

Access North

the latest from... september • 2012

Center for Independent Living of Northeastern Minnesota

Our mission is: To assist individuals with disabilities to live independently, pursue meaningful goals, & have the same opportunities & choices as all people.

Volume 4 - Issue 3



Greetings!

We are very excited to announce that we are moving into our new office in Hibbing. We have worked towards this for a long time and are very excited. The move will happen the week of October 1st and we will be having an Open House on Friday, October 26th from 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. followed by our Annual Board Meeting and Dinner. The increased space and access will allow us to offer many more classes and groups. As always, we are open to your suggestions.



Part of our new lobby space.



Another view of new lobby area.

Our Duluth, Brainerd and Walker offices will remain open during the move and no services will be interrupted. However, our Hibbing office will be closed Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, October 2nd-4th, but will re-open Friday, October 5th. Thank you for your patience!

If you need immediate assistance, you can call our Duluth office at 1-888-625-1401.

Roberta Cich
Executive Director



Our new address in Hibbing will be 1309 East 40th Street (at the corner of Hwys. 37 and 169 - the former UBC Building) All other office locations will remain open during our regular business hours: 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Please call if you need assistance with anything.



Duluth 888.625.1401
Brainerd 218.824.5228
Walker 218.547.2810

Hibbing Open House Scheduled

OPEN HOUSE

Come and join us on Friday, October 26th from 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. for an Open House to see our new Hibbing office!

You can meet our staff and learn about our services, groups and other programs we offer to people with disabilities in Northeastern Minnesota.

See you there!!

Meet Heidi, our new HRA Service Coordinator/ Independent Living Specialist in Duluth



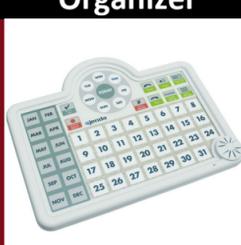
Hi!! My name is Heidi Hanson and I am the new HRA Service Coordinator/ Independent Living Specialist in Duluth. In this position, I will provide advocacy, as well as information and referrals to tenants who live in the Duluth HRA Public Housing hi-rises. This is a new position for Access North and myself, but I look forward to the challenges and positive outcomes of helping people.

I have a Bachelor's Degree in Vocational Rehabilitation from UW-Stout in Menomonie, WI. I grew up in the Chippewa Falls/Eau Claire, WI area. I have worked in the Duluth area for the last few years helping people with housing issues who have mental illness.

In my spare time, I enjoy spending time with my boyfriend, Bob, and his children, Jacob and Briana, as well as my dachshund, Hogan. I enjoy reading, swimming, walking and spending time with family and friends, as well as enjoy beautiful Lake Superior. I especially love to laugh and have fun. I look forward to this new adventure and embrace it with open arms and a big smile!



Lifetime Voice Calendar Talking Organizer



If you have low vision, this calendar can be an especially helpful and useful tool. Record important dates and appointments with your own voice. When the day of the appointment comes, a red light flashes to alert you of that day's message(s). Touch the button and you will hear the reminders and appointments that you had pre-recorded read back to you. You can even set perpetual annual reminders for recurring dates such as birthdays, anniversaries, etc. You can also record a simple To-Do List. Memory stores up to 900 messages. This device can be useful for the entire family! If you would like to loan this from our Assistive Technology Lending Library please email us or call 1 (800) 390-3681.

Recipe of the Month



Fresh Apple Cake

Looking for a way to use up extra apples? Try this moist and delicious cake!

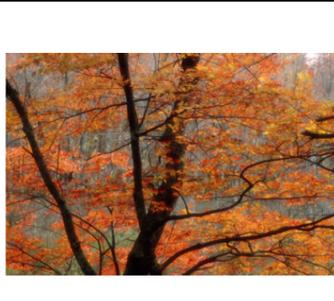
- 2 cups flour
- 2 cups sugar
- 1/2 cup shortening
- 3 eggs
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 2 tsp. nutmeg
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 4 Tbsp. hot water
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 5 cups diced apples
- 1 cup chopped nuts

Cream shortening and sugar together, mix in the rest of the ingredients. Bake in greased 9x13 pan at 350 degrees for 45 minutes.



Fall Groups Schedule

Wow - how did September fly by so fast! Please check our [website](#) for our latest group listings. **Duluth Groups** are very busy with some new additions to their schedule. Click [here](#) for the flyer with all of the details.



GRAND RAPIDS: The Traumatic Brain Injury Support Group meets the second Monday of each month from 2-3:30 p.m. at the Community Meeting Room at the Central Square Mall.

Transition classes are beginning at the Grand Rapids High School Thursdays from 12:30-1:30 p.m. and Tuesdays at the Northern Lights Community School from 10-11:00 a.m.

BRAINERD: The Brainerd office is offering an **MS Group** at the office on the first Thursday of each month from 7-8:30 pm. A **Social Group** meets at the Brainerd office on the first Monday of each month from 2-4:00 pm with pizza and pop.

AITKIN: A **Social Group** will be starting at the Aitkin Public Library on October 25th, meeting every Thursday from 11 am-1 pm. A light snack will be served.

HIBBING: The Fibromyalgia/Chronic Pain Support Group meets every Thursday from Noon - 1:30 at the CILNMM office. **Craft Group** will start up again the fourth Wednesday of the month at the new Hibbing office from 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Sat Nam Defense Group meets every Thursday at the office from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Click [here](#) for a tentative listing of groups that are offered in the Hibbing office. We will send out flyers when we start up the next session of **Computer Class** will have a special session on Tuesday, October 9th from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. and then resume at its regular time on the fourth Monday (4:30-6:30 p.m.) & Tuesday (1:00-3:00 p.m.), **FASD Group, Movie Night, Game Night, etc.** will resume as time permits as well. We will also have more information in the October Newsletter or call you can call 262-6675 for updates.

How to effectively communicate during stressful emotional times.



We have all miscommunicated at some point or another. During times of change, stress or emotion we can forget how to communicate effectively. Sometimes it is the listener that confuses the intention of our communication. Sometimes it is how we communicate to them. Either way, sometimes leaves the conversation feeling stressed, emotional and unheard.

The word communicate has about 8 different definitions depending on the context in which it is used. The definitions I like best are: 1: to express thoughts, feelings, or information easily or effectively. 2: to be joined or connected by expressing thoughts, feelings, or information easily and effectively. Hmmm, what does this mean? Well, it doesn't mean that you must agree on all that your friend, family, coworker tells you. This means when we communicate our thoughts, emotions or feelings effectively we are joined and connected with that other person.

An example from my own life...I feel I am a great communicator, well for the most part. But I am an emotional person. My emotions feed my actions. Like most people, when I am happy, I communicate better. When I am stressed and angry I know that my communication skills greatly diminish. My body language changes. I am stiff, my eyes narrow, my shoulders tense and my breathing changes. Then if I am really upset or angry, I cry. If I continue to try communicate when I am feeling this way, the listener will never get the intention behind my words. My emotions come through my words. For me, in that moment the best thing I can do is to walk away and revisit the situation later when I can communicate more effectively.

This is certainly not to say that people, who are "feelers" like me, communicate poorly. People like my husband, who is a "thinker", definitely have their share of communication problems. Thinkers tend to forget that there is emotion behind words. They communicate very precisely with little emotion of any kind regardless of what they are communicating. When they communicate everything the same way, the listener can never tell the feelings behind the words. Therefore the listener leaves the conversation wondering "what just happened? Was this good or bad?" The listener may wonder if their husband is angry, upset or just providing information. For a feeler like me, this can be very confusing. When a person has to "guess" the intention and feelings of the communicator leaving them lacking connection to that person. The communicator can leave the situation feeling like "no one gets them", leading to stress and hurt feelings and anger.

So, how does one effectively communicate when you are stressed or emotional? Well, like any skills it takes lots of practice. But here are some tips:

1. Body language is key in communication. Use open body language. Uncross your arms, sit or stand at their level, maintain eye contact. This shows that it is important to you that they see your communication. When you walk into a room smile, stand tall and confident.
2. Nonverbal communication: you can get your intent across easier if you control your tone. Even when angry.
3. Data messaging, emails etc.: read, reread and reread again before you send. Ask yourself, did I say what I needed to say? If I received this, would I understand the intent and emotion behind my words?
4. Recognize when you are stressed: your body will let you know. Is my breathing shallow? Did my muscles tense?
5. Use humor: laughter truly is the best medicine
6. Take a moment: do some progressive muscle relaxation. Walk away and gather your thoughts.
7. Agree to disagree: its okay if the listener does not agree with you. If you have effectively communicated, they have heard you. Can there be a compromise?
8. Recognize emotions: Understand yourself, including what's really troubling you and what you really want. Recognize and empathize with the feelings of the listener.
9. Stay positive: Stay motivated to understand and empathize with the person you're interacting with, even if you don't like them or their message
10. Be kind to yourself: You cannot make someone agree with you. But you can leave a conversation knowing you did your best to communicate

During stress or change, when emotions are running high, whether or not you are a "feeler" like me or a "thinker" like my husband or somewhere in between; you can still effectively communicate so that you can feel joined, connected, heard.

- Miirriinia Waters Independent Living Specialist

(Join us for next month's installment addressing effective listening.)

Find out how YOU communicate - follow this [link](#) to take a Communication Quiz