

Access North Celebrates 40 Years of Service!

This year, Access North proudly celebrates 40 years of serving the people of northeastern Minnesota! As a Center for Independent Living (CIL), we are dedicated to empowering individuals to lead self-directed lives and achieve greater independence in their communities.

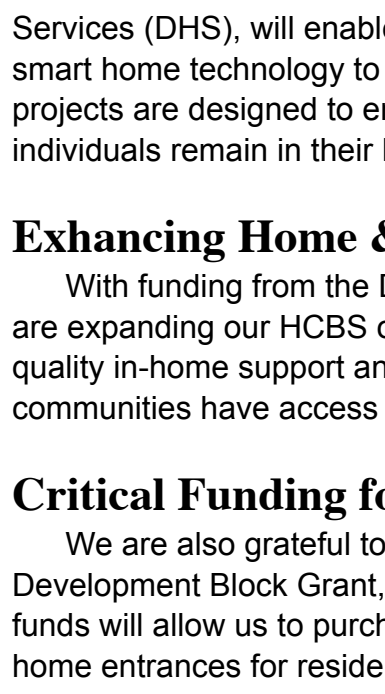
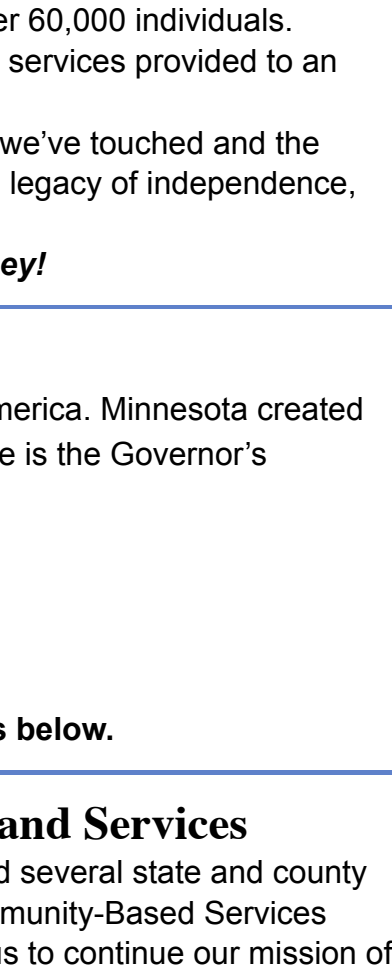
All CILs are statutory non-profits, established and governed by federal law. A key requirement is that at least 51% of our staff and board members must be individuals with disabilities, ensuring that our leadership and services are shaped by lived experience.

Celebrating our Milestone

Throughout the year, you'll hear radio testimonials from local leaders congratulating Access North on this remarkable milestone.

Here's a message from Senator Rob Farnsworth:

"Hi, this is Senator Rob Farnsworth, and I'd like to congratulate Access North Center for Independent Living on their 40th anniversary of service to the people of Minnesota. Let's recognize the wonderful work they do—helping people with disabilities, seniors, and veterans access the services they need to live and work independently here in the great state of Minnesota. Thank you, Access North, and Happy 40th Anniversary!"



A Legacy of Impact

Over the past four decades, Access North has made a lasting impact in northeastern Minnesota:

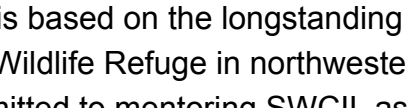
- 310 home modifications and 1,915 home access ramps installed, providing essential accessibility and allowing homeowners to remain in their homes an additional 5-7 years.
- Direct service-including independent living support, transition services, support planning, in-home supports, homemaking, and personal care - provided to over 60,000 individuals.
- Information, referral, and advocacy services provided to an additional 80,000 people.

As we celebrate this milestone, we reflect with pride on the lives we've touched and the progress we've made. We humbly look forward to continuing this legacy of independence, advocacy, and empowerment for many years to come.

Thank you for being part of our journey!

Ed Roberts' Day

Every January 23rd we celebrate Ed Roberts' Day across America. Minnesota created legislation honoring this great disabilities advocate annually. Here is the Governor's proclamation regarding Ed Roberts' Day in Minnesota:



You can read more about our celebrations below.

Access North Secures Multiple Grants to Expand Services

We are excited to share that Access North has been awarded several state and county grants to support our Home Access Programs and Home & Community-Based Services (HCBS) in northwestern Minnesota.

Expanding Home Accessibility for Seniors

The Live Well at Home Grant, provided by the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS), will enable us to offer free home access ramps, home modifications, and smart home technology to seniors aged 65+ who meet income eligibility guidelines.

Expanding Home & Community-Based Services (HCBS)

With funding from the DHS Home & Community-Based Services - Round 3 Grant, we are expanding our HCBS offerings in northwestern Minnesota.

Critical Funding for Home Access in St. Louis County

We are also grateful to receive funding from the St. Louis County Community Development Block Grant, which will directly support our Home Access Program.

Roll-A-Ramp is a lightweight, modular, and expandable ramp system made from aircraft-grade aluminum. These ramps are not only durable but also offer a portable and temporary accessibility solution for individuals who need safe home access.

Continuing Our Commitment to Accessibility

These grants represent a significant investment in the health, safety, and independence of individuals across northeastern and northwestern Minnesota.

Southwestern Center for Independent Living (SWCIL) Prepares for Its First Accessible Deer Hunt



We're excited to share that preparations are well underway for SWCIL's first accessible deer hunt, scheduled for October 31st at Camden State Park in southwestern Minnesota!

Last October, we had the pleasure of hosting David Haen from SWCIL during our own accessible hunt. He gained firsthand experience in every aspect of the event, from planning and setup to hunt operations and teardown.

Our accessible hunt model is based on the longstanding event organized by Options Resource Center at the Rydell Wildlife Refuge in northwestern Minnesota.

We commend SWCIL for their dedication to expanding inclusive outdoor opportunities and wish them the best of luck as they bring this experience to more hunters in their community!

Good luck, SWCIL!

Core Values

At Access North, our Core Values are more than just words—they are the foundation of how we work together and serve our communities across northern Minnesota.

Our employees' success is deeply connected to their ability to embody these values in their daily interactions.

This spring, our leadership team will demonstrate the spirit of servant leadership by hosting a special meal for all staff.

Together, we continue to build a work environment where everyone feels valued, supported, and inspired to make a difference.



Support Our Mission and Make a Lasting Impact

This year, Access North proudly celebrates 40 years of serving the people of northeastern Minnesota!

Your support makes a real difference. By making a donation or exploring planned giving, you can help sustain our vital work—creating opportunities, breaking down barriers, and ensuring that individuals with disabilities have the resources they need to thrive.

Access North Donation Link

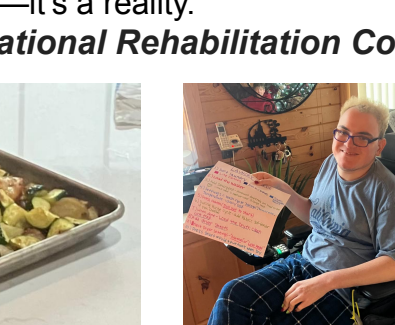
~ A MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON INDEPENDENT LIVING ~

A Call to Defend Our Communities: The Destructive Impact of Trump's Funding Freeze

A Joint Statement



NATIONAL COUNCIL ON INDEPENDENT LIVING



By Dr. Victor Santiago Pineda, Executive Director, Center for Independent Living & Theo Braddy, Executive Director, National Council on Independent Living

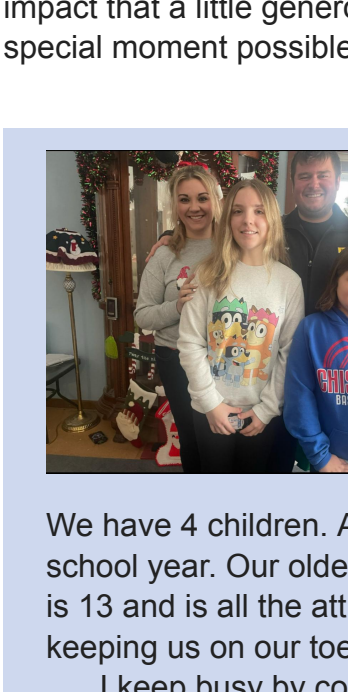
The decision by the Trump Administration to freeze federal funding is not just a policy move—it's a direct attack on the lives of millions of Americans, particularly older adults and people with disabilities.

We cannot afford to sugarcoat what this means. The lifelines people depend on—Medicaid, housing assistance, independent living programs, job training, substance abuse treatment, and other essential community services—are now on the chopping block.

For decades, the independent living movement has fought to ensure that disabled people have the right to live, work, and participate fully in society.

Read more...

Celebrating the "Father of the Independent Living Movement"



On January 23, we proudly celebrated Ed Roberts Day! We hosted a virtual watch party where the Independent Living team shared insights about his incredible achievements and enduring impact.

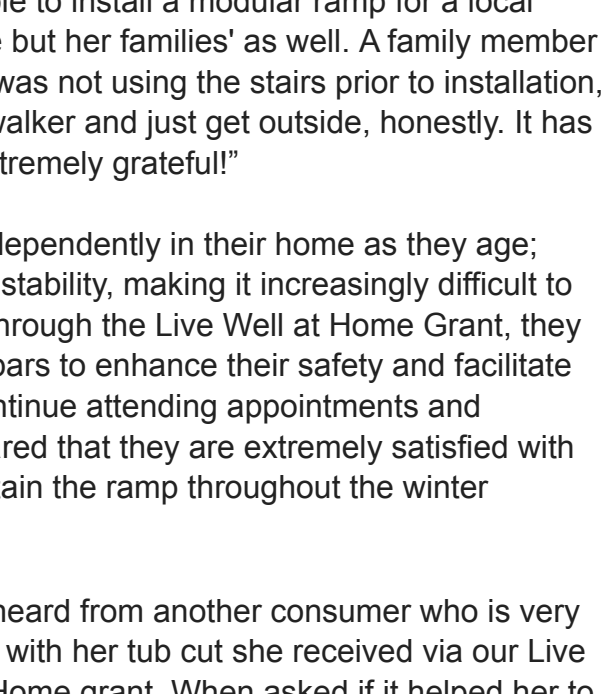
Often called the "Father of the Independent Living Movement," Ed Roberts changed the landscape for people with disabilities.

As we look back on his legacy, we are inspired to carry his vision forward—advocating for inclusion, equality, and self-determination.

~ Jake Knaffa, Independent Living Coordinator

New Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Electronics Class starting in February

Are you ready to become more independent and tech-savvy? We're excited to announce the launch of our **Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Electronics Class**, starting in mid-February!



What to Expect:

- **Hour 1: Education & Needs Assessment** - In the first hour, we'll work together to identify your specific challenges and needs with your devices.
- **Hour 2: Hands-On Support** - The second hour is dedicated to hands-on learning, where multiple staff members will be available to assist you with any tech-related questions or issues you might face.

Who Should Attend?

This class is perfect for anyone looking to improve their device knowledge, no matter your experience level. We welcome everyone from beginners to those wanting to refine their skills!

Don't Miss Out! Sessions Dates & Times

Feb 11th - 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Feb 18th - 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Feb 25th - 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

March 4th - 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

We look forward to helping you unlock your full tech potential and become more confident with your devices!

~ Kiri Basore, Independent Living Coordinator

Language Check

These are all simple ways to emphasize abilities, not limitations.

DONT USE ...	DO USE ...
Blind	• Use "blind" for someone who has complete loss of sight. • Use "legally blind" for someone who has almost complete loss of sight. • Use "limited vision" "low vision" "partially sighted," "visually impaired" for someone who is neither legally or completely blind.
An Epileptic, Diabetic, Depressive and so on	Person with Epilepsy, Diabetes, Depression or someone who has Epilepsy, Diabetes, Depression or Depression
Fits, Spells, Attacks	Seizures
Disabled/Handicapped Scooter	Accessible Cart/Scooter
Slow Learner	Person with a learning disability

Building Independence - One Skill at a Time

Working with someone genuinely excited to learn and grow in their independence makes every visit rewarding, and that's exactly how I'd describe my time with one incredible gentleman named Parker.



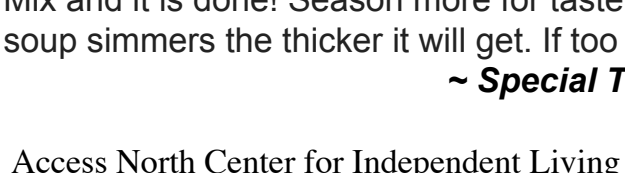
Together, we've explored the art of cooking, and we've created delicious dishes like cake, a chicken zucchini sheet pan meal, bubble-up pizza casserole, and Special K bars—all turning out beautifully.

But our work doesn't stop in the kitchen. He's been equally dedicated to learning essential home skills, including sweeping, vacuuming, dusting, practicing with the dishwasher, and even tackling laundry.

It's a privilege to support Parker on this journey, and he continues to prove that with determination and the right support, independence isn't just a goal—it's a reality.

~ Amber Pittman, Independent Living Coordinator/Vocational Rehabilitation Coach

Spirit of Giving helps Local Family



This holiday season, Access North had the privilege of supporting our 13th adopted Christmas family, a household of seven who has faced overwhelming challenges in recent years.

In the spirit of giving and support, the team at Access North rallied together to make their Christmas a little brighter for them.

When the family received the gifts, her gratitude was truly heartfelt. The mother, deeply moved, called to express her thanks.

The next day, the mother reached out again, wanting to further express her gratitude. She spoke about how our support had lightened their burdens and given them hope when it seemed hard to find.

This family's story is a testament to the importance of community and support. At Access North, we are honored to have been part of their Christmas, and we are grateful to all of the supporters who helped make this possible.

~ Brittany Pope-Sears, Independent Living Coordinator

Meet Tony Antonutti: A Skilled Carpenter on our Team

My name is Tony and I've been with Access North since November of 2023. I'm one of the members of the ramp crew and home modification crew.

We have 4 children. A yours and mine type family. My son is 17 and graduating next school year.

I keep busy by coaching junior high girls basketball for Chisholm and also do some things with the girls elementary basketball program.

That's me in a nutshell. Family man and sports fanatic.

The Many Success Stories of our Live Well at Home Grant

A grant provided by the Department of Human Services

A local couple faced immense challenges leaving their home due to the husband's diagnosis of severe COPD and arthritis. The wife was unable to assist him, so he had to rely on a neighbor to help him navigate the steps every time they both had to leave their home.

Thanks to the Live Well at Home Grant, we were able to install a modular ramp for a local resident, making a significant impact on not only her life but her family's as well.

An elderly husband and wife have enjoyed living independently in their home as they age; however, both have experienced declining mobility and stability, making it increasingly difficult to navigate their home and engage with the community.

We heard from another consumer who is very satisfied with her tub cut she received via our Live Well at Home grant.

One gentlemen's life was deeply impacted by replacing his steps with low-rise stairs. When the weather permits, he now has a chair on his deck and can wait for the mailman and wave to his neighbors and engage with his community.

~ Stories submitted by the Independent Living Staff

Latest AirPods Feature Enhance Hearing Amplification

Apple's new AirPods feature offers a budget-friendly alternative for individuals with mild hearing impairments, providing hearing amplification at a fraction of the cost of traditional hearing aids.

In addition to being affordable, AirPods offer the added benefit of versatility.

~ Jon Rix, Independent Living Coordinator

Give us a call at 1-800-390-3681 to learn more!

Click on the link below to watch a video of these AirPods in action!

AirPods Hearing Assistance YouTube Video

Accessible Space, Inc.

Accessible, Affordable Housing In Northern Minnesota. Quality, Rent Subsidized Housing for Adults with Qualifying Disabilities and Assisted Living Services Available.

Short Waiting Lists on Other Residences: 1. Superior View - Duluth, Minnesota; 2. Pine Grove - Duluth, Minnesota; 3. Redruth Valley - Duluth, Minnesota; 4. Burke Apartments - Duluth, Minnesota; 5. Northern Lights Apartments - Duluth, Minnesota; 6. Munes Residence - Grand Rapids, Minnesota.

Featured Recipe: Chicken & Dumpling (Knoephla) Soup

Chicken Knoephla Soup (German name) aka Chicken Dumpling Soup

- In the soup pot:**
- 4 tablespoons butter
 - 1/2 cup diced onion
 - 1/2 cup diced celery
 - 1 cup diced carrot
- Saute for 5 minutes. Add 4 cups of chicken broth, 1/2 tsp of pepper, 1/2 tsp of salt, 1/2 tsp. of poultry seasoning and 1/2 tsp. parsley. Bring to a boil then simmer until carrots are soft.

Add in three cans of cream of chicken soup and 2-3 cups of diced chicken. Mix well then simmer.

To make the dough:

- Bring a pot of water to a boil. Place 3 cups of flour in a bowl and a good pinch of salt, whisk. Make a well in the middle, add two eggs to the well. Work the egg into the flour with a fork until it is no longer visible. Add water, mix with your hands until the dough sticks together but is firm and not sticky. Add water a little at a time. If it gets too sticky just add a little more flour.
- Next cut little pieces off of the ball of dough with scissors into the boiling water. When the dumplings float they are done. Once all dumplings are floating pour into a strainer to remove all water. Then add the dumplings to the soup mixture.

Mix and it is done! Season more for taste or add chicken base if needed. The longer the soup simmers the thicker it will get. If too thick add milk.

~ Special Thanks to Carol Barnett for this delicious recipe!

Access North Center for Independent Living of NE Minnesota | 1309 East 40th Street | Hibbing, MN 55746 US

Unsubscribe | Update Profile | Constant Contact Data Notice

