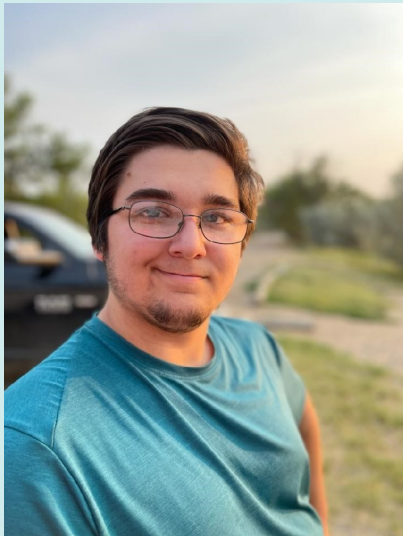




The LIFTT Connection!

SEPTEMBER 2021

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 4



18-year-old Jeremiah Thompson was afloat. He was a high school dropout with no job, no future on the horizon and no place to go. "I didn't know what to do" he said, "and I really needed help!" Jeremiah's sister reached out to Independent Living Specialist Jen Hawkinson from the Glendive branch of LIFTT, hoping she could get Jeremiah back on track. Little did Jeremiah know that Hawkinson was a powerhouse of ideas and a relentless advocate. "Jen is super persistent," said Jeremiah, "she was on me 24/7, no slacking." Jen met with Jeremiah and his family to discuss options that would help him obtain his

school diploma which included enrolling in the High School Equivalency Test (HSET) offered by both the Dawson Community college in Glendive, and the Job Corp program in Anaconda.

Jeremiah was drawn to Job Corp because it included occupational training courses and the High School Equivalency Test. Jen obtained the application papers from a Job Corp recruiter, and helped Jeremiah fill them out. Unfortunately, there was a snag. Jeremiah was missing essential documents including his birth certificate, social security card and school transcripts. He had no idea where they were, and neither did his family, but that didn't stop Jen. Undaunted, she told him to contact Action for Eastern Montana, a nonprofit organization committed to promoting education. Jeremiah had been enrolled at Action as a child and was able to retrieve the necessary government forms. She assisted him in getting a replacement for a lost Social Security card. Jen then invoked the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) which provides public access to all federal agency records, allowing Jeremiah to take possession of his elementary and high school transcripts.

Once everything was in place, he submitted the Job Corp application and, shortly afterward, was accepted into the program. Despite the successful outcome, Jen wasn't finished yet. She had recognized that Jeremiah's disorganization was a barrier to his future and, through guidance and providing him with a personal lock box, Jeremiah can now locate his important documents. "It is discouraging to keep losing things and be so disorganized," he said, "but thanks to LIFTT and Jen, now I know where everything is!"

Today, Jeremiah's future is bright. He owns a car and recently landed a maintenance job. He is considering returning to Job Corp at some point, but right now, Jeremiah is attending high school in Dickinson, North Dakota, working for his dad and keeping his life on track.

**For more information
on how LIFTT services
can help you or
someone you love,
call (406) 259-5181
We are on the web @
www.LIFTT.org**

**"Jen is super
persistent, she
was on me 24/7,
no slacking."**

Jeremiah Thompson

**Worried About Your Rent?
Apply for Covid Relief**



The federal government is conducting an all-out push to make sure tenants and landlords take advantage of the historic funding for emergency rental assistance to help cover rent, utilities, and other housing costs and keep people in their homes.

Thanks to the American Rescue Plan, billions of dollars in federal rental assistance is reaching renters behind on housing costs, as well as landlords who have struggled during the pandemic. These programs are run locally, and emergency rental assistance is available across the country. The programs are created specifically for low-income, non-elderly adults with disabilities seeking rent assistance.

Don't be left out in the cold! LIFTT can help you navigate the rental assistance application process.

Call us for more information.
(406) 259-5181.

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

On July 6, 2021, LIFTT was re-opened to the public. We were happy, hopeful, and optimistic that the pandemic would recede and did not want to believe that mutations of the Coronavirus would bring it back. Unfortunately, that's what happened. A highly contagious SARS-CoV-2 virus strain called Delta variant of COVID-19 spread rapidly through the United States and became a threat. According to the CDC, the Delta COVID-19 is much more transmissible than the common cold, influenza, smallpox, MERS, SARS, and Ebola and is as contagious as chickenpox.

On August 1, 2021, we were alarmed because the Delta COVID-19 was quickly spreading in places with low vaccination rates like Montana. On August 16, 2021, authorities confirmed that the Delta variant of COVID-19 affected even vaccinated citizens whose immune systems are compromised. Yellowstone County reported 703 new cases compared to the 451 new cases reported during July. Given the seriousness of the situation, to protect consumers, team members, and our community, once again, until further notice, LIFTT decided to close its doors to the public. However, LIFTT will continue to provide services to everyone via telephone and the internet. In special situations, LIFTT team members even agree to meet consumers in person, by appointment only, provided they are not experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, flu and have not been in contact with anyone sick with COVID-19.

LIFTT is always open and available to provide consumers with services even though its doors are closed. We encourage you to give us a phone call, send us an email, connect with us on Facebook and Twitter. Clicking with one of our Independent Living Specialists will most certainly open up a world of possibilities and opportunities for you.

We are always available to meet you online via Skype or Zoom. Please do not let the Delta variant of COVID-19 stop you.

Let LIFTT work with you to remove any barriers that might be preventing you from living independently.

We are looking forward to hearing from you.

Carlos Ramalho, Executive Director



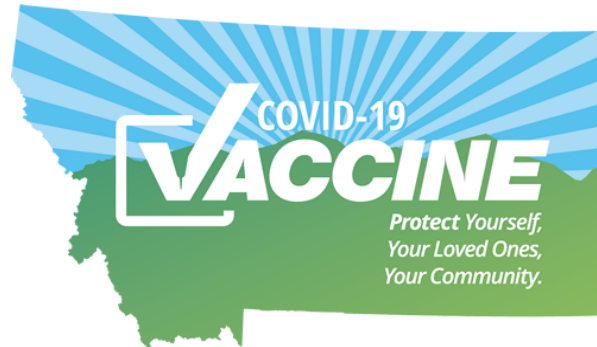


Protect yourself from the Coronavirus Delta Variant LIFTT wants to keep you safe!

We want to remind you that the COVID-19 vaccine can protect you from the recent, so-called Coronavirus Delta Variant.

The Delta Variant is a mutation of the Coronavirus. It is dangerous because it spreads more quickly and causes severe disease. Those who are vaccinated are protected because the vaccine is effective against the Delta Variant. However, those who are not vaccinated are at greater risk of contracting it.

The more people that are vaccinated, the less the Delta and other COVID-19 viruses will spread and mutate. It is vital to receive the vaccine to protect ourselves, our families, our community, and the country.



Please call 1-800-232-0233

**You can find a COVID-19 vaccine near you, use the following resources:
By searching <http://www.vaccines.gov>
By texting your ZIP code to 438829**

MONTANA STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL (SILC) *Join today!*

The Statewide Independent Living Council advocates for the independent living needs of people with disabilities so that they can enjoy the same rights and opportunities as all Montana citizens.

It does this by developing and following the guidelines of a State Plan, which contains the policies and recommendations for independent living.

Most SILC members are people with disabilities, and additional representatives include: a Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation director, a Center for Independent Living director, a representative from Disability Employment and Transitions, a youth representative and a representative from other state agencies that provide services for individuals with disabilities.

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/detd/independentliving/silc/>

For more information contact Vena Dagnall
Vena.Dagnall@mt.gov

Peer Support Group

Would you like to connect with others living with disabilities? Join the weekly fun and fellowship of LIFTT's online peer support group. Whether it's laughs and games or supportive deep discussion, you're sure to enjoy the new perspectives and the positive sense of belonging. Grow new friendships, share your story, empower yourself and each other!

For more information contact Tanya at 690-6324.

**Join LIFTT host
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



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LIFTT's Mission— Living Independently for Today & Tomorrow, Inc. is a 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."

We are on the web @ www.LIFTT.org



TRACKING SUCCESS!
We're please to share this success story from our office in Glendive. Read more on Page 1.

Photo:
Jeremiah Thompson
and
his sister,
Sammi Murphy

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