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THE OPEN DOOR

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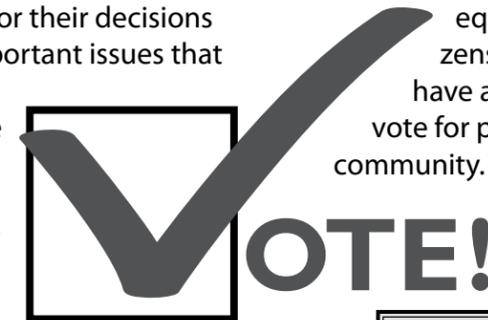
Make This a November To Remember

With Election Day nearly upon us, it is time for ALL of us to participate in the direction of our future!

Your vote is your voice as an American citizen. It's your opportunity to be heard, to hold elected officials accountable for their decisions and to have a say in important issues that affect your community.

On Election Day, every vote matters.

Historically, the disability community has had the lowest voter turnout of any group in America, and this is a big reason that we're constantly fighting to improve services and not allow politicians to turn back the clock on our rights and services. It's time for the disability community to become proactive and ensure we're electing officials who support our issues, including the protection of home and community based services.



We often don't think our vote matters because we are one person and we can't make a difference. That couldn't be farther from the truth. In the last election, if the entire disability community turned out to vote that would have been thousands of additional votes cast here in Wisconsin! Although we may not all share the same views about what issues are important, we can all agree that the right to live in the community and have equal opportunities as non-disabled citizens is a goal we all want to achieve. You have a chance on November 6th to cast your vote for people who will support the disability community. The only way your vote truly does not matter is if you stay at home on Election Day.

Also in this issue:

- Voter registration information
- Candidate information
- Voter rights and responsibilities

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Wheelchair Wash

On Saturday, September 15th, Access to Independence and the IndependenceFirst Mobility Store held our first-ever Wheelchair Wash free of charge to the larger community. We had over 22 people with disabilities who use wheelchairs and power chairs have their chairs cleaned and serviced throughout the day. Jay Martin, a Mechanical engineering professor at UW-Madison's School of

Engineering provided a session on wheelchair repairs and maintenance. We would like to thank the many volunteers from the MATC Occupational Therapy Assistant program, staff members, ATI Board members, and community members who were involved in making this a successful event. Hopefully this can become a larger event with much more collaboration in the future.



The Open Door is published four times a year, . Submissions of articles are always welcome. They are subject to editing for clarity. Opinions expressed are the authors and do not represent Access to Independence or its Funders. *The Open Door* is available in other formats by request. It can also be viewed on our website at www.accesstoind.org If you are interested in advertising please contact ATI at the information provided above.

New Additions to ATI!

Hello, my name is Janie Ocejo and I was hired as the Administrative Assistant for Access to Independence in November, 2011. I am originally from San Antonio, Texas and have been in Madison for 19 years. I have a vast background, skills, and knowledge in social services ranging from benefits counseling, case management, working against domestic vio-

lence and sexual assault, community outreach efforts, and office management mainly with non-profits. My hope is that my skills be valuable and useful as the agency moves into increasing fund development and outreach efforts in the larger communities, along with celebrating the 35th Anniversary of Access to Independence. I have enjoyed these

last several months working with great co-workers and all those we serve. Please don't hesitate to call or stop by if there is anything that I may be able to assist with.



As ATI's newest staff member I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to those of you I have

not yet had the chance to meet. My name is Kaylin Shampo and I began working for Access to Independence at the end of July this year as an Independent Living Specialist and Grassroots Organizer. In May 2011 I graduated from UW-Madison with my bachelor's degree in social work with

a concentration on individuals with developmental disabilities. During my undergraduate studies I completed an internship with a grassroots organization named Living Our Visions or LOV-Dane. Before coming to work for Access to Independence I was a lead direct support professional for Lutheran Social Services, assisting in the supervision and maintenance of five group homes for adults with developmental disabilities in the Madison area. Now when I am not working I attend part-time master's classes at UW-Madison, and I am very much looking forward to getting my master's of social work degree in May

2013. I am currently completing an internship at Eclipse Counseling LLC where I will be providing counseling and therapy services. When I am not busy with work or school I enjoy spending my time with my boyfriend of four years and my fat cat who I have had for thirteen years. On the weekends I like doing art projects and snuggling up with a good book and a cup of coffee. I am very excited to be the newest member of the Access to Independence team, and I am looking forward to working with anyone who needs to utilize the services we provide!

Hi! My name is Gulzira and I came from 9th largest and 3rd multinational country in the world – Kazakhstan. I've got a scholarship with the IREX Community Solutions Program and am interning in Access to Independence. Back home I work in Eldany Charitable Foundation, established in 1996 and rendering rehabilitation, psychological and adaptation help and in-kind sup-

port for more than 700 children and young people with severe disabilities. All our projects conducted in the frames of one concept – Alternative forms of life activity for people with disability. The aim is to change perception of people with disabilities to themselves and attitude of the society to their problems and dreams. I'm really glad to be in one of the best cities where people with

disabilities get the most of their right to be educated, to be employed and to be served as any of us. Looking forward to meeting new people and learn traditions and culture of Madison and its citizens.



WisLoan and TeleWork Loan Programs

Funding Independence!

WisLoan and TeleWork are alternative loan programs that assist Wisconsin residents with disabilities to pay for assistive technology, or to purchase the necessary equipment and technology to enable people 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 may 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.

WisLoan

What Can I Buy with a WisLoan? You can purchase technology such as wheelchairs, computers, ramps, vehicle modifications, or kitchen or bathroom remodeling projects or construction.

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 amounts range from \$500 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 ATI to complete the loan application materials in person. Application can be done at the ATI office or at a location of your preference.

City Hires Disability Rights Specialist

Madison, WI - There is a new face in the Department of Civil Rights, Jason Glozier has recently been hired as the new Disability Rights and Services Program Specialist. This program, started in 1990, is tasked with ensuring that the rights of the city's disabled cit-

izens are respected and promoted, coordinating disability-related city services, and getting people with disabilities involved in the government process.

Jason joins the DCR team with an extensive history of working for inclusion and social justice. Most recently, he was employed at Access to Independence as an Independent Living Specialist and Grassroots Organizer focusing on empowering and educating people with disabilities to address local community issues.

Jason hopes to utilize this unique skill set in a way that not only increases the opportunity for equality but includes people with disabilities in determining their place within the greater community.

For more information regarding the Disability Rights and Services Program, feel free to contact Jason at 266-6511 or jglozier@cityofmadison.com.



Take Your Legislator to Work Campaign!

To celebrate October's National Disability Employment Awareness Month, the WI Board on People with Developmental Disabilities is holding the Take Your Legislator to Work Campaign to acknowledge and celebrate Wisconsin workers with disabilities. Now is the time to showcase the skills and talents of people with disabilities in Wisconsin!

ATI staff member Kaylin Shampo is a Regional Coordinator for this campaign, and is looking for people

with disabilities who love their jobs and want to show their legislator the importance of community-integrated employment. People who participate in the Take Your Legislator to Work Campaign will have their legislator visit them briefly at work sometime during the month of October.

For more information please contact Kaylin Shampo at (608)242-8484, toll free at 1-800-362-9877, or by e-mail at KaylinS@accesstoind.org

Help Our Kitchen Grow!

The heart of any home is the kitchen, and our accessible kitchen is great, but since we started our cooking classes, we have noticed that we could use some things to make it even better. Let us know if you can help us with any of these items on our "wish list" – or with a donation of cash to help us build a well-equipped kitchen for our future classes.

- Dish towels
- Pot holders
- 9 inch cake pans – glass and/or metal – round and/or square
- Measuring cups (clear for liquids, plastic for dry measuring)
- Measuring spoons
- Dried herbs & spices
- Food processor
- Stand mixer
- Crock pot(s)
- Mixing bowls
- Mixing spoons
- Coffee mugs
- Soup bowls

United Way Funds New Youth Transition Curriculum

Access to Independence, with generous support from the United Way of Dane County, is gearing up to offer high school Juniors and Seniors with disabilities in Dane County the opportunity to be better self advocates and leaders! While in the final stages of development, this curriculum will be offered to Special Education programs in high schools in Dane County, outside the City of Madison. This new curriculum will provide an opportunity for students to learn about disability history and culture; disability-related laws and leaders who were instrumental in their passage; acceptance of disability; values, goals, and dreams; self advocacy and leadership; and knowledge and empowerment around the student's Individualized Education Plan. ATI will be reaching out to schools in the next couple of weeks, and is excited to offer this opportunity. If you would like more information, please contact Jason Beloungy at 608-242-8484, ext. 229 or by e-mail at jasonb@accesstoind.org



Voter Registration Made Easy

Are you registered to vote? Have questions about the upcoming election, or your voting rights? The Wisconsin Government Accountability Board (GAB) has a new web site that can help. You can visit the site at <http://gab.wi.gov> or call 1-866-VOTE-WIS (1-866-868-3947) with questions. You have three options to register:

1. BY MAIL: Complete the Application for Voter Registration (GAB Form Number 131) and submit it to your local municipal clerk's office postmarked no later than the 20th day (3rd Wednesday) before the election.

2. IN PERSON BEFORE THE ELECTION: Register in your local municipal clerk's office up to the close of business on the Friday before the election.

3. AT THE POLLING PLACE ON ELECTION DAY: You must bring proof that you reside at your present location. Acceptable forms of proof of residence must include a current and complete first and last name, and a current complete residential address.

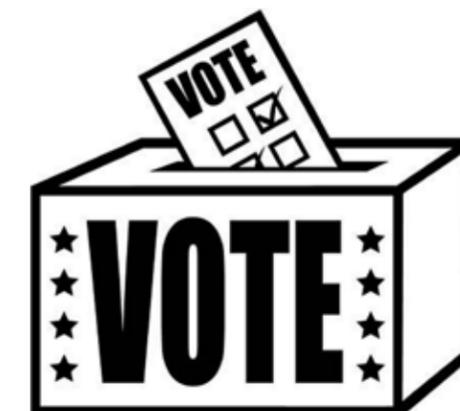
Your registration is considered permanent unless you move, in which case you need register to vote again. Your registration will only be cancelled if you do not vote during a four-year period or don't respond to a written request to continue registration.

Feel free to contact Access to Independence if you need help to register, apply for an absentee ballot, or have questions about polling place accessibility or other voting rights. If you are voting by absentee ballot, you will need

to mail in your Application for Absentee Ballot (GAB Form Number 121) to your local Municipal Clerk's Office no later than 5 p.m. on the Thursday before the election, which is November 1st.

For other helpful resources for voting information: The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin Education Network <http://www.lwvwi.org> or (608) 256-0827.

Disability Rights Wisconsin <http://www.disabilityrightswi.org>
Toll-free Disability Voting Rights Helpline: 1-800-928-8778



UPcoming Events

For more information about these and other events, please call Access to Independence, or visit us on our website at www.accesstoind.org.

Neuropathy Support Group
Every 2nd Tuesday of each month from 6-7pm, Access to Independence will be hosting a Neuropathy Support Group by the Neuropathy Association. If you have questions you may contact the local support group leader, David Woolf at: Phone: 608-770-8574 Email: dwoolf@gmail.com.

Wisconsin Certified Peer Specialists Ignite Recovery!
If you are interested in becoming a Certified Peer Specialist and working with peers on their recovery contact Alice F. Pauser at 608-242-8484 ext. 224. Visit www.wicps.org for more information.

ActionNet Meetings
Green County ActionNet Meeting
2nd Thursday of the month
12-2pm
Monroe Public Library
925 16th Street
Monroe, WI

Dodge County ActionNet Meeting
2nd Tuesday of the month
4:30 pm – 6:30 pm
Golden Care
N8053 Hwy 33
Beaver Dam, WI

Interested in a Support Group for younger people who have experienced stroke? Please contact Tracy if you have any interest, or know anyone who might benefit.

If you have upcoming events you would like listed in our newsletter or on our website, please contact us.

Wisconsin Guide to Voter Rights and Responsibilities

VOTER RESPONSIBILITY

Registration: You must be registered in order to vote in Wisconsin. Register by mail, in-person at your municipal clerk's office, or at the polls on Election Day. Check the Government Accountability Board (G.A.B) Voter Public Access website for more information including deadlines and forms.

Absentee Voting: If you cannot make it to the polls on Election Day, it is your responsibility to arrange absentee voting, which is a privilege not a right. Vote absentee by mail or in-person at your municipal clerk's office. There are deadlines for requesting and returning an absentee ballot on the G.A.B. website.

Proof of Residence: If you are registering to vote in the 20 days before any election, at the polls on Election Day, or for the first time by mail, you must provide a proof of residence document, which must have your name and address on it. It can be a piece of government correspondence, WI driver license, WI ID card, utility bill, or another document identified in State Statutes. For a list of

acceptable documents, visit the G.A.B. website.

Election Information: All voters must vote from their assigned polling place. Voter registration and absentee voting is done in conjunction with your municipal clerk. To review your voter registration record, to find your polling place, and to find your municipal clerk's information, visit Voter Public Access.

VOTING RIGHTS

The Wisconsin Constitution and state statutes give you the right to vote if:

- You are a U.S. citizen
- You are at least 18 years of age
- You have lived in Wisconsin for 28 consecutive days. However, you must not be otherwise restricted from voting, meaning:
- You are not a convicted felon whose civil rights are not yet restored
- You have not been judged incompetent
- You have not already voted in that election

Responsibilities:

Know what you must do on Election Day:

- Be registered to vote
- Re-register if you have moved or changed your name
- Vote at your assigned polling place between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m.
- State your full name and address
- Sign the poll book

You must not wear any political paraphernalia such as campaign shirts, hats or buttons to the polls.

REPERCUSSION

Voter fraud is a felony:

- Election fraud is punishable by a fine of \$1,000, imprisonment for not more than 6 months or both
- Examples of voter fraud include voting or registering to vote while you are not eligible, voting more than once in an election, or impersonating another voter.

Preparing for Election Day ensures that you are able to exercise your right to vote without complications.

Decisions, Decisions:

A Candidate Guide for the November Election

The November 2012 election is fast approaching, and sometimes it can be difficult to figure out who will be on the ballot in your area. To find out what your ballot will look like, you can visit <https://vpa.wi.gov/AddressSearchScreen.aspx>. If you don't have internet access, you can call ATI and we can send you the information for your area.

Candidates often know very little about people with disabilities. Election season is a time to educate candidates and influence future votes! You can use the following questions to create awareness among candidates and your community.

1. Investing in Adult and Children's Long-Term Services & Supports

How will you protect the significant investments Wisconsin has made (e.g. Family Care, IRIS) that reduce costly institutional care and provide community-based supports? Do you support an investment to reduce the waiting list for children?

2. Supporting Education for Students with Disabilities

What will you do to ensure public education supports and funding is available to improve outcomes for students with disabilities so they are college and workforce ready?

3. Protecting Medicaid

What are your plans to strengthen Wisconsin's Medicaid program

and protect against drastic cuts that could jeopardize services people rely upon, such as personal care and Katie Beckett supports for families?

4. Prioritizing Employment

Do you support employment as the first and preferred outcome for all working age citizens with disabilities when they are receiving public supports? How would you address the high unemployment rate of this population?

5. Supporting Transportation

How will you protect and increase public transportation investments that allow people with disabilities to get to work and participate in the community?

6. Redesigning Mental Health Systems

How will you support the redesign of Wisconsin's system of community-based mental health treatment for adults and children which is over-reliant on the county tax levy? How will you ensure persons living with serious mental illness can live in the community?

Some additional questions for federal candidates:

1. Prioritizing Federal Funding for Programs that Impact People with Disabilities

2. Dealing with the Federal Deficit

3. Investing in Long-Term Services & Supports

HOW TO USE THESE QUESTIONS
Post the questions on a candidate's Facebook page or tweet a question(s) to a candidate's Twitter account.

Invite a candidate for a conversation over coffee in the district.

Invite a candidate to your local organization's meeting (e.g. People First chapter, etc.)

Send an e-mail to the candidate's campaign.

Ask a question at a candidate forum or organize a forum.

Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper encouraging them to include disability issues in their coverage.



For more information about where particular candidates stand on issues that matter to you please visit the Wisconsin Vote website at <http://wisconsinvote.org>.

3rd Quarter Donors

Ken Golden
Roger Chapman
Ann Falconer
John Habeek
Marilyn Habeek

Thank You to Our Donors!

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, ATI 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'd like to begin recognizing donors each quarter, thank each of you for your generosity!