

Challenger DAKOTA

Dakota Center for Independent Living • www.dakotacil.org "Serving people with disabilities since 1980"

DCIL staff attend Nat'l NCIL conference in D.C.

The National Center for Independent Living (NCIL) held their 2026 Annual Conference on Independent Living in Washington D.C. late July.

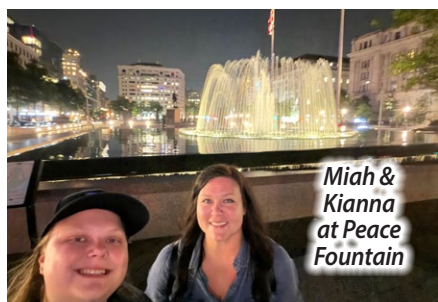
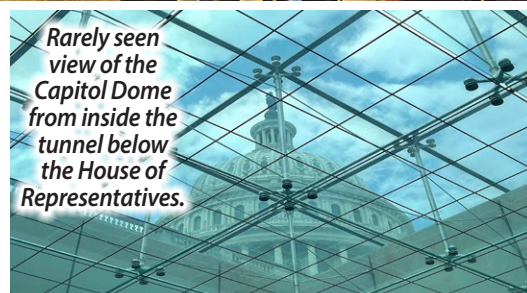
Nearly 1,000 disability advocates from across the nation marched to Capitol Hill to bring awareness of the Americans with Disabilities Act and to protect and

strengthen disability rights.

DCIL IL Program Director Kianna and IL Advocate Miah attended, marched, and visited important local landmarks.



Right: rally in Capitol Park after the march with remarks from former Sen. Tom Harkin.



11th Annual Family Day Riverwalk great turnout

Sertoma Park was packed with attendees of the 11th Annual Family Day Riverwalk on July 15th. Approximately 2,000 people attended this year's Riverwalk to visit more than fifty vendors.

The event combined outdoor fun with community support.

The Riverwalk featured games,

food vendors, live entertainment and activities for all ages along the scenic river. It also served as a fundraiser for Bismarck Parks and Recreation, helping support park programs and improvements.

DCIL offered information on DCIL services, games, and free swag to take home.



Olmstead conference tackles tough disability topics

The 2026 Olmstead Conference was held on July 20th at Bismarck State College. The full-day event brought together advocates, professionals, and community members to explore key topics impacting individuals with disabilities, including the DOJ Settlement, Technology for Independence, XR for VR, Benefits Planning, Money Follows the Person, Supported Decision Making, the Cross Disability Waiver, and Advocacy.

The ND State Council on Developmental Disabilities had a few of their council members and staff lead a panel. DCIL board

member Trevor Vannett, spoke on the panel while DCIL staff took in all the important information and updates.

DCIL presented at the event and was also one of the many vendors at the conference to share information on services.



Panelists discuss disability issues at the conference. DCIL board member Trevor Vannett pictured on right.



IL Specialists McCallie, Jaelie, Stacy, Dee Dee, and Janie.

Veteran Stand Down provides crucial services for vets

Each year, the Central ND Veterans Stand Down serves as a vital lifeline for veterans and their families, connecting them with indispensable resources and a community that cares.

This year served 234 veterans on August 20th at the Amvets.

DCIL was signed up as one of the many vendors, providing info on how DCIL can help veterans.

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Right: DCIL staff ready for questions: IL Advocates Jeanne, Andrew, Miah, and Harleigh.



DCIL at the Veteran Stand Down

## DCIL in the Community

# Health Information Fair focuses on healthy aging

The Rural Aging Action Network (RAAN) Health Information Fair took place on August 27<sup>th</sup> at Washburn Memorial Hall.

The event was specifically designed for older adults, their families, and caregivers to explore local resources for healthy aging. Event highlights featured com-

munity vendor booths, health professionals, door prizes, and bingo. Local organizations were on-site to showcase senior services, home care resources, and health information.

DCIL presented services available at their booth during the event as well.



# Assistive Technology devices help make life easier



DCIL displayed samples of assistive technology devices at White Buffalo Foods in Fort Yates on September 2<sup>nd</sup>.

DCIL advocates frequently visit senior centers and other locations in our service area to host assistive technology booths where the staff show people what devices can be

purchased to make life a little easier for those with disabilities.

*If you are interested in learning about assistive technology devices that could simplify your life, check with your local senior center to see when DCIL will be displaying their samples in your town, or call IL Advocate Miah at 701-222-3636.*

# Project Service Connect serves up community support

DCIL joined area vendors for Project Service Connect on September 17<sup>th</sup> at the Dream Center.

This free annual event is headed by the Missouri Valley Coalition for Homeless People (MVCHP) to serve individuals who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness. Over 25 local organizations and agencies were on-

site to connect individuals and families with essential resources and supportive services/information. This event included free donations of clothing and supplies, haircuts, children's book readings, and free access to a community art event.

Thank you to MVCHP for inviting DCIL to this important community event.



# Dickinson DCIL in the Community

## Life-changing resources found at Community Connections

Dickinson DCIL participated in the 4th Annual Community Connections event at the Dickinson State University King Pavilion on August 2<sup>nd</sup>.

The event was sponsored by The Beginning Project, who believes in the power of local resources to help people take the first step towards stability, since that is often the hardest to take. They are dedicated to creating a "front door" for those in need -- a space where high-quality entertainment and a warm meal meet the life-changing resources local organizations provide. Their mission: to connect individuals facing hunger, homelessness, addiction, or mental

health challenges with professional support networks.

DCIL staff from our Bismarck office staffed an informational outreach booth during the event since our Dickinson office is temporarily closed.

 the  
beginning  
project



IL Advocate  
Miah and  
IL Program  
Director Kianna  
in Dickinson.

## DCIL Social & Rec

### Larks "Limitless Night" inclusive

The Bismarck Larks held a special all-inclusive game on July 13th.

DCIL was sure to be there with a booth to help celebrate the ADA's 36th anniversary and to talk about DCIL services. From the Larks for the July event, "Get ready for a stadium-wide takeover where "inclusion" is the name of the game. For one night, the Bismarck Larks are hiring the coolest crew in town as individuals with disabilities take over every job the ballpark. A night for all abilities, Limitless Night is powered by Dakota Eye Institute."

A group of DCIL consumers attended and enjoyed the game as one of DCIL's social and rec activities. What a great time!



DCIL consumers  
enjoying the game.



More DCIL consumers  
having a fun time  
at the ball game.



IL Advocate  
Andrew (center)  
& IL Advocate  
Assistant Randee  
(far right) at the  
Larks "Limitless  
Night" game.

**Larks Game Night!**



A few more DCIL consumers  
watching the ball game.

## Paper Fidget Spinners- July



## Big Al's Big Band- August



## August - DAKOTA ZOO Adventure!



## Art Exhibit- September



# Getting around the house easier & safer with TDP help

by IL Specialist Dee Dee

Deborah lives with her brother, Don. Deborah has Rheumatoid Arthritis, COPD, and Myelodysplastic Syndrome. Deborah uses a walker and has a 1-person assist at all times. Don uses an electric wheelchair and he also uses a Hoyer Lift for transfers.

The carpet in their home had become loose and that created a tripping hazard. Deborah and Don got their carpet replaced with hard flooring by the Transition Diversion Program (TDP). The Rehabilitation Accessibility Program (RAP) grant assisted with funding, along with Saint Vincent de Paul.

Now Deborah and Don can easily and safely move about their home.



# Frank's progress is so impressive, advocate proud

by IL Advocate Andrew

A new client, (let's call them Frank) came to DCIL hoping to get assistance with transportation around Bismarck, finding their own apartment, and finding a job. Frank was new to Bismarck and Mandan and did not know how to maneuver through the various service agencies in the area. Frank was also interested in some assistive technology that could help. Frank was staying at a motel at the time.

Frank told us that he struggled to transfer himself from his wheelchair to his bed because his bed was too high. Frank had to call 911 several times and had to have paramedics come to the hotel he was staying at to transfer him. I assisted Frank with discussing the issue with the motel management who agreed to set up

a smaller bed in Frank's room. This allowed Frank to be able to transfer to his bed from his chair and vice versa.

Our next goal was to help Frank with finding housing. I provided Frank with some of his options and assisted with applications. Frank was approved for Boulevard apartments. I assisted Frank with reaching out to Saint Vincent De Paul and AID, Inc., who agreed to assist Frank with his deposit at Boulevard as well as some of the furnishings and furniture at the new apartment. I had originally attempted to get Frank approved for the Transfer Diversion Program. However, considering Frank was living at a hotel, he did not qualify for TDP.

Frank is now living at his own, accessible unit at Boulevard Apartments. Frank is

working with ND Assistive to get an adjustable bed and other assistive technologies for his apartment to make it more accessible. I initially assisted Frank by getting him a toilet chair, shower chair, and bed rail all donated by Saint Nic's Medical supply. However, Frank will be getting some additional equipment that will make transfers and everyday life easier for Frank.

Frank has been approved for an educational program through the Blind Institute of Technology that, once completed, will lead to a full-time job for Frank.

I couldn't be more proud of all the progress and work that Frank has done to lead him to where he is now. I know that he still has a lot of goals to complete, but he has come a long way. I am excited for what the future holds for Frank.

# Notes of gratitude from admins after surveys with consumers

Surveys are conducted when work is completed with a consumer. This particular survey was done by Money Follows the Person (MFP) Program Admin. Sarah after IL Specialist Dee Dee & Housing Facilitator Bill wrapped up their work for James:

*"It [Transition and Diversion Program] was a life savor. My HBCS case manager knows her stuff & was able to discuss this program with me, which turned out to be great. Everyone had their roles & all worked together as a team to make it happen. This*

*program saved my life from where I was at back in July trying to figure out a different avenue. I would be willing to talk to anyone about what this program did for me from a first hand experience. I truly believe if it had not been for this program and everyone involved that I would not be here today. I felt comfortable from day one with the team, there was a good connection. The communication between Bill & Dee Dee was fantastic. They worked tremendously hard to help me & were always in contact. I got two of the best! This program helped*

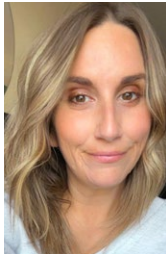
*me to continue to be independent."*

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And another grateful consumer sends a thank you through a ND Transition and Diversion Program (NDTDP) survey:

"There are phenomenal people (from the CIL) who work in the Bismarck office and Dickinson office. IL Specialists Laura & Dee Dee, and Housing Facilitator Bill helped us a lot. "This individual reports being very pleased with the finding of the apartment and all other assistance provided by the TC, HF, and TDP." – Jayden H.

DCIL News

DeAnn embraces new role as MFP/TDP Director in early September



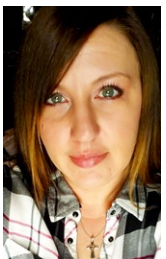
DeAnn

DeAnn brings a strong background in social work, case management, and supporting individuals and families through challenging life transitions. Throughout her career, she has worked with adults, youth, and families, with experience in behavioral support, substance use treatment, advocacy, resource coordination, and collaboration with community agencies.

DeAnn is passionate about building meaningful relationships and helping people recognize their strengths while working toward greater independence and success. She values compassion, communication, teamwork, and creating an environment where people feel heard and supported.

Outside of work, DeAnn enjoys spending time with her family and is currently planning her upcoming wedding. She is excited to join the team, continue growing professionally, and contribute her experience and passion for helping others.

DCIL adds new IL Advocate Jeana in Aug.



Jeana

Hi y'all! I'm Jeana! I was hired August 2026 at DCIL. Previously I worked as a Care Coordinator helping people struggling with mental health and substance abuse create meaningful purpose filled lives. I am excited to start this new journey helping people with disabilities live independently! I love to play volleyball, am a plant mom-a little obsessed- and love camping and going to the lake.

Jaelie starts IL Specialist duties in July

Hello, my name is Jaelie, and I am an IL Specialist with Dakota Center for Independent Living.

Before joining DCIL, I worked in childcare, where I developed a strong appreciation for supporting others and building meaningful connections. I am grateful for the opportunity to be part of the DCIL team and look forward to learning, growing, and contributing to our mission of serving the community.

I am excited to meet new people, gain valuable experience, and be part of an organization that makes a positive difference in the lives of others.



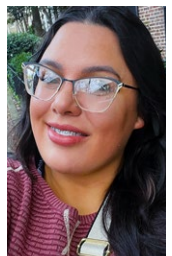
Jaelie

Harleigh fills IL Advocate position in Aug.

Hi! My name is Harleigh, and I'm excited to join DCIL as an Independent Living Advocate. I'm a proud Native American from the Turtle Mountains in Belcourt, ND. I have a background in Human Services/Social Work and experience working with individuals and families through case management, juvenile delinquency prevention, and other community-based services. I have always had passion for helping others, connecting people with resources, and supporting them as they work toward their goals.

Outside of work, I'm a proud mom of five wonderful children who keep me very busy! Family is a very important part of my life, and I enjoy spending time with them and making memories together.

I'm grateful for this new opportunity and excited to be a part of the DCIL team. I look forward to getting to know everyone, learning more in my new role, and making a positive difference in the lives of the people we serve.



Harleigh



Congrats, Clarissa!

Our consumer Clarissa just successfully obtained her ND Drivers Permit after taking the Drivers Permit classes through DCIL.

Clarissa was determined to be more independent, and this is definitely a step in the right direction.

We're so proud of you, Clarissa!

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To learn more about the DCIL Driver Permit Classes or some of the accommodations that may be requested when taking the driver permit exam, call DCIL at 701-222-3636.



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\* 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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