

# Challenger

DAKOTA

Dakota Center for Independent Living • www.dakotacil.org

"Serving people with disabilities since 1980"

## Health & Wellness Fair connected people to services



Dakota Center for Independent Living hosted its annual Health & Wellness Fair on January 6th at Touchmark in Bismarck.

DCIL saw guest participation double this year with a total of 155 attendees.

The event connected people with services from DCIL as well as twenty-four area agencies who offered benefits enrollment help, informational booths and on-site counseling referrals at this event.

We would like to thank our exhibitors for making this year's Health & Wellness Fair so successful! We couldn't have done it without you. Participating organizations:

- AARC
- AgeWell Center
- Alliance Center for Hearing
- Alzheimer's Association
- Bismarck Cancer Center
- CaringEdge Home Health & Hospice
- CHI Health at Home
- Costco Optical & Hearing Aid
- DCIL
- Dakota Physical Therapy
- Ethos Home Health & Hospice
- HIA Health
- ND Legal Services
- ND Office of Attorney General
- ND Brain Injury Network
- NoDak Medical Alert
- ND Senior Medicare Patrol
- Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE)
- Protection & Advocacy
- ND State Library "Talking Books"
- Sanford Home Care
- Sanford Patient & Development
- ND Vocational Rehab
- Warehouse 13



**DAKOTA CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING**  
**KIANNA ROECKER**  
 INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM MANAGER

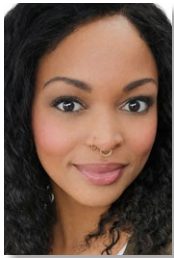


*Top: DCIL Program Director Kianna Roecker was featured on KFYR TV during coverage of DCIL's annual Health & Wellness Fair in January held at Touchmark in Bismarck.*

*Below: Staff from DCIL offer important information on our services and assistive technology to guests of the health fair. From left: Advocates Andrew, Miah, Jeanne, and Caitlin; Executive Director Royce and Program Director Kianna.*



# DCIL welcomes Katie back as IL Specialist in January



Katie

Hi everyone! I'm Katie, and I'm excited to say I made my way back to Dakota Center for Independent Living on January 21st! I was here previously for about a year and a half and had the opportunity to move into a couple different roles in that time, which allowed me to take on more responsibility and learn a lot.

I'm a North Dakota native and live in Mandan with my 11-year-old daughter, who definitely keeps life interesting and busy outside of work. When I'm not working, I'm usually in full mom

mode.

At DCIL, I work as an IL Specialist/Transition Coordinator, I love that my job is a mix of everything—Leading meetings, coordinating services, and even assisting with things like picking out furniture and assistive technology. Basically, I like to say we help people build a fresh start (sometimes literally, one couch at a time).

One of the best parts about being back is the team. I genuinely enjoy working here and being around such supportive, down-to-earth people every day.

I'm really glad to be back and look forward to continuing the work we do together!

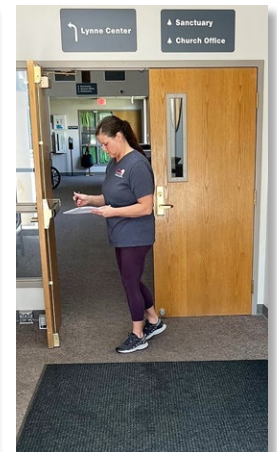
# DCIL will do accessibility assessments at no charge

Dakota Center for Independent Living (DCIL) will do an accessibility assessment of your business or polling site. We'll give you ideas on how to make your location more accessible for people with disabilities, and it's free of charge across the 18 counties we serve.

Recently, assessments were done in a few counties of our service area in the state. Photos to the right show some of the areas that are measured during assessment.



If you'd like an assessment done at your location, please contact Program Director Kianna Roecker at DCIL: 701-222-3636.



Follow us on Indeed for current job opportunities!

[indeed.com/cmp/Dakota-Center-For-Independent-Living,-Inc.-1](https://www.indeed.com/cmp/Dakota-Center-For-Independent-Living,-Inc.-1)

Thank you to our valued funder:

The NDAD Gibbens Memorial Grant

The NDAD Gibbens Memorial chose DCIL as the recipient of their grant in May. Their generous grant will be used to build the ADA accessible raised garden bed for the upcoming DCIL gardening program, offering new opportunities for engagement and skill building.

# Team building fun was had at last staff meeting

DCIL staff participate in monthly staff meetings packed full of informative updates, special guest speakers and presentations, and team building activities.

In March, the staff had fun with three different team building activities.

For the first exercise, teams had to rate items found on their "plane" in a plane crash scenario. Items were rated in order of importance for survival.

The next exercise was a scavenger hunt. Lots of scrambling and fun! And the final exercise involved dry

spaghetti noodles, string, tape, and marshmallows. Mission: build the tallest structure!

Winners of the grand finale "team building activity" were Advocate Jeanne & Specialist McCallie.

Great job everyone!



# Standing Rock HS Career Fair very welcoming

On Tuesday, March 10th, DCIL advocates Jeanne and Andrew traveled to Standing Rock High School for a career fair. The advocates set up a booth to provide information about DCIL's programs and services.

Groups of students came to the gym grade by grade, starting with the seniors, then juniors, sophomores, etc. The advocates answered questions, talked about the good work that DCIL

does, and corrected some misconceptions about disability and people-first language. DCIL staff were even interviewed by the student-ran radio station at the school.

By far the highlight of the day were the high school students who were so warm and welcoming. The students put on the career fair, setting up tables, registering presenters, providing coffee, water, food, and anything else

attendees needed. We were treated to delicious beef stew as well as fry bread with wojapi, a thick, traditional chokecherry sauce.

At the end of the day, each presenter was sent home with a teddy bear wearing a Standing Rock Warrior's T-shirt which was just the cherry on top of a really fun, busy day.

Thanks for welcoming us to your career fair with open arms!



## DCIL helps spread the word about community resources

DCIL staff are frequently out in the community to share information on community resources by hosting booths at different events, providing presentations on disability etiquette, teaching Drivers Education courses at area schools, and troubleshooting technology at local senior centers.

In January, DCIL collaborated with many agencies at a free event at The Dream Center titled "Navigating Disability Services: A Workshop for Families & Self Advocates." DCIL hosted an informational booth at the event as well.

The workshop was designed to help individuals with disabilities, the families, and self-advocates to better understand and navigate available disability services and supports.

The workshop also featured presentations from Burleigh County Housing Authority and Disability Rights North Dakota (ND Protection & Advocacy), offering practical guidance on housing resources, rights, advocacy, and how to access critical services.



# Remodeling underway at DCIL Dickinson branch

DCIL has a branch office in Dickinson that is currently going through updates and remodeling. Recently, a few of the Bismarck

staff spent time in the Dickinson office purging items no longer needed and reorganizing the office essentials that were staying. Bismarck's staff Josie and

Miah are seen loading a trailer below. The DCIL Dickinson branch office is temporarily closed during these changes.



# Advocates stayed committed to improving Mary's life

by Advocates Miah and Caitlin

Mary was faced with a challenging situation after receiving a letter from her landlord stating that her lease would not be renewed. She was given exactly one month to find a new place to live and move all her belongings. Having lived in her apartment for over 10 years, Mary was understandably upset and did not want to relocate.

Mary reached out to her DCIL advocate, Miah, for assistance in exploring potential housing options. Miah and Mary toured several apartments; however, none were a good fit. With time quickly running out, Mary was in urgent need of additional support. DCIL advocate Caitlin stepped in to assist both Mary and Miah in the housing search.

Miah and Caitlin were committed to helping Mary secure an apartment that best suited her needs and was within

walking distance of her job. Caitlin contacted numerous property managers and was able to arrange a same-day tour at a newer apartment complex. The advocates, along with Mary and her close friends Kris, Kris's husband, and Kim, toured the apartment. Mary immediately felt it was the right fit and decided to apply.

Because Mary utilizes housing assistance, the advocates also had to coordinate closely with Burleigh County Housing to ensure all required steps, inspections, and approvals were completed within a matter of days. Miah and Caitlin worked diligently with housing representatives to submit documentation, confirm eligibility requirements, and expedite the approval process so the apartment could be secured within the limited timeframe.

With financial assistance from Kris

and her husband, Mary was able to pay the holding fee to secure the unit while the remaining documentation was gathered. The advocates ensured that all required paperwork was completed and submitted promptly. Within the first two weeks of February, Mary was approved of the apartment and successfully moved in by the end of the month.

She is now living closer to her job in a safer, newer apartment that will better meet her needs for years to come.



# Social Security benefits secured with help from advocate

by Advocate Andrew

A consumer had originally applied for benefits before a loss in the family brought everything to a halt.

My consumer lost their Aunt who they were very close with and were living with. While dealing with this loss, my consumer missed a deadline to follow up with Social Security, and that was reason for their denial.

Along with my assistance, we were

able to make a request for additional time to respond to Social Security. We explained that my consumer was dealing with a significant loss that prevented them from responding in a timely manner. Social Security responded by allowing for additional time.

With the additional time, my consumer was able to request a reconsideration. We worked through the request and submitted it in time.

My consumer is now receiving their benefits along with almost a year's worth of backpay. With the money, my consumer hopes to live on their own for the first time.

I am very proud of my consumer for not giving up and continuing to work through the process. I am hopeful that this will be beneficial towards their goal of living independently in the community!

# DCIL Specialist & TDP gave Lynn new chapter in life

by Specialist McCallie

Lynn was referred to TDP after she had to move out of her current home due to a bad situation with others in her life.

Lynn was able to find a place at the brand-new Dakota 2 apartments that have just opened. Lynn did not have any furniture or household supplies. All she had was her clothing, her cat's supplies, and some items that she was borrowing from a friend.

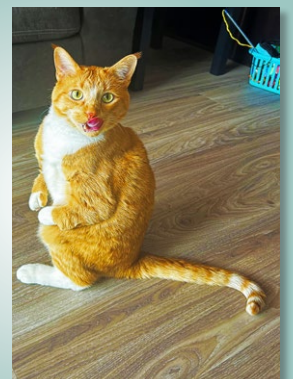
McCallie was able to purchase Lynn

a brand-new adjustable bed, new couch, and brand-new household supplies to help her start her new chapter.

Lynn is thankful for how fast staff were able to get her the items that she needed and the help with setting up her new apartment. She is excited to be the first one that has ever lived in her new apartment and relieved that she is somewhere safe and warm.

Lynn and her cat Tom thank DCIL Staff and TDP for their new life!

*Lynn's cat Tom doesn't use his front legs much and instead usually walks with his hind legs, but it doesn't slow him down a bit in his new happy home!*





**Dakota Center for Independent Living**  
3111 E. Broadway Ave., Suite #1  
Bismarck, ND 58501

NON PROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID

BISMARCK, ND

PERMIT NO. 419



**Dakota Center for Independent Living**  
3111 E. Broadway Ave., Suite #1  
Bismarck, ND 58501

Phone: 701-222-3636  
Toll Free: 1-800-489-5013  
Fax: 701-222-0511  
Web: [www.dakotacil.org](http://www.dakotacil.org)

\* DCIL has a satellite office in Dickinson, ND.  
They can be reached at: 701-483-4363.

\* DCIL offices are fragrance free.

## What can we help you with?

### DCIL Core Services:

- Information & Referral
- Peer Support
- Advocacy
- Independent Living Skills Training
- Transitional Services



Scan the QR code above to be taken to our website, or find Dakota Center for Independent Living on Facebook, Instagram, & YouTube!



### Mission Statement

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

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

**If you would like to receive the newsletter by e-mail or an alternate format, please contact us at DCIL by calling 701-222-3636 or emailing [dcil@dakotacil.org](mailto:dcil@dakotacil.org).**