

NORTH COUNTRY NEWS

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North Country's Personal Care Program Starting to Grow

NCIL has been fortunate to have Michele Beauto, RN, join our team. Michele has been busy enrolling consumers in our personal care program. Michele says she expects that up to six consumers will be enrolled in our personal care program. Michele says the part of her job she likes the most is that the consumer gets to direct their care and are involved in each step of our program. Please join us in welcoming Michele to North Country.

North Country's MAPC program offers two types of services: Hands-on personal care such as assistance with bathing, dressing, skin care, toileting, medication reminders and other hands-on assistance are offered. Funding sources for this service are Medical Assistance (MA), county funding, some private insurance and private pay. Supportive Home Care services such as light housekeeping, meal preparation, helping with laundry, companionship and grocery shopping are offered, however this service is not covered by MA.

If you would like to find out more about North Country's Personal Care Program, call Gloria at 715-392-9118 or 1-800-924-1220.

North Country Independent Living is taking applications for personal care workers (PCWs). We are looking for individuals with personal care experience who have a flexible schedule and a desire to provide the best service to our consumers. Please call our Superior office for an application.

Your help is appreciated...

Please help us...

In order to reduce costs of mailings, please consider receiving your newsletter by email. Contact Cheryl at North Country by email: ncilcheryl@superior-nfp.org or call 800-924-1220 V/TTY.

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If you would like to receive North Country News via email please contact North Country at ncilcheryl@superior-nfp.org or call 800-924-1220v/tty

What is the Ticket to Work Program?

You may have heard of the Ticket To Work Program, but what does this mean for you? This program offers social security beneficiaries additional options for services to assist in getting and keeping a job. Each person who is between 18 and 64 and receives Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is now eligible to receive a “ticket” from the Social Security Administration.

This **ticket can be used to purchase services** from an agency who has signed up with the Social Security Administration to be an “Employment Network” (EN). The person may have to go through an individual eligibility process in order to work with an EN.

On July 22nd, the regulations of the Ticket to Work (TTW) program changed which have now made part-time work a potential option under the ticket, which was not the case prior to these changes. There is now some new hope that this will encourage both beneficiaries and agencies that provide employment services to utilize the TTW program more often.

Experience Works Helps Out North Country

North Country now has two new staff to help us fulfill our mission of empowering consumers. Both our new staff members come to us through the Experience Works program.

Kathy Petras works in our Superior office answering our phone, doing filing and helping with mailings and other office tasks. She has a degree in accounting from WITC-Superior. Kathy says she enjoys working at a non-profit like North Country where everyone is so kind and helpful.

Marie Mihalek is helping out our Ashland staff, taking messages, and working on mailings and other tasks that need doing. Marie comes to North Country after working for over six years as an Enrollment and Training Assistant in the Experience Works program at the Ashland Job Center.

Experience Works is a program that offers agencies like North Country the benefit of an experienced worker to help get things done. Welcome Kathy and Marie to North Country.

New Staff Joins Northern Office of ODHH

April Joy Johnson is the new Regional Coordinator of the Northern Wisconsin office for the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Wausau. You can contact her at:

April.Johnson@Wisconsin.gov Office: 715-842-7693, FAX 842-1211 or Text: 262-332-0290.

Transportation Voucher Program Goes the Distance

Since March of this year, North Country's Transportation Voucher Program has provided 43 people with disabilities in our eight-county area with funding to pay mileage to their friends, neighbors or family members for travel totaling more than 36,000 miles. Volunteer drivers in the program have provided hundreds of hours of their time and more than a thousand one-way trips.

Where did they go? Of the 1000 plus trips, shopping and medical trips top the list, followed by trips to socialize, get to work and school. In addition to the trips themselves, this year participants also worked on identifying additional transportation resources in their communities and, where possible, developing relationships with transportation providers so that they could continue to travel after their limited voucher funding was expended. This portion of the program presented serious challenges. Some riders have been able to successfully connect either with volunteer driver programs or other human services transportation programs available to them. Others, perhaps by coincidence, have moved to communities offering more transportation options. (Continued on page 4)



Calendar of Events

First Monday of the month, Northern-Bridges, our new Managed Care Organization, has their Governing Board meetings at the Ramada Inn, Hayward, 10290 Highway 27 South and county road B, 9-3. Open to the public.

November 21st, New Horizons North celebrates 40 years of providing services to consumers so they can live more independently in our community. This event will be held at the Ashland High School Auditorium at 1900 Beaser Ave. starting at 6 p.m. Local storyteller and performer Tom Mitchell will be featured. A reception will follow.

January 9, 2009, North Country Board of Director's meeting, Ashland. Contact John Nousaine in our Superior office for more

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

information.

January 22-23, 2009. Wisconsin Transition Conference, Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells. Conference information and registration available at www.wsti.org

January 13 through March 19, Alpine Skiing for youth and adults with disabilities. One session a night, 5:30 to 7:30. \$100. Spirit Mountain. Sponsored by Courage Center, Duluth. 218-726-4762.

Dec 5, Jan 9 Feb 6 and March 6, 5:30 to 7 p.m., curling for youth and adults at the Duluth Curling Club. \$10 a person, per session. Sponsored by Courage Center, Duluth.

Transportation Voucher Program Goes the Distance(Continued from page 3)

For most participants however, replacing the voucher program's rides has not been easy. Unlike North Country's voucher program, most other transportation programs limit users to specific kinds of trips. While people with disabilities and elderly residents in much of our eight-county area may have access to medical trips, if they live outside of the limited zones served by public transit programs, trips for shopping, social, work and school present a challenge.

If you or a family member or friend would be interested in getting more information on our voucher program, you may contact Bob Olsgard, Transportation Coordinator, at: ncilbob@superior-nfp.org or toll free at 800-924-1220, extension 20.

North Country is looking for few good board members!

Did you know North Country's charter calls for our board of directors and staff to be comprised of at least 51% people with disabilities? It's part of our way to ensure consumer control of the organization. We strongly believe that the lessons we learn from our disability experience provide valuable information to other consumers. Right now our 9 member board has one vacancy and another one coming up in January, as one of our board members is approaching the end of his 2nd term. Currently our percentage is 75% consumers so our new members could be a family member, interested professional, community member, or a consumer.

We also like to have geographic representation and currently have no board members from Bayfield, Sawyer or Burnett counties. We also value diversity in other ways as well. We have parents, Native Americans, veterans, interpreters, Rehab Councilors, county board members, bankers, etc. Some of the disabilities represented are physical disabilities, blindness, diabetes, and multiple chemical sensitivity. We presently have no youth members.

Board members set policy for the organization and attend quarterly board meetings in Ashland or Superior. For the upcoming year the schedule is:

November 14th Superior

January 9th Ashland

April 10th Superior

July 10th Ashland

Sept 10th and 11th planning/board meeting/Superior

There are also committee meetings, training opportunities, etc. Our board serves as volunteers to the organization but we do reimburse for expenses so it shouldn't cost you anything. Please consider serving. It's a lot of work but also fun and has lots of opportunities.

For more information you can contact John Nousaine, 715-392-9118, 800-924-1220, ncil-john@superior-nfp.org

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.



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 Area Brain injury/Stroke Support Group, meets the third Wednesday of the month in the North Twin Island meeting room of Memorial Medical Center from 1-2 p.m. For more information, call Stewart at the North Country office in Ashland.

Barron County Fibromyalgia/CFS/Chronic Pain Support Group, meets every second Thursday of each month from 1-3

in the counsel room/upper floor at the Chetek Lutheran Church, 1419 Second St., Chetek, WI Call 651-9011 or 237-2798 for information. E-mail:

FMS_CFSBARRONCOUNTY@yahoo.com

A Parent and Caregiver Support Group for Autism Spectrum Disorders, meets the third Thursday of the month from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at Ashland County Human Services, 630 Sanborn Ave. Ashland. This is a new location. Parents, friends, relatives are welcome. Child care provided. For more information, call Shannon at 715-292-0711 or e-mail at: Shannon@ncis.net

Visually Impaired Support Group, meets the third Wednesday at 1:30 at 700 Division Street, Park Falls. Call

Arnold for more information at 762-4018.

Ashland Area Depression Support Group, A depression and anxiety support group is now forming! Organizational Meeting, November 19, 2008 8:00 to 9:00 PM First Meeting: Wednesday November 26, 2008 8:00 to 9:00 PM. For more information you can contact: Phil Lutz 682-2398 pjlutz@centurytel.net or Ward Simpson 682-5067 ward.simpson@gmail.com Meeting Location: St. Andrews Episcopal Church 620 3rd St.W., Ashland Meeting in the Guild Hall: Entrance on 3rd St.W Parking available on Chapple Avenue and off of 3rd St.W.

More Q&A regarding Long Term Care in NW WI

Q: I keep hearing about family care and waivers for long term care. What do these terms mean?

A: A new managed care program - FAMILY CARE - will soon replace traditional county-operated Long Term Care services for frail elders and adults with physical and/or developmental disabilities. NorthernBridges will be our local, publicly managed care organization. Alternatively, IRIS (Include, Respect, I Self-Direct) is a statewide waiver available to consumers. Starting in 2009 consumers will transition to one of these systems and waiting lists for services are to be eliminated within two years of a county's transition.

Q: If I live in an Adult Family Home, can I enroll in IRIS?

A: Yes! Contrary to previous guidelines for the IRIS Waiver, and contrary to our report in the last newsletter (Aug 2008), consumers living in AFHs, CBRFs, and RCACs can now be enrolled in IRIS.

Q: If I am currently on the county waiting list what does this mean to me?

A: Each county's transition plan identifies how the waiting list will be eliminated. Local Aging & Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) will be contacting you when you move up the list. The ADRC will have enrollment counselors to help consumers through the process.

Q: Are there any other agencies besides the Department of Health Services at the State level, or my county case manager, that I can find more information about all of this?

A: Yes! North Country Independent Living and New Horizons North, in collaboration with Pathways to Independence, are providing training and assistance to consumers and families. We want people to understand and create new opportunities for choice that are already working for others!

Contact Martha Oie at North Country Independent Living: ncilmartha@superior-nfp.org or 800-499-5676 V/TTY. Contact Deanna Yost at New Horizons North: dyost@nhnorth.com or the toll free number (888) 474-0217 ext 35; or contact Katharine Swanson at kswanson@nhnorth.com or their local number 715-682-7171. You can also link to information on the website at www.northcountryil.org. Click the Long Term Care button on the left.

2009 Calendars Available

The popular 2009 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.

Social Security Announces 5.8 Percent Benefit Increase for 2009

Monthly Social Security and Supplemental Security Income benefits for more than 55 million Americans will increase 5.8 percent in 2009, according to Social Security. The 5.8 percent increase is the largest since 1982. The 5.8 percent Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) will begin with benefits that over 50 million Social Security beneficiaries receive in January 2009. Increased payments to more than 7 million Supplemental Security Income beneficiaries will begin on December 31.

This means that the maximum SSI amount for an individual will increase from \$637.00 in 2008 to \$674.00 in 2009, and for an eligible couple it will increase from \$956.00 in 2008 to \$1,011.00 in 2009. Those on Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) will see an increase of 5.8 percent.

Other notable changes include an increase in Substantial Gainful Activity from \$940.00/month to \$980.00/month, and a SSI Student Earned Income Exclusion increase from \$1,550.00 to \$1,640.00. Medicare Part B premiums will stay at \$96.40/ month for 2009 for most individuals.

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 to continue to fulfill 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 _____

I would like to volunteer at North Country

Mail to:
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Superior, WI 54880



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