



Volume 4 - Issue 5

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Happy New Year from AccessNorth - Center for Independent Living of NE Minnesota

Greetings!

Here we are at the end of another year. Always a time for reflection as well as looking ahead. The entire staff at AccessNorth want to wish you a very Happy 2013 and hope that on New Year's Eve and the whole year through - may hope, love and warmth be in your heart and the New Year brings you many blessings.

Our offices will be open on New Year's Eve from 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. and closed on New Year's Day. We will resume our regular hours on January 2nd (8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.).

Roberta Cich
Executive Director

AccessNorth Receives Generous Grant from Lake Country Power



We would like to give a **big THANK YOU** to Lake Country Power for granting us money to add four wheelchairs to our Assistive Technology Lending Library. These wheelchairs will be available on loan to those who need them by contacting Sheri in our Duluth office at (218) 625-1400 or Jason in our Hibbing office at (218) 262-6675.

This grant was made possible through Lake Country Power's Operation Round Up program - a program which has granted over \$1 million since it began in 1994 to community and charitable organizations.

AccessNorth's Ramp Program reaches incredible milestone by building our 1,000th ramp!



December 13, 2012, was a banner day in the history of the Center for Independent Living of NE Minnesota. Bob Brown and his crew installed the 1,000th home access modular ramp onto a home in Cohasset to allow it's resident to remain in the home. These ramps have impacted more than just the 1,000 homes - countless people have benefited from the installation of these ramps on homes - consumers, spouses, family members and loved ones have all enjoyed the greater accessibility these ramps have provided.

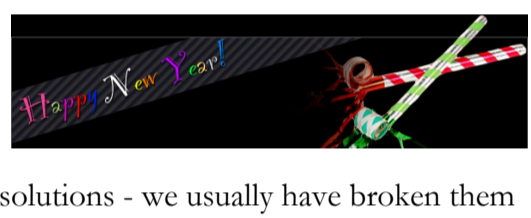
Thank you and congratulations to Bob Brown for being the coordinator for this wildly successful program and for positively affecting the lives of so many with this valuable service!



(Bob is in the news a lot lately)

I resolve

A few unconventional New Year's Resolutions to ponder.



Sometimes it seems pointless to make New Year's Resolutions - we usually have broken them within the first few weeks of the new year. But how about these? They don't take any (or hardly any) money (maybe can save you money), not a lot of effort and could - possibly - make a big difference in your life or the life of someone you know. Happy New Year 2013!!

- **Get moving every day!** Take the stairs, park a little farther away (I know that's not fun in Northern Minnesota), take an extra walk to the other side of the store for something.
- **Build your dreams.** When is the last time you had a dream about the future? It's never too late to daydream - and then work on that dream to make it a reality.
- **Go on an adventure.** When is the last time you drove down a new road that you have never been on before? A scenic highway that has always looked interesting? Taken a walk in the woods, around a lake?
- **Stop to smell the roses.** Well, OK, it's hard to smell the roses in the middle of a Minnesota winter if your not in a floral shop - but the intention is to see and appreciate the beauty of what is around you. How many crisp snowy days do we have that the snow is glistening and beautiful, the sky is a gorgeous blue - do we even take a moment to notice? Take a picture - use it for your wallpaper on your phone to remind you of the beauty of that moment in time.
- **Visit your spiritual side.** Take a moment to sit quietly and clear your mind.
- **Random acts of kindness.** Open the door for someone, smile at a stranger, shovel your neighbors sidewalk. These things always make us feel better.
- **Tell your loved ones how much you love them.** This can never be done too much. With the recent tragic events that have occurred, it reminds us once again that tomorrow is never promised to any of us, young or old. Live for today and tell those that you love how you feel - you may not get another chance. Friends and family are priceless. Love is free, caring is free.
- **Contact a long-lost friend or relative.** This goes along with the previous resolution. If you have been thinking of someone, call them - write them - email them. Today. Don't wait until tomorrow.
- **Resolve to do ONE good, healthy thing for yourself.** Quit smoking, start exercising, eat less sugar, more vegetables. Anything that will make you feel better about the choices you're making.

Remember - the year is long, and one year goes into another. Before you know it, you will be incorporating these things (and more) into your everyday life. And who knows? It may make a big difference in the quality of your life and those around you.

Effective Communication: I Hear You

This is the second installment of our series on Effective Communication.



Have you ever been frustrated after a conversation because you felt the other person wasn't hearing you? Have you ever been accused of not listening? If you are like me and millions of other people, you have experienced both. One of the most important parts of effective communication is being able to and willing to listen to the other person. Listening makes your loved one feel appreciated and loved. Listening to your children fosters independence and self-esteem. In your professional life it can save time and money by preventing misunderstandings. Listening skills fuel our social, emotional and professional success, and studies prove that listening is a skill we can learn.

We can all strive to better listeners in every aspect of our lives. The Golden Rule of listening is to treat others as you would want to be treated or listen as you want to be listened to. So how do you do that? It's really just a matter of technique.

1. **Face your speaker:** Sit straight and lean forward to your interest in what they say
2. **Eye contact:** Maintain eye contact, to the degree of comfort for each of you. Remember, you are not trying to stare them down or intimidate them
3. **Minimize external distractions:** Turn off the TV, put down your book. If at work shut your office door and have your calls held.
4. **Feedback:** This is extremely important as it shows to the other you are paying attention. Nod your head, smile, say something like "then what happened"
5. **Focus:** Try to quiet your own internal stimuli to minimize confusion later. Let the person finish their side before you express yourself.
6. **Be open minded:** Even if you disagree, be willing to listen intently to what they say. Don't assume you know what they are going to say.
7. **Let the speaker finish, even if they are complaining about you:** Refrain from being defensive and interrupting. This will just cause hurt and upset feelings. It is a proven fact that we listen 4x faster than we speak and so this just gives you time to process and be able to communicate your side.
8. **Paraphrase:** When the speaker is all finished, then you should validate what you heard. This gives the speaker and you opportunity to truly understand what was just talked about. Say something like "so you are saying.." or "If I understood correctly..."

Being an active listener takes practice and time, but the reward is less arguments and hurt feelings and increased respect, understanding and positive conversations. Remember..

"One of the most sincere forms of respect is actually listening to what another has to say."

Bryant H. McGill

Recipe of the Month - NEW YEAR'S DAY BLACK EYED PEAS

Black eyed peas on New Year's Day bring good luck for the entire year!



- 1 lb. dry black-eyed peas
- 2 cups chopped cooked ham
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 pinch garlic powder
- 2 onions, diced
- 1 (14.5 oz.) can whole tomatoes

Place black-eyed peas in 8 quart pot. Add enough water to fill pot 3/4 full. Stir in ham and diced onions, and season with salt, pepper, and garlic powder. Place tomatoes in a blender or food processor, and blend until the tomatoes are liquefied. Add tomatoes to pot. Bring all ingredients to boil. Cover the pot, and simmer on low heat for 2 1/2 to 3 hours, or until the peas are tender.