

## Personal Care Coming to North Country

Gloria Hakkila-Johnson is taking on a new position at North Country. Gloria is now our Medical Assistance Personal Care Coordinator/Developer.

With all the changes that are coming with long term care reform and the expansion of Family Care, Gloria is taking on this new position to help all of us get ready for the future. Gloria says the really important part of her job right now is the “developer” portion. We are hoping that consumers are going to have more choices about all their community supports when Family Care starts up in northern Wisconsin in January of 2009. An important part of being able to live independently is having the personal care consumers need.

With Family Care consumers will have the opportunity to decide if they want to have more control of some of their services or not. These opportunities are called Self-Directed Supports. “I’m excited that consumers will have this opportunity. It is great watching people become empowered.” says Gloria.

Gloria is asking that consumers throughout our service area contact her and tell her what your needs are so that we can try and develop a program that our consumers want. Call or e-mail Gloria with your questions or concerns. Gloria adds, “I’m looking forward to watching this program grow.”

## Pathways Transport Fills Medical Transportation Gap

Bob Olsgard, Transportation Coordinator

For Chequamegon Bay area residents who need wheelchair accessible Specialized Medical Vehicle service, getting to medical appointments in distant locations or even nearby has increasingly been a challenge. Thanks to the recent growth of Pathways Transport of Ashland, travel to a variety of medical destinations including Duluth, Minneapolis, Hurley, and beyond may be getting easier.

With a staff of four drivers and a growing fleet, Pathways is committed to meeting local needs. “We try to be there for everybody who calls,” says manager/owner Rich Rivard. He is quick to add riders should try to schedule as far in advance as possible. To schedule a trip or to get more information, call Pathways Transportation Manager Gary Allen at (715) 682-0670.

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## Medicare Part D Open Enrollment

The open enrollment period for Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Plans is from November 15<sup>th</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007. This is the time to switch plans if there are going to be changes or you are experiencing problems with your current plan. If you are not enrolled and would like to enroll, this is the time to do it. Also, if you have low income you may qualify for a Low Income Subsidy, which would assist with premiums and co-pays. To find out more about the Low Income Subsidy or Medicare Part D open enrollment, you can contact Scott Anderson at North Country Independent Living or any of the following organizations for help: Disability Rights Wisconsin- 1-800-926-4862; The Prescription Drug Hotline- 1-866-456-8211; Medicare- 1-800-633-4227

## Ashland/Bayfield County Food Shelf is Moving

Beginning November 1<sup>st</sup> the food shelf for Ashland and Bayfield County is moving to a new location with expanded hours. The food shelf and the Chequamegon Bay Food Pantry are combining and will now be operated by the BRICK, a group of Bay area Churches. Here's the new address and contact information:

The BRICK  
420 Ellis Ave.  
Ashland, WI 54806  
Ph. 682-7425

The BRICK will be open from 9-4 Monday through Friday.

**TELEWORK** The Wisconsin Telework Program is a statewide, alternative loan program that allows Wisconsin residents with disabilities to purchase computers and other equipment needed to work from home or from other remote sites away from the office, such as work on the road or at a Telework Center.

Telework is made possible through a grant from the Rehabilitation Services Administration. The Department of Workforce Development and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation received the grant and provide program and fiscal oversight.

*North Country Independent Living staff are able to answer questions you may have. Call 800-924-1220 v/tty.*

## Assistive Technology Available to Native Americans with Disabilities

If you are a Native American person with a disability and in need of assistive technology, we may be able to help you access refurbished equipment from the Wheelchair Recycling Project.

Wheelchair Recycling Project refurbishes wheelchairs, power chairs, scooters, Hoyer lifts, crutches, canes, walkers, grab bars, etc and resells them at very affordable prices. You can check out their inventory at [www.wrp.org](http://www.wrp.org)

With the assistance of the Paralyzed Veterans of America Education Foundation, we conducted Assistive Technology expos at Lac Courte Oreilles, Bad River, St Croix and Red Cliff tribal communities. It was a pleasure and an honor to work with these communities and we would like to extend our thanks to the tribes.

Using remaining funds we have developed a relationship with the Wheelchair Recycling Project and will be able to provide some assistive technology for Native American consumers in need. For more information, contact John Nousaine at our Superior office: [nciljohn@superior-nfp.org](mailto:nciljohn@superior-nfp.org) 800-924-122 V/TTY.

## 2008 “20 Year Anniversary” Calendars Available

The popular 2008 North Country Calendars are now available at both the Superior and Ashland office locations! Sorry we don't have the capacity to mail or ship these very popular and handy year-at-a-glance calendars so you need to stop by and pick them up.

2008 marks North Country's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and we plan to celebrate with various activities and events throughout the year! Stay tuned for further updates!

## North Country at 20, Just Getting Started

We are excited that North Country Independent Living will be celebrating 20 years of service in 2008. A group of our staff and board members are working on promotional ideas, activities, and events to celebrate our two decades of helping people with disabilities become more independent.

If you are interested in helping us plan our anniversary, contact John Nedden-Durst in our Ashland office. Be looking for more on our celebration in future newsletters.



### Calendar of Events

*All phone numbers are in area code 715 unless otherwise noted.*

**First Monday of each Month**, Northwest Long Term Care Options Consortium, Ramada Inn, Hayward, 10290 Highway 27 south and county road B, 9-3. Open to the public.

**November 11-17**, Homelessness Awareness Week

**November 17**, Courage Duluth will be hosting a Power Play Hockey Tournament at UWS in Superior from 12-6 p.m. at the University of Wisconsin-Superior gym. This tournament is for people who use power wheelchairs to play floor hockey in a gym. This is an exciting sport and there will be teams from Minnesota and Wisconsin competing. There will also be demo opportunities for those who want a chance to experience what the game is all about.

**November 29**, North Country Independent Living Board of Directors meeting, 9:00 a.m. at the Superior office of NCIL. For more information, call John Nousaine, Dir.

**Nordic Skiing, Spirit Mountain Nordic area.** \$5 per person. Sponsored by Courage Center Duluth, this skiing opportunity is to introduce beginners to this great sport. Stand-up, skiing for consumers with visual impairments, and sit-ski lessons will be available. Call Courage Duluth for more information, 218-726-4762.

**January 22 & 23, 2008**, Wisconsin Transition Conference, Kalahari Resort Convention Center, Wisconsin Dells. Book hotel reservations through the hotel website at [www.kalahariresort.com](http://www.kalahariresort.com) or by calling 1-877-525-2427. To receive a discounted rate, make your reservations by December 14, 2007.

**February 2, 2008**, Adaptive Recreation Avalanche, 2008, sponsored by Midstate Independent Living Consultants, Stevens Point & Rhinelander. For more information, call Becky at 1-800-311-5044 v/tty. More information will also be available in the January edition of North Country News.

## MS Society has Funds to Increase Independence

The Wisconsin Chapter of the MS Society has received funds to purchase health related needs/equipment for persons with MS. Common items that would be considered would be air conditioners, modifications to homes, vehicle modifications, and exercise equipment related to MS. Other health related items may be considered.

For more information, call the MS Society, 1-800-242-3358. and ask for either financial assistance or Act 71.

## Multiple Chemical Sensitivity Syndrome A Personal Story

Karen Secor

Multiple chemical Sensitivity Syndrome (MCSS) is a medical condition characterized by sensitivities to chemicals. MCSS is recognized by the Social Security Administration and HUD as a disability and is covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Awareness of MCSS and its issues are important. These issues need to be included when planning accessible housing, visitability, transportation, and emergency preparedness. People with MCSS have unique challenges since different chemicals affect individuals differently.

My problems started in the fall of 1986 when my 20/20 eyesight changed overnight. One morning I couldn't read the paper. A month later, I broke out in a massive case of hives, which I had for the next seven years. I also experienced asthma, voice loss, fatigue, inability to concentrate, and many strange, sometimes frightening experiences.

Although I was not the only one at work experiencing problems, I was one of the more vocal clean-air advocates -- until I lost my job. I was told my position was no longer needed. After leaving the "sick" building I worked in, all my symptoms disappeared.

Being free of MCSS now, I need to share my experiences and promote MCSS awareness.

## North Country Welcomes New Staff

My name is Eric Basinski. I have been hired as an Independent Living Specialist at North Country Independent Living. I will be working out of our Superior office, but will also be available to provide our services to all eight of our counties. I will be providing advocacy for consumers, helping them with assistive technology, and helping consumers get the information they need on a wide range of topics.

I am a person who has recovered from schizophrenia, so I understand the need for individuals with disabilities to become empowered. I admire the philosophy and mission of North Country and I am driven to spread the message. I genuinely appreciate the opportunity to work here and will do my very best to become an integral part of the North Country Independent Living family.

## Funds Available for Well Replacement

The Douglas County Rural Housing Authority has limited funds available to loan at low interest rates, for replacement of failing on-site sewage systems, replacement of failing or contaminated wells and public sewer connections. This program is available to all residents of Douglas County including the City of Superior. Some restrictions apply, including, but not limited to the following:

- Owner-occupied single family principal residences only
- Property taxes must be current
- New developments/sites do not qualify
- Properties purchased on land contract do not qualify
- Family income guidelines

For additional information or application, contact the Douglas County Zoning Office, Courthouse, Room 206, 1313 Belknap Street, Superior, WI 54880. Phone: 715-395-1380.

## Please Help Us

We are updating our mail list. If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter by mail or if you would prefer to receive it via email or an alternate format, please contact us. You may contact any of our staff or Cheryl directly by email at [ncilcheryl@superior-nfp.org](mailto:ncilcheryl@superior-nfp.org) or at our Superior office by telephone.

### Subway Shops to be Accessible

The Department of Justice has announced a settlement with the corporation that franchises Subway shops throughout the U.S. The settlement under the Americans with Disabilities Act lays out steps to make Subway shops accessible to people with disabilities. Subway has some 20,000 franchises, including several in northern Wisconsin. The agreement focuses on barrier removal for people with disabilities to make sure consumers have full use the services that Subway offers. Included in the settlement is improved access to restrooms, whenever readily achievable.

If you would like to find out more about the ADA or the agreement, call the Justice Department's toll-free ADA Information Line at 1-800-514-0301 or 1-800-514-0383 (TTY) or check out the ADA website: [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov)

### Spinal Cord Injury Group Being Formed

People with spinal cord injuries in our area are asking North Country to help with getting a support group started. If you or someone you know has a spinal cord injury and would like to be a part of a support group in the Ashland area, please contact us.

North Country already is providing technical assistance and collaboration with our Ashland Area TBI/Stroke support group and the MS support group in Ashland and Superior. If there is interest in starting a spinal cord injury support group, we can explore how North Country can help in getting this group going. Call, write or e-mail us, using the contact information on the back of this newsletter.

## Support Groups

*All phone numbers are in area code 715 unless otherwise noted.*



**Superior MS Support Group** meets the second Tuesday of each month from 6-8 p.m. at the Superior Public Library. For more information, contact Pam at 394-6958.

**Ashland MS Support Group** meets the third Wednesday of the month in the Stockton Island Room at Memorial Medical Center. Contact Peggy at 682-6506 for more information.

**Ashland Area Brain Injury/Stroke Support Group** meets the third Wednesday of the month in the Twin Island Meeting Room of Memorial Medical Center, Ashland. For more information, contact Stewart in the Ashland office.

**Park Falls area and Price County Visually Impaired Support Group** will be meeting on December 5<sup>th</sup> for their annual Christmas party and celebration. For more information, call Arnie at 762-4018.

## **North Country Independent Living (NCIL) “Telecommunication and Internet Access Project”**

The purpose of this project is to provide technology awareness training to people with disabilities, with a focus on activity associated with telecommunication (phone) and Internet access for eligible individuals with disabilities.

### **Project Services**

- Information on funding & financing resources
- Provision of assistive technology try-out services
- Advocacy to ensure equal access to technology
- Orientation on the use of telephone equipment and basic Internet usage

### **Eligibility**

- Be a person with a disability
- Reside in Douglas Co. (or one of our other 7 counties)
- Currently not have Internet Access
- Be income-eligible
- Participate in an evaluation process

**Limited** funding assistance for TEPP phone program voucher co-pays and Internet start-up costs is available through this program. For questions or an application packet, please contact:

Cheryl Stevens  
Administrative Assistant  
North Country Independent Living  
715.392.9118 ext. 11 voice/tty  
1.800.924.1220 ext. 11 voice/tty,  
[ncilcheryl@superior-nfp.org](mailto:ncilcheryl@superior-nfp.org)

## **Focus is on Homelessness in November**

Northwest Wisconsin Community Services Agency in Superior and Ashland is making progress in helping people who are homeless find decent, clean, accessible places to live. Ashland now has two shelters with the newest one opening in May. Mary Jane Grande of Ashland, a board member of North Country, has recently been hired part time as the Homeless Coordinator of NWCSA for this portion of their service area which includes Ashland, Bayfield, and Iron counties. The Ashland shelters have even taken in folks in Price County because there hasn't been any room in the shelters there.

Mary Jane says that in a typical day, she will get at least four calls from people or families who are homeless. She adds that from her experience at least one in three homeless people have some type of mental illness. Mary Jane says she feels that more people are becoming homeless because it's more expensive to live, including the cost of food, gas and rent.

November 10-17 is Homeless Awareness Week. Shelters in Ashland and throughout our service area could always use things like Soap, toothpaste, tooth brush, etc. Maybe this would be a good time to make a donation to your local shelter? If you would like to find out more about the shelter program in Ashland, call Mary Jane at 715-292-7862.

## St. Scholastica Offers Clinic to People Without Insurance

The Occupation Therapy Program at the College of St. Scholastica is offering an on-campus clinic for people with little or no insurance. The goals of this program are:

- To provide a community service to individuals who may not otherwise be eligible for occupational therapy or are uninsured or underinsured or who have limitations on coverage.
- To provide OT students with supervised opportunities to interact directly with individuals with a variety of disabilities.

Consumers meet in one-hour sessions. Most often, the clinic works with people with arthritis, stroke, brain or spinal cord injury, MS, Parkinson's and hand or upper extremity injuries or dementia or other conditions that interfere with daily living. Appointments are available for afternoons until 5 p.m. There is a \$10 per session charge or a \$100 charge for an 11 week session. Scholarships are available for consumers who qualify.

The adult clinic is going on now on Monday's and Wednesday's until mid December. A clinic for children will be available on Monday and Wednesday from mid January through mid May. Appointments for this session can be made in the afternoons from 2-5 p.m. Group sessions are also an option where individuals can receive life skills for older boys, a handwriting group and a sensory group. For more information, call Julie at 218-723-5967 or e-mail: [jhalom@css.edu](mailto:jhalom@css.edu)

## WISLOAN

WisLoan is a statewide, low interest loan program that allows a Wisconsin resident with a disability to purchase assistive technology or make home modifications so that he or she can live more independently or productively. **Contact North Country for more information.**

WisLoan is a federally-funded project of the National Institute for Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) and the U.S Dept. of Education.

## Donation for North Country Independent Living

North Country welcomes your support in fulfilling its mission of empowering people with disabilities. Your contribution is tax deductible. North Country Independent Living is a non-profit agency with 501(c)3 status.

Enclosed is my donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Organization/Company \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to:  
North Country Independent Living  
2231 Catlin Ave. Suite 16  
Superior, WI 54880

I would like to volunteer at North Country

**Board of Directors**

**Ben Barrett**, Trego  
**Johnilee Nyberg**, Minong  
**Mary Jane Grande**, Ashland  
**Justin Nicoletti**, Superior  
**Bill Gallik**, Superior  
**Karen Secor**, Montreal  
**Larry Quam**, Superior  
**Jeff Kieffer**, Catawba  
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**ALTERNATE FORMATS AVAILABLE**

If you require any of this information in an alternate format, please contact us.