



# 2025 MONTANA LEGISLATURE

The 2025 Montana Legislature kicked off on January 6, 2025 and is moving full steam ahead. During this session there are several bills and budgetary items that we are tracking. Over the next couple of months, while the Legislature is in session, we will need your help to ensure that programs and services that impact the lives of Montanans with disabilities remain intact and are adequately funded. As always, we will be sending out information and action alerts on our Action Alert system to keep you informed of opportunities to lend your voice to the legislative process. If you would like to receive action alert email notices and stay up to date on our legislative work, please visit our Action Alert website at [mtcil.org](http://mtcil.org).

### What is the Action Alert?

The Montana Centers for Independent Living Action Alert is an email listserv and online portal designed to inform you about current local, state, and national issues that affect the lives of people with disabilities. Just visit our Action Alert website and sign up to become an advocate and you will receive emails about important opportunities to advocate on behalf of individuals with disabilities.

During this Legislative Session we need your help to ensure that disability programs and services are fully and adequately funded as well as to ensure that other legislation to improve the lives of people with disabilities successfully makes its way through the legislature by signing up for action alerts and sending emails, letters, making phone calls, or showing up in Helena to testify.

*Legislation that passes or fails has a great, direct impact on our lives and it is important that people disabilities and our allies show up in great numbers to make sure that our voices are heard.*

### Important Budget Hearing Dates:

#### Joint Subcommittee on Health & Human Services:

January 21 & 22, 8 AM-Noon:  
Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities Division

January 23, 8 AM-Noon:  
Senior and Long-Term Care Division

January 27, 8 AM-Noon:  
Child & Family Services Division

January 28, 8 AM-Noon:  
Early Childhood & Family Support Division

January 30, 8 AM-Noon:  
Disability Employment & Transitions Division

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### SUMMIT STAFF

#### Missoula County

- Executive Director  
Tami Hoar
- Policy Director  
Travis Hoffman
- SD-CFC/PAS Program Manager  
Carrie Dyrud
- SD-CFC/PAS Coordinator  
Patti Montgomery-Stewart
- SD-CFC/PAS Coordinator  
Devon Harris
- SD-CFC/PAS Administrative Assistant  
Jessica Workman
- IL Specialist & Peer Coordinator  
Tyler Stosich
- Program Support Specialist  
Theresa Martinosky
- IL & Recreation Specialist  
Brenden Dalin
- Executive Office Manager  
Solveig Gasner
- Independent Living Specialist  
Sabrina Quimby
- Communications Director  
Blake de Pastino
- BASE Coordinator  
John Howard
- Youth Transitions Coordinator  
Gavin Workman
- Youth IL Specailist  
Vacant
- BASE Advisor  
Michael Beers
- Financial Officer  
Scott Fels
- Accounting Assistant  
Kellie Morrison

#### Flathead County

- County Coordinator  
Dianna Kintzler
- Program Support Specialist  
Katie Newman
- SD-CFC/PAS Specialist  
Aleyna Raymond

#### Ravalli County

- Deputy Director  
Alan Fugleberg
- Peer Support Specialist  
Roxanne Fisher

#### Lake & Sanders County

- Deputy Director  
Alan Fugleberg
- Independent Living Specialist  
Susan Morris
- Independent Living Specialist  
Carol Madden
- Program Support Specialist  
Tammie Miller

## New Summit Staff

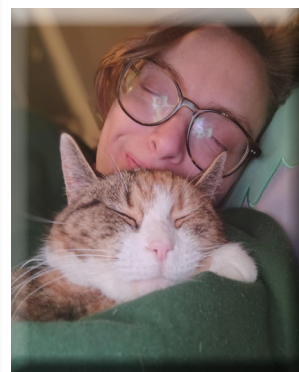
### Solveig Gasner Executive Office Manager- Missoula



Solveig moved to Missoula from Wyoming over 6 years ago. In her time living in Montana she has worked in the arts community, most recently directing the Camp Horror Film Festival. While organizing that event, she realized she had a passion for making niche communities more accessible. She is very excited to continue this type of work at Summit.

When she's not working, she enjoys watching movies with her cat, Cookie.

### Sabrina Quimby Independent Living Specialist - Missoula



Sabrina was born and raised in Vermont. She enjoys poetry, reading, dancing, and dad jokes. She also greatly enjoys snuggling with her cat.

Sabrina is on board directors for the Missoula food bank and is part of their queer coalition. She has always had a desire to work at a place like Summit and now that she is the new Independent Living Specialist at Summit in Missoula, she hopes to really make a difference in the disability community.

### SUMMIT BOARD



- |                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| Molly Blair      | Tom Seekins    |
| Sherene Ricci    | Randy Blevins  |
| Gabrielle Broere | Jodine Tarbert |
| Peter Drakos     | Lori Abramson  |
| Kelly Sellars    |                |

## Polson Office Update

Summit's branch office serving Lake and Sanders counties is now open in Polson and continues to see an uptick in activities.

Carol Madden is leading a Youth Opening Doors for Advocacy (YODA) program, the first time offered at the Lake/Sanders office. Currently, 6-8 Lake County area youth are participating in this program that began in December.

Susan Morris continues to work remotely with consumers seeking to apply for Social Security disability benefits and helps with the first level appeals process.

Alan Fugleberg, Deputy Director for Summit, continues to work from the offices in Lake and Ravalli counties, and is working a day per week in Missoula assisting with Social Security disability applications and other independent living work. In late October, he presented an in-service for Lake and Sanders County Job Service representatives.

Summit now has a new Board of Directors member from Polson. This new director is Lori Abramson, manager of the Polson Chamber of Commerce.

**If you have any questions about our classes and workshops, please call 406-215-1604.**

## Kalispell Office Update

Warm winter greetings from Kalispell!

Our youth group, YODA, continues to meet twice monthly on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. We continue to promote team building with group activities that focus on collaboration, advocacy, and, of course, FUN! The upcoming meetings are January 14th, January 28th, and February 11th (Valentines themed meeting)!

### **Employment opportunity:**

Summit's Kalispell Office is taking applications for the Kalispell Independent Living Specialist position. This is a career opportunity for the right person with a solid background in social work or human services and a passion for working with people of all ages with disabilities. This is a 40 hours per week, non-exempt position. For more information and instructions on how to apply, please visit [www.summitilc.org/about/employment](http://www.summitilc.org/about/employment).

Kalispell is also currently looking for positive role models in the disability community to become part of the Kalispell peer advocates group and taking applications for a full-time independent living specialist.

**For more information about YODA, peer group, or employment please contact Dianna at**

**406-257-0048 ext. 3 or go to**

**[www.summitilc.org/about/employment](http://www.summitilc.org/about/employment).**

## Hamilton Office Update

The Ravalli County office in Hamilton continues to be busy.

Alyssa Rockwell, as Program Support Specialist, offered a Building Advocacy and Learning Leadership Skills (BALLS) class for Hamilton High School students this fall. We are looking to increase participation in other activities at The Refuge such as Thank Goodness It's Art Friday, Aktion Club (People First) and the new Book Worm Club. For more information about The Refuge workshops please call Kelli Hatten at 406-306-0422, Ext. 151.

In December, the Art Expressions class was suspended. We hope to begin holding this class again in early 2025.

**For more information regarding Hamilton Summit services and workshops please call 406-363-5242.**

# Accessible Community Garden

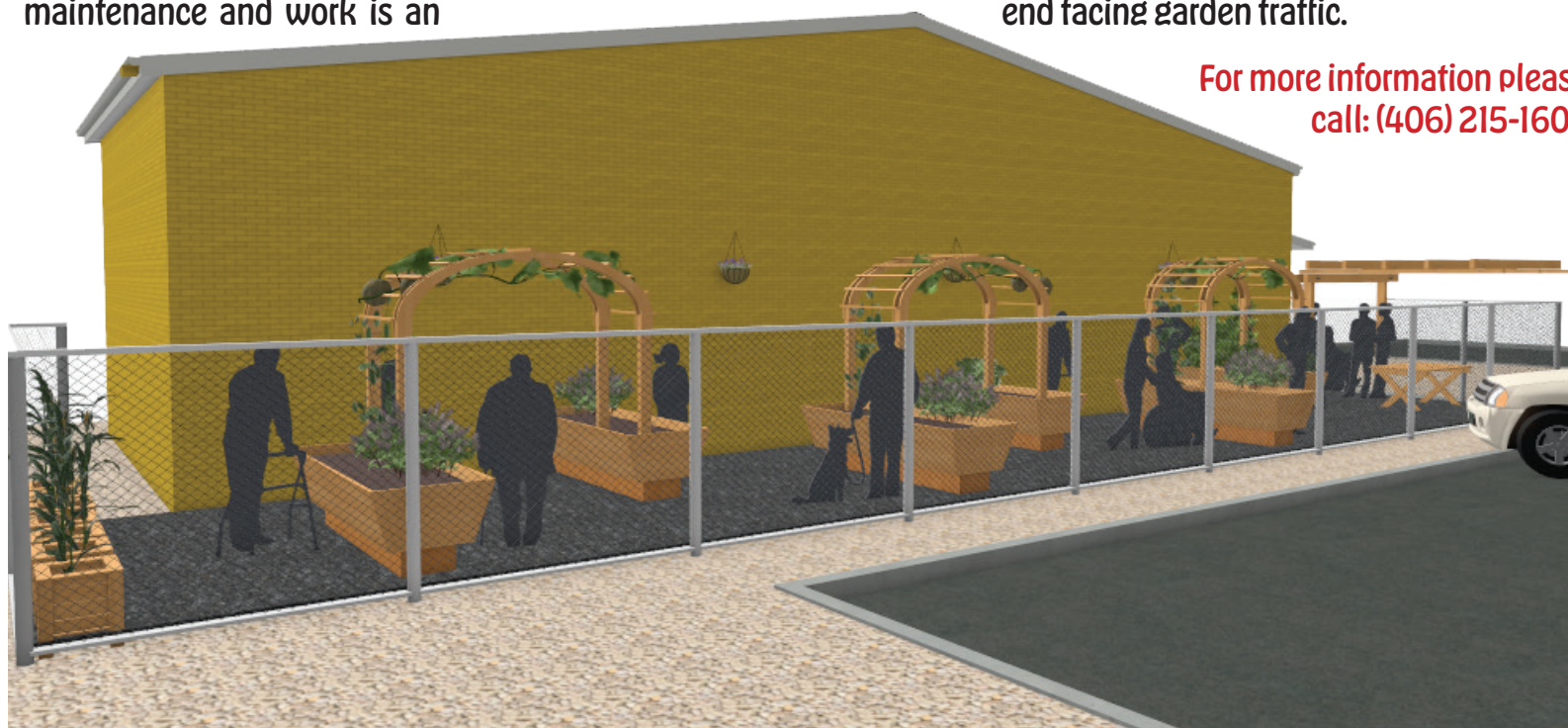
An accessible community garden is coming to our Summit office in Polson. The goal of this project is to build a place with a purpose. That place will be a fully accessible community flower and vegetable garden outside our office on Main Street. The purpose will be to assist people with disabilities practice skills in personal development, self-determination, interpersonal relations, social inclusion, and emotional and physical well-being through therapeutic horticulture activities.

There are many barriers to enjoying life. These include social isolation and loneliness, and inadequate access to recreational and other outdoor activities such as gardening. It is important for everyone to have opportunities in a variety of settings where there is potential for growth and enjoyment. A garden like this was tried with success in Missoula in 2023, and showed positive well-being outcomes for people with disabilities (see report on page 5). Not only is there potential for more well-being in our community, there are also other ways this project can benefit our programs. Horticulture is a potential work outcome for transitioning youth, or our adult consumers working with Voc Rehab. Garden maintenance and work is an

excellent opportunity for our community to learn about soil conservation and growing and preparing their own food. Starting an accessible garden in a community where there isn't one will help Summit become more a part of the community fabric and get our messaging to the people who need us.

**We are beginning the fundraising phase and are looking for donations!** The most expensive and important part of the project is having the project area fenced with locking gates. Two fencing contractors have provided quotes indicating the cost will be approximately \$5,000. The ground surface will be covered with rubber stall matting providing accessibility for everyone. The preparation of the ground and installation of the mats will cost approximately \$3,000. With space on the outside of our chain link fence facing Main Street, we hope to encourage large donors who will have their business logos proudly displayed there as supporters of this community project. Do you know anyone who may like to sponsor one of the 8'x3' raised beds? The cost of one raised bed is \$800. Each sponsor will receive a plaque with their name or business name at the end facing garden traffic.

**For more information please call: (406) 215-1604**





## Seeding Belonging Project DIG Short Report



Project DIG (Disability Inclusive Gardening) was a pilot program from June – October 2023. The purpose was to better understand how gardening can support the health and well-being of people with disabilities.

Project DIG used therapeutic horticulture (TH) to connect people with gardening experiences. TH uses specific plant and garden activities to support a person's health and happiness. TH programs focus on a person's strengths and interests.

### What we wanted to learn:

Could Project DIG help people with disabilities:

- Participate together in meaningful experiences?
- Connect with each other?
- Feel like they belong?
- Improve their sense of well-being?

We partnered with a local disability service organization who was interested in therapeutic horticulture (TH). We built an accessible raised bed garden on their property. Consumers and staff participated in gardening activities and experiences. The project director led 2-3 program sessions per week from June to October. Each consumer participated in at least one session each week.

We collected information about garden sessions from consumers and staff. Participants got to share their thoughts each day. We interviewed staff members at the end of the season.

### What we asked participants:

- What were their favorite activities and experiences in the garden?
- How did they work with others while gardening?
- What made them feel good in the garden?
- What else did they want to learn or do in the garden?

### Participants said Project DIG helped them:

- Set and reach goals.
- Interact with nature and plant life.
- Work outside with people of all abilities.
- Feel like they belong in the community.
- Work independently and as part of the team.
- Take ownership.
- Find meaning in participation.
- Learn new skills.
- Take pride in meaning in growing their own food.
- Share and care. Sharing what they did and caring for the plants.
- Make decisions on what to do in the garden each day.
- Have better moods and positive feelings.

The garden became a gathering place for working together, and spending quality time as a group.

Project DIG helped people learn how to grow plants and food. It also helped participants discover and use their strengths. The program brought people together around chosen activities they found meaningful. It helped participants grow their well-being!

### Want to learn more about Project DIG?

Download the report here:

[https://scholarworks.umt.edu/ruralinst\\_health\\_wellness/63/](https://scholarworks.umt.edu/ruralinst_health_wellness/63/)

Read the full report here [bit.ly/ProjectDIG](https://bit.ly/ProjectDIG)



# Summit Missoula & BASE are Moving!

Summit is excited to announce that its Missoula team is moving into their new forever home in February.

Late last year, Executive Director Tami Hoar and our Board of Directors approved the purchase of a building on West Broadway. Since then, renovations and accessibility improvements have been underway, and now, after many years at its location on Southwest Higgins Avenue, the Missoula team is ready to move.

The new office will house our crew of independent living specialists serving Missoula County, our administrative and management staff, and – later this spring – BASE, our all-abilities social and activity center. The new BASE digs will feature a large performance and movement area, recording space, and offices for BASE staff.

Please bear with us while our move is underway. We'll have more exciting details once the finishing touches are being made, but as of February 1, you'll find Summit's Missoula team at 3104 W. Broadway!



# BASE SCHEDULE

725 West Alder, #4 Missoula, MT

For the following activities,  
please call BASE for details:

- All Abilities Yoga
- Game Night
- Art Group
- Filmmaking
- Improv Workshop
- BOLD Gayme Night
- Dance/Movement Class

Check out BASE films on the BASE YouTube channel BASE Film Extravaganz.  
(see QR code below)



For BASE Schedule Updates and  
Additional Events go to:

[www.summitilc.org/calendar](http://www.summitilc.org/calendar)

or check the BASE Facebook page at

<https://www.facebook.com/base725>

To get involved or to share ideas of new BASE programs, contact BASE [jhoward@summitilc.org](mailto:jhoward@summitilc.org).

**Contact BASE:**

[www.basemissoula.org](http://www.basemissoula.org)

Phone: 406-215-1080

## CLASSIFIED ADS

### Adult Symmetry Stander

\$300 obo, in good condition  
call: Nancy 406-273-9012

### Jazzy Pride Wheelchair

Make offer, only 2yrs old  
call: Linda 406-531-4938

### Shoprider power chair

300lb capacity. Needs battery & charger.  
Free (406) 728-1630

### Symmetry Stander, Quickie Powerchair, Invacare Powerbed, Hoyer lift

Comfortable, easy-to-use seat stander Call/  
leave message: Tejeanne (406) 865-0221

### Power Scooter

\$500 obo. Please contact Adrian:  
(406) 263-8650

### Adult Tricycle

Schwinn 26" tricycle, bike pump included.  
\$500obo (406) 721-1698

### Wheelchair Lift

Ricon wheelchair lift model #S1231  
G00100100. \$400obo.  
Contact: Cory (406) 471-3314

### Silver Spring wheelchair ramp 10' L x 36" W

Made of high-strength light weight  
aluminum. \$297obo. Contact:  
[tamera144@gmail.com](mailto:tamera144@gmail.com) or 406-363-4898

### Smart Talker text scanner

Slightly used, \$700. Contact Larry at 406-  
633-4036 or [ketch1969@gmail.com](mailto:ketch1969@gmail.com)

### Nova Walker, Quontum 600 power wheelchair, Commode, 2 Transfer Benches, Beezy Manual Wheelchair.

Call Gary (406) 224-5527 or  
[garylee032051@gmail.com](mailto:garylee032051@gmail.com)

To get listed contact Tyler Stosich at (406)  
728-1630 or email [tstosich@summitilc.org](mailto:tstosich@summitilc.org).

Or, list and find items on the MonTECH exchange: <http://montech.ruralinstitute.umd.edu/mtdb/>

Summit is funded in part under an agreement with the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. Any statements herein do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Department.



# Save the Date

## Montana Legislative Day

### Legislator Luncheon

Monday, January 27, 2025  
Montana State Capitol Rotunda @ 12pm

Sponsored by the Montana Statewide Independent Living Council & Centers for Independent Living



#### 2025 Independent Living Legislative Day

IL Legislative Day will be held on Monday, January 27, 2025. IL Legislative Day is an opportunity for IL advocates and people with disabilities to meet with legislators over lunch in the Capitol Rotunda to talk about issues facing people with disabilities and urged legislators to find solutions to address those issues. If you are interested in attending, please contact Summit at 406-728-1630.

## BECOME AN ADVOCATE



Scan to sign up for email alerts, view posted alerts, or even see what legislation we are tracking.

The Montana Centers for Independent Living Action Alert system is an email listserv and online portal designed to inform you about current local, state, and national issues that affect the lives of people with disabilities.

This publication is available in alternative format on request. Please call 1 (800) 398-9002.

Sign up to receive our newsletter in your email inbox at [www.summitilc.org](http://www.summitilc.org)