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A month in, bills pour in for hearings

by Jane McClure

More than one month into the 2019 legislative session, Minnesotans with disabilities and their advocates are already immersed in the committee review process. Several hundred bills have been introduced in the Minnesota House and Senate, including many disability-related measures. Those includes new policy and funding asks, as well as most proposals that were sidelined during 2018.

One big effort is again spearheaded by the Best Life Alliance, which has pushed for the introduction of House File 179 and Senate File 06 in support of disability services. The Alliance and its allies are seeking more funding for disability support service, and the reversal of a devastating seven percent funding cut.

Another group, the PCA Reform Coalition, is spotlighting the personal care assistance (PCA) program and the need for rate increases. The coalition is at the capitol pointing out that the program's reimbursement rate has only increased by \$1.16 per hour over the last decade. It is calling for increases to help end the high turnover rate in PCA staffing, which creates hardships and instability in the lives of people who rely on PCAs.

The coalition is pushing for a data-driven rate reimbursement framework, increased wages, an increased enhanced care rate for clients with the highest needs and consistent collection of service provider data statewide.

The House Long-Term Care Division has already heard from Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) leadership about the case crisis for Minnesota elders and people with disabilities. The state hit a 20-year high for direct care job openings in 2017. Kari Benson, DHS director of the DHS Aging and Adult Services Division, said those numbers are only expected to get worse.

The PCA Reform Coalition is spotlighting Bureau of Labor Statistics figures that show the hourly wage for PCAs in Minnesota is \$11.83, and at \$12.69 for home health aides. A presentation to the House division showed that nationally, about 45 percent of direct support professionals live in households below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Many rely on some form of public assistance to support their families.

But the direct care and supports funding crisis are just two of many focuses for Minnesota's diverse disability community. Calls for more support of rural and children's mental health and ways to address increased demand for special education have been among the many disability issues heard by committee over the past month.

House and Senate leaders have also highlighted the need to contain health care costs while providing needed services. Health care in all forms is expected to be a major topic, and a source of capitol debate.

Special education is in the spotlight, with an eye on everything from the amount of paperwork teachers face to funding. Funding is already under

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FILE PHOTO

A rally in support of a PCA rate increase was held outside the State office Building in 2016.

Rallies, awareness events raise profiles at state capitol

by Access Press staff

When the Minnesota Legislature is in session, it's time for disability advocacy groups to swing into action. Rallies and days to raise awareness of a specific disability or disabilities are important aspects of any legislative process and provide a way to draw attention to key issues and needs.

Many Minnesota group are staging or have staged 2019 events. The state's Centers for Independent Living had

their day to promote independent living February 5, after deadline for this issue of *Access Press*. But other groups are lining up their events and encouraging people to get involved. Some of the multi-organization events are listed with in this article.

One of the biggest annual events is Disability Day at the Capitol, which is Tuesday, February 19. Attendees from around the state are gathering to support policies and funding that focus

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Two longtime disability nonprofits announce merger

by Access Press staff

Ally People Solutions and Community Involvement Programs (CIP) of Minneapolis have announced that they will merge, with the merger taking effect April 1. The merged organizations will continue providing programs and services under a new name, which hasn't been announced.

Before the merger takes effect, the two organizations will host an event, 3-11 p.m. Wednesday, March 13 at Indeed Brewing Company, 711 15th Ave. NE, Minneapolis. The "Indeed We Can" fundraiser is regularly hosted by the brewery, with each Wednesday's net proceeds donated to a local nonprofit, chosen and sponsored by an Indeed employee.

ALLY and CIP will host the event, which will include food, fun and prizes. A toast is planned to celebrate the upcoming merger. A program is at 5:30 p.m.

Changing times in the nonprofit world and the disability service system are driving the merger, which was announced in mid-January. A new government rate management system has resulted in lower service budgets for many people. The seven percent cut to Medicaid services in Minnesota is also a factor in the decision to merge.

The merger is a sign of the times in Minnesota's disability community. Over the past several years agencies have combined to provide programs and services in the face of a challenging fundraising climate. The most recent merger was completed last month when East Suburban Resources (ESR) merged with Rise, Inc.



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS

Rise added 155 team members and began serving an additional 500 people last year as a result of the merge

ESR, a nonprofit agency which provided services to people throughout Washington County, Minnesota, and St. Croix County, Wisconsin, officially became a subsidiary of Rise on July 1, 2018. The two agencies transitioned into a full merger by January 2019.

After more than 40 years of working in the vocational rehabilitation field, Ed Boeve, ESR's executive director, retired July 1, 2018. He is, however, working part-time through the end of the year to help the merger process. The ESR Board studied its options for a few months before opting to join forces with Rise.

The Arc Minnesota's current configuration is another high-profile change. On January 1, 2018, chapters across Minnesota merged as one organization to provide consistent and essential services to support more people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

According to a letter sent out by ALLY President and CEO Bob Brick, ALLY and

CIP leaders have been meeting to discuss how a merger can help clients of both agencies reach their goals. Discussions between leaders of the two agencies helped determine that Ally and CIP share the same philosophies in helping their clients succeed. More information about the merger will be announced in the future.

The merger will affect several hundred clients. "We are confident that with our shared values and more than 100 years' of combined experience, ALLY and CIP will be able to increase opportunities for new or expanded services and stronger advocacy for the people we serve," Brick said.

ALLY People Solutions, which is based in St. Paul, has provided services to people with disabilities for more than 50 years. It provides support and employment services to people with mental health and people with intellectual disabilities, along with opportunities for recreation and volunteer activities. It also helps employers find workers.

It was created in 1965 by families with adult children with intellectual

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"Equality is the soul of liberty; there is, in fact, no liberty without it."

Frances Wright

NEWS DIGEST



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EDITOR'S DESK

Tim Benjamin

"The study showed that Minnesota is also falling backwards in its Home and Community-Based Services for people with disabilities." Minnesota's worst categories were "reaching those in need" and "promoting independence."

It seemed as though our winter was going to be very mild but then the end of January really hit hard, with crazy record-breaking cold all over the state, followed by a beautiful warm weekend and then back to normal Minnesota February temperatures. I heard a report that lake ice is very unstable this year. Even the ice doesn't like all these ups and downs.

There was new data released from United Cerebral Palsy and the ANCOR Foundation (American Network of Community Options and Resources) in their Case for Inclusion in 2019. The annual report grades Medicaid programs in all 50 states and the District of Columbia on how well they serve individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The results of the study dropped Minnesota down to 21st place in 2019 from 7th place in 2015. Minnesota's worst categories were "reaching those in need" and "promoting independence," where we ranked 45th and 35th.

Those categories were shocking to me because I thought these are areas where we've been improving. The study showed that Minnesota is also falling backwards in its Home and Community-Based Services

for people with disabilities.

"Lots of variables play into Minnesota's ranking," said Sue Schettle, CEO of the Association of Residential Resources in Minnesota, an association of more than 200 providers, businesses and advocates for people with disabilities. "The workforce shortages played the largest role in our state's slip over the last few years." Minnesota's Department of Human Services evaluations have shown that personal care assistants are the lowest paid workers in the HCBS workforce.

In Minnesota, there are three major groups working on legislation to address the wage crisis for PCAs and direct support personnel that seems to be the main cause of the lowering of standings for programs for people with disabilities throughout the country. Those groups are Best Life Alliance, SEIU Healthcare Minnesota, and the PCA Reform Coalition.

Best Life Alliance, a statewide coalition of organizations, people with disabilities, families and supporters, was previously known as the 5% Campaign. Starting in 2014, the group pushed for a five-percent higher wage for staff that provide more complex care. Now the huge issue the group is fighting is to reverse a devastating

seven-percent cut in state reimbursement rates that remained when then-Gov. Mark Dayton vetoed the omnibus bill a year ago. There were many reasons for Dayton to have vetoed that bill, but unfortunately it meant that the legislature's funding cut remained in the final budget.

SEIU Healthcare Minnesota, the union that represents many PCAs and DSPs, has a two-year, tentative agreement that won't be shared until all union members vote and approve, but the union said highlights include, "funding so reimbursement rates and client budgets will go up 2.37% for everyone, with those making the minimum wage seeing a 10.4% wage increase from \$12 to \$13.25; \$750,000 for trainings and orientation to help workers gain and build skills; increased paid time off; and an additional increase in wages for workers serving clients who need the highest hours of care." If the union votes in favor and the legislature votes in favor and the governor accepts the agreement, it would start July 2019.

The PCA Reform Coalition it consists of disability advocates, PCA agencies, and other human services providers in Minnesota. Using input from DHS, they are trying to build a formulary that would

legislate PCA cost-of-living raises as determined by inflation and other factors. Another strategy is to insert a "competitive workforce factor" into rate formulas. They also want to address the needs of people requiring specialized supports, since the current system does not sufficiently provide for specialized training and experience. They say a career ladder needs to be incorporated into the programs to ensure that people with significant and complex needs have workers trained to care for their specific needs.

Jeff Bangsberg, chairperson of the board of directors for the Metropolitan Center for Independent Living said, "We need to reform the reimbursement rate structure for Personal Care Assistants, so that inflation is factored into state budget forecasts for PCA services. This will ensure automatic cost of living increases for both the Traditional and PCA Choice programs. We are grateful to have a large coalition joining us in this effort."

All three groups are working on the same front: to get legislators to provide meaningful and effective support for Minnesota's citizens with disabilities—the support required by law to ensure that they can live independently and with dignity. ■

HISTORY NOTE

For four decades, Wilderness Inquiry has made outdoors accessible

Wilderness Inquiry's mission is to connect people from all walks of life to the natural world through shared outdoor adventures. Through the medium of outdoor adventure travel, the nonprofit inspires personal growth, enhanced awareness of the environment and community integration. Wilderness Inquiry wraps up its 40th year of service in May 2019, so during this anniversary year it's time to look back at four decades of new possibilities and opportunity.

In 1974, Bill Simpson, Tom Rasmussen and Greg Lais took a group of 14-year-old students on a winter camping trip in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. That started regular student trips and inspired Lais and four other friends to spend a month in the wilderness as a St. John's University J-term project.

The name "Wilderness Inquiry" was

eventually adopted. It explains that the experiences are about education and the wilderness. People with disabilities were included as a result over a controversy over Boundary Waters management and whether motorized transport should be used there. In 1977 then-Sen. Wendell Anderson (D-Minnesota) was made the statement that "the handicapped, elderly and women" would never be able to enjoy the area without the use of motors.

At the time, Lais' sister Mary worked for what was then the Minnesota State Council on Disability. She called her brother to suggest that they give it a try and contradict Anderson.

In an effort to demonstrate that anyone can enjoy the wilderness on its own terms, Lais and college pal Paul Schurke organized a trip to the Boundary Waters in 1977. Deaf people and people using wheelchairs were among the group. That trip opened

new possibilities and changed the lives of everyone involved. As Lais recalled:

"I'll never forget watching Margot Imdieke crawl across a portage trail dragging her wheelchair to prove to herself that she could do it. It blew me away, and put my issues and worries in perspective. I learned then to keep an open mind and never say never!"

Wilderness Inquiry was formally incorporated in 1978, with help from Greg and Mary's father, Don Lais. Several programs began under the Wilderness Inquiry umbrella, including programs to provide outdoor experiences for youth and adults with cognitive and physical disabilities.

Over the years Wilderness Inquiry built a reputation for inclusive outdoor adventures and other trips around the world. It has grown from a Minneapolis garage to its own office and warehouse,

and a base camp at Little Sand Bay near the Apostle Islands. Since the beginning, Wilderness Inquiry has served almost 400,000 people on canoe, kayak, rafting, hiking, dogsled, ski, horse-pack and safari adventures throughout North America and the world.

Many things have changed since three friends and a group of students made that first trip to in the Boundary Waters together, but the spirit, care and sense of adventure continues throughout Wilderness Inquiry programs to this day—whether in Alaska, East Africa or the Bronx. Learn more about Wilderness Inquiry at www.wildernessinquiry.org. ■

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With assistance, filing those returns need not be taxing

It's that time of year. Income tax filing season is underway. Taxpayers have until Monday, April 15 to file state and federal income taxes and make payments.

Low-income people with disabilities can find help with tax preparation but it's best to act quickly. Services can be in demand and appointment slots can rapidly fill up.

The Minnesota Department of Revenue and taxpayer assistance groups offer many helpful tips as tax season begins.

More than 64 percent of Minnesota taxpayers may qualify to file their taxes electronically for free. One benchmark of eligibility is if a person's adjusted gross income is \$66,000 or less.

Check to see what free tax preparation services are available. Minnesota has more than 200 free tax preparation sites available across Minnesota through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and AARP Tax-Aide programs. The Internal Revenue Service certifies volunteers from both programs to prepare basic tax returns in Minnesota communities.

"Along with free tax preparation software, these free tax preparation sites are another available resource for Minnesotans to get help with their 2018 taxes," said Minnesota Department of Revenue Commissioner Cynthia Bauerly. "Volunteers at these sites across the state are certified by the IRS and are ready to help qualified individuals file their tax returns on time and accurately."

VITA help is available for persons age 60 and older, and for people with disabilities. People who speak limited or no English can also get help. Qualifying parties need to have annual income of \$55,000 or less.

The AARP Tax-Aide program offers free tax preparation for all Minnesotans,



particularly those age 50 or older. Unlike VITA sites, AARP Tax-Aide sites don't have income restrictions. Search for a site at <http://ow.ly/CgIV30nqhLj> on the Department of Revenue website. Use its search feature and interactive map for help, searching by zip code or county. Find sites with military return expertise and expertise in languages other than English on the website too.

Persons seeking assistance may call 651-297-3724 or 1-800-657-3989 (toll-free).

Other resources are available, through community action programs and community centers. Libraries often have tax forms available. Another good resource for tax preparation is the nonprofit program Prepare and Prosper. Find out more at <http://prepareandprosper.org/>

Visiting a site for help? Bring items including a photo ID, W-2 information, banking information for direct deposit, and other applicable items. The Department of Revenue website outlines the types of forms to bring to an appointment.

Ask if the forms can be filed electronically and see if direct deposit can be used for a refund. Electronically filing tax forms and choosing direct deposit for a refund is the most secure and convenient way to file taxes and get a refund in a timely manner. Learn more about electronic filing options and the benefits of choosing direct deposit during the tax appointment.

Take time to make sure information is accurate, including correct name spellings and Social Security numbers, Individual Identification Taxpayer Number (ITIN)

cards, and bank accounting routing numbers. With names, use proper names as they appear on a Social Security card.

Save and bring receipts and other tax-related documents. Bring all needed documentation for any claimed deductions or credits.

People sometimes have to change residences after filing a return. In the event of a move, contact the state and IRS. That way any refund checks or other mailings will be sent to the correct address. For state address changes, call 651-296-3781 or 1-800-652-9094 (toll-free). IRS change of address information is at www.irs.gov or call 1-800-829-4477.

File returns by the April 15 due date, even if money is owed and cannot be paid. Pay as much as possible by the due date and contact state and federal officials to set up payment agreements for the remaining balance. Banking information can be included on paper or electronic tax forms. Payments can be set up for a specific date.

If income tax refunds are due, the state and federal websites have ways to track those, online. Anyone who wishes information on a federal refund, but cannot use the Internet, can call 1-800-829-4477 or 1-800-829-1954. Don't spend a refund until it appears in a bank account, if direct deposit is used.

Returns may take longer to process due to the increasing number of refund scams, stolen personal information and identity theft. Changes in federal tax law could also have an impact.

With property tax refunds from the state, be aware that state law prohibits those from being processed before July 1.

For additional help, visit www.revenue.state.mn.us/ ■

Minnesota drops rank in new inclusion report

Stagnant or declining investments in state programs that help individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities lead more independent and productive lives have resulted in Minnesota dropping from 7th place in 2015 to 21st place today in state rankings, according to the Case for Inclusion 2019. The report is compiled by the ANCOR Foundation and United Cerebral Palsy (UCP).

The report, The Case for Inclusion 2019, ranks all 50 states and the District of Columbia on how well state programs, primarily Medicaid, serve people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The states are ranked in five key areas critical to the inclusion, support and empowerment of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. The five areas are promoting independence, promoting productivity, keeping families together, serving those in need, and tracking health, safety and quality of life.

"This report should be a wake-up call for policy makers and community leaders that Minnesota is indeed on a troubling track when it comes to the direction of community-supports for people with disabilities," said Sue Schettle, CEO for the Association of Residential Resources in Minnesota (ARRM). "We need broad political and community action to enhance the many bright spots across Minnesota where progress is being made and get Minnesota back on the right path."

According to the report, the biggest factors affecting Minnesota's lower rankings were stagnations in key measures, including in the number of people on waiting lists to receive residential Home and Community-Based Services (3,564, compared to 3,575 in the 2016 Case for Inclusion report) and the percentage of residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities receiving Medicaid-funded services (92 percent—virtually unchanged from the 2016 report). Minnesota's particularly challenging workforce conditions and volatile public policy landscape drove poorer performance as compared to other states.

The Case for Inclusion, which has been published regularly since 2006 by UCP, compiles the most recent data available (generally from 2016 for this report) and analyzes 30 outcome measures in the five major categories. The ANCOR Foundation joins UCP this year in publishing the report. Among the other key findings on Minnesota's performance:

Minnesota's worst performances were in the categories of reaching those in need,



Minnesota's change in the ranks is a concern.

where the state ranked 45th, and promoting independence, where the state ranked 31st.

A bright spot is that Minnesota joins 13 others plus the District of Columbia in having eliminated all large, state-run institutions. But at the same time, the state has lagged behind in moving people into increasingly "home-like" settings with three or fewer people living together.

The state has a great deal of room for progress in the area of promoting productivity. Only nine percent of working-age residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Minnesota worked in competitive employment jobs, meaning they worked alongside individuals without disabilities and at market-driven wages. This rate is less than half the national average of 19 percent.

Nationally, the report found that notable advances in the support of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities have stalled. For instance, just 29 states—two more than in the 2016 Case for Inclusion—report that at least 80 percent of these Americans are served in home-like settings, such as a family home, their own home or a small group setting—a number that hasn't budged from the 2016 findings.

The report documented downward trends in two critical areas, the number of people on waitlists for residential and community services, and the number of individuals working in competitive employment. The Case for Inclusion 2019 found the number of people on waiting lists for Home and Community-Based Services nationally was up 75,000 from the 2016 report to almost 424,000. Just seven states, down from 10 in 2016, reported at least 33

percent of working-age individuals working in competitive employment.

"Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including the young and the aging, want and deserve the same opportunities and quality of life as all Americans. Yet some states do much better than others in demonstrating the needed political will and implementing the sound policies and focused funding necessary to achieve this ideal," the report stated.

Factors driving the stagnating or downward trends include states forgoing

Medicaid expansion and growing shortages in direct support professionals (DSPs), the frontline workers who help those with disabilities integrate into the community.

"The DSP workforce crisis may be the most significant challenge we face in improving the outcomes tracked by the annual Case for Inclusion," said ANCOR and ANCOR Foundation CEO Barbara Merrill. "Without the professional staff needed to provide the supports and services that enable people to be integrated into the community, provider agencies have little hope of maintaining or expanding on any progress they've seen in the past decade."

In Minnesota, providers report an average DSP vacancy rate of 15 percent, or approximately 10,000 positions, and annual DSP turnover rates of more than 50 percent. At the same time, Minnesota's unemployment rate ranks among the lowest in the country, at 2.8 percent.

Armando Contreras, President and CEO of UCP, notes that "across the country, we see efforts by state policymakers to enhance their approach to Medicaid services and supports and related programs by making the best use of existing and scarce resources. Of course, additional funding to keep pace with the diverse needs of this population would help, but new ideas and shared best practices from successful states have the potential to drive improvements even absent additional funding."


The full Case for Inclusion 2019 report, along with scorecards for each state and additional resources, can be downloaded at www.caseforinclusion.org. ■

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FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Many partners will solve direct support workforce shortage

by Claire Wilson, Alex Bartolic

DHS, along with other state agencies, is playing a significant role in implementing the plan and also has been working for years on strategies to ensure people with disabilities live, work and enjoy life in ways most meaningful to them.

Increasing worker wages and benefits is the first strategy listed in the plan. This action would require legislative action with support from people with disabilities, advocacy organizations, providers and direct support professionals themselves. DHS and our partners are laying the groundwork for discussions in two ways. We are analyzing compensation of occupations with skills and education backgrounds similar to those of current direct support workers. We are also looking at how provider rates could better match different levels of worker training and care required by different people receiving services. An enhanced rate for some PCA services began last summer; the current analysis may support other rate changes to more closely match people's individual needs.

Another effort to explore possible wage

and benefit adjustments is the statewide survey of providers on direct support worker wages and benefits. DHS, the University of Minnesota Institute on Community Integration and provider trade organizations have partnered on this survey with advocate support. While this work is underway, we are also pursuing strategies with potential to better meet individual needs, give direct support workers more attractive, flexible work hours and to free up time for critical hands-on support.

We must be creative and open to new service delivery options to ensure the people get the appropriate level of quality care when, where and how they need it. Viewing technology as a first option, for example, can help to promote independence of the person served and free up workers to be in places where they are critically needed for hands-on care. When in the home of a person who agrees to use it, an automated medication dispenser, for example could potentially free up time of a skilled nurse who might otherwise have to visit daily to administer medications. Use of remote monitoring technology can allow providers to assign fewer overnight on-call staff to monitor several people who

live close to each other instead of having a worker sleep at each person's home in case it is needed.

Similarly, the new Individualized Home Support service available across Medical Assistance disability waiver programs allows people to get help intermittently as they go about their day, at home, at work and in the community. A key difference between this service and previous reimbursable support services is greater flexibility in billing for this service and in providing the services—either in person or remotely by phone, text or videoconference.

Flexibility can make direct support work more attractive to people who may want to work around another job schedule, in semi-retirement, while their kids are at school or only within their neighborhood.

Direct Support Connect, Minnesota's dedicated online job board and hiring resource for direct support workers and people who hire them, began an advertising campaign last summer that highlights flexibility as well as the intangible rewards of a job with meaningful personal interaction. The

potential benefits for the person receiving services is to manage their own services and connect with someone with the skills and availability they need. While Direct Support Connect represents only one of many needed strategies, we are encouraged by initial results of a social media campaign over last summer and fall, which more than doubled the number of profiles for both direct support workers and people looking to hire and self-direct their own services in the same time period. Another campaign is now underway and enhancements to the website continue to be made.

The direct support worker shortage is a national problem requiring many approaches and collaboration among a host of stakeholders to make progress. We are committed to working with partners throughout Minnesota to improve the situation so people can get the services they need.

Claire Wilson is deputy commissioner for policy at DHS. Alex Bartolic is director of the Disability Services Division at DHS. ■

MERGER From page 1

developmental disabilities. Faced with the painful option of institutional or foster care placement, these parents chose to care for their loved ones at home. Frustrated with the lack of support services, they rented space at Christ Child School in St. Paul for day activities. The all-volunteer effort provided a safe space for their children to learn and have social contact.

They outgrew the space and moved to the basement of Merriam Park Community Center and created Merriam Park Day Activity Center. Paid staff was soon added, and demand for services led to the need for another space. The program moved to St. Paul's Midway neighborhood, and became Midway Training Services or MTS.

The program grew over time and changed its name to ALLY People Solutions several years ago. It has locations in Ramsey County and also works with people in Dakota County through the Dakota County Connex program.

CIP has its roots in organizing efforts in Minneapolis in the late 1960s, after leaders at Westminster Presbyterian Church sought ways to meet the needs of adults with developmental disabilities in their community. Associate Pastor Tom Zemek from Westminster Presbyterian Church attended a meeting of what is

now The Arc. By chance, another member of the congregation, Peggy Tillett, was also at the meeting. There they learned about the needs of a number of adults with developmental disabilities in the community.

Some adults had moved home from state institutions to be with family but were in need of support. Other people who had been living with family for many years were anxious to start life on their own. What was needed was a supportive, supervised environment where people could learn independent living skills. The Apartment Training Program, which opened in 1971, was the first CIP initiative. CIP now offers a wide range of services including employment and day services, case management, housing and home care services, personal support services and enhanced mental health programming.

CIP incorporated as a nonprofit in 1971 and began providing services for people living with intellectual disabilities and people living with mental illness. CIP's clients are in the Twin Cities and Pine County areas.

Combined, the two agencies provide more than 100 years' experience.

For more information about the ALLY and CIP merger, check the organizations' websites at www.allypeoplesolutions.org and www.cipmn.org ■

BILLS From page 1

review in the House, as the Finance Committee spent two meetings discussing increasing enrollment trends and the complexities of funding needed services. Department of Education statistics show increasing demand, with the number of students enrolled for special education services from 115,844 in 2003 to 147,605 this year. While that trend can be attributed to higher overall K-12 enrollment as well as improved screening and awareness, it has put a strain on a system already lagging behind financially.

One issue the House committee reviewed is the cross subsidy, which results from the difference in the amount of state and federal money a school district gets versus the actual costs of providing special education services. Such services are mandated and can cause hardship for school districts to provide. Other general education programs face cuts to keep up with special education services.

The cross subsidy affects all students and all districts, legislators were told. Minnesota Department of Education statistics show an average \$830 cross subsidy per K-12 student. But this varies greatly by district. St. Paul Public Schools' subsidy is about \$1,400 per student, highest in the core cities. Recent changes to the funding formula and increased state funding haven't helped.

Calls for more funding have also been made for rural and children's mental health services over the past few weeks. Children's mental health services and the growing need were discussed at committee, where educators and experts described the increasingly complex needs they see among schoolchildren.

In the House alone, there are three bills to support rural mental health services with increased funding. Rural mental health

counseling receives \$113,000 per year, but access to services as well as funding are big hurdles. Minnesota only has one state-supported rural mental health counselor. He works with nine farm advocates who help farmers with mental health as well as financial and legal issues.

One House division heard from Kittson County Commissioner and farmer Theresia Gillie. Her husband Keith died by suicide in April 2017. Gillie told the committee she believes it is her responsibility to make sure others get needed support.


The push to get bills introduced and heard is compounded by the fact that as of *Access Press* deadline, committee deadlines for bills hadn't been announced. While there's no yearly deadline to introduce legislation, House and Senate leaders annual set dates for committee action on bills. The dates are set during the first half of the session. That helps winnow down the number of topics to be handled. But is also means disappointment for those whose pleas are set aside.

The first deadline is for committee to act favorably on bills in the body of origin. The second is for committees to act favorably on bills or bill companions that met the first deadline in the other body. The third deadline is for committees to act favorably on major appropriation and finance bills.

What can be confusing is that deadlines don't apply to House committees on Capital Investment, Ways and Means, Taxes or Rules and Legislative Administration, nor to Senate committees on Capital Investment, Finance, Taxes or Rules and Administration. There's also a committee referral process for action on bills after a deadline.

See live and archived hearings, check the status of bills and get more information at www.leg.state.mn.us. There is a tab for disability access for visitors. ■

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TOP 150 2018

FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Age, disability can be factors in isolation

by Deb Taylor

Think about the most meaningful relationships in your life. What do they add to your experiences? How do they embolden your sense of purpose? The idea of having those relationships slowly fade or be taken away is heart-breaking, but nonetheless a reality for millions of older Americans, who find themselves feeling isolated and alone on a daily basis.

Loneliness is a slippery slope for older adults and for people with disabilities. Changes in life as they age may begin to build upon one another and leave them feeling alone and forgotten about; like they don't belong. The realities of aging and disability may mean they are despondent from the loss of a spouse or friend. Or that they may be alienated as a result of a chronic health condition, limited mobility, failing memory or hearing loss. A fear of falling or of driving can keep people confined to their homes. These physical limitations can greatly inflame feelings of isolation. Reported loneliness numbers are even greater in the aging LBGTQ

population. No matter the cause, millions of older adults find themselves socially isolated, leading them to feel pushed aside and rejected.

One such term to describe this phenomenon is an "elder orphan." That may sound like a grim label and invoke extreme imagery, but when we really take a closer look at these situations, it really isn't an exaggeration. These are older adults with no spouse, either no close relatives or no contact with family, and no significant connections to their communities, leading them to feel they don't belong anywhere.

Meaning comes from connecting and contributing to something beyond the self. A large part of the way we construct our sense of identity is our relation to other people; what we share of ourselves with others, how we interact with others, our shared experiences with them. The consequences of weakening or taking away these relations can be devastating not just emotionally, but also physically.

A University of California, San Francisco study found that participants 60 years old and older who reported feeling lonely saw

a 45 percent increase in their risk of death. Isolated survey respondents also had a 59% greater risk of mental and physical decline than their more social counterparts.

Studies like these suggest it's not enough to simply be physically healthy-to have your bodily functions working properly-you need to foster meaningful relationships that will ultimately give you a sense of belonging and purpose. We all need a "why" to get us through the good and bad. For most people, the largest part of that "why" is the people in our lives who matter to us.

So how can we combat loneliness?

It starts with the recognition that we all are susceptible to social isolation and loneliness as our lives inevitably change. It starts with a conversation.

The key to addressing loneliness is listening closely, observing vigilantly. We have to encourage one another to share what we're thinking and feeling. There's a stigma of loneliness being seen as weakness. As Americans, we have deeply embedded values of individualism and self-reliance, especially in older generations. This can sometimes mean hesitating to reach out for

help. But we need to start addressing social isolation and loneliness the way we would a heart problem or any other health risk, because it is one.

Only then can a plan can be developed to help each other to better connect—from finding social groups at senior centers to using online resources of support. At all ages, we need to create and maintain meaningful ties to one another as we grow older. To truly make the physical spaces we reside in impactful communities, we need to find ways to emotionally invest in the places we live; through participation in community outings to simply getting to know your neighbor. After all, no one deserves to feel like they don't belong anywhere.

Deb Taylor is the CEO of Senior Community Services and its Reimagine Aging Institute, a nonprofit that helps older adults and caregivers navigate aging to maintain independence and quality of life. We provide a wide array of programs -- www.seniorcommunity.org. ■

YOUR LETTERS ARE WELCOME

Access Press welcomes letters to the editor and commentary pieces from readers, on topics of interest to Minnesota's disability community. Letters should be no more than 500 words, with 750 words per commentary. Ask the editors if more space is needed.

Letters and guest commentaries must be signed by the authors or authors. With letters, a writer's hometown is published but not a street address. Please send contact information in case the editors have questions about a letter or commentary. Contact information isn't published unless the writer specifically

requests that the newspaper do so. Pictures of the author can be published with a guest commentary but aren't required.

Access Press asks that letters and guest commentaries be specifically written for the newspaper. Letters must have a focus on disability issues and ideally, a focus on those issues as they affect Minnesotans. Form letters will not be published.

Because Access Press is a non-profit publication and must follow regulations on political partisanship, political endorsement letters are not published. That is true for candidates' endorsements as well as for ballot questions. Before

making a submission writers are always encouraged to contact the newspaper to discuss ideas or to ask questions about From Our Community submissions, at 651-644-2133 or access@accesspress.org. Let the newspaper staff know if accommodations are needed to submit a letter or commentary.

Letters and commentaries reflect the view of the authors and not the views of the staff and board of directors of Access Press.

Deadline for the print edition of the newspaper is the 25th of each month, with publication the following month.



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REGIONAL NEWS

Returning, new leaders named

A familiar name and two newcomers are leading state departments that extensively deal with people with disabilities. Gov. Tim Walz and Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan named state department commissioners in January including Tony Lourey at the Department of Human Services, Jan Malcolm at Department of Health and Rebecca Lucero at Department of Human Rights.

Malcolm, 63, has served as commissioner for the Minnesota Department of Health in now three administrations, including Gov. Jesse Ventura (1999-2003) and Gov. Mark Dayton (2018). A nationally recognized expert in public health, she previously worked at a variety of health care organizations and nonprofit organizations and served as adjunct faculty at the University of Minnesota.

Walz praised Malcolm for her "proven track record at taking on management challenges and making meaningful changes." He added, "She mirrors our vision for health equity across the state, and we are glad to have her experience and expertise in our administration."

"The health of Minnesotans is one of our government's primary concerns. Thanks to our state's strong public health and health care systems, we have a good foundation on which to build, but we can do better," said Malcolm. "The Walz-Flanagan administration's vision for One Minnesota means making the system more affordable and closing the gaps in health outcomes that exist today, based on many factors, including race and geography."

Lourey was named to his post after engagement with hundreds of stakeholders and partners. Walz praised Lourey for his unparalleled expertise on the health department budget and his collaborative leadership.

"It is a tremendous honor and privilege to join the incoming Walz-Flanagan Administration as Commissioner of the Department of Human Services," said Lourey. "I look forward to building on the Walz-Flanagan vision for One Minnesota, partnering with counties, tribes, and providers to improve the health of the people, families, and communities across Minnesota."

Lourey, 51, was raised in the small town of Kerrick. He worked as a public policy consultant for 20 years, assisting county and state governments nationwide. He served as a Kerrick Township Supervisor for nine years. Lourey was elected to the Minnesota Senate in 2006 and quickly became a leading voice in health and human services as the chair of the Health and Human Finance Committee from 2013 to 2016. He played a central role in Minnesota's efforts to expand health care coverage, compliance with the Affordable Care Act, and improvements upon the bipartisan success of MinnesotaCare.

Lucero was praised by Walz for her background in policy across sectors, as



Jan Malcolm



Tony Lourey

well as a flexible, creative, and persistent approach to the human rights department.

"With Minnesota facing some of the worst racial disparities in the country and as reports of hate crimes and discrimination continue to rise, the Department of Human Rights must be a catalyst for transformational change," said Lucero. "I am proud and honored to join the Walz-Flanagan Administration because we can – and we must – do better. Everyone deserves to be healthy and safe, valued and nurtured, and I look forward to getting to work."

Lucero, 37, was born and raised in Albuquerque, New Mexico, but made Minnesota her home for more than a decade. She has extensive policy, legal, and nonprofit leadership experience, building coalitions and fostering meaningful, change-oriented relationships. Lucero was the public policy director at the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits. Her previous experience includes Habitat for Humanity and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

(Source: Minnesota governor's office)

out of date IEPs," said the letter signed by Theresa Battle, interim special education director. Hagen also published Instagram posts that referred to her students "in a demeaning manner" and posted "student assignments which contain inappropriate content," the letter stated.

Instagram is a free photo and video sharing app available on Apple iOS, Android and Windows Phone. People can upload photos or videos to the service and share them with their followers or with a select group of friends.

Hagen was previously warned about special education compliance problems in April 2017.

(Source: Pioneer Press)

Vaccines part of debate

Autism activists are concerned that the appointment of vaccine skeptics to a newly formed state council gives credibility to views the state has struggled to dispel. The Minnesota Council was formed last fall as an advisory group for state lawmakers.

Doctors have widely concluded that vaccines, like the one for measles, mumps, and rubella, are not linked to autism. The World Health Organization list published includes vaccine hesitancy as one of 10 threats to global health in 2019, and notes measles cases have increased 30 percent worldwide.

Two of the more than 30 members on the council are known vaccine skeptics. Anti-vaccination groups have focused on Minnesota's Somali-American community in the past as they tried to perpetuate the hoax that vaccines cause autism, contributing to a drop in vaccinations and the largest measles outbreak in the state's recent history in 2017.

"Even if it's not something that's discussed or that a policy is going to come out of, giving them this large contingency on this council is dangerous. It's giving credence to a theory that's false," said council member Noah McCourt, an autism self-advocate who also serves on the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities.

But autism council members who are also members of a "vaccine safety council" have said they want to defend parents' choice to not vaccinate their children. But they have also said that discussion won't take place at the autism council.

The council has started meeting, with reminders from leadership and state legislators that the council isn't pro or anti-vaccine, and that it has other topics to deal with. The group is building on the work of a state autism task force that disbanded in 2014. The previous council disbanded after chairs resigned and there were personality conflicts among council members.

One in 59 children were identified with an autism spectrum disorder nationwide, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But in Minnesota, it's one in 42 children.

(Source: Star Tribune)

Changes seen in abuse cases

A northern Minnesota care facility where a vulnerable adult is believed to have been subjected to a fatal beating faced a swift and severe penalty, part of the Minnesota Department of Health's effort to clamp down on the senior care industry.

In early November, state health investigators arrived at Chappy's Golden Shores, a small assisted-living facility south of Grand Rapids. Complaints of maltreatment revealed levels of violence against residents, as well as repeated coverups by administrators. The facility license was quickly suspended, and the remaking 38 residents relocated.

The response reflects change at the state health department, which has been working to improve efforts to protect vulnerable Minnesotans in care facilities. The effort was spurred in part by an investigate series by the *Star Tribune* and a scathing report by the legislative auditor.

"I've never seen the [Health Department] come down this quickly and this forcefully on the side of protecting our vulnerable adults and the elderly," said Sen. Jim Abeler, R-Anoka, chairman

of the Senate Human Services Reform Committee. "There was an urgency here that we haven't seen in the past."

After taking over, Health Commissioner Jan Malcolm overhauled the agency's system for responding to and investigating allegations, eliminating a vast backlog of never investigated cases while speeding up the pace of new investigations. That has produced positive results, more than doubling the number of maltreatment investigations it completes annually, and is conducting them at a much faster pace. Each allegation of maltreatment is examined within two days, and the average time to complete investigations has dropped by nearly half, from 187 days in 2017 to 110 days last year, state data show.

"The progress is very real," Malcolm said in an interview. "We feel much more confident today that when serious issues are brought to our attention, that we spot them and are able to get to them more quickly."

Although advocates are pushing for more progress, the thorough nature of recent investigations has drawn praise. That includes the scrutiny of Chappy's.

The facility owner has appealed the state decision.

State lawmakers are seeking more tools to deal with miscreants, with one proposal to require all assisted living facilities to be licensed by the state. It also would clarify state law to give people the right to place cameras in senior homes to monitor care of their loved ones.

(Source: Star Tribune)

Teacher suspended for behavior

A St. Paul special education teacher was suspended for seven days for shoddy recordkeeping and demeaning her students on Instagram. Kjerstin Hagen was hired in 2012 and teaches students with disabilities at the preK-8 American Indian Magnet School.

For each child on her caseload, Hagen was out of compliance with state rules requiring review and revision of students' individualized education plans, according to an October 2018 discipline letter. The *Pioneer Press* newspaper sought release of her teaching records.

The noncompliance included "inaccurate information, substandard documentation, programming errors (and

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PEOPLE & PLACES

True Friends benefit from generous gift



True Friends, which provides an array of experiences for people of all abilities, has received a \$100,000 donation from the Norman C. Skalicky Foundation and Stearns Bank to benefit its general operations.

"This generous gift from the Norman C. Skalicky Foundation and Stearns Bank makes it possible to carry on our mission of high quality, personalized care to our clients," said John LeBlanc, President and CEO of True Friends. "I know our clients and board of directors are very thankful for this gift."

Beyond keeping the lights on, general operations at True Friends supports program development and critical infrastructure initiatives to provide exceptional care for individuals participating in camp, respite, horse therapy and travel services.

"Stearns Bank has always been passionate about giving back to the community, even more so to those needing a helping hand," Norman Skalicky said. "The work of True Friends to enhance self-esteem and independence aligns well with our mission to help foster growth and success."

While True Friends programs provide life-changing experiences for our participants, programs also offer caregivers a moment of respite; a chance to rest and to relieve the stress that sometimes occurs while caring for individuals with special needs.

With locations near Maple Lake, Annandale, Plymouth, Eden Prairie and Bemidji, True Friends serves individuals in Minnesota and throughout the United States.

The True Friends program is the result of two legacy service providers joining forces in late 2012. Courage Center Camps and Friendship Ventures partnered to



Norm Skalicky

create a new camp organization to serve people with disabilities. Both organizations had rich histories of providing exceptional and much needed services. Camp Courage was established in 1955 to service individuals with physical disabilities. Friendship Ventures was established in 1964, serving participants with developmental disabilities and special needs. The True Friends name was adopted in 2013.

True Friends provides life-changing experiences that enhance independence and self-esteem for children and adults with disabilities. Its programs and services include summer and winter camp, day camp, respite, therapy riding, travel and team building. It serves individuals with physical, developmental and learning disabilities.

Through partnerships with other organizations, True Friends also hosts a wide variety of health and education camps. With four Minnesota camps and a Twin Cities office in Plymouth, it serves almost 25,000 individuals of all abilities each year.

Norman C. Skalicky is CEO and Chairman of Stearns Bank, N.A. The bank has locations in St. Cloud, Pine City and North Branch.

The Norman C. Skalicky Foundation was formed in 2001 with the help of the Central Minnesota Community Foundation. Since then, the foundation has initiated several fundraising challenges and supported various community causes to benefit those in need.

Recipients of foundation funding include Catholic Charities, Habitat for Humanity, The Salvation Army, Boys & Girls Clubs, United Way, various food shelf organizations and several disaster relief efforts.



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PEOPLE & PLACES

King day celebration includes disability focus



Submitted photos

Minnesota's 33rd annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration was held in St. Paul at the Ordway Theater. A large crowd was on hand to enjoy performance and speeches, and honor award winners. Mae Jemison, a NASA astronaut for six years, was keynote speaker. She was the first woman of color in the world to travel to space. In addition to honoring King's legacy, the event celebrated women of color in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math). Chemist and philanthropist Reatha Clark King received the Governor's Civil Rights Legend Award,

while Katherine Coleman Johnson, a NASA research mathematician, received the Governor's Equity and Justice Legacy Award. Several elected officials spoke, and everyone enjoyed music and dance. The event is run every year by a committee, with help from groups include groups and commissioners for people with disability. The entire event was accessible, with accommodations offered for people who have visual disabilities and who are deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing. One of the groups involved is the Minneapolis/St. Paul Black Deaf Advocates.

Shriners Hospital Minneapolis for sale

The 10-acre Shriners Hospital Minneapolis campus is for sale. The listing was announced in February. It's part of a transition for Shriners' Twin Cities operation as it moves from traditional hospital to outpatient care. The Twin Cities office of Colliers International has listed the property. Shriners is in southeast Minneapolis along East River Parkway, near the border with St. Paul. It is just south of Interstate 94. The campus overlooks the Mississippi River. A new owner could use the current buildings or demolish them. The property is in a residential neighborhood with a mix of single-family and multi-family homes. A sale and move will be the end of an era for Shriners, which opened a hospital at the location in 1923. The current facilities date from 1991 and include a conference center, small hotel and skyway-connected parking ramp with 172 spaces. There is also an auditorium, operating rooms and even a small

prosthetics factory. Putting the property up for sale is the latest change for Shriners, which laid off more than 60 staff members in September 2018. The plan is to move to a smaller building, keeping the current location open until a move is made. The hospital itself has 104,000 square feet of space, with two operating rooms and 19 inpatient rooms. Shriners Hospitals for Children is a network of 22 non-profit medical facilities across North America. Children with orthopedic conditions, burns, spinal cord injuries, and cleft lip and palate are eligible for care and receive all services, regardless of the patients' ability to pay. Hospitals are owned and operated by Shriners International, a Freemasonry-related organization whose members are known as Shriners. Patients must be minors under the age of 18 and are not required to have any familial affiliation with the Shriners order nor Freemasonry.



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PEOPLE & PLACES

The Arc Minnesota names new CEO



Andrea Zuber

The Arc Minnesota has announced that Andrea Zuber will become its new chief executive officer, effective February 19. The Arc Minnesota Board of Directors confirmed the new leader at its January board meeting. Zuber will provide executive leadership, vision, and strategic direction for the nonprofit to provide consistent, essential services to support more

people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families throughout Minnesota. "The Arc Minnesota Board is excited to welcome Andrea Zuber as our new CEO based on her demonstrated ability to lead change that makes an impact," said Mike Wall, board chairman. "We look forward to her leadership as we work together to remove barriers and increase access to opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families throughout the state." Zuber is currently director of social services for Dakota County. She has spent her entire career leading the development and delivery of social services with extensive experience in transforming support for people with disabilities and their families. As a county department director, she championed full inclusion for people with disabilities and people with mental health challenges, integrated employment and housing, and was a recognized as a sponsor and leader in the implementation of diversity, inclusion and equity work. Her 22 years of experience in the disability field includes leadership roles at the Minnesota Department

of Human Services, Ramsey County and Arc Great Rivers. She has been actively engaged in partnerships and collaborations based on her experience with organizations that support inclusion for people with disabilities including People First Minnesota and the Minnesota Disability Law Center Citizens Advisory Council. She served on the University of Minnesota's Institute on Community Integration Citizens Advisory Council, the Minnesota Employment First Coalition, and was engaged in efforts related to the development and implementation of the Minnesota Olmstead Plan. "It is an honor and a privilege to lead The Arc Minnesota at this time," said Zuber. "Working together with all who believe in a bright future for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families, we will be committed to creating hope, connections, and opportunities to support all Minnesotans plan for and live their best lives." The Arc Minnesota provides services to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

Nine groups get access grants

Nine Twin Cities arts organizations were awarded ADA Access Improvement Grants by VSA Minnesota. The nonprofits will use the grants, totaling \$82,635, to make arts programs more accessible to people with disabilities. Since 2010, 149 projects by 76 different organizations have now been funded, totaling \$1,705,635. VSA Minnesota has administered the ADA Access Improvement Grant program since 2010 for the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council (MRAC). MRAC will administer the program after VSA ceases operations in September. The purpose is to enable nonprofit arts organizations in the seven-county Twin Cities area to improve their programs, projects, equipment, or facilities in ways that have the potential for significant or long-term impact in involving more people with disabilities as participants or patrons in arts programs. Art Works Eagan, Eagan, was award \$15,000 to install automatic door openers for six to eight strategically targeted doors in its facility. The project

PEOPLE AND PLACES To page 15

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Best Life Alliance has been a presence at the capitol for the past few years, working for a rate increase.

RALLIES

From page 1

on independence, choice, and inclusion. About 500 people attended the 2018 event, and a larger crowd is sought this year. Register online at <http://bit.ly/disabilityday2019>.

The event starts at 9 a.m. with check in and registration at the Department of Transportation cafeteria. That's followed at 9:30 by a brief training on issues and advocacy. Poster-making and tabling starts at 10 a.m., with the march and roll to the capitol at 10:30 a.m.

A rally in the capitol rotunda is to start at 11 a.m. and last until 11:45 a.m.

Those who attend the event are encouraged to set up meetings with House and Senate members from their home districts, and to work with legislators' staff to get even a few minutes of time. Disability Day volunteers will be available to help people get to meeting and provide other support.

The Arc Minnesota can answer questions about the event. Call Gene Martinez at 952-902-0855 or email genemartinez@arcminnesota.org. The deadline for requesting accommodations was February 5, but check to see what is available.

Other sponsors as of *Access Press* deadline are ACCRA, Advocating Change Together (ACT), Autism Society of Minnesota, Down Syndrome Association of Minnesota, Lifeworks, Metropolitan Center for Independent Living, Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance, Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities, Minnesota Council on Disability and Proof Alliance. Proof Alliance is the new name for Minnesota organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (MOFAS). Check the sponsors' web pages for additional

information on Disability Day.

Another big legislative event is ARRM/MOHR Disability Services Day at the Capitol, which is Tuesday, March 12. The capitol rotunda rally is at 10 a.m. The two organizations join forces each year to support community-based services for people with disabilities. The rally draws people from around Minnesota. Look for more information on the websites, www.rrm.org or www.mohrmn.org.

Registration forms are due by Friday, February 15. The sponsoring organizations will be coordinating meetings with state lawmakers, and will have a coat and break room available in the state Office Building.

Mental Health day on the Hill also brings together organizations that advocate for children and adults living with mental illnesses and their families. This event is 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Thursday, March 14. Buses from around the state will arrive in St. Paul, filled with advocates to make the case for supports and services.

An informational briefing at 9:30 a.m. will be followed by a rally from 11 a.m. until noon. Visits to legislators follow the rally. For questions Sam Smith at NAMI Minnesota is one of the contacts, at 651-645-2948 ext. 107 or ssmith@namimn.org.

Other groups will also have events and rallies. Several groups are sponsoring Tuesdays at the Capitol through MNCCD, with several dates still available. Information about available dates and how to sign up are on this month's Opportunities page.

Rallies and other events are also publicized on websites and Facebook pages, and on social media for organizations. Check often as events can be organized quickly, especially in response to legislative action or inaction. ■



Canoeing at Vinland's main campus in Loretto, Minnesota

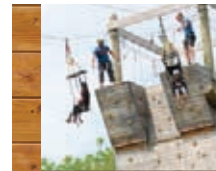
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Minnesotans with disabilities, their families and the public provided comments about the Olmstead Plan from December 20, 2018 - January 31, 2019. State agencies reviewed those comments and are proposing new amendments.

Starting February 26, 2019, Minnesotans are invited to provide comments on draft amendments proposed by state agencies.

For a copy of the draft amendments, information about how you can provide comments online or to register for a webinar, visit: www.mn.gov/olmstead



Public Comment Sessions

Webinars

Wednesday, Feb. 27 2:00-3:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Mar. 6 5:30-7:00 p.m.

Teleconference

Tuesday, Mar. 5 5:30-7:00 p.m.

To register for a webinar, visit: www.mn.gov/olmstead
To register for the teleconference, call 651.296.8081.

Note: To request accessible materials or accommodations due to a disability, contact mary.catherine@state.mn.us or call 651.296.9844. For meeting accommodations, requests must be received 72 hours in advance of the meeting.

ENJOY!



Spark theater + dance

Spark theater + dance present a workshop and performance this month, *The Supercilious ways of Walter Wading*. Performances are offered throughout the Twin Cities area. Read more in the Enjoy! listings.

Steps for Autism

Autism Society of Minnesota hosts the 19th annual family fun walk and the state's largest autism resource fair 8:30-11 a.m. Sat, March 3 at Southdale Center, Edina. Formerly known as Steps of Hope, the walk, dash and other activities are now Steps for Autism. Walk with friends and family and help raise funds for Minnesotans with autism. Prizes for top fundraisers. A full schedule and registration details are online. FFI: www.ausm.org

The Arc Gala

The Arc Minnesota hosts a gala fundraiser Sat, March 9 at Renaissance Depot, Mpls. This year's event raises funds for modernization and expansion of education and training models to support the changing needs of individuals with disabilities and their families around the state. Tickets start at \$175. FFI: www.arcminnesota.org

Beach Boys at PACER benefit

The Beach Boys changed America's music landscape, and they'll take the stage at the annual PACER Center benefit Sat, May 11. Tickets start at \$75. The event celebrates PACER's work on behalf of families of children with disabilities and children and youth who are bullied. All proceeds support PACER's programs. FFI: www.pacer.org

Sensory Friendly Days at Great Lakes Aquarium

Great Lakes Aquarium, 353 Harbor Dr., Duluth, hosts sensory friendly days, second Tue and last Sat of each month during the winter. Next dates are 5:30-7 p.m. Tue, Feb. 12 and March 12; Sat, Feb. 23 and March 30. Lowered exhibit volumes, dimmed lights, sensory bins and fidget-making offered. Tickets start at \$17.99. Discounts available. FFI: Inclusion Coordinator, Samantha Smingler, 218-740-2003, ssmingler@glaquarium.org

Young People's Concert: The Planets

Minnesota Orchestra presents a concert about the universe for students in grades 3-6, at Orchestra Hall, 1111 Nicollet Mall, Mpls. OC and ASL offered 10 and 11:35 a.m. Wed-Thu, Feb. 13-14. Tickets \$6.25 at the door. Lobby opens at 9 a.m. FFI: 612-371-5656; www.minnesotaorchestra.org/yp

Periphery: The Student Sit-Ins of 1960

Youth Performance Company presents a story of segregation and change, at Howard Conn Fine Arts Center, 1900 Nicollet Ave, Mpls. ASL offered 7:30 p.m. Sat, Feb. 16. Tickets \$15. VSA discount and other discounts available. FFI: 612-623-9080, www.youthperformanceco.org

Mr. Popper's Penguins

Children's Theatre Company presents the story of Mr. Popper and his talented penguins, at Children's Theatre Co., United Health Group Stage, 2400 3rd Ave. S., Mpls. For audiences ages four and older. AD and ASL offered 7 p.m. Fri, Feb. 15. SF offered 7 p.m. Fri, Feb. 22. To reserve ASL and AD seating, visit <https://my.childrenstheatre.org> and click on the ASL

or AD link at the bottom of the page. Assistive listening devices, induction loop system, Braille programs and sensory tours available upon request. Sensory-friendly performances aim to provide a supportive and welcoming environment for children and families affected by autism spectrum disorders and sensory, social and cognitive disabilities. Features include reduction of loud or jarring sounds, reductions in flashing or strobe lights, modification of the house lights, audience members are free to talk or move during the show, extra staff and volunteer support, designated Quiet Room and Take a Break Space, guidance and sensory supports (fidgets, earplugs, noise cancelling ear-muffs) available in the lobby before the show. Audience members are welcome to bring their own manipulative items, seat cushions, comfort objects and extra support items to the show. Families may select their own seats, but if special assistance or a buffer seat is needed, call 612-874-0400 or email access@childrenstheatre.org. For pre-visit resources to prepare for a visit, go to www.childrenstheatre.org/plan/sensory-friendly-programming. Tickets start at \$15. Discounts available. FFI: 612-874-0400, www.childrenstheatre.org

Antigone by Sophocles

Park Square Theatre presents a story of civil disobedience, at Park Square Theatre, Andy Boss Thrust Stage, 20 W. 7th Place, St. Paul. AD offered 7:30 p.m. Fri, Feb. 15. CO offered 7:30 p.m. Fri-Sat, Feb. 22-23 and 2 p.m. Sun, Feb. 24. AD/OC single ticket discount is half-price for patron and one guest with code ACC (regular \$40, \$60; previews \$27, \$37). Other discounts available. FFI: 651-291-7005, www.parksquaretheatre.org

The Skin of Our Teeth

Girl Friday Productions present's Thornton Wilder's story about the human spirit, at Park Square Theatre, Proscenium, 20 W. 7th Place, St. Paul. AD offered 7:30 p.m. Fri, Feb. 15. ASL offered 2 p.m. Sun, Feb. 24. OPC offered 7:30 p.m. Fri-Sat, March 1-2 and 2 p.m. Sun, March 3. Assistive listening devices available. ASL/AD/OC single ticket discount is half-price for patron and one guest with code ACC (regular \$40, \$60; previews \$27, \$37). Other discounts available. FFI: 651-291-7005, www.parksquaretheatre.org

Potted Potter: The Unauthorized Harry Experience – A Parody by Dan & Jeff

A touring company presents a hilarious Harry Potter parody, at Pantages Theatre, 710 Hennepin Ave. S., Mpls. ASL offered 7:30 p.m. Fri, Feb. 15. Tickets \$39.99 to \$99.99. Limited seats are available at the lowest price level to patrons using ASL interpreting on a first-come, first-served basis. Prices apply for up to two tickets for each patron requiring ASL interpreting. FFI: 612-339-7007, <https://hennepintheatretrust.org>

Flowers for the Room

Yellow Tree Theatre presents a story about love and disability, at Yellow Tree Theatre, 320 5th Ave. SE, Osseo. ASL offered 2 p.m. Sun, Feb. 17. Please request ASL services no later than the Wed before the scheduled performance (which is pay what one can). Large print playbill and advance script available with one-week notice. Assistive listening devices available. AD is offered if requested no later than two weeks before the performance. If cost is a barrier, \$5 tickets are available through the Arts for All program. Several ticket price options. FFI: 763-493-8733, <http://yellowtreetheatre.com>

Sense and Sensibility

Lyric Arts Company of Anoka presents the story of sisterhood and finding love, at Lyric Arts Main Street Stage, 420 E. Main St., Anoka. ASL offered 2 p.m. Sun, Feb. 17. Deadline has passed for reservations so contact the theater to see if an ASL performance has been scheduled. Lyric Arts reserves seats in Row I for parties including persons using wheelchairs or with limited mobility. Assisted listening devices available on request. Tickets \$29-32; \$5 discount for ASL seats. FFI: 763-422-1838, www.lyricarts.org

A Bronx Tale

A touring company presents Chazz Palminteri's story of 1960s life in the Bronx, at Orpheum Theatre, 910 Hennepin Ave. S., Mpls. OC offered 7:30 p.m. Thu, Feb. 21. ASL offered 1 p.m. Sun, Feb. 24. AD offered 6:30 p.m. Sun, Feb. 24. Tickets \$39-145. Limited seats are available at the lowest price level to patrons using ASL interpreting or captioning on a first-come, first-served basis. Prices apply for up to two tickets for each patron requiring ASL interpretation or captioning. Additional seats may be sold separately and at regular price. Audio description receivers may be used in any price level in the theatre. FFI: 612-339-7007, <https://hennepintheatretrust.org>

The Supercilious Ways of Walter Wading

SPARK theater + dance presents a workshop and performance for children ages 5-8 and their adult caregivers, at Plymouth Creek Center, 14800 34th Ave., Plymouth. ASL offered Sat, Feb. 23 for 10 a.m. workshop and 11 a.m. show. Free but reservations required. Other performances offered throughout the area. FFI: 763-509-5200, www.sparktheater.com

Planetarium Show: From Earth to the Universe

Bell Museum, 2088 Larpenteur Ave. W., St. Paul, hosts a show about the mysterious and beautiful night sky. ASL offered 12:45 p.m. Sat, Feb. 23. Tickets \$6-\$8. Planetarium tickets go on sale three weeks before the date of the show. Pre-purchasing is recommended because shows sell out. FFI: 612-626-9660, bellaccess@umn.edu

The Diary of Anne Frank

Rochester Civic Theatre Company presents the memoirs of a young Jewish girl and her family's efforts to escape the Nazis, at Rochester Civic Theatre Studio Theatre, 20 Civic Center Dr. SE, Rochester. ASL offered 7 p.m. Sat, Feb. 23. Please indicate ASL seating when booking tickets. Tickets \$31, discounts available. FFI: 507-282-8481, www.rochestercivictheatre.org

Stewardess!

History Theatre presents the story of early stewardesses and what they faced, at 30 E. 10th St., St. Paul. ASL and AD offered 2 p.m. Sun, Feb. 24. OC offered 7:30 p.m. Sat, March and 2 p.m. Sun, March 3. Specify the services need. Accessible entrance on the east side of the building off Cedar Street. Six spaces for wheelchairs, plus companion seats. Hearing enhancement devices and Braille or large print playbills are available. Tickets reduced to \$25 for OC/AD/ASL patrons (regular \$25-56). Other discounts available. FFI: phone: 651-292-4323, www.historytheatre.com

Sun Supper: Family Portrait: Stories from our Community

Penumbra Theatre teaching artists guide story tables in sharing and telling passed-down stories, at Penumbra Theatre, 270 N. Kent St., St. Paul. Event includes a meal. ASL offered 4 p.m. Sun, Feb. 24. For inquiries about ASL, contact 651-288-7787 or whitney.blountsm@penumbraetheatre.org. Tickets \$15. Discounts available. FFI: 651-224-3180, www.penumbraetheatre.org

Art of Me Performance

Upstream Arts and Merrick, Inc. present an original performance by artists with disabilities, co-created from structured improvisations led by Upstream Arts teaching artists, at Merrick, Inc., 3210 Labore Rd, Vadnais Heights. ASL offered 4 p.m. Thu, Feb. 28. Free. FFI: 612-331-4584, www.upstreamarts.org

Iphigenia and Other Daughters

Theatre Unbound presents the story of the women of Greek tragedy, at Gremlin Theatre, 550 Vandalia St., St. Paul. AD offered 7:30 p.m. Thu, Feb. 28. Tickets \$18-22; 612-721-1186, www.theatreunbound.com

[Title of Show]

Normandale Department of Theatre presents a play about struggling playwrights, at Normandale Community College, Fine Arts Building, Black Box Theatre, 9700 France Ave. S., Bloomington. ASL offered 7:30 p.m. Fri, March 1. Make reservations in advance and request seating near the interpreters as seating is limited in the Black Box Theatre. Tickets \$10. Discounts available. FFI: 952-358-8884, www.normandale.edu/theatre

Devised Theatre

North Hennepin Community College Theatre presents the world premiere of a tale about politics, technology and spirituality, at North Hennepin Community College Fine Arts Center, Black Box Theatre, 7411 85th Ave. N., Brooklyn Park. ASL offered 7:30 p.m. Fri, March 1. Tickets \$12. Discounts available. FFI: 763-493-0543, www.nhcc.edu/theatre

The Biggest Little House in the Forest

Children's Theatre Company stages an original production of the charming tale, at Children's Theatre Company Cargill Stage, 2400 3rd Ave. S., Mpls. Best suited for preschoolers. AD and ALS offered 2 p.m. Sat, March 2. To reserve seating in the ASL section, enter the "ASL-19" promo code in the upper right hand corner. To reserve AD seating, enter the "AD-19" promo code. Assistive listening devices, induction loop system, Braille programs and sensory tours available upon request. Tickets start at \$15. Discounts available. FFI: 612-874-0400; www.childrenstheatre.org

Actually

Minnesota Jewish Theatre Company present an adult-appropriate drama about perception and reality, at Highland Park Community Center Theater, 1978 Ford Parkway, St. Paul. AD offered 1 p.m. Sun, March 3. Tickets: \$23-38; AD patrons \$23. FFI: 651-647-4315, <http://mnjewishtheatre.org>

Slow Down and Look

Mpls. Institute of Art, 2400 3rd Ave. S., Mpls., encourages patrons to look closely and deeply to appreciate art. Interpreted tours begin on the second

ENJOY! To page 15

New home sought for arts calendar

VSA Minnesota's announcement that it will shut down at the end of September means that its arts and disability-related programs need new stewards. Although some grant and education programs have found new homes, one program with an uncertain future is the accessible arts calendar. A version of this calendar appears every month in *Access Press*.

The calendar is an important resource, not just to *Access Press* readers but to all who appreciate arts accessibility. VSA Minnesota prominently features the calendar on its website. The calendar provides information about accessible performances, including specific accommodations, ticket prices, performance time and dates, and information on the performances themselves.

The calendar is a useful resource for anyone trying to plan an evening or afternoon out. It includes events and activities for all ages. It would be a loss to Minnesotans with disabilities if the calendar didn't continue. *Access Press* would use a future calendar but doesn't have the staff capacity to take on the calendar as a project.

Any organization interested in continuing the calendar should contact VSA Minnesota at 612-332-3888, or info@vsamn.org

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OPPORTUNITIES



MAKE IT YOUR DAY!

The Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (MNCCD) is seeking hosts for Disability Day at the Capitol during the 2019 legislative session. Being a day sponsor is a MNCCD member benefit for no additional cost. Day at the Capitol is held 9:30-11 a.m. Tuesdays in the Minnesota Department of Transportation Cafeteria. There is a charge if food and beverages are desired. MNCCD members are on hand to provide a briefing on current disability policy issues, information to share with legislators, assistance with locating legislative offices, and assistance for anyone wishing to make a sign or tell a personal story. Stories can be powerful and effective in conveying a message.

As of *Access Press* deadline, open dates included Feb. 12, March 19, April 16, 23 and 30, and May 14. Days are held whether or not there is a sponsor but why not take advantage of the chance to bring a group and meet others during the session? Contact Alicia McCallum and Jean Bender, co-chairs of the MNCCD Grassroots Committee at: grassroots@mnccd.org to be a day sponsor.

ADVOCACY

2019 Minnesota Self Advocacy Conference

The 2019 Minnesota Self Advocacy Conference, Inclusion Means Everyone, is Fri-Sat, March 8-9, at Mystic Lake Center, Prior Lake. Conference and room fees are on the conference website. Forty workshops are being planned. Enjoy door prizes, a photo booth and art projects. Every other year Advocating Change Together and the conference planning committee organizations put on a two-day state self-advocacy conference. Typically, 400-500 self-advocates and allies attend to make friends, learn about self-advocacy issues, and become connected to the larger self-advocacy movement. What makes the conference unique is its "nothing about us without us" approach. Two-thirds of the sessions are led or co-led by self-advocates and all voting members of the conference planning committee are self-advocates. FFI: <https://conference.selfadvocacy.org>

Free civil rights training

Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities and Department of Human Rights has released a package of resources around the Bill of Rights for Supervised Living Facilities. The Package includes an easy-read guide, instructor handbook, resident workbook, and four videos that help to explain four specific rights. Minnesota's Olmstead Plan was developed to ensure that people with disabilities are living, learning, working, and enjoying life in the most integrated setting. Prevention of Abuse and Neglect is one of the topics included in a comprehensive plan to educate people with disabilities and their families, mandated reporters and the general public about how to identify and report abuse, and how to prevent it from occurring. FFI: www.mnccd.org

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

AuSM skillshops sampler

AuSM Skillshops are mini-workshops for people with autism, family members and caregivers. AuSM Minnesota offers many skillshops, on a wide variety of topics. Skillshops are held at the AuSM office, 2380 Wycliff St. Suite 102, St. Paul and at partnering locations throughout the Twin Cities. Costs per workshop are \$25 for AuSM members, \$40 for non-members and \$10 for people with autism and students.

Neurodevelopment and ASD: What Does the Research Say?

offered 7-9 p.m. Tue, Feb. 26 at Autism Society of Minnesota. Presented by Eric Ringgenberg, AuSM education program manager. In the last decade, advances in technology and neurological inquiry have furthered our understanding of the neurological basis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). While onset and trajectory of individual development vary widely, an understanding of neurodevelopmental processes highlights the differences correlated with ASD across neurodevelopment. As this level of understanding increases, how can it inform our understanding of brain-based differences and daily practice? Preregister. FFI: www.ausm.org

PACER workshop sampling

PACER Center offers many useful free or low-cost workshops and other resources for families of children with any disabilities. Workshops are at PACER Center, 8161 Normandale Blvd., Bloomington, unless specified. Workshops are offered throughout the state, with some workshops available online. Advance

registration is required for all workshops. At least 48 hours' notice is needed for interpretation. Many workshops are live-streamed. Check out PACER's website and link to the newsletter of statewide workshops that allows participants to pick and choose sessions designed for their needs. Workshops are free but advance registration required. FFI: PACER, 952-838-9000, 800-537-2237, www.pacer.org

Early Childhood and Assistive Technology offered online 2-4 p.m. Tue, Feb. 19. Augmentative and alternative communication tools can help individuals say whatever they want to say to whomever they want to say it to whenever they want to say it. Live captioning provided. Co-sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Education

Tech for Girls Club: Chariot Racing with Robots offered 10-11:30 a.m. Sat, Feb. 16 at PACER Center. Girls with disabilities will build and decorate their own chariot out of a variety of craft materials. Completed chariots will be attached to Sphero robots. Robots will be coded to drive, race, and battle other chariots. The workshop will use the CoderDojo curriculum. Provided in partnership with Thomson Reuters

Becoming an Active Partner in Your Child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) offered 6:30-8:30 p.m. Tue, Feb. 19 at PACER Center. The workshop, for parents of children ages three to five, will provide an overview of the early childhood special education process and how to take an active lead in the IEP process. Live Web Streaming Available. Offered by PACER's Family Information and Resources Project and funded in part by a contract from the Minnesota Department of Education.

INFO & ASSISTANCE

MCIL hosts classes and activities

The Metropolitan Center for Independent Living provides many life skills classes as well as fun outings and events for people with disabilities. MCIL is at 530 N. Robert Street, St Paul and most activities are there or start there. Classes and events are listed on the website, www.mcil-mn.org. Click on "Classes Groups and Sessions" for updated information or to print their calendar. Please give two weeks' notice if the alternative format or other accommodations are needed. Events are free, accessible and mostly scent-free. The People of Color with disabilities group meets 5:30-8 p.m. the third Thu of each month. FFI: 651-603-2030

Hope for Recovery workshop

NAMI Minnesota (National Alliance on Mental Illness) hosts a free workshop that provides information on mental illnesses, treatments, crisis management, suicide prevention, the mental health system and local resources along with practical strategies for helping a loved one or friend. It is 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Sat, March 9, at NAMI Minnesota, 1919 University Ave., Suite 400, St. Paul. The workshop is for family and friends of a teen or adult living with a mental illness and people living with a mental illness who are doing well in their recovery. Preregister. FFI: 651-645-2948, "classes" at www.namimn.org

Classes and support in Sauk Rapids

Independent Lifestyles, Inc., 215 North Benton Dr., Sauk Rapids, offers many support groups and classes, for free or a small fee. New in 2019 is a free adult coloring and conversation, 3-4 p.m. Tue, Feb. 19 and March 19. Bring supplies or use those at the center. Also new is the Adult Social Activity, with snacks, crafts and bingo, 1-3 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month. Upcoming dates are Feb. 27 and March 27th. \$3 cost. FFI: Marsha at 320-281-2049. Advocates for Independence meet 2-4 p.m., first and third Wed, for persons with disabilities who wish to increase leadership and assertiveness skills. Other activities include adapted martial arts with free one-month introductory classes, special events and more. FFI: 320-281-2042

Mental health support offered

In the Twin Cities NAMI has about two dozen family support groups, more than 20 support groups for people living with a mental illness, anxiety support groups, groups for veterans and other groups. Led by trained facilitators, groups provide help and support.

Parent resource groups are facilitated by a parent who has a child with a mental illness and who has been trained to lead support groups. A group meets 6:30-8 p.m. on the second and fourth Monday at Eagle Brook Church, 2401 East Buffalo St., White Bear Lake. FFI: Jody Lyons 651-645-2948 x109.

Family support groups help families who have a relative with a mental illness. A group meets at 6:30 p.m. the second and fourth Wed at Centennial United Methodist Church, 1524 Co. Rd. C-2 West, Roseville. FFI: Anne Mae. 651-484-0599.

Open Door Anxiety and Panic support groups help people cope with anxiety disorders. One group meets 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. the second and fourth Thu in Room 104, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 700 Snelling Ave. S., St. Paul. Another group meets 6:30-8 p.m. the first and third Thu at Woodland Hills Church, 1740 Van Dyke St., St. Paul.

A peer support group is offered for LGBTQ adults living with a mental illness. The group meets 1-2:30 p.m. Sat, Living Table United Church of Christ, 3805 E. 40th St, Mpls. FFI: David, 612-920-3925, 651-645-2948.

Young Adult NAMI Connection is a free support group for persons ages 16-20. One group meets 7-8:30 the first and third Thu at Friends Meeting House, 1725 Grand Ave., St. Paul. A group also meets 7-8:30 p.m. on the first and third Thu at Dental Office of Dr. Crandall & Associates, 2300 East Highway 96, White Bear Lake. The group is facilitated by young adults who live with mental illnesses and are doing well in recovery. A full calendar of all events is offered online. FFI: 651-645-2948, www.namihelps.orgbook

Vision loss group offers activities

Vision Loss Resources provides free and low-cost activities in the Twin Cities for people who are blind or visually impaired. Life skills classes for those with low vision; card games, craft classes, book clubs, walking groups, dinners out, special outings and technology classes are among the offerings. Participants need to RSVP to participate, at least three working days prior to an event. The calendar is also available on the Vision Loss Resources website and as a printable large-print PDF document for those who wish to print their own or additional copies. A new policies handbook will be introduced in February. It has been developed to help everyone understand VLR policies, practices and eligibility requirements. Copies will be available in both the St. Paul and Minneapolis locations. All participants attending Community Center activities will need to sign the one-page summary and community center participation agreement form. FFI: RSVP hotline, 612-843-3439; activity line and audio calendar, 612-253-5155, www.visionlossresources.org

Free mental health first aid course

NAMI Minnesota (National Alliance on Mental Illness) will hold a free Mental Health First Aid training course designed to teach the basic first aid skills needed to help a person who is experiencing a mental health problem or crisis. This course is 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Sat, March 2 at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 700 Snelling Ave S., St. Paul. It is not intended for professionals who have a background in mental health. Preregister. FFI: 651-645-2948, "classes" at namimn.org

St. Cloud Area Parkinson's Disease group

St. Cloud Area Parkinson's Disease Support Group typically meets 1-2 p.m. third Mon of each month at ILICIL Independent Lifestyles, 215 N. Benton Dr., Sauk Rapids. Next meetings are Tue, Feb. 18 due to Presidents' Day and Mon, March 18. Meetings are open to those diagnosed with Parkinson's, their families, caregivers and the general public. The free group provides support, education, and awareness about the disease. FFI: 320-529-9000

QPR - Suicide prevention classes

QPR is a free, one-hour presentation sponsored by NAMI Minnesota that covers the three steps anyone can learn to help prevent suicide - Question, Persuade and Refer. Just like CPR, QPR is an emergency response to someone in crisis and can save lives. It is the most widely taught gatekeeper training program in the United States, and more than one million adults have been trained in classroom settings in more than 48 states. The QPR classes will be offered 5:30-6:30 p.m. Fri, Feb. 15 at NAMI Minnesota, 1919 University Ave., W., Suite 400. FFI: 651-645-2948 x198, "classes" at namimn.org.

Adult support groups offered

AuSM offers free support groups for adults with autism spectrum disorder. Groups include those for adult family members, women with autism spectrum disorders and independent adults with autism. Check the website for upcoming groups. Groups meet at the AuSM offices at 2380 Wycliff St. FFI: 651-647-1083 ext. 10, www.ausm.org

VOLUNTEER

Book Readers Sought

Volunteers are a valuable resource at Radio Talking Book, broadcasting local news and information programs to blind and print-impaired listeners from sites around the state and at the Communication Center in St. Paul. The goal is to provide accurate and timely information to our thousands of listeners throughout Minnesota and across the nation. FFI: Roberta Kitlinski, 651-539-1423

Open the Door to Education

Help adults reach their educational goals and earn their GED. Tutor, teach or assist in a classroom with the Minnesota Literacy Council. Give 2-3 hours a week and help people expand their opportunities and change their lives through education. Provides training and support and accommodations for volunteers with disabilities. FFI: Allison, 651-251-9110, volunteer@mnliteracy.org, <http://tinyurl.com/adult-opportunities>

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ACCESSIBLE MOVIES



On a cold winter day, a trip to the movies can be a welcome diversion. But be aware there have been changes in Minnesota's accessible film offerings.

The IMAX theater at the Minnesota Zoo in Apple Valley closed at the end of January. The zoo's 500-seat immersive 3D theater opened in 1997.

The zoo's IMAX theater is owned by a group of private investors affiliated with other IMAX theaters. As of now it's not known what will happen to the theater space.

In the meantime, the Science Museum of Minnesota Omnitheater still offers the immersive movie experience enjoyed by IMAX fans. The museum and theater are at 120 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul.

Tickets are \$9.95 adults, \$8.95 senior age 65 and older, and children ages 4-12. For online ordering add a \$3 service fee. Access features of films include captioning, audio description, amplification, Spanish alternate language (via headset) and large print script.

The Greatest Places, Living in the Age of Airplanes, Journey to Space, Tornado Alley and National Parks Adventure are among the films now playing. The Greatest Places, Tornado Alley and Journey to Space end Feb. 28. FFI: 651-221-9444 or 1-800-221-9444, option 2 for Omnitheater film times, reservations or questions, info@smm.org.

There is an extra charge to visit the museum. To request accommodations for museum exhibits, call at least 72 hours in advance. FFI: 651-221-9406. The museum is open Sun, Tue, Wed 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m., Thu-Fri-Sat 9:30 a.m.-9 p.m. Closed Mon.

Here's a guide to additional theater accommodations from VSA Minnesota:

For other movie theaters, check ahead before planning a trip. Almost all theaters now have some area for wheelchair or power scooter seating, as well as companion seating. Many theaters routinely offer assisted listening devices. Websites provide icons to click to find assistive options.

Accommodations for other disabilities vary by theater and even among theaters in a chain or group. Accommodations can also change over time, so it's a worth a call or email to a theater to see what is new. Be aware that not every movie is designed to be accessible, so having an assistive technology doesn't guarantee the chance to see a new movie.

Rear Window Captioning displays reversed captions on a light-emitting diode (LED) text display which is mounted in the rear of a theater. Patrons who are deaf or hard-of-hearing use transparent acrylic panels attached to their seats to reflect the captions, so they appear superimposed on the movie screen. The reflective panels are portable and adjustable, enabling the caption user to

sit anywhere in the theater without bothering patrons in surrounding seats.

DVS Theatrical presents concise descriptive narration of visual cues, including actions, settings, scene changes, facial expressions and silent movement, through an FM or infrared system, making movies more meaningful to people with vision loss. The moviegoer hears the narration on a headset without disturbing other audience members and at no extra cost.

CaptiView closed caption viewing systems allow moviegoers to read movie dialogue from the comfort of their seat anywhere in the auditorium.

Digital Theatre Systems or DTS superimposes open-captions over the bottom of movie theater screens.

Fidelio is a wireless audio system that delivers descriptive narration for people with vision loss and amplified sound for people with hearing loss. Patrons can get a compact audio receiver with a plug-in headset at the box office or bring their own headset. Descriptive narration and closed captioning availability are subject to the content made available from distributors.

Other websites outline additional options. Captionfish, at www.captionfish.com, can help moviegoers find captioned films by city. The American Council of the Blind has an Audio Description Project to enhance movies as well as museums, national parks and live events. It includes many links to audio-described DVDs, Blu-ray discs, television programs and more. Visit www.acb.org for more information.

Here's a list of movie theater access options, from VSA Minnesota and the theaters themselves:

Landmark Theatres has three theaters in Minnesota, Edina Cinema, 3911 W. 50th St., Edina, 952-920-8796; Uptown Theatre, 2906 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis, 612-823-3005 and Lagoon Cinema: 1320 Lagoon Ave.,

Minneapolis, 612-823-3020. At its Minnesota theaters Landmark offers CaptiView and Fidelio. FFI: www.landmarktheatres.com

AMC Theatres offer assisted listening devices available at all of its theaters, according to the main AMC website Some theaters offer CaptiView and Fideleo. The Roseville and Eden Prairie theaters offer monthly sensory film experiences through the national Autism Society.

AMC Eden Prairie Mall 18 Theatres, 8251 Flying Cloud Drive Suite 4000, Eden Prairie Shopping Center. Park in upper level lot between Sears and Kohl's. Accessible films are in Auditorium 7. FFI: 952-656-0010; movie times, 888-262-4386

AMC Showplace Inver Grove 16, 5567 Bishop Ave., Inver Grove Heights, has generally offered open captioned films Wed-Thu. FFI: 651-453-1916; movie times, 1-888-262-4386.

AMC Rosedale 14 Theatres, 850 Rosedale Center, Roseville. Accessible films are in Auditorium 14. FFI: 651-604-9347, 1-888-262-4386, www.amctheatres.com

Marcus Theatres has theaters throughout Minnesota and other Midwest states. Closed captioning, open captioning, descriptive narration and assistive listening devices are available. Options vary by location. Marcus has assisted listening devices and CaptiView at its Minnesota locations.

Marcus Oakdale Ultrascreen Cinemas, 5677 Hadley Ave. N., Oakdale. FFI: 651-770-4994. This theater uses DTS to superimpose open-captions over the bottom of select movies. Subscribe to an Open Caption weekly e-mailer at the theater website.

Marcus Lakes Cinema, 4351 Steubner Rd., Hermantown, and **Marcus Duluth Theatre**, 300 Harbor Drive, Duluth, offer Rear Window Captioning and DVS. FFI: Hermantown, 218-729-0334; Duluth, 218-722-1573, www.marcustheatres.com

Regal Cinemas is a national movie chain, with one theater in Minnesota. Go to www.regmovies.com to learn more.

Regal Eagan 16, 2055 Cliff Road, Eagan, offers accessible films in Auditorium 15. Check movies for accessibility icons. FFI: 651-452-8329, www.regmovies.com

Regal's longtime Brooklyn Center theater has closed. ShowPlace ICON has one Minnesota theater, Showplace ICON at West End, 1625 West End Blvd., St. Louis Park. It offers assistive listening devices, closed captioning and descriptive video services. FFI: 763-515-1177, www.showplaceicon.com

In Memoriam

Karrigan was bird lover, ACT volunteer

John R. Karrigan is remembered as a longtime supporter of and volunteer for the disability organization Advocating Change Together (ACT) and other groups. What some of his friends in the disability community might not know is that he was also a veteran bird watcher or "birder" and a writer about birds and nature.

Karrigan died in January after a 10-month battle with metastatic melanoma. He was 74 and lived in Minneapolis' Powderhorn Park area.

A native of South Dakota, Karrigan was a graduate of Aberdeen Central High School. He attended college in South Dakota, Arizona and Minnesota.

He was a lifelong learner who enjoyed reading about history and current events. Karrigan was dedicated to his volunteer work with ACT, where he spent time and energy for several years.

He also wrote for many years for Minneapolis community newspapers, the now-defunct *Powderhorn Paper* and *Southside Pride*. At *Southside Pride* he was a beloved bird and nature columnist for many years. He was frequently seen in and around Powderhorn Park, wearing his binoculars to identify bird species. Readers enjoyed his work about birds, nature and the people of Powderhorn Park. In recent issues he had written about his cancer treatments.

Karrigan is survived by his long-time partner Bonnie Rae, siblings and other relatives and friends. Services have been held. Memorials are preferred to ACT or Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis.

Polio led to wheelchair sports

Dennis W. Olson's childhood bout with poliomyelitis led to time as a wheelchair athlete in adulthood. Olson died in January at the age of 78.

A native of Donnelly, he spent his childhood and early teen years on a farm. At age 8 he contracted poliomyelitis and spent an entire year away from his family hospitalized in Minneapolis. He was a patient of the renowned Sister Kenny, whose often-innovate treatments offered good outcomes.

Olson grew up in a largely inaccessible world, walking with a brace and crutches. An obituary stated that "His courage, ingenuity and brute strength allowed him to find a way to achieve what he needed and was often a source of amazement, admiration — and even sometimes alarm — to others."

His family moved to International Falls during his teen years. Olson married and raised six children, working as a life insurance salesman and enjoying many family activities. The family lived in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

He moved to the Twin Cities area in the 1990s and became active in wheelchair basketball and softball, playing for the Courage Center Rolling Twins from 1995 to 2005. The teams made trips to national tournaments around the country.

He is survived by children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Services have been held. ■



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AROUND THE DIAL

Disability and Progress

KFAI Radio, 6-7 p.m.
Thursdays. Host Sam Jasmine and guests explore a wide range of topics important to people with disabilities. KFAI is at 90.3 FM in Minneapolis and 106.7 in St. Paul. Listeners outside of the Twin Cities, or those looking for a past show,

will find show archives online at www.kfai.org Look for the link to archives and for Disability and Progress. Listeners need to have a Real Audio Player downloaded so that this will work. A smartphone app is also available to hear archived programs.

To comment or make suggestions, for future shows, call 612-341-3144, or email disabilityandprogress@samjasmine.com. Note this is a new email address. Postal mail may be sent to KFAI, 1808 Riverside Ave. S., Disability and Progress, Box 116, Minneapolis MN 55454.

Disability Viewpoints

An award-winning public access television show by and for people with disabilities, is on hiatus as of the start of 2019. Mark Hughes and his team of co-hosts featured current news, interesting people and groups, and events in Minnesota's disability community. Some shows are archived on YouTube, so search for Disability Viewpoints on that web channel to find past shows. Disability Viewpoints has a Facebook page, and past shows are highlighted on www.ctv15.org

Hoodwave Disability Radio

Daniel and Leah Hood believe that having a voice is very important, and a way to influence change. The Hoods are *looking for podcast content and seek partners, as well as a quiet place to produce podcasts*. Learn more at www.hoodwave.org or the HoodWave Radio Facebook page, at HoodWave Disability Radio.

OTHER PROGRAMMING

Access Press is interested in listing other regularly scheduled broadcast, cablecast or podcast programs by and for people with disabilities. Programming needs to have a tie to Minnesota or the Upper Midwest. Anyone with questions can contact jane@accesspress.org



RADIO TALKING BOOK

Books Available Through Faribault

Books broadcast on the Minnesota Radio Talking Book Network are available through the Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library in Faribault. Call 1-800-722-0550, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mon through Fri. The catalog is online at www.mnbtbl.org, click on the link Search the Library Catalog. Persons living outside of Minnesota may obtain copies of books via an inter-library loan by contacting their home state's Network Library for the National Library Service.

Listen to the Minnesota Radio Talking Book, either live or archived program from the last week, on the Internet at www.mnssb.org/rtb or on handheld devices via the SERO app (iOS or Android). Call the Talking Book Library for a password to the site. To find more information about Minnesota Radio Talking Book Network events go to the Facebook site, Minnesota Radio Talking Book.

Audio information about the daily book listings is also on the National Federation for the Blind (NFB) Newslines. Register for the NFB Newslines by calling 651-539-1424.

Access Press is featured on It Makes a Difference, 9 p.m. Sun. The sampling published monthly in *Access Press* doesn't represent the full array of programming. Many more programs and books are available.

Donate to the State Services for the Blind at mn.gov/deed/ssbdonate

Chautauqua*

Tuesday – Saturday 4 a.m.

Notes from No Man's Land, nonfiction by Eula Biss, 2018. Insights about America's continuing struggle with racism, especially with regard to Hispanic and African Americans. Read by Judith Johannessen. Seven broadcasts; begins Fri, Feb. 22.

Past is Prologue*

Monday – Friday 9 a.m.

Sons of Freedom, nonfiction by Geoffrey Wawro, 2018. America's contribution to World War I is one of the great stories of the twentieth century, yet it has all but vanished from historical view. Read by Roger Sheldon. 26 broadcasts; begins Tue, Feb. 26.

Bookworm*

Monday – Friday 11 a.m.

Darker Than Midnight, fiction by Maggie Shayne, 2005. A former cop experiences blackouts. He doesn't know if he killed his wife, and someone doesn't want him to remember. Read by Jan Anderson. 13 broadcasts; begins Thu, Feb. 21.

Choice Reading*

Monday – Friday 4 p.m.

Nevada Days, fiction by Bernardo Atxaga, 2017. A Basque family emigrates from Spain to Nevada but contemplates returning home when violence strikes nearby. Read by Don Lee. 14 broadcasts; begins Wed, Feb. 20.

PM Report*

Monday – Friday 8 p.m.

In Chocolate We Trust, nonfiction by Peter Curie, 2018. The chocolate company, the school trust, and the Pennsylvania town that all bear Milton Hershey's name are a unique hybrid of industry, government and philanthropy. Read by Stevie Ray. Nine broadcasts; begins Thu, Feb. 14.

Night Journey*

Monday – Friday 9 p.m.

The Other Woman, fiction by Daniel Silva, 2018. Israeli intelligence chief Gabriel Allon is in Vienna assisting the defection of a notorious spy. When the spy is murdered, all evidence points to Allon as the killer. Read by Yelva Lynfield. 16 broadcasts; begins Tue, Feb. 19. – V

Off the Shelf*

Monday – Friday 10 p.m.

Flower Towards the Sun, fiction by Marcia R. Rudin, 2017. Two women leave Europe to marry in the US. But a bureaucratic slip places the Norwegian woman with a Jewish tailor in Milwaukee, and the Ukrainian woman with a Protestant farmer in North Dakota. Read by Isla Hejny. Nine broadcasts; begins Wed, Feb. 20.

Potpourri*

Monday – Friday 11 p.m.

Autonomy, nonfiction by Lawrence D. Burns with Christopher Shulgan, 2018. Automotive and tech world insiders

investigate the quest to develop and perfect the driverless car. Read by Jim Tarbox. 14 broadcasts; begins Mon, Feb. 25.

Good Night Owl*

The Best Kind of People, fiction by Zoe Whittall, 2018. George and Joan Woodbury are professionals living in an affluent suburb. Then George is accused of sexual misconduct by students at his daughter's school. Read by Therese Murray. 12 broadcasts; begins Wed, Feb. 27. – L, S

After Midnight*

Tuesday-Saturday 1 a.m.

Miss Ex-Yugoslavia, nonfiction by Sofija Stefanovic, 2018. When she was 22, writer Stefanovic was a contestant in a beauty pageant to crown "the beauty queen of a country that no longer exists." Read by Lannois Neely. 11 broadcasts; begins Tue, Feb. 19. – L, S

Weekend Books

Your Personal World, 1 p.m. Sat, presents *Have Dog, Will Travel* by Stephen Kuusisto, followed by *Unblinded* by Traci Medford-Rosow and *Kevin Coughlin*, both read by Beverly Burchett. – L

For the Younger Set, 11 a.m. Sun, presents *Stay Sweet* by Siobhan Vivian, read by Connie Jamison.

Poetic Reflections, noon Sun, presents *Half Hazard* by Kristen Tracy, read by Holly Sylvester; followed by *Palominos Near Tuba City* by Denise Sweet, read by Michele Potts. – L.

The Great North, 4 p.m. Sun, presents *Flames of Discontent* by Gary Kaunonen, read by Jan Anderson.

All times listed are US Central Standard Time.

Abbreviations: V – Violence, L – Offensive Language, S – Sexual Situations, RE – Racial Epithets, G – Gory Depictions

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PEOPLE AND PLACES

From page 8

is necessary to make its gallery and event spaces easily accessible for clients, volunteers and community members with mobility challenges.

Cedar Cultural Center, Minneapolis, was awarded \$15,000 for a website project. With the support of a web accessibility service, Cedar Cultural Center will audit, assess, test and update its website to become more accessible to people who utilize screen readers. As part of this project, Cedar staff will undergo training on web accessibility standards to ensure that they are equipped to understand and maintain accessibility as the site and standards are updated.

Drama Interaction, Chaska, was awarded \$1,407. Drama Interaction proposes the purchase of sound equipment to better serve participants in classes and audiences.

In the Heart of the Beast Puppet & Mask Theatre, Minneapolis, was

awarded \$9,000. In the Heart of the Beast seeks funding to increase the accessibility of its largest annual event, the May Day parade, ceremony and festival. More than 60,000 people attended the parade last year. The theater wishes to hire an accessibility coordinator to help the theater establish long-term relationships with communities of people with special needs, redesign its studio space layout for community workshops, and increase accessibility offerings the day of the event.

Jewish Community Center of Greater St. Paul, St. Paul, was awarded \$7,500. The grant will be used to increase the number of people with hearing loss attending JCC cultural arts events through the installation of a frequency modulation assistive listening devices in its Center for Performing Arts.

Lakeshore Players Theatre, White Bear Lake, was awarded \$4,667.

Lakeshore will buy open captioning equipment to continue to become more accessible to all individuals.

Leonardo's Basement, Minneapolis, was awarded \$5,345. Leonardo's Basement will procure hardware that will support individuals with cognitive disabilities and physical impairments. This will include an automatic door operator, adjustable height workbenches and noise-reducing headphones. Support from VSA Minnesota will help make arts learning workshops accessible to all 14,000 students served annually.

Pillsbury House Theatre, Minneapolis, was awarded \$15,000. Funds will be used to transform a neglected room on the second floor into a sensory room for young people in programs who have learning difficulties, developmental disabilities or sensory impairments. The special room will have a myriad of interactive elements that would encourage young people to engage and explore the environment which will have a positive effect on their ability to react and interact with the larger world around them.

Playwrights' Center, Minneapolis, was awarded \$9,716. The project is

designed to deepen the Playwrights' Center's outreach by improving the accessibility of its services and resources for people with disabilities, who are underrepresented among its fellowships, mentorships, membership and educational programs.

The grant applications were reviewed and scored by a panel. Panelists included Nicholas Ambroz, Brainerd, VSA Minnesota Board; Kit Bix, Minnetonka, freelance theatre reviewer; Sam Jasmine, Plymouth, VSA Minnesota Board, KFAI Disability & Progress director, Cindy Tarshish, Minnetonka, ADA Minnesota; and John Work, Stillwater, TicketWorks.

Founded in 1986, VSA Minnesota is a statewide, nonprofit organization whose mission is to create a community where people with disabilities can learn through, participate in and access the arts. It is an affiliate of VSA, a program of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC.

The next grant application deadline is May 1. \$82,635 will be available to award. Go to www.vsamn.org for details. ■

ENJOY!

From page 11

floor rotunda on the first Sun of the month at 1, except as noted differently. Other interpreted tours and memory loss tours can be scheduled through the tour office. ASL offered 1 p.m. Sun, March 3. Free. FFI: 612-870-6323, www.artsmia.org

As You Like It

Guthrie Theater presents Shakespeare's tale of love and adventure, at Guthrie Theater, Wurtele Thrust, 818 2nd St. S., Mpls. OC offered 1 p.m. Sun, March 3; Wed, March 6; March 9 and Sun, March 10. AD and OC offered 7:30 p.m. Fri, March 8. ASL offered 7:30 p.m. Fri, March 16. ASL and AD offered 1 p.m. Sat, March 16 with sensory tour at 10:30 a.m. Ticket reduced to \$20 for AD/ASL, \$25 for OC (regular \$15-93). FFI: 612-377-2224, www.guthrietheater.org

The Government Inspector

Theatre in the Round Players presents a farce about bureaucracy and buffoonery, at Theatre in the Round, 245 Cedar Ave., Mpls. AD offered 2 p.m. Sun, March 3. Tactile tour at 1 p.m. upon request based on reservations. Large-print programs and assisted listening devices available at every performance. Tickets \$22. Discounts available. FFI: 612-333-3010, www.theatreintheround.org

Let's Talk: Staging God: Artistic Expressions of the Unknown

Learn about the intersections between performance religious ritual, at Penumbra Theatre, 270 N. Kent St., St. Paul. Penumbra's Let's Talk Series creates space for compassionate and challenging conversations around issues of social justice, equity, and the arts. ASL offered Mon, March 4, reception at 6 p.m., program at 7 p.m. For inquiries about ASL tickets, contact Penumbra at whitney.blountsm@penumbra.org or 651-288-7787. Tickets \$20. FFI: 651-224-3180, <http://penumbra.org>

Tour for People with Memory Loss

At 10 a.m. on the first Tue of every month the historic James J. Hill House, 240 Summit Ave., St. Paul, offers a sensory-based tour designed for people with memory loss and their caregivers. Each themed tour, usually an hour or less, highlights three rooms and is followed by an optional social time until 11:30 a.m. with pastries and coffee. Private group tours available for care facilities. Next tours Tue, March 5 and April 2. Free but reservations required. FFI: 651-297-2555, www.mnhs.org

Young People's Concert: Carnival of the Animals

Minnesota Orchestra presents a concert for children in grades 1-3, at Orchestra Hall, 1111 Nicollet Mall, Mpls. OC and ASL 10 and 11:35 a.m. Wed-Thu, March 6-7. Lobby opens 9 a.m. Tickets \$6.25 at the door. FFI: 612-371-5656, www.minnesotaorchestra.org

Open Flow Forum

The Artists with Disabilities Alliance is the first Thu of the month, 7-9 p.m. at Walker Community Church, 3104 16th Ave. S., Mpls. Upcoming dates March 7 and April 4. Join artists with disabilities and supporters to share visual art, writing, music, theater and artistic efforts or disability concerns. Informal, fragrance-free, with shared refreshments. Facilitators are Dan Reiva, Tara Innmon, and Kip Shane. Fully accessible, but anyone needing special accommodations should contact Jon at VSA Minnesota, 612-332-3888, jon@vsamn.org

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

TA touring company presents the story of children in a wondrous Candy factory, at Orpheum Theatre, 910 Hennepin Ave. S., Mpls. OC offered 7:30 p.m. Thu, March 7. ASL offered 1 p.m. Sun, March 10. AD offered 6:30 p.m. Sun, March 10. Audio description receivers may be used in any price level in the theater. Tickets \$39 to \$135. Limited seats are available at the lowest price level to patrons using ASL interpreting or captioning on a first-come, first-served basis. Prices apply for up to two tickets for each patron requiring ASL interpretation or captioning. FFI: 612-339-7007, <https://hennepintheatretrust.org>

Benevolence

Penumbra Theatre presents a world premiere drama about Emmett Till, at Penumbra Theatre, 270 N. Kent St., St. Paul. ASL offered 7:30 p.m. Sat, March 9. Tickets



MATT GUIDRY

The Art of Me is a joint Interact Center for the Arts-Merrick Inc. production. More information is in the Enjoy! listings.

\$40. Discounts available, including ACCES Wed. FFI: 651-224-3180, <http://penumbra.org>

Minnesota Orchestra Family Concert: Carnival of the Animals

Minnesota Orchestra presents an inclusive concert for all ages, at Orchestra Hall, 1111 Nicollet Mall, Mpls. SF, OC and ASL offered 1 and 3 p.m. Sun, March 10. Fidgets, noise-canceling headphones, and quiet spaces are available, and attendees can access online preparatory materials one month before performances. Stand-alone chairs provide for flexible seating, and open space is available for those who wish to sit on the floor or move around the room. Lyndie Walker, MT-BC, of Toneworks Music Therapy Services hosts the concert. Lobby opens 11 a.m. Pre-show activities 11:45 a.m. -12:45 p.m. and 1:45-2:45 p.m. Tickets \$12. FFI: 612-371-5656, www.minnesotaorchestra.org

Planetarium Show: Minnesota in the Cosmos

Bell Museum, 2088 Larpenetour Ave. W., St. Paul, hosts a planetarium show. OC offered 3:15 p.m. Sun, March 10. Tickets \$6-\$8. Planetarium tickets go on sale three weeks before show date. Pre-purchasing is recommended because shows sell out. FFI: 612-626-9660, bellaccess@umn.edu

Roe

Mixed Blood Theatre presents a drama about the Roe v. Wade U.S. Supreme Court case, at Alan Page Auditorium at Mixed Blood Theatre, 1501 S. 4th St., Mpls. Projected supertitle translations in English at all performances, 7:30 p.m. March 15-16, 20-23, 27-30; 4 p.m. Sat, March 16, 30; 2 p.m. Sun, March 17, 23-24, 31; 10 a.m. student matinees March 14, 21, 27. AD and ASL offered 7:30 p.m. Sat, March 16, with tactile tour at 6:30 p.m. SF/relaxed performance offered 7:30 p.m. Wed, March 20. Recorded AD offered starting March 20.

DeafBlind AD and ASL offered 2 p.m. Sat, March 23. Mixed Blood's Access Pass provides complimentary guaranteed admission for shows to patrons with disabilities and companions, as well as free transportation to and from the theatre for patrons with disabilities. A number of accessible parking spaces are in a lot next to the theatre. Advance reservations \$35 online or by phone. Or join as members for \$9/month. Radical Hospitality admission is FREE on a first come/first served basis starting two hours before every show. FFI: 612-338-6131, www.mixedblood.com

Owl Moon

Stages Theatre Company and Escalate Dance present a wintry woods story, at Hopkins Center for the Arts, Mainstage, 1111 Mainstreet, Hopkins. SF offered 10 a.m. Sat, March 16. Tickets \$10. SF tickets not available online; call 952-979-1111, option 4. AD and ASL offered 1 p.m. Sun, March 24. Tickets \$16, discount for AD and ASL patrons. Other discounts available. FFI: 952-979-1111, option 4, www.stagestheatre.org

The Fix

Minnesota Opera presents a musical take on the 1919 Black Sox baseball scandal, at Ordway Music Theater, 345 Washington St., St. Paul. Sung in English with English captions projected above the stage. OC offered 7:30 p.m. Sat, March 16; Tue, March 19; Thu, March 21 and Sat, March 23; 2 p.m. Sun, March 24. AD offered 2 p.m. Sun, March 24. Braille, large-print programs and infrared listening systems available at patron services in Ordway's first level lobby. Tickets \$25-165 reduced to half-price for AD patrons. FFI: 612-333-6669, www.mnopera.org

Planetarium Show: Out of this World!

Bell Museum, 2088 Larpenetour Ave. W., St. Paul, hosts a tour of the solar system. ASL offered 11:45 a.m. Fri, March 22. Tickets \$6-\$8. Planetarium tickets go on sale three weeks before the date of the show. Pre-purchasing is recommended because shows sell out. FFI: 612-626-9660, bellaccess@umn.edu

Candide

VocalEssence and Theater Latté Da present the musical comedy of star-crossed lovers, at Cowles Center for Dance and the Performing Arts, 528 Hennepin Ave., Mpls. AD and ASL offered 7:30 p.m. Fri, March 22. Tickets \$35-\$45; Mention code ASL1819 for \$17.50 tickets. FFI: 612-371-5656, www.vocalescence.org

Tues with Morrie

Fargo-Moorhead Community Theatre presents a story about friendship and ALS, at the Stage at Island Park, 333 4th St. S., Fargo. AD offered 7:30 p.m. Sat, March 23, 7:30 pm; pre-show description at 7:10 p.m. Tickets reduced to \$10 for AD patron & companion (regular \$23). Other discounts available. Contact Box Office for AD tickets; not available online. FFI: 701-235-6778, www.fmct.org

Evita

Lyric Arts Company of Anoka presents the musical story of Eva Peron, Argentina's legendary first lady, at Lyric Arts Main Street Stage, 420 E. Main St., Anoka. ASL offered 2 p.m. Sun, March 24. ASL interpreters are provided at the first Sun performance of each regular

season production if a reservation is made three weeks before the show (reserve by Sun, March 3). If no ASL seating has been reserved, the ASL interpretation will be canceled and seats will be released to the general public. When ordering tickets, please indicate the need for seating in the ASL section. Lyric Arts reserves seats in Row I for parties including persons using wheelchairs or with limited mobility. Assisted listening devices available on request. Tickets \$32-35; \$5 discount for ASL seats. FFI: 763-422-1838, www.lyricarts.org

Art Show by Jimmy Longoria

Jimmy Longoria of Stillwater is the latest artist to have a display at Vision Loss Resources, 1936 Lyndale Ave. S. (at Franklin), Mpls. VSA Minnesota coordinates the exhibits. Longoria's art is on display through April. Free. Exhibit hours 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Mon-Fri. FFI: VLR: 612-871-2222, <http://vsamn.org>

MORE EVENTS INFORMATION

VSA MINNESOTA

VSA Minnesota is a statewide nonprofit organization that works to create a community where people with disabilities can learn through, participate in and access the arts, at <http://vsamn.org>. The website has a comprehensive calendar at the upper right-hand corner of its homepage. For information on galleries and theater performances around the state join the Access to Performing Arts email list at access@vsamn.org or call VSA Minnesota, 612-332-3888 or statewide 800-801-3883 (voice/TTY). To hear a weekly listing of accessible performances, call 612-332-3888 or 800-801-3883.

Access Press only publishes performance dates when accommodations are offered. Contact the venue to find out the entire run of a particular production, run times and if discounts for seniors, students, other individuals or groups are provided. VSA Minnesota advises everyone to call or email ahead, to make such that an accommodation is offered, as schedules can change. VSA Minnesota can also refer venues and theater companies to qualified describers, interpreters and captioners.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

A web events listing is <http://c2net.org> (c2: caption coalition, inc., which does most of the captioned shows across the country. Facebook is a way to connect with performances. Sign up to connect with Audio Description across Minnesota tinyurl.com/d34dzo2. Connect with ASL interpreted and captioned performances across Minnesota on Facebook tinyurl.com/FBcaption. A resource is Minnesota Playlist, with a recently updated website calendar with all the ASL-interpreted, audio-described, captioned, pay-what-you-can shows and features. Go to <http://minnesotaplaylist.com/calendar>. Arts festivals are held throughout the state. Check: www.exploreminnesota.com/index.aspx, festivalnet.com/state/minnesota/mn.html, www.fairsandfestivals.net/states/MN/

ABBREVIATIONS:

Audio description (AD) for people who are blind or have low vision, American Sign Language (ASL) interpreting for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, Open Captioning (OC) for people who are hard of hearing, and sensory-friendly (SF) performances.

CLASSIFIEDS

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Classified rates: \$15 (first 18 words) and 65¢ per word thereafter. Classified ads prepaid. **Mail to:** Access Press, Capitol Ridge Inn Offices: 161 St. Anthony Ave; #910; St. Paul, MN 55103; **Phone:** 651-644-2133; **Fax:** 651-644-2136; **Email:** access@accesspress.org



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