

Fall  
2019

DAKOTA CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

# Dakota Challenger

## **Bismarck Consumers Advocate** **for Their Communities**

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

– Margaret Mead

When tenants of two mobile home parks in Bismarck were told their parks had been purchased by new out-of-state owners and received letters along with leases detailing the new terms and rent increases, they did not hesitate to band

together. They immediately got their local leaders involved in requesting modifications to the lease agreements. Several consumers-organized, very well-attended community meetings were held in August with Senator Dick Dever, R-Bismarck, in attendance, along with Kent French, Director of Governmental Affairs with the ND Manufactured Housing Association.

The Dakota Center for Independent Living organized a Community Education Event presented by Legal Services of North Dakota based on Landlord/Tenant Law. The presentation, held August 29<sup>th</sup> at the Bismarck Veteran’s Memorial Library, was a direct result of consumers advocating for themselves by contacting Legal Services of ND and notifying all residents of the two mobile home parks of the meeting. Topics addressed at the meeting included: changes; utilities; landlord right of entry; abandoned property/landlord liens; termination/eviction. The new owners have said they agree to some of the requested modifications to the lease agreements and are planning to accept many of them. Tenants are eager to see this in writing.



### **Mission Statement:**

The Dakota Center for Independent Living believes in empowering people with disabilities by minimizing barriers, advocating for inclusion and promoting consumer choice.



# CRAFT DAY AT DCIL DICKINSON OFFICE



With mill levy money, The Bowman Senior Citizens Center put in a new automatic accessible door.

# DICKINSON OFFICE



Local Bowman artists volunteered to paint the Bowman Library .

## *Thank You* to St. Luke's Volunteers!

April 7, 2019 marked the beginning of "Volunteer Appreciation Week." There are a variety of services our volunteers provide to enhance the quality of life for the residents. During 2018 over 4,000 hours volunteer service hours were provided by St. Luke's volunteers! To show appreciation for their dedicated service to St. Luke's, a volunteer appreciation luncheon was held in the Chapel at St. Luke's on May 13, 2019. The theme was "Muchas Gracias to our Dedicated Volunteers." The room was decorated with Mexican décor, and the volunteers enjoyed a taco bar for the meal. All enjoyed special games and thank you gifts were given to all who attended in appreciation for their service.

*The Catholic Daughters take part in the festivities during the Volunteer Appreciation*



Marie Wax, far left, is an active consumer at the DCIL office in Dickinson.

## VROOOOOOM



Rebecca was bound and determined to achieve her goal of getting her driver's permit. Rebecca began the Driver's Permit Course taught at the Dakota Center for Independent Learning on August 9th, 2019, completed the course on August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019 and passed the permit test on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Mission accomplished! Pictured



here with a very proud Rebecca is Beth, Rebecca's cousin and staunch supporter!

# BISMARCK

# ANNUAL DCIL FUNRAISER AUCTION

TEMCHACK AUCTIONS

VOLUNTEERS

# THANK YOU

To the **BUSINESSES THAT DONATED**



**Throughout the summer Dickinson DCIL traveled to Bowman and taught a Safety Smart Class to Community Participants. After all the hard work, they had a pizza party and made 'Emergency Resource and My Coping Skills Wheels' .**



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# WHAT IS YESS UP TO???



Dakota Center for Independent Living offers training that prepares people with disabilities to become **Peer Mentors**. Anyone interested in becoming a Peer Mentor for Dakota Center for Independent Living please contact Jeannie at 701-222-3636.

## DO YOU BUY FROM AMAZON?

Well, now you can support DCIL while you shop. Every time you make a purchase at Amazon, they will give us money. This helps our non-profit agency do more for our family of consumers. Just go to <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/45-0430508>. You can log into your Amazon account from there and start shopping. Now Amazon will give us .5% of your total purchases. EASY? YEP! If you have questions, please call Vicki @ 701-222-3636.

## Friendship & Blessing, Different Abilities

Everybody dreams of finding their dream job, but no one expects to find that their job will lead to a friendship that will last a lifetime.

My name is Erin Pasley, and I am from an Illinois family of six; including my late father, mother (who is my role model), and my three younger sisters. I enjoy music, swimming, and most especially being surrounded by friends. I am 21, and when I was moving from Illinois to attend the University of Mary in Bismarck at the age of 18, I quickly found that friends were few and far between. I found myself making friends who didn't have the same morals as I do, and I lost/gained friends consistently. I was working for a bridal shop through my freshman year of college and realized how unhappy I was in the workforce.

While I was job searching, a college professor told me about a family looking for someone to care for their teenage daughter with Down Syndrome. I had no experience caring for someone with special needs; I really didn't even know much about Down Syndrome at all, but I sent my resume and set up an interview.

I met the family at their house over the dinner hour and was extremely nervous. They introduced me to their daughter Carly, and their two other children, one older and one younger than Carly, in the household. She looked at me; I looked at her. I saw this small girl listening to music that I listen to daily, and there was just something in her eyes telling me I was in the right place. I greeted her in a long phrase, and I simply got a "hi" from her. I am pretty sure, looking back now, that I talked down to her like she was a child. She was 1 at the time, but her small stature made her look so young.

Many people interviewed for the job, but Carly's parents hired me; to this day I don't know why, but their decision has been one of the greatest blessings of my life.

The first few weeks were...awkward. Carly utilizes very little verbal communication. She has an Alternative Augmentative Communication (ACC) device, which she usually uses very little. I felt like I didn't know what I was doing. She was unable to tell me if what I was doing was right or wrong. I felt like I was working in the dark. One day, though, as I became frustrated because I didn't know what she wanted, I broke down. In that moment, she made eye contact with me and embraced me for a short second. In that moment I realized how genuine, kind, and spectacular Carly is.

Carly's family made me feel like family - especially her mother Brenda, who was grown to be a second mom to me. Together, we eat meals, watch TV, dance, tell cringe-worthy knock-knock jokes, go out on the town, swim, and so much more. Carly and I quickly became close friends - friends who would talk about boys, having hard days, the good things in life, and sharing moments of achievement.

Our friendship is one of the defining moments that changed my life. I learned that Down Syndrome is beautiful, and there is no much more to life than what I imagined. Before Carly, my life felt superficial. Today, I lead Youth Empowering Social Status (YESS), a group of people with and without disabilities working to bring inclusion to the youth in our community.

I'm involved in more things that I can count, and I have begun the journey to received my master's degree in speech language pathology; I have never been happier.

In 2018, I was diagnosed with Fibromyalgia, brought on by a traumatic event I experienced in 2014. I was devastated - the health problems I was working to overcome after that trauma were no longer curable. It made working and school so difficult. My symptoms include severe nerve pain, brain fog, insomnia, and fatigue. This especially made maintaining friendships difficult. I didn't want to go out and party, go out to eat, or go running simply because I couldn't do it anymore, but that didn't affect Carly's friendship with me.

Carly and I have a friendship that is almost impossible to describe in words. In the two-and-a-half years we have been together, we have overcome challenges every day, both mentally and physically. I tell her that we have survived 100 percent of our struggles, and we will continue to survive. She has inspired me to be the best version of myself, and I feel honored that I can now go out and inspire others to the best version of themselves, too.

When I reflect on my friendship with Carly and her family, I see a friendship that isn't defined by disability. I purely see a best friend--a second family--that I will have for the rest of my life. This has become more than a job, it has become my life. Even though I am done working as a respite for Carly in September to focus on the demanding hours of graduate school, I have assured them that they aren't getting rid of me. I will be back to take her out all of the time, as I need my partner in crime. I am really proud to be a part of the lucky few.



Erin & Carly



## ADOPT-A-BLOCK Food Distribution

As part of The Banquet's new affiliation with the Dream Center Network we are introducing the Dream Center Adopt-a-Block program. Adopt-a-Block is a program where the Dream Center Adopt-a-Block truck goes to select neighborhoods and distributes grocery items to those in need. To receive the grocery items you will be asked to fill out a short intake form at the Adopt-a-Block truck location--it's easy!

**South Central High School**  
Parking Lot

406 S. Anderson St. Bismarck

**Mondays**  
**Starting June 24**  
**5:30 pm-7:00 pm**

**Jeannette Myhre School**  
Parking Lot

919 S. 12th St. Bismarck

**Wednesdays**  
**Starting June 19**  
**5:30 pm-7:00 pm**



For more information contact Jim Barnhardt  
701-226-4524 or e-mail [jimbarnhardt@msn.com](mailto:jimbarnhardt@msn.com)

**TO DONATE TO DCIL GO TO:**

**[www.dakotacil.org](http://www.dakotacil.org), click on DONATE**



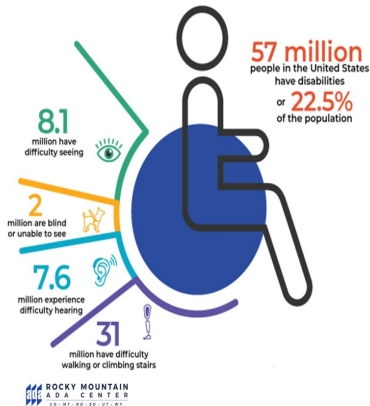
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**BANQUET**  
A Community Meal

# 29 YEARS AGO IN JULY

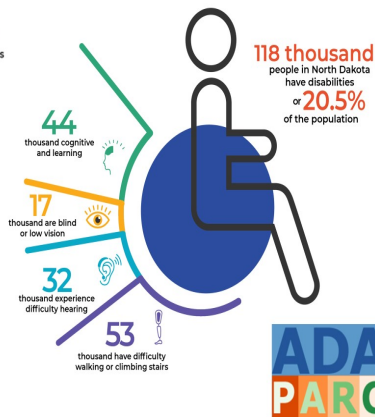
## THE ADA WAS PASSED INTO LAW

On July 31st, DCIL collaborated with Rocky Mountain ADA Center to celebrate this law... American Disability Act (ADA). Twenty-nine years ago President George H.W. Bush signed it into law; protecting the rights of 49 million Americans with disabilities.

### American Disabilities



### North Dakota Disabilities



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DCIL has a satellite office in Dickinson, ND. They can be Reached at: 1-701-483-4363

Find us on FaceBook at  
Dakota Center for Independent Living  
Web address: dakotacil.org

**If you would like to receive the newsletter by e-mail, please contact Vicki at DCIL by calling (701) 222-3636 .**

Also, available in alternative format—upon request.

**DCIL was established in 1980**