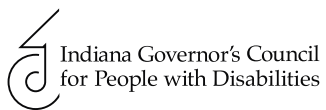


ignite thoughts into action

# spark



Indiana Governor's Council  
for People with Disabilities

**mar/apr 2012**  
volume 2 number 3

in this issue on  
**TRAVEL**



Munson shares  
travel advice



Planning  
vacations



Vacations in  
your backyard

in this issue on  
**TRAVEL**

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**spark** is a bi-monthly publication of the Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities, an independent state agency that facilitates change. Our mission is to promote the independence, productivity and inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of society. This mission is accomplished through planning, evaluation, collaboration, education, research and advocacy.

**Suellen Jackson-Boner**  
Executive Director

**Christine Dahlberg**  
Deputy Director

## The spring season signals the approach of summer, a few months out of the year our culture has set aside as a time to relax. It's a time to vacation with family, enjoy outdoor activities and spend leisure time with family and friends.

We all need to get away from time to time, whether it's the overseas trip of a lifetime, a family vacation to a favorite spot, or just picnicking and relaxing at a local park. Taking a break from the everyday stresses of life to rejuvenate and refresh is something we must all do to keep ourselves healthy and balanced.

Furthermore, giving ourselves a break from our daily routines frees up time to try new things – maybe a new activity that's piqued your interest or revisiting an old hobby you used to enjoy.

Of course, for people with disabilities, planning vacations and trying new activities come with unique circumstances. Planning a trip can be difficult for anyone, and the added tasks of finding accessible accommodations and inclusive activities for children and adults with disabilities makes it all the more challenging.

With inspiring stories about accessible travel and an abundance of information and resources to help you plan enjoyable vacations, we hope this issue of Spark will bring reassurance and excitement as you make your plans for summer!

Sincerely,



Suellen Jackson-Boner  
Executive Director



## Emily Munson shares advice from her overseas excursions

It might be wise to get advice from Emily Munson when considering international travel. She's been on two trips, and neither was impulsive nor spontaneous. In fact, it took quite a bit of planning to vacation abroad with spinal muscular atrophy. But her preparations paid off, and her trips to Paris and the Caribbean Islands were the most rewarding and exciting times of her life – so much so that she intends to continue traveling the globe.

Munson's first international experience was in August 2010 when she celebrated her graduation from law school by booking a cruise to the Caribbean Islands. Her urge to travel continued to grow, and within a year, she attended the Wheelchair Soccer World Cup in Paris.

If you are considering traveling overseas this summer, take the

opportunity to read what Munson has to say about her experiences vacationing with a disability.

### How did you research your destination and its accessibility options?

**Munson:** For my Caribbean Island cruise, much of the research was done on my own and through recommendations from friends. Online Google searches about wheelchair accessibility were a main source of information, and I also used sites like specialneedsatsea.com, newmobility.com and quest.mda.org. On my trip to Paris, I worked through a travel agency that specializes in traveling with disabilities, yoola.fr.

When touring the islands, I needed to make arrangements with a rental company to provide an accessible van. It's best to make reservations before vacationing; however, there are island tourism

offices immediately off the boat that can help you make accommodations for accessible sight-seeing, if available. These services cost extra if you do decide to make reservations.

### How did you prepare yourself for your international excursions?

**Munson:** I learned that having an "expect the worst" mentality brings more appreciation for the accessibility that is available. It is crucial to be very specific when describing what you need – such as a roll-in shower, accessible table, etc. Another important recommendation is to find out what types of electronic adaptors you may need by calling the manufacturer of a product in question. Had I plugged in my ventilator without the appropriate adapter, it would have blown a fuse in Paris, and I would have been left without oxygen. I also talked with my doctor before



Lots of planning and preparation helped make Munson's Caribbean cruise a delight.

away Rastafarian restaurant that tourists would never know existed. When I couldn't do much on the island, I could always count on something happening on the cruise ship. And, in Paris, people in wheelchairs get to view the Mona Lisa from up-close – much closer than the regular viewer.

**What advice can you give those who want to take a trip overseas?**

**Munson:** There are a couple of different tips to share. The first is to be aware that there are travel companies that specialize in arranging trips for people with disabilities. I find a lot of good articles and ads on disability travel in Quest, the Muscular Dystrophy Association newsletter. Second, international cities become much more accessible after hosting an Olympics or Para-Olympics. I had friends living in Greece who were very surprised by the city's transformation after the Olympic Games had been held there. Finally, it takes a sense of adventure. Whether using a travel company or vacationing with friends or family, organizing travel outside the U.S. comes with many different challenges. But if people are up for an adventure, it's worth it!

available on the Caribbean Islands, there are no accessible taxicabs. In both the Caribbean and in France, many older buildings were not made accessible, and sidewalks and cobblestone streets were hard to maneuver. Some large public buildings in Paris do have accessible accommodations, but many times they are hidden away to uphold the aesthetics of the original architecture. Especially in places like the Louvre or Versailles, someone looking for accessibility signage would not find it unless he or she asked. I was grateful to have a tour guide through Paris to help avoid problematic situations.

**Did you feel like you missed out on some experiences?**

**Munson:** I traveled with friends and companions on both trips, which is definitely a good thing to do. Although I didn't get to see inside the Pantheon or travel around a few of the islands in the Caribbean, there were some advantages. I bartered locally for free gemstones, had drinks near the beach and sampled local food on the islands. At St. Croix, my accessible bus driver took me on a tour to the easternmost coastline and then to a tucked-

making any travel arrangements to be sure that I had accounted for everything.

**What differences can travelers expect between U.S. and international airports?**

**Munson:** Interestingly, in my experience, airports outside the U.S. are a bit friendlier and are able to make arrangements easier than U.S. airports. TSA agents in the States are careful to abide by every rule, especially at the security gate. The Paris airport posed the biggest challenge when I was not allowed to pass my power wheelchair through security. Because I depend on the wheelchair for mobility, my travel agent fortunately spoke on my behalf before they tried removing it from me at baggage drop-off. Despite that incident, Parisian airport staff stayed with me until I boarded the plane to make sure I was being helped.

**What major forms of accessibility were absent abroad?**

**Munson:** In Paris, transportation is supposed to be accessible, but the Métro (subway) is not. And unless rental companies are

# Trails, beaches, dunes accessible to all at national parks

The National Park Service (NPS), part of the U.S. Department of the Interior, is determined to make America's most pristine natural landmarks accessible for people of all abilities. From trails and campsites to the Grand Canyon and Rocky Mountains, accessible features are enabling people with disabilities to experience and appreciate America's most treasured landscapes.

Whenever possible, the NPS has created and modified features – while still preserving original structures – to ensure people with disabilities have the same opportunities as all visitors to enjoy the parks. Wheelchair-accessible facilities, assistive technologies, and communication enhancements for those with hearing and visual impairments make the parks inclusive for all patrons.

To give people with disabilities an even better experience at national parks, the NPS offers a free Access Pass that gives people with disabilities no-cost admission to more than 2,000 recreational sites. The pass is available for people with permanent disabilities, and at some sites it also provides a 50 percent discount on amenity fees and services such as camping, swimming, boat launching and specialized interpretive services.

Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, the shoreline that boards Indiana Dunes State Park in Porter, Ind., is one of three national parks in the state. The Lakeshore features accessible camping spots, picnic areas, overlooks and vistas. The site also offers assistive listening devices and sign language interpreters upon request. A few of the accessible features include:

- **Inland Marsh Overlook:** This boardwalk leads from U.S. 12 across dune ridges, through Beech-Maple Forest to an inland wetland vista.
- **Lakefront Drive and Lake View:** This shoreline road runs along two miles of Lake Michigan and provides an accessible plaza with picnic tables, shelters and restrooms.
- **Dunbar Parking Overlook:** Park your car and view 300 miles of dunes shoreline.

Last year, the NPS welcomed more than 2 million visitors to Indiana's national parks, which include George Rogers Clark National Historical Park in Vincennes and the Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial in Lincoln City. \*



To learn more, visit [nps.gov/findapark/passes](https://nps.gov/findapark/passes).

For more information about the accessibility of national parks, visit [nps.gov/pub\\_aff/access](https://nps.gov/pub_aff/access) or call the individual park you wish to visit.

A list of all national parks and contact information can be found at [nps.gov](https://nps.gov).



# Planning accessible, fun vacations

Travelers with disabilities make about 17 million hotel visits and take more than 9 million airline flights nationwide each year, according to a study by Open Doors Organization, a Chicago nonprofit that advocates for accessible travel. Although planning accessible vacations can be challenging, people with disabilities are finding options and taking time away from home – most frequently visiting New York City, Washington, D.C. and Chicago, with Orlando, Las Vegas and Los Angeles following close behind.

The task of planning a vacation can be overwhelming for anyone, let alone the specific circumstances that travelers with disabilities must consider. Luckily, there are knowledgeable resources to ease the stress and help travelers realize their destination dreams. Many

travel guides specifically focused on accessibility are available, offering tons of tips and tricks to make traveling more enjoyable for people with disabilities.

### Making plans ahead of time:

- When planning an itinerary, don't over-plan the day. Planning too much in too little time may make a vacation more stressful and tiring than necessary.
- Make accommodations early, and mention your specific needs. Make sure that accommodations will be comfortable and enjoyable for all travelers.
- Be specific and clear about disabilities and specific needs when speaking with travel companions and hospitality personnel. Others do not likely have the background knowledge

that you do about your specific disability.

- Describe the trip accurately and specifically to your doctor. Medical professionals may have additional suggestions and instructions to make your time away more enjoyable and safe.
- Ask your physician for additional copies of prescriptions in case of an unplanned emergency.

### How and what to pack:

- Begin packing early to make sure you're not rushed at the last minute and have time to account for all necessities.
- Begin by making a list of everything that you touch in a day's time. Narrow the list down to only the things you'll need for the trip.

- Look around your home. If there is anything that isn't easily found in a supermarket or convenience store, consider taking it along.
- Pack with the mentality that what you don't take may be something that you have to go without.
- Store any medication, prescriptions, doctors' notes and important phone numbers in separate locations in your luggage, in case one bag is lost or stolen.
- Bring spare parts and tools for any required equipment in case of unpredictable damage.

### Traveling with wheelchairs:

- If possible, use a wheelchair with large, air-filled tires to eliminate bumps and increase accessibility on uneven terrain.
- Have your wheelchair routinely serviced shortly before leaving to ensure it is in tip-top shape for traveling.
- Label all parts of the chair with a name and contact information in case of lost parts.
- If flying, store all detachable parts of the wheelchair in a carry-on bag – as space allows – so there is less chance of lost parts.

### Traveling by air:

- When booking your flight, ask for assistance to help you through the process when you arrive at the airport.
- Avoid connecting flights when possible. The chance of flight delays or losing luggage increases.



- Use an airline that has a track record of excellent service for travelers with disabilities. Look at customer feedback websites to find out which ones have been most helpful in the past.
- Know your rights before going through security checkpoints. Go to [tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/specialneeds/index.shtm](https://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/specialneeds/index.shtm) to learn more about policies and procedures for airport security.
- If you require any special meals for specific dietary needs, be sure to request those in advance.
- Arrive at the airport early and ask to pre-board the plane if extra time is needed.
- Individuals called airport porters are available to help escort you through the security checkpoints and to your gate, which can help expedite the process.

- Carry necessities, like medication, in carry-on bags.
- Be sure to adjust body positions during the flight every so often to avoid stiffness and muscle cramps. \*

For more information and resources to help you plan a fun, accessible vacation, visit:

- Society of Accessible Travel and Hospitality: [sath.org](https://www.sath.org)
- Independent Traveler: [independenttraveler.com](https://www.independenttraveler.com)
- Disabled Travelers Guide: [disabledtravelersguide.com](https://www.disabledtravelersguide.com)
- World on Wheelz: [worldonwheelz.com](https://www.worldonwheelz.com)
- Global Access News: [globalaccessnews.com](https://www.globalaccessnews.com)



# Vacations and adventures in your backyard

**Y**ou don't have to venture too far from home to enjoy a relaxing vacation or find fun activities. There are many exciting adventures for the whole family to experience right here in Indiana.

## Outdoor recreation

Indiana's state parks and other recreational areas are some of the best spots you can find for trail exploring, camping, swimming and fishing. Many of the state parks and their facilities are accessible and inclusive of people with disabilities and, despite budget setbacks, the department is doing all it can to make additional upgrades.

"Budgets are tight, and a number of states around us are having to cut services from parks and recreation," said Ric Edwards, director of safety and ADA compliance for the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR). "I've been pleased with what we're still able to do."

One key focus is ensuring mobility access throughout the parks, specifically on rougher landscapes that are difficult to access with standard assistive devices. DNR has purchased a number of four-wheel-drive power wheelchairs that can be used free of charge to enjoy environments that are not easily accessible with traditional devices. These super-duty wheelchairs are currently available at Lincoln, McCormick's Creek, O'Bannon Woods and Pokagon state parks. Patrons simply have to provide a form of identification at the park's office to borrow the wheelchair.

In addition, Indiana Dunes State Park in Chesterton poses another challenge. The Dunes' beautiful soft sand makes it difficult for wheels to roll patrons onto the beach. DNR recently purchased a power wheelchair that runs on belts that individuals can use for free to enjoy the beach independently. Edwards

also hopes to secure a wheelchair for Charlestown State Park, which just opened a new pedestrian bridge to Rose Island in September. Although the trail is accessible, a wheelchair is needed to help patrons with disabilities get up and down a steep grade that leads to the bridge.

DNR is also making efforts to upgrade inns and cabins. The Clifty Inn at Clifty Falls State Park, located near Madison, Ind., now has upscale, accessible rooms that are much nicer than the rustic accommodations you'd traditionally expect at state parks, according to Edwards. Potato Creek State Park, about 12 miles southwest of South Bend, Ind., and Shakamak State Park in Jasonville, Ind., also offer modern, accessible accommodations. Edwards said roll-in showers were also recently installed at McCormick's Creek.

Updating pedestrian trails to ensure accessibility continues to be a priority for DNR. O'Bannon Woods State Park in Corydon, Ind., recently received a Kellogg Grant to install an accessible trail – now open to the public – which is even more accessible with use of the 4x4 wheelchair. Upgrading piers, particularly for fishing, to be accessible is another change DNR continues to pursue. Furthermore, Edwards said the Department is hoping to install permanent, accessible restrooms throughout the parks' trails and more secluded areas where facilities aren't available.

DNR also provides information to help local communities build accessible programs and facilities, such as playgrounds for kids of all abilities. For more information and resources, visit [in.gov/dnr/parklake](http://in.gov/dnr/parklake).

## Attractions and sightseeing

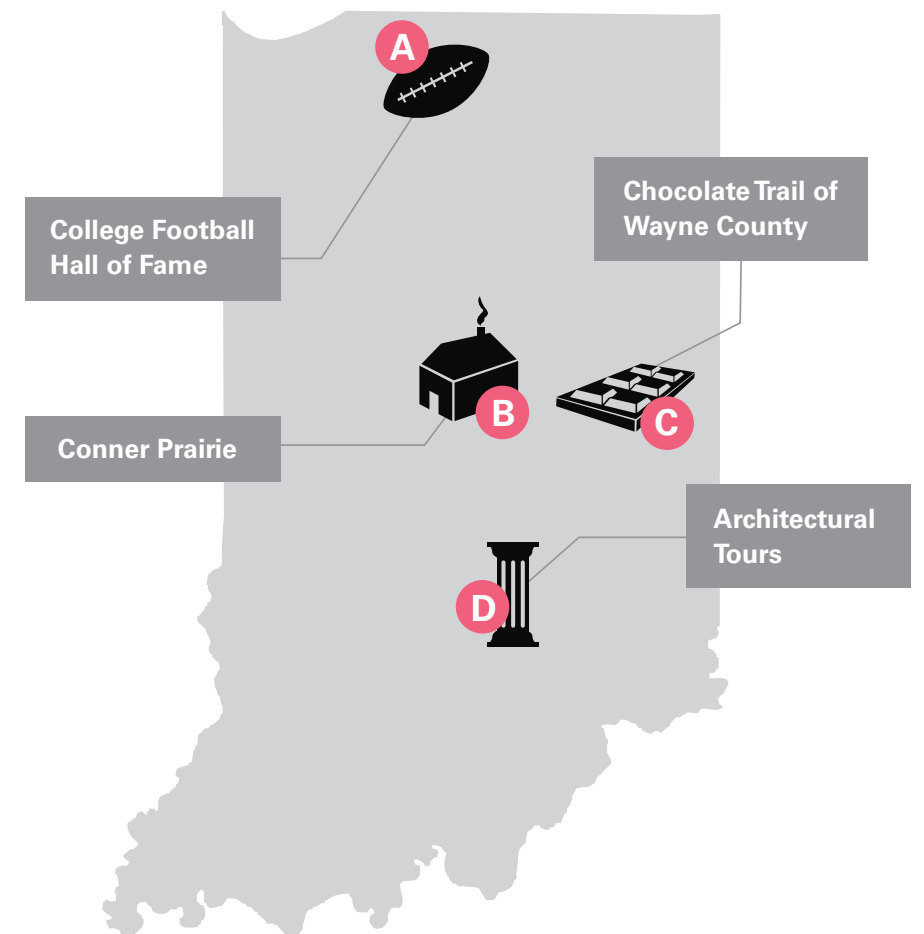
In addition to state parks, there are many other fun activities to enjoy in our own communities. Museums, sport venues, historical sites, art galleries and other great attractions are all across Indiana. Here are just a few unique spots:

**College Football Hall of Fame – South Bend, Ind. A**  
[collegefootball.org](http://collegefootball.org)

Sports enthusiasts can learn about the heroes and history of college football at this museum, featuring interactive exhibits and events.

**Conner Prairie – Fishers, Ind. B**  
[connerprairie.org](http://connerprairie.org)

Guests not only learn, but have the opportunity to engage in Indiana's rich history in this interactive park. The accessible site features a Civil War re-enactment experience, a pioneer village where guests relive



life in the 1830s, a Balloon Voyage that takes guests on a helium-filled balloon ride, and so much more, including summer camps, historical tours and special events.

**Chocolate Trail of Wayne County – Richmond, Ind. C**  
[visitrichmond.org/attractions.cfm](http://visitrichmond.org/attractions.cfm)

This journey of indulgence includes accessible, one-of-a-kind bistros, cafes, local chocolatier and candy shops/factories, historic homes, spas, a winery, gift shops and more.

**Architectural Tours – Columbus, Ind. D**  
[columbus.in.us](http://columbus.in.us)

Did you know that Columbus, Ind., is ranked sixth in the nation by the

American Institute of Architects for innovation and design? Famous architecture put Columbus on the map, and you can experience its more than 70 highly renowned buildings and pieces of art through an accessible guided tour.

A great place to start your search for fun activities and close-to-home getaways is your city or county convention and visitors bureau. Visit [visitindiana.net](http://visitindiana.net) for a complete list. To find more attractions in Indiana, visit [in.gov/visitindiana](http://in.gov/visitindiana) and click on "plan your trip." \*



# Camps and activities keep kids moving and learning all summer

**W**ith the summer months quickly approaching, finding activities to occupy children during their time out of school is on the forefront of many parents' minds. Thankfully, there are many camps and activities across Indiana that are inclusive of children at all ability levels. These camps and programs offer structured learning and recreational opportunities to keep kids physically and mentally active during summer break.

## Accessible Camps

**CYO Camp Rancho Framasa**  
Nashville, Ind., and Indianapolis, Ind.  
This Catholic camp is set on 309 acres of wooded hills in Brown County, Ind. It offers six-day and three-day overnight programs or a week-long day camp. Campers of all abilities have opportunities to learn and share together in a fun and supportive environment. Children can meet new friends,

participate in cabin activities, make crafts, play all-camp games, watch skits, sing songs and cook outdoors. On certain weekends, families can experience camp together at CYO Camp Rancho Framasa.

While the camp is located in Nashville, Ind., it also offers programs in the Indianapolis area. Visit their website, [campranchoframasa.org](http://campranchoframasa.org), or call (888) 988-2839 to learn more.

## YMCA Programs

Various locations throughout Indiana YMCA locations have camps or other summer activities for kids of all interests and abilities. The programs are designed with diversity in mind, making every effort to include people with special needs in their vast summer camp programs and activities.

The Y allows service pets and provides customized equipment, audio tele-text machines for people with hearing impairments, and signage in Braille for those with visual impairments.

To find a YMCA near you, visit [ymca.net](http://ymca.net) and use the search box that says "Find your Y." Or, click on the "Find a Y Camp" in the footer of the homepage to find a camp location in your area. You can also call the YMCA customer service number at (800) 872-9622.

## Camp Tecumseh

Brookston, Ind.

At Camp Tecumseh, any child with a mild to moderate disability is welcome and experiences a fully inclusive camp environment. Camp counselors are encouraging and can help create successful camp experiences for children with any ability level. The camp offers activities such as drama,

swimming, tennis, diving, mountaineering, volleyball, kayaking, crafts, canoeing, archery, ceramics, fishing, cricket, horseback riding, soccer, high ropes, guitar, basketball and zip lining. Each day is also filled with cabin bonding time, campfires and themed dinners.

Visit [camptecumseh.com](http://camptecumseh.com) or call (765) 564-2898 for more information.

## Bloomington Parks and Recreation Programs

Bloomington, Ind.

The parks and recreation system in Bloomington, Ind., is devoted to providing inclusive experiences for all to enjoy. Individualized techniques and resources are used to include those with disabilities, without fundamentally altering the activities. Kids and adults with disabilities are offered a leisure companion to provide them with additional support. The programs cover a wide range of interests, and include gardening, arts and crafts, sports, forestry and music.

To learn more about the programs offered, visit Bloomington's website, [bloomington.in.gov](http://bloomington.in.gov), and click on the "Parks and Recreation" button to the left. For more information, contact Amy Shrake at (812) 349-3747 or email her at [shrakea@bloomington.in.gov](mailto:shrakea@bloomington.in.gov).

## Bradford Woods

Martinsville, Ind.

Associated with Indiana University – Bloomington, Bradford Woods offers educational and leadership growth through fun, recreational experiences for both kids and adults. Single-day programs and overnight camps are

offered, and facilities at Bradford Woods follow a universal design model to accommodate campers of all ability levels. Program staffers are well trained in people-first language, disability awareness and medical/personal care, and medical professionals such as nurses, doctors and recreational therapists are on-site.

To learn more about the programs and camps available, visit [bradfordwoods.com](http://bradfordwoods.com). You can also contact Bradford Woods at (765) 342-2915 or [bradwood@indiana.edu](mailto:bradwood@indiana.edu).

## Accessible Playgrounds

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires each and every public playground to be accessible in some form or another. However, there are playgrounds around the state that have taken accessibility to a whole new level.

## Lower Cascades Park

Bloomington, Ind.

This park is the largest and most accessible playground in the state. With two accessible playscapes, large picnic pavilions and sand volleyball pits, this is Bloomington's accessible playground destination. An additional accessible playground is being built at Karst Farm Park in Bloomington.

## Freedom Field at Parkside Elementary School

Columbus, Ind.

This playground is entirely inclusive and provides activities for all ages and abilities. The park uses custom safety surfacing and features safe "rock and space climbers" to give everyone a unique and exciting experience.

## Freedom Trail Park

Westfield, Ind.

Along with an updated inclusive playground, this Westfield park also provides a sensory garden. The park conferred with the Hamilton County Autism Support Group to feature activities appealing to a variety of visitors. The playground system was created to accommodate more than one person in a wheelchair at one time with extra-wide ramps. The swing area is also particularly accessible by including swing forms that are comfortable for all.

## Taylor's Dream, Kreager Park

Fort Wayne, Ind.

Indiana's first Boundless Playground – a place where children of all abilities can learn essential life skills through play – was inspired by then 11-year-old Taylor Reuille, a 5th grader who noticed that other students in her school couldn't enjoy regular playground equipment. Located in Kreager Park, the playground features three circular pods of play equipment and activity areas, enabling children with and without disabilities to play and learn together in an inclusive environment.

Find even more local camps near you by going online to [insource.org/Summer\\_Camp2011](http://insource.org/Summer_Camp2011). INSOURCE, the Indiana Resource Center for Families with Special Needs, has compiled a lengthy list of camp opportunities with program details and contact information that is waiting to be explored. \*

# New laws and proposed rules move transportation forward

As the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) continues to reveal gaps within the current infrastructure of transportation systems in our communities, several improvements have been made to laws and policies governing public transit.

## Air

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) proposed a new rule in September 2011 that would require all airlines to make their websites and on-site kiosks accessible to travelers with disabilities. If passed, airlines must make their websites accessible according to the Website Content Accessibility Guidelines over a two-year period. Any automated kiosks – used for services such as printing boarding passes and luggage tags – purchased 60 days or later following the rule passage must be ADA accessible.

The DOT also submitted legislation in November 2011 to promote better collaboration among airports and airlines. The first of three amendments requires the establishment of service animal relief areas within terminals, making sure to consider both time and distance when determining the number and location of each. Second, closed captioning must be displayed on all television and audio-visual displays within

terminals. Finally, U.S. airports must work with foreign airlines to provide lift mechanisms where level-entry loading bridges are not available.

To learn more, visit [disability.gov/transportation](http://disability.gov/transportation) and find the link for News and Events on the center of the page.



## Rail, shuttle and taxi

The DOT has also made strides to improve access at intercity, commuter and high-speed passenger train stations. A new rule, passed in September 2011, requires new construction or significant renovation on station platforms to ensure people with disabilities are able to board on a level-entry platform.

Taxicab companies offering only sedan-type taxis are able to operate inaccessible vehicles so long as those companies provide

trained assistance for people with disabilities. They must also stow wheelchairs and allow accompanying service animals without charging fees.

If a taxi company operates vans, however, their fleet must contain accessible vans. In general, if their present service meets the equivalent standard for the next potential customer needing accessible service, they are meeting all requirements.

Hotel shuttles do not have to operate an accessible van, as long as they provide equal service, such as through a private contractor.

## Land

On July 26, 2011, the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board proposed accessibility standards for the design, construction and alteration of pedestrian facilities in the public right-of-way. The proposed guidelines ensured that sidewalks, pedestrian street crossings, pedestrian signals and other facilities for pedestrian circulation in the public right-of-way placed by state and local governments were readily accessible to and usable by pedestrians with disabilities.

These and many more legislative actions can be found on the DOT website, [DOT.gov](http://DOT.gov). \*

# Leisure and travel resources

## Transportation Security Administration (TSA)

[tsa.gov/travelers](http://tsa.gov/travelers)  
Toll-free hotline: (855) 787-2227

The TSA website offers all the information you need to know prior to flying, and it includes a section specifically for people with disabilities and medical conditions. People with disabilities can also call the TSA Cares hotline with questions about screening policies, procedures and what to expect at the security checkpoint.

## Emerging Horizons Accessible Travel News

[emerginghorizons.com](http://emerginghorizons.com)  
(209) 599-9409 (voice)

A free online magazine, Emerging Horizons is a travel resource for people who use wheelchairs or who benefit from easily walkable routes. The website provides free access guides to many cities and countries, as well as ideas for activities at each of these destinations.

## Global Access News

[globalaccessnews.com](http://globalaccessnews.com)  
[clearpath@cox.net](mailto:clearpath@cox.net)

An online bank of real-life experiences from travelers with disabilities, this website provides helpful suggestions for travel planning and much more.



## Society for Accessible Travel and Hospitality

[sath.org](http://sath.org)  
(212) 447-7284 (voice)  
[sathinfo@sath.org](mailto:sathinfo@sath.org)

SATH is a nonprofit organization that advocates for accessible travel. Its website offers helpful resources, including need-to-know tips and tricks and an online magazine full of traveling tales.

## Disabled Travelers

[disabledtravelers.com](http://disabledtravelers.com)  
[jeremy@disabledtravelers.com](mailto:jeremy@disabledtravelers.com)  
(website editor/owner)

In addition to resources for everything from access guides to equipment rentals, Disabled Travelers offers listings of travel specialists who can assist people with disabilities in planning accessible vacations.

## Independent Traveler

[independenttraveler.com](http://independenttraveler.com)  
(609) 730-9155 (voice)  
[carriegnz@independenttraveler.com](mailto:carriegnz@independenttraveler.com)

This website provides tips and resources for travelers of any ability. It has a specific section devoted to accessible travel, where it gives helpful travel tips and offers the occasional discount.

## Disabled Travelers Guide to the World

[disabledtravelersguide.com](http://disabledtravelersguide.com)

Nate Berger writes of his and his wife Nancy's adventures across the globe. He offers helpful tips for other travelers who use wheelchairs and wish to explore the world.

# Indiana communities celebrate Disability Awareness Month

**M**arch was a festive month around the state as thousands of Hoosiers helped ignite community spirit by celebrating Disability Awareness Month with local events and activities. The annual campaign, conducted by the Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities, encourages mindfulness and inclusion of all people with disabilities in Indiana, nearly 20 percent of the state's population.

Disability advocates and supporters embraced this year's theme, "Celebrating Community," by using the Council's free campaign materials to generate excitement and build awareness in their communities. With the support of Duke Energy, the campaign's title sponsor for the third consecutive year, this year's campaign prompted a spirit of inclusion throughout many of Indiana's homes, schools, neighborhoods and cities.

The following events highlight some of the great ways organizers celebrated Disability Awareness Month in their communities.

## **Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation – Carmel, Ind.**

"Having the opportunity to plan for something as important as Disability Awareness Month was

a great experience," said Brooke Taflinger, inclusion supervisor for Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation.

With the help of a planning team, Taflinger scheduled an array of events that gave recognition to many of Carmel Clay's programs for people with disabilities. "[Our team] sat down to discuss our target demographic for increasing awareness, how to best serve our community, and what events would create an impact and be beneficial to the community. It was an interesting and fun process to come up with the events."

Events were held at Carmel Clay's Monon Community Center and included a Community Inclusion Training seminar where Taflinger presented information on the disability population in Carmel, ADA guidelines and how to make public spaces more accessible for people with disabilities. In addition, a special gym night was reserved for people with disabilities to enjoy fun, free recreation. And, greeters with disabilities helped spread awareness by volunteering to hand out the Council's campaign materials at the Community Center entrance.

"Disability Awareness Month activities do not have to be

something extravagant or stressful; they can be fun, engaging and something that will benefit people in the community. No matter what type of event you end up putting on, it will bring about disability awareness – whether it's only a small number or hundreds of people, it truly matters that you are taking the steps, creating the opportunity and raising awareness."

## **Boys and Girls Club of Marshall County – Plymouth, Ind.**

Twice a week, club members of the Marshall County Boys and Girls Club became better acquainted with disability issues through month-long inclusion-driven activities. Andrea Schoof, program director for the Club, coordinated the effort by designing a curriculum based on the materials in the Governor's Council's annual campaign kit.

"Interaction is key when planning activities for youth. Therefore, I used the disability awareness activities booklet because there was so much practical and factual information that is presented through interactive lessons."

In April, Schoof also made plans for her club to participate in their own Hop-a-thon, a disability awareness program sponsored by



the national Muscular Dystrophy Association.

"The best part about planning a disability curriculum is knowing that youth are going to learn the importance of respecting differences while also recognizing that people share so many similarities," Schoof said.

## **Columbus Area Arts Council – Columbus, Ind.**

For more than 10 years, the Columbus Area Arts Council, in partnership with VSA Indiana, has hosted a special festival for children with disabilities from six surrounding school districts to enjoy a day dedicated to hands-on arts experiences. Artists from VSA Indiana, the state organization on art and disabilities, spent an entire day interacting with students in a variety of workshops – from collage-making to rhythmic drum circles and dancing. Students

chose which options they wanted to participate in, allowing them the opportunity to celebrate and showcase their talents that remarkably come alive throughout the day.

Gayle Holtman, president and CEO of VSA Indiana, frequently sees and hears great things after the day's activities. "Teachers and aides are always amazed to see their students engaging and showing initiative not normally demonstrated. With so many different artistic experiences to join in on, it really becomes a day to highlight a student's talents and abilities."

Rebekah Walsh, resource and development director at the Columbus Area Arts Council, agrees that the recognition of students' abilities is one of the most rewarding aspects of the day.

"This is such an exciting event to host for us because not only does it create awareness among the parents, teachers and volunteers who help during the day, but the community at large also recognizes the positive message it brings toward inclusion. With the help of VSA Indiana, this is a perfect event for Disability Awareness Month!"

## **Prepare for next year!**

Don't let Disability Awareness Month end on March 31. Visit [indianadisabilityawareness.org](http://indianadisabilityawareness.org) to find resources to host your own event at any time during the year. Event organizers are also encouraged to complete the coordinator evaluation form, which can be downloaded from the website or submitted through the mail, so the Council can incorporate your ideas and improvements for future campaigns. \*



ignite thoughts into action

# spark

We welcome your suggestions  
for newsletter content and  
ideas concerning the actions  
of the Council.

phone: (317) 232-7770  
email: [GPCPD@gpcpd.org](mailto:GPCPD@gpcpd.org)

[www.in.gov/gpcpd](http://www.in.gov/gpcpd)

## How did you celebrate community?

Did you coordinate a new, educational or celebratory event for Disability Awareness Month in March? **We need your input!**

Turn in your evaluation surveys and share ideas for next year's campaign. Evaluation forms are in packets or online at **[indianadisabilityawareness.org](http://indianadisabilityawareness.org)**.

### Disability Awareness Month 2012 Coordinator Evaluation

Thank you for taking the time to help us evaluate the effectiveness and quality of our Disability Awareness Month program. The Governor's Council for People with Disabilities uses your opinions to improve future campaigns. **To be entered in a prize drawing, please return this completed form by April 16, 2012**, to Kim Dennison at Borshoff. You can fax it to (317) 631-6499, scan and e-mail it as an attachment to [kim.dennison@borshoff.biz](mailto:kim.dennison@borshoff.biz), or mail it to 47 S. Pennsylvania St., Suite 500, Indianapolis, IN 46204. Or, if you prefer to submit the form online, visit [IndianaDisabilityAwareness.org/coordinator eval](http://IndianaDisabilityAwareness.org/coordinator eval). Questions can be directed to Kim at (317) 631-6400.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

CELEBRATING  
COMMUNITY  
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