

## DISABILITY INDEPENDENCE, EMPOWERMENT &amp; FAIRNESS

**INTERSTATE CONNECTIONS****General Disability Etiquette - Let's redefine the face of ability!****Respect Privacy.**

**Do:** If someone shares information about their disability, respect their privacy. It's their choice to disclose that information.

**Don't:** Ask personal questions about someone's disability unless they've chosen to share.

**Be mindful of your environment.**

**Do:** Ensure that your workplace, event, or community space is accessible to people with disabilities. This includes ramps, elevators, accessible restrooms, and parking spaces.

**Don't:** Block accessible areas or overlook basic accessibility needs.

*These "Think Again" reminders are courtesy of ILICIL Independent Lifestyles, Inc. in Sauk Rapids Minnesota.*

**UPCOMING EVENTS JUST FOR YOU!****Fred Riggers Disability Advocacy Day**

**February 4<sup>th</sup> 10am to 1pm**

**Idaho State Capitol, Boise, Id**

This day is an opportunity for individuals with disabilities, caregivers, families, and organizations to go to the State Capitol and, like Fred, advocate on key issues that impact Idaho's disability community: Direct care workforce shortage, ABLE Legislation, Medicaid, Education, and more.

*Find more accessible events at [www.dacnw.org/events](http://www.dacnw.org/events)*



## You Got This!

### NEWS FROM DAC NW

There's a popular quote floating around that states something to the effect of "It's never too late to become the YOU that you were meant to be."

This saying resonates with a lot of people because it addresses the perfectionism that many of us have whenever we do something in life. We feel like what we do must be perfect and that we must do it NOW! Sometimes this makes it hard to even start on a goal because we believe that if we can't do it a certain way, we shouldn't even try at all.

It's okay to not be exactly where you want to be yet, and to take your time getting to understand your needs and wants.

For all of us with disabilities, sometimes other people are telling US what we should need and want, but they don't us know the way we do.

This January, perhaps instead of making strict New Year's resolutions, take some time to make friends with yourself and start taking small but real steps towards what you really want out of life.

Daydream, make a vision board, journal, let the sky be the limit. Don't forget that at the end of the day, the person who is going to make your dreams and goals real is going to be YOU!

If you would like a little more support in crafting your own personalized goal journal, please join us for the next **DActivity Club Activity** on **January 22<sup>nd</sup>** at **4:00 PM** at the **DAC office** on 505 N Main St. in Moscow, Idaho. Together, we will work on making those dreams a reality, even if you aren't sure where to begin.



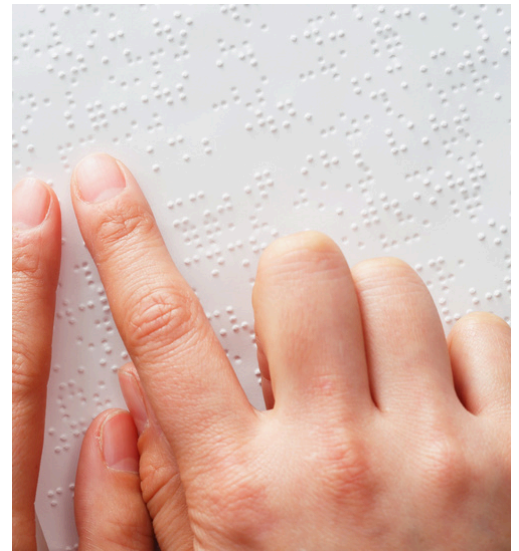
## World Braille Day – January 4th

### News from DAC NEW – Spokane

What comes to mind when you hear the word “braille”? Do you think of bumps? Do you think of people who are blind? Or do you think of something that you can’t understand? If you are someone who can’t access braille, think about how those who are blind can’t access the printed word. How does that make you feel?

The percentage of those who are blind is a matter of statistics. Those with severe vision loss or “blindness” are combined with those with “low vision” or vision impairment that can’t be fully corrected. This combining of definitions often leads to different percentages.

The percentage of blindness in adults aged 40+ who are legally blind in the United States is around 0.7% to 1%.



Approximately 6.8% of children under 18 in the U.S. have a diagnosed eye and vision condition and nearly 3% of children under 18 years have blindness or vision impairment. This is defined as having trouble seeing even when wearing glasses or contact lenses.

Approximately 7 million people in the U.S. have vision impairment - 1 million of these are blind. This means 1 million people in the U.S. would benefit having access to braille when reading books and navigating their environment. According to the [CDC](#), vision disability is one of the top 10 disabilities among adults 18 years and older and it is one of the most prevalent disabling conditions among children.

January 4<sup>th</sup> marks World Braille Day in celebration of its creator, Louis Braille. He was born in Coupvray, France on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 1809. He was blinded in an accident when he was three years old. Louis Braille entered the Royal Institute for Blind Youth in Paris in 1819. While in school, he learned of a system of tangible writing using dots, invented several years earlier by Charles Barbier. It was called night writing and was long thought to have been intended for nighttime battlefield communications that involved a raised 12-dot system.

In 1824, when Braille was only 15 years old, he developed a six-dot “cell” system. He used Barbier’s system as a starting point and cut its 12-dot configuration in half making the system less confusing. The system was first published in 1829 with a more complete elaboration in 1837.

A universal Braille code for the English-speaking world was adopted in 1932 when representatives from agencies for the blind in Great Britain and the United States met in London and agreed upon a system known as Standard English Braille. This consists of around 250 letters (phonograms), numerals, punctuation, formatting marks, contractions, and abbreviations (logograms). Some English Braille letters, such as ⠠ (for), correspond to more than one letter in print.

Every day, thousands of blind people use Braille for everything from shopping lists to labels for canned goods, from reading novels to solving math and scientific equations, from learning a piece of music to composing one. The increasing availability of Braille signs makes it easier for blind people to get around hotels, office buildings, government facilities, university campuses, and more. Braille is as flexible as print, can be learned in roughly the same amount of time, and can be read just as fluidly.

[Lilac Services for the Blind](#) is available to provide people in North Central and Eastern Washington who are blind or have low vision with the training and adaptive devices needed to restore, maintain, or increase their independence and quality of life. They have an office in Spokane and in Wenatchee.



## NW ADA CENTER ~ *Idaho*

### ADA Question of the Month

**QUESTION:**

**What is Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act?**

**ANSWER:**

**Section 508 is a U.S. law requiring federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology (ICT) accessible to people with disabilities**

This covers things like websites, software, videos, and electronic documents.



Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act requires that electronic and information technology developed, procured, maintained or used by the federal government must be accessible to people with disabilities, unless it would pose an undue burden to do so. This relates to both employees of federal agencies and customers of federal agencies who use information technology devices like computers, software, websites, applications, kiosks, electronic voting booths, telecommunications, video, and electronic documents (PDFs, Word, etc.) to access government information and interact with government agencies.

This includes comparable access for people with disabilities, including visual, auditory, physical, and cognitive impairments

Some examples of requirements include software that must be operable via keyboard, web content must provide text alternatives for non-text elements (like images), videos with audio need captions and transcripts, and documents must be structured for screen readers.

Comprehensive information about Section 508 can be found on the [Section 508 website](#) maintained by the General Services Administration (GSA).

For additional information contact Dana Gover, MPA, ADAC, Training & Technical Assistance Consultation

Northwest ADA Center-Idaho Email: [dananwadacenteridaho@gmail.com](mailto:dananwadacenteridaho@gmail.com) ADA TA

Hotline: voice and text

208-841-9422

## Tips to Show Appreciation to Your Caregiver

### SELF-DIRECTED PA SERVICES

In-home care is about one person helping another. Showing appreciation isn't a bonus, it's a necessity.

#### Appreciation Matters

Finding the right personal assistant and dealing with turnover is a common issue. People now are seeking meaning and connection in their work, and are more likely to leave a position after many small moments that made them feel invisible.

#### Employee Recognition

People want to know they belong. Recognition helps them feel seen, and can shift the mood of an entire day. As an employer, you can make or break that feeling.

#### Expressing Gratitude

Sometimes people think showing gratitude weakens accountability. It actually strengthens it when feedback comes from a place of respect.

Ways you can show gratitude:

- Listen carefully and respond appropriately.
- Share praise whenever possible. Generic phrases like "Nice work today" fade fast. Focus on details like "The way you handled ---- showed that you really care."
- Thank your caregiver often. Doing it regularly will start to feel normal.
- A handwritten note expressing your gratitude is powerful.
- Consider a meaningful gift: a hobby kit for crafting, tickets to a movie, books or puzzles, self-care spa kit with face masks, bath bombs and lotions.
- Subscription boxes with gourmet snacks, meal kits, coffee, etc.
- Create a customized playlist of music for them.
- A monogrammed tote bag for carrying their stuff to and from work.

Choose a moment to show your appreciation when your caregiver has a bit of free time and can appreciate the gesture without feeling rushed or overwhelmed. No matter what you decide to do, you will be glad you did it!



**Services YOU control!**

## VETERANS WITH DISABILITIES

### Integrating Medication Management

The complexity of medication management for veterans with disabilities cannot be overstated. A person with a disability often develops multiple chronic conditions that require different medications - especially while we age. Each medication may require specific timing and cause potential side effects and interactions if taken at the wrong time. I can remember my father in the 1990's creating his own elaborate reminder system using watering timers and a light bulb. Luckily, we don't have to rely on that creativity any more.



New technology only matters if it honors the lived experience. All medication management technology must serve the human being who deserves dignity, independence and peace of mind.

We know that poor adherence drives more frequent hospitalizations, ER visits, and can put an individual's independence at risk. And the challenges of adherence isn't just forgetfulness, it can include difficulty in opening the packaging, financial constraints, and the overwhelming nature of planning medication timing.

So let's look at creating a "care village" for you. A network of family, friends caregivers, and technology with the goal of helping you live independently, safely and with meaning.

You probably are familiar with wearable PERS (personal emergency response systems) that have fall detection, location tracking, and two way communication. Now these devices offer medication reminders with voice alerts or flashing lights. Some systems include a dispenser for the right medication at the right time. Your smart watch has specialized options like [Medical Guardian MGMove](#), [Bay Alarm Medical SOS](#), and [Garmin Venu/Forerunner](#).

There are apps for your phone that offer customizable alerts, they can track adherence, manage your refills, and even collect data to share your progress with caregivers or doctors. Check out [MyTherapy](#), [CareClinic](#) or [GoodRx Medicine Cabinet](#).

By working together, these can help you stay in your own home longer and enjoy the independence you deserve!

**VETERAN-  
DIRECTED  
CARE**

**Questions about Veteran Directed Care?  
Call Spokane 509-434-7000  
Or Walla Walla 509-525-5200**

## Build Your Resume by Volunteering

### Young Adults – Next Chapter

Volunteering can be a powerful way for young adults with disabilities to build a strong meaningful resume. It offers you real-world experience, helps you develop job skills like communication and problem solving, and shows future employers a commitment to contributing to the community.

Volunteering also allows you to “test drive” a career path, to explore other interests, often with flexible schedules and accommodations.



#### **Volunteer at your local hospital**

Explore a career in the medical field by volunteering in a hospital setting. There are a variety of options available, from assisting at community events to helping in different departments within the hospital.

#### **Help out at your local food bank**

Volunteers help operate most food banks, with gardening, community education classes, truck unloading, food rescue from local stores, and sorting, shelving and assisting clients.

#### **Pitch in at a local senior center or nursing home**

You can gain life skills like empathy and patience, build meaningful intergenerational bonds, help combat senior isolation, boost your own sense of purpose and well-being.

A quick internet search in your community can give you many choices for volunteering.



## Rewriting the narrative of what's possible!

### QUOTES TO MAKE YOU THINK

"Disability is not a brave struggle or 'courage in the face of adversity.' Disability is an art. It's an ingenious way to live". ~ Neil Marcus, a key figure in the disability culture movement, viewing disability.



# Operation Advocacy 2026: Turning Frustration Into Action — Together

## News from LINC

Idaho is facing major decisions in 2026 that will shape the future of healthcare, education, mental health, disability services, and community supports across the state. For many Idahoans, the pace of policy changes has created frustration, uncertainty, and a feeling of being left out of the process.



### Operation Advocacy 2026 was created to change that.

This hands-on advocacy initiative is designed to support first-time advocates and community members who want to make a difference but aren't sure where to start. No prior experience is needed. Participants are guided step-by-step through the legislative process in a supportive, low-pressure environment.

At the heart of Operation Advocacy is mentorship. Each participant is paired with an experienced Advocacy Mentor who provides encouragement, helps prepare talking points, answers questions, and—when needed—accompanies participants to meetings or hearings. This mentor-based model builds confidence, strengthens advocacy skills, and grows a more informed and connected advocacy community across Idaho.

Participants will learn practical skills such as how to schedule appointments with lawmakers, what to expect inside the Capitol, how legislative hearings work, and how to share their story clearly and effectively. Optional DIY workshops offer short, beginner-friendly sessions on calming nerves, finding your voice, navigating the building, and telling your story in under 90 seconds. Workshops are flexible—attend as many or as few as you'd like.

**Why now?** Idaho families are being asked to do more with less. Budget cuts and policy shifts are impacting Medicaid, mental health services, disability supports, special education, housing, and community programs. Operation Advocacy 2026 helps turn anger and frustration into informed, strategic action—connecting real people directly with decision-makers.

If you've ever thought, "Somebody needs to do something," Operation Advocacy 2026 invites you to be part of that change.

### Ready to learn more or get involved?

Visit <https://www.lincidaho.org/operation-advocacy> or call LINC at 208-336-3335 and ask to speak to an Independent Living Specialist.



## Empowering Independence!



## BLUEPATH –

### What do you get when you join BluePath?

By listing your disability friendly business on BluePath, you are offering your goods and services in an accessible manner to the 57 million Americans that have a disability, AND their friends and family. That group represents \$490 billion dollars in discretionary spending.

You simply complete the 10 minute Quick Look Survey. Even if you can't answer each question with a yes, you can show what accessibility options you do offer. And it will be easy to see where some small improvements can be made.



You will receive a welcome packet in the mail with a sticker to display on your business entrance. Instructions come on how to “claim” your listing so you can customize and even interact with your customers.

You also receive a brochure with 25 simple ways to make your business accessible. These are low-cost simple ideas that you can implement right away. Consider replacing round doorknobs with lever handles, add bright contrasting tape to highlight steps, corners or edges for the visually impaired, and purchase signage that has high contrast and Braille on it. Many of the ideas don't cost anything, they are just good practice for interacting with people with disabilities. Sign up your business today!

### Joke of the Month

Seeing her friend Sally wearing a new locket, Meg asks if there is a memento of some sort inside.

“Yes,” says Sally, “a lock of my husband’s hair.”

“But Larry is still alive?!”

“I know, but his hair is gone.”



**Find YOUR path!**

## LIFE HACKS For Disability – Tips for visual impairments

### Assistive technology can help you to do everyday tasks!

#### Tactile Labels

Raised shapes can help label everything from appliances or any buttons or keys. The shift to smooth all-touch-screen interfaces on appliances like instapots or stoves can be hard to navigate if you are visually impaired. These icon tactile stickers can make it easier to operate safely and independently. They come in a wide variety of shapes for washing machines, microwaves, etc.

**Starting at \$6.00 from**  
[IndependentLiving.com](https://www.independentliving.com)



#### Talking Label Wand

This allows you to create your own recorded messages to place on anything in your home. Use a special sticker and record an audio label into the talking label wand. That message is then associated with that sticker. When you want to hear the message played back, touch the tip of the pen to the sticker. Create memos, appointments, phone numbers, label cans of food, medication instructions, or anything!

**\$90.00 from**  
[Independentliving.com](https://www.independentliving.com)

**Stuff to make life easier!**

## CONTACT YOUR LOCAL CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING



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