



# 2021

## ANNUAL REPORT

Our mission is to advocate, educate, empower, and provide resources for persons with disabilities. We promote accessible communities, fulfilling our vision of ensuring that accessibility will be an accepted civil right.

SERVING 5 COUNTIES: MUSKEGON, NEWAYGO, OCEANA, MASON, & LAKE



## OUR TEAM

**DISABILITY NETWORK WEST MICHIGAN IS A CLOSE-KNIT GROUP OF PEOPLE AND OVER 51% OF OUR STAFF AND BOARD MEMBERS ARE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.**

## **WHAT IS INDEPENDENT LIVING?**

**A PROGRAM  
A MOVEMENT  
A CULTURE**

**CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (CIL) ARE COMMUNITY-BASED, CROSS-DISABILITY, NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS THAT ARE DESIGNED AND OPERATED BY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES. CILS ARE UNIQUE IN THAT THEY OPERATE ACCORDING TO A STRICT PHILOSOPHY OF CONSUMER (CLIENT) CONTROL, WHEREIN PEOPLE WITH ALL TYPES OF DISABILITIES DIRECTLY GOVERN AND STAFF THE ORGANIZATION.**

**CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING PROVIDE:**

**PEER SUPPORT  
INFORMATION AND REFERRAL  
INDIVIDUAL AND SYSTEMS ADVOCACY  
INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS TRAINING  
COMMUNITY TRANSITION SERVICES**

# Introduction of

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# OUR BOARD



**Carl Occhipinti**  
President



**Frank Hollister**  
Vice President



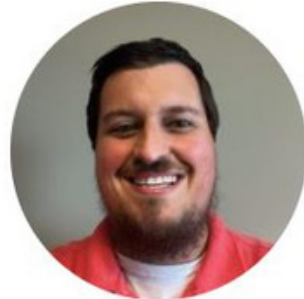
**Caryn Vennema**  
Secretary



**Lynne Bosma**  
Treasurer



**Jane Tuls**  
Director



**Chris Cole**  
Director





# Diane Fleser

CHIEF  
EXECUTIVE  
OFFICER



Diane Fleser, CEO  
Disability Network West Michigan  
231-332-4038  
[dianef@disabilitynetworkwm.org](mailto:dianef@disabilitynetworkwm.org)



Help us build our future by  
giving to our endowment fund  
at the link below.

[muskegonfoundation.org/give-  
now](https://muskegonfoundation.org/give-now)



This past year allowed us to continue innovations and creativity to support people with disabilities throughout the pandemic. We have been able to expand programs and services focused on regional needs through the five counties we serve. From partnering with organic farmers in Oceana County to deliver flowers and fresh food to the doors of those we serve to purchasing over 100 technology devices for increased access to the community while combating social isolation, our team remained busy and focused to carry out our mission.

We continue the important work of advocacy and education and experienced our busiest year providing our Disability Decorum training to local businesses. Part of creating a welcoming and accessible community for all individuals is making sure there are concerted efforts to educate organizations and companies about the importance of inclusion for people with disabilities.

This has resulted in numerous partnerships with local municipalities and businesses to guide them in creating more inclusive spaces within the communities we serve, including work to focus on the importance of making sure local vaccination clinics were accessible to people with disabilities.

As we bid adieu to another challenging year, we remain dedicated to continuing our work to ensure people with disabilities are valued and that their rights are undeniable and inherent in all aspects of life. Thanks for your continued support in those efforts.

Sincerely,  
Diane



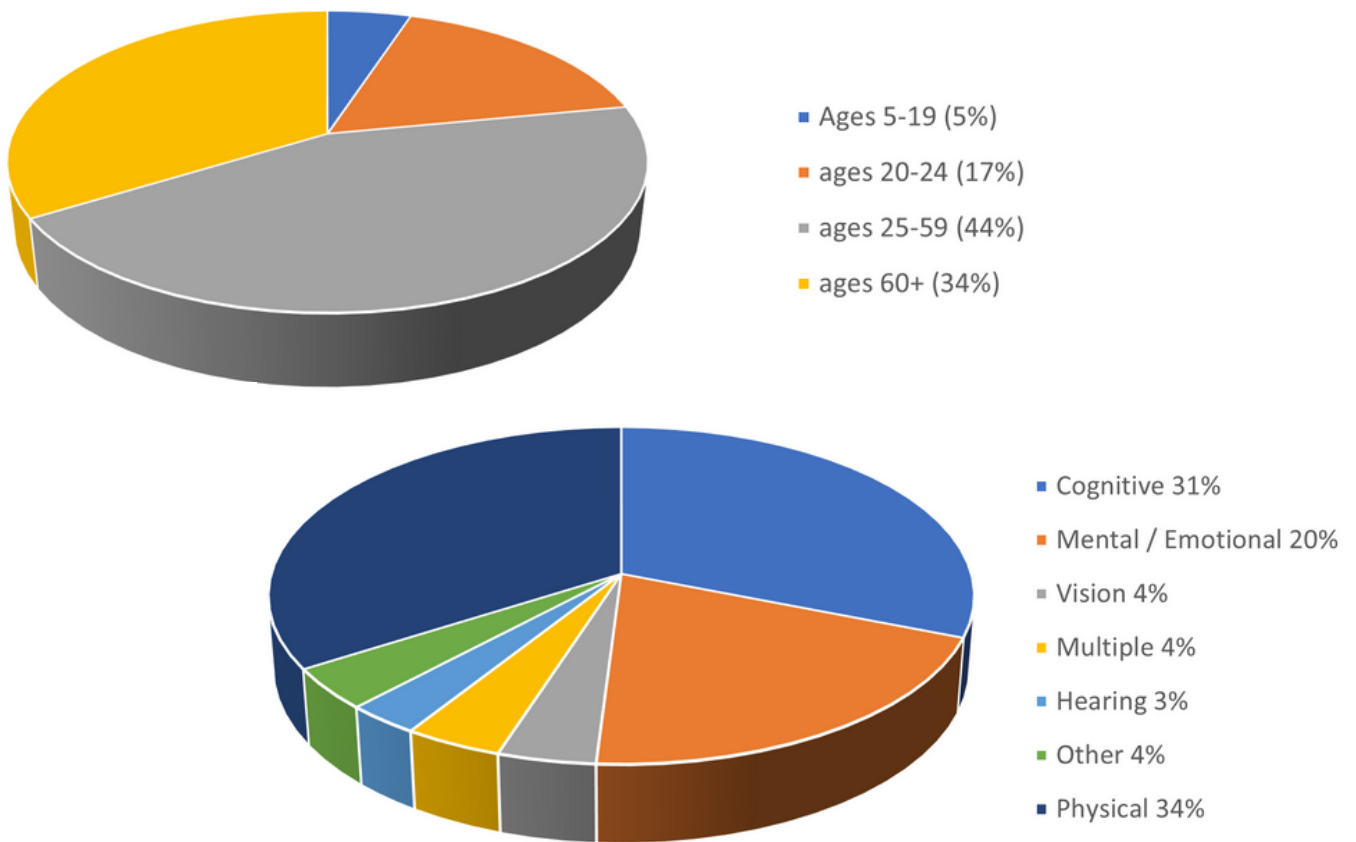
# MAKING AN IMPACT

*3,959 People Received Services*

*3,392 Information and Referrals*

## Disability and Age Demographics

We serve people with disabilities of ANY age and ALL disability types.



- **13** Organizations trained on disability decorum.
- **247** People trained on disability decorum.
- **9,973** Hours dedicated to community and systems advocacy, collaboration, equal access, and community education.

# FINANCIAL INFORMATION

## REVENUE

Federal & State Grants .....	\$811,757
Local Grants .....	\$91,264
Contributions .....	\$9,003
Interest Income .....	\$32,913
Fee for Service .....	\$235,112
Other Revenue .....	<u>\$126,012</u>
Total Revenue .....	\$1,306,061

## EXPENSES

Program Services .....	\$970,959
Admin/Fund Development .....	<u>\$208,561</u>
Total Expenses .....	\$1,179,520

Beginning Assets .....	\$431,007
Ending Assets .....	\$437,673



# Success Stories

## NURSING HOME TRANSITION

A Mason County resident returned to their community after spending several months in a Mason county nursing facility. This transition faced many barriers such as the need for accessible housing, medical and mental health services; as well as transportation.

The Nursing Transition Program assisted with securing housing where public transportation was available. A primary care physician along with mental health services from Community Mental Health was lined up to eliminate those barriers in place preventing a successful transition back into the home community.

After the successful transition, the Nursing Facility Transition program coordinated with a home health care agency and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to secure follow-up or after-care services for the resident. These after-care services assisted the resident with future barrier identification and elimination.

## TRANSPORTATION SERVICES FOR A VETERAN

A disabled Vietnam War veteran who had multiple medical appointments out of county feared he would not be able to keep his future-dated appointments due to depleting his allowed mileage with the medical transportation program as offered through his insurance. After working with a Community Inclusion Specialist with Disability Network West Michigan's Transportation Voucher Program, they were able to advocate for an extension of miles to be approved, which allowed for continued out-of-county appointments without disruption. The veteran shared that "without the travel voucher program I do not know how I would get to my medical appointments".



# Success Story

## MORE THAN JUST SOAP AND WATER CAREER EXPLORATION

Students from Fruitport High School took part in Disability Network West Michigan's Career Exploration Camp! The eight-day camp, supported through a partnership with Disability Network West Michigan, Michigan Rehabilitation Services, and Pioneer Resources, culminated in a community car wash designed and facilitated by the students.

The students practiced budgeting and marketing, cash control, and community outreach. They were able to host a successful event that took in over \$350 in just two hours! Outside of the revenue made, they were able to secure other donations for needed supplies, and lunch from a local food vendor.

In addition to building a successful business model, students learned valuable work, life, and self-advocacy skills. These skills provided the necessary building blocks for becoming ready to work and engaging in the community.



A woman with dark hair and glasses is shown in profile, looking down with a thoughtful expression. She is wearing a light-colored button-down shirt under a dark blazer. The image is partially obscured by a blue banner at the top and an orange diagonal line.

# Addressing Social Isolation

Disability Network West Michigan received funding to enhance innovative services, reducing the impact of social isolation specifically for people with disabilities, caused by the pandemic. Our commitment addressed the emerging and present needs of people with disabilities within our coverage area with a primary focus on the rural areas that we serve.

Our focus was to increase access to technology through an assessment conducted with over 300 people with disabilities. This provided respective devices and assistive technology, along with training sessions as needed. This also promoted no-tech and low-tech options to support community engagement and participation in areas where internet access was a barrier.

## Outreach:

- **300** Calls Made
- **203** Technology Assessments Successfully Completed
- **108** Technology Requests Fulfilled

## Technology Purchases Included:

- **63** Laptops
- **15** Pre-paid internet/wifi boosters/antennas
- **11** Tablets
- **10** Phones
- **8** Other (printers, magnified screens, large button keyboard)
- **23** People made 1:1 appointments to learn how to navigate their identified technology with DNWM staff.



# COMMUNITY EVENTS

## INFLUENCING ACCESSIBLE SPACES Parks & Recreation



## DAY OF CARING

Helping our neighbors in Muskegon,  
Oceana, Newaygo Counties



## FEEDING AMERICA

DNWM Hosted a food truck in Hart



## STAFF RETREAT

@ Muskegon Luge Adventure Park



**ANNUAL VETERANS' APPRECIATION  
DINNER:** Creating opportunities to  
connect with peers.





# SUPPORTIVE PEER GROUPS

YOU ARE NOT ALONE



## Veteran Support Group

Peer Guidance and Mentoring  
Benefits Resources Assistance  
Assistance with Preparing Documents  
Interaction with Veterans  
Informative Presentations  
VETERAN'S CONNECTION MEETINGS,  
Date: 2nd Wednesday of each month, Time: 1-2 pm



## Women's Support Group

A place for women with disabilities to share their experiences and uplift each other as they live with a disability. We have regular guest speakers.  
Date: Last Friday of each month, Time: 1-2 pm



## Young Adult Support Group


An opportunity for young adults with disabilities to share and discuss issues, concerns, hopes, dreams, and goals with other peers. Ages 16-26.  
Date: Every Wednesday, on Zoom, Time 6-7 pm



DISABILITYnetwork

West Michigan

**DISABILITY NETWORK OF WEST MICHIGAN  
27 E. CLAY AVENUE  
MUSKEGON, MI 49442**



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