



Living Independently

The LIFTT Connection!

JUNE 2021

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 3

MEET THE BILLINGS & GLENDIVE TEAMS! Both of our LIFTT offices will reopen to the public on July 6th!



The Billings LIFTT Team. L to R Front: Lee Hoblitzell, Carlos Ramalho, Valerie Rowilson. Back: Marilyn Gone, Tanya Thomas, Lanette Brown, Steve Woodard, Dianne Booth, Cheryl Riga, Jed Barton. Not pictured, Freda Mook, Brooke Brandt, Dori Bruusema, Kasey Mook.
(photo by Freda Mook)



The Glendive LIFTT team: From L to R: Tonnette Brandt, Jen Hawkinson, MaKenna Andreopoulos, Lionia Ornelas, Max Dugan
(photo by Mary Swanson)

LIFTT ENCOURAGES EVERYONE TO GET A VACCINE, AND WE CAN HELP MAKE IT HAPPEN!

June is Vaccine Month of Action!

The team at LIFTT encourages everyone who is eligible and medically qualified to get a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible. Getting all who are able vaccinated against COVID-19 is a critical step in moving our communities, state, nation, and the world out of the darkest days of the last year.

The COVID-19 vaccines being given out by local health departments and other medical providers in our communities are safe and effective and completely **free of charge**! Visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to find a location in your area and information about how to make an appointment. You can also find vaccination site information by texting your zip code to 438829 or by calling (800) 232-0233.

If you are a person with a disability and need assistance in finding a vaccine location near you, making an appointment, getting to a vaccination site, or face other barriers; LIFTT can help you navigate the process. Please give us a call at (406) 259-5181, or send a message to liftt.org/contact.

Director's Corner

LIFTT will reopen on July 6, 2021. It's been a long time since our doors were open. Although the COVID-19 Pandemic has not been kind, it taught us many positive lessons. We're optimistic about the future and have made lots of plans.

This summer, LIFTT will restore operations to pre-pandemic levels and increase services, community activities, and group events. The reopening is an opportunity to reimagine who we are and how we serves the population of Southeastern Montana living with disabilities.

Reimagining LIFTT is a big challenge because it requires change. During the Pandemic, we encouraged talented new leaders to grow and thrive; take advantage of daily surprises, handle long and short -term demands, and overcome fears of the unknown. We're making progress in all those areas.

During COVID-19 communication through technology was crucial. LIFTT developed new and creative ways to engage our service area. We offered services online and via telephone. We increased communication by using a variety of mediums: television, newsletters and newspapers. We are telling people "who we are" and "what we can do."

Thanks to those efforts, we have already experienced a higher level of calls from new consumers seeking services.

Those changes, made by necessity, resulted in effectively serving more consumers, and is the reason LIFTT is building a new ADA Accessible Website.

LIFTT wants the message of independent living to be clear: *No matter what your disability, LIFTT is here to serve you because you are our priority.*

LIFTT wants to build on diversity and inclusion. We have been asking ourselves how to include people in the reimagination process.

- Who needs to be involved?
- How will team members have a voice?
- Is the board meaningfully engaged?
- Are the people we serve represented in the leadership?

Please consider joining us in this reimagining process. Help us focus on LIFTT's mission and how best to serve you.

Carlos A. Ramalho,
Executive Director



ASSESSIBILITY WEBSITE UPDATE

Since the beginning of the year, LIFTT has been seeking financial support for the construction of an ADA accessible website and APP (a digital mobile application) to provide Independent Living services to people with disabilities in southeastern Montana.

This part of the state is comprised of rural communities and citizens who are disproportionately impacted a lack of resources and services. The Accessible Website project will expand LIFTT's capacity to address, the needs of all people with disabilities in southeastern Montana.

To date, we would like to thank these organizations that have generously contributed to the project:

The Brondum Foundation

The Dennis & Phyllis

Washington Foundation

Charles Bair Family Trust

Billings Lions Club

If you would like to contribute to the project, please contact Carlos A. Ramalho, LIFTT Executive Director

Email carlosr@liftt.org
Direct (406) 294-5190

Emergency Broadband Benefit

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC)'s [Emergency Broadband Benefit](#) launched on May 12th. This benefit provides a discount of \$50 per month for eligible low-income households or \$75 per month for households on Tribal lands to cover internet bills, as well as discounts on some devices. This program can also be combined with Lifeline benefits.

Reliable home internet and technology provides older adults with more options to access important services and supports, including legal assistance, telehealth services, and portals for economic impact payment eligibility and benefits programs.

The eligible households can apply in three ways: Contact [participating broadband providers](#) directly. Visit [GetEmergencyBroadband.org](https://www.fcc.gov/emergencybroadband) to apply online. Call (833) 511-0311 for a mail-in application and return it along with proof of eligibility to: Emergency Broadband Support Center, P.O. Box 7081, London, KY 40742. Individuals who use videophones and are fluent in American Sign Language (ASL) may call the FCC's ASL Consumer Support Line at (844) 432-2275 (videophone).



THANKS FOR THE "LIFT!"

LIFTT would like to thank Jim Davis of Great Falls for donating a 2006 Ford Freestar van equipped with a wheelchair lift. The vehicle previously belonged to Jim's sister Patty Davis who lives in Billings and was a one-time consumer of LIFTT.

We look forward to putting the van to good use as our team ventures back out into the communities we serve in the coming weeks and months following the lockdown due to COVID-19.

A special thanks to Dan Morrell of Willard's Garage for helping with the repairs!

MEET LEE HOBLITZELL!

LIFTT is pleased to welcome Lee Hoblitzell as project coordinator and an independent living specialist. Lee said he is looking forward to being a part of the LIFTT family.

Raised in Billings, Lee moved to Seattle in 1997. In 2002, he was in a life-altering car wreck that left him paralyzed from the waist down and wheelchair bound.



Despite his disability, Lee has maintained an independent and active lifestyle, attending the University of Washington, graduating in 2012 with a BA in Political Science and, earning certification in project management, Lee has also skydived, skied, modeled at LA Fashion Week, and continues to frequent the YMCA.

"I am so excited to join the LIFTT staff," and stated; "It is a pleasure and privilege to be a part of LIFTT and have the opportunity to help the disabled community in Billings and Yellowstone County realize and or sustain their independent living."

Do you have a Vehicle to donate?

The LIFTT service area covers 47,302 square miles just slightly larger than the state of Pennsylvania and slightly smaller than the state of Mississippi!

Having a few reliable accessible vehicles such as our "new" Freestar are critical tool in bringing our programs and services to our consumers across this far-flung region. If you have a car or van that you would like to donate, please contact LIFTT at (406) 259-5181 or send us a message at liftt.org/contact Thank You!

Brush up on your Fourth of July trivia!
Independence Day Zoom Session
3:00 pm, Thursday, July 1, 2021
Contact Tanya: tanyat@liftt.org

Peer Support Group:

LIFTT hosts online peer support groups every Thursday at 3:00 pm.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/93017341646>



Living Independently for Today and Tomorrow

1201 Grand Avenue, Suite #1, Billings, MT 59102
(406) 259-5181

Non profit
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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

Give a call (406) or email us!

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).

LIFTT Main Number/Messaging: 259-5181

LIFTT Fax Number: 259-5259

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

Jed Barton, Outreach & Government Affairs, 294-5186, jedb@liftt.org

SELF DIRECT PERSONAL CARE ASSISTANT PROGRAM

Freda Mook, PCA Program Supervisor, 294-5182, fredam@liftt.org

Lanette Brown, PCA Program Facilitator, 294-5184, lanetteb@liftt.org

Valerie Rowilson, PCA Program Facilitator, valerier@liftt.org 294-5208

Kasey Mook, PCA Program assistant, kaseym@liftt.org

INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM

Steve Woodard, Data and Quality Control, 294-5185, stevew@liftt.org

Brooke Brandt, IL Specialist, 294-5191, Brookeb@liftt.org

Larry Ketchem, I&R Specialist, larryk@liftt.org 294-5189

Cheryl Riga, IL Specialist, 294-5192, Cherylr@liftt.org

Lee Hoblitzell, IL Specialist & Project Manager, (406) 294-5188, leeh@liftt.org

Jen Hawkinson, IL Specialist, Glendive office, 606-1766, jenh@liftt.org

MaKenna Andreopoulos, IL specialist, Glendive office, (406) 661-1762, makennaa@liftt.org

Lionia Ornelas, IL Specialist, Glendive office, lioniao@liftt.org

Tonnette Brandt, IL Specialist, Glendive office, tonneteb@liftt.org

PEER PROGRAM

Tanya Thomas, Peer Coordinator, 690-6234, tanyat@liftt.org