

Spring

2022

DAKOTA CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

Dakota Challenger

## TOGETHER for Mental Health

Mental health is an incredibly important part of overall health. With a growing number of Americans experiencing mental health symptoms, we need to join together to advocate for improving our nation's mental health care system.

### Mental Health Awareness Month

The National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI) is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. (NAMI) started as a small group of families gathered around a kitchen table in 1979. It has grown to be the nation's leading voice on mental health. They envision a world where all people affected by mental illness live healthy, fulfilling lives supported by a community that cares.

"Together for Mental Health" is a time to bring voices together to advocate for mental health services and resources.

### You Are Not Alone. Reach Out For HELP.

If you or someone you know is in crisis, call 2-1-1- for help 24-hours a day/7 days a week. It's free and confidential.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 1-800-273-8255, or use the Lifeline Chat on their website. It's a free service that is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The National Crisis Text Line. Text "HELLO" to 741741.

#### Mission Statement:

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

## WHAT IS WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?

Lee, a gentle soul, with a genuinely kind spirit, and a very gracious heart. Lee is a man that lives with disabilities. Some of them are visible, some of them are invisible. Because of an accident that he experienced at a job, he uses a chair for his mobility. He is of Native American heritage. More than anything, Lee doesn't want his disabilities to define or hinder him from being the best version of himself, despite the anxiety and depression he deals with daily. Nor does he expect special treatment from anyone; he just wants to live the life that he able.

Lee is a non-traditional student at Sitting Bull College on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation, Fort Yates, ND. He wants to earn a degree so that he can support himself without having to ever depend on others. His life consists of studying and preparing for a college degree.

Every morning he gets up very early to catch a transit bus from his residence, in Bismarck, to a church parking lot in Mandan where he waits for his second bus to get him to school. He connects there, along with others, for his ride to Standing Rock. He has been doing this for a year and a half. As he waits in Mandan for that leg of his daily trip, he reads his text books so that he has confidence that he is prepared for that day at school. This is a day in the life of Lee.

Once he gets to the 'pick-up spot' in Mandan, he watches, as the other bus passengers, arrive in their vehicles, to join him on the last leg of the mornings journey. They park in the parking lot of this church, every day. Spring, Winter, or Fall, Lee awaits in his chair for the arrival of his second bus. Sometimes he is covered as much as possible with a blanket, to help minimize the cold and the wind.

This is where the story gets interesting and leaves readers with some questions.

Lee tells of at least 5 separate incidents of someone questioning why he is there in front of the church. Here are a few:

- #1 One morning a police officer approached and asks Lee what he is doing there. He shows his school badge around his neck and explains that he is waiting for a bus to take him to college.
- #2 Another morning, man comes out of the church and asks him what he is doing there and he cannot stay there as it disrupts what is going on at the church.
- #3 Same man, different day, comes out of the church again, throwing his arms up and stating, "It's YOU again? You can't sit here! This is a distraction."

#4 Monday, March 7th, 2022, was the final incident. This is how this day played out for Lee:

It was a frigid, windy day, maybe 7 degrees C. Lee is sitting in his assessible chair, carrying a bag with his medical necessities, a bag carrying his laptop, a backpack with school books, a blanket around himself to try to stay warm as he reads his textbook which is semi covered by the blanket so that he can keep his arms and hands warm. A police officer pulls into the parking lot and watches Lee carefully as he passes by him. He turns his vehicle around so he is now facing Lee, who is located near the street. The officer parks his vehicle in the parking lot and just watches Lee.

Now this makes Lee a little anxious, as he is not sure why the officer is just sitting in his vehicle watching him. A second police vehicle pulls into the parking lot, positions himself next to the first, and they sit, talking back and forth while Lee keeps a keen eye on them. He is now feeling even more uncomfortable with this situation. He would like to call the Standing Rock Transit office to find out when his bus is going to arrive, but he's afraid they may be thinking he is reaching for something else. This situation from Lee's perspective looks like stories he's only heard of in the news, of how easily an escalation of an innocent situation can happen.

A third undercover city vehicle arrives to join the two already present. A gentleman gets out of the all black, unmarked vehicle and goes into the church. Lee has had his hands visible to the officers the whole time so they have no reason to believe he is doing anything nefarious. He gently pulls his phone out and points to it, as he is looking at the officers watching him, and he mouths that he 'needs to make a call'. He calls the transit office and asks when the bus is scheduled to arrive as he is getting very anxious about this situation. They tell him that they are nearly there. The bus arrives and the bus driver says, "What the heck are all the cops doing here?" Lee responds, "They are watching me....." All the other bus riders now get out of their warm vehicle to board the bus, with Lee.

(Lee lives with a traumatic brain injury, PTSD, anxiety, diabetes, and a heart condition)



## COFFEE CLUB MEETINGS

**Men: 3rd Wednesday of the month**

Caribou Coffee in Kirkwood Mall 2:00 p.m.

**Women: 3rd Wednesday of the month**

Gina's Café in Scheels, Kirkwood Mall 2:00 p.m.

***Once a month, these groups meet separately. It is an opportunity where they can just be themselves, sit quietly, join in conversation to share a story, or make a new friend.***

***When asked why they attend:***

- ***To be with others***
- ***Talk about anything***
- ***Just be able to laugh***
- ***Get out of the house***
- ***Nobody judges me***
- ***Just nice to be able to be me***



Why do you come to coffee and what do you get out of coming to coffee and what would you do different?

I Love coffee, it's so relaxing to meet up w/ everyone and learn ideas about anything. Coffee is nice to also meet new friends and get the opportunity to do something. Do not stop coffee. please

**GIRLS JUST WANNA  
HAVE FUN**



"The contents of this newsletter were developed under a grant from the Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Community Living. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government: This newsletter is available in alternative format - upon request.

# BRAIN INJURY SUPPORT GROUP

## MEETINGS ARE HELD:

4TH THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH FROM 4-5 P.M. Get on our calendar list by emailing [Jeannie at: jeaniep@dakotacil.org](mailto:jeaniep@dakotacil.org)

Or call her at 701-222-3636 for more information.



“A good place to share information with other brain injured survivors. Gives you encouragement and hope to redirect your future.”

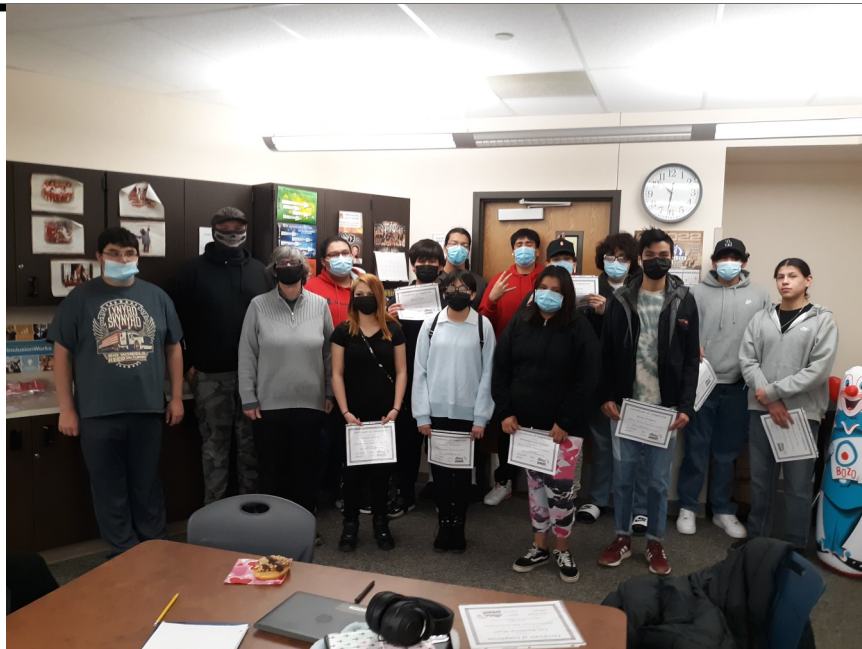
-Arlene

“Survivors give each other strength and encouragement. Makes a person feel better about themselves.”

-Bill“

Support group has given me an abundance of information leading me to a productive life.”

-Kim



**\*\*\*CONGRATULATIONS\*\*\***

## STANDING ROCK DRIVERS PERMIT STUDENTS

Pictured here are 14 of the 22 consumers attending Standing Rock Community High School in Ft. Yates who recently completed the Driver Permit Class. Their teacher, Colette Fleck, who is also the Transition Coordinator, is pictured in the front row, first person to the left.

# AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

You don't want to miss this presentation as we celebrate  
Autism Awareness Month.



## MITCH SLEEP

Mitch will share how awesome it is living with AUTISM: · Employment/Obstacles

- Challenges and barriers
- Family dynamics
- Friends & Relationships

JOIN US on April 11, 2022 at 4 p.m.

Live at the Bismarck Eagles 313 N 26th Street

ZOOM: ID 829 9641 8329    PSWD: 511765

## WELCOME TO DCIL'S NEWEST

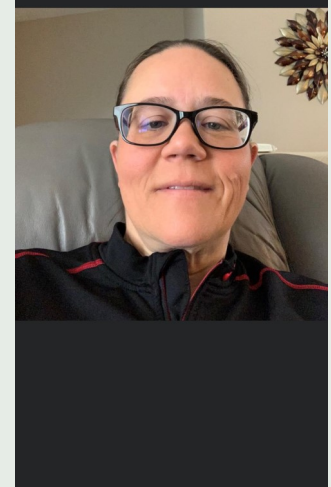
## "MONEY FOLLOWS THE PERSON" TEAM MEMBERS

Samantha was born and raised in Valley City, ND. She moved to Bismarck in 2020. Samantha enjoys camping, reading, hunting, fishing, and spending time with family and friends in her free time. She has 7 years' experience working with individuals with disabilities and has



previously worked in nursing homes. Samantha is currently pursuing her bachelor's degree in Psychology with an online program through the University of North Dakota. Samantha joined Dakota Center for Independent Living in February as a **Transition Coordinator** for the Money Follows the Person Program. Samantha is very excited to be joining the team and looks forward to assisting others in a lasting way.

Cody was born and raised in Linton, ND and moved to Bismarck 18 years ago. Cody enjoys hunting, camping, watching football and basketball, and spending time with family and friends. She has experience working with the elderly and



those with disabilities, as she was recently the Operations Manager at Support Systems, Inc. and before that worked at two of the Prospera Nursing homes as the Scheduling Coordinator and Business Office Manager. She joined Dakota Center for Independent Living in February of 2022, as a **Transition Coordinator** for the Money Follows the Person Program.

# DICKINSON OFFICE



**Special Thank You**  
Travis Leintz from  
The Dickinson Police  
Department giving  
A Community Smart  
Presentation at the  
Dakota Center for  
Independent Living



**“STRESS Less” Kits**



# Money Follows the Person

Thank you so very much. You have made this so much easier, and have taken some of my fear away. MFP is an amazing organization, but you and Kylie, are the wonderful people that make me feel so cared for and comforted. That is a human thing. You can't purchase or manufacture those gifts. That is what you ladies are, gifts.

*Written by Salina (Speaking of her transition from a nursing facility to her own apartment.)*

Austin Bonnet placed a wreath on the tomb of the unknown soldiers in Washington DC. He is in Active Army Reserve. We are so proud of him!



## **STANDING ROCK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS/DCIL DRIVERS EDUCATION STUDENTS TAKE ON A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THEIR COMMUNITY.**

Standing Rock Community High School students and DCIL Driver Permit consumers Ajilon, Courtney, James, Micah and Jazmine participate in a local radio show. Once a month, these students produce their very own Standing Rock Warrior Radio Show. KLND 89.5 FM RADIO comes to the school, located in Ft. Yates, ND, and the students are able to broadcast live, letting the listening area know what is going on at their school.



## **HIGH PLAINS FAIR HOUSING UPCOMING WEBINARS**

### **• Fair Housing Webinar for Renters**

**TUESDAY April 19, 2022, 1-2:30 p.m. Online Event**

### **• Disability Protections in Housing**

**Thursday, April 21, 2022, 3-5 p.m. Online Event**

**Get tickets on Evenbrite or call 701-203-1077  
for more information.**

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Toll Free: 1-800-489-5013  
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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**  
**Youth Empowering Social Status—YESS**

**Website address: [dakotacil.org](http://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**