

# THE INITIATOR

APRIL 2010

## Complete Streets: Another Step Toward Creating a Structure of Belonging

What does it mean to belong? That's the question posed by Peter Block in his recent book, *Community: The Structure of Belonging*. It's also the theme of several special events Disability Network/Lakeshore is planning to honor the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Our first event will be the Complete Streets Panel, where local road commissions, planning commissions, and tourist organizations will be invited to learn about this concept from a panel of experts. Already, several organizations have signed on for the event, including West Michigan Trails and Greenway Coalition, Southwest Michigan Planning Commission, Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the City of Holland.

What does a complete street look like? According to Darrell Harden, Transportation Planner for MDOT's Southwest Region, it's "one that serves the needs of all users, rather than just those who are driving a passenger vehicle. The list includes buses, bicyclists, pedestrians, and people with disabilities who use any of those various modes of transportation."

Harden explains, "People of all abilities are considered equally in the planning for and design of the streets, helping to break down barriers and other artificial divisions that 'accommodations' sometimes cause. In conjunction with a solid community

planning effort, complete streets can greatly enhance livability in the community, making the transportation system an enhancement of life rather than just something facilitating travel."

Sharon Nunnelee, Executive Director of West Michigan Trails and Greenways Coalition, agrees. "Complete streets afford freedom of transportation choices—for recreation, errands, commuting, and more," she explains. "They can bring people with disabilities into the family of a community and create a community that is more attractive to everyone, more inclusive of everyone, and more accommodating for everyone."

To bring complete streets to West Michigan, Harden says communities must identify key stakeholders and work together to develop a plan. "With a plan in place, the community will have a clear direction when making decisions about capital investments, and involving a broad spectrum will ensure that everyone is truly invested in the outcome."

Nunnelee says, "Disability Network has made a beginning by bringing the project into the spotlight and helping to make communities aware of the need, the possibilities." What comes next depends, in part, on you. Join us on Thursday, May 20th in Saugatuck.



**Darrell Harden, MDOT**

### Complete Streets Panel Event

Thursday, May 20th  
10:00 a.m. to noon  
Saugatuck Brewery, Saugatuck, MI

To register contact Kathryn Gillen at: 616.396.5326 ext. 107 or [kathryn@dnlakeshore.org](mailto:kathryn@dnlakeshore.org)

There is no charge for the event, but please RSVP by Friday, May 14th

### Follow Along

Join in the "Structure of Belonging" conversation at:  
[www.hollandsmallgroup.blogspot.com](http://www.hollandsmallgroup.blogspot.com)

### Our 20th ADA Anniversary Events

- Livable Communities Presentation  
October 2010
- Dancing Wheels: A live performance of people with and without disabilities  
October 2010

# THE INITIATOR

## Electronic Newsletter

Did you know that Disability Network/Lakeshore has an electronic newsletter that includes: more info, pictures, video, links and upcoming events? Visit [www.dnlakeshore.org](http://www.dnlakeshore.org) to register!

## Join Us on the Web

Disability Network/Lakeshore is now on Facebook, Twitter and Linked-In.

## Volunteers

We rely on our wonderful volunteers for so much of what we accomplish. To find an opportunity that fits your skills, interests and schedule, please contact Annie Hilchen at 616 396 5326.

## Donations

As a non-profit organization, we welcome gifts of all sizes. You may make a tax-deductible contribution by mailing a check (payable to Disability Network/Lakeshore) to:

**Disability Network/Lakeshore**  
**426 Century Lane**  
**Holland, MI 49423**  
Or online at: [www.e-giving.org](http://www.e-giving.org)



426 Century Lane  
Holland, Michigan 49423  
t 616 396 5326 800 656 5245  
f 616 396 3220  
[www.dnlakeshore.org](http://www.dnlakeshore.org)

NON-PROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
HOLLAND, MI  
PERMIT NO. 238

## Who we are

Most people equate disability with limitations. It's our job to change the perceptions and realities that prevent people with disabilities from sharing in the community. Every year, we provide training, mentoring, and referrals to help people with disabilities and their families live productive lives. Because disability touches so many people, we also work on a larger scale, helping governments and businesses make changes that benefit not just those with disabilities, but everyone in the community.

Return Service Requested