



*Helping those with barriers to employment
and community inclusion since 1948.*

JANUARY 2025



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Happy New Year. As we celebrate our 2024 accomplishments, we look ahead to the work in front of us. Our exciting plans include the addition of new enrichment programming, increasing 1:1 long-term support jobs, and increasing community integration opportunities with our Works of Heart gifts and apparel business.

WITHOUT YOU, WE CANNOT SUCCEED

As the political agenda continues to challenge our ability to provide paid work to all of those we serve--those who can work in the community and those who require more support and personal care while enjoying the dignity of work, we continue to innovate and create new opportunities. To this end, we are looking for employment partners. If you own a business or work for a business in need of reliable staff, contact us. We work with you to create a plan that meets your needs while providing work to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Whether one or more people, we pair them with a job coach to meet their support needs and ensure your job requirements are met. We can also perform kitting, assembly, labeling and other work at our work site.

Another way to get involved is to attend our events. Our gala is scheduled for April 12 and promises to be fun! Registration is now available.

Finally, if you are unable to be involved in other ways, please consider us in this year's charitable giving plan. If you work for an organization who gives matching donations, that is a great way to double your impact. If you are associated with a foundation or other giving organization aligned with our mission, make an introduction to AAI.

We look forward to new partnerships this year and to working together to enrich the lives of people with disabilities. As always, we appreciate your support and advocacy for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

AnneMarie Klimek - President, CEO

2025 Gala Tickets & Info

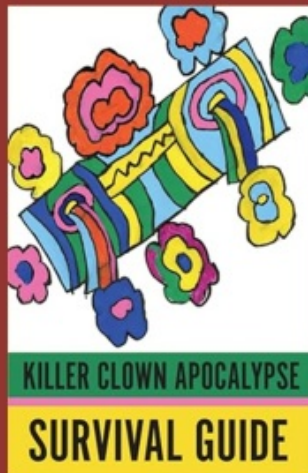
PERSON SERVED SPOTLIGHT

2024 was the year of blossoming for **Ashley Williamson**. She participated in Cow Tipping Press workshops with AAI, which led to an apprenticeship! Ashley's favorite thing to do at AccessAbility is working different jobs; she likes getting experience working in the store and feeling like part of a community. This is Ashley's first year working in the community since the COVID-19 pandemic began; a huge milestone for her!

Ashley enjoys sharing her writing with other people, exercising, going for walks outside, cooking, listening to audiobooks and gaming.



Ashley Williamson
Joined September 2013



HOW TO LOVE WHAT MAKES YOU WEIRD

Ashley Williamson

To love what makes you weird takes guts and nerves of steel.

To love what makes you weird is an ultimate freedom.

It is to develop a layer of skin thick as armor and a mind as open as the sky.

To love what makes you weird is to bend, but never break.

It is what the truest individuality is, but not for the faint of heart.

To love what makes you weird is to dare to be different.

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

Dan Dahl is our December 2024 Employee of the Month! Dan is the Work Floor Coordinator at AccessAbility and he is responsible for coordinating incoming work.

He preps the materials for all of our teams and ensures the teams have what they need to execute the work appropriately. Dan's favorite place in the world is at home with his two dogs.

Team spirit is knowing and living the belief that what a group of people can accomplish together is much larger, far greater, and will exceed that which an individual can accomplish alone.

-Diane Arias

2024 CHILI COOK OFF

Haylie Price won the 2024 AccessAbility chili cook off competition! Check out her winning recipe below.

INGREDIENTS

4-5 chicken breasts, shredded
1-2lbs hot italian sausage and/or chorizo
1/2 yellow onion
4-5 cans fire roasted tomatoes
5 cans mild or spicy chili beans
1 large can tomato sauce
1 jar salsa
1 small block of Velveeta cheese



DIRECTIONS

1. Cook and season chicken to your preference. Haylie used a pressure cooker and seasoned with Kinder's blend seasoning, Spicy Dano's and Meat Church fajita seasoning.
2. Dice yellow onion and season to your preference; saute. Once translucent, add your sausage/chorizo and cook until brown.
3. In a large stockpot, add the chorizo/onion mixture along with shredded chicken, chili beans, tomatoes, salsa, and tomato sauce.
4. Let simmer for 30 minutes. When ready to eat, dice up Velveeta cheese and mix in until combined.
5. Enjoy with your favorite chili toppings!



EVENING STARS THANKSGIVING EVENT

The Evening Stars Thanksgiving Dinner was held on November 19th, 2024, and was a great success!

This event was catered by Lake Elmo Inn and the meal provided was turkey, salad, stuffing, vegetables, dinner rolls, and dessert.

We had over 100 persons served, support team members, and staff attend this Evening Stars event. It's always great to see everyone and celebrate the holidays together!



UPCOMING EVENTS



EVENING STARS

January Pizza & Movie Night "Twisters"	February Valentine's Catered Dinner	March Craft Night
April Easter Egg Hunt	May Dance Party	June Prom Night
July BBQ	August Outdoor Game Night	September Trivia Night
October Halloween Dance	November Thanksgiving Catered Dinner	December Holiday Party



Join us on **April 12th** for the AccessAbility Lucky 7's gala!

This year's event is being held to raise funds to enrich and expand our programs and training opportunities, which are essential to empowering the people we serve with the skills and resources they need to thrive.

Gala tickets and more information can be found [here](#).



FEATURED PRODUCTS

Send love with our new wooden Valentine's Day postcards—unique, eco-friendly keepsakes that make your affection truly unforgettable!



Available on Works of Heart

Wholesale Available on Faire

Thank
you

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks for the generous support our funders provided this year. Their contribution plays a vital role in helping individuals with disabilities find meaningful employment and build a brighter future.

We are truly grateful for your commitment to making a positive impact in the lives of those we serve. Together, we are creating a more inclusive world where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.



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