**Let’s get outdoors!**

By Nick Taylor

With the nice weather on its way for us to enjoy, now is a good time to learn about the many adaptive recreation options available to folks in the Access to Independence service region.

I’ll begin by focusing on the more well-known resources such as Madison School & Community Recreation (MSCR), which serves the Madison Metropolitan School District. They offer a multitude of recreation opportunities including, but not limited to: Golf, day trips to sporting events such as the Milwaukee Brewers, Pontoon boat rides and fitness groups. If you don’t live within the Madison Metropolitan School District, you can check with your local school and/or town’s recreation department for options.

**Contact MSCR:** For more information contact Chad Thom, Adaptive Supervisor
at 608-264-3020.

On the state level, the Department of Natural Resources has a handful of state parks that have accessible cabins. Locally, the options are Kettle Moraine State Forest—Southern Unit (about an hour’s drive from Madison going toward Milwaukee) and Mirror Lake State Park (near Wisconsin Dells and Baraboo). Additionally, Mirror Lake State Park has a few adaptive kayaks for rent if you are a more adventurous person.

**Contact DNR:** For more information, contact the DNR at 1-888-936-7463. If you have difficulty contacting the resources provided, give us a call at 608-242-8484 (toll-free 1-800-362-9877) and we will help you get hooked up with the right folks.

**Inaugural fundraising event begins May 6th**

*Reel Access to Real Independence* is a raffle and a fishing contest with a grand prize drawing, and will run from May 6th through October 27th. There will be a two-month Spring, Summer, and Fall phase. All tickets are $10 each, and tickets sales will be used to support Access to Independence, as well as a portion going to the winners of the fishing contest, and ticket sales partners.

**How it Works**

When you buy a ticket from ACCESS, or a participating location\*, you are entering the grand prize drawing, a raffle, a fishing contest, and receiving a FREE membership to an online fishing club!

**Raffles:** During each two-month phase, tickets purchased will be entered into prize drawings, valued at over $500! Any tickets purchased during any of the three phases will be entered into the year-end grand prize drawing, with a prize valued at $1,000!

**Fishing Contest:** When you purchase a ticket, you can indicate the type of fish you are seeking. If you’ll be fishing for more than one type of fish, you can buy more than one ticket. The eligible fish species include Bass, Bluegills, Muskies, and Walleyes. If you catch the type of fish during the phase you hold a ticket for, you can enter it in the contest\*. The largest fish for each species during each two-month phase will win a cash prize starting at $50. Don’t catch a thing? Don’t worry! All tickets purchased will be entered into the raffles, and will receive a free fishing club membership.

**Free Membership:** All tickets purchased will receive a complimentary 1-year membership to the nationwide online fishing club, Fishwithme.net. At the time of purchase, a card with a discount code will be provided, and that code can be entered when signing up to the club. This is a $30 value for free!

\*For a list of vendors, contest rules, and event updates, go to **www.reelaccess.org**. No internet access? Then call Jason at 608-242-8484, and information can be provided over the phone or by mail.

**The Benefit**

As noted, proceeds from ticket sales will go to support the incredible work being provided by Access to Independence. Even if you have no interest in fishing, buying a ticket(s) gets you entered into a raffle and grand prize drawing.

**6th Annual Summer Brat Sale on Friday, June 3rd**

For the 6th summer in a row, ACCESS will be hosting our annual Brat Sale, right in our parking lot at 3810 Milwaukee Street, in Madison. In addition to the delicious bratwurst you’ve come to expect, we’ll have some fun activities to promote our inaugural Reel Access to Real Independence raffle and fishing contest. Also this year, we expect to sell our 3,000th bratwurst, and whoever is the lucky soul to buy it will win 6 free brats and a few extra gifts.

**More Info**

Stop by between 11am and 5 pm, rain or shine.

Here’s the menu:

**Brats:** $2.50

**Chips:** .50¢

**Soda/water:** $1.00

We welcome advance orders, especially for 10 or more per order. You can place pre-orders up until 4:30 pm on June 22nd, by calling 608-242-8484.

**Let’s get outdoors!**

By Ashley

My name is Ashley and, once upon a time, I had no clue how to “adult.” I could get myself to and from a job most days. I could shower every day, usually. I sometimes remembered to brush my teeth. Honestly though, chores, cooking, planning out my day, and using most other skills attributed to being an independent adult were beyond me. I couldn’t figure out how to do it for the life of me. It wasn’t until I contacted Access to Independence and basically screamed “HELP ME” that I truly learned how to be independent. It wasn’t really even about “adulthood” like I thought it was. It was about being an independent person.

At the time I sought out Access to Independence, I was on disability leave from a job that I would never return to. I also was facing divorce, and becoming a single mother for the second time in my life. I had to figure out how to help myself help my son stay alive. Maybe that’s a little crass, but I was afraid he would starve to death if I didn’t learn how to be independent. With the help of my Independent Living Specialist, Tracy, I was able to gain the skills I needed - she saved a life, well, actually two, my sons and my own. She came to my house and helped me set new goals to achieve.

One of many goals that she helped me to achieve was learning how to cook - a skill, like I mentioned before, that was not one that I thought was easily attainable. We didn’t work on cooking right away, but we gradually stepped into cooking. First, she helped me to research recipes that I thought I could try. We wrote out a grocery list. We went grocery shopping. We went through many recipes step by step. She also taught me that substituting ingredients was just fine, and it was ok to make mistakes. She was a blessing in my life. Today, not even a year later, I am able to research recipes, try new recipes, and experiment with adding or subtracting from recipes without being scared, and without much hesitation. My Independent Living Specialist was a true life saver.

I am not a perfect person, I still struggle. I have PTSD and my days of confidence are up and down. However, I was shown that I am able to be an independent person. I CAN do these things that overwhelm me.