



Living Independently for Today and Tomorrow

# The LIFTT Connection!

APRIL 2021

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2

## LIFTT OFFERS FREE ONLINE EXERCISE WITH SPIRIT CLUB!



Living Independently for Today & Tomorrow (LIFTT) is excited to announce a partnership with SPIRIT Club to bring supportive inclusive virtual exercise and healthy lifestyle classes to people with disabilities free of charge across our 18-county service area.

Utilizing both live and on-demand video; SPIRIT Club offers exercise classes for people of all abilities including Zumba, Yoga, Boxing, Cardio Fitness, Strength Training, Balance & Flexibility, and Meditation.

SPIRIT Club virtual exercise classes do not require participants to have any special fitness equipment.

In addition to the fitness classes, SPIRIT Club also offers a twice-a-month virtual healthy cooking class where participants are guided through the process of preparing an affordable, nutritious, and fun dish.

Ingredients lists are posted ahead of time on the SPIRIT Club website so that participants can do their shopping.

In addition to the live broadcasts, the healthy cooking classes are also available on-demand at any time.

For more information about how to access the full library of SPIRIT Club classes through LIFTT contact us today @ (406) 259-5181 or [liftt.org/contact](http://liftt.org/contact).

For more information about SPIRIT Club visit [www.spirit-club.org](http://www.spirit-club.org)

For more information on LIFTT services, call (406) 259-5181. We are on the web @ [www.LIFTT.org](http://www.LIFTT.org)



## Director's Corner

At LIFTT, we tell consumers that when we deal with difficult moments, it is important to keep fighting and remembering that any challenge can be overcome **if we do not give up!**

It feels good to defeat challenges such as sickness, distress, sadness, and disabilities, by moving forward. We have seen it happen at LIFTT. I have personally faced many challenges, including illness, distress, sadness, and disabilities.

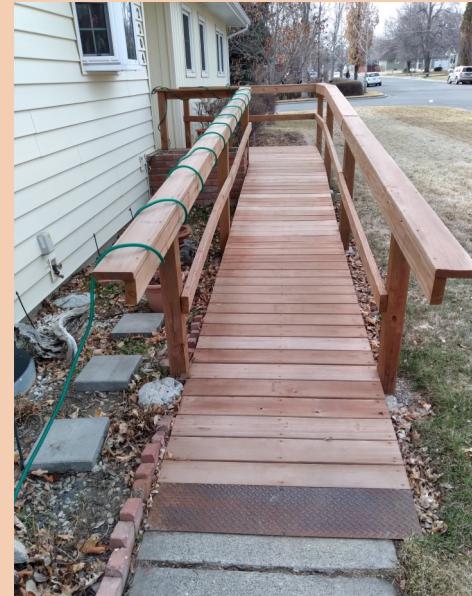
However, I persevered, moved forward, and did not allow my disabilities to prevent me from living, getting up in the morning to go to work, drive, and communicate. All of us at LIFTT understand the importance of perseverance.

Recently, I was infected with COVID-19 and suffered complications from the virus. It was a difficult recovery. My life was at risk because of underlying health issues. However, after a few weeks, I recovered, returned to work, and succeeded in preventing COVID-19 from breaking me.

What helped my recovery was remembering what we tell LIFTT's consumers: "If we fall, we have to get back up, keep walking, and moving forward, one step at a time." This is how we successfully reach our destination. LIFTT is here to get back up and keep walking with anyone who is dealing with any types of disabilities.

Our compassionate team of highly qualified specialists, facilitators, and peers will share with you their experiences, and inspire you to overcome challenges, sickness, distress, sadness, and disabilities.

Give us a chance to help you find a new direction for your future.  
Carlos Ramalho,  
Executive Director



## HOME MODIFICATIONS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

By Steve Woodard,  
Data Management  
and Quality Control

Every client at LIFTT has unique needs in terms of their disability and what they might require for them to live independently, including home modification. Here are a few questions and answers to help if you are considering a necessary change in your living arrangements.

### How do you know if you qualify to receive the modifications?

Usually your doctor can provide written support for the need, and then LIFTT can help you with the application process to receive one of these modifications.

### Is there financial help available for home modification?

Clients can either pay for their own modifications, obtain a low interest loan (Montana Assistive Technology Loan), or you can ask LIFTT to help you apply for grant funding.

### How long does it take to complete a modification project?

The completion time can take a couple of months to as many as six months depending on the type or size of the project and if an application for grant funding is needed.

### Who do I contact to learn more about accessibility modifications services?

Call 406-259-5181 and speak with the receptionist. She will record your information and put your request through a short protocol, and you will receive a return call from an Independent Living Specialist within two business days.

## STAFF PROFILE

### LARRY KETCHEM

#### Living and working independently!



When Larry Ketchem picks up the phone at LIFTT, he is armed with answers.

As the organization's information and referral specialist, Larry is often the first point of contact with Montanans living

with disabilities, many of whom are desperate for services and programs to enhance their lives. Larry makes the red tape necessary for services look easy, but it was not always that way. Growing up, Larry had to grapple with his own questions.

Born with retinitis pigmentosa, he lost most of his eyesight in high school. "My teen years were tough" he said, "I should have been learning how to drive, but instead, at 16, I was learning how to be blind." By the time Larry was 25, he could only see light and dark.

Despite his dwindling vision, Larry refused to be held back: He was on the Billings Senior High School wrestling team, skied; and, as a third generation Broncos fan, faithfully followed his team. After high school graduation in 1988, Larry attended MSU-B and accepted a job offer from LIFTT. Except for a brief medical hiatus, Larry has assisted people with disabilities for a total of 12 years. He credits his accomplishments to his parents, who insisted he "pull himself up by his bootstraps," and a blind vocational rehab counselor who held degrees in math and chemistry, drove a pickup around his farm outside of Billings, and frequently ran up the Airport Road using two canes as his eyes.

#### Independence

Larry believes living independently is a life well lived. He is passionate about helping others achieve

the same sense of freedom, providing intake and referral information, fielding phone calls, conducting I&R research, and sharing his expertise with colleagues. He says the best thing about his job is seeing people with disabilities achieve their goals, "I enjoy helping people succeed," he said, "they come to LIFTT beaten down and desperate for help and it's great when they smile and say, 'I can do this.'"

In his free time, Larry unwinds by playing video-games, spending time with his wife of 22 years, and reading a good book through a talking book device courtesy of the State of Montana that can be downloaded and put on a thumb drive. Larry's literary taste ranges from westerns to Sci-fi and horror.

Larry's philosophy is to stay independent, try everything once, and laugh a lot. "If you can't laugh" Larry said, "you'll go nuts."

#### Independence Day

Once a year, Larry's vision detects more than just light and dark. On July Fourth, Larry purchases the biggest fireworks he can find, and when they are ignited, he can see brilliant red, yellow, and orange explosions in the night sky, spotlighting both America's freedom, and Larry's independent lifestyle.



#### PEER SUPPORT GROUP

Join LIFTT host  
Tanya Thomas  
for an 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



## Living Independently for Today and Tomorrow

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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](http://www.LIFTT.org)



penings in Helena.

The MTCILs Action Alert service notifies and provides links to action steps for advocates when legislation of importance to the independence of Montanans with Disabilities comes up. To sign up to receive Montana IL Action Alerts in your email, go to : <http://www.mtcil.org/become-an-advocate/>

*LIFTT is a not-for-profit agency governed by a consumer-controlled Board of Directors whose lives have been personally impacted by a disability. It is funded in part by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended in 1992 (Title VII - Independent Living Services), and the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (Disability Services Division).*

### Give a call (406) or email us!

LIFTT Main Number/Messaging: 259-5181

LIFTT Contact Us email form: <http://www.liftt.org/contact/>

LIFTT Fax Number: 259-5259

#### SELF DIRECT PERSONAL CARE ASSISTANT PROGRAM

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#### INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM

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#### PEER PROGRAM

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