



5TH ANNUAL EVENT  
**ARTISTS  
BEYOND  
BOUNDARIES**

**By Amber Brunas**

PROGRAMS & COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT

Artists Beyond Boundaries began in 2018 as a way to celebrate the agency's 40th anniversary. What started as a one-off event, soon grew into the agency's most successful fundraising event. Now in its fifth year, this unique event, which celebrates the talents of artists with disabilities, has received over 300 works of art from a wide variety of artists living across the state of Wisconsin.

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# Welcome Staff!



**Mary Rodwell**

INDEPENDENT LIVING SPECIALIST

Mary received her bachelor’s degree in psychology in 2019 and has been working as an in-home caregiver since 2016. She is driven by faith, compassion, and the firm belief that every single person has an inalienable right to dignity and respect. She is a fierce advocate for disability rights and is excited to join Access to help people thrive, not just survive. She is passionate about erasing the stigma that comes with having a disability, particularly in regards to mental health. She draws on her personal experiences living with both a neurological condition and mental health conditions to connect with and provide the highest level of care and service to those she interacts with.

In her spare time, she enjoys trying to keep her houseplants alive and gardening. She enjoys reading and creating art. She is an outdoors woman at heart and enjoys hiking and camping with her husband. She also occasionally teaches classes on Islam.



**Rachel Thielen**

YOUTH SERVICES SPECIALIST

Rachel joined the Access to Independence team in June 2022. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a minor in Education and Educational Services. She is currently working towards her M.A. in Developmental Disabilities. Prior to joining Access, Rachel worked as a Registered Behavior Technician and provided ABA therapy for children on the Autism Spectrum, teaching School Readiness Skills and maintaining/developing goals to increase children’s independence. Rachel enjoys working with children of all ages and supporting them through successfully completing school and with planning for transition to adulthood.

In addition to working at Access, Rachel works part-time as a youth soccer coach for introductory level skills building (ages 2-8). Outside of Access, Rachel loves sports and being outdoors. Some of her favorite activities include fishing, playing basketball and soccer, and hiking. She enjoys travelling when she can, especially to coastal areas!

# The Power of Accessibility Consultation and Technical Assistance

**By Jason Beloungy**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In our April 2022 edition of The Open Door, we announced our new menu of Accessibility Services that are available to businesses, organizations, community groups, and governments to ensure accessibility and inclusion of people with disabilities. Removing barriers creates access, which increases participation and customers. No business, program, or event should want to exclude people, and that is why Access to Independence is proud to use its expertise to help entities address those barriers through consultation and technical assistance services.

One of the ways that the work of our Accessibility Services Program is being felt in our region, is through a partnership with the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra (WCO). Access to Independence



The Accessibility Services Team pose in front of the Wisconsin Capitol building. From left to right: Wendy Weiler, Shar Brunes, Ben Hinkel, Jason Beloungy.

is providing its event consultation and technical assistance services to support the accessibility and inclusion of the Concerts on the Square. This weekly summer tradition of nearly 40 years brings 50,000 people to the Capitol Square every Wednesday evening for six weeks.

The WCO has made accessibility and disability inclusion a part of their organization's broader equity and inclusion efforts, and recognized the expertise that Access to Independence brings as a partner in this work.

**SEE ACCESSIBILITY, PAGE 6**



**BLACKHAWK  
CHURCH**

Access to Independence was able to launch the new Accessibility Services program and engage in a partnership for community impact thanks to a generous financial gift received from Blackhawk Church. Their gift covers the cost of staff time for program development and infrastructure, and time and materials for the project development, to the ongoing support to implement the recommendations. Thank you.

# ARTISTS

FROM PAGE 1

Artists Beyond Boundaries is an extension of Access to Independence's mission. Just as the agency's goal is to empower people to live as independently as they choose, Artists Beyond Boundaries is all about empowering artists with disabilities to share their works of art with a wider audience, as well as have an opportunity to be recognized for their work.

This year's event will continue to be held in a virtual capacity. Artists with disabilities are encouraged to submit their artwork through the event website before August 31st for a chance to win cash awards, and have their artwork featured in the next Artists Beyond Boundaries calendars. Then, on October 6th at 7:00pm we'll host a live-stream event featuring ALL of the artwork submitted to the event and get to know the artists, jurors, sponsors, and others who worked behind the scenes, and find out who this year's finalists are!

Art is for everyone, and this event demonstrates the power of art and the contributions of artists with disabilities to our communities, and far beyond.



**ARTISTS BEYOND BOUNDARIES**

## CALL FOR ART

**SEEKING ARTISTS WITH DISABILITIES**

\$200 AWARDS | ENTER BY AUGUST 31ST, 2022

[www.ArtistsBeyondBoundaries.weebly.com](http://www.ArtistsBeyondBoundaries.weebly.com)

or call 608-716-7199 for more information



## Free, Online Event

October 6 • 7:00 PM

Join us as we celebrate our fifth annual Artists Beyond Boundaries event! We'll be showcasing ALL of the incredible artwork we've received to this year's event. We'll also hear from the jurors, sponsors, and the artists who all worked so hard to make this year's event possible!



For tickets and registration for the online, live-stream event, **scan QR code or visit us online at [bit.ly/ABBLiveStream](http://bit.ly/ABBLiveStream).**



## Support this Event

Your financial gifts make a difference!

Any donation made to the Artists Beyond Boundaries event provides funding for the promotion and continuation of this event, and provides support for the standard programs and services Access to Independence provides to people of all ages, with any disability. Visit us online at [artistsbeyondboundaries.weebly.com/donate](http://artistsbeyondboundaries.weebly.com/donate).



ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY  
HIGHLIGHT

# Clarity XLCgo Phone Amplified Handset

By Nicole Sanders

Access to Independence has several options for Assistive Technology that can help you hear while using your cell phone or landline phone. One option is The Clarity XLCgo phone amplified handset. This handset connects to your cell phone via Bluetooth or the XLC expandable family of land line phones. It has 50 dB amplification, tone control, volume control, extra-loud speakerphone, and a boost button with a simple design. The handset is rechargeable with USB-C charging port, is hearing-aid compatible, and has a T-Coil audio mode.

If you would like to try this device for 3-6 weeks for free, or check out other Assistive Technology we have, please contact us at [info@accesstoind.org](mailto:info@accesstoind.org) or 608-242-8484.

Our staff can help you apply for the Telecommunications Equipment Purchase Program (TEPP) and identify telecommunications devices that are right for you!



## YouTube Channel

Have you checked out the Access to Independence YouTube channel? We've recently started adding informational videos about some of the many different services, programs, and assistive technology here at Access to Independence! Find us at [bit.ly/AccessstoIndYouTube](https://bit.ly/AccessstoIndYouTube) to tune in!



# GENERAL ELECTION DAY IS NOV. 8

## BEFORE YOU GO TO THE POLLS

### #1: Register to Vote

Register to vote or be prepared to register at the polls. Call your local clerk and find out what you need to register before, or on, election day.

### #2: Do Your Homework

Know where the candidates stand on the issues that are important to you. Here are some resources:

- Learn about who is on your ballot. You can do that by going to the MyVote Wisconsin website: [myvote.wi.gov/en-us/Whats-On-My-Ballot](https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/Whats-On-My-Ballot)
- Find your polling place, and learn how accessible it is: [myvote.wi.gov/en-us/My-Municipal-Clerk](https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/My-Municipal-Clerk)
- Other resources and useful information for voters with disabilities is: [disabilityvote.org](https://disabilityvote.org)



## VOTING ISSUES & CONCERNS

If you experience any barriers to voting, whether it is early voting, absentee voting, or election day voting, contact The Disability Rights WI Disability Voter Helpline at 1-844-347-8683.

And as always, if you need assistance with these resources, don't hesitate to contact Access to Independence.

## ACCESSIBILITY

FROM PAGE 3

The Accessibility Services team at Access to Independence began consulting the WCO on this major event, well before the first concert on June 29th. The consultation included a review of how people connect to the event through the WCO website and emails, and provided recommendations to address barriers, as well as best practices for inclusion. The team then focused on the events themselves and conducted an evaluation at one of the weekly events this summer. That evaluation reviewed several aspects of the event from paths of travel, amenities, communication, and seating, among others. The review not only looked for barriers as determined by guidance from the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), but also determined where best practices may be implemented.

At the time this article was written, the consultation project is ongoing. In addition to recommendations, Access to Independence will provide additional technical assistance with implementing recommendations the WCO pursues.

This is just one example of the power of the Accessibility Services provided by Access to Independence. For a full list of the services offered, and for a description of testimonials from previous partners, go to [acesstoind.org/accessibilityservices.html](https://acesstoind.org/accessibilityservices.html).



# WISLOAN + TELEWORK LOAN PROGRAMS

## FUNDING INDEPENDENCE

WisLoan and Telework are alternative loan programs that assist Wisconsin residents with disabilities to enable people to become self-employed or to work from home. These loan programs are different than traditional bank loans because a bank doesn't make the final decision, the WisLoan and Telework Board does. That allows flexibility for people who have an item they need to maintain their independence, but have trouble coming up with the money all at once or finding other ways to pay for what they need. Simply call Access to Independence for information (608) 242-8484.

## WISLOAN

### What Can I Buy with a WisLoan?

You can purchase technology such as wheelchairs, computers, ramps, vehicle modifications, or home modifications.

## TELEWORK

### What Can I Buy with a TeleWork Loan?

You can purchase items such as computers and software, scanners or fax machines, tools, office furniture, or modifications for an accessible office.

## GENERAL QUESTIONS

### How much can I borrow?

Loan amount range from \$250 to \$50,000. The loan would be for the exact amount of the item.

### Can I apply if I have no job?

Yes. Social Security Disability or Retirement benefits and other sources of income are considered.

### Can I apply if my credit is poor?

Yes. The reason for the poor credit is considered, as is one's ability to repay the loan.

### How do I apply?

Contact ACCESS to complete the loan application materials in person. Application can be done at the ACCESS office or at a location of your preference.

## THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS & SPONSORS

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- 
- Lori Kinnard
- Jennifer and Joel Rosenfeld

Access to Independence greatly appreciates the generosity of all those who have made a financial contribution – big or small – to our organization. Through the generosity of our donors, ACCESS is able to expand opportunities for individuals with disabilities to access demonstrations and free loans of assistive technology equipment, skills training in peoples' homes and classes at our office in Madison, among the wide array of services we provide. We would like to thank each of our sponsors for their generosity!

AT Donation

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Financial Donation  
In Honor of Sam and Don Katz

Financial Donation  
Artists Beyond Boundaries



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**Access Board Members**

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Access is seeking new board members.  
 Contact us if you'd like to know more.

**ACCESS TO INDEPENDENCE IS SUPPORTED BY PEOPLE LIKE YOU AND**



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