ACTIVE RE-ENTRY
Independent Living Programs

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Community Newsletter • Fall 2026





Celebrating Resilience at the 2026 Statewide Independent Living Conference

On September 29–30, Independent Living staff from across the state came together at Davis Tech in Ogden for the 2026 Statewide Independent Living Conference. This year's theme, resilience, was at the heart of everything we did.

The conference gave us a chance to step away from our everyday routines and come together as a community. We learned from one another, shared experiences, made new connections and discovered new resources.

Over the two days, we had the opportunity to participate in a variety of breakout sessions, group presentations and activities.

The sessions provided opportunities to learn new skills, hear different perspectives, discuss issues that matter to our communities and bring new ideas back to our centers and our everyday work.

We also visited with multiple vendors and community partners. Their presence gave everyone a chance to learn about resources and services available throughout the state and make connections.

The theme of resilience felt especially meaningful throughout the conference. We see resilience every day in the consumers we serve; as they continue to pursue their goals, overcome barriers, advocate for themselves and work toward greater independence.

We also see resilience in our Independent Living Centers and employees. The work we do isn't always easy, but we continue showing up, advocating for change and finding new ways to help people live the lives they choose. Most importantly, the conference reminded us that we don't have to do it alone.

Thank you to the staff at Roads to Independence in Ogden for hosting the conference this year, and to everyone who attended, presented, provided resources, helped organize the event and made the conference a success.

INSIDE...

Ball Drumming
Page 2

Satellite Office Updates
Page 4

Bryce Canyon
Page 5

Support Groups
Page 7

HEAT Program
Page 8

"Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better"
-Maya Angelou

Ball Drumming

Active Re-Entry consumers have been participating in ball drumming classes at the East Carbon Senior Center. The classes began September 1 and run through November 24, with Kevin Nybo from the Price office leading the group. The classes have been held at the Huntington Senior Center and the Carbon County Senior Center.

The classes use rhythm, movement, and music to create an engaging environment where participants can connect, learn, and have fun. Each week, participants have the opportunity to drum to the beat of the music while incorporating physical movement into their day. The weekly ball drumming sessions have become a time to look forward to, bringing people together through music, laughter and teamwork.





Active Re-Entry Food Pantry Opens

Active Re-Entry, in partnership with the Carbon County Food Bank and the Utah Food Bank, has opened a supplemental food pantry at the Price Office. Julie Walker from SERDA and the Carbon County Food Bank approached us with the idea of bringing a pantry to the center so consumers can access essential food. Staff jumped at the idea because we have seen the positive impact access to basic food can have on people's lives. The pantry opened in June, and we found that the need was much larger than we first expected. In the past three months, we have provided food to 145 individuals. In August, the Utah Statewide Independent Living Council heard about our new food pantry and wanted to help bring this idea to centers across the state. USILC provided funds to all six Utah IL Centers to set up a pantry or, in our case, expand. Active Re-Entry staff have decided to use the funds to offer personal hygiene items, household items, and cleaning supplies. We thank our partners for helping us bring this service to our community. The Active Re-Entry pantry is only available to consumers. To access the pantry, speak with a staff member or call the Price office at 435-637-4950. If you would like to make donations to the pantry, please contact Active Re-Entry.

Consumer Spotlight



Stuart has been an active member of the CIP and Young Adults Groups for many years. He first joined our youth program in 2014 at just 13 years old. From the beginning, Stuart said he felt like “just a kid,” but the program quickly became an important part of who he is. Stuart says he loves coming to the groups because he gets to see the staff at Active Re-Entry and the family he has gained through the program over the years. Stuart has grown tremendously and, within the past year, began working at Deseret Industries Thrift Store and Donation Center. Through his hard work, he was recently promoted to working on the store floor. Stuart shared that the confidence he has gained through our skills classes and time spent with other consumers has helped him become a more confident employee.

Youth Program Update

We are happy to welcome fall and recap our eventful summer program. This summer, youth participated in two activities a week, ranging from skill-building to a trip to the Loveland Living Planet Aquarium with friends from Options for Independence, Roads to Independence, and Ability 1st Utah to see the aquarium's new addition. This summer we also tried something new called speed friending, where youth paired up and asked each other questions for three minutes, then they rotated to a new person. This activity helped build friendships and helped youth learn about their peers. The Youth also celebrated the signing of the ADA with a pool party along with the CIP and Young Adult consumers. Youth Coordinators will be working with students at Carbon High School, Union High School, and Utah State University Eastern, working on transition skills, IL skills, and career exploration. We will continue to build and grow the programs in these areas. If you are or know of a youth age 12 to 24 with a disability and wanting to get involved, learn skills, make friends, and have some fun along the way, contact Chris at 435-637-4950 (Carbon & Emery) or Ryan at 435-630-0500 (Duchesne County.









Satellite Office Updates

Moab

Amy has been serving a growing number of new loan bank consumers requesting assistive technology services. She has also been keeping up with outreach efforts within her service area of Green River, Moab, and Monticello. In June, Amy attended the Kids Business Fair with Chris, Kelly, and David from the Price office. Additionally, she met with staff from Moab Regional Hospital and the Recovery Center to share information about Active Re-Entry and the services we provide.



Amy Farr 435-355-0683

Vernal

Jamie wrapped up the Passport to Summer program in August. Jamie and Tracy traveled to Manila, Utah, as well as Dutch John and the Flaming Gorge area, to connect with the community and continue outreach efforts. It was a great way to close out a fun summer.



Jamie Batty 435-789-4020

Roosevelt

The tail end of summer has been buzzing with activity in the Duchesne County area! In July, the youth program enjoyed a pool day, complete with pizza. As school started back up in August, the youth have continued to do well with their Independent Living Programs and have stayed engaged at the Roosevelt satellite office.
In other news, Ryan, the IL Coordinator for the area, participated in the local parade with a float representing Active Re-Entry, where several individuals learned about us and our services.



Ryan Crozier 435-630-0500

Blanding

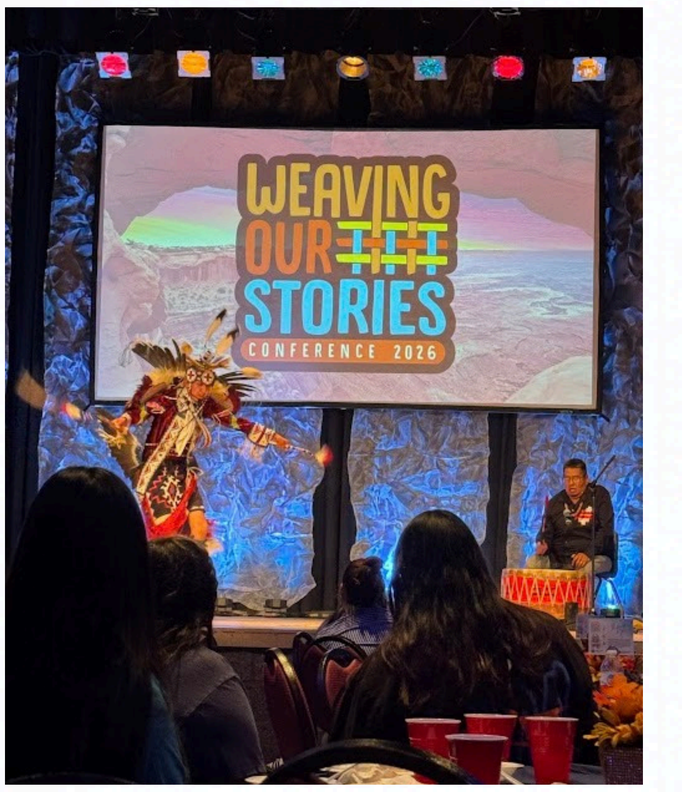
Roxanne did some outreach and spent time with other community members and organizations at the Weaving Our Stories event and the Women's Health Conference. She continues to help individuals apply for our Paid Assitive Technology services, including ramps, hearing aids, and other assistive technology items.

Rozanne Whitehorse 435-820-0900

Stay tuned for more updates as we continue to engage and support communities across the region!







Bryce Canyon Just Got a Whole Lot More Accessible

Extreme Motus All-Terrain Wheelchairs Now Avalible

By Ryan from Extreme Motus Substack

When Sam and I first rolled up to the rim of Bryce Canyon, the rangers looked at us like we were crazy. If you've ever seen the **Wall Street Trail**, you know why. It's a steep, jagged descent through massive red rock switchbacks and loose gravel.

Most people look at those drop-offs and think, *"That's not for wheelchairs."*

But we didn't go there just to sightsee. We went there to prove a point. And today, I have some of the best news I've been able to share since we started Extreme Motus.

The "Wall Street" Test

We took the Motus down into the heart of the canyon. It was steep, it was dusty, and yes, there was a lot of "whose turn is it to push?"

But as we navigated the switchbacks, something interesting happened. We were invited to demo the chair for the Bryce Canyon Park Rangers and Law Enforcement teams. These are the people who handle search and rescue. They spend their days worrying about hikers who get heat exhaustion or twisted ankles at the bottom of the canyon.

They saw the Motus and immediately realized: **This isn't just a wheelchair; it's a rescue tool.** It can reach areas where traditional stretchers struggle and it keeps the rescuers fresh.

The Big Win

I am incredibly proud to announce that **Bryce Canyon National Park now has two Extreme Motus wheelchairs available for visitors to borrow.**

This is a massive shift. It means:

1. P**aved overlooks are no longer the limit.** Families can now go *into* the canyon together.
2. T**he NPS is listening.** They are realizing that "inclusive" means more than just a handicap parking spot; it means trail access.
3. Y**our support made this happen.** Every time you share a video or talk about the Motus, it reaches the people who make these decisions.

Why This Matters

Accessibility in our National Parks shouldn't be an afterthought. It should be the standard. When a park like Bryce Canyon invests in these tools, they are telling millions of visitors: *"The outdoors are for everyone."*

If you're planning a trip to Utah, call the park ahead of time and reserve one. Go see the hoodoos from the bottom up. It's a view you'll never forget.







The Duality of Life with a Disability

Author Unknown

The grey area between visible and invisible disabilities is not always clear cut. There is often a misconception that a disability is either all invisible or all visible. However, this isn't an accurate experience for many disabled people. Disabilities are dynamic and can change in their "visibility" or perceived presentation from one day to the next. Disability isn't "either/or" and it definitely isn't static. Visibility can vary for many reasons: access needs, pain levels, energy, environment, safety and stigma. Some days someone might not look disabled because their challenges are invisible to the general public, however the next day they are visible because their pain creates an obvious limp or they have to wear a brace to support their joints.

Some people have the privilege to choose whether or not their disability is "visible" in certain settings based on comfortability and safety. For example, someone who is deaf can sometimes choose how visible their listening assistive devices are (if they use any) when walking alone so they aren't an obvious target. An ambulatory wheelchair user can forgo the support to access an inaccessible area, again leaving them to seem like they have an invisible disability, but if they were in their wheelchair, it is visible.

What about when you can't choose?

Some people have permanent disabilities that can't be opted in or out of, but might be able to be hidden. An Ostomy bag for example, can be hidden in most cases, but it is always there and at many times is visible to the naked eye. Someone with a lower limb difference might be able to wear long pants most of the time, but at the end of the day they still might have a prosthetic device and are visibly different from able bodies. All types of disabilities are valid. Whether others can see a person's disability or not does not change the fact that they are disabled and choosing to hide one's disability does not make them cowardly or less of an advocate. Such personal decisions are unique to each person's journey and should never be looked down upon.

The Bottom Line

Identifying as disabled is a personal choice. Two people with the same condition may not both view themselves as disabled and choose differently on the level of disclosure they want. Regardless, all people who identify as having a disability deserve the same level of respect, access to accommodations and absence of judgment. You might not know the true extent of what someone is going through but you can still show your support, avoid making assumptions and ask questions.



White Cane Safety Day

White Cane Safety Day is a national observance in the United States, celebrated annually on October 15 since 1964. This day is dedicated to honoring the achievements of individuals who are blind or visually impaired and to recognizing the white cane as an important symbol of blindness and a vital tool for independence.

New Employee Spotlight



Delphine Atene is the new Outreach Coordinator in the southernmost part of San Juan County. A generous grant from the Noorda Foundation made her position possible. She enjoys informing community members about the services Active Re-Entry provides and helping individuals access durable medical equipment and other support as needed. Delphine has three years of experience working in community support. In her free time, she enjoys sewing traditional Native clothing, making necklaces and earrings, and learning how to quilt. Delphine is also a proud mother of two boys and a grandmother who loves all of her grandchildren very much. She looks forward to connecting with the community and supporting others through her work with Active Re-Entry.

Anything Is Possible

Michael Glen grew up in the small town of Roswell, New Mexico, and was very active in the community, an athlete, New Mexico Air National Guard member and hot air balloon enthusiast. At the age of 21, He was involved in a single-car rollover that paralyzed him. After rehab Michael set a goal for himself, that he was going to become a hot air balloon pilot. He was determined to get his license but had no clue of how he was going to do it. Michael applied for his license and received a letter from the FAA saying, "because of your disability there is no way you can fly a balloon". At that time Michael gained support from the ballooning community, and they wrote letters to the FAA in support of Michael getting his license and the FAA changed their decision to allow him to get his student license. Michael worked with many people in the ballooning community to get a basket that would work for him, and they also mentored him in flying. Through hard work and determination Michael achieved his goal in 2006, making him the world's first paraplegic hot air balloon pilot. Michael now travels the country flying his balloon at festivals and speaking to groups about his lived experience with his disability, the support he received through ballooning, and encouraging and empowering youth to achieve their goals. Recently Michael participated in the Dinah SOAR Days Hot Air Balloon Festival in Vernal, Utah flying the Bee Balloon. Vernal was one of the stops on his 2026 summer tour. Check out his website and social media to learn more about Michael and see some amazing photos and videos of his flights. Also check out his documentary on YouTube, titled The Rolling Pilot https://rollingpilot.my.canva.site/

"Don't let anybody ever tell you guys you can't do anything" – Michael Glen







Activities & Events Carbon & Emery Counties

SUPPORT GROUPS		
Grief Support Group Contact Terri at 435-637-4950	October 14 November 11 December 9	1:30
Caregivers Support Group Contact Terri at 435-637-4950	October 28 November 25 December 23	1:30
Active Access Contact Derek at 435-637-4950	November 6	1:30
Low Vision Support Group Contact Tracy at 435-637-4950	October 21 November 18 December 16	1:30

HEAT Program

The Home Energy Assistance Target (HEAT) program is officially opening for the upcoming season to help eligible households cover their home energy costs. To ensure help reaches those who need it most, the application timeline is split into two phases:

- Starting Tomorrow, October 1st: Applications open exclusively for priority target households. This includes households with individuals who are 60 or older, children 6 and under, or individuals with a disability.
- Starting November 1st: Applications will open for all other households.

How Community Members Can Apply or Get Help:
Please share the following contact and application methods:

- Online (Fastest Way): Apply directly at jobs.utah.gov/heat - Home Energy Assistance Target. All necessary forms are provided. (Watch mail and email after applying for Verification Request notifications.)

*You may also call or email us to request that an application be mailed to you, or to request a mailing address and / or fax number.

- Contact us by Phone: Call 435-613-0100 for more information or to speak with a representative.
- Contact us by Email: Reach out to heat@seualg.utah.gov for personalized help or assistance.

Utah Key Voting Dates 2026



October 13 - Ballots are mailed out
October 23 - Last day to register to vote and receive a by-mail ballot by 5:00 pm
October 27 - Last day to request a by-mail ballot by 5:00 pm
November 3 - Election Day
Remember to return your ballot early. You can drop it off at an approved county drop box or mail it no later than October 31.

Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA)

Active Re-Entry has changed how we help individuals with RECA claims. If you have questions, would like your claim reviewed, or need help applying for RECA, you MUST call to set up an appointment with staff; a $100 donation is required. If you just want a paper application, copies are 10 cents per page. Contact us at 435-637-4950 for appointments.

PROGRAM SUMMARY
The Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA), 42 U.S.C. § 2210 note, is a federal law that provides partial restitution to individuals who developed certain serious illnesses following exposure to radiation from the U.S. nuclear weapons program, or their survivors. RECA was reauthorized under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, Pub. L. 119-21, enacted on July 4, 2025.
This unique statute was designed as a non-adversarial alternative to litigation. RECA does not require claimants to prove causation. Rather, claimants qualify for compensation by establishing a diagnosis of a compensable disease after working or residing in a designated location for a specific period. RECA assigned the Attorney General responsibility for establishing procedures and determining whether claims meet the statutory eligibility criteria.

New Employee Spotlight



David Richards is our new Program Assistant supporting Carbon and Emery Counties. This role will have David helping with many tasks at Active Re-Entry such as leading groups, cleaning, answering phone calls, and welcoming community members to the center. David is a excels at listening, providing support, and information about local programs. Outside of his professional role, David is an active enthusiast of the outdoors and regional history, often spending time pursuing landscape photography and exploring local museums. In his personal time, he enjoys spending quality time with his family—especially his niece—as well as playing video games and working on detailed diamond art projects.

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Rachelle Blanc.....Fiscal Officer - Price Office
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Chris Haycock.....CIP/Youth/Young Adult Program Specialist - Price Office
Kathryn Kilbourne.....Friendly Visitor Coordinator - Price Office
Larry Heaton, Dale Harbor, John Christensen, Dean Marchello.....Perkie Drivers - Price Office
Kelly Trolin.....Youth/CIP/PERKIE - Price Office
Tracy Sorensen.....IL/LV Coordinator - Price Office
Kevin Nybo.....Driver/Facility Maintenance - Price Office
Jodi Liin.....Volunteer - Price Office
David Richards.....Program Assistant - Price Office
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Jamie Batty.....IL/LV Coordinator - Vernal Office
Amy Farr.....IL/LV Coordinator - Moab Office
Ryan Crozier.....IL/LV Coordinator - Roosevelt Office
Delphine Atene.....Outreach Coordinator - San Juan Office