

## Washington County's COVID-19 Website

See [Washington County's COVID-19 website](#) for vaccine updates.

## ARC Microgrants

ARC microgrants are still available. Check out the [ARC website](#) for more information and to apply.

## AUSM MEA Activity

AuSM will offer three options for single-session recreation programs during Minnesota's fall Minnesota Education

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14949 62nd Street N  
Stillwater, MN 55082

[Intellectual and Developmental Website](#)

## Washington County Corner

I hope this newsletter finds everyone healthy. Washington County offices are reopen for public-facing services. All county buildings require masks to be worn by visitors and staff. Most services continue to require an appointment to meet in person. Case managers can begin in-person visits if all team members are comfortable but this is still not required at this time. Many county workers continue to telework and this will continue to be an option for some going forward.

## Call for Participants

Community Learning Circle

**Washington County's Access, Aging, and Disabilities Division is looking for community members to join us in learning how to strengthen our Person-Centered Culture and Practice.**

### Person-centered means:

Empowering people to choose, set, and reach their own life goals. Washington County strives to support people with what is important to them and what they want to do in their lives; with a focus on the person's preferences, strengths, and dreams.

### Who we are looking for:

People receiving services from the Washington County Access, Aging, and Disabilities Division; individuals, family members, and guardians.

### What is expected:

**We want to learn from you!** Join us (virtually) for a one hour community learning circle. A community learning circle is a small group of people talking about one topic.

### Topic: Our Words Matter

This topic was chosen to help us learn how to be thoughtful about the words we use when talking and writing about people.

### Time commitment:

Pick a day and time (10-11 a.m. or 6-7 p.m.) that works for you. Each circle will include eight participants and two facilitators.

- **Thurs., October 14**
- **Mon., November 15**

### Microsoft Teams (online)

**Sign up by Noon the day before the meeting using this [registration link](#)**

*You must sign up in order to be emailed a link to attend the online meeting.*

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MEA Activity on page 1*

Association (MEA) break. Sessions for those 12-24 years old will engage participants in nature and museum activities that foster learning, friendships, and fun while celebrating neurodiversity. AuSM programs are conducive to youth and adults who fall within the wide range of the Autism spectrum, and programs are staffed at a 1:4 staff-to-participant ratio.

- **Thurs., October 21**  
*Silverwood Park*
  - **Morning session:**  
9:30 a.m.-Noon  
Ages 12-17
  - **Afternoon session:**  
1-3:30 p.m.  
Ages 16-24
  
- **Fri., October 22**  
*Minneapolis  
Institute of Art*
  - **Morning session:**  
10 a.m.-Noon  
Ages 12-17
  - **Afternoon session:**  
1-3 p.m.  
Ages 16-24

Cost per session:  
AuSM Member: \$30  
Non-Member: \$40

For more information, visit the [AUSM website](#).

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### Questions:

[Email](#) or call Winna at 651-430-4143.

*\*Let us know if you need any special accommodations in order to participate.*

## Self-Advocacy Programming at Upstream Arts

This summer, Upstream Arts launched our new self-advocacy programming, revolutionizing self-advocacy through the arts. Join us in class and use creativity to expand your voice and choice and live your best life everyday.

After a year of responding to meet the unprecedented demand spurred by COVID-19 and its systemic impacts on our disability community, Upstream Arts is proud to be partnering with the Department of Human Services to offer weekly self-advocacy classes open to all adults with disabilities 18 and older. Classes will meet online this summer, with in-person options this fall!

Taught by teams of highly trained teaching artists, our self-advocacy classes use theatre, dance, poetry, music, and more to explore topics related to informed choice and person-centered planning. Classes offer a fun, creative, and interactive environment for you to expand your artistry, connect with your peers, hone your voice and choice, and practice skills you will use daily to express your preferences and live your most self-determined life.

### Fall self-advocacy classes are here!

Hybrid, online, and in-person classes for adults with disabilities start October 4! Register on the [Upstream Arts website](#).

## CDCS Corner

Under the Governor's Emergency Executive Order 20-12, the Minnesota Department of Human Services has temporary authority to waive or modify requirements so that Minnesotans can continue to access essential programs and services safely and without undue delay during the COVID-19 pandemic. These temporary changes expired on August 30, 2021.

*Paid parent of minor overtime due to the pandemic expired on August 30, 2021. This includes authorizing overtime for all staff. Overtime for staff will only be approved on an individual basis and to address health and safety after August 30, 2021. There continues to be some services that can be provided virtually. Check with your case manager or support planner if you have questions.*

*The minimum wage for all consumer-directed staff will increase from \$13.25 per hour to \$14.40 per hour effective October 1, 2021. The staff wage range for all consumer-directed programs will increase to \$14.40 per hour - \$21.00 per hour. This is in response to the current staffing shortage and the minimum wage increase.*

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### **Washington County CDCS (Consumer-Directed Community Supports) Training:**

This will be a virtual training. All sessions are the same so only one session needs to be attended. Sessions are facilitated by two Community Services staff. If you are interested in attending, please contact your social worker to receive the training packet and email invite.

All trainings are held from 6-8 p.m.:

- **Thursday, November 18**

## **Music Therapy**

### **Living Spirit Therapy Services:**

Specializes in music therapy for people with developmental disabilities, seniors, and those with neurologic issues (such as stroke, Parkinson's disease, Autism Spectrum Disorder), hospice, early childhood music, and community wellness.

Contact Melissa Spiess, M.M. (Master of Music), MT-BC (Music Therapy Board Certification) by calling 651-363-3936, via [email](#), or visit the [Living Spirit Therapy Services website](#).

## **Welcome to Washington County: Skill Spark Therapy Center**

Skill Spark Therapy Center is now offering Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) Skills Therapy.

### **Adapted DBT Skills Training**

Designed for individuals who struggle in traditional DBT programs. This group is designed with simpler language and shorter meeting times for increased engagement.

### **Who benefits from Adapted DBT?**

Individuals who have a learning impairment or intellectual disability and/or struggle to focus for the full length of traditional DBT group skills classes.

### **What is included:**

- 24 weeks of skills groups that last 50 minutes to 1 hour
- To complete a worksheet or exercise between skills groups
- Have DBT skills presented in a more relatable and concrete way

### **Your facilitator: Amber Priestley, LMFT** (Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist)

I have 15 years of experience working with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. I started this adapted group after realizing there were a lack of options to fit the needs of individuals who learn at a slower rate or struggle with attention and focus.

**Insurance Accepted:** Medicaid, BCBS (Blue Cross Blue Shield), UCARE, Optum/Medica, UHC (UnitedHealthCare), and Aetna. Most PMAPS (prepaid medical assistance plan), except Health Partners.

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## **Merrill Arts Center Events**

- **The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales**  
A by-kids-for-kids production that brings the award-winning book to the stage. All ages.

**October 1-10**

*Merrill Arts Center, Woodbury*

- **Madeline's Christmas**  
A holiday musical based on the classic children's story. Good for the entire family.

**December 6-9 and December 13-15**

*East Ridge High School—Loft Stage, Woodbury*

*\*Check out the special matinee for groups of 12 or more and our Princess Tea Parties.*

For more information, visit the [Merrill Arts Center website](#).

## **Resource List**

Check out the [resource list](#) developed by the Washington County Community Services (WCCS) Person-Centered Best Practices committee.

## Social Groups and Activity Clubs

Check out the activities at your local friendship groups:

- **Best Buddies in Minnesota**  
Offering one-to-one friendship and leadership development programs for individuals with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).
- **Bridging Hearts**  
An online social network for young adults with intellectual disabilities, including Autism, dedicated to providing and maintaining a supportive community where everyone feels valued.
- **Highland Friendship Club**
- **Valley Friendship Club**

## Minnesota's New Accessible Playground Directory

See the [accessible playground website](#) for a listing of playgrounds with inclusive and accessible features.

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Our next group begins in November!

For more information, call 651-234-0894, [email](#), or visit the [Skill Spark Therapy website](#).

## Adaptive Sports and Activities

### Adaptive Dance

- **Young Dance**

Transforming lives through movement. Since 1987, Young Dance has encouraged youth in our community to build body and spirit through the art of dance. Our mission is to transform lives through movement. We are an inclusive community where creativity flourishes and all are encouraged to aspire to artistic excellence.

For more information, call 612-423-3064, [email](#), or visit [Young Dance's website](#).

- **Ballet Royale Minnesota**

An extraordinary place to dance. Ballet Beyond Barriers - Ballet Royale Minnesota's Adaptive Dance Program

For more information, visit [Ballet Royale's website](#).

### Adaptive Hockey

- Visit the [Minnesota Sled Hockey Association website](#).
- Visit the [Minnesota Special Hockey website](#).

### Adaptive Sports

- **Minnesota Special Olympics** offers many year round adaptive sports.

Check out the [Minnesota Special Olympics website](#).

### Adaptive Winter Sports

- **Hyland Hills Ski Stars**

Hyland Hills offers a weekly lesson program for youth with developmental disabilities. Individuals will have fun and develop their skiing skills in a safe and controlled environment.

For more information, call 763-559-6700 or visit [Hyland Hill's website](#).

- **Deaf & Hard of Hearing Program**

The Midwest Sport/Ski Council offers people with hearing impairment the opportunity to learn how to downhill ski and snowboard. The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Learn to Ski/Snowboard Program for beginning to intermediate skiers, promotes self-confidence, physical activity, and skill set development.

The program takes place at Hyland Ski & Snowboard Area in Bloomington. Equipment and lift tickets are provided for students at minimal cost, and lift tickets are free for

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qualified instructors who have completed the mandatory training clinic. The people involved in this program donate their time for teaching and other assistance as needed; non-council people are also welcome. There are many rewards for program participants, including the students' smiles as they discover that they too can enjoy the sport of skiing and snowboarding.

The training program for new instructors consists of two clinics provided by the Hyland SnowSports Academy and volunteer instructors. Participants are taught step-by-step methods in the art of teaching people to ski. In addition, these clinics will substantially develop your own skiing skills. Anyone with intermediate or better ability can qualify as an instructor.

When working with the deaf and hard of hearing students, most instructors have only one student apiece, as instructors are geared specifically to each student's ability. Interpreters will be available on the hill to provide assistance during the lessons.

People with rusty or beginner skiing skills are welcome in the program and at the clinic. These folks can be used in other areas of the program while they improve their skills to the point they are capable of instructing.

For more information, [email](#) the Hearing Impaired Coordinator.

- **Padraig's Place**

A Place to Have Fun! At Padraig's Place, we are focused on having fun and we believe all guests are entitled to enjoy winter recreation. Padraig's Place, a local non-profit organization, has come together with the ski and snowboard schools at Buck Hill Ski and Wild Mountain to provide a fun experience for skiers and snowboarders with physical and/or cognitive disabilities. We provide an opportunity to experience winter fun in a safe, family-friendly atmosphere. We tailor our lessons to suit your individual needs, creating the best memories, again and again.

For more information and to register visit the [Padraig's Place website](#).

## Technology Consultations

A consultation at PACER is a way to explore educational assistive technology in a stress-free, collaborative environment. This is not a formal assessment or evaluation but rather a starting point to locate technology that may help people with disabilities become more independent at home, school, or work. The PACER Simon Technology Center (STC) offers free, informal assistive technology consultations for children and adults with disabilities to families in Minnesota. A consultation fee is charged to families who would like an assistive technology consultation but live outside of Minnesota. *Please note this service is separate from our fee-based individualized training service.*

If interested, please submit the appropriate consultation form (online or mail), or call PACER Center at 952-838-9000.

## Christmas at the Courthouse Holiday Bazaar

Wander into a winter wonderland and take in the sights of the season with the Historic Courthouse decorated for the holidays inside and out while shopping at the holiday bazaar! Visit with vendors of unique, hand-crafted items, and tour the exhibits and old county jail. Beat the holiday rush and get your shopping done early.

**Saturday, November 20 & Sunday, November 21**  
*Stillwater*

Proceeds raised support our Restoration Fund.

For more information, visit the [Washington County Historic Courthouse website](#).

## Free, Online Training

Eventbrite offers free online trainings with many different topics. In the filter section, make sure you turn "on" online classes, select "family and education" for the category, and set the price to free. Visit the [Eventbrite website](#) for more information.

## University of Minnesota Webinars

University of Minnesota Extension Center for Family Development educators will facilitate free webinars, providing information and resources for families and those who serve families to make informed decisions leading to greater health, resilience, and well-being. Check out the fall webinars on the [UofM website](#).

## Contact Us for Article Submissions:

For questions or to submit article submissions, contact:

Denise Steans  
651-430-4168  
[Email](#)

## Sign Up for this Newsletter

Sign up to receive this newsletter via email or text through our [Notify Me system web page](#).

If you have a change to your email address, make sure to update the Notify Me system so you continue receiving your newsletters.

## E1MN Partnership

E1MN is Minnesota's state agency partnership to advance Employment First outcomes for youth and adults with disabilities. The state agency partnership evolved from Minnesota's [Employment First policy](#) adopted by the Olmstead sub-cabinet in 2014. Employment supports for people with disabilities span multiple state agencies, which can be complicated for all involved. E1MN coordinates and brings things together to help the system make more sense so youth and adults with disabilities understand their options and get what they need to achieve and maintain competitive integrated employment.

E1MN is led by the State of Minnesota Departments of Education (MDE), Employment and Economic Development (DEED), and Human Services (DHS). E1MN coordinates their work through two steering committees, each made up of state agency representatives.

### Values:

- **Continuous improvement:** We will engage with stakeholders, leverage promising practices, use data to adapt efforts, use resources wisely, and improve outcomes.
- **Employment First:** The values and guiding principles found in Minnesota's Employment First Policy will serve as the foundation for our work.
- **Person-centeredness:** We will embed person-centered principles in our work to help people move toward meaningful work that builds on their unique interests, strengths, and talents.
- **Equity:** Equity is fundamental to our work. People with disabilities of all races, ethnicities, and socio-economic statuses should have access to the supports they need to succeed.
- **Collaboration:** We will support each other and bring out the best each of our agencies has to offer to people and to the process.
- **Simplicity:** We will develop a system that is easier to understand, implement, and navigate.

### Strategies:

- Align our systems - policies, programs, funding, providers, and roles - to better coordinate services and Employment First approaches.
- Connect partners to solve problems, remove barriers, and transform services.
- Use data and information to drive our work and seek continuous improvement.
- Build on existing strengths and great ideas, while also developing new resources to share.
- Engage with our shared customers and stakeholders to share our work and incorporate their insights.
- Work with local and culturally-specific partners to improve and assure access and equity.
- Build a unified voice through shared communications, training, and support to foster consistent practices and messages for all stakeholders.
- Support families in setting a positive trajectory for employment and independence for their child.
- Incorporate person-centered tools and practices to help create a common language and experience for our shared customers.

For more information, contact your Washington County Social Worker and visit the [E1MN partnership page of the Disability Hub website](#).