



LIFTT

Living Independently for Today & Tomorrow

The LIFTT Connection Newsletter

MAY 2023 VOLUME 4, ISSUE 3

Class is in Session!

**Living Well in Community graduates first class since COVID
Further workshops planned in both Billings & Glendive**

The LIFTT team in Billings recently completed the first in-person session of the "Living Well in Community" workshop (LWC) held by the agency for over three years.

Two students, Christine Burkhart and Darren Abel made their way through the ten-week course under the guidance of co facilitators Tara Robison and Tanya Thomas.

Developed by the Rural Institute for Inclusive Communities at the University of Montana, LWC focuses on setting and achieving quality of life goals.

While progressing through the sessions students were asked to:

- Identify what is meaningful to them and then set quality of life goals around ways they want to make their lives better.
- Make progress toward the goals they set by applying problem-solving skills and managing emotions like frustration and discouragement, feelings that can get in the way of reaching goals.
- Discover tools and skills that can make goal achievement easier like communicating effectively and finding important resources.

- Explore ways to improve their overall health by changing daily habits.
- Practice self-advocacy and systems-advocacy to help them make changes that can

Abel who is a long-time part of LIFTT's peer program and has taken previous versions of the course under its former name of "Living Well with a Disability" was impressed with the evolution of the program he saw in LWC particularly the replacement of textbooks with digital presentation materials

"The new version is much more interactive and participatory than then the old version with books." He said.

Robison and Thomas say that they plan to continue offering LWC at the LIFTT Billings office on a quarterly basis and that they are now working to complete facilitator training in a companion curriculum all about building independent living skills entitled "Community Living Skills" (CLS) which they hope to be able to offer for this first time this summer.

Members of the Glendive LIFTT team are also undergoing facilitator training for both courses and are looking forward to bringing them to the eastern portion of the agency's service area later in 2023.

Keep up with LIFTT's website, mobile app and social media channels for details about dates, times, locations and registration information for upcoming workshops.



The Spring 2023 LWC Class celebrates its graduation! From Left: facilitator Tanya Thomas, students Darren Abel and Christine Burkhart and facilitator Tara Robison (photo by Jed Barton)

support them and others in living well.

"The class and the strategies that Tara and Tanya taught us really helped me," said Burkhart who came to live in Billings after growing up in Illinois; "I now know that when life hits like a Midwest thunderstorm can make plans and decisions that are best for me without substituting the approval, judgement and opinions of others for my own."

Director's Corner: New programs support not detract from our core services

As you know, Living Independently for Today and Tomorrow (LIFTT), a Montana nonprofit organization based in Billings & Glendive, has been striving to grow. Organized as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit Center for Independent Living (CIL) and serving 18 Counties, LIFTT is consistently seeking new ways to serve you the disabled population of Southeastern and South Central Montana and help you live proudly and independently.

LIFTT has always

- pointed its consumers in the right direction by providing information & referral,
- advocated on their behalf,
- helped the youth transition into adulthood, finding employment or attending higher education,
- assisted institutionalized adults regain their independence,
- offered peer support, and provided Medicaid Self-Direct Personal Care Assistance (PCA) services.

While we continue to offer these core services We are continually making an effort to expand our offerings.

In 2021, in association with RiverStone Health here in Yellowstone County, LIFTT began to

hire Community Health Workers (CHW) to serve the population further. Later in the same year, we began to promote the COVID-19 vaccines in a person-centered way empowering our consumers to decide whether to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.



(photo by Deb Acosta)

We did this because we felt that consumers needed to be better equipped to make this important decision instead of relying on inaccurate information made available elsewhere.

Promoting vaccines, however, can be expensive and additional funding is necessary. Therefore, when the Administration for Community Living (ACL) USAgging launched the Aging and Disability Vaccine Collaborative (ADVC) grant to CILs, LIFTT applied and qualified. (For more about LIFTT

ADVC services please see the flyer on page 5).

We have received enough funding to double our budget and staff to offer more services to more people throughout the region and promote the COVID-19 and Influenza vaccines. That also means LIFTT is becoming more visible, and as it grows, so does the demand.

LIFTT has been in operation since 1987 and has provided independent living services to thousands of citizens. Without LIFTT's services, it would be nearly impossible for them to receive government benefits and services, find housing, employment, assistive technology, and home modifications, considering that 100% of LIFTT's consumers have a significant disability.

While independent living services will always be LIFTT's primary focus, along with peer support to all, we will strive to work at the intersection between aging and disability to build healthier communities.

Please join us.
Carlos Ramalho,
Executive Director

Electronic Visit Verification is Coming to LIFTT's SDPAS Program

To comply with Federal and Montana Medicaid regulations; LIFTT's Self Direct Personal Care Assistance Program (SDPC) will soon be implementing a new system called Electronic Visit Verification (EVV).

EVV is a system that automates the collection of information by capturing the service begin and end time, activities completed, and other information entered by a home care worker at the point of care.

EVV will give providers, care coordinators, and members/guardians access to service de-

livery information to prevent gaps in care and help ensure members receive the services they are authorized to receive.

In the coming days and weeks LIFTT's SDPCA program facilitators will be reaching out to consumers and care givers with specific information regarding the implementation of EVV in LIFTT's program.

Please watch your mailboxes, and emails for special notices from LIFTT and for phone calls from your program facilitator. We will also, when appropriate, post information on our web-

site, mobile app and social media channels.

For more information about Montana Medicaid's EVV program please visit: <https://dphhs.mt.gov/sltc/EVV>



HELP LIFTT SOAR!

JOIN OUR BOARD!



Last year, more than 1,000 individuals in Southeastern Montana received independent living services because of LIFTT's commitment to its vision and mission. This year, our non-profit organization is on track to exceed that number of persons served.

If you are a person with a disability living in our service area of Big Horn, Carbon, Carter, Custer, Dawson, Fallon, Garfield, Golden Valley, McCone, Musselshell, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Stillwater, Wibaux, and Yellowstone counties. LIFTT invites you to consider applying to become a member of our Board of Directors.

As a board member, you will attend quarterly meetings, par-

ticipate in strategic planning, work on fundraising initiatives and resource development, as well as serve on committees. Sometimes, board members are expected to recruit donors or consumers. Board members can serve up to three consecutive terms of one year each.

The position is volunteer, non-paid, and does not offer compensation except reimbursement of authorized expenses. These aspects of the role are non-negotiable.

For more information about the board or to apply, please contact

**LIFTT's Executive Director,
Carlos Ramalho,
carlosr@lifft.org
406-294-5190**

Congrats to Luck of the Draw Raffle Winners & Thank You Prize Donors!

Thank you to all of the folks who bought tickets as a part of LIFTT's "Luck of the Draw" raffle. Thanks to your generosity we raised around \$4000!

Congratulations to the winners:

- Grand Prize (BBQ Grill & Gift Card); August Koepke
- Date Night Prize Package: Dee Robart

- Softer Side Prize Package: Dano Burbach
- Rough & Tough Prize Package: Raquel Mitchell

The Team at LIFTT would also like to thank the Glendive area businesses that donated the items included in the prize packages including: Neighbors Helping Neighbors Furniture &

More, Albertsons, Tractor Supply Co. Holiday Station Stores, Fitzerellis, Crav'ns, Auto Value Parts Stores, Robins Service and Towing, The Flower Basket, Holiday Inn Express & Suites Glendive, Yellowstone River Inn, Penny's Diner Glendive, Re-Treat, and 406 Salon and Spa by Whitney Schipman

CONTRACTORS WANTED

Living Independently for Today & Tomorrow (LIFTT) is looking for local contractors that are knowledgeable about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and are willing to work with consumers using grant funding to do home modifications.

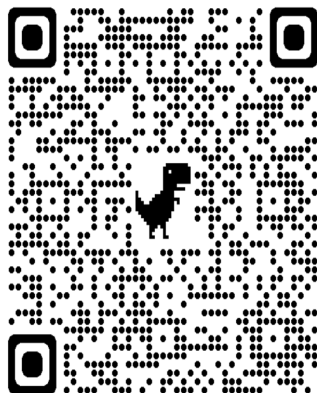
If you are interested in learning more please contact Larry Ketchem @ (406) 294-5189, larryk@liftt.org, or John Robison @ (406) 294-5188, johnr@liftt.org.



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Some requirements for contractors to work with LIFTT and the grant funders include a builder's license, workers' compensation, and proof of insurance.

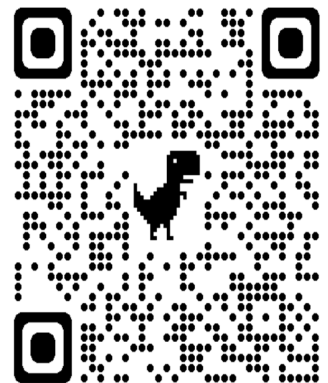
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IL on the Go!
Download the
LIFTT Mobile APP!
Free for Apple & Android

Just use the QR Codes or
go to liftt.org/mobile-app

Take



LIFTT helps those with disabilities remove barriers that keep them from living their best life. **Whether you have a physical or mental disability, and you want the flu and/or Covid vaccine or a booster, we're here to help connect you with resources to [get the care you want and need.](#)**



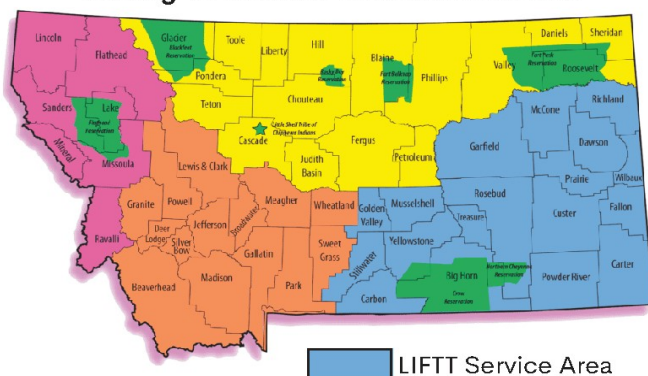
LIFTT

Living Independently for Today & Tomorrow



Scan the QR to learn
more about the program
or to find help.

Serving 18 counties in eastern Montana



LIFTT Service Area

Stay connected with LIFTT!

Visit us online @ **liftt.org**

Billings at (406) 259-5181 | Glendive at (406) 948-8500





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We are on the web @
www.LIFTT.org

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LIFTT's Mission— Living Independently for Today & Tomorrow, Inc. is Montana non-profit organization committed to empowering persons with disabilities to live freely and equally in Southeastern Montana through the provision of independent living services which reduce societal barriers.

Peer Support Group

Would you like to connect with others living with disabilities?

Join the weekly fellowship of LIFTT's online peer support group. Whether it's games or supportive deep discussion, you're sure to enjoy the new perspectives and the positive sense of belonging.

Join LIFTT peer coordinator Tanya Thomas for our online peer support groups every Thursday at 3pm.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/93017341646>
Meeting ID: 930 1734 1646
One tap mobile +13462487799, 93017341646# US

LIFTT is a nonprofit agency governed by a consumer-led Board of Directors whose lives have been personally impacted by a disability.

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