



The DP Express

Spring 2022

Greetings, DisAbility Partners Community!

Spring has sprung! In our neck of the woods, that can mean summer temps one day and snow forecasted the next! At DisAbility Partners, we are eagerly awaiting the time when our community can join us at the center again. Our staff are back in the office but still connecting with consumers remotely. We are busy planning several upcoming, **outdoor events**. In **June**, plans are in the works for a **vaccination and booster drive** outdoors. Our hope is to reach those who have either not had access or have decided now is the time! There will be **ice-cream and a drawing for those present!** We will host a **monthly raffle** for May, July, and August. If you have been vaccinated or received a booster **in the last six months**, snap a photo of your vaccination/booster record and send to Susan at (sragdale@disabilitypartners.org) or text photo to **(828)772-0263**. July is a month of celebrations with Independence Day and the 32nd Anniversary of the ADA. The CIL is hopeful that we can plan to celebrate with YOU by having a cook-out. Stay posted for updates. **Look for a special edition of DP Express with details of our June and July events.**

This issue has a great article from Kathy on **growing vegetables in small spaces**. Cultivating our own food has an impact not only on our health and the environment, but can become a great hobby. Also included, a reminder about our **Living Well in the Community** workshop and notes on **May is Mental Health Month**.



Wishing you all a safe and healthy spring! - Eva, Kathy, Marcos & Susan



Living Well in the Community

Join us for conversation, goal-setting and fun! LWC is a **12-week workshop**, currently in an online format. We meet once a week for 2 hours via Zoom, sharing resources, setting goals and discussing the Living Well curriculum. This is a safe, judgement-free space among peers. DisAbility Partners is able to provide some technical support for participants. **Our next session is set to begin on Thursday, September 1, 1-3pm** and will be a weekly recurring meeting.

A former participant shares about his experience:

“I recently finished the LWC online workshop. It felt good to have a safe space to express and explore the challenges of being part of America's chronically ill who tend to be chronically ignored. The course gave me an opportunity to meet new people and the weekly focus subjects gave us a place to explore, define, and apply tools to make our journey workable. (LWC) provided new friends to connect with, in and outside the workshop. It was a good place to get the pace of Zooming. Now I can find online conversations anywhere. It's ironic that the pandemic pushed others into a lifestyle that the chronically ill and the homebound excelled at long ago. It's great to have these courses...” - “Oso”

For more information contact Susan.

sragdale@disabilitypartners.org

(828)298-1977 office

(828)772-0263 cell

Register by Thursday, August 4 to participate in our upcoming session.



Ask THE ADA COORDINATOR

DP Express will be posting **ADA questions submitted by our readers along with answers from our ADA Coordinator**. If you have a question regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) such as accessibility, accommodations, service animals and so forth, email your questions to:

khollingsworth@disabilitypartners.org. If you prefer, call in your questions at 828-298-1977. For confidentiality reasons, questions posted in the DP Express will not include the name of the person who submitted it.

Example: “If I have need of an emotional support animal, am I still required to pay the pet deposit where I live?”

Answer: **What the landlord or manager may not do is charge a pet fee or a deposit. This applies to service animals as well. Still, the tenant may be required to pay the costs of repairs for damage the animal potentially causes to the premises.**



Our **Cyberpals program** places donated, refurbished computers into the homes of local people with disabilities and we are always in need of donations. We gratefully accept donations of desktop computers, laptops, and most computer peripherals that are no greater than 10 years old. If you're interested in donating, **please call 828-298-1977 and ask for Marcos.**



GROWING VEGETABLES IN SMALL SPACES

By Kathy Hollingsworth

When most of us think about growing vegetables, the first thing that crosses our minds is having to dig up a section in the yard for a garden. If you live in an apartment and only have a balcony or patio, the desire to plant vegetables is not out of reach. It is about getting creative to plant vegetables on your list without taking up all of your outside space. Growing vegetables in containers is becoming common practice. It can be one of the easiest ways to have home grown vegetables!

When first planning your garden, you need to determine what type of sunlight you have coming into your space. Then you can decide what vegetables to plant and where to set your containers.

FULL SUN: Cucumbers, Squash, Watermelon, Cantaloupe, Eggplant, Tomatoes, Peppers and Corn

PARTIAL SUN: Beets, Carrots, and Potatoes. At least a half-day of full sun and some partial sun.

SHADE: Spinach, Salad Greens and Chard.



Containers do not have to be your typical clay or plastic pots from a local garden center. Containers can be found in your own home using a vast number of items. Try coffee cans, milk jugs, old fish bowls or tanks, old tool boxes, mail boxes or baskets to name a few. Just make sure that any of these items can hold enough soil for the plant and that these items will permit adequate drainage. If you don't have a drill to make holes in your container, hammering a big nail to make holes will work. For glass or ceramic containers, a hole can be made using a drill with a tile and glass bit. You can also use a hammer and a nail on glass and ceramics. There are online videos on how to make holes without breaking a glass or ceramic container. It is very important that each container you choose have adequate drainage in order for the plant not to get water logged.

If you plan to grow a variety of herbs, one cost effective idea is to either invest in or recycle a canvas shoe organizer. Although this may appear to be somewhat out of the ordinary, this type of planter is great for growing herbs. This can be hung up and kept off the wall with a few strips of wood.

Fabric containers, referred to as grow bags, can be used for growing flowers, herbs and vegetables. Grow bags come in sizes ranging from 1 gallon to 25 gallons. From my own personal experience, I used a 10 gallon grow bag when I decided to grow beef steak tomatoes last year. The grow bag was deep and wide enough to plant one tomato plant that grew quite nicely producing several tomatoes. For smaller size tomatoes such as Tommy Toe (cherry tomatoes), a 5 gallon grow bag is a good size. Don't forget to insert a stake or a tomato cage in your bag depending on the type of tomato you plan to grow. There is adequate drainage with grow bags, but I found that I had to water the plant more often than I would a regular container. There are no worries though about overwatering your plants using grow bags. If you plan to put a grow bag on your deck or on any wood surface, make sure something is underneath the bag, a plant saucer or a tray, to prevent the wood from rotting. Grow bags are cost effective and one grow bag can be used up to 3-4 seasons. I spent less than \$20.00 for a pack of six 10 gallon grow bags purchased on Amazon last year.

https://www.amazon.com/s?k=grow+bags&i=lawngarden&crd=53ZYQGFBS07&sprefix=grow+ba%2Clawn+garden%2C97&ref=nb_sb_ss_c_3_7_ts-doa-p

Another cost-effective measure for growing vegetables is planting them from seeds. This method tends to work better than transplanting plants that are already half grown and sold at the stores. Seeds are usually inexpensive. If you have an area inside your home with the proper sunlight, you can always start early by growing plants from seeds. Create your own starter kit by using egg cartons, toilet paper roll or Dixie cups. Fill these items up with soil, plant the seeds and of course nurture them to grow. Eventually they can be transplanted to containers. Again, you need to have good drainage and some type of tray underneath the plants. The key to successfully growing vegetables is having good soil that is packed with the nutrients needed for healthy plants. Good soil will be your greatest expense. As for fertilizers and pesticides, there are many homemade recipes that are non-toxic. I sprayed my tomato plant leaves with aspirin water every few weeks, one aspirin for every gallon of water. You can find other ideas to make your own pesticide online.

Planting in containers has advantages:

- Container gardens allow you to grow different plants with different soil needs. That is generally not possible in a proper garden.

- Plants in containers are also easily portable. If they are not getting enough sunlight or the weather is getting too cold, you can always move them indoors or outdoors according to conditions.
- There is not much weeding to be done with container plants and no use for heavy garden tools.
- Vegetables and herbs are conveniently in reach if you have the plants right outside your door.

Container gardens can have disadvantages. Container plants need to be watered more often since plants in containers tend to dry out easily. If you have the time to do this and do not need a large amount of vegetables, then planting in containers is the right fit for you. Even though I have yard space for a garden, I prefer growing plants in containers. It beats digging up the ground only to end up with back pain! This year I plan to grow tomatoes and green beans, using raised containers for the beans. If you plan to grow vegetables or flowers in containers, you can get creative and decorate your containers to add accents to your porch or patio.

Through the NC Cooperative Extension, Extension Master Gardener volunteers in Buncombe County have a Garden Helpline that is open between March 2 through October 27. If you have a gardening question, call 828-255-5522 or email questions and a photo of the issue to buncombemg@gmail.com. If you reside in another county, you can contact the Master Gardener volunteers at your local NC Cooperative Extension.



MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

It's always a good time to check in with ourselves and others about mental health. In the wake of the pandemic, with so many of us experiencing isolation, fear or loneliness, raising awareness could not be more timely. Check out links below for mental health resources and toolkits, as well as information on the partnership between AB-Tech and Bloom Fitness for on-line yoga, meditation and exercise groups!

<https://www.mhanational.org/mental-health-month>

<https://abtech.edu/programs/adult-education/adult-basic-education-abe-foundations/bloom-fitness>



At-home testing and vaccinations are available for those unable to leave home, as well as for caretakers. In Buncombe County, call (828)250.5101, or contact your local DHHS.

Or fill at a simple, online form at <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/vaccines/home-vaccine-providers>



Artwork representing how disability is seen in society; created by alumna Yen Nguyen '20