

Summer 2026

Challenger

DAKOTA

Dakota Center for Independent Living - www.dakotacil.org

"Serving people with disabilities since 1980"

'Fun in the Sun' had by all at Consumer Appreciation



Easter Egg Decorating- March



Sundae Making & a Movie- May



Dream Center Block Party- May



HERITAGE CENTER TOUR- JUNE



Understanding Disabilities: "Unmasking" - April



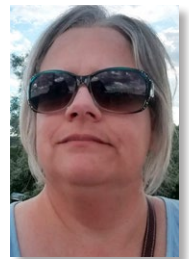
Stacy fills DCIL role as IL Specialist in March

I am very excited to join the team at DCIL as an IL specialist under the MFP program.

I have a degree in Broadcasting and Criminal Justice and over 20 years of experience in helping/advocating for many consumers across ND. The people

we advocate for need our voice and understanding and I'm glad I get to be there for them.

Outside of work, I enjoy time spent with family, friends and my cats. I also like to read, listen to music and watch TV.



Stacy

Staff attend symposium on Adults, Aging and Disabilities

The North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services held a two day symposium at the BSC National Energy Center of Excellence in Bismarck, April 7-8. The event was attended by many human service agencies around the state, including DCIL, allowing important collaborations and networking amongst agencies.

This statewide symposium fo-

cused on aging and disabled adults, especially in areas such as dignity, access, and person-centered services.

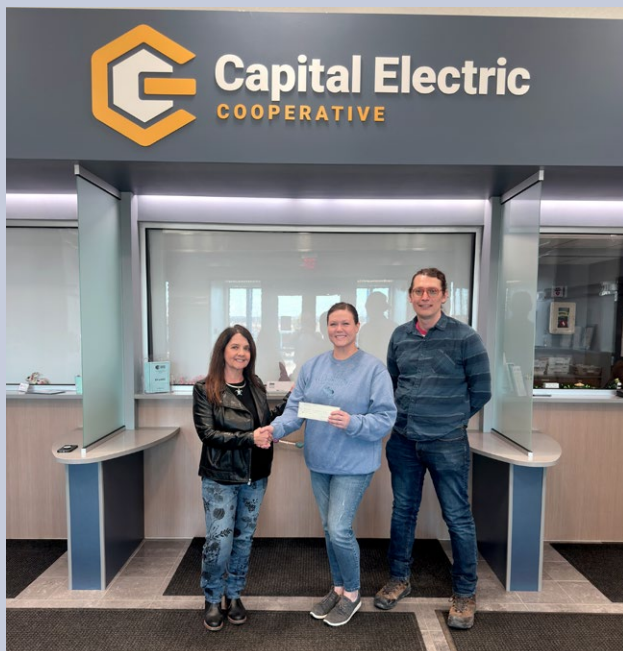
Through keynote presentations and breakout sessions, participants explored ethical practice, neurocognitive change, housing, adult protective services, human trafficking awareness, mental and behavioral health, compassion fatigue, and

professional well-being. The agenda emphasized meeting people where they are—across systems, generations, and lived experience—while supporting the workforce that serves adults, older adults, and individuals with disabilities.

DCIL staff attend trainings such as this regularly to keep current on crucial skills needed for our agency's advocacy and transition work.

DCIL chosen for 'Operation Round-Up'

DCIL is grateful to be one of 15 recipients of the "Operation Round-Up" grant in March offered by Capital Electric Cooperative. Thank you Capital Electric!



Thanks to our sponsors for donations to our Consumer Appreciation!



Gala brings mental health 'Out of the Darkness'

DCIL Program Director Kianna and Advocate Andrew attended the "Bloomin' Light Out of the Darkness" Gala on May 21st at the Radisson Hotel in Bismarck. DCIL participated in the vendor show with an informational booth on DCIL services.

The unique floral runway show

was designed to raise awareness and reduce the stigma around mental health.

The event was hosted by Mental Health America of North Dakota (MHAND), the North Dakota Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health (NDFFCMH), and Ken's Flower Shop.



DCIL @ Dickinson 'Parent Fair'

DCIL Program Director Kianna, and IL Advocates Miah and Caitlin represented DCIL at the 3rd Annual Parent Fair at Dickinson High School on April 11th.

This year's theme was "The Science of Parenting." Participants came for a luncheon, book corral, vendors, community resources and information, games and fun.

Wellness fair fun & uplifting

On Wed., May 27th the Bismarck Agewell Center held a Wellness Fair. DCIL Advocates Andrew and Jeanne participated in the fair by hosting a booth, providing information about DCIL programs and services. Also pictured above: DCIL board member Trevor Vannett.

Attendees took in the booths, listened to a presentation on health, movement, and exercise, and were treated to some delicious caramel rolls and coffee. Attendees were also invited to join in group exercise and stretching.

The atmosphere of the event was lively, uplifting, and fun. It was a great day and DCIL was thankful for being a part of it.



Navigating Disability Services series: 'Disability Rights' focus at latest event by The Arc of Bismarck

IL Program Director Kianna was asked to speak during the latest event in a series on Navigating Disability Services hosted by The Arc of Bismarck at the DreamCenter.

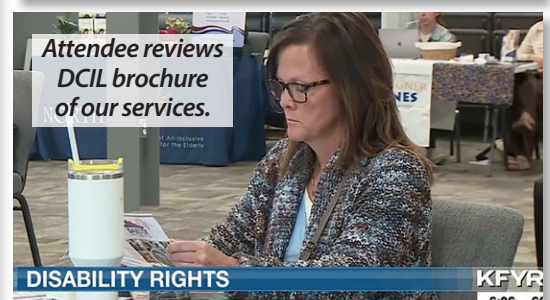
Local leaders and advocates were invited to share valuable insights, resources, and guidance for individuals with disabilities, their families, and fellow professionals at the June 15th installment on "Disability Rights."

Kianna covered invaluable information in her presentation, "This presentation today is focused on Disability Rights both nationally and here in North Dakota. We will be reviewing and ensuring that we understand the protections, advocacy efforts, and person-centered values that help ensure individuals with disabilities are treated with dignity, equality, and respect.

The main topics that we are going to discuss are disability rights, inclusion, fighting discrimination, reasonable accommodations, dignity of risk, advocacy, and the importance of protecting individual choice and independence.

We will also talk about how disability rights impact everyday life for people with disabilities, which includes employment, healthcare, housing, transportation, communication, education, and community participation.

One important thing to remember throughout this presenta-



tion is that disability rights are not about charity or pity.

They are about equity, access, dignity, and human rights. Accessibility and inclusion benefit everyone, and creating accessible communities strengthens society as a whole.

For over four decades, DCIL has worked to empower individuals with disabilities to live independently and participate fully within their communities. We are dedicated to serving the needs of our patrons in every way imaginable. No disability is too large or small for our team, and we are proud to offer a variety of services to the disabled community.

At the end of the day, disability rights are about ensuring every person has the opportunity to live with dignity, independence, equal opportunity, and full participation within their communities."

DCIL: Advocating for Inclusion Since 1980

For over four decades, **Dakota Center for Independent Living** has been a trusted partner for North Dakotans with disabilities by providing services that open doors to community life, personal growth, and lasting independence.

Information & Referral
Connecting individuals with the resources, services, and supports they need.

Skills Training
Practical, hands-on training to build the everyday skills for independent living.

Transitional Services
Supporting smooth transitions from school, institutions, or hospital settings into community life.

Peer Support
Learning from those who have walked a similar path fosters confidence and resilience.

Systems & Self Advocacy
Individual Advocacy means working with people with disabilities to support themselves in safeguarding their civil rights.

Statistics & Impact in North Dakota

1 in 4
Americans
have some form of disability — North Dakota reflects this reality across all communities.

2023
NDCPD 5-Year Plan
Launched to expand I/DD services through 2027 — focusing on employment, self-determination & dignified aging.

40+
Years of DCIL Service
Over four decades empowering individuals with disabilities across North Dakota communities.

The North Dakota Navigator Program, run by NDCPD, helps individuals with disabilities find and enroll in health insurance which helps with breaking down critical barriers to healthcare access statewide.

Fire brings agencies together for consumers' wellbeing

by DCIL

A devastating fire at the Bismarck Alberta Heights apartment complex in early May resulted in several residents needing to find new housing immediately, and those with disabilities also displaced have the additional need of urgently finding accessible housing, medical supplies, and assistive technology equipment lost in the fire. DCIL IL specialists and advocates stepped up to help, as DCIL received 27 of the referrals.

We're overwhelmed by the ways the community has pulled together

and generously offered services, supplies, and financial assistance to those who lost everything in the fire: Thank you to the Lions Club for covering stays at hotels to temporarily house our consumers who are now homeless until a new residence can be secured for them. Thank you to the Red Cross, who is donating needed medical supplies that were lost in the fire, and helping with financial assistance in some cases. Thank you to Wrap and Pack Moving Company, Quality Movers and 2 Vets Moving Company for offering afford-

able moving for our consumers . And thank you to the Salvation Army for providing meals on a daily basis.

And of course we want to express our gratitude for the partnerships with the North Dakota Transition and Diversion Program , North Dakota Aging Services, West Central Human Services Center, ND Center for Persons with Disabilities Housing Program, and Metro Plains property management.

This is a huge undertaking, and with everyone's help, we will successfully rehome all our consumers.

Bill crushing his goals of making new social connections

by IL Advocate Andrew

A new consumer came to DCIL recently wanting to increase their social circle and get out more. In respect for their identity, we will call him Bill. Bill wanted to connect with peers and do more activities in the community. Bill was interested in the events going on at DCIL and asked to receive the monthly calendar.

Andrew and Bill created a goal of wanting to "attend at least 3 social events at DCIL or in the community

in one months' time."

Bill has been extremely successful in his goal, attending just about every event at the center since signing up. Bill has already completed his goal of 3 events in one month's time and is close to completing his new goal of 4 events in one month. Bill is hoping to attend 5 events next month!

In even a few months' time, Andrew has seen a big improvement in Bill's mood, demeanor, and confi-

dence.

Andrew is excited about what the future holds for Bill and all the good that Bill can do. Andrew says he can't take the credit however. Bill was well equipped to be successful in what he set out to do. Bill simply needed support and a light push, and that's where advocates like Andrew come in to help. Bill just needed to put himself out there and allow himself to be a little vulnerable to see success in meeting his goals.

Kenneth had the best birthday ever with our help

by IL Specialist McCallie

Kenneth is an older gentleman from the Mandan area who needed a new, accessible apartment. Kenneth was living in a trailer home that was very old. The ceiling was collapsing, the flooring was soft and uneven, and the windows and doors were not sealing properly.

Kenneth expressed that he would like to live in a place that had more people his age and where he could possibly make new friends. He decided he wanted to wait for a place to open at Liberty Heights. While waiting for an apartment, Kenneth's water heater pipes burst after freezing and the water heater had to be shut off. This left Kenneth without

hot water and water damage in the middle of winter. Waiting was no longer an option at this point. Thankfully, Kenneth reached the top of the wait list for an apartment, and one became available to him a few days later.

McCallie and MFP Housing Coordinator Bill met with Kenneth the day that he planned to move in and sign the lease, which was conveniently his birthday. McCallie spent the rest of the day setting up Kenneth's apartment with brand new household supplies and furniture. Kenneth was able stay at the apartment for the first time that night with all of his brand-new items.

Kenneth's trailer unfortunately

could not be saved and had to be disposed of. This could have cost him anywhere from \$5,000-\$7,000, but the owner of his trailer park was very fond of Kenneth and decided to remove the trailer home at no cost to Kenneth. The park owner was just happy that Kenneth was someplace safe and that he got the help he needed.

Kenneth loves his new apartment and community and has decided that he also wants to take care of himself in a better way, starting with a new hair cut and beard trim! Kenneth stated that this was the best birthday he has ever had and he is grateful for everyone who has helped him. Happy Birthday, Kenneth!

Tyler so thankful for IL Specialist Dee Dee & Housing team

by IL Specialist Dee Dee

Tyler Senger is the sweetest young man and is very likeable. Tyler was born with Schizencephaly, which has caused him to be legally blind. Tyler also has many other physical challenges. Yet, Tyler is a strong individual and has not let any of this deter him. Tyler remains positive and ambitious.

Tyler is very bright and has many interests, including video games, classic cars, robotics, car restoration videos, and death metal. One of his favorite bands is Lamb of God. Tyler also enjoys creating music through an application by the name of Sound Trap. Tyler has a desire to go to school for cyber security or Information Technology. Tyler is also working on getting a part-time job. In the past, he has volunteered at his school's kitchen, a gas station, and a grocery store in Strasburg.

Tyler was living in Linton, ND and felt it would be helpful to live in a larger community, where he would have more opportunities available. Tyler was hoping to participate in more activities and enjoy more of a social life.

The ND Transition and Diversion Program (NTDTP) assisted Tyler with this relocation and he officially has been happily residing in Bismarck since January 2026.

After Tyler (and his kitty, Lotus) moved to Bismarck, ND, he was assigned an advocate and has made many strides with his advocate, Andrew. Tyler has attended the Easter egg dyeing event, "Sundae Making & a Movie" event, the Block Party at the Dream Center, and went to the races in Mandan. Andrew also assisted Tyler with a referral to Sporting Chance, an organization who offers adaptive hunting and fishing. Tyler said that



he plans to go fishing with Sporting Chance this summer.

Tyler would like to express his gratitude to his team, "Thanks to Dee Dee (IL Specialist), Bill (MFP Housing Facilitator), and Kristy (HCBS Case Manager) for the opportunity for me to move to Bismarck." Tyler also wants to thank his family for always supporting him, especially his mom (Kayla), stepdad (Don), and grandma (Bonna).

Things going well for consumer Jim one year later

by IL Specialist McCallie

James (Jim) received assistance from the ND Transition and Diversion Program (NTDTP) one year ago. Jim needed assistance with finding a new apartment that was accessible and safe for not only him, but his daughter too.

Jim was originally staying with family, but the home had become a toxic

and violent place that was no longer safe for Jim. NDTDP helped Jim get into a safe place to call his own, along with new furniture and household supplies. Jim's services with NDTDP ended a year ago, but he reached out to his previous IL Specialist McCallie to let her know that he is doing great in his apartment, he has been in it for about a year and he loves it, his health

has improved, and he now gets partial custody of his daughter because he is in a safe environment.

Jim stated that none of this would have been possible without the help of NDTDP and the staff who worked with him every step of the way.

Congratulations to James on his one-year anniversary, and we hope there will be many more to come!

Sometimes it's the small things that mean the most

by MFP/NTD Program Director Cody

IL Specialist Janie is working with an individual in the nursing home and she was able to get him a signature stamper to sign documents, as we all know there are tons of documents to

sign when living in a nursing facility.

He was so excited to get this small item he told Janie, "You don't realize all the small abilities that get taken away when you become disabled and it is always a chore to sign things. This gives

me back some normalcy to sign documents quickly so people don't need to wait on me."

So no matter how small we think it might be, it matters to the people we work with!

Comment from a ND Transition and Diversion Program (NTDTP) survey: "I had no hope when I first received the call from McCallie [IL Specialist]. I could not believe the help that was given through this program [NTDTP]. Every second you [NTDTP staff] spent on us was worth it... we would not have made it otherwise and I would not have my daughter right now. McCallie handled things perfectly." Our child is back in school, working with Speech Therapy, and her and her father are stable in the apartment that NDTDP assisted in securing. Father reports now having a job and is so grateful for the assistance from McCallie and the NDTDP."



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

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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

* 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.

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