

# AccessNorth

## Center for Independent Living of Northeastern Minnesota

Assisting individuals with disabilities to live independently, pursue meaningful goals,  
and have equal opportunities and choices.

March - 2012

Volume 3 - Issue 9

### Greetings!

It is a time for change here at Access North. We have added new staff, some seasoned staff are now in new positions or have new responsibilities and we are moving forward with our main office building project in Hibbing. We are also busy organizing new programs and groups in all of our offices. I would personally like to thank everyone who is helping and supporting us through this transition. Access North has a fantastic staff and Board of Directors who have gone above and beyond to make sure none of our services or groups are interrupted during these changes. We have also received tremendous support from our colleagues in the community.

As we move forward and grow, we remain focused on our mission: To assist people with disabilities to live independently, pursue meaningful goals and have the same opportunities and choices as all people. We welcome your ideas and suggestions.

Enjoy the newsletter.

Sincerely,  
Roberta Cich  
Interim Executive Director



### In This Issue

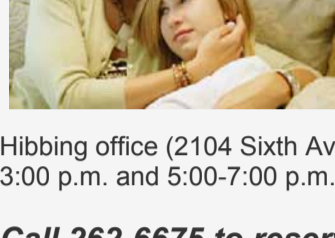
**Financial Planning Workshop**  
**Another Success Story - Christine's Story**  
**Grand Rapids News - Meet Kate**  
**TLC Corner - Spring brings bluebirds of sadness**  
**Notes ...**

**Assistive Technology Corner**

**Recipe of the Month - Honey Pork and Peppers**

### Estate Planning Workshop

**Disability Planning Specialists to present seminar ...**



If you have a son or daughter with a disability and are wondering what to do to plan for their future...we are sponsoring a seminar on securing their financial future and how to set up a Supplemental Needs Trust. This seminar is offered free of charge and is being presented by Dave Reedstrom, a consultant with Disability Planning Specialists.

It will be held on Thursday, May 10th at our AccessNorth Hibbing office (2104 Sixth Avenue East) with two separate sessions for your convenience: 1:00-3:00 p.m. and 5:00-7:00 p.m. Please attend whichever session works into your schedule!

**Call 262-6675 to reserve your spot.**

### Another Success Story

**"I was always waiting for rides. I was stuck. I missed out on a lot of things because I couldn't physically do it"**



This was the way life was for Christine Kreps. She has severe arthritis in her knees which affects her mobility as she can only weight bear for short distances. She also has an enlarged heart as well as other medical conditions. All these combined make any long distance walking or strenuous activity impossible. Doing the things she loves, such as going to the zoo or to the Land of the Loon Festival, were near impossible. Unless, her elderly mother or other friend/relative could push her in a wheel chair. So her doctor prescribed a scooter.

Christine worked with a local medical supply company and found the perfect scooter for her. Yet, to her dismay she found out her insurance would not pay for it. Christine lives on a fixed income and could not afford to purchase a scooter. Frustrated and discouraged, Christine turned to people she knew for advice. A close family member and a friend of hers both recommended that she try contacting AccessNorth - Center for Independent Living for help. "They had worked with Access before and were very happy. I thought, well, it couldn't hurt"

She contacted AccessNorth and was connected to Independent Living Skills Specialist Miirriinia. She met with Miirriinia and was told her that she had options. Together they came up with a plan and applied for a grant that seemed to fit her situation. Miirriinia told her, she couldn't guarantee she'd qualify, but then they would try another resource. Christine felt hope again.

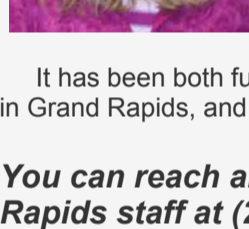
After what seemed a lifetime, Miirriinia delivered Christine the good news. She had been approved for the full grant and her new scooter would be delivered to her.

Today, Christine says her life has changed greatly even though she has only had her scooter about a month. That month has made a difference. She has enjoyed "cruising at turtle speed" on several occasions to Super One. She is excited for nice weather so she can enjoy it. She is making plans to visit the Minnesota Zoo, which she would not have been able to do previously. She looks forward to the county fair, malls, parades, going to the park with her 8 yr old cousin and the occasional casino outing. "If I want to go, I can just go" she said. "I can enjoy time with family instead of depending on them."

She calls AccessNorth "Excellent" and would "Most definitely" recommend them to anyone else that needs services to keep them independent. Now, with summer approaching and her options before her, Christine says the only dilemma she has now is "Deciding what to do next!"

### Grand Rapids News

**Meet another one of our staff members in our new Grand Rapids office...**

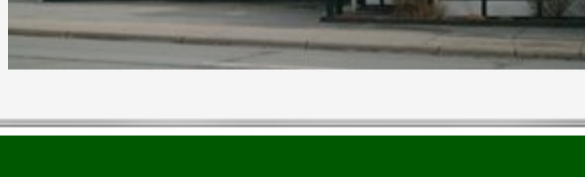


Hi! I am Kate Barrette, the morning receptionist at the new AccessNorth office in Grand Rapids

I received my Bachelor of Science degree from Moorhead State University then lived in the Chicago area for some time. I moved to Grand Rapids in 2004 with my children, Monica (19), Michael (17), Samantha (15) and Charlie (13). They occupy most of my time outside the office. Our strong Catholic faith and love of family make us survivors in life.

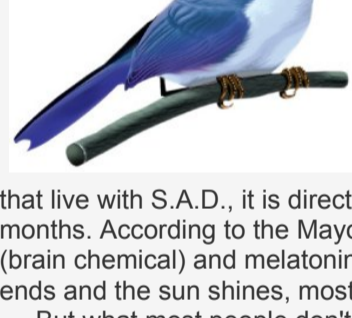
It has been both fun and exciting to be involved in the opening of the AccessNorth office here in Grand Rapids, and I work with a WONDERFUL team of people. Please stop in and visit us!!

**You can reach any of our Grand Rapids staff at (218) 326-5183 or stop by at 516 South Pokegama Avenue.**



### TLC Corner

**Spring brings bluebirds of sadness ...**



This time of year is, for most people, a fantastic thing. The birds are singing, flowers are peeking out of the ground and the sun is shining (most days anyway). Yes, for most people spring brings feelings of comfort and peace. Yet, for some of us, spring brings on increased anxiety, irritability, insomnia, weight loss, weight gain and agitation. In other words, spring can exacerbate our depression symptoms.

Most people think of Seasonal Affective Disorder (S.A.D.) as the "winter blues". That is mostly true. For the majority of people that live with S.A.D., it is directly connected to the lack of sunshine during the fall or winter months. According to the Mayo clinic, reduced sunlight affects your internal clock, serotonin (brain chemical) and melatonin (natural hormone affecting sleep and mood) levels. As winter ends and the sun shines, most people with S.A.D. feel better.

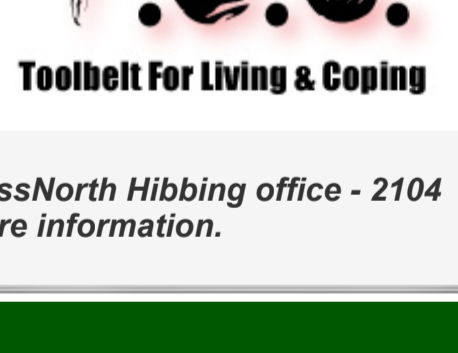
But what most people don't know is that S.A.D. is just a term to describe depression that is affected by changes in season. Many people start to have symptoms in the spring or even year round.

According to the Mayo Clinic, people who live with S.A.D. that worsens in spring, tend to be anxious because people are out and enjoying the weather. Now they are expected to do the same and they become noticeable. It may make them anxious or feel like they are the only ones feeling this way. There are longer days with more to do and feelings of being overwhelmed can happen.

S.A.D. is so much more than the winter blues and can cause very severe depression. The same risks that come with any depression are true for Seasonal Affective Disorder. They could include thoughts of harming one's self, seclusion, poor choices and anxiety, sleep problems. So what are your treatment options?

First off, you should seek treatment if your depression is such that it lasts more than two weeks or you feel you want to harm yourself. Otherwise, Light therapy has been known to help. Some people use light therapy lamps prescribed by a doctor. If you don't have one, open blinds or just get outside when the sun shines. Some studies have shown vitamin D to be helpful. Others use therapy or medications. Exercise increases serotonin levels lessening depression symptoms. Many people use a combination of all of the above.

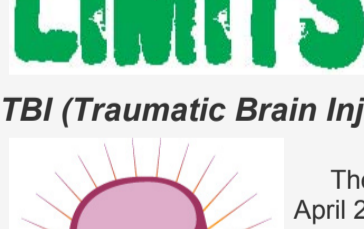
However you treat your depression, you can turn spring blues into better days. You can cope by: following your treatment plan, getting out and socializing with others. You can join a local support group and connect with people who are going through the same things, such as T.L.C. at AccessNorth. The biggest thing you can do for yourself is to recognize you are not alone. Someone else is feeling S.A.D. too.



**T.L.C. meets the second Tuesday of every month from 5:30 - 7:00 at the AccessNorth Hibbing office - 2104 East Sixth Avenue. Call 262-6675 for more information.**

### Notes ...

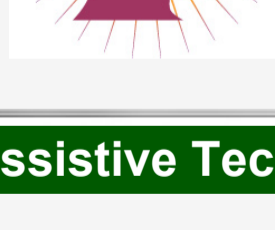
**Without Limits - changes it's meeting time.**



Our cerebral palsy support group, Without Limits, will now meet the second Monday of every month from 10:00 a.m - Noon in the AccessNorth Hibbing office, 2104 East Sixth Avenue.

**Call 262-6675 for more information.**

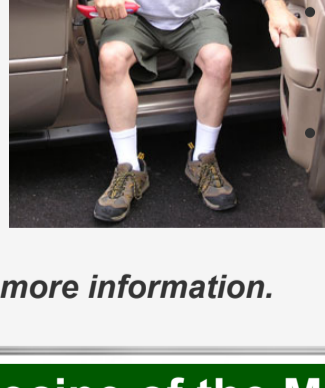
**TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury) Support Group starting in Hibbing.**



The first meeting of our new TBI Support Group will be Wednesday, April 25th, from 5:00 - 6:30. Meetings will be held the second and fourth Wednesday of every month in the AccessNorth Hibbing office, 2104 East Sixth Avenue.

**Call 262-6675 to sign up or for more information.**

### Assistive Technology Corner

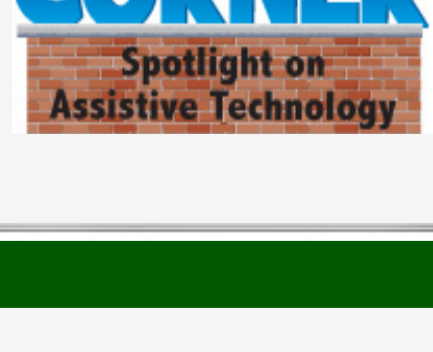


**The Handybar™ offers support to help you out of the car safely and securely.**

Push down on the Handybar™ to help lift yourself out of the car. Support handle inserts into the U-shaped striker plate on your car's door frame. Helpful for people with injuries or physical challenges as well as expectant mothers.

We have two available in our Assistive Technology Library.

**Call 262-6675 for more information.**



### Recipe of the Month

**Honey Pork and Peppers**

- 1 1/2 # boneless pork cut into 1 inch pieces
- 1 med onion cut into 1 inch pieces
- 1 med red pepper cut into 1 inch pieces
- 1 med green pepper cut into 1 inch pieces
- 2 T oil
- 1 envelope brown gravy mix
- 1 c water
- 1/4 c honey
- 3 T soy sauce
- 2 T red wine vinegar
- 1/2 t ground ginger
- 1/2 t garlic



In a large skillet over medium heat cook pork in oil until browned, about 15 minutes. Combine gravy mix, water, honey, soy sauce, vinegar, ginger and garlic. Cover and simmer for 20 minutes. Add onion and peppers, cook 10 minutes longer. Serve over rice.

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