

New Horizons

Housing That Supports Independence



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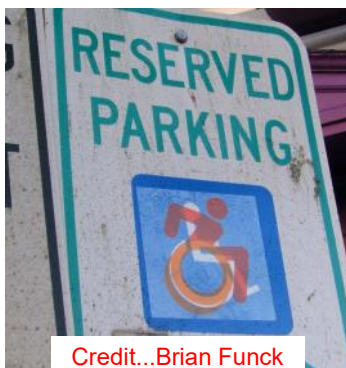
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A Symbol for 'Nobody' That's Really for Everybody

By Elizabeth Guffey/ Reprinted from the NY Times Aug. 25, 2018

The blue and white wheelchair icon is more than a guide to parking spots and ramps. It allows millions to fully participate in society.



Credit...Brian Funck

I was 12 years old when I first encountered the blue wheelchair symbol. I still remember sitting in our family car on that hot Southern California afternoon in 1975 as my mother pulled into the department store parking lot. Something was wrong. The cars were all parked in the wrong places. Then, as we drove near the store's front door, we saw a new set of neatly painted blue and white lines on the pavement, and a little wheelchair symbol stenciled on each space. The rest of the parking lot was filled, but these spaces were all conspicuously empty.

I especially remember the comments that came after the new spaces arrived. "It's such a shame," our neighbor told my mother one day. "It used to be if you arrived early enough you could count on getting a parking space in front of the store. Now nobody can use them." Later I wondered, who is "nobody"?

I was born with cerebral palsy. At that point I had never used a wheelchair, but as soon as I saw that figure, I knew instinctively that it was a friend and an ally. Whatever my neighbor or other people said, the little figure was whispering a message of inclusion directly to me.

To this day, I have a complicated relationship with wheelchairs. I did not use one at all until my 40s, when I first visited the New York Maker Faire in Queens, N.Y., and my wheelchair use remains peripatetic. Even so, I've long recognized this symbol as a kind of lifeline that allows me to participate in and contribute to larger society. Like many disabled people, I was born with a body that allows partial mobility. As a child, I used heavy braces and special orthotic shoes, and I've always found it challenging to merely move across a room. I fall frequently, and my injuries have included concussions, broken teeth and sprained limbs. Despite these setbacks, the symbol has guided me through places, and pointed out spaces that are safe.

This month, the "wheelchair symbol," formally known as the International Symbol of Access turned 50. It's an occasion worth celebrating.

The original symbol was conceived by Susanne Koefoed, a Danish design student during the turbulent summer of 1968 — a year now remembered for social upheavals like the resistance in Prague, the strikes in Paris and the raised fists of black American athletes at the Mexico City Olympics. In the student-led design workshop in Stockholm that she was attending, Koefoed planted the seed for another sort of revolution when she came up with an idea for common signage to guide disabled people to accessible facilities. She drew a schematic wheelchair.

The symbol really took off in 1974, when the United Nations approved it as a key component of barrier-free design. Officially rendered in the now-familiar blue and white, the international convention for roadside amenities, the little icon became a familiar sight in parking lots, restrooms, ramps and other public places across the globe. In 1990, when President George H.W. Bush signed the Americans With Disabilities Act into law, the "wheelchair symbol" came to legally identify a host of standardized accommodations for disabled people. By this time, it was one of the most recognized symbols in the world. In the United States, it is now accepted as legal signage and can be found on road signs, disabled parking tags and other official documents across the 50 states.

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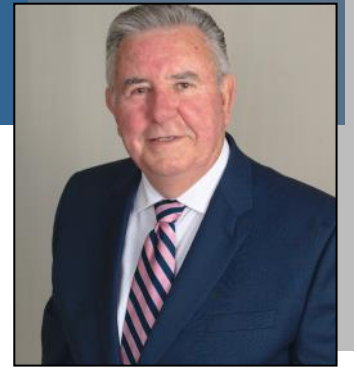
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“My Two Cents”

By *Tim Doherty, Executive Director*



Remembering My Friend Nate

By now most of the Project Freedom community knows that our friend, Nate Smith passed away January 19th. Nate Smith was a tenant and employee at our Lawrence office and served as our receptionist there—answering the phones, and greeting our many visitors each day. Nate could answer most questions regarding our housing...which application to use, and if there were any vacancies at our other housing sites. He loved to come to work each day and was an inspiration to all of us who got to know him.

There is a Chinese proverb, that says, “It is better to light a candle, than to curse the darkness”. I think that that philosophy is one that best describes my friend Nate. Nate was born with spinal bifida, and used a wheelchair for mobility. Because of this condition, Nate had a ostomy when he was a young boy, and lost his sight when he was a young man, so he had his share of problems and issues. I think for me, having to go each day with what he had to contend with, certainly would have made me a very sour person.

But not Nate Smith. He talked to me one day, on our trips to the doctors, or wherever, and told me that, early on, he struggled with his limitations, especially when he became blind. However, I remember him saying that, he realized that he didn’t want to go through life being a negative person, and holding on to his bitterness. His attitude was that he accepted his condition, and was going to make the best of what he had. He was going to be positive in how he comported himself and live his life to the fullest. He would light the candle, rather than curse the darkness.

And that is what he did. Anyone who knew Nate, couldn’t help but smile and see his positive, gentle nature. He was always interested in what I was doing...what new housing project I was working on.. and how it was going. He was also, always handsomely dressed, and took pride in his appearance. I would sometimes comment that he really looked good today... saying he could appear as a model in GQ magazine. He chuckled and said that the credit should go to his friend Essie, who picked out his clothes each day.

Nate also was fiercely independent, and wanted to make sure that his trips to the hospital at times, didn’t ultimately result in his returning to a nursing home. This is a fear that I have heard from many of our tenants who are disabled. He was ever so grateful for his apartment at Project Freedom and for his status as our receptionist, and to be able to live his life as he saw fit, making his own choices.

Our Project Freedom family suffers today at the loss of our friend, Nate Smith. For someone who lived in darkness, he was a bright light to all of us who knew him. God bless and God speed Nate, you will not be forgotten.





From Norman's Desk

Last month saw the Democratic presidential candidates begin to focus more on people with disabilities and our issues. This took place as candidates dropped out of the race.

Each of the major Democratic candidates completed the 15-question 2020 Disability Voter Candidate Questionnaire written by RespectAbility, a nonpartisan national nonprofit organization fighting stigmas and advancing opportunities so people with disabilities can fully participate in all aspects of community. The nonpartisan voter questionnaire is about a variety of disability issues was sent to all the viable presidential candidates.

This candidate canvassing was being done in conjunction with RespectAbility's online publication TheRespectAbilityReport.org, an online publication covering the intersection of disability and electoral politics. The answers to the questionnaire will be turned into nonpartisan voter guides for all 50 states. The same questions will be sent to candidates for governor and senate as well.

When Minnesota Senator Amy Klobuchar released her [detailed disability policy plan](#) the senator held a live event. Klobuchar detailed her plan and held a panel discussion with three local disability experts, delving deeper into specific aspects of her plan.

In a press statement released prior to the disability-focused event in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Klobuchar cited her "a strong track record of standing up for people with disabilities." Key highlights of the plan include commitments around long-term care, expanding healthcare access, and advancing economic opportunities as well as promoting disability rights at home and abroad, as reported by Lauren Appelbaum for TheRespectAbilityReport.org

Meanwhile, Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren continued to outreach to the disability community with a live chat on Twitter with advocates with disabilities from around the country. Then in her closing statement for the CNN/[Des Moines Register](#) Debate last month, Warren specifically mentioned people with disabilities in her vision for what her presidency will bring.

Mayor Pete Buttigieg of South Bend, IN, took to Twitter as well to reach people with disabilities. Buttigieg himself answered questions live on Twitter from advocates during a Disability Town Hall. His campaign also released on Twitter a series of videos featuring supporters with disabilities.

While these efforts are notable, many disability advocates want the mainstream news media to pay attention to disability issues as part of their overall coverage of the candidates. For the first time in my political memory, a debate moderator asked a question specifically on disability policy during the December debate.

"Are there specific steps you would take to help people like Kyle to become more integrated into the workforce and into their local communities?" asked Politico's Tim Alberta, citing as an example a young adult with a disability from Iowa.

This sent the "disability-Twitter-verse" into orbit. Unfortunately, only three candidates were able to respond, but Elizabeth Warren seized the moment to highlight her background as a Special Education teacher.

Readers have asked me which candidates have better disability policies, and my answer will always be as a journalist: Look for yourself. Evaluate for yourself. Make your vote count for what is important to you.

Norman A. Smith,
ProjectFreedom1@aol.com
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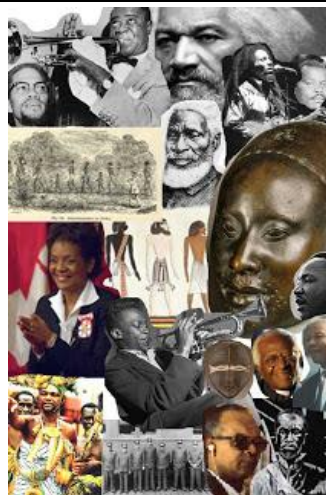
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Hamilton Happenings

| DATE | DAY | PROGRAM (in Community Room) | TIME |
|--------|-----|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 6-Feb | Thu | Hamilton Massage | 9:30 am –11:30 pm |
| 10-Feb | Mon | Hamilton Movies | 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm |
| 14-Feb | Fri | FC Valentine Party at Hamilton | Bus Leaves PFR 4:00 pm |
| 19-Feb | Wed | Hamilton Massage | 12:45 am –2:30 pm |
| 22-Feb | Sat | FC Black History Celebration | Bus Leaves PFR 11:00 am |
| 24-Feb | Mon | Movie | 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm |



Lawrence Events

| DATE | DAY | PROGRAM (in Community Room) | TIME |
|--------|------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 5-Feb | Wed | Massages | Sign up |
| 6-Feb | Thur | Tai Chi | 4:00-5:00 pm |
| 11-Feb | Tue | Lawrence Movies | 4:30 pm - 6:30 pm |
| 13-Feb | Thur | Yoga | 4:00 pm -5:00 pm |
| 19-Feb | Wed | Nutrition | 7:00 pm |
| 25-Feb | Tue | Lawrence Black History Activities | 4:30 pm - 6:30 pm |
| 27-Feb | Thur | Tai Chi | 4:00-5:00 pm |



Robbinsville Events

| DATE | DAY | PROGRAM (in Community Room) | TIME |
|-------|-----|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| 3-Feb | Mon | Robbinsville Movies | 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm |
| 6-Feb | Thu | Robbinsville Massage | 12:30 pm - 2:30 pm |
| 2-22 | Sat | Friends Connection Black History | 12:00 n - 3:00 pm |



Hopewell Events

| DATE | DAY | PROGRAM (in Community Room) | TIME |
|------|------|---|--------------------|
| 2-5 | Wed | Heart2 Heart Chair Massage | 1:15 pm - 3:15pm |
| 2-7 | Fri | Mercer Home Health Pokeno | 3:00 pm - 4:00 |
| 2-11 | Tue | Senior Care Bingo Raffle | 3:00 pm -5:00 pm |
| 2-13 | Thur | Friends Connection Valentines Event | 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm |
| 2-14 | Fri | Friend Connection Valentines Party at Hamilton | 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm |
| 2-19 | Wed | Heart2Heart Chair Massage | 9:30 am - 11:30 am |
| 2-22 | Sat | Friends Connection Black History Event Hamilton | 12:00 n - 3:00 pm |
| 2-25 | Tue | Allstate Insurance Co. Apartment Insurance Info | 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm |
| 2-27 | Thur | Friends Connection Movie Program Hopewell | 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm |

Campaign Highlights Power Of People With Disabilities

Reprinted from Star Tribune/TNS | December 13, 20 by Chris Serres

Artist and former special education teacher Sarah Bender is among the co-founders of the "Treat People Like People" campaign. She said people frequently make false assumptions based on her disabilities.

MINNEAPOLIS — This spring, two of Minnesota's foremost advocacy agencies faced a marketing dilemma: How to create a campaign against abuse of people with disabilities without reinforcing negative stereotypes of them as frail and helpless. Months of research, interviews and focus groups have culminated in a simple but powerful campaign built around the lived experiences of people with disabilities and a four-word slogan: "Treat People Like People."

The unconventional campaign, which launched last month, marks the first time that Minnesotans with disabilities have played a central role in the messaging of a statewide campaign to prevent abuse and neglect. And unlike many anti-abuse campaigns, which reduce victims to impassive caricatures, "Treat People Like People" features people with disabilities as fully actualized humans, with voices and dreams of their own.

While still being polished, the campaign is already drawing praise from disability rights groups and researchers, who see it as a critical tool in combating an epidemic of violence against adults with disabilities. In 2018 alone, state and local agencies in Minnesota received more than 56,000 allegations of abuse, neglect and financial exploitation of adults with disabilities; that includes 11,460 allegations of physical and sexual abuse, according to data. "Clearly, what we have been doing is not working, so we have to change the way we think about people with disabilities," said Roberta Opheim, state ombudsman for mental health and developmental disabilities and one of the architects of the campaign.

The new campaign is notable for what it's not: Alarming, sensationalistic or grotesque. The creative staff at the Minneapolis-based advertising agency Russell Herder reviewed anti-abuse campaigns in more than a dozen states and countries, including Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom. Many of these campaigns aim to shock: there are graphic images of sobbing children, bruised and beaten women and terrified or cowering senior citizens. Celebrities, including Angelina Jolie and Madonna, have appeared beaten, bruised and disfigured in anti-violence ads.

The problem with such shock-and-outrage campaigns, says Nancy Fitzsimons, a social work professor at Minnesota State University, Mankato, is that they "reinforce the false otherness" of abuse victims and perpetuate the misperception that people with disabilities are inherently weak or powerless. The campaigns also focus on physical or sexual violence and fail to recognize the routine indignities and less-visible forms of abuse that people with disabilities face each day, she said. "The moment that an individual is regarded as 'less than,' then it is easier to dehumanize them," said Brian Herder, chief creative officer at Russell Herder. "So the idea here is ... to show people with disabilities as fully realized, fully informed and fully engaged people."

'Quiet the rushing thoughts'

Among the campaign's co-creators is Sarah Bender, a 48-year-old artist and former special education teacher who has cognitive disabilities.

In 2003, Bender had parts of her brain surgically removed to alleviate her severe epilepsy. The surgery left her with short-term memory loss, bouts of anxiety and difficulties processing information. Bender likens her brain to "an old guy who keeps putting files in the wrong cabinets," which sometimes means she becomes disoriented and can take longer to recall names and events.

Yet Bender said people frequently make false assumptions — that she is incapable of creative achievement, for example. In fact, after her surgery, Bender discovered that art was therapeutic, enabling her to focus her attention and "quiet the rushing thoughts" in her brain. Bender has produced more than 100 paintings and carvings since her surgery. She is still finishing a brightly colored landscape mural that covers nearly two walls of her Apple Valley apartment. "It's a reflection of my heart and my soul, and whatever needs to come out in the moment," Bender said, explaining a painting with lush greenery and expanding suns.

Of the anti-abuse campaign, Bender said, "I believe we have to assume the very best about people. Everyone has their issues, but that doesn't mean we're defined by them."

For now, the “Treat People Like People” campaign consists of a [website](#) with personal stories, informational posters, social media posts and tool kits on how to recognize and prevent abuse. There are video clips of Minnesotans with a range of disabilities singing, talking about their talents, and sharing their personal ambitions. The website also invites people to make an online pledge to “treat people like people,” with dignity and respect.

Much of the campaign’s content is directed at care providers, who are among the most common offenders. National research has found that most violence against people with disabilities is perpetrated by people they know, including caregivers and relatives. In one harrowing case last year, a woman with intellectual disabilities was repeatedly sexually abused and impregnated at a St. Anthony group home by a male caregiver. And just last month, a male aide who worked at group homes in southwest Minnesota was charged with raping two adult residents with intellectual disabilities.

The campaign was spearheaded and funded by two state advocacy agencies — the Office of Ombudsman for Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities and the Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities.

The heads of both agencies have bigger ambitions for the campaign, including television commercials, highway billboards and signs on buses, depending on future funding. So far, the agencies have spent less than \$100,000 on the campaign. “We are dreaming big,” Opheim said. “We want to promote the idea that people with disabilities are part of the essential fabric of society, are not ‘the other,’ and deserve to be treated the way you and I want to be treated.”

Feds Work To Protect Parents With Intellectual Disabilities

Reprinted from DisAbility Scoop December 9, 2019 / by Shaun Heasley

Federal officials say that a state has agreed to change its ways after child welfare workers sought to remove children from their mom and dad allegedly because of the parents’ low IQs.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Office for Civil Rights said it has reached a voluntary resolution agreement with the Oregon Department of Human Services. Under the agreement, the state agency will follow laws protecting the rights of parents with disabilities and has committed to update its policies and procedures, create new training and undergo monitoring. The Oregon agency “will ensure that its safety requirements are based on actual risks that pertain to the individual parent and not on mere speculation, generalizations or stereotypes about individuals with disabilities,” the agreement states.

The development comes after the state agency lost its bid to keep two children from their parents, Amy Fabbrini and Eric Ziegler, who have low IQs. The children were both removed from the parents shortly after birth, according to federal officials. One was returned to the parents after 10 months when a county circuit court dismissed the state’s neglect petition. The other was reunited with the parents after four years apart when the circuit court denied a petition from the state to terminate the parents’ rights.

In light of the case, the HHS Office for Civil Rights said it investigated the Oregon agency’s practices more broadly and found “systemic deficiencies” in regard to the “implementation of its disability rights policies, practices and procedures to prevent discrimination against parents with disabilities in Oregon’s child welfare system.” The rights of parents with disabilities are protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, according to the civil rights office.

Under the agreement, the Oregon agency is still permitted to remove children from parents with disabilities, but only in cases where there is a “direct threat to the safety of the child.” Such a threat, however, cannot be based on “stereotypes or generalizations about persons with disabilities, or on a participant’s diagnosis or intelligence measures (e.g., IQ scores) alone.” “A mother’s and father’s love can overcome a multitude of challenges, and a state should only remove children from their parents based on actual evidence of abuse or neglect, not stereotypes. Parents with intellectual or other disabilities should not be presumed to be unable to care for their own children,” said Roger Severino, director of the HHS Office for Civil Rights.

The Oregon Department of Human Services said that the agreement is in line with the agency’s values and offers a framework to best serve families. “We appreciate the collaborative approach as well as the assistance of the Office of Civil Rights in helping identify areas for practice improvements to ensure that all families receive the supports and services that meet their individual needs,” said Fariborz Pakseresht, director of the state agency, in a statement.

Death And Deals: Children With Special Needs Suffer, Private Equity Profits

by Sabrina Willmer, Reprinted from Bloomberg News/TNS | December 6, 2019

NEW YORK — One nurse slept on the job. Another didn't show up at all. A third scalded a child so badly that her skin peeled. Still another failed to check on a toddler who depended on a breathing tube. By the time the nurse returned, the child's hands and feet were purple. The little girl was dead.

All of these incidents have something in common: the dark side of private equity. The nurses worked for Aveanna Healthcare LLC, a company assembled through a series of corporate takeovers, with two goals in mind. One is to provide quality at-home nursing for those who are sick or have disabilities, mostly children who may need near around-the-clock care to stay alive. The other is to maximize profit.

The outcomes, at times, have been devastating. Under the control of two prominent private equity firms, Bain Capital LP and J.H. Whitney Capital Partners LLC, Aveanna has left a trail of injury and death in some of the biggest states where it does business, Bloomberg News found. More than 1,000 pages of state health documents, many released under public-records laws, show Aveanna has had a disproportionate number of safety violations. At least seven children have died in Texas, Pennsylvania and Colorado. In these fatalities, reported over the past year, health officials found that Aveanna's nurses failed to check vital signs, follow emergency procedures, appear for their shifts or give the proper doses of medicine. Aveanna says injuries and deaths on its watch, while unacceptable, are rare, and that it cares for more seriously ill children than other companies.

But internal company documents reveal financial incentives that favor corporate growth and cost-cutting over clinical care. In interviews, more than a dozen former Aveanna employees described how the pressure to meet financial goals jeopardized the quality of care for children. Despite misgivings, some families say they have little choice but to keep hiring Aveanna's nurses. The company is so big that it dominates children's at-home care. Now, it's about to buy one of its largest rivals. "It is a game they play with our kids' lives," said Lynda Leising, who uses Aveanna nurses to care for her six-year-old son, Noah, who has a condition that combines Down syndrome, autism and Tourette's. "And it is really about how they can make more money." Aveanna executives said the company's safety record should be viewed in the context of the millions of hours of nursing that it provides annually across the U.S. They cited surveys of thousands of patient families that found 97 percent were satisfied with their care.

The record shows a more complicated picture. Under a branch-office incentive plan, Aveanna ties 90 percent of bonuses to earnings growth, the hours of patient care it provides and cash collection, according to a company document viewed by Bloomberg. Under the arrangement, instituted after Bain put together its 2017 deal, customer satisfaction and clinical outcomes each make up only 5 percent. The company would often decline to send nurses if it was short-staffed and had to pay overtime, according to Andrew Wiggins, who said he left Aveanna in October 2018 after working as a scheduler for 3 1/2 years. "If I had a 20-year-old in Temple, Texas, on a ventilator who needed care during the weekend, to avoid paying overtime we would tell the patient we don't have it even if we had three or four nurses available," Wiggins said.

When booking nurses, some former employees described a focus on maximizing the cut Aveanna got from insurers and filling shifts, rather than matching appropriate caregivers with patients. State inspection reports documented instances when the company failed to conduct background checks, face-to-face interviews or check references. Cody Carter, a nurse recruiter who said he was laid off in September 2018, said Aveanna essentially had two requirements for nurse hires: "If you were breathing and had a nursing license."

Aveanna said it increased outlays on training and technology for nurses and other caregivers after the merger of Epic and PSA. The company said it provides a tablet computer for every caregiver and spent \$25.6 million in 2018 on training and oversight in Texas and Pennsylvania. But, in Texas, state officials documented at least five fatalities related to Aveanna's care over the past year. Only one other pediatric company had a single one, according to a state tally of reports related to neglect or abuse. In one instance, in McAllen, Texas in 2018, a former Aveanna administrator alleged that the company's branch leadership had discouraged the staff from reporting deaths and other injuries, according to a complaint filed with the state. The company said it wasn't required to disclose the fatality because it happened at the hospital.

In Texas, Florida, Pennsylvania and Colorado, the four states that Bloomberg examined, Aveanna tended to have more violations than similar large companies, except for Colorado's and Florida's branches of Maxim, which it is in the process of acquiring. Regulators determined that Aveanna and its predecessors were responsible for a raft of offenses: missed shifts, unqualified staff, lack of training and supervision. Nurses lifted children incorrectly, resulting in emergency room visits; gave the wrong drug doses; or slept on shifts.

In a Pittsburgh suburb, Tessa Richards, a 24-year-old nurse's aide, lowered a five-year-old boy with spina bifida into scalding bathwater. The child spent a month in the hospital, undergoing skin grafts and transfusions. At the time, the nurse worked for PSA, a predecessor to Aveanna. Zimmerman, the former executive who sued Aveanna, said in her lawsuit that the company fired her in part because she pushed to investigate this incident.



February General Recreation Club Freedom Events Highlighted

| | | | |
|---------------|------------|--|-------------------------------|
| 2-Feb | Sun | Robbinsville Super Bowl Party - \$5 to Eat! | Doors Open at 5:30 pm |
| 3-Feb | Mon | "Day Rec" - Hamilton | 2 pm-4 pm |
| 5-Feb | Wed | Hamilton/Lawrence Shopping | Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 am |
| 10-Feb | Mon | "Day Rec" - Hamilton | 2 pm-4 pm |
| 12-Feb | Wed | Grocery Shopping - Shop Rite | Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 am |
| 17-Feb | Mon | Presidents' Day - PF Offices CLOSED | |
| 18-Feb | Tue | Mall Trip Market Fair 4 People Needed | Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 am |
| 20-Feb | Thu | Columbus Indoor Farmers Market | Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 am |
| 26-Feb | Wed | Grocery Shopping - Shop Rite | Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 am |
| 27-Feb | Thu | "Day Rec" Trip | Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 am |

Friends' Connection Saturday Get-Togethers & Events Transportation

The popularity of the Friends' Connection has been outstanding. The once-a-month Pot Luck gatherings on Saturdays are so popular that it is straining our transportation resources. So, in order to make sure everyone may attend, we need to encourage those people with their own transportation resources to come to these gatherings on their own. This may also apply to other large gatherings.

If you are interested in attending, please call Mary to register. Please let Mary know if transportation is needed. We reserve the right to request those with vehicles or AccessLink to use those resources.

Norman A. Smith
Associate Executive Director

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The Best Plants to Purify the Air in Your Home

By Alexandra Churchill reprinted from MarthaStewartLiving@mail.marthastewart.com

Peace Lily (*Spathiphyllum 'Mauna Loa'*)

Perfect for homeowners who enjoy bouquets of flowers, but not the upkeep. This resilient tropical plant, recognizable for its pristine white blossoms, is pretty *and* incredibly powerful: It removes benzene (found in plastics and synthetic fibers), formaldehyde (in carpets and upholstery), trichloroethylene (in adhesives and paint removers), xylene, ammonia, and more.

Chinese Evergreen (*Aglaonema modestum*)

This popular houseplant is especially easy to grow and maintain. As a tropical foliage plant, it's great for a budding (pun intended) garden-er as it tolerates poor light, dry air, and drought. The best part: It's efficient at removing benzene and formaldehyde.

Spider Plant (*Chlorophytum comosum*)

This "spider-like" plant, often potted in a hanging planter, gets its name for its long, droopy leaves. Spider plants eliminate formaldehyde as well as xylene and toluene, the latter of which are both found in many household products.

Golden Pothos (*Epipremnum aureum*)

Also commonly known as "devil's ivy," this sturdy plant has a subtle yellowish hue on its leaves. It's known to eradicate carbon monoxide and benzene, making it suitable to entryways from the garage and garden.

Red-Edged Dracaena (*Dracaena marginata*)

This plant grows slim, ribbonlike stalks with red edges and can grow quite tall. Another powerful purifier, it eliminates benzene, formaldehyde, trichloroethylene, xylene, and toluene.

Boston Fern (*Nephrolepis exaltata 'Bostoniensis'*)

This lush fern features featherlike fronds and thrives in humidity. While harder to care for than others, it proves to filter pollutants like formaldehyde, xylene, and toluene.

Florist's Chrysanthemum (*Chrysanthemum morifolium*)

While technically not a houseplant, these bright, colorful blossoms do more than just look pretty: Mums help eliminate harmful pollutants like formaldehyde, xylene, benzene, and ammonia.

English Ivy (*Hedera helix*)

This popular evergreen is recognizable for its verdant, trailing vines. It is particularly effective at eliminating formaldehyde, which lurks in furniture and cabinets.

