

# SibNews

News for and about siblings of people with disabilities

**Vol. 22, Issue 1**

**March-May 2024**



**New  
WisconSibs  
Staff**

**GROWING  
STRONGER  
WITH  
CHANGE**

**Calendar of  
Upcoming  
Activities**

# Transitions Are Our Strength

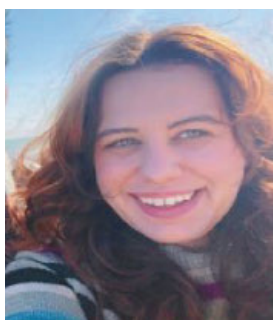
## The Sibling Leadership Network Grows Stronger with Change

Jenna has been interested in preparing for the day when she may take a bigger role in her brother's care. It's a big transition to consider but finally, her parents agree to taking steps to make that happen. They decide to start with scheduling times when Jenna's brother who has autism stays with her overnight.

She prepares for his night routine. She knows his breakfast routine is strict...Cheerios filled to the brim of his favorite bowl, a glass of 2% milk, 4 ounces of Minute Maid from concentrate juice, and plain white bread with butter. Any departure from this routine and the day will be difficult. She's ready.

The night goes well. But in the morning she realizes someone in her household drank all the orange juice. She's a pro at anticipating change and has a backup can of juice ready.

Siblings like Jenna know very well how changes, or 'transitions', can impact their lives. Sometimes change is sudden and unexpected, often jarring our routines, our



Kaitlyn McNamara of Madison, WI is only the second Executive Director of the Sibling Leadership Network.

assumptions, and even our mental wellness. Sibs have learned 'on the job' how to navigate the waters of change.

That's why siblings are often called upon to be leaders to address change. When change is anticipated, leaders assess their strengths, check their vulnerabilities, and work on opportunities to keep strong and growing.

That was the purpose of the Sibling Leadership Network (SLN) strategic planning meetings recently held in Appleton. For the first time ever, the board of directors of this national organization came from all over the country to meet at the WisconSibs offices for a weekend to 'reset' their organization after several transitions in leadership.

***"The SLN aims to connect siblings to programming, resources, and support from childhood to adulthood, no matter where they live or their stage in life."***

Also for the first time, both the Executive Director of the Sibling Leadership Network, Kaitlyn McNamara, and the Chairman of the SLN board, Kristin Lanari, are both WisconSibs. Kristin says, "There are so many state chapters doing great work. The SLN aims to connect siblings to programming, resources, and support from childhood to adulthood, no matter where they live or their stage in life."



Founded in 2007, the Sibling Leadership Network is a national organization dedicated to providing siblings of individuals with disabilities



Back row: Julie Wolf, CT; Kaitlin McNamara, WI (Exec Dir); Linda Monterroso, NV; Tiffany Banks, CO; Nikki Donnelly, CA; Eric McVay, ME (SABE Rep)  
Front row: Emily Holl, WA (Sibling Support Project Rep); Kristin Lanari, WI (Chairman)

the information, support and tools to advocate with their brothers and sisters and to promote issues important to them and their entire families. WisconSibs is a founding Chapters and one of 28 Chapters of the SLN. Learn more at [www.siblingleadership.org](http://www.siblingleadership.org)

**On the cover:** Kristin Lanari of Appleton has been active in WisconSibs since 2004 as a participant, WisconSibs board member, and our Chapter Representative.

### Finding strength in our logo...



- The "i"s of differing sizes represent the diversity of siblings (child/adult, male/female, life stage, cultures, etc.) we serve.
- The span of dots reflects connection, growth, and lifelong journey. Like the arch of a bridge, it symbolizes strength and support.
- The colors begin with the green and blue of our former Fox Valley Sibling Support Network identity and expand to include other primary colors. That offers a fun and vibrant palette that plays to our mission to help siblings thrive throughout their lifelong journey.



# Welcome Executive Director Bill Grennell

***"Change is the only constant in life"***

Heraclitus, Greek philosopher, 500 B.C.

You may have been surprised to learn that WisconSibs recently hired a new Executive Director following the resignation of Ann Sickon.

We thank Ann for her dedication and all the progress she stimulated while holding the position for the first year following Harriet's retirement from the position. The organization grew its structure to allow for more staff under her direction. We all appreciate her for that work. However, her family also needed her as she provides caring support to her son, her sister, and her mother.

We also thank our board of directors for their quick action and dedication to see to it that no ground was lost in our organization's growth. Thank you to Tonya Deder-

ing for filling in as interim executive while the board searched for the next Executive Director fit for the position.

Bill comes to the organization with many years of experience in the nonprofit sector. He has worked as a fundraiser, major gifts officer, volunteer manager, camp director and executive director. He has worked for the Boy Scouts of America in Missouri, Minnesota, and California, Ronald McDonald House Charities of Southern California, The American Red Cross in southwest Virginia, The Literacy Council of Rockford, IL and the Experimental Aircraft Associate in Oshkosh.

*"I am excited to have the opportunity to work with the talented and passionate WisconSibs staff, Board, and volunteers. I feel grateful for this chance to help make a difference across Wisconsin for youth and adult siblings and their families."*



Bill invites you contact him or stop by the office to get acquainted. He'd love to hear your ideas and get to know your interests.

920-968-1742 | [bill@wisconsibs.org](mailto:bill@wisconsibs.org)

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# WisconSibs Expands Sibshops, Reignites Adult Sibling Programs

## NEW STAFF



**Alley McGuane, Madison, WI**, joins the WisconSibs staff as the Madison Sibshop Coordinator. She graduated from UW-La Crosse with Therapeutic Recreation degree in 2017. Since then, she has been an Afterschool Site Coordinator, Day Camp Director, and Family Engagement Coordinator, working with elementary age kids with and without disabilities. Currently, she works with Madison School District at Madison East High School as a secretary and volunteers at Heartland Church in Sun Prairie.

"I am excited to join WisconSibs and support families through Sibshops."

**Alley McGuane**

[amcguane@wisconsibs.org](mailto:amcguane@wisconsibs.org)

WisconSibs also welcomes **Emily Askri, Kaukauna, WI** as Adult Sibling Program Coordinator to develop and coordinate adult sibling programs, including workshops, conferences, social events, and communication with adults throughout Wisconsin who have siblings with disabilities.



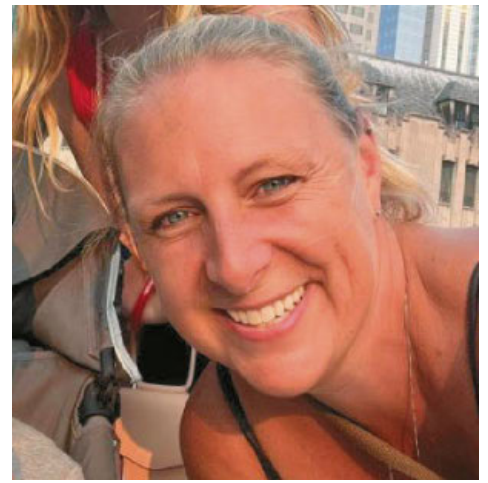
For over 15 years, Emily has been helping various non-profits, both local and national, develop programs to help people reach their fullest potential. Emily is a graduate of University of WI - LaCrosse.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to be a part of WisconSibs' mission. I have seen how impactful community, and the support that comes from shared understanding, can have in people's lives."

**Emily Askri**

[emily@wisconsibs.org](mailto:emily@wisconsibs.org)

Thanks to our generous donors and grant funders, including the MCW Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin, the DHS ARPA Home and Community-Based Services, and the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region, WisconSibs is expanding its youth and adult sibling programs. Our calendar is growing with more programming in Milwaukee and Madison and will expand to more areas as we grow our troupe of trained Sibshop facilitators and volunteers. If you are interested in participating, becoming a volunteer, or becoming a trained Sibshop facilitator, please contact any of our program coordinators.



**Megan Kitze-Ward, Milwaukee, WI**, joins the WisconSibs staff as the Milwaukee Sibshop Coordinator. Megan graduated from the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire with a degree in English Education and went on to get her Masters in Educational Leadership from the University of Cincinnati as she remained in the classroom, coaching, and working with students. After 20 years of teaching, Megan chose to step down to be there for her son who has autism, and his sister who opened Megan's eyes to the sibling world.

She currently works as a health and fitness coach, an online AP teacher, and now the Milwaukee Sibshop Coordinator where she can really spread her love and passion for helping siblings of kids with disabilities to ensure a better future for EVERYONE in the family.

**Megan Kitze-Ward**

[megan@wisconsibs.org](mailto:megan@wisconsibs.org)

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# Easy Pastry Brunch Cups

Children can get involved rolling out the pastry to make these for a special Spring brunch or just a simple supper.

1 tablespoons butter  
1 tablespoons flour  
3/4 cups milk  
1/2 cup shredded Swiss cheese  
1 sheets puff pastry  
9 eggs  
1 cups diced ham  
chopped fresh green onions or chives

Heat oven 375 F.  
In small saucepan, melt butter. Whisk flour with butter. Gradually pour in milk, whisking each time. Bring to simmer, whisking until mixture starts to thicken.



Remove from heat; stir in Swiss cheese. Set aside.

Use rolling pin to thin out puff pastry. Cut into nine squares. Line pastry squares in muffin cups, pressing bottoms down firmly and moving pastries up sides for edges to come up just over

muffin tins. Fill each cup with 1 teaspoon cheese sauce. Crack one egg into each cup and sprinkle each with diced ham. Bake 10-15 minutes until eggs set. Sprinkle with chopped green onions. Makes 9

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# Calendar of Events

MORE INFO OR TO REGISTER, VISIT  
WISCONSIBS.ORG OR  
CALL 920-968-1742

Find details and watch for more activities, events, and announcements posted on the WisconSibs website.

## WisconSibs in Action

WisconSibs Sibshops  
Fox Valley—Madison—Milwaukee



MAR 16 Sat	Journey Forward – Oshkosh @ James P. Coughlin Center (UW Extension-Winnebago Co.) Mar 16 @ 8:30 am – 1:00 pm	
MAR 18 Mon	Adult Sibling Workshop: Advocacy @ Zoom Mar 18 @ 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm	
MAR 20 Wed	Disability Advocacy Day 2024 @ Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center Mar 20 @ 9:30 am – 3:30 pm	
MAR 23 Sat	Sibshop – Madison – March 23 2024 @ Elver Park Neighborhood Center Mar 23 @ 9:00 am – 12:00 pm	
MAR 27 Wed	WisconSibs READ Book Club-March 2024 @ Zoom Mar 27 @ 7:15 pm – 8:30 pm	
APR 10 Wed	National Siblings Day – Official date Apr 10 <small>all-day</small>	
APR 13 Sat	Sibshop at Heckrodt Nature Center @ Heckrodt Wetland Reserve Apr 13 @ 12:00 pm – 4:00 pm	
APR 19 Fri	Vegas Madness 2024 @ Waverly Beach Apr 19 @ 6:00 pm – 10:00 pm	
APR 20 Sat	Kidz Expo 2024 – FREE! @ Fox Cities Exhibition Center Apr 20 @ 9:00 am – 2:00 pm	
	Wings for Autism at ATW April 2024 @ Appleton International Airport Apr 20 @ 9:00 am – 11:30 am	
APR 27 Sat	Sibshop at 2024 WI Autism Conference @ Kalahari Resort Apr 27 @ 10:25 am – 12:45 pm	
MAY 11 Sat	May 2024 Sibshop @ Washington Park May 11 @ 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm	
JUN 18 Tue	Sib Camp 2024 – Devil's Lake – June 18-21 @ Devil's Lake State Park-Baraboo, WI Jun 18 @ 3:00 pm – Jun 21 @ 12:00 pm	
JUN 27 Thu	Sib Camp 2024 – June 27-30 @ Potawatomi State Park Jun 27 @ 12:00 pm – Jun 30 @ 12:00 pm	
JUN 28 Fri	Sibshop Facilitator Training @ Madison, WI Jun 28 @ 8:00 am – Jun 29 @ 4:00 pm	



Interested in becoming a trained Sibshop Facilitator? Check it out!



After a long winter, even a mild one like 2024, spring brings new life and new ideas. It also means it's time to show off your creativity and have some fun with our **Sibs Are My Peeps photo contest**.

**ANYONE** may enter this contest. Any age. Any ability.  
From any where in Wisconsin!



This year the theme is **Peeplympics**, a nod to the upcoming Summer Olympics taking place in Paris, France.

So grab a couple packages of Peeps, a box, some glue, a little paper or decorations, and you've got fun for an afternoon. The contest runs from March 1 to March 31, 2024.

Finalists get to display their Sibs Are My Peeps creation at the 2024 Fox Cities Kidz Expo on April 20, 2024 at the [Fox Cities Kidz Expo](#), downtown Appleton and compete for the "Peep's Choice".

More information and see entries from previous years visit <https://wisconsibs.org/what-we-offer/sibs-are-my-peeps/> or scan the QR code here.



Contest Runs  
**MARCH 01-31**

**Sibs Are My Peeps.**

Our annual Peeps photo contest is here! Anyone can enter. Send 2 photos, with your name, age, title and description to [siblingsaremypeeps@wisconsibs.org](mailto:siblingsaremypeeps@wisconsibs.org)

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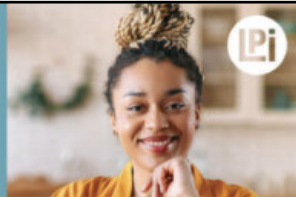
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We are Wisconsin siblings of people with disabilities.

We are role models to our siblings, peers, friends, and community.

We are caregivers and companions. Even the very youngest of us help care for our siblings with special needs.

As we grow, we play a vital role in the quality of life of our siblings.

[We are proud to be WisconSibs](#)

## JOIN US FOR A FUN NIGHT SUPPORTING WISCONSIBS



**Date: April 19, 2024 From: 6:00 pm - 10:00 pm**

**Location: Waverly Beach Bar & Grille**

**N8770 Fire Lane 1, Menasha, WI 54952**

ORDER TICKETS BY APRIL 12 FOR EARLY BIRD PRICE OF **\$50 per person**

**More info and ordering at [www.wisconsibs.org](http://www.wisconsibs.org)**

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**IT'S  
BACK!!**

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Harriet Redman, *Founder, Dir of Special Projects*  
Alley McGuane, *Sibshop Coord—Madison*  
Megan Kitze-Ward, *Sibshop Coord—Milwaukee*

**Watch our website or call our office for announcements about new board and staff position openings.**