2021 Iowa Family Leadership Institute

The IFLTI Spring 2021 Cohort is going strong with 10 participants, socially distanced and donning masks! Shown here in the photo with legend Julie Beckett, the group is (fortunately) primarily meeting in person this year.

And, they are embracing technology in this pandemic-era of learning! So much so, they have their own YouTube Channel (linked here). Please be sure and subscribe to the channel if you’re able, once they get to 100 subscribers they can customize the channel so it’s easier to find and come back to.

Digital Storytelling

IFLTI will be hosting a Digital Storytelling training Thursday and Friday, June 17-18. This is an opportunity for family advocates to put their family’s message into a digital format!

Thanks to funding from the Iowa DD Council, participants can partake at no charge! Participants in this sponsored training opportunity will write a script and create a 2-4 minute video story for their advocacy efforts. A flier for this training opportunity can be found at the end of this newsletter. If interested, please complete this application (linked here) to attend. Applications to participate are due Monday, May 10. Again, this is a sponsored opportunity to expand your skill set as you continue to share your advocacy story!
University of Iowa Health Care COVID-19 Helpline

University of Iowa Health Care has launched a new helpline to answer questions about influenza or 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) for health care professionals as well as members of the community.

The helpline will be staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Numbers to call are:

- (319) 384-8819 for general COVID-19 information or questions
- (319) 384-9010 for patients with COVID-19 and flu symptoms

For emergencies, call 9-1-1.

Working Together

In April, two 2018 IFLTI graduates teamed up together in a unique, pro-advocacy way! Charlene Sauer (IFLTI ‘18) invited Emma Bouza (IFLTI ‘18) to join her as a guest speaker in the Wartburg class Charlene is teaching, Working with Different Abilities. Emma presented her advocacy work for Ruby’s Law to the class, and shared some personal stories.

Regarding Emma’s presentation, one student provided this feedback, “When Emma was describing to the class the process of how she was working to get this law put into place as well as describing the lengths that she was going to help her daughter as well as other individuals like her, I could see the passion for her daughter and this subject in her eyes. I think Emma is a true representative of what an advocate should be and the steps they should take to help these individuals.”

“This week we had a speaker that was a powerhouse of an advocate as she addressed her issues straight to the legislature,” commented another student.

Kudos to these two IFLTI grads for their continued work and advocacy, and for introducing another generation to the important advocacy work we’re all doing!

Kudos Korner

Angela Palmer (IFLTI ‘18) has been named to the ASPIRE Steering Committee as a Family Peer Leader. ASPIRE—Advancing State Policy Integration for Recovery and Employment—is sponsored by the US Department of Labor and Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP).

Congratulations, Angela!

Unite Iowa

Megan Middaugh (IFLTI ‘17) is a Community Engagement Manager for Unite Us and is working to create a Unite Iowa Network.

Unite Iowa is a network of social and health care providers, connected through a shared technology platform... Unite Us. This platform allows these providers to send and receive electronic referrals, address social needs and improve the continuity of care across communities. Unite Iowa is a secure tool for providers to collaborate in providing care. For most community-based organizations, joining the network and accessing this electronic tool is available at no-charge! This tool could be of great use to providers caring for individuals across rural Iowa.

For more information, contact Megan (email linked here) or visit the Unite Iowa Community Information Sessions webpage, which lists information sessions for the tool which are being held in coming weeks.

Great work, Megan, on this very exciting tool!
**IFLTI 2.0**

It’s still in the planning stages but be prepared… information regarding an enhanced version of IFLT for grads will be coming your way soon!

Work is now underway for an IFLT 2.0 webinar series, designed for previous IFLTI grads and families. Again, this is still in the planning stages so if you have input or ideas which you think may be useful, contact [Diane Brenneman](mailto:Diane.Brenneman@iowa.gov) at (319) 356-8637.

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**Together We Can**

ASK Resource Center is putting a new and creative twist on their Together We Can Conference (another COVID outcome)! As you can guess, it’s virtual. For more information, to view the conference agenda or to register, [click here](https://askresourcecenter.org/twc-conference).

**Together We Can Conference**

**Saturday, May 1**

This year’s conference features key-notes on family advocacy, self-advocacy, youth leadership and disability law. As always, the TWC Conference is free to attend.

And there are kids activities too! That’s right, the 2021 TWC Conference will include interactive sessions for kids…and the whole family!

ASK (Access for Special Kids) Resource Center is a parent training, information and advocacy center for families of children with special needs across the state of Iowa.

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**2021 Summer Youth Leadership Academy**

Calling all youth leaders! The Iowa DD Council is looking for youth with disabilities who want to make a difference and are looking for opportunities to be leaders. If you know someone who meet these criteria, encourage them to check out this webpage for the [Iowa DD Council’s 2021 Summer Youth Leadership Academy](https://iowaddcouncil.org/2021-summer-youth-leadership-academy). Attendees will learn about leadership, goal setting, networking, determining your strengths, mentoring and more. This summer Academy is Monday, August 2, through Friday, August 6. Applications are due by Friday, June 18.
Vocational Training for Southeast Iowa

Christine Ertz (IFLTI ‘19) is continuing to work toward her goal of creating a vocational day hab facility for individuals in southeast Iowa. Coincidentally, around the time writing on this newsletter began, Christine received word from a large, national organization pledging their assistance in getting a vocational center operational! Way to go, Christine, for not giving up!

Hands & Voices

Congratulations to Sarah Johnston (IFLTI ‘17), who is serving as President of the Iowa chapter of Hands & Voices. Hands & Voices Iowa is a group of parents of ASL signers, cued speech users, parents of kids with cochlear implants or total communicators, who have common interests connected through the community of deafness. Great work, Sarah!

Adult Changing Stations: A Surprising Way to Win

People think the only way to win an issue is to get a bill passed, but sometimes there are other ways. Legislation is often introduced to keep an agency’s feet to the fire, or to push an issue needing to be addressed. Sometimes agencies agree to do if voluntarily, so passing a bill isn’t required. That is what happened with House File 492, co-authored by Amanda Milham (IFLTI ‘19), that would require the Department of Transportation (DOT) to install adult changing tables in modern Interstate bathrooms. The bill didn’t make it off the House Floor because it’s lead sponsor, Rep. Ann Meyer, of Fort Dodge) was able to get agreement from the DOT to do this without legislation, and to build into their budget for the next year.

This is great news for advocates, and a great example of how advocacy can win, even when a bill isn’t passed! It’s also a great example of how a state agency can work with local advocates to make Iowa accessible for all! Congratulations, Amanda, on seeing your hard work pay off!
Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to attend all University of Iowa-sponsored events. If you are a person with a disability who requires a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in this program, please contact Anne Akers in advance at 641-782-9500 X 24.

This training is supported by a generous grant from Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council. 
https://iowaddcouncil.org/