

Handy News & Notes

Milwaukee Community Update – July 2026

Summer Summer Summertime! What's to do in Milwaukee this season can be found right here! Find ways to entertain, enlighten, and enliven with our monthly newsletter and enjoy summer in Milwaukee County to the fullest!

July is Disability Pride Month.

July of 2026 marks the 36th Anniversary of the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and a push forward to full inclusion in everyday life. With an aim at continued progress in advancing equal rights, accessibility and inclusion, all people will have the right to work, live, and access services in a way that promotes inclusion.

What is Disability Pride month?

Disability Pride Month is an annual observance in July that:

- celebrates disability identity and community
- recognizes disability culture and leadership
- marks the ADA anniversary and the ongoing work to make civil rights real in daily life

Key Facts

- More than 1 in 4 U.S. adults, [over 70 million people](#), have a disability.
- Disability Pride Month happens in July and is tied to the [ADA](#) anniversary, signed on July 26, 1990.
- The [Disability Pride Flag](#) was created by Ann Magill, a writer with cerebral palsy, and later updated based on community feedback.

This year's theme is **"The World Works Better with Us."** - When people with disabilities are included, respected, and supported, communities work better for everyone. That includes schools, workplaces, healthcare, transportation, and public life.

How do we experience this in everyday life - Disability-led advocacy and design have helped create changes many people now rely on, like curb cuts, closed captioning, audiobooks, and voice dictation. What began as access often becomes a better experience for everyone, including caregivers pushing strollers, viewers who prefer captions, commuters listening to books, and anyone who uses voice-to-text while multitasking.

How can I participate in Disability Pride month?

-Connect With People with Disabilities: Spend time with people with disabilities in your life and community, at events, at work, at school, and online.

- Learn Disability History and Culture: Understand the roots of Disability Pride by learning the history of disability rights and cultural contributions.

- Advocate for Disability Rights and Inclusion: Disability rights are under attack, from cuts to Medicaid to threats to special education to the resurgence of the R-word.

- [Challenge ableism and harmful language](#). Push back on stereotypes and slurs, including the R-word, and set clear expectations for respect.

- [Email or call your elected officials](#). Ask them to protect Medicaid, special education, and disability civil rights. Tell them disability rights are nonnegotiable.

-Attend an event in Wisconsin : Wisconsin: [Disability Pride Madison](#) (July 25th at Warner Park in Madison 1:00-5:00pm.

** If you have questions or have a Disability and need help or information you can contact the ADRC at (414) 289-6874 or on our website at [Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services](#)



ILLEGALLY PARKS CARDS

You are ILLEGALLY PARKED!

[@MKECoOPD](#)

The Milwaukee County Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD) has a supply of these cards. If you'd like some, please contact Jacqueline Formanek at 414-278-3938 or email jacqueline.formanek@milwaukeecountywi.gov with your complete name and mailing address.





FAMILY FRIENDLY

ALL ABILITIES OPEN HOUSE

WEHR NATURE CENTER

SUNDAY,
JULY 26

11:00AM
TILL
2:00PM



EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

LOCAL SUMMER SNACKS - BIRDING - ACCESSIBLE HIKES
HANDS-ON ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT - ADAPTIVE YOGA
ACCESSIBILITY PARTNERS

Discover how we're making nature
accessible for all ages and abilities—
because everyone belongs outdoors.



WEHRNATURECENTER.COM | 9701 W. COLLEGE AVE, FRANKLIN WI



What is BOLD?

BOLD is open to all legally blind people. Event participation is free. BOLD's purpose is to allow the blind and visually impaired to experience outdoor sports and leisure activities while developing their social and athletic skills. For more information call Kevin Meyers – Out-reach director at 414-839-0635 or Ray Tweedale president at 262-224-5517.

BOLD Activities for July

Sailing Lessons

Sat., July 11

Sailing Education Association of Sheboygan (SEAS) has invited BOLD for a day of sailing lessons on Lake Michigan. SEAS offers Experiential Sailing Lessons, that give people the opportunity to have their first contact with sailing in a 23ft boat. In this lesson, you will have basic instruction about boat parts and sailing experience. You will also learn basic sailing terms, how to tie knots and how to sail around a course using audible marks. SEAS has found success as a leading organization in the development and improvement of technology for visually impaired and blind sailors. The technology they have developed and implemented is among the best and most effective of its kind and has allowed them to give people the freedom of sailing. We will have lunch after sailing.

Richard J. Meyer Park Bike Ride or Hike

Sat., July 18

Come join us biking or hiking on a trail in Racine County. We will be riding a trail from Wind Lake to Rochester and back. Join us for a ride or hike. You will be matched with an experienced guide who will pilot the front of a tandem bicycle while you peddle on the back. There will be a brief safety talk.

Whitewater Lions Fishing Derby and Water Sports

Sat., July 25

Whitewater Lions Club is once again inviting VIPs from BOLD to participate in their 14th Annual Fishing Derby and Water Sports event on Whitewater Lake at the Lions Club House. There will be boats for tubing, water skiing, and boat tours around the lake along with the regular fishing derby. The Lions Club will provide the boats, fishing tackle, poles, and life vests.

After lunch it is time to fish! You will be taken to a boat with a captain and guide. Around 3:30 pm, you will return to the clubhouse for a presentation of prizes for the Fishing Derby.

If you have any questions, call Kevin Meyers, Outreach Director at 414-839-0635.

EVERYONE IS CREATIVE. DISCOVER WHERE YOU SHINE!



FC Art Academy

for Ages 15+

Creativity • Connection • Confidence

FC Art Academy is a 10-week program for individuals with disabilities. Designed for ages 15+, the program offers two tracks to support a range of interests and abilities. Whether you've explored art before or are just getting started, you belong here!



What You'll Do:

- ✓ EXPLORE ART AND CREATIVE EXPRESSION
- ✓ BUILD FRIENDSHIPS AND SOCIAL SKILLS
- ✓ GROW CONFIDENCE IN A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY
- ✓ LEARN HOW TO SHOWCASE AND MONETIZE YOUR WORK

Class Schedule

- TRACK 1: THURSDAY (11:00AM - 12:00PM)
- TRACK 2: WEDNESDAY (1:00PM - 4:00PM)

June 17 - August 26



Register Now: fcwi.org/artacademy



Thursday, July 23rd, 2026, 10:30 am - 1:00 pm
Independence First, 540 South 1st Street, Milwaukee, WI 53204
Lunch will be served



Scan the code below to register for this free event or email at Jeremy.gundlach@wisconsin.gov



Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities

* Location is in an accessible building. If you need language translation or an accommodation, please contact us at jeremy.gundlach@wisconsin.gov.



FREE resources for people with disabilities!

Independence First has free items and financial assistance programs to improve your life. These resources are in addition to our workshops and services which are free for people with disabilities.

If you have a disability, you could be eligible for these programs:

- A free laptop through the **United Way Techquity** program
- Discounts on phone, cellular, and internet services through the **PSC Lifeline** program
- Financial assistance for equipment needed to use basic telephone services through the **TEPP** program
- Low interest loans to purchase assistive technology or home modifications to work from home from the **WisLoan + Telework** program
- Devices and training to stay safe and independent through our Aging in Place project with **Greater Milwaukee Foundation**
- Free groceries for seniors-in-need provided by **Hunger Task Force** and distributed monthly at Independence First
- Smart home devices installed free of charge in your home from **Focus on Energy**
- Free mobility devices and other assistive technology donated to our **Equipment Reuse Exchange** program

Give us a call!

We'll help you find which resources you can receive.

Contact Independence First: 414-291-7520



Hiking Club

Hit the trails and explore nature in the Milwaukee metro area!



A group that promotes health and nature appreciation by getting outside and exploring new destinations at Milwaukee metro area parks and recreational areas.

Transportation will not be provided.

Group meets on the following Tuesdays from 6-7:30pm at the following locations. Specific addresses will be provided after RSVP received.

- 06/24/2025 – Lion's Den Gorge Nature Preserve
- 07/08/2025 – Retzer Nature Center
- 07/22/2025 – Grant Park: 7 Bridges Trail
- 08/05/2025 – Lake Shore State Park: The Lake Front Trail
- 08/26/2025 – Riveredge Nature Center

**To RSVP and to request accommodations contact
Calli Niemi at 414-852-0606 or cniemi@independencefirst.org**

Reasonable Accommodations Independence First is committed to providing the highest degree of accessibility when offering agency-sponsored events.

Please notify **Calli Niemi** at **414-852-0606** **TTY/Relay** or **cniemi@independencefirst.org** with your disability-related accommodation requests by 2 weeks before the group meeting. We will do our best to honor accommodation requests made after this date.

Environmental Chemical Sensitivities

For the safety and comfort of those with chemical and environmental sensitivities, Independence First requests that when attending agency-sponsored events, please refrain from using any perfumed products such as scented soaps, deodorants, perfumes, colognes and heavily scented fabric softeners. To maintain a smoke-free environment, please also refrain from smoking in paths of travel and doorways.



Personal Wellness Workshops



These personal wellness workshops are designed for individuals who use wheelchairs whom may have difficulties navigating through life. We aim to show them the possibilities in and outside of home to continue to be productive and independent.

RSVP is required!

All sessions take place at Independence First

540 S 1st St Milwaukee, WI 53204

Tuesdays from 2:00PM – 3:30PM in Conference Room 101

07/08/2025 – Cooking

07/15/2025 – Fitness

07/22/2025 – Dressing

07/29/2025 – Transfers/Mobility

To RSVP and to request accommodations,

Contact: Harvey Ross at 414-226-8127 or hross@independencefirst.org

Reasonable Accommodations Independence First is committed to providing the highest degree of accessibility when offering agency-sponsored events. Please notify Harvey Ross at 414-226-8127 V/Relay or hross@independencefirst.org with your disability-related accommodation requests by June 23, 2025. We will do our best to honor accommodation requests made after this date.

Environmental Chemical Sensitivities

For the safety and comfort of those with chemical and environmental sensitivities, Independence First requests that when attending agency-sponsored events, please refrain from using any perfumed products such as scented soaps, deodorants, perfumes, colognes and heavily scented fabric softeners. To maintain a smoke-free environment, please also refrain from smoking in paths of travel and doorways.



Poetry 101 Workshops



These poetry workshops are designed for individuals who may have difficulties advocating and expressing themselves in life. We aim to show them the how to communicate through words and art.

RSVP is required!

All sessions take place at Independence First

540 S 1st St Milwaukee, WI 53204

Thursdays from 2:00PM – 3:00PM in Conference Room 101

07/10/2025 – Intro
07/17/2025 – Brainstorming
07/24/2025 – Creating poetry
07/31/2025 – Finishing up

To RSVP and to request accommodations,

Contact: Harvey Ross at 414-226-8127 or hross@independencefirst.org

Reasonable Accommodations Independence First is committed to providing the highest degree of accessibility when offering agency-sponsored events. Please notify Harvey Ross at 414-226-8127 V/Relay or hross@independencefirst.org with your disability-related accommodation requests by July 01, 2025. We will do our best to honor accommodation requests made after this date.

Environmental Chemical Sensitivities For the safety and comfort of those with chemical and environmental sensitivities, Independence First requests that when attending agency-sponsored events, please refrain from using any perfumed products such as scented soaps, deodorants, perfumes, colognes and heavily scented fabric softeners. To maintain a smoke-free environment, please also refrain from smoking in paths of travel and doorways.



Summer Session of Milwaukee Board Game Night



**Join us for a fun night
of games, snacks,
conversation,
friendship building and
peer support**

Independence First

540 S 1st Milwaukee WI 53204

Third Tuesday of the month 6-8PM

June 17, 2025

July 15, 2025

August 19, 2025

Independence First will provide a variety of board and card games, and more! Feel free to bring your own game to share!

Please RSVP or to request accommodations,

Contact: Hope Lloyd at 414-226-8105 or hlloyd@independencefirst.org

Reasonable Accommodations

Independence First is committed to providing the highest degree of accessibility when offering agency-sponsored. Please notify Hope Lloyd at 414-226-8105 or hlloyd@independencefirst.org with your disability-related accommodation requests by 2 weeks before the group meeting. We will do our best to honor accommodation requests made after this date.

Environmental Chemical Sensitivities

For the safety and comfort of those with chemical and environmental sensitivities, Independence First requests that when attending agency-sponsored events, please refrain from using any perfumed products such as scented soaps, deodorants, perfumes, colognes and heavily scented fabric softeners. To maintain a smoke-free environment, please also refrain from smoking in paths of travel and doorways.

PRIVATE PARTY RENTALS

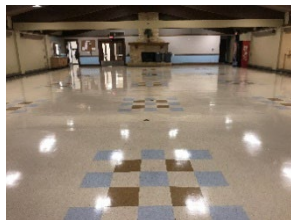
Looking to book your next family gathering or community-group event? Weddings, family reunions, birthday parties, graduations, showers, organizational meetings, are among the many events held here each year. Both Wil-O-Way facilities are in beautiful Milwaukee County parks. The buildings are accessible and have a large hall and kitchen. The spacious grounds have picnic tables, walking trails, wading pools, and accessible playgrounds.

BOOK AN EVENT NOW!

Current Capacity 180 people

Check out the [Facility Guidelines](#) & [Facility Rentals Calendar](#).

Wil-O-Way Grant (South Milwaukee)
(Wauwatosa)



Wil-O-Way Underwood



SHARE HANDY NEWS & NOTES!

Do you work with someone or know someone who would be interested in or would benefit from the information in Handy News & Notes? If so, please refer them to the link below to sign up for this FREE information source.

<https://county.milwaukee.gov/EN/Sign-Up-for-E--Notify>

OFFICE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (OPD)

Director: Jacqueline Formanek

Marcia P. Coggs Human Services Center • 1230 W Cherry St • Milwaukee County 53205



• Marcia • (414) 239-5679 • 711 (TRS)

[Office Persons with Disabilities Website](#)

