

CDCS (Consumer-Directed Community Supports) Corner

Training:

The CDCS training sessions will be held on a **virtual/online** platform. *All sessions are the same so only one session needs to be attended.* Sessions are facilitated by two Community Services' staff.

If you are interested in attending, please contact your social worker to receive the training packet and email invite.

CDCS training sessions will be from 6-8 p.m.

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Community Services
14949 62nd Street N.
Stillwater, MN 55082

[Intellectual and
Developmental Website](#)

Washington County Corner

I hope this newsletter finds you well and you are enjoying the summer. There are many legislative updates that may affect families and persons receiving services through the following programs: Consumer Directed Community Supports (CDCS), Consumer Support Grant (CSG), Personal Care Assistance (PCA), and Waivered Services.

Here are some highlights:

- Benefit extension (until 11/11/23) that allows parents and spouses to continue providing personal care assistance services.
- A \$3.75 wage increase to \$19 per hour for employees working under the CDCS, CSG, and PCA program. *This will be effective 1/1/24.*
- The establishment for the first time of a wage scale rewarding home care workers for their years of experience, bringing long-time caregivers up to as much as \$22.50 per hour in 2025.
- A one-time retention bonus for any worker who has provided home care for six months or longer, beginning in July 2023. More information to come regarding how this will be implemented.
- The elimination of the parental fee for the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act (TEFRA) program. The TEFRA option allows a disabled child to receive Medical Assistance (MA) payments, even if the child's parents have too much income to qualify for the MA program. The Department of Human Services (DHS) will provide further information. The parental fees under this program are determined and managed by DHS. *County financial workers do not administer this program.* DHS will notify families that they may be impacted by this or you can call the DHS parental fee unit at 651-431-3806.

Visit the [SEIU \(Service Employees International Union\) website](#) for additional information regarding the home care worker union contract.

New Retention Bonuses and Training Stipends Available for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Direct Care Workers

A person employed by a waived service company or for an individual receiving waived services may be eligible for this bonus or stipend.

HCBS direct care workers and traditional PCA workers can apply for grant initiatives, including retention bonuses and PCA training stipends. The two initiatives are part of the legislature-created HCBS grant developed to help attract new direct care workers and keep current employees who provide HCBS services to people with disabilities and older adults.

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on the following dates:

- **Thursday, August 17**
- **Tuesday, November 14**

Updates:

Governor Walz signed the Earned Sick and Safe Time bill. This bill provides paid sick time for employees to care for themselves or a family member. *All employees who work more than 80 hours in a year will earn paid sick time.*

Due to the passage of this bill, all employees of a Financial Management Service (FMS) provider no longer can opt out of PTO (paid time off). *For paid parents of minors or spouses, this may reduce your hourly wage to accommodate this expense.*

This began 7/1/23. You will work with your FMS provider to adjust your plan and/or wage to reflect the additional costs.

For additional information regarding this bill, visit the [Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry's online article about New Workplace Protections](#).

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Retention Bonuses

HCBS direct care workers who meet income and service requirements can apply for a retention bonus. *Those who apply by December 31, 2023, are eligible for two \$575 retention bonuses. Those who apply from January 1-March 15, 2024, can receive one \$575 retention bonus.* To learn about eligibility criteria and apply for a bonus, visit the [Minnesota Department of Human Services' \(DHS\) HCBS Workforce Development Grant Retention Bonuses website](#).

Training stipend

Traditional PCA workers can apply for one free training session that may qualify them for a stipend and fulfills a requirement toward an enhanced rate for PCA services they provide to eligible people. *After completing that course and the other required courses, which are also free, participants who meet income qualifications can get a one-time \$500 payment.* To access the trainings and learn more about eligibility for the PCA enhanced rate, visit the [Minnesota DSW \(direct support workers\) Training website](#).

Northway Academy Opened in Stillwater

Northway Academy is an Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) therapy provider under the EIDBI (early intensive developmental and behavioral intervention) benefits for individuals as young as two years old and through the age of 21. They provide day treatment services to help families achieve their goals in development and independence. They have thoroughly trained staff that are eager to help you and your families.

A new service site, located at 1701 Curve Crest Blvd., Suite 104, Stillwater, Minnesota, opened in January of 2023.

To learn more about Northway Academy or to make a referral, call 866-719-2117 or [email Aimee](#).

Opportunity for Students in Grades 11-12 to get Paid and Earn School Credits

Do you have high school students? Check out a cool new way for your student to earn a paycheck while earning school credit.

K-12 Omnibus Education Bill

This bill includes wording that allows students in grades 11 or 12 to earn up to two elective credits each year (beginning with the 2023-2024 school year) toward graduation for working in home and community-based services or long-term care licensed assisted living facilities.

Getting around Washington County this Summer

[Visit the GoWashington website](#) for information on Metro Mobility & Transit Link, Fixed-Route services, Community Circulators, and more.

Beat the Heat

Fishing

- Let's Go Fishing**
 Trained captains and crews provide fishing and cruising trips on the St. Croix River with a 26 foot customized pontoon which can accommodate wheel chairs. *All fishing equipment, bait, and life jackets are provided.* Free for seniors (55+), persons with physical/developmental disabilities, all military and families of those deployed, veterans, and intergenerational youth.

[Visit the Let's Go Fishing website for more information.](#)

Splash Pads

- Highland Park**
 6975 Iidsen Ave. S.
 Cottage Grove
- Madison's Place Playground**
 4125 Radio Drive
 Woodbury

Swimming

- Big Marine**
No lifeguards
 Gentle graded beach on Big Marine Lake is great for families.
 Forest Lake

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Fun in Washington County

- Cycling without Age: Limitless Cycling**



In the spring of 2019, Matthew Stepaniak and Darren Dobier were both looking to bring adaptive biking to the St. Croix River Valley for two very different reasons. For Matthew, it was personal so that he could find a way for his 86-year-old mother (who just turned 90 this June!) to ride a bicycle again after her stroke

to help keep her mentally and physical engaged. For Darren, it was professional as he was looking for opportunities that his company, DIRO Outdoors, could provide outdoor experiences to individuals who could not participate independently. Matthew and Darren, who have known each other for years as Greater Stillwater Chamber of Commerce members, collaborators, and community volunteers had no idea what the other was up to. Coincidentally, they were both exploring the idea with Sue Brine Elmer, at that time Enrichment Director of The Lakes at Stillwater senior living facility, when she asked them both, "Have you been speaking to each other?" A partnership was formed and with the mentorship of River Valley Trails, Inc., the nonprofit service, Limitless Cycling, was born.

Even prior to COVID, studies have shown an increase in anxiety, social isolation, and depression due to lack of resources, especially in rural communities. These negative effects were exacerbated during the height of COVID due largely to stricter lockdowns, higher threat of illness, and loss of social support to those with cognitive and physical challenges young and old alike.

Limitless Cycling began to combat those negative effects by bringing Van Raam adaptive bicycles to residents in the St. Croix River Valley and beyond. As a Cycling Without Age affiliate, they bring these specialized bicycles to senior living facilities, community centers, and individuals with their caregivers to increase opportunities for socialization and self-care to enhance positive mental health and overall wellbeing. Supporting and honoring seniors is the cornerstone of their vision in addition to serving the needs of our veterans and those who cannot bicycle independently. They acknowledge the diversity of our community to promote the principles of inclusion so that all may enjoy the outdoors and create equity for all to support an ever-aging population that has, and is, increasing at an incredible rate:

- Around 2020, Minnesota's 65+ population eclipsed the ages 5-17 (K-12) population, for the first time in history.*
- The number of Minnesotans turning 65 in this decade (about 285,000) will be greater than the past four decades combined.*

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- Lake Elmo Swim Pond**
 Lifeguards daily (12-8 p.m.)
 Two acre man-made, chlorinated, and filtered swimming pond.
 Lake Elmo
- Point Douglas Beach**
 No lifeguards
 510 feet of sandy beach and scenic St. Croix River views.
 Hastings
- Square Lake Beach**
 No lifeguards
 690 feet of sandy beach on the clearest/cleanest lake in the seven-county metro area.
 Stillwater
- St. Croix Bluffs Beach**
 No lifeguards
 Small beach on the St. Croix River.
 Hastings
- Goldfish Swim School**
 No membership required.
 Shiver-free pool heated to 90 degrees. Help your kids practice swimming skills or bond with your family.
 Oakdale

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- Washington County's population was 267,568 as of April 1, 2020.**
 - 65+ (15.6% 41,740)
 - Veterans (20% 53,513)
 - With a Disability <65 (6.2% 16,054)**
- The total number of older adults (65+) is anticipated to double between 2010 and 2030, according to projections. By then, more than one in five Minnesotans will be an older adult, including all the baby boomers.*
- By 2040, the oldest boomers will be starting to turn 85, the youngest will be turning 66.***

* [Minnesota State Demographic Center](#)
 ** [United States Census Bureau](#)
 *** [Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#)



The challenge in the months and years ahead will be providing services and equipment to meet the needs for these increasing numbers to provide opportunities to remain active and live independently in our communities. These bikes average \$15,000 each and need "pilots" for them. Limitless Cycling accepts these challenges and assumes the cost of the entire program (bikes, trailers, gas, maintenance, etc.) and provides

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YMCA

Those starting grades 9-12 in the fall can join a Twin Cities YMCA for free until August 31!

Membership includes:

- Access to 19 YMCA locations, including Hudson, WI;
- Gyms to play hoops, volleyball, etc.;
- Indoor and outdoor pools;
- Fitness centers with weights, cardio machines, etc.; and
- Group exercise classes.

[Visit the YMCA north website for more information.](#)

Sensory-Friendly and Inclusive Activities

- [Accessible Minnesota Attractions](#)
- [Inclusive Playgrounds Near the Twin Cities](#)
- **Puppet Show:**
[Spark! Mobile Sparks Imaginations](#)

The Spark! Team presents original

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volunteers for the activities with no paid positions. They have established themselves as a recognizable and sustainable program as they support our community's mental/physical health while decreasing social isolation/loneliness. They succeeded in creating one of the most diverse mobile piloted adapted bicycle programs in the region and are 100% debt-free. They have exceeded their fundraising and ridership goals, welcomed new partnerships, and participated in multiple community events to show what diversity, inclusivity, and equity means in the biking world. Their work has made a real difference in the lives of our most valuable community members, and they are looking forward to continuing their work in the years to come.

Contact Limitless Cycling about opportunities in your community, learn more about their bikes, sign up for volunteer opportunities, or donate on the [Limitless Cycling website](#).

- **Ice Cream:**
 - **FOX 9 Ice Cream Social:**
Fox 9 is getting back out into the community serving up free soft-serve ice cream with Minnesota Nice Cream at events across the state. Come meet the FOX 9 staff and get free, local treats.

Wednesday, July 12 • 5-7 p.m.

Fox 9 Town Ball, Forest Lake Brewers vs. Anoka Bucs
700 3rd Ave. SW, *Forest Lake*

Check the [FOX 9 website](#) for other events running through the end of July.

- **Minnesota Scoop Passport:**
Sign up for the free passport for a tasty tour of summer across Minnesota and check in at participating ice cream shops. Runs through September 4.
- **Movies in the Park:** Check city websites for information on free movies.
 - [Cottage Grove](#)
 - [Oakdale](#)
 - [Stillwater](#)
 - [Woodbury](#)
- **Valley Friendship Club: *Having Fun, Making Friends***
For over 13 years, Valley Friendship Club (VFC) has been creating fun, social, and educational opportunities for kids, teens, and adults with disabilities. In May 2023, VFC moved into a new, much bigger space known as The Ark at First Presbyterian Church: 6201 North Osgood Avenue, Stillwater, Minnesota.

This is a wonderful space that offers large, indoor rooms for parties, great outdoor spaces for summer games, use of a commercial kitchen for cooking classes, and so much more! The new space will allow VFC to increase programming, continue to reach out, to partner in the community at large, and welcome more participants as VFC increases offerings for both younger pre-school and elementary-aged participants and expands the choices for socially-appropriate options for adults.

Stop by to see VFC at the **Open House on August 20** or sign up through the [online VFC Events calendar](#) for one of the upcoming events.

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Connecting people; growing together



SELF-DIRECTION CONNECTION CONFERENCE

Friday, October 27, 2023
8am to 3pm

Cost:
\$40

*scholarships available.

REGISTER NOW

Mayo Health Systems Event Center, Mankato, MN

8am--Registration

9am--Keynote speaker

10am--Break & Exhibits

10:30am--Session 1

11:30am--Lunch & Networking

1pm--Session 2

2:15pm--Wrap Up and Prizes



Learning Objectives

Learn about the latest trends and practices in Consumer Directed Community Supports (CDCS) and Consumer Support Grant (CSG).



Opportunities to Connect

Meet other people using CDCS and CSG for their own life. Connect with friends and make new ones.

Join us for a self-direction conference. Focused on Minnesota specific services by and for people with lived experience. Advocate, grow and learn together. Audience: self-advocates, families, caregivers, case managers and support planners.



www.harrymeyercenter.org/selfdirection

AT for Wellness

Subsidizing Minnesotans access to essential telehealth services with equipment and connectivity services

The AT4W program provides technology assistance to older adults and people with disabilities of all ages who do not have access to technology resources necessary to use remote service delivery and telehealth. This funding will allow us to make purchases for appropriate devices and services that are traditionally denied by waiver, including equipment (laptops, tablets, smartphone) and connectivity services (internet or cell phone service).

We work together with you to determine your needs, preferences, and any accessibility features that may be necessary to assist you in accessing telehealth services from your home environment.

Services Offered:

- Consultation and assessment
- Training and set up of equipment
- Connection to community resources



Who Qualifies:

- Receiving HCBS waived services
- Homebound (they have a hard time leaving their home)
- Low income (on MA)
- Living in their own home (rented or owned), group home, or assisted living

AND

- Lacking access to the technological resources necessary to use telehealth

To Make a Referral:

1. Go to LiveLifeTherapySolutions.com
2. Click 'Obtain Services'
3. Scroll down to AT for Wellness
4. Download 'Referral Form' and fill out
5. Submit to the secure portal on the website



LiveLife Therapy Solutions, Inc.

Office: 952-921-8334
Fax: 952-921-8335

www.livelifetherapysolutions.com

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Sensory-Friendly and
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stories with
your favorite
puppet friends
in neighborhood
parks all
summer long.

- [Sensory-Friendly Movies at AMC Theatres](#)
- [Sensory-Friendly Outings in the Twin Cities](#)

Contact Us for Article Submissions:

For questions or
to submit articles,
contact:

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

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If you have a change
to your email address,
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your newsletters.

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Here's a sampling of upcoming VFC events:

- **Weekly Events:**
 - **Zoom:** Bookclub (M), Online Hangout (T), Music Mashup (W), Arts & Crafts (Th), Bingo (F)
 - **In-person:** Hub Hangout (T), Fit Friends (W)
- **Kids Connect Camps (12 and younger):**
 - **Art Camp w/Kari's Create & Paint** July 31-August 4 • 9-10:30 a.m.
 - **Find your Funny! Improv Camp** August 7-11 • 9-10:30 a.m.
- **Teen up Camps (13 and older):**
 - **Art Camp w/Kari's Create & Paint** July 31-August 4 • 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
 - **Find your Funny! Improv Camp** August 7-11 • 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
- **Family Events:**
 - **Family Picnic at 21 Roots Farm** July 8 • 12-3 p.m.
 - **VFC Summer Socials** July 10 & 24/August 7 & 21 • 6-7:30 p.m.

Watch our VFC calendar for Townie Tuesday, Kids Playdates, Movie Nights, Kayaking, Fishing, Arts & Crafts, End of Summer Party, and more!

- **Washington County Parks Events:**
Visit the county website for more information. *Park events require a vehicle permit.*
 - [Bird Hikes](#)
July 8-December 9 • Five different county parks.
 - [Campfire Programs](#)
Saturdays: July 8-August 26 • Lake Elmo Park Reserve/St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park
 - **Canoeing and Kayaking**
Launch access at many county parks.
Through September: [rent kayaks and stand-up paddleboards online](#) for pickup at iPaddlePorts (rental stations) in Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park or Square Lake Park.
 - [Passport to Adventure](#)
Saturday, June 10-Monday, September 4 • All nine county parks.
 - [Stand Up Paddleboarding](#)
Tuesdays: July 11-August 29 • Square Lake County Park
 - [Summer Day Camps](#)
June-August • Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park/Lake Elmo Park Reserve
 - [Summer Market in the Ravine](#)
Saturday, July 15 • Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park
 - [Washington County Bluegrass Festival](#)
Saturday, September 9 • Lake Elmo Park Reserve
 - [Yoga in the Park](#)
Thursdays: July 13-August 31 • Lake Elmo Park Reserve