

THE OPEN DOOR

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2 0 1 9 A W A R D W I N N E R

RELENTLESS

TRACY MILLER

BADGER



A CCESS to Independence is thrilled to announce Tracy Miller as its recipient of the 2019 Relentless Badger Award! This award is given once annually at our statewide Independent Living Days event in Madison, WI.

Above: Pictured, from left to right, is Ben Meunier, Stacy Dayton, John Maurer, Ben Hinkel, Tracy Miller, Amber Fasula, Dee Nash, Ashley Beal, Tim Saubers, and Jason Beloungy

SEE RELENTLESS • PAGE 2

Jason Beloungy named new Executive Director
Details to come in the August Edition



ACCESS needs someone like you

Are you someone with a disability who is living independently? Are you willing to give a little of your time to helping other people?

We are beginning to grow our Peer Mentor program and we need volunteers with disabilities who are interested in becoming a Peer Mentor to assist others with the challenges and barriers to live independently.

Supportive relationships with peers positively impact people in many different ways. Examples of ways

that peer mentors can provide support to help peers to reach their goals may include helping them with:

- Learning about valuable community resources
- Learning about their disability and what it means for them
- Learning new skills
- Understanding their rights
- Advocating for themselves
- And so much more!

We are looking for people with all types of disabilities who are interested in going through a brief training process to volunteer up to a few hours of their time each month. Your life experience has

great value and is an important tool you can share with others! Keep in mind what it may have felt like for you when someone shared their own insights and life experiences in a way that made you feel that you were not alone on your journey. Mentoring is a mutual and cyclical process. We give to others what we have learned from others and they are capable of giving back, as well as “paying it forward.” Someone you mentor today may be a mentor for someone else tomorrow. Knowing this can be a great feeling!

SEE VOLUNTEERS, PAGE 3

INAUGURAL

FROM PAGE 1

The Relentless Badger Award is presented to an individual from each of the 8 independent living center regions in Wisconsin. ACCESS nominated Tracy as our region’s recipient due to her demonstrated commitment to the Independent Living Philosophy. Here is the text from her nomination, which was shared at the statewide event:

“For over 35 years, Tracy has exemplified the very heart of the Independent Living

Philosophy in numerous measurable and immeasurable ways. Not only has Tracy spent more than three decades with ACCESS, she has left a lasting impact on the thousands of people she has worked with directly, through the systems advocacy she passionately engages in on issues like housing and civil rights, and through the service providers she has bettered through training, education, and advocacy. Tracy started out as a limited-term employee, and it has been one hell of a limited term! She has worn many hats within the organization, and

with every hat, she has made sure that the empowerment and independence of people with disabilities is the focus. Another of the many reasons that Tracy is our 2019 Relentless Badger, is that she has a deep reservoir of knowledge, and a deeper level of empathy with everyone she assists. She has a raging fire in her belly for social justice, and an intense commitment to many causes. Tracy embodies the best of independent living, and ACCESS to Independence would not be the organization that it is without her. We congratulate Tracy Miller as our 2019 Relentless Badger!”

Volunteer Recognition: Cheryl Schiltz

Advocate,
board member,
volunteer and
creative force.

Cheryl Schiltz has worn many hats at ACCESS over the years. ACCESS is pleased to recognize her many contributions to the agency, her most recent endeavor as a judge and photographer for our

2018 Artists Beyond
Boundaries Event.

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

Cheryl Schiltz (CS):
I was introduced to
disability in 1997 when
an adverse reaction to
an antibiotic destroyed
my vestibular system.
I lost my sense of balance
and connection the world
around me. After bumps,
bruises and detours,



SEE SCHLITZ, PAGE 7

Pictured is Cheryl Schiltz.

Services continue for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community

Changes to come,
needs addressed.

ACCCESS to Independence is committed to working with people of any type of disability, and of all ages. For many years, ACCESS had a Deaf and Hard of Hearing Coordinator whose primary role was to provide the array of independent living services,

as well as additional programs like workshops and classes, for the Deaf and hard of hearing community in our region. In 2019, ACCESS made the commitment to keep serving the Deaf and hard of hearing community, but now through one of our Independent Living Specialists (ILS).

SEE CHANGES, PAGE 5

VOLUNTEERS

FROM PAGE 2

If you are interested in volunteering to be a peer mentor, please contact Ashley Beal at ACCESS for more information. Please note: if you have volunteered to be peer mentor with us before and are interested in doing it again, we'd also like to hear from you! Please let us know if you are interested in helping your peers achieve independence. And THANK YOU!



HELP ACCESS REDUCE COSTS

By requesting your newsletter in email format, you can help ACCESS reduce printing costs while still receiving the same great information! Contact us today to change how you read *The Open Door*.

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SERVING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

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CALL 608-242-8484 FOR PRE-ORDERS!

 **ACCESS**
TO INDEPENDENCE INC.



ACCESS Open House and Retirement celebration

The evening of February 28th was filled with friends, consumers, staff, and board members as ACCESS to Independence hosted a combination Open House and Retirement Party to celebrate long-standing Executive Director, Dee Nash. The Open House/Retirement Party featured tours of the agency, assistive technology demonstrations, appetizers, cake, and a slideshow presentation fea-

turing a collection of photographs documenting Dee's time in the independent living arena.

Dee has worked in independent living for 31 years and has been the Executive Director of ACCESS to Independence for the past 10 years. Dee's adventure will not stop at retirement; she is looking forward to spending time with her family in the Seattle area.

Top: People who attended the Open House/Retirement event enjoyed appetizers, cake, tours of the agency, and a slideshow presentation.

Right: Pictured, from left to right, is Tracy Miller, Janie Oejo, and Dee Nash.



CHANGES

FROM PAGE 3

This means that the same high quality services are still available, although there may be a need for accommodations, such as a sign language interpreter or the use of relay services, if the ILS does not speak the same language as someone requesting services.

For questions, or to request services, please call 608-242-8484 (voice/relay), e-mail info@accesstoind.org, or visit us online at www.accesstoind.org.

Listening Session for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community

ACCESS has committed to providing workshops and classes for members of the Deaf and hard of hearing community and would like to get the community's input on the topics that are needed or of interest. This is also a good time to share ideas and ways that ACCESS can better reach and serve the community.

What: Listening Session

Where: ACCESS to Independence office, 3810 Milwaukee Street, Madison, WI 53714

Date: May 15, 2019

Time: 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Light refreshments and sign language interpreters will be provided.

Please contact Tracy Miller at 608-242-8484 (ext. 227), or tracym@accesstoind.org, if you have any questions, or if you would like to share your thoughts with us and are not able to come to the meeting.

Artists Beyond Boundaries 2019

Call for Artists to start June 1st

Last year ACCESS celebrated its 40th Anniversary by hosting an event to celebrate artists with disabilities. ACCESS has decided to make this event an annual celebration! If you are an artist with a disability, ACCESS invites you to submit up to two of your works of art for this year's Artists Beyond Boundaries event. A panel of judges will select 12 pieces to be included in a 2020 calendar. On the evening of October 24th, ACCESS will host a dinner, as well as an exhibition of all artwork that has been submitted according to event guidelines. This dinner and exhibition will take place at the Concourse Hotel in Madison, Wisconsin. Event attendees will have the opportunity to vote for a "People's Choice" award, which will consist of works which have not been selected by the panel of judges. The People's Choice award



Artists Beyond Boundaries logo.

winner will have their artwork featured on the cover of the 2020 calendar. Additionally, each of the 13 winning artists will receive a check for \$200!

For entry rules and the application, please visit our website at www.accesstoind.org beginning April 1. Applications will be available from June 1 to August 31!

SAVE THE DATES

June 1 – Aug. 31: Artists are invited to submit up to 2 works of art along with a completed application to ACCESS. For applications, entry rules, or questions please see our website www.accesstoind.org or email Amber at amberf@accesstoind.org. Please include the subject line: Artists Beyond Boundaries.

Sept. 20: Winning artwork will be announced – Stay tuned to the event page on our website and our Facebook page for more details!

Oct. 24: Artists Beyond Boundaries Event at the Concourse Hotel in Madison. Registration for the event will be available on our website beginning August 1st. Go to www.accesstoind.org or email Amber at amberf@accesstoind.org for more information.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS & SPONSORS

◆ Stacy Dayton	⚡ Maggie McGuire	💰 Carol Peik	Ⓢ Joel Heiman	Ⓢ Stuart Smith
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◆ Mary Meunier	💰 Marilyn Feil	Ⓢ Katherine Choinoski	Ⓢ Janie P. Oejo	Ⓢ Cathleen Trueba
◆ Tracy Miller	💰 Jill Hatleberg	Ⓢ Ruth Diehl	Ⓢ Judy E. Olson	Ⓢ Monica Wahlberg
⚡ Barbara Charlie	💰 Clyde & Kathy Holmes	Ⓢ Sarah Edgerton	Ⓢ Marci Rosen	
⚡ Ken Croes	💰 Mary Meunier	Ⓢ Kristi Everson	Ⓢ Anthony J. Schwabe	

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!

◆ Artists Beyond Boundaries ⚡ AT Donation 💰 Financial Donation Ⓢ United Way - Dane County

SCHILTZ

FROM PAGE 3

I learned it was up to me to make my new life custom of my own making.

I was waiting for the world to change; to accommodate me. However, I learned that change was up to me. Since then, opportunities never cease to appear and they never cease to amaze me. One of these opportunities was ACCESS to Independence, where I became a disability advocate. I made it my mission to encourage others to customize their life according to their own desires.

I have a BS in Rehabilitation Psychology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. I work and volunteer in vocational rehabilitation, the Student to Transition to Employment Program (STEP), independent living and disability advocacy and support. I live in Madison, where I enjoy my family, photography, writing and making a difference whenever it shows up.

TOD: How and when did you become connected with ACCESS?

CS: When I was introduced to disability, I didn't know what to do or where to go for help. I really felt my life was over. Then someone told

me about ACCESS and I made an appointment to learn about what they do to help people with disabilities.

I was given resources that made a great difference, not only in support, but they made a difference in my own personal direction. It was then that I decided to go back to school for my degree in Rehabilitation Psychology.

During that time there were opportunities to do internships and ACCESS was one of them. I learned more about the center, what they do and the amazing people who work to make the differences I found. I was hooked and became a member of the Board of Directors on and off for 8 years. It was an honor to assist in the direction and growth of ACCESS.

As a photographer, I volunteered to take photos of various events. One of my favorites was taking photos of Dee in a brat costume during the annual brat sale. I volunteered to photograph the Independent Living Days and have for the last 5 years. I've photographed ACCESS's Open Houses, meetings with Legislators as well as the Disability Pride Fest. I've been greatly touched and honored to document and witness the power and dedication of those involved in every event.

TOD: What was the most rewarding

part of your involvement with the Artists Beyond Boundaries Event?

CS: I'm not sure I can say what the most rewarding part was – the whole process was wonderful. Seeing the different type of mediums, the drawings, paintings, ceramics, photography, and more, gave a great sense of how people see the world around them and how they include that in their work.

There was such wonderful pride in those who participated and seeing all the artists proudly display their work was heartwarming.

I formed a team to help make the selections. The process of selecting the winners was difficult, everything was so great! I'd like to thank those who helped me. This could not have been done without them:

- Wendy Buglass-Murkve
- Kristen Engel
- Sharkey Plender
- Constance Spasojevic

I guess if I were to say what was the most rewarding, it would have to be seeing the images in the calendar and knowing how proud the winners must be to have their work included.

Help support our future of empowerment and independence.

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ONLINE

Visit www.accesstoind.org and click the 'Donate' tab.

CASH or CHECK (payable to ACCESS to Independence):

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www.accesstoind.org

ACCESS Board Members

Teresa Grenawalt	Keith Wanta
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ACCESS is seeking new board members.
Contact us if you'd like to know more.

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is supported by:



*And people
like YOU!*

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