DISABILITY NETWORK OF MID-MICHIGAN

February 2021 NEWSLETTER

**ARTICLE 1 – FEATHERS AND FEDORAS is SATURDAY, JANUARY 13**

Our annual fundraiser has gone virtual. We've tried to recreate as many aspects of the Feathers and Fedoras experience you've come to love over the past five years. We hope you'll join our honorary chairs, Shauna and Paul Barbeau for a fun evening benefiting DNMM's independent living programs for people with disabilities.

[Click here to register for our Live and Silent Auctions.](https://dnmm.cbo.io)

[Click here to register for our In-Home Dining Experience.](http://www.dnmm.org/gratzi)

[Click here to register for our virtual Casino.](http://www.dnmm.org/casino)

[CLICK HERE FOR MAIN EVENT DETAILS.](http://www.dnmm.org/faf)

YOUR DOLLAR GOES FURTHER!

Thanks to a generous grant from the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation, all donations will be matched up to $50,000!

EVENT SPONSORS

This year’s event sponsors are Dow and Dupont.

**ARTICLE 2 -** FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH: CELEBRATING THE HISTORY OF BLACK PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

People with disabilities can thank Lois Curtis for paving the way for them to live in the community while receiving the services they need.

In what many called "the most important decision for people with disabilities in history," the Olmstead Decision justified the right for people with disabilities to live independently, but would take four years to come in effect including being heard in the Supreme Court.

At the center of the 1999 lawsuit that cited a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 were Lois Curtis and Elaine Wilson, two women with mental and intellectual disabilities. They were held in Georgia Regional Hospital for years after their treatment team determined they were able to live in the community because the state did not want to give them the funds they needed to live independently.

While she was growing up, Curtis was diagnosed with intellectual and mental disabilities. As a result, she would get into trouble constantly - at home and at school. The police were called several times and they would take her to jail or to a mental hospital.

However, at 11-years-old she was sent to live at Georgia Regional Hospital, a mental institution for people with disabilities. She would remain there until she was 29 years old.

It would not be until May 11, 1995 that Curtis' situation began to change when Sue Jamieson, an Atlanta-based legal aid attorney took Curtis' case challenging Tommy Olmstead, the commissioner of the Georgia Department of Human Resources, whose decision kept Curtis in the hospital. Wilson was added later as a plaintiff in the case.

A decision would be reached more than two years later in May 1997 when Judge Marvin Shoob said that the Georgia Department of Human Resources and Regional Hospital failed to place Curtis and Wilson in adequate housing.

Because of Shoob's ruling, the Department of Human Resources and Regional Hospital appealed on December 14, 1998, and one year later on June 22, 1999, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader-Ginsburg decided it was unconstitutional for Curtis and Wilson to be forced to stay in the mental institution when they could live in the community.

Justice Bader-Ginsburg created three important requirements for that ruling. A person with a disability can live in the community when: treatment officials deem it appropriate for the patient to live in the community, the person doesn't object to living in the community, and when there is a reasonable accommodation to live with other people who have mental disabilities.

In writing the opinion of the Court, Justice Bader-Ginsburg opined: "Institutional placement of persons who can handle and benefit from community settings perpetuate unwarranted assumptions that persons so isolated are incapable or unworthy of participating in community life."

We concur. And we feel bringing attention to this case is altogether fitting during this time as we celebrate Black History Month and as we honor the life of the late Justice Ruth Bader-Ginsburg.

**ARTICLE 3 - ONLINE TAI CHI FOR FALL PREVENTION**

Our Friends at the Michigan State University Extension have offered our staff, consumers, and supporters an exciting opportunity. Starting February 18th, we'll join in an online Tai Chi class Thursdays at 11:30 a.m.

The Tai Chi classes will be taught online via Zoom. Tai Chi is an art embracing the mind, body and spirit. Originating in ancient China, tai chi is one of the most effective exercises for health of mind and body. Although an art with great depth of knowledge and skill, it can be easy to learn and soon delivers its health benefits. For many, it continues as a lifetime journey. Tai Chi:

Increases strength

Increases balance and posture

Prevents falls

Improves mind, body, and spirit

Reduces stress and increases relaxation

Modifications will be provided for those who want to attend seated or standing. This program is targeted to help older adults and older adults with disabilities at risk for fall stay active. Classes will be held on Thursdays starting on February 18 and running until June 17.

COST: FREE

If you are new to Zoom video conferencing, please contact Anita Carter (carte356@msu.edu) prior to class day and she can help you set up and become familiar with the Zoom platform.

Click here if you are interested in registering for the virtual class.

For more information or questions please click here to contact Anita Carter.

**ARTICLE 4 - Virtual Peer Group Events**

New Event: Valentine’s Day Dance. Thursday, February 18th. 7:00 – 8:30pm

Come out and get your groove on! Meet up with friends virtually for some dancing and socializing! Show off your dance moves. Maybe even meet some new friends!

Standard Events:

“Just Dance!” Mondays at 11:00 a m

"Social Lunch" Tuesdays - 11:30am - 1:30pm

Grab a bite to eat and join us for a friendly chat about whatever topics you want. A chance to get together - virtually - and hang out for a while!

"Amazing Women" Group - Tuesdays from 3:00 - 4:30pm

Women need to talk to each other! Here is a chance to get on and share your day, ask each other what they think about something or share your experiences with other peers. Come join us twice a month to talk and hang out!

"Bingo!" Wednesdays – 3:00 pm Just a little friendly competition!

"ACTIVITY GROUP" Thursdays - 2:00pm

Everything from virtual tours of museums, theme parks to cooking demonstrations. From arts and crafts to live music. Maybe even some magic from time to time. Peers pick the activity each week. Join us!

"MOVIE MATINEE" Mondays and Fridays - 1:00pm

Pop some popcorn and join your peers for an afternoon at the movies! Classic 80s comedies, recent Pixar classics, always something fun! January shows include: Zookeeper, Mulan, Wonder Woman 1984, and Soul.

**ARTICLE 5 – OFF THE SHELF VIRTUAL BOOK CLUB**

DNMM has launched a virtual book club open to everyone. We'll be focusing on books dealing with issues of diversity - from stories about people with disabilities to books pertaining to social justice. Our hope is to offer a wide range of life perspectives and experiences.

Our next book is Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus by Dusti Bowling. Aven Green loves to tell people that she lost her arms in an alligator wrestling match, or a wildfire in Tanzania, but the truth is she was born without them. And when her parents take a job running Stagecoach Pass, a rundown western theme park in Arizona, Aven moves with them across the country knowing that she’ll have to answer the question over and over again.

Her new life takes an unexpected turn when she bonds with Connor, a classmate who also feels isolated because of his own disability, and they discover a room at Stagecoach Pass that holds bigger secrets than Aven ever could have imagined. It’s hard to solve a mystery, help a friend, and face your worst fears. But Aven’s about to discover she can do it all . . . even without arms.

The next meetings of "Off The Shelf" are Wednesday, February 3rd at 6:00pm (Book Introduction) and Wednesday, February 17th (Discussion up to Chapter 17).

Copies of the book can be found on Amazon for around $7, Kindle for $5 and it is available on Audible and on Thriftbooks.

The club is open to the public, so feel free to invite your friends and family to join. For now, the conversations take place on Zoom. [Click here to contact Matthew Ivan if you are interested in joining.](mailto:ivan@dnmm.org?subject=Off%20The%20Shelf%20Virtual%20Book%20Club)

**ARTICLE 6–**  DNMM JOINS COALITION SUPPORTING DIRECT CARE WORKERS

Disability Network of Mid-Michigan recognizes the important role quality caregivers play in our communities. We support elevating this essential workforce and have been engaged in advocacy to improve wages, training, and respect for direct care workers for years.

Throughout Michigan-in private homes, nursing homes, and a variety of residential care settings-older adults and people with disabilities rely on more than 120,000 direct care workers to meet their daily needs and participate in their communities. Further, when properly trained, supported, and integrated into care teams, direct care workers can promote better care for consumers and prevent costly outcomes. Unfortunately, despite their enormous value, direct care workers struggle with low compensation, insufficient training, and limited career paths, which drive many workers out of this sector. The COVID-19 crisis has amplified these challenges, leaving many workers without safe, high-quality jobs-and consumers without the care they deserve.

Now is the time to transform Michigan’s direct care workforce. We invite you to click here if you are interested in joining the coalition.

ARTICLE 7 - DNMM'S MEDICARE SPECIALISTS ARE HERE TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS

Do you need extra help paying for your Medicare Part D prescription plan?

Call one of our MMAP-certified Medicare Specialists to see if you are eligible for the Low-Income Subsidy for Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage. We can help with screening questions and do the application over the phone in as little as 15 minutes!

Our certified MMAP counselors can also assist you with general questions about the Medicare Savings Plan.

CALL US TODAY! WE'RE HERE FOR YOU!

1-800-782-4160

**ARTICLE 8 - STATEMENT OF INCLUSION**

At Disability Network of Mid-Michigan, inclusion is a universal human right for all people, regardless of race, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or any other discernible quality. To be inclusive is to promote a sense of belonging, respect, and value for who you are as a person. It is about equal access and opportunities for everyone. Inclusion is an integral part of our Independent Living philosophy and of our agency's vision of "Accessible and Inclusive communities that provide opportunities for individual choice."

In the twelve counties we serve in Mid-Michigan, Disability Network offices have been, and continue to be, places of solace, understanding, and information for all. We are committed to promoting and protecting diversity and inclusion, within our offices, among our community partners, and throughout the 15 Centers for Independent Living in Michigan.

**ARTICLE 9 – STATEMENT OF ACCESSIBILTY**

DNMM advocates for the removal of barriers to independence and full inclusion of people with disabilities throughout the Mid-Michigan area. DNMM pledges to ensure accessibility. Each year, DNMM conducts a review of its own architectural, environmental, attitudinal, employment, communication, transportation, and other barriers that may exist which prohibit full access to our services.

If you have any issues of concern regarding the accessibility of DNMM services and facilities, we encourage you to share that information with us.

Please send your concerns or suggestions to:

Executive Director  
Disability Network of Mid-Michigan  
1705 S. Saginaw Road  
Midland, MI 48640