

DAMI News

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 4

DECEMBER 11, 2006

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www.disability-awareness.org

This issue of DAMI News is distributed with the generous help of the Minnesota Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Winter Review

Grant Award

The Minnesota Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church has awarded DAMI with a grant for 2007 of \$12,000. This grant is a key component of our financial stability. With it,

Activities at DAMI

1. Grant Award
 2. CBE Invitation
 3. INMH Meeting
- Info: 612-230-3264

DAMI is able to do assessments of camper registrations for summer camp, provide adult fo-

runs on disability awareness topics and meet the many requests for information that come to the office each month.

CBE Invitation

Christians for Biblical Equality, publishers of *Mutuality* and *Priscilla Papers*, has invited DAMI to contribute an article on inclusive language for the spring issue of *Priscilla Papers*. The theme of the issue will be focused on inclusion and justice. The DAMI article will address the ways language has been used to include and exclude people with dis-



BE AWARE THAT FOR MANY PEOPLE THE HOLIDAYS CAN BE DEPRESSING AND SAD. NOTICE AND BE SENSITIVE.

abilities.

INMH Meeting (p. 2)

The Interfaith Network for Mental Health met Dec 7 and heard a panel presentation on holiday depression.

Visit the DAMI Web Site Soon !!!

This fall we received inquiries from ministers looking for help creating a liturgy focused on the theme of inclusion. Instead of investing time helping them

develop such a liturgy, we told them to visit the DAMI web site: www.disability-awareness.org. There they found liturgies they could adapt and use under the

Liturgical Resources menu. Resources to meet other needs abound. Take some time yourself to explore the DAMI web site soon.

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Learning Disabilities in Children

Source: www.ldonline.org

A learning disability is a neurological disorder. It results from a difference in the way a person's brain is "wired." Children with learning disabilities are as smart or smarter than their peers, though they may show difficulty reading, writing, spelling, reasoning, recalling and/or organizing information.

A learning disability can't be cured or fixed; it is a lifelong condition. With the right support and intervention, however, children with learning disabilities can succeed in school and go on to successful, often distinguished careers.

Parents can help children with learning disabilities achieve such success by encouraging their strengths, knowing their weaknesses, understanding the educational system, working with profes-

sionals and learning about strategies for dealing with specific difficulties.

Facts About L. D.

- According to the National Institutes of Health, 15% of the U.S. population, or 1 in 7 Americans, has some type of learning disability.
- Difficulty with basic reading and language skills are the most common learning disabilities. As many as 80% of students with learning disabilities have reading problems.
- Learning disabilities often run in families.
- Mental retardation, autism, deafness, blindness, and behavioral disorders are NOT learning disabilities.
- Attention disorders, such as ADHD, and learning disabilities often occur at the same time, but the two disorders are not the same.

Common L. D.'s

Dyslexia: trouble understanding written words.

Dyscalculia: difficulty solving arithmetic problems and grasping math concepts.

Dysgraphia: difficulty forming letters or writing within a defined space.

Auditory & Visual Processing Disorders: difficulty understanding language despite normal hearing and vision.

Nonverbal Learning Disabilities: a neurological disorder which originates in the right hemisphere of the brain, causing problems with visual-spatial, intuitive, organizational, evaluative and holistic processing functions.

Expect to see kids with L. D. in religious education settings. Form a team to create and monitor an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for each child with an L. D.

TIPS for Faith Communities to Accommodate Children with Learning Disabilities

1. Identify children with L. D.'s through an inclusive registration process.
2. Meet with parents; learn accommodations used at home.
3. Create & monitor an IEP per child.
4. Raise awareness of L. D. through education.
5. Evaluate activities with L. D.'s in mind.
6. Create L. D. accommodations in events & activities.

INMH Quarterly Meeting

The Interfaith Network for Mental Health, a grass roots interfaith association of Twin Cities faith communities, met at St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church Dec. 7 for lunch, a panel presentation and networking. The three panelists were Linda Goldetsky, licensed clinical psychologist; John McClay, director of Mt. Olivet Counsel-

ing Center; Steve Palmer, counselor at Westminster Counseling Center.

The topic they addressed was "Holiday Blues & Depression: Faith Communities Being Welcoming & Supportive During the Holidays". For many people, the holidays recall sad memories and difficult relationships. Faith communities can be

watchful for the signs of sadness and depression in affect and behavior. Giving support in a respectful and sensitive manner may be the kind of timely help a person looks for from a community of faith.

The next INMH meeting is at 11:30 - 1:30, Feb. 8, 2007, Plymouth Congregational Church, Mpls.

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DAMI News is published by Disability Awareness Ministries, Inc.

DAMI is an independent 501(c)3 non-profit, founded in 1991, whose mission is to remove barriers in faith-based communities that prevent full participation of people with disabilities in community life.

*Religious
Disability
Resources*

American Baptists

Rev Rosalie Norman-
McNaney: Email to:
rmcnahey@abc-usa.org

Episcopal

ecdeaf.com
ahealingministry.com

Jewish Community

uscj.org/accessibility/

jfcsmpls.org/Services/
services.html#Inclusion

Lutheran

elca.org/disability

Mennonite

adnetonline.org

Presbyterian

pcusa.org/phewa/
pdc.htm

Unitarian

uua.org/programs/jus-
tice
/accessibility/

United Methodist

new.gbgm-umc.org/um-
cor/work/health/disc

National Organizations

aamr.org
joniandfriends.org
nami.org
nod.org

The DAMI Difference . . .

What if DAMI did not exist? What if the funding that supports DAMI came to an end? What might go missing? What might not get done that is being done now? What difference would it make?

DAMI played many roles in 2006. DAMI is a clearing house of information on disability awareness. We respond to calls for information on specific disabilities, on making activities and programs inclusive, on surveying a congregation for the disabilities it lives with, on elevators and ramps, on inclusive liturgies for worship and on, and on, and on. If DAMI did not exist, what difference would it make to finding information?

DAMI advises and consults on disability concerns. We consulted with the MN Annual Conference, United Methodist Church on how to make their annual meeting registration process more inclusive. People with disabili-

ties who registered were accommodated, making it easier for them to attend and participate. We consulted with the Basilica of St. Mary on how best to organize their Mental Health Committee structure and identify lay leaders. If DAMI did not exist, what difference would it make to those who seek our advice?

DAMI assesses camper registrations and advises on inclusion strategies. In 2006, DAMI assessed 142 camper registrations. We recommended accommodation strategies to camp staff, enabling every camper to participate fully in the camp of their choice. If DAMI did not exist, what difference would it make to campers with disabilities?

DAMI teaches disability awareness to a variety of audiences. This year we conducted adult forums, delivered disability awareness training to camp counselors and trained directors of reli-

gious education to follow an inclusive registration process for identifying children with disabilities who register for classes. If DAMI did not exist, what difference would it make to those who want to learn about inclusion?

DAMI helps create events focused on disability. We are a partner in planning, organizing, coordinating and presenting quarterly interfaith networking events that raise awareness about mental illness in faith communities. If DAMI did not exist, what difference would it make to those who network and share information on disability?

DAMI depends on the gifts of the persons and faith communities we serve. Without this support, DAMI would cease to exist, creating a critical difference in the level of awareness in the faith community. Help DAMI continue to make a difference in 2007 with your generous support.

Control Over One's Own Life

Here is part of a reflection written by Deborah Kaplan, Director, Disability Rights Center, Wash., D.C., 1981. Her thoughts still apply to participation in a congregation's life.

"Our society has had a long tradition of keeping people with disabilities [PWD] separate ... PWD want to change that tradition. ... A central theme is

control; control over one's own life and control over vital programs affecting PWD either as a group or as part of society. For too long, others have been making decisions and molding the lives of PWD. What we are saying now is that we want to make our own decisions and control our own lives. Of course we don't expect to avoid

making mistakes, but we would like to have the right to do so and learn from them. Other people seem to have been faring well under such a system. Once we have some control, we look forward to working as equal partners with our families, friends and communities in striving toward our goals. ..."

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DONATIONS

As 2006 draws to a close, the Board and Staff at DAMI are grateful for the gifts we have received from churches & individuals. DAMI has had a good year, and we look forward to 2007. Please consider an end of the year gift to help continue the work of raising awareness about the inclusion of people with disabilities.

DAMI Yearly Memberships

DAMI is a membership non-profit organization. The bylaws grant voting privileges at the Annual Meeting to persons who join DAMI and whose total gifts equal or exceed \$25 or 10 hours of volunteer service in a calendar year. (Gifts of less than \$25 are still welcome!)

Contribution Structure

- \$25 Friend
- \$50 Supporter
- \$100 Advocate
- \$500 Partner
- \$1000 Sustainer
- \$5000 Benefactor

JOIN DAMI TODAY !!!

Yes ! Sign me up for a one-year membership in DAMI !!!

New Member Renewing Upgrade

My check is enclosed for \$_____ payable to DAMI

NAME _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone/Email _____