



CONNECTIONS

Connect with Friends Workshops Tackle Isolation and Build Friendships

Isolation among persons who live with paralysis is an ongoing concern, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Recognizing this challenge, Connections launched in July our *Connect with Friends* program, created for persons who live with all types of paralysis.

Providing northeastern Coloradans with weekly in-person and online video conferencing sessions, the program includes eight individual workshops through May 2022. Topics range from photography, genealogy, gaming, armchair travel, and videography. Offered for no charge to qualifying residents of seven northeastern Colorado counties, the program is funded in part by a grant from the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation National Paralysis Resource Center.

“The pandemic really heightened awareness around isolation, particularly for people with disabilities such as paralysis that constricts their access even further,” Connections’ Executive Director Rochelle Mitchell-Miller said. “We are excited to offer new and engaging programming specifically to people with paralysis to engage socially. Self-care means so much more to us in 2021 and should be equally accessible to everyone.”

For area residents living with paralysis, participating in the *Connect with Friends* program will provide an opportunity to meet others, either in-person or virtually. This is in addition to having goals and objectives to meet as an active program participant.

The program is directed by Connections professional Peggy Garcia, who has collaborated with several area residents with paralysis during their transitions from group living homes to independent living.



Rochelle Mitchell-Miller



Courtesy Image.

Rochelle Mitchell-Miller (left) and Chalice Springfield at the July 7 Northern Colorado Women in Business conference.

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Our Organization

Established in 1986, Connections for Independent Living is one of nine certified Independent Living Centers (ILCs) in the State of Colorado. We serve Weld, Morgan, Logan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington, and Yuma Counties. All our services are free and voluntary for our valued consumers.

Limited In-Person Office Hours Resume

On Tuesday, June 15, Connections resumed limited in-person office hours. Acknowledging the interest in providing personal, face-to-face consultations, we reopened our doors on Tuesdays and Thursdays for the first time since mid-March 2020. Wednesdays were added to the weekly schedule beginning in August.

Connections team members will continue to serve consumers remotely Mondays through Fridays by telephone and by video conferencing.



Richard Rhinehart

Although appointments are not required for service meetings at the Greeley offices or by telephone or video, they are encouraged. Appointments can be made directly with the Connections team member, or by calling reception at 970-352-8682. The contact page at our website (connectionscolorado.org) also includes an online appointment scheduling service.

Unvaccinated visitors to our offices, along with those individuals with specific medical conditions that create vulnerability to infections, should wear masks during their visit. Connections holds a Five Star Certificate with the City of Greeley that ensures visitor safety for health.

Connections office hours through Labor Day weekend are Mondays through Thursdays, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. On Fridays, Connections is open from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. After Labor Day, Friday closings return to 5:00 p.m.

Our team looks forward to serving you!

Connections Welcomes New Team Members

This summer, Connections welcomed three new team members.

Tom Muniz serves as an Independent Living Specialist for Connections. He has spent much of the last two decades assisting persons who live with disabling conditions. A past Connections employee, Tom serves as our Deaf Independent Living Specialist and Interpreter Coordinator. He previously served five years for the Governor's Commission on Community Service, and 11 years for the Colorado Advisory Council for Persons with Disabilities.



Courtesy Tom Muniz.

Tom Muniz.

Michelle Patterson is a graduate of Colorado State University, where she worked at the Student Disability Center. Assisting Connections consumers as an Independent Living Specialist, Michelle has several years experience working with disability resources at both the local and the state levels.



Jessica Standiford.

Michelle Patterson.

Michelle is fluent in American Sign Language, and is a passionate advocate for Colorado's Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Community. Born deaf, Michelle currently leads Connections' monthly Women with Disabilities Peer Support Group.

Nancy Kostal joined Connections as a Housing Associate, assisting in processing and coordinating consumer vouchers with the State of Colorado Housing Choice program. She is currently majoring in psychology at Aims Community College, and is a past volunteer for the Weld Food Bank.



Jessica Standiford.

Nancy Kostal.

Connections Peer Support Groups

ANXIETY SUPPORT GROUP

Participants share information about how they cope with anxiety and Post Traumatic Stress (PTSD). This group meets every last Thursday from 2:00–3:00 p.m. MDT.



📞 bit.ly/ConnectionsAnxiety passcode 549156

📞 dial 253-215-8782; using your keypad, enter 86218709472#, 0#, 549156#.

CHRONIC PAIN/ILLNESS PEER SUPPORT

A support group for those living with chronic pain and illness. Group meets every first Thursday of the month from 3:00–4:30 p.m. MDT.



📞 bit.ly/ConnectionsChronicPain passcode 565101

📞 dial 346-248-7799; using your keypad, enter 83030138798#, 0#, 565101#.

LOW VISION PEER SUPPORT

Learn about and share strategies for living with low vision or blindness. This group meets every fourth Tuesday from 11:00 a.m.—12 noon MDT.



📞 bit.ly/ConnectionsLowVision passcode 289228

📞 dial 669-900-6833; using your keypad, enter 81692498500#, 0#, 289228#.

SELF-ADVOCACY PEER SUPPORT GROUP

This is a participant lead group that teaches people how to advocate for themselves. This group meets the second Tuesday of each month from 10:00–11:00 a.m. MST.



📞 bit.ly/ConnectionsSelf-Advocacy passcode 752016

📞 dial 669-900-6833; using your keypad, enter 84949531378#, 0#, 752016#.

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY SUPPORT GROUP

The Traumatic Brain Injury Support Group is a peer support group offering information and support to individuals who have experienced a Traumatic Brain Injury, Stroke, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, or any other type of brain injury. Caregivers are welcome. This group meets the second Monday of each month from 1:00–2:00 p.m. MDT.



📞 bit.ly/ConnectionsTraumatic (no passcode)

📞 dial 253-215-8782; using your keypad, enter 87692062801#, #.

SOCIAL GROUP

This informal group is for individuals who live with a disabling condition to socialize and discuss any topic they choose. The group meets the last Friday of each month from 11:00 a.m. — 12 noon MDT.



📞 bit.ly/ConnectionsSocialGroup passcode 279168

📞 dial 669-900-6833; using your keypad, enter 87239763680#, 0#, 279168#.

WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES SUPPORT GROUP

A safe environment for women to support each other. This group meets the third Thursday of every month from 2:30 –3:30 p.m. MDT.



📞 bit.ly/ConnectionsWomenDisabilities passcode 373583

📞 dial 346-248-7799; using your keypad, enter 89197179026#, 0#, 373583#.

Explore our full program calendar online at connectionscolorado.org.

NEWS & NOTES

Thanks to all who submitted a Connections consumer survey in June. Nearly 95 percent of those submitting responses report our organization has been helpful in their lives. About 74 percent awarded Connections five out of five stars in services.

Connections remains committed in providing assistance and guidance to Coloradans during the COVID-19 vaccination process. If you haven't yet received your vaccination, our team stands ready to help, including providing free American Sign Language interpreting at your provider if necessary. Contact us today.

Our Connections Housing Coordinator reports that our Connections waiting list for Section 8 Housing Vouchers will reopen for new applicants beginning October 1. The Housing Choice Voucher Program provides rental assistance to income-eligible Coloradans through subsidizing a portion of the monthly rent.

Are you a Facebook user? Follow our Connections page at facebook.com/CILgreeley/ for regular updates about our organization, and information about persons with disabilities.

Connections is published bi-monthly by Connections for Independent Living and distributed at no cost to care consumers, followers, supporters, and partners. Rochelle Miller—Executive Director; Joshua Fulenwider—Director of Independent Living Services; Karen McCullah—Interpreting Coordinator; Richard Rhinehart—Director of Communications and Editor. Send change of address to Connections, 1331 8th Ave., Greeley, CO 80631-4601.

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Challenge Barriers. Build Independence.

**2019-2020 ANNUAL
REPORT ENCLOSED**

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About Connections for Independent Living

Our mission is to promote the full inclusion and integration of people with all types of disabilities into all levels of society. We challenge barriers, both physical and attitudinal, which restrict the rights and personal development opportunities of people with disabilities. With a staff and board of directors that consists mostly of persons with disabilities, we are effective in promoting independent living and empowerment.

Connections 35th Anniversary Celebration

Connections is celebrating 35 years of service this September 17 with a special event hosted at our 8th Avenue headquarters in Greeley.

Our outdoors gala will welcome registered consumers, partners, and friends. There will be light food and beverages for attendees, tours of our offices, and much more.

The late afternoon/early evening event will pay special tribute to Beth Danielson and to Brad Taylor for their many years of service to the disability revolution, and to the Northeastern Colorado community. Connections will also be raising funds in support of our building improvement fund at the event.



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Limited transportation to and from the Connections offices will be available for registered consumers who request assistance. Invitations are mailing to all Connections consumers. RSVPs by telephone or email are requested.

For full event information, visit ConnectionsColorado.org/35years