



LIFTT

Living Independently for Today & Tomorrow

The LIFTT Connection Newsletter

JANUARY 2023 VOLUME 4, ISSUE 1

LIFTT Launches 2023 Outreach Project

After months of careful planning, in December 2022, LIFTT launched its 2023 Outreach Program. It is an aggressive project designed to bring Independent Living (IL) services, to those areas and populations which have in the past been unserved or underserved by LIFTT.

Among our unserved and underserved populations include are our most rural communities as well as Native Americans both on and off reservations and other racial and ethnic minorities.

This project will strengthen our service area's unserved/underserved communities by addressing their needs, disseminating information, and promoting their engagement with the independent living philosophy and inclusion in society. Our goal is to create an enduring partnership between these communities and LIFTT.

Leading our outreach efforts are the extraordinary team of Senior IL Specialist and Manager of our office in Glendive, MT, Jen Hawkinson, and Billings based, Outreach Coordinator, John Robison.

We plan to visit schools, libraries, nursing homes, public health departments, chambers of commerce, commercial es-

tablishments, clinics, human service providers, community organizations, faith communities as well as county, municipal and tribal governments.

We will distribute literature, make presentations, hold workshops, talk to individuals, families, and public officers, and en-

fully into their communities to promote equal opportunities, self-determination, and respect.

For purposes of this new outreach initiative, we have divided our service area into two parts:

The Glendive Office will work on the Eastern part of our service area and bring services as well information & referral to the following counties: Carter, Custer, Dawson, Fallon, McCone, Power River, Prairie, Richland, and Wibaux Counties.

The Billings Office will work on the Western part of our service to reach out to the following counties: Big

Horn, Carbon, Garfield, Golden Valley, Musselshell, Rosebud, Stillwater, Treasure, and Yellowstone Counties.

For our outreach project to reach its full potential we need to hear you from you! If you have any ideas or want our team to visit you, your school, faith community, community organization, or workplace, please get in touch with us at 406-259-5181 (Billings) or 406-948-8501 (Glendive). We would love to talk with you about LIFTT and its services.



gage in any other activity that can communicate the message of independent living to the community.

LIFTT's 2023 Outreach Project will support people with disabilities across the 18 counties in southeastern and south central Montana that comprise our service area and help them live with dignity, make their own choices, and participate fully in society.

This project will bring tools, resources, and supports for integrating people with disabilities

Director's Corner: A Strategic Vision for LIFTT



2022 was an excellent year for LIFTT! Our team of talented independent living (IL) specialists, Personal Care Assistants (PCAs), PCA Facilitators, Board Members, Peer Mentors worked together, fulfilled LIFTT's mission and vision by empowering people with disabilities to live independently through education, support, and opportunities. We "LIFTTed" them above the barriers of life.

Examples of what LIFTT accomplished during 2022 our new Americans with Disabilities Act

(ADA) accessible website & APP launched in January and July 2022, respectively, and the video produced by KTVQ, launched in October 2022.

These projects synthesize our efforts to communicate our mission and vision to all stakeholders so that everyone understands LIFTT's goals and works toward a common purpose. These achievements demonstrate that during 2022 LIFTT focused on its mission and vision, became more digitally savvy, listened to the needs of its consumers, and made a continuous effort to improve accordingly.

In 2023, we plan to continue to do all these things, mobilize and inspire more people, and keep our community-oriented services viable.

To do that, LIFTT will pursue financial sustainability and seek the necessary funding by conceiving a realistic fundraising and resource development plan.

LIFTT will also boost volunteer recruitment efforts by offering

specific & flexible volunteer assignments and support & training for volunteers. We will highlight the impact of volunteers and feature their successful contribution to LIFTT on our website, APP, and social media. Please look for volunteering opportunities at LIFTT. We will be posting them soon.

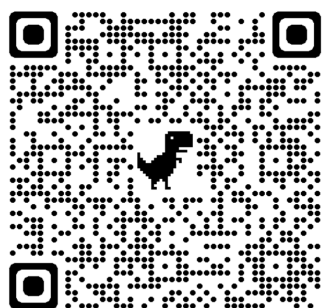
We will seek partnerships with the Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and implement an internship program.

We will all work together to reach LIFTT's 2023 strategic plan goals summarized above knowing that 2023 will bring challenges as significant as the ones we faced in the last three years.

We will succeed because we are resilient, strong, and equipped to handle the surprises waiting for us.

Happy New Year! We look forward to seeing you in 2023!

Carlos Ramalho, Executive Director and winner of the LIFTT office holiday door decorating contest!



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

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



Providing Access to Vaccines in Carbon County

On December 12, Community Health Worker & Outreach Coordinator John Robison and Independent Living Specialist Tara Robison traveled to Red Lodge to participate in a COVID-19 Vaccination Booster Clinic cosponsored by LIFTT and the Carbon County Public Health Department.

LIFTT's participation in the Clinic was part of the agencies work on Project ALIVE (Accessible Life-saving Integrated Vaccine Equity).

Project ALIVE is a project of LIFTT, the Partnership for Inclu-

sive Disaster Strategies, and the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL),



and is designed to identify and where possible remove barriers to COVID-19 vaccines for Montanans with disabilities and to help those wanting a vaccine

and needing support to access one.

At the Red Lodge event 42 people received the Moderna Bivalent Vaccine while also learning more about LIFTT's programs and services as well as the independent living philosophy. "All in all, it was a success" said John Robison.

In addition to providing patients with information LIFTT team members assisted clinicians by running errands, organizing patient flow and watching for any adverse reactions to the vaccine by patients during the recovery period.

Thank you from Ugly Santa!



**From The Desk of
U.S. Claus**

**North Pole
January 2023,**

**To my Friends in the
Glendive Community,**

I wanted to thank all of you for welcoming me into your homes and places of business during my visit to the "The 'Dive" last month and allowing me to provide you with some education about the great things going on at LIFTT.

I am especially touched at your generosity that

meant the team at LIFTT found \$1200 in their stocking on Christmas morning to support their mission of helping people with disabilities become and remain independent.

I look forward to coming back next year and who knows? Maybe I'll dispatch a few elves or reindeer to other communities to spread the word about LIFTT!

**All the best
Ugly Santa**

P.S. for a complete list of the stops I made in Glendive check out LIFTT.org

Former Peer named LIFTT's new Data and Quality Control Manager

My name is Tricia Cutright, and I have been at LIFTT as a Peer Mentor since 2019. Peer mentors provide education, recreation, and support opportunities to individuals. The peer mentor may challenge the mentee with new ideas and encourage mentees to move forward, step out of their comfort zones, and think outside the box.

I am a person with invisible disabilities. I have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), Bipolar Disorder, and Schizoaffective Disorder Bipolar type. These disabilities are challenging because most people do not understand Mental Health disabilities.

In my experience the diagnosis of Schizophrenia is met with fear because society has put such a negative stigma on this disability. Most people immediately dismiss us when in fact we can be very productive members of the community.

It took me some soul searching and leaps of faith to do but I decided to share this information to encourage those with invisible disabilities and to stand as an example that they can live independently. It is my hope to bring positive awareness to this issue with my work through LIFTT and Mental Health Advocacy.

Because of my disabilities, and the loss of my oldest son to suicide in 2005, I became involved in the Butte-Silver Bow Mental Health Local Advisory Council in

2016. I was a part of the committee that worked with Montana's Peer Network to bring the Certified Peer support pilot program to work with Butte's police department and Mental Health providers.

I moved back to Billings in 2018 and contacted the local Mental



Tricia Cutright, A peer with LIFTT since 2019 was recently named the agency's Data and Quality Control Manager, (LIFTT File photo)

Health Advisory Board to continue my involvement with Mental Health Advocacy. I met the board chair, who happened to work at LIFTT. He got to know me and interviewed me for the Peer Mentor program. I have been involved with the council now known as the Yellowstone County Behavioral Health Local Advisory Council and LIFTT ever since.

I have an extensive background in Computers, and I hope someday to complete my bachelor's degree in Computer Science. I

only need five classes to finish, but funding is my roadblock.

While training to become an Independent Living (IL) specialist, I accepted the opportunity to become LIFTT's Data Manager and have been working in this position since December 2022. Although the field of technology is demanding, I feel energized by what I am doing and feel I am growing professionally and as a human being. In my current job as Data Manager, I enjoy helping and supporting all LIFTT's team members and consumers. I love helping people and making their life easier.

In my down time I crochet hats for the homeless, paint pictures and love going to hot springs around the state and car races.

I Wish you all a Happy New Year!
Tricia

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



LWC



WORKSHOP

Living Well in the Community (LWC) is a ten-week workshop grounded in Independent Living philosophy that can help people set and achieve quality-of-life goals, while building skills to support health and wellness.

The Living Well workshop can benefit participants physically, intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, and socially

This workshop is free of charge to anyone with any kind of disability. Physical, mental or emotional.

Orientation is held the week before class starts and is a no obligation way to come see what the class is about and sign up if interested.

NEXT ORIENTATION DATE:

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 25, 2023 @ 2PM

CLASSES START: WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 1, 2023 @ 2PM

<https://liftt.org/>



LIVING WELL IN COMMUNITY SESSIONS INCLUDE:

Goal setting	week 1
Building Support	week 2
Healthy Reactions	week 3
Stating on course	week 4
Healthy Communication	week 5
Seeking Information	week 6
Eating Well	week 7
Physical Activity	week 8
Advocacy	week 9
Maintenance	week 10





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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.

**GRRRRR,
GREAT!!**
SCAN THIS
QR CODE TO
GET IMMEDIATE
ACCESS TO
THE LIFTT
WEBSITE!

<https://liftt.org/>



LIFTT is a not-for-profit agency governed by a consumer-led Board of Directors whose lives have been personally impacted by a disability.

LIFTT is funded in part through contracts and grants from the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services and the Administration for Community Living, United States Department of Health and Human Services. The statements herein do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Montana DPHHS, ACL, or HHS.

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