

**Access** [Front cover]  
(Text only/large print edition of  
the magazine)  
More Than You Think

**Profiles of our community**  
2010 Annual Magazine &  
Directory of Community  
Resources. 20<sup>th</sup> edition.  
Ann Arbor Center for  
Independent Living

Photo: Brock Mealer, who  
uses a wheelchair, wears a  
University of Michigan football  
shirt as he kicks a football.

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Photos: Brock Mealer wears a University of Michigan football sweatshirt as he cheers on his team.

Photographer Stacey Boyd takes a picture while looking through his camera

Katie Koval smiles as she pets her service dog, Rosie, a black Labrador.

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Advertising supplement to  
AnnArbor.com

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“When I first came to the CIL, I was given a copy of Access Magazine. I read and reread the entire thing because it was an inspiration to me. I saw pictures and read about people with disabilities like me, out in the community, doing things, and making an impact. I realized that people with all

kinds of abilities are able to create wonder in the world. ... Together we can accomplish so much, and that's what I love about the CIL. We all have different abilities that we bring with us, and when we put them together we can accomplish anything.”  
--Katie Koval, Ann Arbor

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## **Note from the president:**

The Ann Arbor CIL is “On a Roll!” When our local, state, and national economies took a nose dive last year, our staff, volunteers, board members and donors rolled up their shirt sleeves and went to work!

Why? Because the Ann Arbor CIL is made up of a majority of individuals with disabilities. Because we are mission-based and passionately dedicated. And because we want to do everything we can to empower

children, youth and adults with disabilities to be successful at home, at school, at work, and in the community.

It takes more than “a village,” it takes “a movement” to make things happen, and together we are helping individuals with disabilities in our community gain new knowledge and skills, and expand their personal and professional networks, that will propel them toward success.

In response to the economy, we issued our own “call to action,” and we rededicated

ourselves to the fundamental beliefs that formed the foundation of the independent living movement and the founding of the Ann Arbor CIL more than thirty-three years ago. These beliefs embrace the notion that each individual is different and unique; that people with disabilities are the most knowledgeable experts about our own needs and issues; and that programs serving individuals with disabilities should be designed to serve all disability groups with peer support as a

cornerstone. In independent living terms, a peer is someone with a disability who is a role model, a support person, and a friend who shares a common experience.

This 20th Anniversary Edition of Access Magazine is filled with the real life experiences of individuals with disabilities in our community. They share their successes, supported in very tangible and real ways by the extraordinary contributions of our staff, volunteers, board members, donors, and funders. These

stories represent the spirit and what is best about the independent living movement.

Through the storm of the economic downturn, the Ann Arbor CIL is coming out stronger, and more exciting than ever before. I hope that reading about our work and the accomplishments of the people we serve results in your own “call to action.” We invite you to become part of the independent living movement and share in the vibrancy of the Ann Arbor CIL.

--Jim Magyar  
President & CEO

Photo: CIL President and CEO  
Jim Magyar smiles at the  
camera.

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**The Ann Arbor CIL** is a nonprofit organization serving individuals with disabilities in greater Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, and beyond.

Each year, we impact the lives of over 4,000 people with disabilities and their families and friends. We help individuals with disabilities build new knowledge and skills and expand their personal and professional networks by fostering a true place of community and belonging. We also help businesses and

organizations reach out to, and include, people with disabilities as both customers and employees.

Our areas of focus include:

- Advocacy and Disability Awareness
- Assistive Technology, Rehabilitation Engineering, & Information Technology
- Career Services
- Information about and Assistance Accessing Community Resources
- Occupational Therapy Assessments and Recommendations

- Peer Support
- Small Business Development Assistance
- Sports, Recreation & Leisure Programs
- Supports for Independent Living
- Supports for Youth
- Transitions from Nursing Facilities back into the Community
- Volunteer and Training Opportunities

In this, our 20th Annual Edition of Access Magazine, we are proud to share the stories of

some of the individuals we served during the past year.

Photos clock-wise beginning at the top left corner: Two women in white baseball caps hugs. One of them wears the Independence Ride shirt with company logos on it.

The CIL logo in white on a blue background.

State Rep. Alma Wheeler Smith speaks to the crowd. In the background a woman wearing a bike helmet and a

man in a suit smile in front of a Disability Network Michigan sign.

Staff member Lisa Mangigian speaks to a group.

A summer AmeriCorps VISTA smiles as she presents to her peers.

A man rests his chin on his hand as he listens during a jobs workshop.

State Sen. Randy Richardville shakes a constituent's hand at

an event to build a wheelchair  
ramp onto an individual's  
house.

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## **Brock: Spinal Cord Injury Support Program**

“When I’m in Michigan Stadium, I feel like I’m a part of a huge family,” Brock Mealer, 25, says. “For three hours every Saturday, life’s worries go on hold.” For Brock, who’s father and family friend passed away two years ago, going to Michigan Stadium to watch his brother play football is bittersweet.

Two years ago, Brock and his family were on their way to

church on Christmas Eve when a 92-year-old man ran a stop sign and hit the car in which he and his family were traveling. Brock's father, David Mealer, and his brother's girlfriend, Hollis Richer, were killed in the accident. Brock sustained an injury to his spinal cord which causes him to be paralyzed from the waist down. When he goes to Michigan Stadium now, thoughts of his father and Hollis are never far.

In the days and months after the accident, Brock faced

not only a difficult grieving process, but also a rehabilitation process that was both mentally and physically grueling. With life as he had known it forever changed, he says, “I had to learn everything all over. I couldn’t sit up, and I was in pain all the time.” He added, “one of the hardest things to get used to was needing to rely on someone else for life’s most basic tasks. I had always been so independent.”

During his rehabilitation process at the University of

Michigan Hospital, Brock met Ann Arbor CIL staff member Tom Hoatlin, who also has a spinal cord injury. Tom directs the CIL's Spinal Cord Injury Support program, which connects patients with new spinal cord injuries with peer mentors who have had similar injuries for several years. The program is designed to provide training in adjusting to life with a spinal cord injury as well as emotional support during a significant life transition process.

Brock says, “I remember Tom’s coming into my hospital room just to ask me about me. No one else at the hospital did that. Meeting Tom and getting to know him as a person meant a lot to me.” Brock added, “at a time when I didn’t know what life would look like after the hospital, Tom and the other peer mentors were an important example to me. They were guys with the same injuries, all living independent, full, and meaningful lives. They showed me that getting

out there and living again was possible.”

After three months in the hospital, Brock took on the difficult task of returning home and learning how to live a normal life again. At the time of the accident Brock had been about to graduate from the Ohio State University, and he was working in the construction industry.

“Suddenly, I didn’t know how and when I was going to be able to finish college, or how I was going to be able to go back to work. It was scary.”

Brock finished his undergraduate degree and is now working on a master's degree at the Ohio State University in public affairs. He says, "I want to get involved and change things for people with disabilities, and things related to driving and insurance. I want to use my experiences to make things better for other people."

Brock is still training weekly on UM's Lokomat, a machine which helps him put weight on his legs and gradually rehabilitate his central nervous

system. Although unsure of whether he'll be able to walk again, Brock says, "I'm starting to see some progress. I'm starting to be able to put weight on my legs, and it's amazing to feel."

"Going through something like this," Brock added, "you realize how human you are. It changes your perspective on life. I'd always felt invincible before. I never expected something like this to happen to me. I appreciate life very differently now."

## Quotations of Brock:

“When I’m in Michigan stadium, I’m taken back to a time before the accident, and I feel like my Dad and Hollis are right there cheering with me.”

“Everyone at the hospital was giving me advice and telling me that things would be okay, but it was more meaningful coming from Tom and the other [CIL] peer mentors. They’d lived it. They’d been through it.”

Photo page 6: Brock Mealer, in University of Michigan sportswear prepares to toss a football.

Photos page 7: Top to bottom. Brock holds a football as he sits on the U of M football field. We can see the stands behind him.

Brock holds a football up to throw it.

Brock and the U of M football coach hug.

Brock, wearing a U of M sweatshirt, smiles at the camera.

Photos page 8: A profile view of Brock using the Lokomat and a closer view of his feet in the Lokomat stirrups.

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## **Mark: Small Business Development Supports**

Three years ago, Mark Long was laid off from his job on the assembly line at Chrysler. For months he looked for another factory job, but with the rough economy of Southeast Michigan taking its toll, he kept hearing “no.” “The bills were piling up, and money was running out,” he says. “I was broke.”

With little else to do, Mark offered to cut his neighbor’s

grass one day. One lawn turned into two, and before long he started going door-to-door to get customers. “I remember walking up the street with my feet cold and numb,” he says. “I had always liked cutting grass, but at the time I wasn’t thinking it would be a long-term job. I was just taking it day-by-day.”

Although Mark was starting to develop some repeat customers, he was struggling at the time with his bipolar disorder. “I had mood swings, I was withdrawn, and I couldn’t

concentrate. The bipolar was starting to paralyze me.” Eventually, Mark, 48, went to Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), where his counselor helped him with his bipolar disorder. After debating what his next career move should be, his counselor connected him with the Ann Arbor CIL to explore the idea of starting a lawn care business.

Seeing that Mark had a strong work ethic and a drive to succeed, Ann Arbor CIL staff members Rick Weir and

Cheranissa Roach began working with Mark to develop a successful business. They helped him develop a formalized business plan and then helped him implement a marketing strategy, advertise, recruit new customers, and learn about accounting techniques. Eventually, they helped Mark get funding from MRS to purchase necessary equipment, and Mark formed M & L Landscaping in Detroit.

“Before long, things really came alive,” Mark says.

“Without Rick, Cheranissa,

and my MRS counselor, I wouldn't be here. When I started, my business covered a two-block radius. Now I'm all over the city.”

Mark now has more than 32 repeat clients, both residential and commercial. Some days he works more than 13 hours a day. “I love what I'm doing. And working in soil and nature really helps my illness. It's peaceful and relaxing, and the physical work is good for it, too.”

Still, Mark isn't without his challenges. “I'm always

working to find the next job; this is a competitive business. I've come a long way, and I'm not willing to give it up. I want to have a fleet of lawn care trucks one day.”

Mark is fully reflective of the help he's gotten. “Rick and Cheranissa were very encouraging and supportive,” he says, “and they gave me the confidence to succeed. They made a lot of difference to my life.”

Mark says he wants to help others the way he's been helped. When he sees new

lawncare trucks out on the road now, he stops to talk with the owners just starting out. “I’ve gotten a lot of great help in my life, and I want to help bring others up, too. I want to be special to somebody one day,” he says. “This is bigger than me. I gotta stay out here to pass it forward.”

Quotation of Mark: “Without Rick, Cheranissa, and my M.R.S. counselor, I wouldn’t be where I am today.”

Photos: Mark Long mows the grass below a Maple tree with bright yellow leaves. In an insert photo he smiles at the camera.

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## **Ashley: Career Services**

Ashley Faucher is showing that finding the right career is worth the challenging journey it can sometimes be. Now a successful stylist at Reflections Salon and Spa in Brighton, three years ago Ashley was a senior at Howell High School with little to no ideas for what her future held.

While many of her classmates were applying to different colleges and making plans for after graduation,

Ashley was at a loss for what to do next. After years of struggling to get by in school, her grades and test scores were too low to be considered by most colleges. Ashley, who has a learning disability, looked into Oakland Community College, but the school told her she didn't qualify for regular classes. "They said her scores were too low," Ashley's mother, Penny Faucher, said. "After everything we had been through, that was tough to hear."

Because of her learning disability, Ashley has a hard time processing reading and math, and words on a page can seem confusing and overwhelming to her.

Throughout high school, completing homework and preparing for tests were fraught with nerves, anxiety, and feelings of uncertainty.

Test after test, Ashley had worked hard to prepare, only to receive disappointing grades in return.

Although her learning disability had affected her

performance in the classroom, her intelligence and propensity for success were evident in other ways. Her freshman year of high school, Ashley memorized a complex cheer routine in just two days to make the varsity cheerleading squad, beating out older, more experienced cheerleaders for the spot.

“I learn things in different ways,” Ashley said. “Figuring out what those ways are has come in unexpected ways.” In middle school, Ashley said she got in trouble for bouncing on

the trampoline while she was studying for a test once. “But it worked. I got a B. Most of the time studying ‘the right way,’ I got Fs.”

“We joke all the time about her learning disability now,” Penny said, “but back then it wasn’t so funny. We used to wonder if she would make it.” Penny said Ashley’s studying became a whole family affair. “Ashley’s father and I did all kinds of things to help her learn. She was so good at learning cheers, we used to

make up cheers to help her learn material for tests.”

After graduation, Ashley started looking for a job, but nothing was panning out. “I gave my resume to a few places, but I wasn’t really putting myself out there. I was afraid of having to read or write on a job. I didn’t know how my learning disability would be on a job.” Ashley eventually got involved with Ann Arbor CIL staff members Dan Durci and Helen Ledgard, who helped Ashley develop her resume and identify job

leads. After several applications, Ashley landed a job at DSW Shoe Warehouse in Brighton.

“I knew working in retail wasn’t where I ultimately wanted to end up, but the job at DSW was what I needed,” Ashley said. “It helped me face a lot of fears I had about working.” Ashley said that when she was first assigned to work on the cash register and write down orders from customers, she wasn’t sure how she would handle it. “But after a little bit of practice, it

was fine. I figured out tricks to help me stay on top of things, and I learned that if I make a mistake on a job, it's okay.”

Ashley worked at DSW for nine months and gained the confidence she needed to go after a goal she had had since she was a child: to become a professional hair stylist.

Ashley took the steps to apply to cosmetology school and was ultimately accepted at Douglas J in Lansing.

Through a partnership with Michigan Rehabilitation Services, Dan provided Ashley

with funding to help pay for the tuition, and he helped her secure accommodations for her learning disability.

Facing a return to the classroom, though, Ashley was nervous. “I knew there were going to be a lot of hard tests. I didn’t want it to be a repeat of high school,” she said. This time, though, something was different. “For the first time, I wanted to be there. I wanted to be in school. And I wanted to do well.” With that motivation, Ashley said she made a

decision that she was going to have to be open about her disability.

In high school, Ashley had always hid the fact that she had a learning disability.

Many times she had passed up accommodations the school provided her for her learning disability for fear of being viewed differently by her classmates. “I never wanted anyone to see I had a learning disability. In order to use the school’s accommodations, I would have had to leave the room when a test was going

on, and I didn't want to do that. I did everything I could to hide my disability. When other kids would finish a test before me, I'd fake being done just so I wouldn't be the last one working on a test. When I went to cosmetology school, I decided I couldn't do that."

At Douglas J, because of her learning disability the school offered her additional time to take tests and an assistant to read test material out loud to her. "Getting special accommodations for tests, I didn't know how other

people in the class would react,” she said. “But I was completely open about it, and my teachers and classmates turned out to be really supportive and encouraging. They knew me for me, and that was a totally new feeling.”

Ashley fought hard to achieve good grades and soon found herself getting recognition from her peers. She graduated from Douglas J in December 2008 and later passed the state licensing exam. “It was a long road of figuring out what I needed,

and then advocating for it, but I made it,” she said. Shortly thereafter, Ashley landed a job at Reflections, where she now has a full schedule of repeat clients. She cuts, styles, and colors hair, as well as does manicures and pedicures.

“It’s been a long road, but it’s amazing to have made it to where I am. More than anything, this job has made me believe in myself.” She says her learning disability still affects how she does her job, but she doesn’t let it get in the way anymore: “When

challenges come up, I'm open about it, and I find ways around them. If I can't understand how to read or pronounce something, I ask a colleague. If I need to write down a word that I don't know how to spell, I just think of something different to say.” Ashley says her learning disability continues to influence all aspects of her life. “Going out to a restaurant is always going to be hard for me; I have a hard time with menus. But I've figured out that if I ask my friends what

they're ordering, it helps me understand what the menu says. And things like texting and Facebook have also really helped me with spelling."

She says that learning to understand her learning disability, be open about it, and get around the roadblocks it puts up has taken a while, but it's been worth the journey. "Many of my friends from high school still have no idea I have a learning disability, but with friends I meet now, and people in my career, I'm open about it," Ashley said. "They all

know and don't care. Life is easier. They know me for me, and that means a lot.”

“It feels good to be where I am now,” Ashley added. “Looking back, there were a lot of hard struggles along the way, but enjoying all the wonderful outcomes now, it never really seems like it was all that hard.”

Quotations of Ashley:

“More than anything, this job has made me believe in myself.”

“My learning disability still affects how I do my job, but I don’t let it get in the way. When challenges come up, I find ways around them.”

Photo page 10: Ashley Faucher laughs.

Photos page 11: Ashley Faucher smiles at the camera as she washes a client’s hair. In two inset photos she cuts the client’s hair.

Photo page 12: Ashley Faucher perches on the back

of her salon chair holding up  
her tools.

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## **Joel: AmeriCorps VISTA Summer Employment Opportunity Program**

“Before I came to the CIL, I had never thought of my depression as part of the disability community, and I didn’t identify with the CIL,” Joel Reinstein, 22, says.

“When I heard the word, ‘disability,’ wheelchairs came to mind. I had never thought about hidden issues as being considered a disability. The summer program really helped

me recognize my own depression as a disability.”

Joel, a student at Michigan State University (MSU), was a member of the Ann Arbor CIL’s Americorps VISTA Summer Employment Opportunity Program, which provided a 10-week, full-time work-learning experience for 20 young adults. The Ann Arbor CIL launched the program in partnership with Michigan Works! and the Corporation for National and Community Service. It combined on-the-job work

experiences at seven area non-profit organizations with classroom-based learning at the CIL about career exploration and “real world” readiness. Students worked at the Ann Arbor CIL, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Court Appointed Special Advocates, EMU GEAR UP, the Michigan Prisoner Re-entry Initiative, the Neutral Zone, and Ozone House.

Joel was stationed at the CIL for his on-the-job service experience and worked primarily on the CIL’s annual

cycling event and fundraiser, I-Ride. “In the months leading up to I-Ride, I did a lot of cold-calling. It wasn’t glamorous, but I called up potential sponsors to try to get food donations and sponsorships for the event.” It worked: Joel secured enough food donations to make sure every meal was provided at no cost to participants during the four-day event. Joel was also responsible for a variety of other event logistics.

“Participating in the program really made an impact on me,”

Joel said. “I saw first-hand the benefits of hard work and sticking something out. It gave me a feeling of being able to accomplish things.”

Joel, who was diagnosed with clinical depression and anxiety in high school, said “having depression has had a huge impact on my life. Thoughts of ‘what’s the point? I’m not going to make it. I’m not good enough’ play out in my mind all the time.” Joel took a leave of absence from MSU last winter because of challenges related to his

depression. After spending the summer with the CIL, he said, “I now have a better understanding that my own hidden issues are part of the disability community.”

“Because of my depression, everything I do is focused on taking on problems that seem insurmountable,” Joel said.

“But I’ve stopped trying to fight off my depression, and I accept it as a part of me. It’s always going to be there. Now what I try to do is acknowledge its existence and get out of the door anyway.”

Joel plans to continue with his studies at MSU this winter. And after graduation? “I want to apply for the Peace Corps,” he said. “I don’t like doing things just for my career. I want to help people.”

Photos at the top of the page-- clockwise from top left:

A young man wearing a helmet rides an adult-size upright tricycle. I-Ride participants cycle into the distance. A cyclist in an I-Ride t-shirt pumps her fist in the air in a sign of victory. A teacher

holds the hand of a smiling student as they go over some documents. Two summer AmeriCorps VISTAs present to their peers. Two women in white baseball caps hugs. One of them wears the Independence Ride shirt with company logos on it.

Photo at the bottom of the page: Joel Reinstein grins at the camera.

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## **Stacey: Small Business Development Supports**

Stacey Boyd is a photographer who gets noticed. His striking posters and commissioned photography projects grace the walls of churches, private businesses, and family homes. And his services are in high demand. But Stacey's road to professional success was far from typical.

A military vet, Stacey was serving on the Fort Bragg

Military Base in North Carolina in 1987 when he was in a car accident that left him with a spinal cord injury and paralysis from the chest down. Stacey spent a year recovering in the hospital and going through rehab. “I had to learn everything all over again: how to sit up, get dressed, get out of bed, and take care of myself,” he said. “It was like nothing I’d ever been through.”

When he finally got home from the hospital, Stacey had a hard time with depression. “For several years, I didn’t

leave the house much. It was a different life. Nothing was the same,” he said. “But after a long time like that, one day something just clicked in me. All of a sudden, I looked around and realized, ‘this is the way it’s gonna be. I’m not gonna walk. And I’m not gonna worry about it.’” From there, Stacey said, “life moved forward.”

Over the years, Stacey began getting more and more into photography. “I was always the guy at family gatherings taking photos,” he

said. Eventually, he enrolled in a photography class at Oakland Community College, and a once-hobby started to turn into a profession. “It was a sports poster that I made of my son Justin playing football that was the turning point,” he recalled. “Parents and kids saw it and loved it. They started calling me up and asking me to make ones for them.” Stacey started to think he could make something more out of his photography, and he began looking around for help in starting a business.

Stacey went to the Veteran's Administration (VA) and got help from his counselor Merri Busch, who in turn referred him to the Ann Arbor CIL for help in launching his business, Rollin' Photography. Over a period of several months, Ann Arbor CIL staff members Rick Weir and Cheranissa Roach helped Stacey come up with a strategic business plan, served as a sounding board for new ideas, and helped him identify new products, customers, and revenue

sources. Rick and Cheranissa also helped Stacey assess what his equipment needs were and apply for funding for the equipment from the VA.

“Rick and Cheranissa were instrumental in helping me get my business going,” Stacey says. “So were my family, my wife, Alicia, and my two boys, Jordan and Justin. Each person played an important part in helping me prove that doing what I love can be a financially viable business.” Stacey has now expanded far beyond his customized youth

sports posters. He now does senior portraits, school class photos, professional sports photography, antique photo restoration, and artistic photo works for commissioned projects. And business is booming. “I’m busy,” he says, “and it’s all from word of mouth.”

“At the end of the day, what I love most in this job is to see the expressions on the kids’ faces. They are so excited to see the finished work,” he says referencing the children’s sports posters he does.

“When I show up at an event, they all say, ‘you’re the picture man!’ It’s like nothing else.”

Quotations of Stacey:

“With the disability, my life is the same as it always was. I used to do 10,000 things; now I do 9,999. The only thing I can’t do is walk.”

“I love that I am able to be a positive role model for my two sons. For them to see their dad, in a wheelchair, at home, and running a business, that is so cool.”

Photos page 14—clockwise from top left: Stacey Boyd holds his camera and sits next to his niece. Stacey looks through a camera pointed towards the viewer. Stacey Boyd holds up a picture he took of his sons. Stacey Boyd holds up a photo collage of his son Justin in his football uniform and another of an NFL Xbox 360 game.

Photos page 15: Top: Stacey Boyd smiles and rest his chin

on his hand. His camera sits next to his elbow.

Bottom: We see Stacey Boyd in his wheelchair from the back as he holds his camera over his shoulder. He wears a baseball hat that reads Retired Army.

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## **Karly: Supports for Youth**

For as long as she can remember, Karly Stanislovaitis, 18, has been determined to make it on her own. Now a journalism major at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Michigan, Karly is doing just that. “Being independent is awesome. It’s an irreplaceable feeling,” Karly says. “There are many challenges, but to be

independent is worth every moment.”

Born with cerebral palsy, Karly has limited strength and muscle spasticity in her lower body, which makes her unable to walk on her own. She also has a learning disability and a condition in her eyes, called strabismus, which causes her to have weakness in her eye muscles and limited depth perception.

With these challenges, Karly has become a stand-out student. She graduated from Dexter High School last spring

with a 3.5 GPA, and she is now embarking on a goal she has had since she was a young child: to go away to college and make it on her own.

“I’ve always had a drive in me to be independent. I think I got that from my parents.” Karly said. “They always believed I could be independent, and they instilled that belief in me.” Karly says her parents had a huge role in helping her get to where she is today. “So many people with disabilities don’t have people

who tell them they can have a normal, happy life, but my parents always did. They always pushed me to do things I didn't think I could do, and they gave me the drive to set goals for myself. Being away from them now I realize how much I owe them.”

Before going away to college, Karly got involved with the Ann Arbor CIL, and staff members Anna Dusbiber-Gossage and Jen Chapin-Smith helped her prepare for a lot of the challenges that would lie ahead for her on

campus. Anna and Jen helped Karly think through things like how she'd get around on campus with enough time to get to class, how she'd shower, and how she'd do laundry. They also helped Karly figure out the right questions to ask the University's Office for Disability Support Services and advocate for what she needed.

“The things Anna and Jen helped me with were things I never would have thought of on my own, and they were

important. Anna and Jen gave me advice I couldn't have gotten from others in my life. They knew what it would be like to have a disability on campus because they've been there. Only someone else with a similar disability can understand.”

Karly says the most significant benefit of working with Jen and Anna was just getting to know Anna, who also has cerebral palsy.

“Anna is a few years older than me, and she has graduated from college, she's

working at the CIL, and she is married. She has made a good life for herself. Just by being her, she has set an important example for me.”

Karly was a multi-year winner of the CIL’s John Weir Academic Scholarship, and she was a member of the Center’s AmeriCorps VISTA Summer Employment Opportunity Program. “Being involved with the CIL changed my perspective on life,” she said. “Everyone I’ve met there has overcome adversity in different ways, and I approach

college differently now  
because of that.”

Quotation of Karly:

“Being independent can have  
its ups and downs, but I  
wouldn’t change it for  
anything.”

Photos: Left: Karly

Stanislovaitis talks on her cell  
phone and uses her computer.

Right: Karly strolls around  
campus using her walker.

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## **Doug: Sports**

Doug Peterson is an avid tennis player, and it shows on the court. “Tennis is really fun,” he says. “It’s good exercise.” Doug, who has Downs Syndrome, has been participating in the Ann Arbor CIL’s tennis program for four years. He had never played tennis before participating in the program, and now he’s quite skilled.

“The CIL’s Sports and Rec Programs have made a

definite and positive impact on Doug,” Jane Peterson, Doug’s mother, says. “Doug has gained both skills and friends that have carried on beyond the CIL. The skills have given him confidence he didn’t have before, and he now plays all the time with friends or family. He and his dad play almost every weekend.”

Doug, 32, has always had a love of being physically active, and throughout his lifetime sports have provided a way for him to connect with others. In high school, Doug was invited

to swim with the varsity swim team after the coach saw him swimming at a local club. After high school, though, Doug had a hard time finding activities and making friends. “A lot of things have come into play to make Doug’s life better, and the CIL is one of them,” Jane says.

Jane added that the CIL’s tennis program has provided an important social context for Doug. “At the CIL, Doug is among peers,” she says. “It is one of the few places where he can feel successful, and

that means a lot to him. When the tennis sessions aren't on, he asks about them all the time.”

She also says the program has benefited their whole family. “Since Doug has become skilled in tennis, his sisters see him in a context of ability, not disability. We play tennis as a family now, and it's an activity where he participates as an equal.”

Doug volunteers at Sunrise Assisted Living and works three days a week with a supported employment

program. “He now has a full and active life, and the CIL is part of that. He has hobbies, work, friends, and family,” Jane said. In addition to tennis, Doug has been involved in bicycling, walking, yoga, and game nights at the CIL.

Quotation of Doug:

“Doug and his tennis show people not to underestimate people with disabilities. He shows the world around him to recognize abilities, not disabilities.”

Photos: Left: Doug Peterson smiles at the camera as he holds his tennis racket. Right: Doug hits a ball with his racket.

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## **Adam: Sports**

“I’ve done a lot of sports events, and I-Ride is the best event I’ve done,” Adam Rose, 15, says. A competitive hand-cyclist since the age of 12, Adam has a lot to compare it to. Over his tenure as a young athlete, Adam has competed in a long list of elite-level hand-cycling races and sporting events. He and his parents spend many weekends on the road, going to hand-cycling races around

Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and beyond, and photos of Adam on the winner's podium at most of these races fill his dad's expansive photo collection.

Every year, Adam and his parents, Don and Lori Rose, participate in the Ann Arbor CIL's cycling event, called Independence Ride, or "I-Ride." I-Ride is a four-day adaptive cycling event in which people with and without disabilities ride from Holland, Michigan, to Ann Arbor. This past year 150 people

participated in the event, and 35 cyclists rode the entire journey from Holland to Ann Arbor.

Adam is no ordinary, superstar athlete, though. When Adam was four, he had leukemia which nearly took his life. “There were times when Adam was so weak and taken by the cancer, I didn’t think he’d make it,” Don says. But Adam fought back, and his cancer has now been in remission for 11 years. Adam has a T10 spinal cord injury which he sustained from a rare

adverse reaction to one of his chemotherapy treatments. As a result Adam is paralyzed from the waist down.

When reflecting on the long battle Adam has had with leukemia and paralysis, Don admits, “it’s been hard. I had to quit my job the first year of Adam’s leukemia, and there have been so many medical visits. But now I watch him, big, strong, and so independent. It’s amazing to see.”

Adam is now a sophomore at Eisenhower High School in

Shelby Township. “Disability has shaped my life,” he says. “What’s simple for most kids is a challenge for me. But using a wheelchair, you learn to adapt. Having a disability has made me more appreciative of things around me. I have a better attitude toward life because of it.”

Adam started handcycling when he was seven and also got involved in wheelchair basketball when he was eight. When he entered his first handcycling race at the age of

12, his love of competitive cycling took off from there.

Adam and his family began participating in the CIL's I-Ride event two years ago. "Before the first I-Ride, I was nervous," Adam said. "Up until that point, I had only competed in marathons, which take about 2-3 hours. I-Ride is a lot more intense." Don added, "I didn't know if he could do it, but he did."

Now with three I-Rides under his belt, Adam says, "I-Ride is a lot of fun. There's a lot of joking around, and

everyone is like a big family. It's one of the only events where able-bodied and disabled people ride side-by-side. There are no disabilities or special abilities. We're all the same."

"Although Adam has been one of the youngest adult participants in the event," Don said, "being in sports with older adults with disabilities has had a huge impact on him. He sees them excelling at sports and at life. The other guys show him there can be a good life ahead. We look

forward to doing I-Ride for many years to come. It's the highlight of our summer."

Adam's goals for the future? "The Paralympics," he says. "I want to qualify for the U.S. Paralympic hand-cycling team in 2012 or 2016. I'm only 15. We never thought I'd be this good this young – I can only imagine how much better I can become. It's getting exciting."

Quotations of Adam:

"No matter what disability you have, I-Ride shows you that you can do what able-bodied

people can. It says you can do anything.”

“I’m just a regular kid.

Photos page 18: Adam Rose, wearing a helmet, sunglasses and an I-Ride t-shirt peddles his hand-cycle at the front of a group of cyclists.

Inset photos from top: Adam Rose takes a break from the ride. Adam peddles his hand-cycle while his father, beside Adam, pushes Adam’s wheelchair. Adam sits in his

wheelchair next to his  
handcycle.

Photo page 19: Adam Rose,  
wearing a helmet and  
sunglasses, competes in a  
handcycling race.

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## **Ann Arbor Public Schools: Advocacy**

This year, Nazarena Acosta-Miranda went to middle school for the first time. For many young people her age, going to middle school, where classes change every hour and hallways are bustling thoroughfares of activity, can be an intimidating transition. For Nazarena, a sixth grader at Clague Middle School in Ann Arbor, the move was especially challenging.

Nazarena, who is blind, had to memorize where each of her classes were and learn how to navigate the school on her own.

To help Nazarena get around more easily, the school installed Braille signage along all hallways, pointing the way to classrooms, bathrooms, the music room, and the cafeteria. “The signs are helpful. They help me find my way when I get lost,” Nazarena said.

The Braille signage was part of a broader initiative of Ann Arbor Public Schools’ (AAPS)

over the past two years to implement changes at buildings and facilities to make them more accessible for students and constituents with disabilities. Ann Arbor CIL staff member Carolyn Grawi has served as a consultant to the initiative and provided advice on universal design and disability accessibility. As result of the work, all public schools in Ann Arbor now have accessible entries at every building, appropriate and accessible parking, at least one accessible men's

and women's bathroom on every floor, and user-assessed ramps and curb cuts. AAPS is also updating its website to provide information on accessible entrances for its users.

The work is making an impact. Katy LaCroix, a fourth grade teacher at Logan Elementary, says the microphones and speakers that were installed in every classroom to aid students who are hard of hearing have benefited everyone, both with and without disabilities. "With

the microphones, all of my students can hear the instruction better, and students are paying better attention to their lessons. As a teacher, I am also finding that I don't strain my voice as much during the work day," Katy said. "The microphones have improved the classroom experience for all involved."

The microphones are not the only feature that is benefiting people both with and without disabilities. Motion-sensitive light switches that were installed to assist

individuals with mobility impairments are resulting in reduced energy costs for the entire school system, because the lights turn off automatically when a room is not occupied. In addition, ramps installed at the Skyline football stadium are providing easier access to games for students, families, and football fans who use wheelchairs. “It’s an excellent ramp,” said Benjamin Graham, a counselor at Skyline High School. “I’ve used it at games and noticed how gradual it is. A lot of ramps are so steep

that individuals in wheelchairs cannot safely use them without help. This ramp is very well-designed. Just about anyone in any wheelchair would have an easy time using it.” The ramps installed at the football stadium are serving as a model for other schools and architects to follow due to their innovative design and the choice of upper and lower-level seating they offer to users.

“Making sure our facilities are truly accessible is

important to us,” said Dr. Todd Roberts, Superintendent of Ann Arbor Public Schools. “In order to make sure that every child has access to the education we’re providing, we need to ensure that every child, parent, and grand-parent who comes to our schools can use our facilities.”

Randy Trent, Executive Director for Physical Properties, said that working with the CIL really helped him make things better by seeing things from the standpoints of all users: “At the schools,

when accessibility issues come up, it's often in the context of one problem for one child. With the CIL, we discussed experiences faced by everyone, from kids, parents and grandparents to community members. Carolyn helped us understand that accessibility is not about just meeting a standard, it's about doing what works better for everyone.”

Carolyn continues to work with the school system to review plans and consult on accessibility issues of facilities

and programming. She brings expert-level knowledge to the work, having completed a variety of advanced ADA compliance and accessibility training programs. Staff members at the CIL regularly consult with private businesses and units of government on accessibility, universal design, and ADA compliance issues.

Photos: Top of pages 20-21: Nazarena Acosta-Miranda feels the Braille sign outside a classroom door. Katy LaCroix

demonstrates a science lesson to her fourth grade students.

Randy Trent goes up a concrete ramp using a wheelchair. In the background, Skyline High School students practice football.

Bottom of pages 20-21: Katy LaCroix helps fourth graders with a science experiment and speaks to the class. An elementary school student speaks through a handheld microphone.

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## **Patrick: Advocacy**

“You have no idea how much this ramp means to me,” Patrick Redmond, 51, says. Through advocacy efforts of the Monroe CIL, Patrick recently received a ramp which helps him enter and exit his house with ease.

Before getting the ramp, Patrick had an old ramp on his front door which was barely useable. It was sinking into the ground and had become dangerous. Patrick says he

used to have to use his back door, struggling to walk using a cane. As a result he didn't leave the house much unless necessary.

“When I received a call that I would soon have a new ramp built onto my house for free, I about fell over,” he said. A retired engineer, Patrick experiences seizures and traumatic arthritis. After multiple knee and back surgeries, Patrick now uses a wheelchair.

The ramp that Patrick received was part of a broader

ramp-building initiative made possible by a partnership among Comcast, the Michigan Senate, Disability Network—Michigan, the United Way, and the Monroe CIL. Early in 2009, Comcast donated \$30,000 to build ramps for five Michigan residents in need. Funding for Patrick's ramp was allocated to the Monroe area after Monroe CIL staff members Rhonda Elliott and Kelly Meadows spoke to their legislators about the large number of people who need wheelchair ramps.

Most insurance companies will not pay for wheelchair ramps, and the Monroe United Way has a two-year waiting list of people wanting ramps. The Monroe CIL staff chose Patrick based on need and coordinated many of the details for the project. On August 7, more than 30 people came to Patrick's house to help make the ramp a reality. State Senator for Monroe, Randy Richardville, was one of the volunteers that day. Tim Horton's donated donuts and coffee, and Lowe's

donated delivery of the wood and other supplies. Contractor Mike Everitt of Unlimited Contracting in Dundee donated his time to oversee the work, and State Line Medical donated the design plans for the ramp.

Patrick is elated with the results. “Now I can pull right up to my front door in my power wheelchair,” Patrick said. “I appreciate this so much.”

Photos page 22 clockwise from top left: CIL Monroe staff

members Mark Rawlings and Linda Maier handle the mulch bags with a volunteer.

Volunteers plant flowers in the new garden.

State Sen. Randy Richardville shakes a constituent's hand at the wheelchair ramp-building event at Patrick Redmond's home. Volunteers drill the boards of the ramp into place. A volunteer cuts a brick using a powertool.

Photos page 23: Top: Patrick Redmond smiles as he goes

down his new ramp in his  
power chair.

Bottom: Volunteers put the  
frame of the ramp into place.

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## **Linda: Assistive Technology**

“It is what it is, and it’s all good,” Linda Owczarzack, 55, says. “That’s my saying, and that’s the summary.” Linda, through dry wit and unwavering determination, is showing that life really can be reinvented.

In 2005, Linda was diagnosed with estrogen receptive breast cancer, following a diagnosis of basal cell carcinoma on her face in 1999. The doctors gave her a

30% chance of survival. After multiple surgeries, chemotherapy, and difficult complications, Linda made it to remission. Though she beat the odds for survival, Linda was left with complicated and permanent side-effects of the cancer treatment. She now has moderate to severe neuropathy, which means she has limited sensation in her body, particularly her arms and legs. "It's hard to explain, but my feet and hands feel frozen. I can move them, but I

can't necessarily tell what they're doing." She explains that when she walks, she doesn't feel her feet hitting the ground. She also has a chronic cough in part due to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

While battling cancer, Linda lost her job with a local school district after working for 14 years as a paraeducator. "If I looked at everything I've lost, it would not be productive," she says. "Instead, I accept what's in front of me and recognize the good. There's always

good.” With that attitude and determined to chart a new course for her career, Linda went back to school to pursue an associates degree at Washtenaw Community College to become a medical administrative assistant.

When she returned to school, though, Linda found the neuropathy was posing challenges that were getting in the way of her success. She couldn't type accurately on a standard keyboard and was having difficulty getting her assignments done. “It was

frustrating,” Linda said. She eventually got a recommendation from UM for alternative keyboarding technology and went to Michigan Rehabilitation Services and the CIL for help in getting connected to it.

Ann Arbor CIL Rehabilitation Engineer Glen Ashlock helped Linda get ahold of two types of technology allowing her to enter text into her computer without moving her fingers. The alternative keyboard OrbiTouch enables her to

input letters and commands using hand movements instead of finger movements, and Dragon Naturally-Speaking, a software program, enables her to enter text through speaking.

To use the devices, Linda had to learn a whole new way of doing things. For the OrbiTouch, Linda had to master a code based on colors and hand movements, and to use the Dragon Naturally-Speaking, she had to learn how to speak so that it catches her instructions accurately.

Glen provided Linda with training and support to make sure she was prepared to use them, and Linda says, “Glen was wonderful. It’s going to take some more time to really master these devices, but after only a few months, I’m already seeing the benefits.”

“The Center has provided a real opportunity for success,” she added. “The new devices allow me to use the skills I have in a non-traditional way.” Linda paused and reflected, “which is who I am.”

Quotation of Linda:

“One of the hardest parts is the misunderstanding people have when they see me...

People don't realize that

...You can have a powerful, normal, healthy appearance but be going through something entirely different on the inside.”

Photos: Top: Linda

Owczarzak speaks into a small microphone attached to a headset she wears.

Bottom: Linda uses an OrbiTouch keyboard.

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## **Julia: Supports for Independent Living**

Julia Moore is a woman who fights for what she wants. After she retired in 2007, when she found herself unable to afford necessary medications, she didn't know what to do. A former middle school teacher for the Ann Arbor Public Schools, Julia found herself asking, "I worked 38 years for this?"

Julia has neurological deficits stemming from a

congenital spinal column defect, and as a result, nerve impulses don't reach various parts of her body. Julia said, "I don't have good balance, I have muscle spasms, and I drop things. I'm in a lot of pain." In 1993, Julia became paralyzed from the neck down. She underwent three spinal surgeries and months of rehabilitation to regain functioning. She said, "it was a long process to learn how to drive and walk again." Currently Julia uses a scooter and a crutch to get around.

Under her retirement medical insurance, many of her necessary medications were not covered. She applied for a number of prescription drug coverage programs but kept getting turned down because she fell between the qualifying requirements of the programs and the insurance coverage she had. Julia applied for Social Security disability benefits hopeful that she would find the answer she needed. She went through a very labor-intensive

application process, which was made even harder by the manual dexterity required for filling out the forms and the disability she has. When she was turned down, she thought, “I did all this work, and they turned me down! To say I wasn’t disabled was ridiculous. I was angry.”

Julia consulted Ann Arbor CIL staff member George Ridenour, a long-time friend of hers. George encouraged her to appeal the decision and then helped her through the process. Remembering the

lengthy process, she said, “it was very frustrating. They kept sending me one packet of paperwork after another, and I was insulted by some of the things they asked. They didn’t understand how it feels to have a disability.”

“George was my advocate, though,” she said. “He helped me fill out the forms and presented my case. He knew how to ask for what I needed. Most importantly, he gave me perspective on the process.” She explained that when she was frustrated by the never-

ending requests for paperwork, George helped her see that the things they were asking were normal. “George told me what to expect. He knew a lot about the process because he’d done it before. It was a huge help.”

After what seemed like endless paperwork and back and forth, Julia finally got the news: She had been approved for Social Security disability benefits. “I thought, ‘after almost three years, it’s about time.’” Julia said now with the monthly social

security benefits she's able to pay for the medication she needs. "I can go out and live my life, finally. It's making a big difference."

Quotation of Julia:

"Challenges are a part of life. Part of what we have to do as humans is learn how to meet the challenges, whatever they happen to be.

Photo: Julia stands, using her cane, on a dock in front of a pond full of lilies and marsh grasses.

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## **Katie: Supports for Youth**

This summer, Katie Koval, 18, moved out on her own.

Though a typical rite of passage for many young adults, it was a significant turning point for Katie.

When Katie was 15, she was diagnosed with epilepsy. After going through a long journey of diagnosis, treatment, and learning how to deal with long-term effects, moving out on her own is a symbol of the long way she's come.

When Katie first started getting seizures, doctors couldn't figure out what was causing her condition.

Eventually she underwent brain surgery, which helped to stabilize the seizures, but the surgery resulted in permanent brain damage which causes her short-term memory and balance problems. The seizures still pose significant risk for Katie.

When Ann Arbor CIL staff member Jen Chapin-Smith first met Katie, she informed her that people with

challenges related to seizures often use service dogs. Dogs can provide advanced assistance for individuals with epilepsy.

With Jen's advice, Katie acquired Rosie, a black lab who is being trained as Katie's social support and seizure alert dog. Because humans emit a certain scent before having a seizure, when Rosie is fully trained, she will be able to detect the scent and warn Katie to get to a safe position before the seizure takes place. This will prevent Katie from

having a seizure in an unsafe location, such as while crossing the street, or climbing the stairs.

When fully trained, Rosie will be able to help Katie with a number of other things.

Because of her brain-damage, Katie often has a hard time remembering to take her anti-seizure medication at the right time, and when she walks even short distances, she has a hard time staying oriented or remembering how to return where she came from. Rosie can help Katie remember to

take her anti-seizure medication, and she can also help Katie keep her bearings and remember how to get back to her starting point. Rosie may also be able to help her drive safely one day. Katie had to give up her learner's permit when she was 15 due to the epilepsy, and service dogs can sometimes help individuals qualify to drive.

One of the unexpected benefits of having Rosie has been the signal that she provides to others. "When I go

out, often times it's hard to know how to tell people that I have a disability," Katie said. "Because Rosie wears a service dog jacket, she's a natural ice-breaker. It's so much easier to say 'I have a disability' in this way."

"There have been a couple of moments when I've realized just how much Rosie helps me. There are so many unexpected and scary things that can come up with my condition. Before I got her, I never wanted to leave the

house. Now with Rosie, I'm not afraid to go out."

Katie, a dancer since the age of four, had to give up a career in ballet after the brain surgery, due to the balance problems it caused. Katie has found an unexpected love of world dance, though, and is now involved in African, Middle Eastern, and Indian dancing. She teaches at a number of dance studios around Ann Arbor.

Katie is a winner of the CIL's John Weir Academic Scholarship and has been

involved in the CIL's youth programming. She attributes the CIL with providing significant emotional and social support for her. Katie is now a first year student at Eastern Michigan University, majoring in international affairs. She speaks Mandarin and is looking to become a professional translator.

When reflecting on the journey epilepsy has taken her on, Katie says, "I've had my moments. Frustration, anger, discomfort, and pain. I would be lying if I said it hasn't been

a challenge. But I have days when I can't believe how far I've come."

Quotation of Katie:

"Getting Rosie has definitely enabled me to go out and pursue the life I've always wanted to live. She gives me confidence to go out into the world. I know I'll be safer with her."

Photo: Assistance dog Rosie, a black Labrador, wearing her red jacket to indicate that she

is working, sits on her owner  
Katie Kovals lap and licks her.  
Inset photos of Katie Koval  
dancing.

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## **Norman: Supports for Independent Living**

Four years ago, Norman LaFleur was living in the back room of his sister's house when the cold temperatures and damp air caused him to get pneumonia and complications related to his diabetes. After initial treatment in the hospital, a social worker recommended that he finish his recovery in a nursing home. The move to the nursing home was well-

intentioned, but Norman quickly found himself stuck there, with no options to help him get out.

“It was lonely there, and I felt stuck. I wanted to get out,” Norman said. “The nursing home was not made for me.” Norman, 48, was not alone. He was one of a large number of individuals with disabilities who are living in nursing homes but don’t need to be.

Ann Arbor CIL staff member Julia Plaggemeyer heard about Norman and got involved. The CIL’s Nursing

Facility Transition Program, funded through Medicare, and done in collaboration with the Area Agency on Aging 1-B and the Department of Community Health, helps individuals like Norman move out of nursing homes and achieve an independent life in the community.

Norman has four disabilities that posed challenges to his moving out of the nursing home. He has diabetes that requires him to get insulin three times per day. He has a vision impairment that makes

it difficult for him to read a glucometer and administer the correct dosage of insulin on his own. He has neuropathy, which causes him to need a wheelchair to get around. And he has kidney disease that requires him to need dialysis three times per week.

Despite these challenges, Norman was motivated to achieve an independent life. To enable a move, Julia worked with him to secure an apartment and arranged for appropriate household items. She coordinated in-home

chore services, nursing services, and training for Norman to learn how to treat his diabetes independently. She also helped identify accessible transportation for him to get to kidney dialysis appointments. Finally, she helped advise Norman on the significant event that was about to take place. Before moving day, Norman said, "I was nervous. But I was excited, too. I knew I had to do it."

"Looking back, I realize what an incredibly life-

changing event Norman went through and how privileged I was to take part in it,” Julia said.

The transition to an independent life in the community went as planned. Norman now goes to kidney dialysis three times a week and uses accessible public transportation to get there on his own. He prepares a lot of his own meals in his apartment but says with a smile, “I order out once in a while from Jimmy John’s. I really like that place.” Norman

also goes downstairs and sits outside with his neighbors regularly. “We talk about different things,” he says. “And I go places by myself. I have freedom.”

Quotation of Norman:

“I’m very grateful for the help I got in getting here. I have a good life here. I feel good when I think about myself now.”

Photos: Top: Norman LaFleur, using his wheelchair in the

kitchen, boils eggs in a pot on the stove.

Bottom: with his small, black dog on his lap, Norman LaFleur talks to a neighbor who is using a red power scooter.

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## **Byran: Skills Training and Employment**

Bryan Burhart knows firsthand what it's like to have a hard time with the job-search. Born with cerebral palsy, Bryan cannot speak and has limited movement in his arms and hands. As a result, he communicates using a laptop that he operates with his head.

Bryan, 32, first got involved with the Life Skills CIL Ebay training project last year to learn how to market and sell

products using Ebay. The Life Skills CIL is the Monroe branch office of the Ann Arbor CIL. Today Bryan serves as a marketer and developer for the Center's emerging joint-partnership with private industry, which aims to create a training and employment center for people with disabilities in Southeast Michigan.

The Ann Arbor CIL and Rodnick, Co., maker of gourmet fruit and gift baskets, are teaming up to create a marketing, production, and

distribution center staffed by a majority of people with disabilities. “Because there are so many aspects to the gift basket business, individuals with a wide variety of skill levels and abilities will be able to be employed at all stages of the business. Individuals with the most severe challenges and those with the highest levels of education will work side by side,” said Mike Marone, Managing Partner of Rodnick.

“The partnership with the Ann Arbor CIL makes sense

on all levels,” said Mike. “We want to expand our business, and we need high quality employees to do so. People with disabilities make great employees.” With plans to house a production facility at the Ann Arbor CIL building, staff members of the Ann Arbor CIL will recruit employees, provide training, and offer on-going support to employees to ensure their success.

For now, while the partnership is in development, Bryan handles customer

communication, marketing, and online sales for Rodnick on Ebay, and in turn is receiving valuable training and skill development.

“Working with the CIL has helped me see that anyone can do anything,” Marone said. “Things I previously thought of as limitations or barriers I now see as opportunities. By embarking on this project, we’re not lowering any standards; were raising the bar.”

Bryan is proof positive.

“Bryan’s customer service is

outstanding,” eBay instructor Mark Rawlings said. “He’s an example for everyone.” Mike added, “This partnership inspires me as an entrepreneur. Success means more jobs and more benefits to individuals with disabilities. It’s amazing to see the impact. It’s exciting.” Rodnick, Co. is based in Saint Clair Shores, Michigan.

Quotation of Bryan:

“Having a job to go to daily means a lot to me. I feel like a productive member of society

now. I am able to put my skills to use.”

Photos: Inside the Monroe CIL eBay center, Bryan Burhart uses a pointed attached to his headset to type up information about a product onto his computer.

Bottom: Bryan Burhart, using a power chair, smiles as he sits outside the Monroe CIL next to a sign that reads Now Open in Monroe! eBay. In the background, a sign on the window reads Life Skills Training Center.

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## **Highlights of 2009:**

At the Ann Arbor CIL, we understand first-hand what it means to have a disability.

That's because we, too, face the challenges of disability every day. More than fifty percent of our staff, board members and volunteers are people with disabilities.

Founded in February of 1976, we were the fourth Center for Independent Living in the nation. There are now more

that 600 CILs across the U.S. and throughout the world.

## **Grants Awarded:**

This year, the Ann Arbor CIL's Program Research and Development group was "On a Roll!" Led by Director of Program Research and Development Edward Wollmann, the Center was awarded two significant new federal grants propelling us to a new level of national attention for our work.

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special

Education and Rehabilitative Services awarded the Center's Sports and Recreation program \$315,000 over the next three years to provide recreational activities and educational experiences for individuals in our disability community. Just a few of the activities made possible through this grant include tennis, cycling, community gardening, visual arts, bowling, and quad rugby. During the next three years this initiative will help us propel the employment, mobility,

socialization, independence, and community inclusion of our disability community to new heights.

In addition, the U.S. Small Business Administration awarded the Center \$1,000,000 over the next five years to provide increased small business development supports to entrepreneurs in our community, and to conduct new research on the effect of social capital development supports in microenterprise programs and the means to increase awareness about

effective practices among microenterprise development practitioners across the country. Through this initiative, the Ann Arbor CIL stands to become a nationally-recognized leader in the field of small business development supports for disadvantaged micro-entrepreneurs.

**By the numbers:**

2,472 children, youth, and adults with disabilities received 4,692 independent living support services this year. On top of that, more than 2,000

individuals benefited from our Disability Awareness and Sensitivity Training programs at local schools, universities, and organizations.

**Those we serve:**

By gender: 53% female; 47% male

**By age:**

1% ages 5 and younger

8% ages 5-19

9% ages 20-24

70% ages 25-59

12% 60 and older

## **By race:**

American Indian/Alaska

Native: < 1%

Asian: 2%

Black/African-American: 26%

Hispanic/Latino: < 1%

Native Hawaiian/Pacific

Islander: < 1%

Two or More Races: <1%

White/Caucasian: 71%

## **There's more than you think to the disability community:**

Disabilities served by the Ann

Arbor CIL:

AD/HD

Agent Orange

Alzheimer's  
Amputation  
Arthritis  
Asthma/Emphysema  
Autism/Asperger's  
Autoimmune Disorder  
Back Injury  
Blind/Visually Impaired  
Bone/Joint Disorder  
Brain Disorder  
Brain Injury  
Cancer/Cancer Survivor  
Cardiovascular Disorder  
Carpal Tunnel  
Cerebral Palsy  
Chemical Sensitivity  
Cognitive Impairment

Deaf/Hearing Impaired  
Dementia  
Depression  
Developmental Disability  
Diabetes  
Emotional Impairment  
Epilepsy/Seizure  
Fibromyalgia  
HIV/AIDS  
Kidney Disease  
Learning Disability  
Lupus  
Mental Health Challenge  
Morbid Obesity  
Multiple Sclerosis  
Muscular Dystrophy  
Narcolepsy

Organ Transplant Recipient  
Parkinson's Disease  
PTSD  
Post-Polio Syndrome  
Pulmonary Disease  
Short Stature/ Little Person  
Sleep Apnea  
Spinal Cord Injury  
Stroke  
Substance Abuse  
Other condition that causes  
substantial limitation of a  
major life activity

The Ann Arbor CIL's annual  
financial audit is available by

contacting our Chief Executive  
Officer at [jmagyar@aacil.org](mailto:jmagyar@aacil.org).

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## **Annual Gala Benefit & Auction**

This year, more than 125 people came to the Ann Arbor CIL on September 11 to raise money for the Center at our annual Gala Benefit and Auction. Volunteers transformed our warehouse into an elegant event hall, and in a lively and engaging atmosphere, guests helped us raise more than \$35,000. Donors bid on such items as a guitar signed by Kid Rock, an

“Off the Wall” album signed by Michael Jackson, and an African safari vacation. The live auction also raised funds for a fully accessible family restroom to be built at the CIL, which will allow members of our disability community to use the restroom privately and with greater ease. We thank all those who helped make this such a successful event.

Photos of the Annual Gala and Benefit Auction clockwise from the top left:

Ann Arbor CIL Board member Joan E. Smith and her husband talk with a consumer. In the background we see people sitting at tables covered with white linens and auction items on display. Small white lights adorn the ceiling. A large crowd, including people with a variety of disabilities, sample the buffet.

Two consumers using wheelchairs talk and eat.

Ann Arbor CIL staff members Dana Emerson and Glen

Ashlock look at auction items on display.

Ann Arbor CIL staff member Anna Dusbiber Gossage bids on a live auction item.

Ann Arbor CIL staff members Tom Hoatlin and Carolyn Grawi hold up a giant check for \$5000 made out to AACIL.

Ann Arbor CIL staff member holds up a Kid Rock autographed guitar as two women applaud the winning bidder holding his card.

Auction guests look at the program listing the auction items.

Guests sample the dessert bar  
and chocolate fountain.

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**The Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living** gratefully acknowledges the following benefactors, sponsors, foundations and grantors:

**Businesses:**

16 Hands

A&A Driving School

Abilities!

Abracadabra Jewelry

Acclaim Private Home Care,  
Inc

Acme Mercantile

Advantage Mobility

Advisacare

Adorn Me  
Aegis Health Perspectives, Inc  
All American Role Models  
All Sewn Up  
Allstate  
Anderson Paint Company  
Ann Arbor Bed and Breakfast  
Ann Arbor Civic Theater  
Ann Arbor Comedy Showcase  
Ann Arbor Commerce Bank  
Ann Arbor Commission on  
Disability Issues  
Ann Arbor Ice Cube  
Ann Arbor Therapeutic  
Massage  
Arbor Beverage Company  
Arbor Wellness

The Arc Michigan  
Arctic Coliseum  
Aquila Corporation  
The Arena  
Arete Coaching and  
Consulting, Inc  
The Ark  
Associates in Physical  
Medicine and Rehabilitation  
Athletes Unlimited  
Audio Craft  
Aunt Agatha's Mystery Book  
Ayla & Co  
Bana Salon and Spa  
bd Mongolian Barbeque  
Beer Depot  
Bellanina Day Spa

Dr Steve Bennett, FAAO/  
Bennett Optometry  
Bentheim Reform Church  
Best Western Greenfield Inn  
The Black Pearl Seafood and  
Martini Bar  
Blue Cross Blue Shield of  
Michigan  
Blue Nile Restaurant  
Blue Water Café  
David Boland, pianist  
Boys and Girls Club  
Bra-Vo Intimates  
Breakaway  
Busch's  
Capital Region Community  
Foundation

Caesars Windsor  
Campbell Communications  
Carelinc Medical Equipment  
Caryn Elise Photography  
CASA of Washtenaw County  
Case Handyman  
Centre Street Café  
Charles Reinhart Company  
Realtors  
Chef Miller  
Chelsea Comfort Inn and  
Village Conference Center  
Chelsea Community Hospital  
Chelsea Hospital Catering  
Chelsea Flower Shop  
Christian Roux, Ltd  
Citizens Insurance

Coach's Catastrophe Cleaning  
Collected Works  
Comerica  
Comfort Keepers  
Common Grill  
Communications Access  
Center  
Community Living Services  
Compuware Arena  
Cornerstone Design Inc.  
Corporation for National  
Community Service  
Country Hearth Inn  
Cupcake Station  
Cynthetics  
The Daily Show with John  
Stewart

DaVinci's Salon and Gallery

Days Inn

The Detroit Lions, Inc

Detroit Red Wings

Dick's Market

disAbility Connections

The Doctors Show

Dogma Catmantoo

Domino's Pizza

Downtown Home and Garden

The Doctor Phil Show

Bonnie Dunkelberger,

massage therapist

Durham's Tricklements

The Earle

Eastover PTO

Edible Arrangements

Eisenhower Center  
Elephant Ears  
Elmo's Main Street T-Shirts  
English Gardens  
eve- the restaurant  
Falling Water Books and  
Collectables  
First Unitarian Universalist  
Church  
Ben Fletcher, photographer  
Footprints  
Found  
Fourth Avenue Birkenstock  
Friends of Liz Brater  
Fusion Medical  
Garrison Lawhouse PC  
Georgetown Girls

General Motors Mobility  
Glacier Hills Home Care  
GMAC  
Grange Kitchen and Bar  
Hagopian Cleaning Services  
Hearing Loss Association of  
Ann Arbor  
HearUSA  
Heavenly Metal  
Heberle and Finnegan  
Hennessy Capital  
Hillers Market  
Holy Family Catholic Church  
Hungry Howie's  
Hylant Group Inc  
IHOP  
Ionia State Recreation Area

Sadashi Inuzuka, artist

It's a Treasure

Jackson Area Subway

Daniel L Jacob and Company

Jelinek Orchards

Kaizen Healing Arts

Kaleidoscope

Kellogg Eye Center

Kalous Case Management

Key Bank

Koester Performance

Research

Lake Forest Golf Club

Laketown Township Hall

Leelanau Cellars

Lexi's Toy Box

Liberty Athletic Club

Liberty Street Robot Supply  
and Repair

Lily's Garden

Limno-Tech, Inc.

Logan Restaurant

Lucky Monkey Tattoo Parlour

Macaroni Grill

Masar's Arline

Master Visions

Mathilde's Imports

Maximum Delights

McCormick Rehab

The Melting Pot

Mental Health Association of  
Michigan

Michigan Paralyzed Veterans  
of America

Michigan Sports Unlimited  
Miners Den  
Mobility Works  
Monroe County United Way  
Motawi Tileworks  
Motte and Bailey Booksellers  
M&M Music  
Nacht and Associates  
Noodles and Co.  
Northville Public Schools  
NSK Corporation  
NuStep  
O'Connor Hearing Center  
OHM Engineering Advisors  
Old Town  
Outdoor Athlete  
Pacific Rim by kana

Panera Bread

Park Shoe Repair

PEAC

John Payne, Attorney

The Peaceable Kingdom

Peckham

Performance Network Theater

Pfizer United Way Campaign

Phoenix Contractors, Inc.

Pizza Hut

Planet Rock

Princess Designs

PRP Wine International

Purple Rose Theater

Quality Home Medical

Equipment, Inc

Quality Suites

R&R Industries  
Rainbow Rehabilitation  
The Recovery Project, LLC  
Reddeman Farms Golf Club  
Red Hawk Bar and Grill  
Red Shoes LLC  
Red Wings Hockey  
Rehab Transportation  
REI  
ResCare Premier  
RideConnect  
Rodnick Co  
Romanoff's Catering Service  
Nick Roumel, Attorney  
Running Wise and Ford  
Rusao Designs LLC/Becky J  
Fixel

Ryba's Bicycle Rentals  
Safeco Insurance  
Salem Lutheran Church  
Salon 328  
Schokolad Chocolate Factory  
Select Ride  
Selo/Shevel Gallery  
Serendipity Gallery  
SERVPRO of Washtenaw  
County  
Seva Restaurant  
Shalimar Indian Restaurant  
Silver Maples of Chelsea  
Sleeping Bear Press  
Spartan Medical Supply  
Spartan Stores

Special Tree Rehabilitation  
System

Spectrum Health

Sundance Grill and Bar

Suwanee Springs

TeaHaus Ann Arbor

Ten Thousand Villages

Toledo Zoo

Trader Joe's

Tree Town Acupuncture

United Way of Toledo

UM Council for Disability

Concerns

University of Michigan Health

Science Libraries

University of Michigan Health  
System

University of Michigan Home  
Care Services

University of Michigan Spinal  
Cord Injury Model System

University of Michigan Motor  
Control Lab

University of Michigan  
Orthotics and Prosthetics  
Center

University of Medicine  
Physical Medicine and  
Rehabilitation

UM School of Art and Design

University Musical Society

Urban Jewelers

Varsity Barber Shop

Village Pharmacy II

Vintage to Vogue (V2V)  
Voter Access Coalition of  
Washtenaw County  
Barbara Watson, Premier  
Designs High Fashion Jewelry  
The WAVE  
Mary Waxer, Varsity Ford  
Sales and Leasing  
Wayne State University  
Department of Occupational  
Therapy  
WDIV-TV  
Weber's Inn  
Law Offices of D. Louis Weir  
West End Grill  
Western Washtenaw Area  
Value Express

Wheelchair Getaways  
Wheelchair Sports  
Who Wants to be a Millionaire  
with Meredith Vieira  
Whole Foods  
Wiard's Orchards and Country  
Fair  
Wireless Toys  
Women Out Working  
Wright and Filippis  
Youth Empowerment Project  
Ypsilanti Marriott at Eagle  
Crest  
Zap Zone  
Zingerman's Bakehouse  
Zion Methodist Church  
Zola Café and Bistro

Zulu Nya

**Non-profit partners:**

Adaptive Sports Coalition

Ann Arbor District Library

Ann Arbor Housing

Commission

Ann Arbor Thrift Shop

Ann Arbor Transportation

Authority

Ann Arbor Public Schools

Ann Arbor YMCA

Area Agency on Aging 1B

Association for Community

Advocacy

Athletes with Disabilities Hall  
of Fame

Avalon Housing  
Big Brothers Big Sisters of  
Washtenaw County  
Brain Injury Association of  
Michigan  
Catholic Social Services  
Community Housing  
Alternatives  
Community Residence  
Corporation  
Communication Access  
Center for the Deaf  
Deaf Can  
Dawn Farms  
Eastern Michigan University  
GEAR UP

EMU Disability Resource  
Center  
Fair Housing Center  
Food Gatherers  
Fresh Start Club House  
First Unitarian Universalist  
Church  
Habitat for Humanity  
Housing Bureau for Seniors  
Jewish Family Services  
Legal Services of SE Michigan  
Lions Club  
Michigan Ability Partners  
Michigan Disability Rights  
Coalition  
Michigan Prisoner Reentry  
Initiative

Michigan Theater  
Michigan Thunderbirds  
Wheelchair Sports  
MSU Extension Services  
Neutral Zone  
Ovarian Cancer Society  
Ozone House  
Partners in Personal  
Assistance  
Paws with a Cause  
Trinity Lutheran Church  
University of Michigan, Office  
of Services for Students with  
Disabilities  
University of Michigan  
Initiative on Disability Studies

Washtenaw Affordable  
Nonprofit Housing Corporation  
Washtenaw Community  
College  
Washtenaw Intermediate  
School District  
Washtenaw Youth Mentoring  
Coalition  
Ypsilanti Housing Commission  
Ypsilanti Thrift Shop

**Foundations & Government  
Entities:**

Ann Arbor Area Community  
Foundation  
Capital Region Community  
Foundation

City of Ann Arbor  
Corporation for National and  
Community Service  
Maurice McFarland Estate  
Michigan Commission for the  
Blind  
Michigan Community Services  
Commission  
Michigan Department of  
Community Health  
Michigan Rehabilitation  
Services  
U.S. Department of Education  
U.S. Department of Veterans  
Affairs  
United Way of Washtenaw  
County

# Washtenaw County

## **Individuals and Families:**

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James and Jamie Abelson

Gerald and Gloria Abrams

Mary Lou and Sam Accordino

Thomas and Yvonne Acton

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Allan and Jacqueline

Anderson

Mary Andrews

Sharon Angeline

Laurel Angus

Robert Anthony

Alicia Aniel

John and Linda Armitage

Shannon Arnott

Glen Ashlock

Mark Avery

Eli Avny

Richard and Suzanne Bade

Joel Bailey

Peg Ball

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Joan Mills

Dawn Milz

Lori Misch

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Lawrence Novak

Viola Elaine Nutt

Caryn O'Connor

John L and Marilyn O'Connor

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James Olson

David and Constance Osler

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Nancy Page

Blair Parent

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Deveny

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Constance Poissant  
Lana Pollack  
PJ Pooley  
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Neal Probert  
Charles and Shirley  
Rasmussen  
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Charles Wright  
Jeanine C. Wright  
Rep. Alma Wheeler Smith  
Diane Worthing  
John and Mary Yablonky  
Mayumi Yoneta  
Philip Zazove

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**CIL Staff**

Glen Ashlock, AT/IT Program  
Manager

Chris Baty, AmeriCorps VISTA

Robin Bennett, AmeriCorps  
VISTA

Lauren Boland, AmeriCorps  
VISTA

Jen Chapin-Smith, Community  
Mentorship Coordinator

Molly Concannon, Business  
Relations & Career Education

Shirley Coombs, Chief  
Financial Officer

Dorothy Denner, NFT  
Coordinator & OTRL

Anna Dusbiber Gossage,  
Youth Program Coordinator

Dana Emerson, Director of  
Operations

Alex Gossage, Special  
Projects Coordinator

Carolyn Grawi, Director of  
Advocacy and Education

Kevin Hartgerink, Network  
Administrator

Kathy Herron, VR/IL Wrap-  
Around Specialist

Tom Hoatlin, Director of  
Development

Helen Ledgard, Business  
Development and General  
Counsel

Lisa Mangigian, Talent  
Connector, Career Services  
Jim Magyar, President & CEO  
Alysa Mohr, IL Program  
Manager  
Julia Plaggemeyer, Career  
Services Coordinator  
Sue Probert, Community  
Resource Specialist  
George Ridenour, IL Specialist  
Cheranissa Roach, Business  
Consultant  
Melissa Sartori, Inclusive  
Leisure Activities Coordinator  
Miles Shultz, AmeriCorps  
VISTA

Mary Stack, Sports &  
Recreation Specialist

Rick Weir, MicroEnterprise  
Works Manager

Jeffery Welcome, Accountant

Shay Willis, AmeriCorps

VISTA

Steven Wiltse, AmeriCorps

VISTA

Edward Wollmann, Director of  
Program Research &  
Development

Jeanine Wright, Data  
Specialist

**Monroe CIL Staff:**

Bryan Burhart, eBay and  
Computer Specialist

Gary Dygert, Information &  
Assistance

Josh Nocella, AmeriCorps  
VISTA

Rhonda Elliott, AmeriCorps  
VISTA/Outreach Specialist

Kelly Meadows, IL Specialist

Mark Rawlings, IL Skills  
Specialist

**M.R.S. Blended Staff:**

Dan Durci, Transition  
Counselor (Livingston)

Becky Munce, Intake  
Specialist