



Living Independently for Today and Tomorrow

The LIFTT Connection!

FEBRUARY 2021

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

IT'S GOOD FOR BUSINESS!

it's Billings

Chamber of Commerce

We are excited to announce LIFTT's affiliation with the Billings Chamber of Commerce! To celebrate our membership, we are devoting this newsletter to Billings businesses, and how LIFTT can network with business partners to enhance the local business culture.

As a center for independent living, LIFTT's philosophy is to provide services to both our consumers and the community. Independent living is based on the belief that people with disabilities have the right to control their own lives, and that disability is a natural part of the human experience. Billings businesses can benefit from this philosophy.

LIFTT offers several services designed for business owners on how they can better serve their employees, clients, and disabled customers. For example, employment is a crucial way for disabled people to participate in society

and create more opportunities for themselves. In addition to a steady paycheck, disabled employees enrich their workplaces through their strengths, experiences, and insights.

If your company is hiring, LIFTT can help. Our staff provides comprehensive training of soft skills and intense peer monitoring, which improves disabled employees job performance and helps them retain employment.

Another service LIFTT offers is assistance navigating ADA requirements. Using various tool kits, we determine if your work site meets the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) standards. Our compliance team can also evaluate parking lots, entry ways, offices, sales floors, meeting and convention facilities, restrooms, hotel rooms, and even medical facilities. When the evaluation is complete, we provide suggestions on how to improve access.

LIFTT looks forward to working with the Billings Chamber and taking part in partnerships and networking opportunities that will strengthen the Billings economy.

All About Independent Living

What is Independent Living?

It is a program,
it's a movement,
it's a culture!

The Independent Living Program

Centers for Independent Living are community-based, cross-disability, non-profit organizations that are designed and operated by people with disabilities. CILs are unique in that they operate according to a strict philosophy of consumer control, wherein people with all types of disabilities directly govern and staff the organization. Centers for Independent Living provide:

- Peer Support
- Information and Referral
- Individual and Systems Advocacy
- Independent Living Skills Training
- Transition support

America is home to:

403 Centers for Independent Living (CILs)
330 branch offices
56 Statewide Independent Living Councils (SILCs)

For more information
on LIFTT services,
call (406) 259-5181

We are on the web @ www.LIFTT.org



Director's Corner

At LIFTT we are dreamers! We dream with a world where disabled people will not be discriminated and will enjoy equal opportunities. There will be abundance, peace, happiness, and prosperity for all.

Although we dream, and encourage others to dream, our staff work hard to provide services to the disabled citizens of the state of Montana.

Have you ever heard the expression "dreams come true"? We want to assure you they do and it is OK to dream. How do we know? Because LIFTT's dreams are becoming a reality. Many doors are opening for LIFTT to take the message of independent living to all corners of Montana.

We are now on television, are building a new accessible website and APP which will strengthen LIFTT's capacity to provide services electronically.

We are investing in different outreach activities and disseminating useful information. We are building strategic partnerships with individuals and organizations such as Billings Chamber and C7TV, that will help LIFTT fulfill its mission.

We hope that by the time the next edition of LIFTT's newsletter is published, the COVID-19 pandemic will be over, and we will be prepared to meet you face to face, dream, and work together.



Carlos Ramalho,
Executive Director



LIGHTS, CAMERA, . . . ACTION!

Living Independently for Today & Tomorrow (LIFTT) is pleased to announce the launch of a new program on Billings Community 7 Television.

(Photo) Kathleen Benoit interviews LIFTT employees Freda Mook and Lanette Brown in the C7 TV studio.

Entitled "Living Independently in Montana;" over the series of 26 half-hour episodes, the program will introduce viewers to the programs and services offered by LIFTT as well as to the broader concepts of the disability rights movement and independent living philosophy.

Living Independently in Montana can be seen at various times throughout the week in Billings on Community Channel 7 and anywhere throughout LIFTT's service area through the Community 7 website and soon on LIFTT's website and YouTube channel.



Community 7 TV offers diverse and stimulating programming in the public interest and supports and promotes the economy and quality of life in Yellowstone County by providing educational and informational programming.



We still have some Echo Dots free to LIFTT consumers!

Echo Dots can help you make calls, control smart home devices, listen to music, news, jokes, weather forecasts and much more. Supply is limited, first-come-first-served, so call LIFTT today, 259-5181

BEST PRACTICES FOR BUSINESSES



Businesses and other public places should comply with ADA not because of fear of law-suits, but because it's the right thing to do.

Accessibility accommodations don't give people with disabilities special rights; they provide equal access and equal accommodations to afford everyone equal rights to which they're entitled.

Making facilities and public places accessible to more customers, patrons and potential employees is just good business.

Please contact us with any questions. We can also provide technical assistance and assess your facility to provide guidance on accessibility.
(406) 259-5181

10 Reasons to Hire Disabled People

Employees with disabilities are among the most reliable workers a business can hire, with exceptional records of attendance, and job performance. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates one million disabled people have lost their jobs. Employment is a crucial way for the disabled to participate in society and create more opportunities for themselves. In addition to a steady paycheck, disabled people enrich their workplaces through their strengths, experiences, and insights.

1 Dependable work force

Studies indicate 90% of all employees with disabilities rated "average" to "better" in job performance and ranked high in job satisfaction and retention.

2. Pay cost effective wages

LIFTT has a staff of qualified job coaches that supervise and instruct disabled employees.

3. Time management

Workers with disabilities complete specific job tasks, freeing up other workers to focus on challenging chores.

4. Increased profits

Businesses who hire disabled employees see a positive impact on productivity and profitability.

5. Tax incentives. Businesses accommodating people with disabilities may

qualify for some of the following tax credits and deductions:

- **Disabled Access Credit (DAC):** DAC is a non-refundable credit for small businesses that incur expenditures for the purpose of providing access to persons with disabilities.
- **Barrier Removal Tax Deduction (BRTD):** The BRTD encourages businesses of any size to remove architectural and transportation barriers to the mobility of persons with disabilities and the elderly.
- **Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC):** The WOTC provides employers incentives to hire qualified individuals from these target groups.

6. Enhanced public image

A survey conducted by the Illinois Dept. of Commerce revealed that 93 percent of customers preferred to purchase from a company that hired individuals with disabilities.

7. Workplace morale boosted

Business surveys found that employees of companies who hire disabled people are more committed to diversity and more satisfied with their jobs.

8. Expand innovation

People with disabilities foster technological change with innovations such as closed captioning, voice activation, and spell check.

9. Happy workplace

Employers have witnessed camaraderie and a positive effect on their entire staff.

10. They inspire others

It takes action to make action. If more companies hire developmentally disabled employees, others will be inspired to do the same.

Peer Support Group

LIFTT hosts 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

Please welcome two new
employees to LIFTT!



Cheryl Riga, Independent Living Specialist (left)
and Valerie Rowilson, Self-Direct Program Facilitator (right).

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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