineer, Glen Ashlock, evaluated David’s needs and identified key devices that will help David with understanding lectures, taking tests, keeping up with assignments, and organizing his life.

Most significant is a program called Kurzweil, which allows David to download textbooks onto his computer, turn written content into audio content, make voice memos, and highlight and underline words in audio files. “It’s an awesome program,” he says. “With it I can understand lectures in school, process information, and read course material. I can do anything someone would ordinarily do through writing. Before I got this I was apprehensive about having to be an auditory learner. Glen opened my eyes to learning in this way!”

Glen also showed David how to use his iPod and iTunes to organize all the audio files he was creating with the Kurzweil program and helped him use his Android phone and the Google calendaring system to help him organize his life. Because of his memory problems, David has difficulty remembering even simple obligations from one moment to the next. With his phone, David now keeps track of everything he has to do, moment-by-moment.

David says he was a tech-neophyte before he met Glen: “I was stuck in the stone age;” he says. “Glen got me out. I’m now using all this technology to help make my life better. I wouldn’t have known how to do any of these things without Glen’s help. Using these things is how I will be successful.”

David is now looking to transfer to a school closer to home and begin taking classes. “This technology will be the key component for my going back to school,” he says. “It gives me confidence. I used to look at a book and get frustrated. Now with this technology I know I can be successful. Glen got me back to where I was in life before my stroke. Through technology, he’s made moving forward possible.”

David wants to get his bachelor’s degree and then pursue a graduate degree in the healthcare field. “I have so much appreciation for the brain now and what it does,” he says. “I want to understand what happened to me and use all of the experiences I’ve been through to help others.”

In the meantime, David says the time away from school and his regular life has given him a chance to reflect on what’s important to him. “I’m such a different person now, in many ways for the better,” he says. “So many kids my age, and I was one of them, have a very different outlook on life. Before my stroke, I was interested in what every other kid is interested in – what are we doing tonight, friends and activities. I never wanted to learn and looked at it as work. Now with everything I’ve been through I appreciate learning very differently. Learning excites me now.”

David says because he processes information so slowly, he still has his challenges. “I’m not going to lie; it’s still difficult. Learning is really hard for me. But I enjoy the process. It means so much to me now.”

He says he has a new appreciation for his relationships with friends and family as well. “This experience has brought our family closer, and I’ve met so many great people I would have never otherwise met,” he says. “The ways people have reached out and helped throughout this journey have been amazing. My relationships with people now are so much deeper and more meaningful. Life is more fulfilling.”

“Having the stroke and going through this process is not a path I would have chosen, but now, with perspective, I’m thankful for it,” he says. “I want to take advantage of all the opportunities it’s given me.”
As five o’clock in the afternoon approached on January 12, 2010, Pierre “Gardy” Boncoeur was just beginning to relax and close up shop for the day. Business had gone well that day, and he was just going outside to collect some merchandise from the front of his clothing and shoe store in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. In its six years, the business had grown to include three employees and he was proud of what he had built.

In an instant, though, everything in life changed. At 4:53 pm that afternoon, a 7.0 magnitude earthquake shook Haiti. “As the building began to tremble, I tried to run away, but it all happened very fast,” Gardy says. Within seconds, the building collapsed, and he was buried under a tangled mess of cement, wood, and wire. “I was trapped,” he says. “There was nothing I could do.”

Gardy called for help, but there was chaos and commotion everywhere. A tailor in the building next door saw Gardy and tried to help to no avail. The prisoner had escaped in the quake from a nearby prison saw Gardy. The prisoner had a c6 spinal cord injury which causes him to be unable to completely free him. Gardy lay in the rubble for several more hours until street bandits Gardy knew from the area saw him and were able to finally free him. Gardy had been trapped for 12 hours.

Out of the rubble, Gardy could not feel or move his legs. The bandits created a make-shift stretcher for him and left him on the side of the road. Gardy’s brother and cousin eventually arrived and began looking for care for Gardy. “It was chaos everywhere. I had to ride in a truck with deceased bodies while we looked,” he says.

Gardy was turned away from four facilities before the group found a Doctors Without Borders hospital that would take him.

Gardy remained at the facility for four days until the staff declared they did not have the capacity to care for his injuries. Desperate, his family took him to a nearby pediatric hospital affiliated with his wife’s work. With the help of his wife’s boss, he was examined by an American medical team and selected to go to a U.S. hospital for care.

On January 20, Gardy was evacuated by the University of Michigan’s Survival Flight jet and taken to Ann Arbor.

Gardy continues to receive care and support from the translators who have now become his friends and visit him several times a week. “Their friendship means a lot to me,” he says. “They have become my family. I get courage and strength from them, and I am so grateful for their support.” Gardy also talks on the phone every day with his wife, Yolaine, who has been able to visit him several times a week.

During the treatment process, Gardy learned that he has a C6 spinal cord injury which causes him to be paralyzed from his chest down and have very limited use of his arms and hands. He also had to have one of his legs amputated. “When I first learned this I was in shock,” he says. “I didn’t want to accept it. In Haiti, someone with a condition like this is put on the street. They are shunned and cast aside. I couldn’t believe it was me.”

During his rehabilitation process, Gardy met Ann Arbor CIL staff member Tom Hoatlin, who also has a spinal cord injury. Tom directs the CIL’s Spinal Cord Injury Support Program, which provides independent living training and peer support to patients with new spinal cord injuries. The Ann Arbor CIL has been partnering with U-M’s Spinal Cord Injury Model Systems since 1985 to help patients during the important and difficult adjustment to life with a new spinal cord injury.

With the help of a translator, Tom counseled Gardy about what life will be like with the new injury and showed Gardy how to do things with a wheelchair. “I had never met anyone like Tom before,” Gardy says. “He was using a wheelchair and had a good life. I had never seen anyone like that in Haiti. I saw how well he adapts, and it gives me hope. He showed me that a good life is possible.”

Gardy says as his future is sorted out, the translators continue to support and help him. And with plans to go to a soccer match this weekend, life is beginning to feel normal again. “I’m rooting for Michigan,” Gardy says.

remains unclear for Gardy. Without any income and an uncertain immigration status, he does not know whether he will be able to stay in the U.S. Gardy says as his future is sorted out, the translators continue to support and help him. And with plans to go to a soccer match this weekend, life is beginning to feel normal again. “I’m rooting for Michigan,” Gardy says.

Even practically, Gardy would have a very difficult time living in Haiti. The terrain and buildings are not accessible for someone using a wheelchair, especially his house, and he would have no means of powering or servicing his chair. He also would not be able to purchase vital medical supplies, and there are no support services for people with disabilities. However, the future is put on the street. They are shunned and cast aside... here [in the u.s.], I have a chance at having a life. The culture here accepts people like me.”

“I had never met anyone like Tom in Haiti. He was using a wheelchair and had a good life. I saw how well he adapts, and it gives me hope... it gives me the will to live.”
“I feel like I’m the happiest guy in the world right now,” Ken Watkins says. “It’s been a long, tough journey to get to this place. I really appreciate where I am now and what lies in front of me.”

Early in his career Ken thought he had it all. “I graduated from high school with a 3.8 GPA, I earned a full scholarship to the University of Michigan, and I successfully finished my Bachelor’s degree at DeVry University. I got a job working with Hewlett Packard in computers and eventually worked my way up to management,” he says. “Everything was going as planned. I thought the rest of my career was set.”

But as months of looking turned into years, I realized that my career was just not where I wanted it to be. “I just kept thinking to myself, ‘what is going on? What happened to me?’” He got an Associate’s degree in Computer Networking but again couldn’t find work. “I just kept thinking to myself, ‘it hit me hard. My career was just not where I wanted it to be’. But as months of looking turned into years, I realized that the market was getting away from me. The technology was changing fast, and my skills just weren’t current.”

As things got harder, Ken turned to Avalon Housing for help and learned of a program in the University of Michigan, and I successfully finished my Bachelor’s degree at DeVry University. I got a job working with Hewlett Packard in computers and eventually worked my way up to management,” he says. “Everything was going as planned. I thought the rest of my career was set.”

“In the late 80’s, though, everything began to change for Ken. After 17 years at Hewlett Packard, he was laid off. “At the time I thought I would have no problem finding a job. But as months of looking turned into years, I realized that the market was getting away from me. The technology was changing fast, and my skills just weren’t current.” Ken ended up migrating away from computers and over the years took a variety of jobs to make ends meet. “I lost my way up to management,” he says. “Everything was going as planned. I thought the rest of my career was set.”

While at the CIL, Ken also got help with his job search and was ultimately successful in landing a full-time, paid internship with Thomson Reuters in Ann Arbor. “It was a dream opportunity,” he says. “I’ve been involved with a lot of social service agencies over the years, and the CIL really stands out. There’s a sincerity of purpose here that you don’t see at other places. It’s a great place.”

Ken had an idea to use the program as an opportunity to further develop his skills and contacted the Ann Arbor CIL for help.

Ken worked with the CLS Network Administrator Kevin Hartgerink to devise a plan, and over a period of 3 months, Ken helped the CLS with system updates, cabling projects, and staff computer support. “Before I came to the CIL, I assumed that as a nonprofit it would have low-level technology. But when I got here I was amazed,” he says. “With complex servers and a sophisticated network administration system, there was a lot for me to learn from. Kevin really put in a lot of effort to make sure that I learned. I really appreciate the time and attention he gave to help me.”

While at the CIL, Ken also got help with his job search and was ultimately successful in landing a full-time, paid internship with Thomson Reuters in Ann Arbor. “It was a dream opportunity,” he says. “I’ve been involved with a lot of social service agencies over the years, and the CIL really stands out. There’s a sincerity of purpose here that you don’t see at other places. It’s a great place.”

“Getting involved with the CIL really made the difference,” he says. “I’ve been involved with a lot of social service agencies over the years, and the CIL really stands out. There’s a sincerity of purpose here that you don’t see at other places. It’s a great place.”

As Madelyn got better, Ann Arbor CIL helped her by contacting the Ann Arbor CIL. “It was a dream opportunity,” she says. “We were stuck. Living in a nursing home was terrible there,” she says. “I felt like I just wasn’t me.”

While at the CIL, Madelyn had an idea to develop her skills and contacted the Ann Arbor CIL for help. “But again couldn’t find work. “I just kept thinking to myself, ‘what is going on? What happened to me?’”

When Ken was once again laid off from a job in 2008, he says “it hit me hard. My career was just not where I wanted it to be.” He got an Associate’s degree in Computer Networking but again couldn’t find work. “I just kept thinking to myself, ‘what is going on? What happened to me?’”

“Getting involved with the CIL really made the difference,” he says. “I’ve been involved with a lot of social service agencies over the years, and the CIL really stands out. There’s a sincerity of purpose here that you don’t see at other places. It’s a great place.”

As Madelyn got better, Ann Arbor CIL staff member Dorothy Denner heard about Madelyn and got involved. The CLS Nursing Facility Transition Program helps individuals like Madelyn move out of nursing homes and establish an independent life in the community. The Ann Arbor CIL works in partnership with the Area Agency on Aging 1-B, the Michigan Department of Community Health, and Medicare to provide transition services that facilitate long-term stable living arrangements.

Together, Dorothy and Madelyn evaluated whether Madelyn could live on her own and then began the work to make it possible. Dorothy identified an accessible and affordable apartment, secured reliable in-home medical care and support services, and arranged transportation services so Madelyn could get to dialysis treatments. Dorothy also worked with the apartment complex to make accessibility modifications to the kitchen.

When Madelyn moved in, she was “so happy.” Her first morning in the apartment, she wasted no time dusting off her cooking skills and made two eggs, bacon, a fresh peel, a piece of toast with diet orange marmalade, and decaf hot coffee. “As I ate it, I was in tears. I didn’t care if I had to eat on the floor – I was free.”

These days, Madelyn has settled in and adjusted to life in the apartment. “It’s a busy place here. There’s always something going on,” she says. “In-home services help Madelyn with household tasks and buying food, but she is quick to point out, ‘I always do all of my own cooking.”

“Many days when I come home I just stop and look out the window. If you only knew how glad I am to be here. I am thankful for each and every day.”

“Getting involved with the CIL really made the difference... it was the right experience at the right time.”

“Being able to move out of the nursing home has been like a life line. I was drowning. You all saved my life.”
My disability has made me who I am. It gives me a different viewpoint, a different way of thinking," says Ben Case, 18. I wouldn’t have it any other way.

In 2010, Ben was the winner of the Ann Arbor CIL’s annual John Weir Youth Academic Scholarship. With stand-out academic and extracurricular accomplishments and leadership in promoting disability awareness and acceptance, Ben embodies the opportunities that lie in overcoming obstacles posed by a disability.

Ben has Enlarged Vestibular Aqueduct Syndrome, or LVAS, a condition in his inner ear which affects his ability to hear and control his balance. With profound hearing loss in his left ear and severe to profound hearing loss in his right, Ben wears hearing aids and uses some sign language.

"Being Hard of Hearing – I love it," he says. "It's made me who I am. I'm not going to say it hasn't been without its challenges, but for me it's been a positive thing, every step of the way."

Ben says that when he was a child his deafness never posed a barrier for him. But in high school he began struggling to keep up with lectures because of it, and his GPA began declining. "I was trying to prove that I could do everything on my own," he says. "But I quickly realized that I shouldn't. I began asking for some accommodations, and they made a big difference." Ben asked to sit in the front of the classroom so that he could hear lectures more easily, and he asked for help from a Teacher Consultant in accessing learning materials.

"I had never had to advocate for what I needed and was a little afraid and unsure of how to do it when I first asked. But I wanted to be able to participate just like everyone else. I wanted to prove that I could succeed."

Ben learned that advocating for what he needed was worth it — the school provided the accommodations, and his GPA dramatically improved. Ben says from this he was able to take harder, more challenging classes.

"I figured out that being strong and independent doesn't mean you have to struggle to do everything on your own," he says. "It just means you have to know yourself — know what you can do and what you need in order to be able to succeed."

During Ben's junior year, he says he got his first real test of whether he would be able to live on his own. "I had an opportunity to travel to Mexico and study at the American School Foundation in Mexico City," he says. "It was exactly what I wanted to do. I wanted to take advantage of it, but I was worried about adjusting to the language and culture with my hearing loss. I decided the only way to find out was to try."

The trip ended up going really well, and Ben says it gave him the confidence to go after his goal of living independently at college. Ben began applying to colleges during his senior year and realized that if he was going to be able to go, he needed significant financial aid to do so.

Ben says he began applying for scholarships and looking for any financial aid that could help. Ben's counselor at Huron High School in Ann Arbor told Ben about the Ann Arbor CIL's John Weir Youth Academic Scholarship, and Ben applied. "Initially I applied because I needed the money," he says, "but after I learned more about what it is about, I began to want it more because of what it stands for. I really believe in disability rights and acceptance."

The Ann Arbor CIL's John Weir Scholarship is awarded annually to college-bound high school seniors with disabilities on the basis of academic achievement, extracurricular involvement, and demonstrated leadership in promoting disability rights and acceptance. The scholarship is named after John Weir, one of the founding members of the Ann Arbor CIL, who was a pioneer in advancing disability rights and cultural acceptance. The scholarship is managed and held in trust by the Ann Arbor Community Foundation and provides one winner each year with a $2000 scholarship over a four-year college period and two runners-up with one-time $500 scholarships.

As an applicant, Ben stood out not just for his academic and extracurricular accomplishments, but also for his leadership experiences in promoting disability awareness and acceptance. Ben has spoken on panels at conferences about hearing issues, and when he was a sophomore in high school he participated in the Alexander Graham Bell Association's youth leadership program in Milwaukee. Ben says meeting other youths from around the country and participating in the program gave him a deeper appreciation for having a disability and the importance of promoting disability awareness.
Ben says his love of talking to others about what it’s like to have a disability began as a child when he would often give impromptu demonstrations to friends and family about what it’s like to be hard of hearing. “I loved telling people my story,” he says. “I had a device that simulates what it’s like to have a hearing impairment, and I had so much fun watching people try out what I experience all the time.”

Since winning the scholarship, Ben has gotten involved as a volunteer at the CIL. “Connecting with the CIL has been eye opening for me,” he says. “I had always been an advocate among my peers in the Deaf community, but until I got this scholarship, I had never been an advocate for the whole disability community. I didn’t realize there was a separate organization out there for all people with disabilities. Getting involved with the CIL has helped me put my disability in much greater perspective.”

Now a freshman at the University of Michigan Ben says, “I think my disability and all the experiences that have come with it have enabled me to be more of a leader than I would have been otherwise. Most people when they meet me don’t know that I have a disability. I love finding the right opportunity to tell them and teach more people about what it means to have a disability.”

Majoring in pre-med with a 3.6 GPA, Ben says his disability is a driving factor and source of motivation in every thing he does. “I’m really proud of what I’ve been able to accomplish so far and excited about the things that lie ahead.” After college, Ben plans to go to medical school to become an Otolaryngologist. “I hope to make a real difference in the lives of those who are hard of hearing,” he says. Right now Ben is working as a research assistant on efforts to redevelop hearing in those who have lost it. “It’s very promising research,” he says. “We are trying to figure out how to redevelop hair cells in the cochlea. It’s exciting.”

“I really appreciate the scholarship and all it has done for me,” Ben adds. “Winning it has not only provided me with needed financial assistance to go to school, but it has also opened up an important new community for me. I now have a new launch pad to become even more of an advocate for disability causes. I feel more driven to accomplish the goals I set for myself now and achieve more with this scholarship. I’m very thankful for it.”

Renee says having Rick and Cheranissa believe in her made all the difference. “They made me feel good about myself. They gave me the confidence I needed to do this.”

Renee still battles mental health challenges, but she says she’s learning to manage them. “When I look around now at all I’ve accomplished, I realize everything I’ve been through to get here has been worth it,” she says. “I’ve been working my whole life for my dreams to come true, and they finally are.”
Danetta

- Housing Assistance

“When I come home, the peace of mind here is like nothing else,” says Danetta Joplin, 52. “Life is beautiful when you are able to have your own space.”

For five years, Danetta was homeless. Without any place to call her own, she spent her days figuring out where she was going to sleep that night and nights figuring out if the place she was staying was safe.

“I would end up finding a friend who would take me in for a few days, sometimes a few months, then I’d have to figure out the next spot,” Danetta says. “Some nights I walked the streets. It was terrible. I didn’t know where I was going to go or how the situation was going to end.”

For 14 years, Danetta had worked as a custodian for Willow Run Schools and as a housekeeper. “I had a great career; I was really able to help me and it made a big difference. Their support and encouragement also meant a lot to me during a difficult time.”

After a long wait, Danetta was finally approved for Social Security disability benefits. “I couldn’t have gotten here without Sue,” Danetta says. “She came through for me when no one else did. She saw me at the hardest of times and always believed in me. I also appreciate a special friend who took me in. They mean a lot to me.”

Danetta also began having terrible mouth pain, but she had no means of accessing dental care. Also making the situation harder was Danetta’s learning disability. “Sometimes I need someone to explain things to me,” she says. “I have a hard time with paperwork and job applications. I think it was a big reason I was homeless for so long. Life was unraveling, and I needed help figuring out how to turn it around.”

During this time, Danetta also began having terrible mouth pain, but she had no means of accessing dental care. She was so patient with me. She really cared.”

Danetta began helping Danetta with a number of complicated issues going on in her life which were contributing to everything fell apart.”

Danetta found herself with no place to call home. Danetta went, and began going from place to place. It was awful. As things got worse, I would pray and think, ‘there’s got to be a better solution.’ But I could never find it.”

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“it made everything

The bills were piling up, and with no means to pay them, Danetta found herself with no place to call home. Danetta was along with 3,000 others in Washtenaw County who are homeless each year.

“I put most of my stuff in storage and began to look for friends to stay with,” she says. “I didn’t know what to do. I kept a few belongings with me that I carried wherever I went, and began going from place to place. It was awful. As things got worse, I would pray and think; ‘there’s got to be a better solution.’ But I could never find it.”

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Danetta says that when she was a kid, she was never afraid to ask for help. “Even though school was always harder for me, I never let it bother me,” she says. But over the years, Danetta got disenchanted with asking for help. “I went to so many agencies. All they ever did was refer me to the next place. No one was ever really able to help me.”

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The first time Danetta went to the Ann Arbor CIL, she says she wasn’t expecting much. “It was just another routine visit.” But when she got connected with Ann Arbor CIL staff member Sue Probert, she says things started to feel different. “Sue was wonderful. She was so patient with me. She really cared.”

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Sue began helping Danetta with a number of complicated issues going on in her life which were contributing to her problems and preventing her from being successful in finding housing. Over a period of two years, the two

worked together on job applications, computer training, accessing resources available through the Department of Human Services, signing up for Michigan Rehabilitation Services, and identifying low-income housing resources. They also worked to obtain a new copy of Danetta’s Social Security card after it had been lost, and Sue helped Danetta open a checking account. In addition, Sue helped Danetta get glasses and affordable dental care through a clinic at the University of Michigan. Most importantly, Ann Arbor CIL staff member George Ridenour helped Danetta apply for Social Security disability benefits.

“Sue and George were both wonderful,” Danetta says. “They really took the time to help me and it made a big difference. Their support and encouragement also meant a lot to me during a difficult time.”

After a long wait, Danetta was finally approved for Social Security disability benefits, and she began to look seriously for housing. She identified a housing complex where she wanted to live in Milan and began contacting the place every month to learn of a vacancy. When an apartment finally opened up, she and Sue worked to complete all the necessary paperwork to make sure she would be approved. After she was finally approved, Danetta says, “I was thrilled. I couldn’t believe I was going to have my own place.”

Danetta has now been in the apartment for nine months and is working successfully as a substitute Paraprofessional with Milan Public Schools. “I never thought I’d see this day,” she says. “This place is a dream come true.”

Danetta keeps the apartment meticulously clean, her pride and joy in the place and background in cleaning evident. “I love this place,” she says. “I appreciate it and cherish it.”

At Christmas, Danetta had her family over for the holiday. “It was a dream come true,” she says. “For my entire life, I had always had to go to someone else’s home for the holiday. Now I finally had a place of my own. No one could believe it; they were amazed. I prepared a full Christmas dinner, and it came out perfectly. Everyone loved it.”

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With her housing now stabilized and secure, what’s next for Danetta? “I want to get a car,” she says. “It’s my next step to being fully independent. I know I can do it.”

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In the years following the accident, Cynthia’s emotional state deteriorated, and she became increasingly depressed. “As time went by, I became overwhelmed by a sense of hopelessness. For years I laid in bed consumed by pain and a belief that life was never going to be anything more. The television became my only window to the world, and it was my best friend. I gave up on any dream I had for my life coming true or any hope of life getting better.”

Cynthia says, though, that in 2009, after years of being at home, something in her began to change. “I don’t know what happened, but I began to have more of a desire to get out. I started to think I could do something more.” Cynthia learned about the CIL’s arts program and began working on building up the courage to go to it.

In the fall of 2009, Cynthia joined the Ann Arbor CIL’s “Many Ways of Doing” clay course, an art program offered at the CIL in partnership with the University of Michigan’s School of Art & Design. The course pairs U-M students with individuals with disabilities to learn about clay sculpture and cooking and nutrition classes. Cynthia says she has also gotten a potter’s wheel at her house so that she can do clay when her body is in the least amount of pain.

“Before coming to the CIL I never would have been able to do these things,” Cynthia says. “Participating in the program has given me the opportunity to know what I am capable of doing and given me the confidence to believe in myself. All the support I’ve gotten from everyone at the CIL really means a lot.”

Cynthia says while she still deals with her pain every day, participating in the class and getting involved in the CIL has given her more perspective on how to deal with the pain and find motivation to do the things she wants to do. She has since gotten involved in art programs with Ann Arbor Rec. & Ed and the Yorst Studio in addition to getting involved in more classes at the CIL, including Art Fridays, Facebook classes, and while she’s doing this, Cynthia continues to make her clay angels, which are becoming increasingly popular. At the Ann Arbor CIL’s recent Gala Benefit, Cynthia’s angels sold for $85 each. “More and more people are putting in requests and asking me for them,” Cynthia says. “It’s nice to know that people want them. It’s amazing to be putting something out into the world again.”

“Art to me means expressing your passion, putting out into the world something you’ve created.”

“a disability is not a hindrance here. the cil is about figuring things out in a different way, building up strengths you didn’t know you had.”

“the program was the right opportunity at the right time.” Cynthia says. “It provided me a way to test the waters of going out of the house in a safe environment, and I got to explore one of my greatest passions – art.”

Cynthia began making bowls and cooking dishes and started to really get noticed as she sculpted beautiful, ornate angel figurines. “Working with the clay was really good therapy for me. I became absorbed in trying to make the perfect lasagna bowl or the most elegant figurine. As I began producing work after work, my whole outlook began to change. The person I was before the accident began to come back out. That person had been lost for so many years.”

Cynthia says being in the class and getting to know other people with disabilities also gave her more perspective on her problems. “I met people who were experiencing disabilities much more limiting than mine,” she says, “and they were living full lives. I saw things in a different light. It took me out of my self-pity and gave me inspiration to keep going.”

Cynthia says being a career-driven person working in the publishing industry as a layout artist. “I had always loved art and found a career doing what I loved,” Cynthia says. “In high school and college, I had always been involved in some type of art – photography, fashion design, cosmetology, metalworks, and woodworking. I had found a career doing art, and I was really happy. I loved what I did and became a workaholic,” Cynthia says. “When the accident happened, it brought everything to an end. I lost my reason to exist.”

Cynthia adds, “to want to get out of bed, get out of the house, and do more in life – it means so much to me now. Expressing myself through art and experiencing that joy has really made a difference. I want to rebuild my life now.”
Pete

Sports & Fitness

“This gym is awesome. It’s enabled me to get back into doing what I love – exercising and maintaining a fit body,” Pete Plotchov, 33, says.

Pete, who was paralyzed from the waist down, says, “it’s hard to stay fit when you have paralysis. Before my accident, physical fitness had always been important to me. And now since the injury it’s even more crucial. My fitness affects how I can transfer in and out of my wheelchair and my stamina to do things. I couldn’t pursue my career, go boating, or get outside if I didn’t maintain my fitness.”

In 2004, Pete and his friends were on a routine ski trip when they decided to take turns going off a jump. “Usually I would do a test run on a new jump before hitting it, but this time for some reason I didn’t,” he says. That afternoon, the snow on the slope was packed hard, and as Pete headed toward the jump he picked up more speed than usual. “After I hit the jump and got in the air, I began tipping back,” he says. “When I was about 20 feet up, I lost control and landed on my back. I don’t remember anything more except waking up in the hospital.”

Pete learned that he crushed five vertebrae and had a spinal cord injury that would cause him to be paralyzed from his waist down for the rest of his life.

In the months ahead, Pete began the difficult process of adjusting to life with a spinal cord injury. “in the blink of an eye, I went from being someone who was completely independent to someone who couldn’t do basic life tasks without help from someone,” he says. “It was tough. Figuring out how to transfer in and out of my wheelchair was relatively easy. But processing the fact that I couldn’t dress myself or use the bathroom without help – that was hard. I had always been so independent.”

During his rehabilitation process, Pete met Ann Arbor CIL staff member Tom Hoatlin, who directs the CIL’s Spinal Cord Injury Support Program at the University of Michigan Hospital and also has a spinal cord injury. “Getting connected to Tom really made a difference,” Pete says. “Everyone at the hospital was trying to help and would say things like, ‘it’s going to get better.’ But it didn’t mean anything coming from people walking around. When Tom was talking, it was different. He’d been there. He knew what he was talking about. Now as I look back, I know what Tom meant. Life really does get better.”

“I’m not going to lie,” Pete says. “It’s hard to process everything in that situation no matter who is helping you. But hearing it’s going to be ok from someone using a wheelchair made a huge difference.”

When Pete left the hospital, he began the difficult process of rebuilding his life. “It was definitely an adjustment,” he says. “I got used to the daily things pretty quickly, but dealing with the emotional aspects took time. The disability affected everything in my life.”

Pete says that at the time of his injury, he had a girlfriend of several years. “She stayed with me for three years after the accident, but it was tough,” Pete says. “I was really depressed during this period, and I became kind of a jerk. After we broke up, I was apprehensive about dating with the disability. I wanted to date, but I didn’t know how any girl would respond. After some time I pushed myself to get out there and give it a try, and it went well. I realized that even with the wheelchair, girls are interested!”

Last year, Pete got married. “When I was first injured, I never thought that would happen,” he says. “When I first met my wife, I was so surprised that she didn’t care about the disability. She saw me for me.”

After he left the hospital Pete also began working out a lot. “At first I did it to rebuild some of the strength I lost, but as I got doing more of it, I remembered how good it felt to be in good physical shape,” Pete says. “I mostly work my upper body when I’m there – chest, back, shoulders, and biceps,” he says. “What I like best is that I can wheel right up to the weight stations and get going. There are also special bars on the equipment that hold my body down and keep me from lifting up out of my chair when I do the exercises.”

In addition, Pete uses the NuStep machine to get aerobic exercise. The NuStep allows individuals who can’t move their legs the opportunity to get a cardio workout by moving their arms. “Other gyms don’t have anything like the NuStep,” he says. “Ordinarily I have a hard time getting a cardio workout, but the NuStep makes it possible.”

“I’ve gotten in incredible shape from using the CIL gym,” Pete says. “After losing the use of my legs, I have much more appreciation for the function I do have. I appreciate being fit now more than I ever did before.” Pete says getting involved at the CIL and meeting other people with disabilities has also helped him see his own situation with more perspective.

“Things are still hard for me, but I don’t let them hold me back anymore,” Pete says. “Having recently completed his Master of Business Administration degree at Northwood University, he says, “my life has come full circle now. Career, family, and staying in good physical health – I have all the things that are important to me. Life is where I want it to be.”

The Ann Arbor CIL’s Fitness Center was launched in 2008 after Ann Arbor-based manufacturer of ergonomic fitness equipment, NuStep, donated its top-of-the-line TXR cardio machine to the CIL and the CIL acquired fully-accessible weight-lifting equipment. The CIL Fitness Center also has a wheelchair scale, treadmill, and bench-pressing station.

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On May 3rd, voters in Washtenaw County will decide how special education services are funded in the Washtenaw Intermediate School District (WISD).

Special education services respond to the unique needs of all learners and provide supports to help students with disabilities access an equal education. Nearly 7,000 students in the WISD, or about 1-in-7, receive special education services. Special education services help students build strong foundations so they can become productive citizens in our community. Spending money on special education services saves money for taxpayers in the long run because investing in the early years of an individual prepares him or her to become a productive member of our community and not rely on social service programs.

The request to fund special education services on the ballot in May will not create a tax increase; rather it will maintain a similar, and actually slightly lower, tax rate for taxpayers.

The outcome of this ballot issue affects all students – both with and without disabilities. If it is not approved, funding for special education services will be taken out of general operating budgets and reduce funds available for all education programs. Approving this millage request protects education for all students, regardless of disability.

As members of our voting community decide the future of education for all students, the Ann Arbor CIL shares the stories of just a few of the students whose lives will be impacted.

Colin

“I’ve spoken in Lansing to legislators about the Americans with Disabilities Act. I’ve interfaced with politicians. I think I’m a really strong advocate for the disability community,” says Colin Northrup, 17. A Junior at Dexter High School, Colin says, “I wouldn’t have the confidence to do these things if it weren’t for the supports I’ve gotten in school. They’ve made me the person I am – they’ve made me believe I can do these things.”

Colin has cerebral palsy and as a result has spastic quadriplegia. “I can’t walk, my hand eye coordination is not fully developed, and I have a visual-perceptual learning disability,” he says. “It takes me twice as long to do some things, but I can do what everyone else is doing.”

And indeed he can. Colin has achieved a 3.8 GPA while taking tough classes and being involved in numerous extracurricular activities. His favorite class is Dexter’s newspaper class, a unique course that allows students the opportunity to produce a professional-quality newspaper while developing skills in language, writing, and information.

To be successful in school, Colin uses the assistance of a Paraprofessional who helps him in the classroom with things like writing, handling books, and picking up materials. He also uses an extra study hall period to complete assignments and is provided assistance in the school’s Testing Center when taking tests.

“The special ed services have been really good,” Colin says. “They’ve helped me excel in classes and get ready for college. Most of all, they’ve made me more confident. The extra help makes me feel like I can participate like everyone else.”

“It’s great to see the effects of the services on Colin,” says Dawn Northrup, Colin’s mother. “They’ve made him become a confident and strong person. The benefits of the services are starting to show most in the fact that he is now advocating for his own services. It’s testament to how much difference they made. He wouldn’t be the person he is without them.”

Colin has also been involved with events at the Ann Arbor CIL, speaking at IRide and participating in recreation picnics.

So what’s next for Colin? “I’m working on college applications right now,” he says. “I want to become a sports broadcaster. Everyone tells me I’m a great speaker.”
When Amy was a freshman, she got C's, "says Amy Moorman, a Junior at Dexter High School. "I wasn't doing well in school, and I didn't feel good about myself."

When Amy was 12, she began coming down with sudden, uncontrollable twitches. "My arms would just start flailing around for no reason," she says. "It was scary. I didn't know what was happening. I thought I was going crazy." For a long time, Amy says people didn't believe her; they thought she was doing it to get attention. But during her freshman year, Amy was diagnosed with Tourette's Syndrome, a neurological disorder which causes involuntary muscle movements and vocalizations. Now she says with confidence, "I twitch! I'm proud of it. It's unique."

After she was diagnosed, Amy and her family figured out that the Tourette's Syndrome was having a big impact on her performance in school. "Symptoms are triggered by stressful situations," Amy says. "When I would get nervous to take a test, symptoms would get worse." Amy and her family figured out that special education services could help reduce her stress, reduce her symptoms, and improve her performance.

Amy is now allowed extra time for taking tests and the option to take tests at the school's Testing Center. "Taking tests away from other people helps me stay calm, and if I do twitch, I don't distract my classmates," Amy says. "With the Testing Center, my disability doesn't get in the way as much." Amy is also allowed to leave the classroom during a class if her twitches start happening. "It's hard to focus when you're flailing around," Amy says.

These small changes have made a big impact. Amy is now getting all A's and B's. "I'm so happy," Amy says. "I get A's and B's now. I'm really proud of it. My good grades are a result of my working hard and getting the right supports. Without them, I'd be failing."

Amy says most of all the support services have made her more confident. "When I wasn't doing well in school, I didn't feel good about myself. Now I do," she says. "They've given her the confidence to try new things knowing she can get help if she needs it. "The support services have given me a strong foundation for everything I do now. They mean a lot to me."

Amy is now involved in weightlifting, football, and wrestling at Dexter High School, and she is an avid lover of books and reading. She has also gotten involved with the CIL's Youth Program, participating in Youth Advocacy and IRide. "The CIL is awesome," Amy says. "I love it. Meeting more people with disabilities and seeing them out doing stuff has meant a lot to me."

The help Amy has gotten at school has inspired her future goals. She is currently working on college applications and wants to become a teacher. "I want to give back for all the help I've gotten," Amy says. "I want to help kids in the same way the teachers here help me."

Antonia ("Porsche") Sims, 24, loves to tell her story and teach others about the importance of wearing a helmet.

When Porsche was seven years old, she was riding her bike at a relative's house when she mistakenly rode into the street and was hit by an oncoming car. Porsche broke her arms and legs and went into a coma for two months. "When she woke up, the doctors told us she would be a vegetable for the rest of her life," Porsche's mother, Carolyn Spencer, says. "Now I see her becoming a strong and independent adult. It's amazing to see how far she's come."

Porsche attended Pioneer High School and is now part of the WISD's Young Adult Program which helps youths with significant disabilities transition to independent adulthood. From the accident, Porsche has a brain injury that causes significant learning and development disabilities, and she also has difficulty walking.

The WISD program incorporates academic learning, real-world work experiences, recreation activities, and life skills training to help young adults develop skills to become independent.

"The WISD program has been really important to Porsche's development," says Carolyn. "In just a few years since high school, she's gone from a third grade reading level to a fifth or sixth grade level. We read with her all the time. It's been amazing to see her improve."

In the program Porsche engages in job skills training at Joann Fabrics, where she stocks shelves, cleans, and works with customers. "I feel happy when I'm there," Porsche says. "It makes me realize one day I can have a job to do on my own."

The program also helps Porsche improve her problem-solving and social skills through class activities, and it is teaching her about being safe in public places. "Like any young adult, she wants to be able to go to a store or the mall by herself," Carolyn says. "This program is teaching her how to do that."

"Together the WISD and CIL programs have been vital for Porsche. She has so few opportunities to be social or work on her development. She's on a much stronger path now because of them."

CAROLYN SPENCER, PORTIA'S MOTHER
Amanda

These days, Amanda Helppie, 29, says she has found her place. A Paraprofessional for the Wayne-Westland School District, she says, “I love this job. I take a lot of pride in it. The fact that my disability is an advantage in it means so much to me. My disability has come full circle.”

While hindsight always makes things look easy, finding the right career has been a long journey for Amanda. From a young age, Amanda always wanted to be a teacher. Amanda pursued a Master’s degree in education at the University of Michigan and after graduation was thrilled when she landed a job as a third grade teacher with the Wayne-Westland School District.

“I was so excited,” Amanda said. “I had finally achieved my dream.” Early on in the job, though, Amanda realized things weren’t working. “I was exhausted all the time. I knew teaching would be tiring, but I never thought it would be as hard as it was. I was on my feet all day, and I felt like I was scrambling all the time. After one month on the job, I was physically, emotionally, and mentally spent. I didn’t know what to do.”

Amanda, who has Cerebral Palsy, has limited muscle control and difficulty balancing. As result, she gets tired easily. “I can’t move my arms and legs the way most people can,” she says. “I walk really slowly, and it takes me much more time and energy to do things. Because my balance isn’t very good, I constantly have to be careful when I walk around. Even a small tap on my shoulder can cause me to fall down. I have difficulty writing, and my reaction times are slower.”

Amanda says she never thought her disability would get in the way of what she wanted to do in life, but the physical demands of teaching just didn’t work for her. Amanda decided to leave the position and put in a request to be transferred to a Paraprofessional position.

 Unsure of whether she would be able to obtain the Paraprofessional position, Amanda got involved with the Ann Arbor CIL’s Career Services program. “I went to the networking workshop and had a great time,” she says. “At the group people were talking about how much they had grown and developed since the first time they came to the CIL. The classroom environment was so positive, and people were so forthcoming about their disabilities. I had never been in a place like this.”

Amanda began working with staff members Lisa Mangigian and Martha Humes on her job search. “Lisa’s help was wonderful,” Amanda says. “She helped me identify a whole new set of career options in which my skills and interests would be an asset. It was empowering. It lessened the stress of the situation and made me not regret leaving the teaching job.”

Martha helped Amanda come up with constructive ideas for improving the ways her disability was impacting her life at work, and Amanda says, “She helped me think through how I could make everything work. She gave me confidence to believe I could overcome the challenges I was having.”

A few weeks later, the Wayne-Westland School System offered Amanda an opportunity in another role, but she says, “It was not a good fit. It had physical demands that I knew I couldn’t do.” Amanda says that before coming to the CIL, she probably would have taken the offer, but the help from the CIL gave her the confidence to critically evaluate the job and determine whether it would work. “I knew I had to wait for the right job,” she says.

The school system ultimately offered Amanda a full-time Paraprofessional position, and Amanda says it was worth the wait. Now on the job five months, she says, “It’s going really well. I get to combine my love of education with my background as someone with a disability. I get to be a teacher in the best way possible.” Amanda works one-on-one with a student with Autism and says she’s proud of the work she accomplishes with him. “There are moments when I can teach him something that no one else can teach him. Those moments mean the world to me. I love that my disability is an asset in everything I do.”

“The job isn’t without its challenges,” she says, “but I’ve figured out how to make things work. I always make sure items aren’t left on the floor so I don’t trip, I make sure there’s always a chair with a back on it for me to use, and I make sure everything is in a reachable place.”

“More than anything, I love that I can educate all the kids in the classroom about living with a disability. I like showing them that having a disability is nothing to be scared about and can be a positive thing. I love that when I trip or fall down, we can all laugh about it together.”

“Coming to the CIL has made such a difference in my life,” she says. “Before, I was hiding my disability, and it didn’t work. At the CIL I am learning to embrace it, talk about it, and have it be a positive thing. I went from being disappointed I had a disability to being proud of it. For the first time, I am giving it its rightful place as an important part of my life. I finally feel like I own my disability and can celebrate it. I didn’t realize what I was missing.”
“The bus system provides me with independence that I otherwise might not have,” says Ken Patterson. “It allows me to do the things I want to do without having to rely on others for help.”

Ken, who is legally blind, uses the #1 and #2 buses in the Ann Arbor Transportation Authority (AATA) bus system to get to work in downtown Ann Arbor, where he is a Regional Director for Kaplan Test Prep. Ken has Stargardt’s Disease, a condition which causes progressive macular degeneration. Because of it, he has limited vision, sensitivity to light, and difficulty distinguishing colors. “I can’t read printed materials without a magnifier, I can’t identify people with my eyesight, and I can’t drive,” he explains.

Ken is one of thousands of people with disabilities around Ann Arbor who rely on the AATA bus system to get to work, shop for food, get to medical appointments, and connect with family and friends. In 2010, people with disabilities took almost 120,000 trips on the AATA bus system. “Serving people with disabilities is a big part of what we do, and caring about them is important to us,” says Mary Stasiak, Community Relations Manager for AATA.

“Providing transportation access for people with disabilities is important not just for people with disabilities but also for the economy,” says Michael Ford, CEO of AATA. “It enables the community to have a more diverse workforce because more people are able to get to work, and it allows more people to shop in our stores.”

For over 30 years, the Ann Arbor CIL has worked with AATA to expand quality access to transportation for people with disabilities. In the past several years, Ann Arbor CIL staff member Carolyn Grawi has worked with AATA to expand routes, improve the accessibility of buses and bus stops, and keep rates affordable for people with disabilities. Bus drivers are also trained in disability awareness and sensitivity.

“Working with the CIL has made a big difference,” says Mary. “We’ve improved our service because of working with Carolyn. She provides a perspective we don’t always have. She helps us learn about issues people are experiencing and identifies ways to improve. Making things better for people with disabilities makes things better for everyone. We view the CIL as a key partner of ours, and it’s important to us to have the organization at the table when we’re making decisions.”

In 2009, after two years of research and advocacy efforts, AATA and the Ann Arbor CIL were also successful in establishing a bus service on Research Park Drive where the CIL is located. Before the re-routing, visitors to the CIL had to walk and wheel through heavy traffic, snow, rain, and ice to access the CIL. “Changing the route wasn’t something we entered into lightly, but it was something we needed to do,” says Mary. “It’s great to see people using the bus with ease at the CIL now.”

The results of AATA’s and the CIL’s efforts show in the experiences Ken has when he travels to work. “The system is great,” he says. “I really appreciate that most places in the city are never further than a half mile from a bus stop, the buses are clean and on-time, and drivers are friendly and professional. When I travel to other parts of the country for work, I appreciate what we have here.”

As AATA begins to implement its Transit Master Plan for a regional transit system in Washtenaw County, Mary says, “Having the CIL as a partner in this effort will be key. Providing safe and effective service for all riders is a crucial part of the Plan.”

“The bus system provides me with independence that I otherwise might not have. It allows me to do the things I want to do,” says Ken Patterson. “It allows me to do the things I want to do without having to rely on others for help.”

When the line bus system doesn’t solve a transportation need, individuals with disabilities in the AATA service area turn to the A-Ride program for help in getting from A to B. A-Ride is a program of the Ann Arbor Transportation Authority (AATA) providing door-to-door cab or van service for people with disabilities at affordable rates. Select Ride is AATA’s provider of the A-Ride system.

“A-Ride is very helpful when a direct bus route is not available for my needs,” says Ken Patterson, who uses A-Ride for work and other activities. “I use it about twice a week.”

At Select Ride, serving people with disabilities is not just part of its business; it’s part of its values. Select Ride embodies best practices in employing people with disabilities and also supports the work of the Ann Arbor CIL through volunteering and sponsorship.

Chris Ingersoll is one of Select Ride’s Client Relations Specialists. He also has Ankylosing Spondylitis, a condition similar to spinal arthritis which causes chronic pain. To accommodate his disability, the company allows him to work two hours a day, which gives him time to get the job done without exacerbating symptoms of his disability. The accommodation promotes an employment situation that works for both Chris and the company: “Chris is very talented,” says Dave Reid, President of Select Ride. “He handles difficult, upset clients and makes them happy. Clients who would have otherwise gone elsewhere stay our client because of Chris. He’s very valuable.”

Select Ride has provided accommodations to other employees with disabilities as well. For example, when the company hired a cab driver with cognitive deficits a few years ago, it provided an extended training period to help him master the job. The accommodation paid off—the driver is still successfully employed. Most drivers turn over more frequently, costing the company money.

“The people with disabilities I’ve hired tend to be very dedicated to their jobs,” says Dave. “They really appreciate working. For us it provides a great reason to seek out and hire people with disabilities.”

Select Ride actively recruits employees with disabilities at the Ann Arbor CIL, and the company’s managers regularly volunteer at job-seeker events. In addition, Select Ride participates in the CIL’s Ann Arbor Area Business Leadership Network initiative, fostering positive dialogue and training about diversity and disability in the Ann Arbor area business community.

Select Ride’s care for people with disabilities has also translated to sponsorship support of the Ann Arbor CIL. When asked why, Dave says, “the CIL’s mission goes hand-in-hand with that of our business. We provide a level of independence for people who don’t have it, and the CIL takes that idea further. The CIL represents that whatever limit someone with a disability is experiencing can be overcome. It’s a mission I believe in, and it’s the type of organization I want to help and be a part of.”
off ered to individuals with disabilities at the help fund the classes, events, and supports in business, the best way to do right is by talented individuals with disabilities. With creating sustainable, well-paying jobs for providing high quality, gourmet gifts while mission-driven business enterprise launched MichiganGifts.org, a social its partnership with Rodnick Co. and The Ann Arbor CIL successfully transitioned hearing be successful.

individuals who are deaf and hard of accessible and inclusive supports to help the best of what works in providing supports to people who are deaf and career services and independent living program providing focused and specialized disabilities served by the Ann Arbor CIL: • 2,670 children, youth, and adults with disabilities supported through 8,903 services last year. • Over 1,000 people helped through information and assistance services each year. • Over 1,400 job-seekers helped through expert career search advice in the last two years. • 35 small businesses launched last year. • 18 individuals transitioned from living in a nursing facility to living independently in the community in the last 18 months. • 425 individuals participated in sports, recreation & arts programs, including cycling, bowling, tennis, painting, photography, gardening, journaling, poetry, theatre group, use of our fitness center, and more. • Over 2,000 individuals impacted by disability awareness programs in the community.

michigan gifts The Ann Arbor CIL launched an exciting program providing focused and specialized career services and independent living supports to people who are deaf and hard of hearing. The program is a result of intensive research and development efforts over the past two years and incorporates the best of what works in providing accessible, and inclusive supports to help individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing be successful.

BY RACE OR ETHNICITY
1% American Indian or Alaska Native 1% Two or more races
19% Black or African American 2% Hispanic/Latino
3% Asian 3% Two or more races
74% White
2% Asian
3% Hispanic/Latino
19% Black or African American
3% Asian
74% White

BY GENDER
Male: 47%
Female: 53%

there’s more than you think to the disability community. disabilities served by the Ann Arbor CIL:

AD/HD  Cognitive Impairment
Agent Orange  Dementia
Amputation  Depression
Arthritis  Developmental Disability
Asthma/Emphysema  Diabetes
Autism/Asperger’s  Emotional Impairment
Autoimmune Disorder  Epilepsy/Seizure
Back Injury  Fibromyalgia
Blind/Visually Impaired  HIV/AIDS
Bone/Joint Disorder  Kidney Disease
Brain Disorder  Learning Disability
Brain Injury  Lupus
Cancer/Cancer Survivor  Mental Health Challenge
Cardiovascular Disorder  Morbid Obesity
Carpal Tunnel  Multiple Sclerosis
Cerebral Palsy  Muscular Dystrophy
Chemical Sensitivity  Narcolepsy
Chemical Sensitivity  Organ Transplant
Chemical Sensitivity  Recipient
Chemical Sensitivity  Parkinson’s Disease
Chemical Sensitivity  PTSD
Chemical Sensitivity  Post Polio Syndrome
Chemical Sensitivity  Pulmonary Disease
Chemical Sensitivity  Short Stature/ Little Person
Chemical Sensitivity  Sleep Anea
Chemical Sensitivity  Spinal Cord Injury
Chemical Sensitivity  Stroke
Chemical Sensitivity  Substance Abuse
Chemical Sensitivity  Other condition that causes substantial limitation of a major life activity

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Independence for Non-Drivers and People With Disabilities
Many youth, non-drivers and people with disabilities need TheRide to travel outside their immediate neighborhood. More than one-third of those who use TheRide either do not have a driver’s license or access to a vehicle, totaling over 2 million trips a year.

Quality of Life for Seniors
TheRide is sometimes the only option for seniors to leave their homes without assistance. Census data shows that Washtenaw County’s senior population will more than double in the next 30 years. TheRide can help our area’s seniors maintain their independence.

Access to Jobs
TheRide provides reliable transportation to ensure workers can get to jobs. More than 4.5 million trips taken annually on TheRide’s buses are either to or from work or school.

TheRide Takes Us There!

day directory of COMMUNITY RESOURCES

The Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living extends our sincere appreciation to the participants of Access Magazine and Resource Directory. By participating, they have made a financial commitment to the people we reach every day. We are grateful to the businesses and organizations that have been a part of this publication for many years. We especially welcome and thank all of the new community partners found in this year’s magazine. Please patronize these generous organizations.

accessibility
AccessibleAnn Arbor.com
Email: diana@juno.com
Web: AccessibleAnn Arbor.com
AccessibleAnn Arbor.com is your source to find out about the accessibility features of businesses and organizations in Ann Arbor and throughout Washtenaw County. Developed by architect and accessibility expert David Essau, and especially focused on arts and culture. AccessibleAnn Arbor.com tells you how to get into and around the major destinations in our community, where you might run into challenges, and where you can get more information.

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Phone: (734) 414-9425
Fax: (734) 414-9336
Web: www.ADMorall.com

BFA, LLC - Special Needs Home Modifications contractor builds ramps, lift systems, bathrooms and kitchen accommodations, stair lifts, rails and more to help enable clients to safely navigate their home environments and to empower a more independent lifestyle in their homes. We not only have the skills and resources for special needs accommodations, but we also have an insightful problem solving capability which come from our personal experience as a special needs family. We are committed to create functional and affordable barrier free environments for others. www.ADMorall.com

Cornerstone Design Inc/Michigan Accessible Homes
310 Depot St., Suite 2
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
Phone: (734) 463-7580
cdbarchitects.com/mi-accessible-homes.com

Cornerstone Design provides creative, responsive architectural services for all types of projects. A particularly specialy, served through our Michigan Accessible Homes division, is universal design of residences for people of all ages and abilities. Firm principal David Essau, AIA also consults on accessibility issues through the Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living.

acupuncture, herbs & nutrition
Tree Town Acupuncture
2008 Huronview Rd, Suite 1A
Ann Arbor, MI 48105
Phone: (734) 730-2341
Web: www.TreeTownAcupuncture.com

Tree Town Acupuncture offers acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine to assist people in restoring, improving and maintaining their health. We are dedicated to providing holistic, compassionate, high quality care to help people manage a wide variety of health issues, including acute and chronic pain, fatigue, headache and migraines, autoimmune disorders such as multiple sarnoid arthritis, lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, ulcerative colitis and diabetes, asthma, infertility, menopausal sy mptoms, PMS and other gynecological disorders, depression, anxiety, insomnia, cancer support and stroke rehabilitation. For more information please call or visit our website.

advocacy
Michigan Ability Partners
3810 Packard, Suite 200
Ann Arbor, MI 48108
Phone: (734) 975-6880

Michigan Ability Partners is an Ann Arbor based, non profit human services agency that partners with veterans and people who have disabilities in support of their self-directed transition to self sufficiency. Michigan Ability Partners offers a menu of services designed to promote self sufficiency in the areas of homelessness recovery, employment, transitional and permanent housing, and financial services. MAP also owns a subsidiary, MAP HCD, LLC, that develops and operates affordable supported housing for people with disabilities in Washtenaw County.

Michigan Disability Rights Coalition
3498 E. Lansing Rd, Suite 100
East Lansing, MI 48823
Phone: (517) 333-2477
Web: www.mdrc.org

The Michigan Disability Rights Coalition: Your Partner in Building Freedom. MDRC is a statewide network of individuals and organizations that advance the issues of Michigan’s disability community through grassroots activism, public education and advocacy. MDRC works to build opportunities for people with disabilities so that we may live fully integrated lives within our chosen communities.

arts and entertainment
The Ark
316 E. Main Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48104
Phone: (734) 761-1800 Office or (734) 761-1451 Hotline
Email: ark@theark.org
Web: www.theark.org

The Ark is a non-profit music venue located on Main Street in Ann Arbor between Liberty and William Streets. Founded in 1963, The Ark is dedicated to the presentation, preservation, and encouragement of folk, roots, and ethnic music. The Ark is wheelchair accessible and works to accommodate any special seating needs. Please note that the club doors open 1 hour before a performance. If someone in your party has a wheelchair or special seating needs, we recommend coming slightly earlier and ringing the doorbell located next to our front entry doors so we can seat your party prior to entry of the general public. This way we can assure adjacent seating for your friends and family. Please call with any seating concerns or special needs at (734) 761-1800 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. weekdays or email us at ark@theark.org.

ACCESS 2011 | 21st ANNUAL EDITION 39
Eisenhower Center  
3200 E. Eisenhower Parkway  
Ann Arbor, MI 48108  
Phone: (800) 534-5543  
Email: eisenhowercenter@sbcglobal.net  
Web: www.eisenhowercenter.org

Paws With A Cause  
4646 S. Division  
Wayland, MI 49348  
Phone: (800) 252-PAWS (7297)  
Email: paws@pawswithacause.org  
Web: www.pawswithacause.org

Rainbow Rehabilitation Centers, Inc.  
Corporate Offices  
38777 Six Mile Road, Suite 101  
Livonia, MI 48152  
800-968-6644  
Ypsilanti Treatment Center  
5570 Whittaker Road  
Ypsilanti, MI 48197  
Phone: (734) 482-1200

Web: www.rainbowhub.com  
Email: admin@rainbowhub.com

ResCare Premier  
Residential Rehabilitation Continuum  
Phone: (734) 439-8762

ResCare Premier’s Residential Rehabilitation Continuum is dedicated solely to the treatment of individuals with acquired brain injury. Our Comprehensive Continuum offers affordable services that foster exceptional outcomes for persons with intensive rehabilitation needs and for individuals with behavioral issues. The Residential Rehabilitation Continuum incorporates traditional therapies into functional, community-based skill training. It is specifically designed to provide the consolidated knowledge and skills needed to regain autonomy and re-establishing quality, productive lifestyles. Individuals may be admitted to any program along the Continuum. Our Continuum allows individuals to transition to more independent settings, step along the way to fully integrate newly acquired skills, or step back to practice challenging tasks. This continuity ensures that progress is never interrupted.

Special Tree Rehabilitation System  
39000 Chase Street  
Troy, MI 48097  
Phone: (800) 323-9935  
Email: sfc@specialtree.com  
Web: www.specialtree.com  
Special Tree, one of the nation’s leading providers of rehabilitation services to individuals with brain injury, spinal cord injury, and other disabilities. Now celebrating 35 years, Special Tree offers a full range of care for adults and children including inpatient, outpatient, and residential services at 25 Michigan locations. With a person-centered approach to healing and recovery, Special Tree has achieved accreditation from CARF and the Joint Commission and was named the 2010 Michigan Quality Leadership Award recipient.

Driving aids and services

General Motors Mobility Program with OnStar  
P.O. Box 5033  
Troy, MI 48007  
Phone: (800) 323-9935  
Email: sfc@specialtree.com  
Web: www.specialtree.com  
Special Tree, one of the nation’s leading providers of rehabilitation services to individuals with brain injury, spinal cord injury, and other disabilities. Now celebrating 35 years, Special Tree offers a full range of care for adults and children including inpatient, outpatient, and residential services at 25 Michigan locations. With a person-centered approach to healing and recovery, Special Tree has achieved accreditation from CARF and the Joint Commission and was named the 2010 Michigan Quality Leadership Award recipient.

Advantage Mobility Outfitters  
3996 Second St  
Wayne, MI 48184  
Phone: (800) 990-8267

Web: www.advantagemobility.net

Advantage Mobility Outfitters provides high quality sales and services of new and used vehicles and modifications such as wheelchair and scooter lifts, hand controls, raised roofs and doors, and more. With many options to meet your needs, Advantage develops custom mobility solutions for all types and brands or vans, cars and RVs. We offer pick-up and delivery service, and a mobile repair unit that can be dispatched right to your home or business. With top-notch sales, service and repair, Advantage has served the Ann Arbor and Metro-Detroit communities for more than 25 years.

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Phone: (866) 801-8267 or (248) 616-3004

Web: www.mobilityworks.com

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Quality Home Medical Equipment, Inc.

273 Manufacturers Drive
Westland, MI 48186
Phone: (734) 721-4821
Fax: (734) 721-8666
Quality Home Medical Equipment Inc. is a family-owned company that is dedicated to providing our clients with prompt, professional care and assisting with all your home care needs. We offer a range of products including hospital beds, patient lifts, ambulatory aids, bathroom accessories and scooters. We specialize in wheelchairs—manual, power and standing chairs, with great emphasis on patients’ specific needs. Our seating and mobility specialist has over 20 years of experience and we also have certified delivery techs and a caring reimbursement specialist. We offer delivery, setup and instruction in your home and a superior repair service for most equipment.

Dr. Steven W. Wagner
Washkewicz Intermediate School District (WISD)
1819 S. Wagner
Ann Arbor, MI 48108
Phone: (734) 994-8100
Web: www.washk12.michigan.gov
Washkewicz Intermediate School District coordinates delivers programs/services to support student achievement in the school districts and public school academies in Ann Arbor, Chelsea, Dexter, Lincoln, Manchester, Milford, Saline, Brighton Lake, Willow Run, and Ypsilanti. WISD helps schools increase student achievement, support diverse communities, maximize resources and develop efficiencies.
• Providing school improvement consultation, assessment/curriculum/instruction assistance.
• Offering the latest educational training.
• Providing consultant/research assistance and resources.
• Coordinating programs/services too expensive or specialized for one school district to operate.
• Performing regulatory functions for the Michigan Department of Education.
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Brain & Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation Programs

U of M Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD)

G-664 Haven Hall
505 S. State Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1045
Phone: (734) 763-3000
Web: www.umich.edu/SSD
SSD provides services to students with visual, mobility or hearing impairments, learning or psychological disabilities, and chronic health problems. SSD helps facilitate such services as accessible campus transportation, adaptive technology, and sign language and oral interpreting. All services are fee-free.

SSD staff is available to answer questions, and provide referrals concerning admission, registration, services available, financial aid, etc., before and during enrollment at the University. In addition, ODS can help assess the need for modified housing, attendants, transportation, classroom accommodations, and adaptive equipment.

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Hearing Aids

HearUSA
2900 South State St., Suite 8-16
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
Phone: (734) 663-2915
2220 South Huron Parkway
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
Phone: 734-971-4527
Website: www.hearusa.com

At HearUSA, with more than 180 company-owned centers in 10 states, hearing health care is treated with the respect found in any medical environment. All of the centers have licensed professionals on staff, utilizing advanced computerized testing equipment to ensure that each patient receives accurate testing and optimum hearing aid fit and performance. HearUSA offers the latest innovations in hearing aids in all sizes and levels of technology to meet your hearing needs and budget. HearUSA also provides a warranty on all hearing aids, attractive financing options and hearing education classes.

Hearing Aids

IBU

1819 S. Wagner
Ann Arbor, MI 48108
Phone: (734) 994-8100
Web: www.washk12.michigan.gov
Washkewicz Intermediate School District (WISD) coordinates delivery of programs/services to support student achievement in the school districts and public school academies in Ann Arbor, Chelsea, Dexter, Lincoln, Manchester, Milford, Saline, Brighton Lake, Willow Run, and Ypsilanti. WISD helps schools increase student achievement, support diverse communities, maximize resources and develop efficiencies.
• Providing school improvement consultation, assessment/curriculum/instruction assistance.
• Offering the latest educational training.
• Providing consultant/research assistance and resources.
• Coordinating programs/services too expensive or specialized for one school district to operate.
• Performing regulatory functions for the Michigan Department of Education.
• Coordinating programs and support services for students with special needs from birth through age 26.

Employment/Vocational Rehabilitation

Michigan Rehabilitation Services
3810 Packard, Suite 170
Ann Arbor, MI 48108
Phone: (734) 677-1125
Web: www.michigan.gov/mrs
Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) is a state- and federally-funded program which partners with persons with disabilities in preparing for, finding and maintaining employment. The mission of MRS is to partner with individuals with disabilities and employers to achieve quality employment outcomes and independence for persons with disabilities. There are MRS offices located throughout the state.

Hearing Aids

HearUSA
2900 South State St., Suite 6
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
Phone: (734) 663-2915
2220 South Huron Parkway
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
Phone: 734-971-4527
Website: www.hearusa.com

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home health/personal assistance

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www.AdvisaCare.com

AdvisaCare provides each of our patients and their families the customized care and service they deserve. We deliver unmatched care based upon the injuries, needs, and preferences of each of our patients. At AdvisaCare, your recovery is our challenge. We push boundaries and limitations (real or perceived) to ensure our patients are achieving their recovery goals. We provide 24 to 72 hour per day personalized care, overseen by our Clinical Director and our President. We provide and coordinate Case Management, Physical & Occupational Therapies, Nursing, CHAs, Medical Equipment & Supplies, and Transportation. Call and learn why we believe your care is our calling.

AdvisaCare has been serving patients, and their families, throughout Michigan since 1997.

AK Homecare Services
3771 East Eisenhower Road Ann Arbor, MI 48108
(734) 677-9840
www.akhomecareservices.com

AK Homecare Services is a home health agency that serves the Greater Detroit Metropolitan area. Accredited by CHAP and approved by Medicare, AK Homecare Services accepts most major insurances. We work hand-in-hand with doctors, patients, and family members to develop a personalized home health care program for your homebound loved ones and to coordinate competent and compassionate care and service they deserve. Our commitment is to provide your family members the care they need to help get them home. Our staff is able to provide outstanding quality care to your patients. We provide the best quality health care that is cost effective and associated with high quality of life.

AK Homecare Services’ expertise is in coordinating home health care programs, and the care and support that people need in order to return to their home. Our care is personalized, and our patients, and their families, can look forward to quality care and services. We provide and coordinate Case Management, Physical & Occupational Therapies, Nursing, CHAs, Medical Equipment & Supplies, and Transportation.

Area Agency on Aging 1-8
Livingston/Washtenaw County Access Office
3550 Liberty Road, Suite 2
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
Phone: (734) 832-7793
Web: www.aaa1b.com

The Area Agency on Aging 1-8 (AAA 1-8), a nonprofit organization, offers support, resources, and information to assist older adults, persons with disabilities or their caregivers. Trained resource specialists will answer questions and connect individuals to more than 5,000 services and providers with disabilities or their caregiver. Trained resource specialists will answer questions and connect individuals to more than 5,000 services and providers.

Community Alliance helps vulnerable populations participate in the larger community through support services, fiscal intermediary services, housing and home ownership; options allowing for independence and self-sufficiency. We work through our three initiatives: Community Residence Corporation, Community Living Network, and Community Housing Alternatives.

Community Residence has more than 25 supported living sites throughout Washtenaw County and one family style group home for individuals with disabilities. Community Living Network is a fiscal intermediary provider for individuals with disabilities. Community Housing Alternatives provides housing for low to moderate income families and individuals, with a commitment to providing housing for individuals with disabilities.

Partners in Personal Assistance
1100 N. Main Street Suite 117
Ann Arbor, MI 48104-6354
Phone: (734) 214-3990
Web: www.anabarbora.org
Email: info@anabarbora.org

PPA staff and volunteers can assist in identifying and training opportunities. PPA offers an empowering solution for people with disabilities and elders who want to exercise independence and self-determination in managing their personal care. Personal Assistants (PAs) employed through PPA have access to health care benefits and training opportunities. PPA is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization managed by Consumers and Personal Assistants. Services can be covered by private funds, insurance, and Medicare. PPA has been serving individuals with orthopedic, musculo-skeletal and other neurological disorders. Comprehensive outpatient programs for people with hand injuries, sports injuries, orthopedic conditions and spinal disorders are provided by Occupational and Physical Therapists in the CCH Wellness Center. Call us at (734) 475-3940. Visit our web site at www.cch.org.

Community Residence Corporation
1851 Washtenaw
Ypsilanti, MI 48197
Phone: (734) 482-3300
Email: kmacewen@communityalliance.com
Web: www.communityalliance.com

Community Alliance helps vulnerable populations participate in the larger community through support services, fiscal intermediary services, housing and home ownership; options allowing for independence and self-sufficiency. We work through our three initiatives: Community Residence Corporation, Community Living Network, and Community Housing Alternatives.

Community Residence has more than 25 supported living sites throughout Washtenaw County and one family style group home for individuals with disabilities. Community Living Network is a fiscal intermediary provider for individuals with disabilities. Community Housing Alternatives provides housing for low to moderate income families and individuals, with a commitment to providing housing for individuals with disabilities.

Partners in Personal Assistance
1100 N. Main Street Suite 117
Ann Arbor, MI 48104-6354
Phone: (734) 214-3990
Web: www.anabarbora.org
Email: info@anabarbora.org

PPA staff and volunteers can assist in identifying and training opportunities. PPA offers an empowering solution for people with disabilities and elders who want to exercise independence and self-determination in managing their personal care. Personal Assistants (PAs) employed through PPA have access to health care benefits and training opportunities. PPA is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization managed by Consumers and Personal Assistants. Services can be covered by private funds, insurance, and Medicare. PPA has been serving individuals with orthopedic, musculo-skeletal and other neurological disorders. Comprehensive outpatient programs for people with hand injuries, sports injuries, orthopedic conditions and spinal disorders are provided by Occupational and Physical Therapists in the CCH Wellness Center. Call us at (734) 475-3940. Visit our web site at www.cch.org.

Area Agency on Aging 1-8
Livingston/Washtenaw County Access Office
3550 Liberty Road, Suite 2
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
Phone: (734) 832-7793
Web: www.aaa1b.com

The Area Agency on Aging 1-8 (AAA 1-8), a nonprofit organization, offers support, resources, and information to assist older adults, persons with disabilities or their caregivers. Trained resource specialists will answer questions and connect individuals to more than 5,000 services and providers with disabilities or their caregiver. Trained resource specialists will answer questions and connect individuals to more than 5,000 services and providers.

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Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104
Suite 555
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- the WLBPD collection is housed in the Downtown AADL. This free service, including vent users

- descriptive video) to individuals of all ages who are certified as unable to

- many people who struggle with low vision are not aware that there are ophthalmologists, optometrists, and rehabilitation specialists with special training in low vision. The Low Vision and Vision Rehabilitation Services Team includes Dr. Donna Wicker, O.D., and Dr. Sherry Day, O.D., working cooperatively with our occupational therapist, Karen Murphy, OTR.

- Our multi-disciplinary team tailors its services to the unique needs and goals of each individual. Our doctors monitor remaining vision closely, prescribing the corrective lenses that are best suited to each vision problem.

- Our occupational therapist works with patients, at home when possible, to make the home environment more usable to the patient. The low vision team teaches patients how to use adaptive devices and make better use of their remaining vision to assure they are functioning well in their daily lives.

- orthotics/prosthetics

- University of Michigan Orthotics and Prosthetics Center

- Since the orthotics were fabricated in 1912, the University of Michigan Orthotics and Prosthetics Center has been providing comprehensive services to clients from the University of Michigan Health System and to clients referred directly by their physicians. A physician prescription is required for all services. Orthotists provide a full range of pre-fabricated and custom-made orthotic devices. We also have a full range of soft good and post-mastectomy products in our “Personal Touch” program. Our prosthetists design, fabricate, fit and modify shoes and foot orthoses. And finally, our prosthetic team designs and fabricates a prosthesis that is most appropriate for individuals’ needs (both physiological and psychological). Please stop by and meet our ABC-board certified and registered staff members in our ABC and Joint-Commission accredited facility.

- medical services in home

- University of Michigan Home Care Services – HomeMed

- Since 1989, we have been providing infusion medications, nutritional therapy, specialty shops, high-tech in-home nursing and care management services throughout Michigan. Our core staff of skilled pharmacists, nurses and dietitians is among the most experienced clinicians in the area.

- As a clinical service within the University of Michigan Health System (UMHS), HomeMed is committed to maintaining the institution’s tradition of leadership in health care.

- optical/low vision

- University of Michigan Health System Low Vision and Vision Rehabilitation Services

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Ypsilanti, MI 48197
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Fax: (734) 712-0055

Affiliated with St. Joseph Mercy Health System, we are board-certified physicians providing comprehensive rehabilitation services across the continuum of care. We treat a wide range of disabilities, including back, neck and sports injuries, stroke, traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injuries and pain. Offices in Ann Arbor, Brighton, Plymouth/Canton, Ypsilanti, Macomb, and Wayne counties, as well as the University of Michigan Hospital in Ann Arbor. Specialties include individualized vocational counseling, assessment, testing, job/worksite modifications, coordination of training, job seeking skills training, job development/job placement assistance, and small business planning.

McCormick Rehabilitation Associates, Inc.
2380 Science Parkway, Suite 104 Box 763
Okemos, MI 48865-0763
Call Toll-Free: (800) 347-5870

McCormick Rehabilitation Associates has provided comprehensive vocational rehabilitation Services for more than 19 years in the Ann Arbor area and the majority of Mid-Michigan's lower peninsula. Services include individualized vocational counseling, assessment, testing, job/worksite modifications, coordination of training, job seeking skills training, job development/job placement assistance, and small business planning. Fees for services are primarily covered by approval from Auto Insurance, Workers Compensation Insurance, and Long Term Disability Insurance or through special arrangement/approval from Michigan Rehabilitation Services.

NuStep, Inc.
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Ann Arbor, MI 48108
800-322-2209 or 734-769-3939
www.nustep.com

Every day, people of all fitness and ability levels are transforming their lives with NuStep. That’s because NuStep’s seated recumbent cross trainer models – the T4, T5 and T5XR – offer a safe, low impact and total body workout that burns calories, builds strength and improves cardiovascular fitness. And with a full line of adaptive equipment and accessories, the NuStep makes exercise possible for individuals who are disabled. Even those with significant upper body or lower body weakness or paralysis can exercise independently on the NuStep and experience the life transforming benefits of regular exercise.

Rainbow Rehabilitation Centers, Inc.
Corporate Offices/Treatment Center
5570 Whitaker Road (PO Box 970320), Ypsilanti, MI 48197
Phone: (734) 498-1200 or (800) 936-4644
Web: www.rainbowrehab.com
Email: admissions@rainbowrehab.com

Rainbow Rehabilitation Centers provides rehabilitation services to individuals who have experienced a spinal cord or traumatic brain injury. Rainbow's continuum of care allows individuals with injuries to achieve their highest potential in the least restrictive, most independent setting possible. Our professionals, specially trained staff consistently provides understanding, supportive and progressive rehabilitation at every stage of the recovery process. Residential/day treatment and outpatient services are available for adults and children in locations throughout Westen, Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties in addition to home and community based services through Rainbow's Functional Recovery division.

The Recovery Project
3760 Professional Center Drive, Suite 105A
Livonia, MI 48152
Phone: (734) 933-1745
Web: www.therecoveryproject.net

The Recovery Project, with outpatient rehabilitation centers in Livonia and Macomb, Michigan, provide innovative treatments for individuals with spinal cord, brain injury and other neurological injuries or diseases. In 2009 we added expertise in LVIF (the therapy for individuals with Parkinson’s disease). In 2011 we added a Fall Prevention Program. We utilize the highest quality clinicians in the areas of physical and occupational therapy and personal training. Our clinicians have state of the art equipment, including: step bikes, body supported treadmills, arm and leg ergometers, styli, standing frames and various strengthening/resistance machines. We offer the following recovery programs:

• Traditional and High Intensity Therapy for SC/BI
• Therapy for Individuals with Parkinsons
• General Orthopedic Therapy
• Massage and Speech Therapy
• Lifelong Fitness Program

Therapy Services, Chelsea Community Hospital
775 S. Main St.
Chelsea, MI 48118
Phone: (734) 475-3947
Web: www.chc.org

Chelsea Community Hospital Therapy Services specializes in the inpatient and outpatient treatment of people who have had a stroke or traumatic brain injury, as well as patients with orthopedic, muscle-skeletal and other neurological disorders. Comprehensive outpatient programs for people with hand injuries, sports injuries, orthopedic conditions and spinal disorders are provided by Occupational and Physical Therapists in the Chelsea Wellness Center (734-475-3947). Visit our web site at www.chc.org.

University of Michigan Health System Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Spinal Cord Injury Model System (SCIMS)
300 N. Ingalls NE204
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-5491
Phone: (734) 763-0971
Fax: (734) 936-5492
Email: PMR-SCIMS@umich.edu
Web: www.med.umich.edu/pmr/modelsci

The University of Michigan’s Spinal Cord Injury Model System is a clinical and research effort aimed at improving outcomes for individuals with Spinal Cord Injuries (SCI). Through SCIMS, in partnership with the Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living, it is able to offer not only outstanding clinical services and cutting-edge research but also education and independent living services for consumers and their families. The UM Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation has many certified physicians specializing in the medical care of individuals with SCI (the largest number of any hospital in Michigan). Please refer to our website for more information on clinical research, and educational activities.

We don’t think challenges should keep one from living their dreams either.

Strive Network is committed to empowering the quality of life of all individuals.

Call Toll-Free to speak with a Professional
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www.RideConnect.info
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2700 S. Industrial Hwy
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
The ADA provides safe, convenient and efficient public transportation services and specialized services for persons with disabilities and seniors in the greater Ann Arbor area. Bus route and schedule information is available by phone at (734) 996-0400 or (734) 973-6995 (TD), at the ADA website www.aaata.org and in alternative formats by request. For information or an application for specialized service, call (734) 973-6500.

TheRide – AATA A-Ride
A-Ride is a shared-ride, demand response, public transportation service for individuals whose disability prevents them from riding the regular fixed route bus services. Trips are provided using lift-equipped vehicles and taxis. A-Ride service is provided within 1/4 of a mile from regular fixed routes in the cities of Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti plus Pittsfield, Superior and Ypsilanti townships. The fare is $3.00 per trip by advance reservation or $4.00 for same-day service, and can be paid with cash or pre-purchased scrip tickets. Applications for the A-Ride program are available on the AATA website www.aaata.org, by calling (734) 973-6500, or by visiting AATA main office at 2700 S. Industrial Hwy., or the Blake Transit Center, 331 S. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor.

Rehab Transportation
38777 Six Mile Road, Suite 101
Livonia, MI 48152
Phone: (800) 306-6406
Rehab Transportation offers personalized, attentional and expert transportation for persons with special needs throughout Southeastern Michigan. Vehicles featuring hydraulic lifts with 600 lb. capacity, and 4-point tie-down with seat belts are available. We are also able to transport small groups including multiple wheelchairs. All drivers are professionally trained caregivers, so assistance with personal care tasks before and after transportation is also available. Insured and registered with the State of Michigan. Contact us for all your transportation needs.

RideConnect
705 N. Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
Phone: (734) 222-9885
Web: www.RideConnect.info
RideConnect is a coordination center that provides individuals with information and referrals on available transportation options. This information is based on their needs in Washtenaw County and selected areas in Jackson, Lenawee, Livingston, Monroe, Oakland and Wayne Counties. RideConnect also coordinates services among existing public, private and non-profit transportation and human service transportation providers. RideConnect increases the effectiveness of the affordable, accessible, safe, reliable transportation options for residents of Washtenaw County.

Select Ride, Inc.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
Phone: (734) 663-3959
TDI/TTY (734) 663-5994
Select Ride is pleased to offer accessible transportation through its Arbor Limousine division at no extra charge. We have fully accessible lift vans available for point-to-point transfers or hourly service. Non-accessible service is also available at your choice of taxicabs, vans, town car sedans, minibuses, or limousines. We go anywhere... whether you need a trip across town, to the airport - wherever you need to go! For more information or to schedule your next trip, please call Arbor Limousine at (734) 663-3959.

Wheelchair Getaways
6005 Cascadilla Way
Highland, MI 48357
Phone: (800) 587-7166
Email: info502@wheelchairgetaways.com
Web: www.wheelchairgetaways.com
Wheelchair Getaways rents vans by the day, week, or month to persons with disabilities. Our vans include full-size conversion vans with raised roof, rear seat, and side-door entry. Our minivans are equipped with a drop-down floor, kneeling systems, and power side-door ramp. All vans have the doors for the wheelchair and doors for the chair user. Some of our vans are equipped with hand controls, power transfer seats for the driver and power doors.

Wheelchair Seating
Aquila Corporation
3827 Creekside Lane
Holmen, WI 54636
Phone: (866) 792-9658
Web: www.aquilacorp.com
Aquila Corporation manufactures high-quality wheelchair cushion systems. Over the past 10 years, Aquila has custom-made more than 2,000 cushion systems for clients worldwide. Every cushion system is custom-made to each individual’s specific physical characteristics and health status for maximum effectiveness.

The Aquila P5 powered wheelchair cushion system was designed for those clients who currently have or are at high-risk for pressure sores. Alternate cells are automatically inflated/deinflated to the desired firmness on an adjustable timed cycle program, and increased circulation to help heal and prevent pressure sores.

American Recreation Therapy Association
400 West Washington Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
48104 West Middle Lake Road
Clarkston, MI 48346
Strive Recreational Therapy Services, Inc. provides RI/HOME recreational and aquatic therapy. Strive gets referrals of those with injuries and disabilities and our Certified Recreational Therapy Specialists go to the client’s home and teach them how to get back into the community doing whatever it is they enjoyed prior to their injury. We increase the quality of life for many! Please check out our website at www.strivetreat.com to see more information about Strive and its activities, such as the Michigan Victory Games, Michigan’s premier competitive sporting competition. Contact us today to get started at (810) 962-1236.

The Ann Arbor YMCA
400 West Washington Street
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103
(734) 996-9622
www.annarborymca.org
Y staff are available to provide guidance and assistance using equipment. Our wellness area offers on Nautilus, a SciFit Ergometer, an elevated stretching bench and weight training accessories that can be used from a seated position. Two Nautilus feature leg stabilizers and well-grips. Stairmaster and Seated Stretching bench and weight training accessories that can be used from a seated position. Two Nu-Steps feature leg stabilizers and well-grips. Slower-stretching bench and weight training accessories that can be used from a seated position. Two Nu-Steps feature leg stabilizers and well-grips. Slower-stretching bench and weight training accessories that can be used from a seated position. Two Nu-Steps feature leg stabilizers and well-grips.

University of Michigan Home Care Services
Wheelchair Seating Service
2850 S. Industrial Highway, Suite 200
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
Phone: (734) 971-8268 or (877) 868-8899
Web: www.um-homecare.org
With more than 40 years of experience and the most certified rehabilitation engineers in the state of Michigan, the University of Michigan Health System Wheelchair Seating Service is the leading provider of custom mobility products in the area. From the initial evaluation to service after delivery, our priority is to provide the very best mobility product for each of our patients. All of our service offerings are considered premium, our cost is not. In most cases, our charges are close to or below other wheelchair providers.

youth services

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202 E. Huron Street, Suite 101
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
Phone: (734) 761-3005
Web: www.youthempowerment.com
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Accessible Ann Arbor ................................................................. 39
Advantage Mobility Outfitters .................................................. 40, 41
ArboCare ..................................................................................... 41, 44, 48
AK Home Care Services ............................................................ 41, 44
Ann Arbor District Library .......................................................... 46
Ann Arbor Transportation Authority, A-Ride ......................... 38, 50
Ann Arbor YMCA ........................................................................ 50
Aquilla Corporation .................................................................... 51
Area Agency on Aging 19 ............................................................ 44, 45
The Ark ......................................................................................... 39
The Abilities Coach ...................................................................... 47
Associates in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation .............. 45, 48
BPA, LLC/Special Needs Home Modifications ......................... 39, 51
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan ........................................ 36, 43
Brain Injury Association of Michigan ........................................ 40, 44
Chelsea Community Hospital Therapy Services ................. 49
Chelsea Rehabs/Chelsea Community Hospital ....................... 44, 45
Community Residence Corporation ......................................... 45
Comerstone Designs, Inc ......................................................... 39, 43
Eisenhower Center ...................................................................... 40, 41
Fusion Medicine ........................................................................ 40, 42
General Motors Mobility Program with OnStar ..................... 41
Healthcare DME .......................................................................... 42
HealUSA ....................................................................................... 40, 43
Hellerie & Ferrugier ................................................................. 46
McCormick Rehabilitation Associates, Inc ....................... 48
Michigan Ability Partners ....................................................... 39
Michigan Gifts.org ................................................................. 48
Michigan Disability Rights Coalition ....................................... 39, 49
Michigan Rehabilitation Services/ MI Dept. of ELEG ............... 43
Mobility Works ........................................................................... 41, 43
Nacht Law..................................................................................... 46
NuStep ................................................................. 46, back cover
Partners in Personal Assistance .............................................. 45
Paws with a Cause ................................................................. 40
Quality Home Medical Equipment, Inc ................................. 42
Rainbow Rehabilitation Centers ............................................. 45, 42, 48
The Recovery Project, LLC ....................................................... 49
Rehab Transportation ............................................................ 49, 50
RehabCare Premier ............................................................... 50
RideConnect ................................................................................ 48, 51
Select Ride, Inc ........................................................................ 51, inside back cover
Special Truck ............................................................................. 41, 46
Scribe Recreational Therapy Services .................................... 49, 50
Tree Town Acupuncture .......................................................... 39
U of M Home Care Services .................................................... 42, 45, 47, 51, inside front cover
U of M Home Medical Equipment .......................................... 42
U of M Health System Low Vision & Vision Rehabilitation Services .................. 47
U of M Orthotics & Prosthetics Center .................................... 44, 47
U of M Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation ......................... 2, 49
U of M Services for Students with Disabilities ....................... 42
Washoe Intermediate School District ..................................... 43
Watson Health Care .................................................................. 42, 46
Wheelchair Getaway .............................................................. 50, 51
Youth Empowerment Project ............................................... 43, 51

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☐ $500 ☐ $1,000 ☐ $2,500 ☐ Other $ _______

☐ Yes, I would like to increase the impact of my gift by making a multi-year commitment for ________ years and a total contribution of $ ________.

Enclosed is my first contribution of $ ________

Optional payment plans are available.

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