

## **On Target**

Informing Indiana About Disability Issues  
Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities  
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## **Indiana organizations offer supported employment**

As people with disabilities around the country recognize October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month, several Indiana businesses are making exceptional efforts to place Hoosiers with disabilities in competitive employment and provide opportunities for advancement.

In Valparaiso, the Walgreens Return Center is employing people with disabilities through a partnership with a coalition of area disability-related agencies. The center, where team members repackage Walgreens merchandise, currently employs and trains many people with disabilities. Through the 45-day paid training program, prospective employees learn the job requirements and, at the end, the individuals are assessed. Those who meet the requirements are offered a job that includes benefits and opportunities for advancement. Also, if an immediate job opening becomes available, Walgreens contacts the coalition to fill the spot before trying other routes.

Margo Love-Surprise, job development coordinator at Arc BRIDGES, an organization providing support and job training services for people with disabilities in northwest Indiana, said the program has brought together area agencies. "With Walgreens, we've formed a partnership that is benefitting many people with disabilities in northwest Indiana," said Love-Surprise. "Because we've encouraged all area disability agencies to get involved, we're all working together."

Monica Daniel, manager of the Walgreens Return Center, which also employs people without disabilities, said the program has been a huge success for the company.

"Attendance is excellent, safety is excellent, and the people we've hired through the program do a very good and thorough job, taking pride in their work," said Daniel. "We have also found that Walgreens team members feel a sense of purpose, that they have an opportunity to make a difference."

Another program providing job opportunities to people with disabilities is "Project SEARCH" in Indianapolis. A collaboration of Easter Seals Crossroads, Community Health Network, Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS), Vocational Rehabilitation and the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, Project SEARCH places IPS students with disabilities in an internship program with Community East Hospital. Students with disabilities in their last year of high school are eligible for the program, which features classes on job and life management skills, as well as rotations through several different jobs within the hospital. The students are trained in each particular job and then complete responsibilities on their own. At the end of the school year, some of the students are offered jobs at the hospital, which include full benefits.

Patrick Sandy, vice president at Easter Seals Crossroads, said they modeled the program after a similar one at Cincinnati Children's Hospital. "After we visited their Project SEARCH program and talked with some of the students, we knew we had to start one here," said Sandy. "We're hoping to expand the program to other schools and employers soon."

The City of Bloomington also hires many people with disabilities through area-supported employment programs, including DiversityWorks: The South Central Indiana Business Leaders Network. Through the supported employment program, Bloomington human resources personnel learn of people looking for jobs and search for a position that fits, matching the job responsibilities with the person's skills.

"We are constantly looking to place people with disabilities within our organization, and we partner with DiversityWorks and other area agencies to do so," said Daniel Grundmann, Bloomington's director of

employee services. "Not only do our employees with disabilities tend to have lower absenteeism and great work performance, the morale of our entire organization has improved."

Not only does the city hire employees with disabilities, but personnel are also involved with supported employment on a community-wide level. The city has co-hosted events to educate area employers on the benefits of hiring people with disabilities, and they've worked to create a link between the local employment agencies and the South Central Indiana Human Resource Association, offering speakers for their events to talk about employing people with disabilities.

All of these organizations work with the Indiana Business Leadership Network (INBLN), which has chapters located in Indianapolis, Monroe County, northwest Indiana, Wabash Valley and Warsaw. INBLN's goal is to increase employment of people with disabilities by improving awareness among businesses regarding the resources for, and the benefits of, hiring people with disabilities. Throughout the month of October, several chapters of the INBLN are hosting events coinciding with National Disability Employment Awareness Month. To see if your local chapter is hosting an event, visit [www.inbln.org](http://www.inbln.org).

For more information on the Walgreens program, contact Love-Surprise at (219) 884-1138, ext. 6354 (voice) or [msurprise@arcbridges.com](mailto:msurprise@arcbridges.com). For more information about Project SEARCH at IPS, contact your IPS transition coordinator. For general inquires regarding Project SEARCH, contact the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community at (812) 855-6508 (voice) or (812) 855-9396 (TTY). For more information regarding employment opportunities in Bloomington, visit [www.bloomington.in.gov](http://www.bloomington.in.gov) and click on "Employment with the City of Bloomington."

## **University of Notre Dame makes swimming more accessible**

Researchers at the University of Notre Dame have been nationally recognized for creating a system that allows swimmers with visual impairments to swim with greater ease and less assistance from others. The Tactile Navigation System for Blind Swimmers was developed by AdapTap Team Swimmer Project, led by Paul Down, associate professor of industrial design at the university.

The system consists of in-water touch rods that are attached to pool lane markers, much like a ball on the end of a rod. As swimmers go down the lanes, the tappers keep them informed as to how close they are to the lane markers by the soft ends of the rods. This allows swimmers to glide down the lane with little assistance.

The National Federation of the Blind honored team members with the Bolotin Award, which recognizes individuals and organizations who have made outstanding contributions toward helping people with visual impairments become fully integrated into society.

Notre Dame plans to offer this product through Kiefer and Associates, an international swimwear and accessory supplier. To learn more, go to [www.nd.edu/video/against-odds](http://www.nd.edu/video/against-odds).

## **ADA Amendments Act becomes law**

With incredible bipartisan support and the signature of President George W. Bush, the ADA Amendments Act was passed into law on Sept. 25, 2008, to restore the original intentions of the

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. The bill passed by unanimous voice votes in the House and Senate.

“This vote demonstrates the broad-based bipartisan support for the need to restore protections under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to people with epilepsy, depression, diabetes, cancer and a host of other conditions who have been interpreted out of the ADA by a callous majority of the U.S. Supreme Court,” said Andrew Imparato, president and CEO of the American Association of People with Disabilities, in a statement.

The ADA Amendments Act came together through an impressive collaboration between disability, civil rights and employer groups. To bridge the divide between the disability and business communities, these groups worked together to draft agreeable language that would benefit both sides and gain bipartisan support in Congress.

“We are pleased with Congress and President Bush for recognizing the need for restoring the ADA’s protections as originally intended,” said Suellen Jackson-Boner, executive director of the Indiana Governor’s Council for People with Disabilities. “With this new law in place, Hoosiers and all 54 million people with disabilities in the U.S. are closer to a society in which people with disabilities are afforded the same opportunities as all members of their communities.”

The new law corrects narrow court interpretations that have restricted ADA protections. Individuals will now be considered as having a disability and eligible for protection without regard to the assistance they may use, such as medications, wheelchairs or prosthetics.

## **Preliminary results of voting poll announced**

To coincide with the upcoming election, the preliminary results of “The Indiana Disability Poll: A Focus on Voting” were recently announced.

This collaborative project of the Governor’s Council, Indiana Protection and Advocacy Services and the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community is a snapshot of how Hoosiers with disabilities feel about voting issues in the state.

The survey, which began in November 2007, received a total of 284 responses. Of those who responded, 89 percent are registered to vote and 78 percent voted in the last election.

### **For civic participation, respondents reported the following:**

Signed a petition	44%
Wrote letter to government or newspaper	42%
Attended a political meeting	30%
Gave testimony	19%
Belong to a political action group (PAC)	16%
Donated money to a political campaign	14%
Worked on an election campaign	12%
Worked at the polls	12%

Participated in a rally or march	9%
Ran for public office	3%
Did not participate in any way	20%

### **Top five reasons given for not voting**

- I did not want to vote.
- I had no transportation to the polls.
- I was sick or had medical reasons.
- The polling place was not accessible.
- I was underage at the time of the election.

### **Top 10 voting barriers**

- Parking was too far away or not accessible.
- The entrance was not accessible.
- The entrance was not clearly marked.
- Tables and voting machines were too high.
- I was not allowed to have anyone assist me.
- There was no place for me to sit.
- There was no way for me to cast my ballot privately (low or no vision).
- I was challenged about my ability to vote.
- The path to the polling area had obstacles.
- Voting machines were not accessible.

To report voting accessibility problems, call the Election Fraud and Accessibility Grievance Line at (866) 461-8683 (voice). For more information on this survey, contact the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community at (812) 855-6508 (voice) or (812) 855-9396 (tty).

## **Now available: HIP buy-in**

Hoosiers not eligible for the state's Healthy Indiana Plan (HIP) because they did not meet income qualification guidelines now have a buy-in option.

Previously, HIP was only available to Hoosiers earning below 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL), which is approximately \$40,000 for a family of four. Now, the buy-in option is available to those whose income is above 200 percent of the FPL.

The buy-in option will include benefits similar to the original plan, which was introduced this past January. Currently, HIP provides health coverage for uninsured Hoosiers between the ages of 19 and 65, who are below 200 percent FPL, who do not have Medicare or Medicaid, who have been uninsured for at least six months and who are not eligible for employer-sponsored health coverage. Just like the HIP plan, participants will have a \$1,100 deductible.

The cost of the buy-in option will be based on age, sex and geographic region, and there is no state or federal subsidization of the option. All applicants who are denied HIP coverage due to their income status will receive a notice from the Indiana Family and Social Security Administration (FSSA) about the buy-in option.

At this time, the only provider for the buy-in option is Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield, although the state's other HIP provider, MDwise with Americhoice, is expected to offer its version later this year. Anyone interested in purchasing the HIP buy-in product should contact Anthem at (800) 622-4075 (voice). For more information on HIP, visit [www.hip.in.gov](http://www.hip.in.gov).

## **West Lafayette native participates in Paralympic Games**

Indianapolis native Emma Preuschl never considered herself a person with a disability until she was given the opportunity to represent the U.S. at the Paralympic Games in Beijing. A well-rounded athlete with Erb's Palsy, caused by nerve damage to her left arm during birth, Preuschl competed in the first-ever rowing competitions at the Paralympic Games this summer.

Preuschl first pursued rowing as a freshman at Purdue University. Although she struggled on the team at first, her motivation to do well encouraged her to adjust her stroke and primarily use her right arm. With the help of her coach, Preuschl was able to get a shorter oar and a seat that helps her put more power behind her left-arm stroke.

Although a back injury caused her to miss her senior year of rowing at Purdue, Preuschl worked as an assistant coach for the team and decided to test the waters as a potential competitor for the U.S. Paralympic team. She submitted a time trial result which got her an invitation to selection camp in Philadelphia.

Preuschl made the team and competed in Beijing. On Sept. 11, she was honored with a silver medal as part of the mixed four with coxswain crew, which came in just behind Italy.

For photos, results and more information on the Paralympic Games, visit [www.paralympic.org](http://www.paralympic.org).

## **Of Note**

### ***New coin includes Braille characters***

The first American coin with readable Braille characters will be a silver dollar commemorating the 200th anniversary of the birth of Louis Braille, creator of the alphabet for people with visual impairments. The new design was recently unveiled by the National Federation of the Blind and the United States Mint. The front of the coin shows the word "Liberty" above an image of Louis Braille. The back features the Braille code for the word Braille, Brl, which is inscribed above a depiction of a boy reading a Braille book. Although other coins distributed by the Mint can be distinguished by size and weight, the silver dollar will be the first coin to have Braille characters. The new coin will be available in spring of 2009.

## ***Free service reads written material***

A free, Web-based service, [www.ReadTheWords.com](http://www.ReadTheWords.com), can transfer written words into audio clips for people who have difficulty reading printed materials. Upon visiting the site, an audio recording provides instructions for using the site. Users have a variety of options for inserting text to be converted to audio, including cutting and pasting content or uploading a file. There are a number of readers to choose from, and the service can also read in Spanish and French. To hear the audio clip, users have multiple options, including downloading the file to an MP3 player, listening to the audio online, turning the audio into a podcast and more.

## **Register now!**

Registration materials for the 2008 Conference for People with Disabilities have been mailed and should be completed and returned to the Council by Nov. 14. Please join us for "Mission Ready: Countdown to Change" on Dec. 2 and 3 at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Indianapolis. Together, we'll explore public policy updates; tips for communicating with and influencing legislators and other elected officials; advances in employment opportunities and more.

## ***Helpful voting resource!***

The Council's "Voting in Indiana" booklet can help you prepare for the upcoming election. Request your copy at (317) 232-7770 (voice/TT) or [GPCPD@gpcpd.org](mailto:GPCPD@gpcpd.org).

On Target is a monthly publication of the Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities. We welcome your suggestions for newsletter content and ideas concerning the actions of the Council. on target is made available in accessible formats upon request.

## **On Target Election insert**

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## **Be an informed voter Nov. 4**

On Nov. 4, Americans have the opportunity to exercise their right to vote. However, the act of voting requires more responsibility than registering and appearing at the polls. It requires an extra effort to become acquainted with the candidates' beliefs and values and to truly understand how they will vote on issues that affect your life.

During this general election, Hoosiers will be voting for the next president of the United States and the next governor of Indiana, in addition to federal and state legislators. To make an informed decision, go beyond the sound bites and rhetoric of campaign advertisements — which are tailored to sway your opinion based on glitz and emotion rather than fact and substance. Look for policy statements, past voting records, survey results, position papers, speeches and interviews. Seek out candidates' forums, debates and other local events. Doing

this homework will ensure you're better informed about the candidate you ultimately vote for to represent you and your interests.

There are many places to go to research the facts. Look on the back side of this insert for a list of resources.

## What the candidates say

The Arc of Indiana recently polled state candidates to assess their positions on key issues in the disability community. Out of the 207 Indiana state legislator candidates polled, 45 completed the survey, while 7 said they have policies against responding to surveys. In addition to state legislator candidates, major-party gubernatorial candidates Jill Long Thompson and Governor Mitch Daniels participated in the survey. See the candidates' responses regarding employment and health care below.

To find out more about the platforms of your state legislators and more specific survey responses, visit [www.arcind.org](http://www.arcind.org) and click on the 2008 Election Survey link at the bottom of the page.

	Employment	Health Care
Jill Long Thompson	"I would explore the possibility of offering tax credits to increase employment of people with cognitive and other developmental disabilities."	"I will increase the number of Hoosiers with health insurance coverage by making health care coverage more affordable to businesses and workers, ensuring health care is accessible, and putting stronger measures in place to control costs."
Governor Daniels	Within the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, his administration has achieved a 23 percent increase in employment of people with disabilities over the past four years. He has also worked to fund various outreach programs, including one with the Arc, geared to ensure access to VR.	Along with the Indiana General Assembly, Governor Daniels has implemented the Healthy Indiana Plan (HIP), which can provide health care to Hoosiers living below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. This program is comprehensive and covers doctor visits, hospital services, mental health services and prescription drugs.

## What you need to know to vote

You can vote in the state of Indiana if you meet all of the following requirements. You:

- Are a U.S. citizen and an Indiana resident.
- Will be 18 years old by Nov. 4.
- Are not currently in prison after being convicted.
- Live in the precinct where you vote for at least 30 days prior to Election Day.
- Are registered to vote.

To find your polling location, visit [www.IndianaVoters.com](http://www.IndianaVoters.com) or call the Hoosier Voter Hotline at 1-866-IN-1-VOTE (866-461-8683).

You must present a government-issued photo ID before voting. Visit [www.PhotoID.in.gov](http://www.PhotoID.in.gov) to find ID requirements, or call the BMV at (317) 233-6000.

For more information about voting, visit [www.in.gov/sos/elections](http://www.in.gov/sos/elections), call (817) 232-3939, or send an e-mail to [elections@iec.state.in.us](mailto:elections@iec.state.in.us).

## Poll workers needed

You can help increase awareness and sensitivity to voters with disabilities by becoming a poll worker. To volunteer, contact your county election office or the county office of your political party. These are paid positions and require training. Learn more at [www.in.gov/sos/elections](http://www.in.gov/sos/elections).

If you have trouble voting, here's what to do

If you experience any problems at the polls, you can call the Hoosier Voter Hotline at 1-866-IN-1-VOTE (866-461-8683). Or, visit [www.in.gov/sos/elections](http://www.in.gov/sos/elections) to submit a Fraud and Accessibility Grievance Form.

You can also contact Indiana Protection and Advocacy Services (IPAS) for voting issues related to accessibility at (800) 622-4845 (toll free).

If you encounter problems due to Indiana's current identification requirements, you can contact Jim Dickson at the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) at (800) 840-8844 (toll free).

## Need info about the candidates?

To research candidates' platforms, visit their Web sites at: [www.BarackObama.com](http://www.BarackObama.com) (Sen. Barack Obama), [www.JohnMcCain.com](http://www.JohnMcCain.com) (Sen. John McCain), [www.mymanmitch.org](http://www.mymanmitch.org) (Gov. Mitch Daniels), and [www.hoosiersforjill.org](http://www.hoosiersforjill.org) (Former U.S. Rep. Jill Long Thompson).



Get information about presidential candidates' views on disability issues at [www.aapd-dc.org](http://www.aapd-dc.org). Click on "2008 Presidential Election Action Center."

For a link to a side-by-side comparison chart of the candidates' positions on disability-related issues, visit [www.olrs.ohio.gov](http://www.olrs.ohio.gov).

You can view gubernatorial and presidential debates by visiting [www.indianadebatecommission.com](http://www.indianadebatecommission.com) and [www.debates.org](http://www.debates.org), respectively.

## **Making the 2008 election accessible for all**

Although Indiana law requires polling places and voting machines to be accessible for people with disabilities, other areas of the election process may present some unanticipated barriers. Kim Mettache, who has a hearing disability, recently encountered issues at the gubernatorial debate in Merrillville. The debate did not provide a sign language interpreter or CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation) services.

Mettache, who's a graduate of Partners in Policymaking — the advocacy training program conducted by the Governor's Council for People with Disabilities — contacted the Indiana Debate Commission to explain her frustrations. "As a registered voter, I was doing my part to become more informed about the candidates' positions on issues that are important to me so that I could make an educated decision on Election Day," said Mettache. "But without knowing what the candidates had said, I left the debate with no more information than when I arrived." The Debate Commission worked with Mettache to resolve the issue and agreed to provide her with a transcript of the debate.

Organizers of debates, public forums and other events may not recognize the need or be aware of how to provide accessibility for people with disabilities. Prior to attending these types of events, be proactive and contact the organizers to ask about access. Insist they provide a sign language interpreter, CART services, or other necessary accommodations, such as accessible facilities for people with mobility disabilities, and large print or Braille materials for people with visual impairments. Let them know you're willing to help by providing suggestions for making the event as accessible as possible for attendees with disabilities.

Like Mettache, if you attend a voting-oriented event that is still not accessible in some way, be sure to share your concerns with the organizing group. Sometimes all it takes is greater awareness to affect positive change.

## **Absentee and provisional voting options**

Any registered voter who wishes to vote prior to Nov. 4 may visit his or her election board office beginning 29 days before Election Day to cast a ballot. Others whose circumstances prevent them from voting on Election Day may be eligible for one of the following options.

## **Absentee ballots**

Individuals who cannot make it to the polls on Election Day may be eligible to vote by absentee ballot. Individuals can apply for an absentee-by-mail or absentee-by-traveling board ballot by visiting [www.in.gov/sos/elections](http://www.in.gov/sos/elections) and downloading the application, or calling (317) 232-6531. Mail the completed form to the appropriate address, as indicated on the application.

To qualify for an absentee-by-mail ballot, you must fit one of the requirements listed at [www.in.gov/sos/elections/absentee.html](http://www.in.gov/sos/elections/absentee.html).

You may qualify for an absentee-by-traveling board ballot if you have a disability, are ill or injured, or are caring for an individual who is ill or injured during polling hours. If approved, a ballot is delivered by a bi-partisan absentee voter board that will assist you with your ballot.

## **Provisional ballots**

If voters encounter one of the following problems while trying to cast their vote on Election Day, they are still eligible to cast a provisional ballot at the polling location. The voter completes a ballot that is kept separate from others and forwarded to the county election board. For the vote to count, the individual has until noon on Nov. 14 to present the proper documentation at his or her election office. You may submit a provisional ballot if:

- You cannot present a photo ID.
- Your name is not on the poll list.
- You do not currently live in the precinct.
- You are asked to provide additional proof of residency and cannot do so.
- Your signature on the poll list does not match that on the registration record.