**Inaugural Artists Beyond Boundaries a success**

On the evening of October 25th, 2018, over 100 guests attended the final fundraising event of the ACCESS to Independence 40th Anniversary, Artists Beyond Boundaries. The evening kicked off with a cocktail hour where artists were able to display their work, and connect with guests. The evening continued with dinner and a program emceed by local documentary filmmaker, and former news anchor, Greg Jeschke. The program included remarks by the Chair of the ACCESS Board of Directors, David Rosenthal, who recognized Dee Nash for her 10 years of service as ACCESS’ executive director. The program then focused on the announcement of the 12 artists whose work was chosen by an independent panel of judges, and selected out of works submitted by 36 artists! In addition to the artists selected by the judges, guests were able to cast one vote each for their favorite piece, and a People’s Choice Award was announced. ACCESS to Independence greatly appreciates the support of the evening’s attendees, Greg Jeschke for his flawless emcee skills, the event’s sponsors, and most importantly, the artists who submitted incredible works of art.

**ACCESS Executive Director, Dee Nash,
to retire March 15th**

For 10 years, Dee Nash has been at the helm of the Capital City’s Independent Living Center, ACCESS to Independence. ACCESS has grown over the last decade: not just in agency budgets, and staff, but in the scope and number of services provided. This has resulted in more people with disabilities who are able to live where they choose, how they choose, and with whom they choose, in south-central Wisconsin. The Open Door interviewed Dee, as she readies herself, and the agency, for the next chapter.

**TOD (The Open Door):** When did you come to ACCESS, and what brought you here?

**DN (Dee Nash):** I came to ACCESS in July of 2008. I had wanted to make a change for quite some time. After the death of my father in 2007, I felt I could move out of the Superior area, and continue in independent living. Luckily, I was hired at Access in 2008 and have thoroughly enjoyed my time with the agency. In 2008 the budget was $518,000, and today, the agency budget is $1,320,275. ACCESS has grown for a variety of reasons, from the dedication of the people it employs, to the management, and the board of directors. The agency has developed a variety of fee-for-service activities, and with continued identification of gaps and service needs, I believe ACCESS will continue to grow. Being the director of ACCESS has been both rewarding and challenging, but I am very proud of where the agency is today.

**TOD:** List THREE things you are most proud of from your 10 years of leadership at ACCESS.

**DN:** One would be the Peer Specialist initiative, and how it has grown substantially since it launched under the guidance of ACCESS. Hundreds of people have become Certified Peer Specialists, and are working in the mental health field. A second example would be the tremendous growth of the assistive technology program at ACCESS, and the difference its has made in people’s lives through demonstration, loans, training, and assessment. I believe the community is quite surprised to know all that ACCESS does. The third would be annual Brat Sale fundraiser, which started as a fleeting thought, and celebrated its 7th year in 2018. It has become a great event on the east side of Madison, where ACCESS is located, bringing new individuals to the office. What’s always been a highlight for me was the opportunity to dress up in a Brat Costume. This event has had great sponsorship, board and volunteer participation, and is always just a lot of fun. I also want to add that I was incredibly proud of my time on the Independent Living Council of WI, including my tenure as the Council’s chair.

**TOD:** What’s next for you after your last day in March?

**DN:** I will remain somewhat in the Midwest, but will be working to build a tiny house in the Seattle area, where my daughter and son-in-law live. I am expecting my first grandchild in January, so this will also be a new adventure for me.

**TOD:** What is a quote you’d like to leave for the staff and board at ACCESS?

**DN:** “A goal is a dream with a deadline. Write yours down – because that’s the only way you’ll give them the substance they need to force you to carry them out.” -Harvey Mackay (Swim with Sharks Without Being Eaten Alive)

**2019 Artists Beyond Boundaries calendars
available January**

For only $10, you can enjoy works by artists with disabilities all year long. Proceeds support ACCESS to Independence.

**To order your 2019 calendar:**

1. Go online to accesstoind.org, and click on the “2019 Calendars Available” link, and pay by credit/debit card.
2. Call ACCESS at (608) 242-8484 to speak with Amber, and pay by debit/credit card.
3. Stop in and purchase at the office with cash, check, or credit card.

**New Assistive Technology at ACCESS
to Independence**

**Phone of the Future?**

More people are abandoning landline phone technology and relying on cell phone coverage. Phone amplification for cell phones is limited and some technology funding sources only cover landline technology. Fortunately the HD-70 Amplified Bluetooth Phone solves this problem. This phone can act as an amplified landline phone, but also has the ability to connect to a cell phone via Bluetooth technology. This enables the user to make and received calls from their cellphone from the amplified phone. The user can then change the call volume, and tone, to a level that suits their needs. The phone also features a red flashing light that acts as a visual indicator that a call is coming in. ACCESS has this phone available for both free demonstration and loan.

**The Device that reads you!**

The Eye-Snap Reader works for those who have vision loss, or other disabilities that make reading difficult. The user simply places the reading material (a sheet of paper or book) on the device’s tray and then presses a large tactile play button on an accessible keypad. The device takes a picture, then processes the text, which is read aloud in one of two voices: male or female. Tone or speed of the reader’s voice can be adjusted to the user’s needs. The user can listen to the reader through the device’s speakers or plug in a pair of headphones for privacy. The controls are so simple that anyone can learn to use it in minutes. ACCESS has this device available for demonstration. Contact us to schedule a time to try it out.

**Volunteer Recognition: Pat Freres, “The Voice of the Open Door”**

The Open Door newsletter is available in print, PDF and text-only electronic copies, large-print, and an audio version. ACCESS has been fortunate to have a volunteer willing to share the time and talents needed for recording the audio version. Pat Freres is the voice of The Open Door, and ACCESS is thrilled to recognizer her, and let readers get to know her.

**The Open Door (TOD):** Please tell us about yourself.

**Pat Freres (PF):** I grew up in Racine, the oldest in a family of eight children. I became fascinated with foreign languages, studied Latin, Spanish, and Russian in high school and college and was fortunate enough to travel widely in Europe and the Middle East during those years. My husband Charles is a Renaissance historian, and we spent a couple of years together in Florence, Italy, for his research, which provided an exciting opportunity to learn Italian as well. In the early 70’s we settled in Buffalo, New York, where Charles took a position as history professor at the state university there. I became a high school teacher of Latin and Spanish, which I enjoyed very much. And I helped lead student groups on trips to Spain, Costa Rica, and Italy. Another interest of mine is painting. I’d loved art since childhood, and in the early 90’s, I began painting in earnest. I took a class, read art books, and simply painted every weekend, mostly landscapes, many from our travels. In 2011 we retired and moved to Madison. What a good decision that was! This is such a lively place. We’ve made great friends who share our enthusiasm for nature and art. We serve as volunteer stewards in the UW Arboretum, and have developed an intense interest in birding. It’s all a wonderful discovery.

**TOD:** How did I become connected with ACCESS?

**PF:** A few years ago, through our church, First Unitarian Society, we were in a discussion group with Dick Goldberg, who has some radio experience. After hearing me speak, Dick commented on my “radio voice,” and urged me to put it to good use. He put me in touch with the United Way, and soon Jason Beloungy contacted me about recording the newsletter. It has worked out well, and I’ve been doing it for several years now.

**TOD:** What do I like about volunteering at ACCESS?

**PF:** There’s a strong sense of purpose at ACCESS. I admire the dedication, the good spirit and kindness of those who work here. They seem smart and skilled at navigating all the societal and legal pathways to connect individuals with the resources they need, to enable every person to live the fullest life possible. I am happy to play a small part in their mission.

**TOD:** Can you share a favorite quote of yours?

**PF:** Well, the ancient admonition “Carpe diem” is a fine motto to live by. The Latin suggests something like “harvest the fruit of this day.” Live as a good gardener of the precious hours of your life. What if we all did that!

**New Staff at ACCESS to Independence**

**Ben Meunier** is enthusiastic about providing his skills and expertise to both the Madison community and to people with disabilities across the state as the new Peer Specialist Program Assistant! Ben graduated from Lawrence University in 2017 with a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology and hopes to promote the Peer Specialist Program with progressive advocacy and cultural sensitivity. Apart from working at ACCESS to Independence, he coaches high school students for a science extracurricular in his hometown of Marshall and researches Biblical archaeology. Ben is fond of studying zoology, exercising, and watching his beloved Green Bay Packers.

My name is **Stacy Dayton** and I’m the bookkeeper here at Access. I currently hold Associates degrees in Business Management and Accounting from MATC as well as a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from Upper Iowa University. I’m currently working on my Master of Business Administration with a concentration in Accounting from UIU and graduate in May 2019, which will lead, hopefully, into taking my CPA exam in 2019! When I’m not working or playing student, I enjoy crafting (cross-stitch and diamond painting), singing, going to many concerts (mostly country), dancing (my boyfriend and I just started lessons), and playing video games (computer and Xbox).

My name is **Tim Saubers** and I’m the new Peer Specialist Program Manager here at ACCESS to Independence. I’m brand new to the Madison area, having spent the previous couple of years working with the Community Linkages and Stabilization Program (CLASP), in Milwaukee both providing community-based peer support and supervising the program as a whole. I’m very excited to be here at ACCESS and can’t wait to get to work on the Certified Peer Specialist Program. If you see me around the office please feel free to stop and say hello!

**Help us finish our 40th Anniversary through end-of-year giving**

Is Access to Independence part of your year-end giving? Your financial support is crucial to our ability to serve people of ANY type of disability, and of ALL ages, throughout Columbia, Dane, Dodge, and Green Counties. To make a tax-deductible contribution:

* Clip out the donation slip from this newsletter and mail with a check to Access to Independence
* Go to accesstoind.org, click on the DONATE button, and make a secure payment with your debit or credit card, or PayPal account
* Recurring payment options are also available online

Nearly ninety cents of every dollar is used for direct services, and ACCESS greatly appreciates any amount of support you can afford.