

DP Connections



<https://disabilitypartners.org>

Mar 2023

DisAbility Partners Passes the Leadership Torch

By Gale Anglin

After 26 years of service, Barbara Davis is retiring to enjoy grandchildren, gardening, camping and just relaxing. Through her leadership as Executive Director, Disability Partners has become a strong presence in helping people with disabilities, in our 14 most western counties, to realize more independence in their daily lives through a variety of services.

Through Barbara's leadership Disability Partners has progressed from a small rental space in the Sylva Plaza to ownership of three office locations comprising approximately 12,000 square feet to serve people with disabilities. We grew from three employees with an annual budget of \$126,000 to seventy-five employees with a budget of \$3,200,000. Her vision initiated many new programs for people with disabilities to complement our basic federal grants that renew annually. We appreciate Barbara's dedication and leadership to Disability Partners and people with disabilities.

The time comes when stepping back and rekindling personal goals and dreams must take place. We wish Barbara the best in all her future endeavors and know her retirement years will bring much deserved time for family and personal adventures.

The torch has been passed to Chuck Oaks as the new Executive Director effective November 1, 2022 to lead Disability Partners into the future. Chuck has been with the Disability Partners for the past 7 years providing independent living services to those with disabilities in our communities. He has served in the roll of Direct Care Worker with our Person First Program and Independent Living Specialist/Cyberpals Supervisor in the Sylva office.

He is dedicated to working with consumers to help them reach their independent living goals of their choice and educating our communities on the importance of inclusion and accessibility for all people with disabilities. He is excited to bring new ideas with a continued assurance of the organizations success to fulfill our mission in all service areas. We look forward to working with Chuck and support his growth as Executive Director. Please stop by and meet Chuck and learn more about Disability Partners.

Locations

DisAbility Partners Sylva

525 Mineral Springs Drive
Sylva, NC 28779
828-631-1167

Person First Services
2775 US Hwy 74 E
Sylva, NC 28779
828-354-0296

HomeCare Partners
828-586-1570

Pathways to the Future Thrift Store

329 Jackson Plaza
Sylva, NC 28779
828-631-5533

Hours: M-Th 10am-7pm
Fri-Sat 10am-4pm

DisAbility Partners Asheville

108 New Leicester Hwy
Asheville, NC 28805
828-298-1977

New Year, Same Mission: The Who, What, and Why of DisAbility Partners

By Jamie Whitfield

DisAbility Partners is happy to announce that we have returned! After 2 years of mostly-remote work, we officially re-opened our doors last fall. Our new Executive Director, Chuck Oaks, is preparing us for our continued mission as the Center for Independent Living (CIL) for Haywood, Jackson, Macon, Swain, Graham, Clay, and Cherokee counties of North Carolina. In conjunction with our sister office in Asheville, we collectively serve 14 western counties of North Carolina.

As your local CIL, we are a private, non-profit, consumer-controlled, community-based organization by and for people with disabilities. Our goals are maintaining civil rights options, and ensuring all persons with disabilities have control over their own choices and freedom to participate in their communities. We are dedicated to partnering with individuals and the community to enhance, advocate for, and support personal choices of, persons with disabilities and ensure access to community inclusion, and independent living.

A mouthful, right? Some of you may be wondering what all that means. Here is a break-down:

- **Private:** Our organization is not a government agency.
- **Non-profit:** We are a 501-c3, and 100% of our funding goes towards our mission and operating costs.
- **Consumer-controlled:** Our consumers control the direction of this agency, within the parameters of its mission. Our consumers are persons with disabilities. At least half of all persons working for DisAbility Partners, or serving on its board, have a disability.
- **Community-based:** Our staff and board members live and work right here in the community. We grocery shop here. Pay our bills here. Go to the doctor here.

So, what does DisAbility Partners do?

We have 5 core services that we are required to offer as part of our mission: advocacy, information and referrals, peer support, transitions/ diversions, and independent living skills.

- *Advocacy:* Advocacy is offered in both individual and systemic capacities. For our consumers, we advocate with other agencies to address a need. For the disability community-at-large, we advocate for increased access to the world around us.
- *Information and Referrals:* Anyone can call us for information on area agencies and programs that can assist with a wide range of needs.
- *Peer Support:* We offer peer support to our consumers who just need to talk to someone. Sometimes a different perspective can help find solutions.
- *Transitions/ Diversions:* We help area consumers transition out of nursing homes and into community-based housing. Or hopefully prevent someone from having to move into such facilities.
- *Independent Living Skills:* We offer classes on skills needed for successful independent living. We ask everyone in our community to bear with us on that last part, as it was halted during the pandemic. Our first step, we hope, is to get a volunteer council who will help decide what courses are needed.

In addition to these core services, we operate several programs that support our goals. We have Home Care Partners, to offer personal care services that assist consumers with their activities of daily living, and our Cyberpals program puts computers into the hands of local people with disabilities. Person First Services offers a day program for participants with

intellectual/developmental disabilities. We run a thrift store to raise money for our programs.

There you have it. If you or anyone you know needs more information, feel free to call us. (828)631-1167.

COVID-19 and You

From the Desk of Sandra Barker, RN

Did you know that COVID-19 is a chameleon? About the time you think you have a handle on this pandemic predator, it changes and a new variant of the disease emerges. Like a chameleon, it changes color and hides in plain sight. Since the beginning of this pandemic, we've seen a number of prominent versions, including Alpha, Beta, Delta, and Omicron. Typically, viruses can become more contagious as they evolve.

The CDC guidelines list many precautions that can reduce your chances of getting sick, from COVID-19 and many other illnesses. One of those precautions is washing your hands. Your hands come in contact with many things that can transfer contaminants to your body. All day long you touch your face, rub your eyes, eat, drink, scratch an itch, shake hands-- just to name a few. If you handle paper money, wash your hands or use sanitizer even more frequently. Below is a quick guide to wash your hands that will reduce the chances of transferring germs.

1. Wet both hands and apply soap.

Sing the 'Happy Birthday Song' twice while doing the rest.

2. Rub hands together, getting between fingers
3. Scrub back of hands
4. Get your wrists, and under your fingernails too.
5. After the second time singing, rinse your hands.

Follow the CDC guidelines on how to protect yourself. Go to <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/index.html> for more information on COVID-19, current guidelines, vaccines, variants, and testing.

I am here at Disability Partners to help with your COVID 19 concerns. Do not hesitate to call me at 828-631-1167. Take precautions and stay healthy!

Volunteers Sought for New Consumer Council

As part of our ongoing mission, DisAbility Partners seeks volunteers to serve on our consumer council. The council will help guide our center by generating ideas for our independent living skills courses, potlucks, local advocacy issues, and community outreach. As persons with disabilities, we know our needs and struggles.

Council members will be expected to contribute 2-10 hours a month of their time. We hope to have everyone meet in our offices, but virtual meetings may be required at first. Anyone interested in serving can call our Sylva Office.

United Nation Seeks Input on Disaster Readiness from Persons with Disabilities!

The United Nations and social scientists of the world are seeking input from persons with disabilities about whether they feel heard by local government and response agencies on disaster needs. Go to <https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=2zWeD09UYE-9zF6kFubccNHdwAfkB09Amu3bZbj99-xUNzZIREdLR0tVRFJNV0VFNDgxSEZDRFRVMC4u> to read more, and participate.

Calendar of Events

Open House/ Spring Fling

March 30th, 2023

Starts at 1pm

DisAbility Partners Hosts Spring Fling

DisAbility Partners is hosting an open house to celebrate Spring and the center's re-opening to the public. Master Storyteller Gary Carden will bring his unique talents, and the public can learn all about the services we offer on Thursday, March 30, 2023 beginning at 1 p.m. The event will last about 2 hours and anyone wanting to attend should RSVP. Interested persons can call us at 828-631-1167 with questions and to reserve your space.

Cyberpals Seeks Donations

DisAbility Partners is seeking donations for its Cyberpals program. The program places refurbished desktops and laptops into the hands of consumers with a disability, so they can return to school, seek employment, or just be able to communicate with others. If you have a desktop computer or laptop you no longer need, give us a call. The computer must be able to run Windows 10. Any items donated are eligible for a donation form for tax purposes. We are not accepting scanners, printers, cameras, or other peripheral items at this time.

Aren't sure if your computer can run Windows 10?

You can check the computer's system information here:

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/which-version-of-windows-operating-system-am-i-running-628bec99-476a-2c13-5296-9dd081cdd808>

You can see the system requirements for Windows 10 here:

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/windows-10-system-requirements-6d4e9a79-66bf-7950-467c-795cf038671>



CYBERP@LS
Connections Matter

DisAbility Partners Welcomes New Staff

DisAbility Partners would like to welcome 5 new staff members: Sandra Barker, Jamie Whitfield, Jessica Bell, Carolyn Mason-Burton, and Paula Mathis.

Paula joins us as a Programs Administrative Assistant with more than 35 years of office administration and general clerical work under her belt. She is a wife and mother with 3 girls and 5 grandkids who enjoys spending time with her family. She also has a passion for health and wellness, gardening, travel, and photography. Her dream is to one day visit the Indonesia islands.

Carolyn is our newest Independent Living Specialist. Before joining DisAbility Partners, she was an American Sign Language interpreter for Buncombe County Schools who grew up in Brooklyn, NY. She is a widow and mother with 4 adult kids, one of whom has down syndrome. Learning to best advocate for her own child is how she developed a passion for working with persons with disabilities. She is very sociable and loves meeting new people. You can find her at the Haywood County Senior Center once a week.

Jessica works as an administrative assistant for DisAbility Partners. She has more than 28 years of customer service under her belt and joins us as the former Accounts Payables and Director of Community Outreach with Mountain View Manor. She is a lifelong resident of western North Carolina who collects frogs and sunflowers. Her cheery voice and disposition are often the first point of contact for anyone visiting our offices or giving us a call. When not taking care of her family, Jessica enjoys reading romance novels.

Sandra Barker is our Registered Nurse, who oversees Home Care Partners. She grew up in North Carolina, and graduated from Casper College in Casper, Wyoming. Her background is in emergency care and she has a passion for working with seniors, and persons with disabilities. A mother of 3, during her off-hours, she enjoys spending time with her family.

Jamie Whitfield is also a new independent living specialist. She is a graduate of Western Carolina University and grew up in Nashville, TN. Her evenings and weekends are often devoted to writing and socializing with her friends online. She also enjoys throwing on a pottery wheel.

Safety in the New Year

By Jamie Whitfield

The holidays have passed, but winter is not yet over. With the new year comes a host of things we can do to prepare ourselves for emergencies, or prevent them from happening.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has a complete guide on emergency preparedness, including guides for seniors and persons with disabilities. You can visit their website at <http://ready.gov> to learn more. Or contact us at Disability Partners. We have plenty of brochures on the subject that you can take with you. Materials are available in standard print, large print, English and Spanish. Feel free to print this mini checklist to use while you inspect your home.

Mini Checklist:

- Change batteries in smoke/Carbon Monoxide detectors.
- Inspect your appliances for frayed cords.
- Never use open-flame heating inside the home without proper ventilation. (Such as space heaters using oil or kerosene).
- Make sure heaters are at least 3 feet from fabrics and walls. Do not use a space heater directly on carpet.
- Pack/Update an Emergency Kit. Replace any outdated medication in it.
- Update your medication list.
- Update information on your 'In Case of Emergency' list.
- Don't Forget Your Pet's Needs!

View from My Front Porch

By Gale Anglin

From my porch, I see that winter is here bringing a dreary landscape most days with trees extending their barren branches to the cold surrounding atmosphere. This may be time to stay in, grab a cup of coffee and think about projects to do inside and solve world issues.

I recently purchased a small chest of drawers at an antique store and decided to clean it up to store more items that really need to go to Pathways Thrift Store. But that is for another day. While undergoing this adventure I found a newspaper, The Union, Manchester New Hampshire, dated October 8, 1945. The price for the paper was five cents!

World War 2 ended on September 2, 1945 and the paper reported, General George Patten turned over command of the U S 3rd Army to Lt. General Lucian Truscott, Jr., the indictment came down in Nuremberg, Germany against 24 Nazi war criminals, 23 being top ranking Nazis, President Truman pleaded with Americans to collaborate together to prevent world destruction and cooperation between management and labor was needed at home. Leavitt's Department Store offered regular \$2.49 portraits for 49 cents, Community Optical had glasses for \$5.50 and you can now earn 4 points instead of 2 for saving used fats for soap, new cars, irons, and tires. Could today's society really do this?

The article that really caught my attention was "Jobs Are Sought for Handicapped." Today, we no longer use the word "Handicapped" to reference people with disabilities. In 1945 President Truman designated the first week of October each year to be "Employ the Physically Handicapped Week" which was renamed in 1962 by removing the word physically to include all disabilities. In 1987 Congress expanded the week to a month and changed the name to "National Disability Employment Awareness Month." The theme selected in October 2022 for the coming year is "Inclusion Drives Innovation." People with disabilities can play a vital role in our society if they have the desire to be included and are given the opportunity by our communities.

If you have a disability and want to realize an income more than public benefits offer, reach out to local business, newspapers, online employment websites to see what is available for you. Many local employers need people to work and Disability partners can help you with this search to get you started in the employment direction.

From my porch there is still a chill in the air and the landscape looks the same but I know underneath that brown exterior is a budding terrain of green grass and leaves, flowering roses and daisy's, warm sunshine and the opportunity for adventure. My disability gives me the drive to move forward, change what I can for the better and be open for growth in my personal life. What do you see from your porch?

Meet the Staff

Executive Director

General Manager

HR/ Finance Manager

Accounting/ Payroll

Home Care Program Manager

Independent Living Specialists

Administrative Assistants

Chuck Oaks

Gale Anglin

Philana Griffin

Becky Jones

Sandra Barker, RN

Eddie Maney

Jamie Whitfield

Carolyn Mason-Burton

DisAbility Partners: Jessica Bell

Program Admin Assistant: Paula Mathis