

Capital Letters

Volume 13

March/April Issue 2



Notes from the Associate Director- Dr. Al Swain

The Price is Write Silent Auction/
Dinner, May 14, 2008
“Lucky Number 7”

Dear Friends of CACIL:

Can you believe that the Capital Area Center for Independent Living is getting ready to host its 7th Annual Auction/Dinner? I know that May 2008 seems a lifetime away but, before you know it, we will all be gathered at the Kellogg Center for an evening of fun, food, and shopping. Your generous participation will help us reach our goal of \$25,000.

Our premiere fund-raising event will be hosted by –
Jane Aldrich, from 6 News
Kip Bohne (Jane’s husband), Channel 47
Mike Vitale, Mid-Michigan Radio Group
and Auctioneer, Jim Weaver

Proceeds from this extravaganza will be used to help CACIL maintain its quality services, programs and activities for people with disabilities in Ingham, Eaton, Clinton, and Shiawassee counties. Last year CACIL served

more than 5000 people. Any money raised during the evening can be used to leverage additional revenue from state and federal sources. Your contribution is tax deductible.

You may demonstrate your support in the following ways:

- Donate items or services for the silent auction/dinner. Please indicate the value of the donated item. This year we are looking for an increase in frou-frou items (girly stuff).
- Become a table sponsor for \$400.
- Help us underwrite the cost of this event by being a Big Ten Club Sponsor for \$1000. or more.
- Attending our fund-raising gala.

Date: May 14, 2008

Bidding: 5:00 – 7:00 pm

Dinner: 7:00 pm

Live Auction: Following Dinner

All donations should be mailed or delivered to CACIL at 1048 Pierpont, Suite 9/10, Lansing, MI 48911 by Friday, May 2.

If you wish to obtain dinner tickets for \$45.00 each or have questions about the auction, please call Al Swain at (517) 241-0393.

The Capital Area
Center for
Independent
Living

1048 Pierpont
Suite 9-10
Lansing, MI 48911
877-834-9683
(517) 241-0438 fax
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cacil@cacil.org
On the Web:
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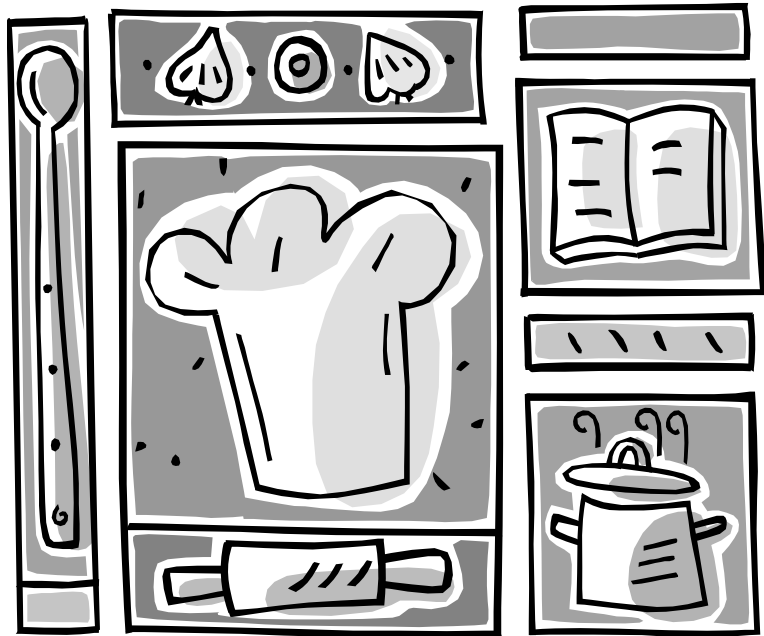
We're Looking For You!-by Avelyn

There are two new programs at CACIL that are looking for you! **Enhance Fitness** is a federally funded research exercise program for anyone who has not exercised in a while (or maybe NEVER DID). It is specifically designed so that participants can either stand or sit to do the exercises. We exercise for one hour (it goes really fast because it's so much fun) which includes cardio, weights and strength training. Because it is a research program, we tested submitted individual evaluations after four months of participation. The results were amazing! CACIL is the only program in the country which serves people with disabilities that has an **Enhance Fitness** program! We were featured on Channel 6 with Jane Aldrich and we were on the front page of the Living Section of the Lansing State Journal. One group member said that "this exercise program has really helped my bowling score!" and another told Jane Aldrich that this group is "like one big family." Exercise can make a dramatic difference in your life in so many ways; you will have more energy, your balance will improve, you'll sleep better and you'll have a great time socializing with other people. In this program, you only do as much as you can— but you'll be surprised how much more you will be able to do in a short time. The class is held Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 12:30-1:30. You can come three times a week or only one or two. Come join us for a new you in the new year!

The second new program is **Artists A Bloomin'** and is a program of creativity for everybody! You absolutely do NOT have to be an artist to enjoy the making of art. That's what art is all about— the enjoyment of the process of making it! In this group there will be no contests, no judgments and no critiques. Being creative is all about taking a risk and having fun...you can color a purple horse, make a blue ladybug or draw a tree growing upside down. We'll do individual activities and group projects. Wouldn't it be fun to paint a mural as a group? Or make leaves with buttons or lace or glitter and then put them on a big group tree on the wall? We might even try writing a poem, a group short story, or even compose a song! Whatever the activity, come free your spirit and discover a part of yourself that you might not even know you had! So instead of saying "I can't draw" or "I don't have any artistic talent", say "**I'm going to try this—it sounds like FUN!**" Come join the group immediately after **ENHANCE FITNESS** on the first Thursday of the month from 1:30 to 3:00pm.

A Note Regarding the CACIL Academy-101

CACIL Academy-101 is seeking donations of cotton material, thread, batting, and other supplies we can use for quilting. Contact Jesse Lathers 335-1524.



CACIL COOKBOOK

DYCEM WITH

CACIL

AVAILABLE AT

CACIL

\$10.00

Call 517-241-0393

to order

AD SPACE AVAILABLE

**Place a business card size ad here.
\$10.00 will buy this ad space for 3
bi-monthly issues, or for 6months.**

How Our Pets Can Reduce Our Stresses And Anxieties

– by: Stanley Popovich

Animals and our pets can be a great way to reduce our everyday stresses and anxieties. It is not easy to deal with our fears and anxieties, however, spending time with animals can help us to better cope with our fears, anxieties and stresses.

Spending time with animals can be a great source of companionship. Whether you have a pet or go to your local shelter, spending time with an animal or pet can help us to feel better. Also many people talk to their pets and this can help to get their problems out in the open. Animals can be of good company to all of us and can prevent the fear of being alone during our troubles. Helping animals and other people through community service can be a great way to overcome our anxieties. There are many animals out there who could benefit from your time and talents. Doing something that will help your pet or other animals can give you a source of pride and accomplishment and also can lead to possible friendships with others. Sitting around and accomplishing nothing will not make things any better whether it is dealing with the fear of being alone or something else. Animals can help us to be active and to focus our energies on working with them instead of worrying about things that may or may not happen. This will prevent us from worrying about our current situation.

One of the ways to manage stress is to challenge your negative thinking with positive thoughts. Animals can help us to relax and help us to focus on the good things in our lives. This will help us to focus positively on any situation. Playing with animals can help reduce our fears and anxieties in any situation.

Animals can get our minds off our problems. A person could do an activity with pet or other animals that will give them a fresh perspective on things. Spending time with animals will get your mind off of the problem and give you the energy to do other things. Most importantly, playing with animals will give you the self-confidence that you can cope and that you can get through the day. Remember that there are many ways that animals can reduce the stresses of our every day life, however, they are not a substitute of getting professional help. If your fears and anxieties become overwhelming, then you will need to talk to a counselor. The next time you feel stressed, spend some time with your pet or other animals and you will be better able to cope with your worries.

Op Ed:

CATA has increased its fares. This is good – it will keep CATA running. Of course, CATA has stated that increasing fares will not solve its problem. But CATA has increased its fares. This is bad. CATA represents quality of life for many people with disabilities. It is the only way many people in wheelchairs can travel: to the doctor, to the grocery store, to the pharmacy, to school, to work, and to whatever social life they can eke out of the greater Lansing area. Unfortunately, the part about going to work, and thereby earning one's way, is rather limited. In the United States, only one third of people with disabilities who want to work do so. What other constituency has a 66% unemployment rate and no one gets very concerned? The average earned income among people with disabilities in the greater Lansing area is -----We have raised the fares on the only form of transportation available to those with the fewest financial resources. For me to go to work and home will now cost \$120 a month. I don't make that kind of money. In fact, the mortgage payments on my house were just put in jeopardy. So why did I go to the hearing and give testimony on the effect of a 50 cent increase? Why did CATA have hearings? Why did CATA say the loss of the millage didn't have anything to do with a need for an increase? Why 50 cents? We have always been told it costs around \$13 to transport one person, so 50 cents isn't really going to have much of an impact.

I understand how the price of fuel has affected everything. I also understand that in Michigan everyone lives on a fixed income. But when you are living at the lower end of the economic scale, the smallest increase in expenditures creates a giant obstacle to get over or around or through. Financial accommodations are in place for people with disabilities, seniors, and students riding the main line bus, but not for SpecTran riders. Wheelchairs do not travel well in snow and crutches/walkers are inclined to slip away on ice, so that walking to the bus stop is not a reasonable expectation. People who use SpecTran cannot easily access the main line buses and usually have the least financial resources, so by all means, let's make sure they have to pay the most. The intent of the Americans with Disabilities Act was to enable people with disabilities (PWDs) to become a part of the larger community. Transportation is a critical component. To live independently does not mean just residing in an apartment. The fact that bus ridership has increased dramatically means that the ADA is meeting its objectives. Isn't this what we want? Meetings of state and community organizations have people with disabilities in attendance and on the boards. Stores of all kinds have PWDs as clients. At the movies and at restaurants, we see wheelchairs and walkers and people that may or may not have disabilities, and we don't generally think much of it. But if it costs me \$120 just to get to work and home, I don't think many restaurants are in my future. Certainly, I will survive, but my quality of life won't be comparable to CATA board members'.

In this whole process, has there only been one option put on the table? Is it that we either raise the fares or cut the service? Would these be the only options for a more affluent constituency? I have a disability and I can't drive, do what you will.

CACIL ACADEMY-101

-Jesse Lathers 335-1524

You must RSVP if you plan to attend any of the of the activities to Jesse Lathers @ 335-1524, or to Marsha Moers if you plan to attend People 1st, The Advocacy Team or the RICC at 241-0399.

Class Descriptions:

- **RICC & People First -**

Regional Interagency Consumer Committee—what is it? We call it the RICC. An organization of people with disabilities. We work to create change in our community, to learn about programs and services and to enjoy the company of good friends over dinner.

The Capital Area RICC has three components— the Lansing group, the Mason Insiders and the People First. The Lansing Group and the Mason Insiders meet monthly to work on projects; People First meets every Thursday morning from 10:30 to 11:30. We have been learning the Bill of Rights and what each of the first 10 Amendments talks about. During the year we have been doing advocacy for Medicaid funding.

- **Advocacy:** (With Marsha Moers) Learn what issues are affecting your life everyday! Stop letting others decide what course your life will take. Learn how you can make a difference.
- **Traveling Café:** A chance to learn of gathering places in our community. The group will be working on issues like money management, rating accessibility and service in the community, etc.
- **Positive Thinking:** Feeling down? Does it seem like everything is just bad news? Join our group and get a lift out of life.
- Keep in mind, this is an election year. The RICC, Advocacy Team, People 1st and the CACIL Academy will be looking at how to vote, voter registration, the candidates and the issues.

- **Music Therapy:** Using music in our lives to relieve stress, alter moods and just learn to appreciate music in general. These classes also work with fine and gross motor skills.
- **Micro-Enterprise:** We have begun make bags for the back of wheelchairs. And they do look awesome.!
- **The Explorers Group:** Learn of places to meet new people and build new relationships. A great chance to get more involved in your community! It could be a chance to discover possible pre-vocational opportunities.
- **Why We Do What We Do:** Figuring out why we are who we are and do some of the things we do. Then exploring ways of reducing non-productive thoughts, feelings and behaviors.
- *****Enhanced Fitness:** An adaptive exercise program for all including wheelchair users. Please wear comfortable clothing. All water bottles/drink containers must have a secure lid or top. Instructed by fitness instructors from the YMCA.
- **Computer Training:** Learn different computer programs, about assistive technology for the computer, navigating the internet, etc.
- **Men's and Women's Groups:** Yes, women are from Venus and men are from Mars. That is why sometimes we need to meet and discuss issues and topics that are gender specific.
- **Artists A Bloomin':** Is a program of creativity for everybody! You absolutely do NOT have to be an artist to enjoy the making of art. That's what art is all about— the enjoyment of the process of making it!
- **Mini-Series Events:** Various topics such as: budgeting, emergency planning, health and nutrition, human sexuality, etc.

March 2008



Unless otherwise stated, all CACIL Academy-101 activities will meet at 1048 Pierpont, Suite 9-10. in Lansing

Please call Kim McDonald at the Capitol Area Center For Independent Living at 517-241-0410 if you have any questions, or if you need more information.

Please RSVP if you plan on attending any of the activities.

RSVP to either Kim McDonald @ 241-0410 or Jesse Lathers @ 335-1524

*Note: For those planning to attend Music Therapy, You must arrive before 3:25 or you will not be able to attend.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
3 Enhance Fitness 12:30 - 1:30 Advocacy	4 Enhance Fitness 12:30 - 1:30 Planning for Spring Auction (quilt & gift baskets)	5 Why We Do What We Do 2-4pm	6 People First 10:30-11:30 Enhance Fitness 12:30-1:30 Artists Bloomin'	7 
10 Enhanced Fitness 12:30-1:30 *Music Therapy @ St. Lawrence- Behavioral Health Bldg (door with green awning)	11 Enhance Fitness 12:30 - 1:30 Micro Enterprise	12 Explorer's Day Ingham County Medical Care Facility 3860 Dobie Road	13 People First 10:30-11:30 Enhance Fitness 12:30-1:30 Nutrition w/ Charlotte from MSU Extension 2 - 3pm	14
17 Enhanced Fitness 12:30-1:30 Consumer Board Meeting 1:30 - 3	18 Enhance Fitness 12:30 - 1:30 Arts & Crafts	19 Why We Do What We Do 2 - 4 pm CACIL Board Meeting	20 People First 10:30-11:30 Enhance Fitness 12:30-1:30 Women's & Men's Groups	21 CACIL closes at noon
24 Enhanced Fitness 12:30-1:30 *Music Therapy @ St. Lawrence- Behavioral Health Bldg (door with green awning)	25 Enhance Fitness 12:30 - 1:30 Micro Enterprise (Quilting/sewing)	26 Traveling Café & Scavenger Hunt Lansing Mall Food Court 1 - 3:30 pm	27 People First 10:30-11:30 Enhance Fitness 12:30-1:30 Emergency Planning 1:30 - 3:00	28 
31 Enhanced Fitness 12:30-1:30 Internet Basics 2:00 - 4:00	In like a lion and out like a lamb.			





Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
	1 April Fool's Day Enhance Fitness 12:30-1:30 Human Sexuality 2:00 - 4:00	2 Why We Do What We Do 2-4pm	3 People First 10:30-11:30 Enhance Fitness 12:30-1:30 Artists Bloomin' 1:30 - 3:00 Positive Thinking 3 - 4	4 CACIL ACADEMY
7 Enhance Fitness 12:30 - 1:30 Advocacy 2-4pm	8 Enhance Fitness 12:30 -1:30 Micro Enterprise (quilting/sewing) 1:45 - 4:00	9 Explorer's Group Butterflies in the Garden Plant & Soil Sciences Bldg 2 - 4 pm	10 People First 10:30-11:30 Enhance Fitness 12:30-1:30 Men's & Women's Groups 1:30 - 3:00 Positive Thinking 3:00 - 4:00	11 ROCKS!
14 Enhanced Fitness 12:30-1:30 Music Therapy 3:15-4:30 St. Lawrence-Behavioral Health Blog (door with green awning)	15 Enhance Fitness 12:30 -1:30 Micro Enterprise (sewing/quilting) 1:45 - 4:00	16 Why We Do What We Do 2 - 4 pm CACIL Board Meeting 5:30-7:30pm	17 People First 10:30-11:30 Enhance Fitness 12:30-1:30 Consumer Board Meeting 1:30 - 3:00 Positive Thinking 3:00 - 4:00	18
21 Enhanced Fitness 12:30-1:30 Web Surfing & Cyber Safety 2 - 4	22 Enhance Fitness 12:30 -1:30 Scrapbooking 1:45 - 4:00	23 To be determined (TBD). Call after 4/15 for details.	24 People First 10:30-11:30 Enhance Fitness 12:30-1:30 Emergency Planning 1:45 - 3:00 Positive Thinking 3:00 - 4:00	25
28 Enhanced Fitness 12:30-1:30 Music Therapy 3:15-4:30 St. Lawrence-Behavioral Health Bldg (door with green awning) RICC 5:00 - 7:30	29 Enhance Fitness 12:30 -1:30 Micro Enterprise (quilting/sewing) 1:45 - 4:00	30 Traveling Café Location to be determined. Call after 4/15 for details.		

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Please RSVP if you plan on attending any of the activities. RSVP to Kim

McDonald @ 241-0410 or Jesse Lathers@ 335-1524

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Be Healthy Stay Healthy

Quit and Keep on Quitting

: By Marjorie Sandoval, CRRN

Everyone has heard how smoking cigarettes can cause serious health problems and smokers everywhere have been told to quit. Wait, I do remember a guy who said no one ever specifically told him to quit so I did. “As your health care provider today”, I said: “QUIT!”

The American Cancer Society came up with a list of the benefits. Check them out.

Short term benefits:

20 minutes after quitting:

blood pressure decreases, pulse rate drops, hands and feet body temperature drops to normal

8 hours after quitting:

carbon monoxide level in blood drops to normal, oxygen in the blood increases to normal

24 hours after quitting:

chance of heart attack decreases, nerve endings start regrowing, ability to smell and taste is better

2 Weeks to 3 months after quitting:

circulation improves, walking becomes easier, lung function increases

1 to 9 months after quitting:

coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, shortness of breath decreases

1 year after quitting: risk of coronary heart disease is decreased to half that of a smoker

Long Term Benefits of quitting smoking:

5 to 15 years after quitting:

stroke risk is reduced to that of people who never smoked.

10 years after quitting

risk of lung cancer drops to as little as one-half that of continuing smokers, risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney, and pancreas decreases risk of ulcer decreases

15 years after quitting:

risk of coronary heart disease is similar to that of people who have never smoked, risk of death returns to nearly the level of people who never smoked

It is one of the most difficult things to do. Don't give up,

‘Quit and Keep on Quitting’

Countdown to Digital TV

-submitted by Darlene Karns

The following information was found in the AARP magazine regarding the 2009 change to digital TV that will effect customers.

Americans with older analog TV's, which receive signals by antenna or rabbit ears, must switch to digital by Feb. 17th, 2009. Subscribers to cable or satellite service should ask their providers if they need special equipment for digital reception.

If you don't buy a digital model TV, a converter box will change digital signals back to analog. The boxes range from \$50.00 to \$75.00 each, but starting Jan. 1st, 2008, U.S. households may request up to 2 \$40.00 coupons to apply to the purchase of the boxes.

For more information, go to: www.dtv.gov or call (toll free) 1-888-225-5322.

Exercise For Your Brain...

De-moc-ra-cy (di-mak-re-se)- n.

1. a: government by the people: rule of the majority **b:** a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections **2.** the absence of hereditary or arbitrary class distinctions or privileges

Do 1 Thing

Disasters happen. We've seen images of the devastation caused by the hurricanes in the gulf states, the tsunami and the events of 9/11.

We all know that we should prepare ourselves, our families and our businesses to cope with disaster situations. Do1thing is a program designed to help individuals, families and businesses take small steps toward being prepared for a disaster. By breaking preparedness into small steps it is easier to get started and easier to stick with. Each month the do1thing program will focus on a different preparedness topic and present easy, and often inexpensive ways to become better prepared.

The do1thing website (www.do1thing.us) will have information on the monthly topic and will also have information on prior month's topics so you can progress at your own pace.

You can take control of your preparedness by just doing one thing!

(You can also visit CACIL and ask Kim for a fact sheet.)

March- Sheltering

April- Risk Assessment

This poem was written by a terminally ill young girl in a New York

SLOW DANCE

Have you ever
watched kids
On a merry-go-round?
Or listened to
the rain
Slapping on the ground?
Ever followed a
butterfly's erratic flight?
Or gazed at the sun into the fading
night?
You better slow down.
Don't dance so
fast.
Time is short.
The music won't
last.
Do you run through each day
On the
fly?
When you ask How are you?
Do you hear the
reply?
When the day is done
Do you lie in your
bed
With the next hundred chores
Running through
your head?
You'd better slow down
Don't dance so fast.
Time is short.
The music won't
last.
Ever told your child,
We'll do it
tomorrow?
And in your haste,
Not see his sorrow?
Ever lost touch,
Let a good
friendship die
Cause you never had time
To call and say, 'Hi'
You'd better slow down.
Don't dance so fast.
Time is short.
The music won't last.
When you run so fast to get somewhere
You miss half the fun of getting there.
When you worry and hurry
through your day,
It is like an unopened
gift...
Thrown away.
Life is not a
race.
Do take it slower
Hear the music
Before the song is over.

-submitted by Carla Lasater

Come Join the Fun at the CACIL Academy

The CACIL academy will be continuing some of the activities that have become popular. These activities include traveling café, explorer's group, music therapy, and enhanced fitness. The group is really enjoying the enhanced fitness.

We have added a few new groups in the last couple of months. These include computer class, emergency preparedness, and men's and women's groups. These are also enjoyed by many consumers.

We will be adding a group which discusses sexuality and relationships. There will also be a group called Artists Bloomin'. This will be an art therapy type of group. We will use a variety of mediums to express our thoughts and feelings through art.

We hope to continue to see everyone at the activities. If you have any suggestions, there is an idea box in the conference room. Please feel free to put any ideas or comments in this box.

A Thrifty Tip...

Here is a simple answer to one of the most common problems in any household...

We have all had one too many clogged drains to deal with in our lifetimes. And those liquid drain cleaners, besides being expensive, don't always work the way we want. And the cost of a plumber is out of sight!

So, here's a sure-fire method that works and saves lots of money. All you need is hot water and big bucket. Fill your bucket with the hottest water you can find, and pour it down your clogged drain or toilet. Do this three times and tah-dah!...your drain is cleared.

If you wish, you can also bring the water to a roaring boil on the stove before pouring it into the drain. This trick has been used successfully by apartment superintendents and has saved folks a lot of time and money.

Community & Human Services...

Unsure Of Who To Call?
Call 211

Capital Area United Way
517-337-8211

Cristo Rey Community Center
517-372-4700

Lutheran Social Services
517-321-7663

Michigan Association for Deaf &
Hard Of Hearing
1-800-968-7327

St. Vincent Catholic Charities
517-323-4734

Black Child & Family Institute
517-487-3775

Poison Control
1-800-222-1222

The Salvation Army (South Lansing)
517-394-6945

Alzheimer's Disease
1-800-272-3900

National Arthritis Foundation
1-800-283-7800

National Domestic Violence Hot Line
1-800-799-7233

National Suicide Hot Line
1-800-273-TALK (8255)

American Council for the Blind
1-800-424-8666

Department of Veterans Affairs
1-800-827-1000

Medicare Information
1-800-392-3070

Social Security Administration
1-800-772-1213

Disability and Research Studies

In the past, people with disabilities were regarded as being ill. As a result, the health needs of people with a disability were largely ignored as an area of research. Only recently has the idea emerged that one can have a disability but be healthy overall. Learning about disability-related health has become a higher priority of health providers and researchers.

The slogan, “Nothing about us without us”, can also apply to medical research. People with disabilities and their supporters can advocate for increased funding and better studies to understand relevant health issues, which can be very different than those of able-bodied people. General health studies should include people with many different abilities; while others should be specifically about those with a particular disability.

On an individual level, being in a research study might involve something as simple as filling out a survey. Sometimes medical procedures, such as having blood drawn, are required. Some studies give their participants a small stipend (a check or gift card) while others do not.

If you are thinking about participating in a study, carefully read the study’s consent form and understand the pros and cons of the project. Make sure that your questions about the research are thoroughly answered and take time to talk about it with family and friends. Only you can decide if participating is right for you.

There are several studies at the University of Michigan seeking volunteers. One concerns menopause and spinal cord injury (SCI). Women with an SCI (and men, as a comparison group) are needed for simple medical tests at University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, which takes about two hours. The aim of the study is to enable women with SCI to better understand their unique health risks. There are two other upcoming studies that can be done from home. For more information, e-mail mjburt@umich.edu or call (734) 764-1454.

Safety Tips for Visiting Professionals

Office Procedure:

- Make fellow staff aware of your day’s schedule.
- Keep address/ client file updated.
- If the visit is in an unfamiliar location, ask a staff member who may be familiar with the area. Any incident or circumstances that makes staff uncomfortable in a location or on a home visit should be reported to a supervisor immediately. Examples of such situations at a home visit are: unsecured weapons, unsecured pets, threatening clients or family member and residences where illegal activity appears to be taking place.
- Contact the client ahead of the visit so he/she will be watching for your arrival.
- Ask for precise driving instructions and consult a map before leaving the office.

In The Car:

- Keep your car in good working order and make sure you have enough gas to carry you through the day.
- Before entering your car, check the back seat. When approaching, be sure to look under the car.
- Lock your car doors and keep windows up at all times. If necessary, keep windows only partially open above ear level while driving.
- Keep valuables out of sight.
- Avoid rubble and broken glass that can flatten a tire and immobilize your car.
- If possible, try to park where you can see your car from inside the home.
- Choose a parking space that is well lit, or that offers the safest walking route to the dwelling.
- Do not park in a driveway to lessen the chance of being blocked in when you want to leave.
- Park in the direction you want to go when leaving the home.
- Be wary of dead end streets.

Public Services Provide Quality Of Life For Everyday Michigan Citizens

– Prepared by the Michigan League for Human Services

Each day in homes across Michigan the state's residents wake to a routine that depends upon the utilization of important public services.

While many people do not identify themselves as depending upon public services, the fact that the vast majority of us rely on a range of services in order to live our lives.

- We start our day with a shower, we shave, we make coffee—all of which are made possible by a municipal water system that provides a constant supply of clean water.
- We flush our toilet tanks to reliable municipal sewage, septic and drainage systems.
- We leave for work and school driving on roads and streets built and maintained by state, county and municipal road systems.
- Many of us ride to school or work on municipal bus systems that get us to our destinations.
- We take our children to day care centers and other day care providers who are licensed by the State of Michigan as being qualified to provide care.
- A large majority of our children attend public schools or state universities or colleges.
- We eat in restaurants that are regularly inspected by local public health departments to ensure that these establishments comply with public health codes.
- Many of us have elderly parents who receive in-home services or reside in nursing homes that are licensed and inspected by the State of Michigan; often our parent's care is paid

through the State's Medicaid program.

- Local police, sheriff and fire departments keep us safe in our homes and in our neighborhoods.
- As we travel on the state's highways, we are protected by State Police patrols; rest stops along the way are maintained by the Michigan Department of Transportation.
- Our family members, friends and neighbors with mental health problems receive needed services; those with disabilities are helped to live independently in their homes and communities.
- Local public library systems enhance the learning opportunities available to our children and provide access to books and literature for everyone in the community.
- Senior citizens benefit from the services and activities provided through local senior centers, including inexpensive meals; many other seniors receive meals at home through Meals on Wheels.
- We fill our gas tanks from pumps that are inspected for quality and accuracy by the State of Michigan.
- Local and state parks provide recreational opportunities for Michigan's children and families.

While this list could be much longer, it helps to underscore that many ways in which public services touch the lives of Michigan residents. All of us use public services every day.

Capital Letters

Capital Area Center for Independent Living

1048 Pierpont, Suite 9-10

Lansing, MI 48911 (517) 241-0393

OBSERVATIONS CONTINUED-by Paula Rehner

The road in front of my house must have been really bad yesterday because people were walking on the sidewalk. When did things get so mixed up? We have to have the sidewalks cleared if we have more than two inches of snow or we might just get ticketed. But, the vast majority of the people walk in the middle of the road. Does that mean I can drive on the sidewalk? A friend came to my house the other day and said she couldn't believe how bad the potholes were by the driveway; those aren't potholes, those are the ruts left when the road wasn't plowed and froze in lumps.

I went outside last night to watch the lunar eclipse and it was really pretty. Of course the only reason it could be seen was that the sky was clear, making the temperature below 0. The man across the street was outside swearing at his car that wouldn't start. Maybe if he had looked up for a few minutes and enjoyed the spectacle, he wouldn't have been so mad. The next one doesn't happen until 2010.

The climate really is changing. Maybe we should stop referring to global warming and just say climate change,

'cause it sure isn't warm around here. Was it really warm for a long time? Now it seems like we have snow every week. Will we still have snow in May?

All my observations haven't been negative. I've been taking a swimming class at the YMCA and have observed some very positive things with their daycare program. The nursery and the pool share windows and it is a lot of fun to watch the babies watch us swimming and for us to watch them making faces at us as they jump up and down in the cribs. It's kind of like a people zoo. They also have a room for slightly older kids that is full of mats and big cushioned things of all shapes and sizes and the kids get to run and climb and go through holes etc. I have an almost uncontrollable urge to run in there and join them. I have also taken notice of who drops the kids off for daycare and several of the dropper-offers are men. Things have really changed for the better. I frequently see men all over town interacting and having fun with their kids when there is no "mom" in sight.

Maybe being a kid now isn't as bad as some people make it out to be and that's the way I choose to see it.