



Center for Disability Inclusion

PARTNERING FOR WORKPLACE SOLUTIONS

Join Us for This Interactive Webinar in Recognition of the 32nd Anniversary of the ADA Signing

July 26
11:30 am - 12:30 pm CST

"National Disability Independence Day,
Celebrating the ADA:
A Lived Experience by Joni Thomas"

Presenter

Joni Thomas

Community and Disability Liaison
Nebraska Total Care



Joni Thomas, Nebraska Total Care

Joni Thomas, Community and Disability Liaison with Nebraska Total Care was born in Iowa and moved to Nebraska when she was two years old. At two and a half, she contracted polio, which resulted in physical disabilities.

She got involved in advocacy at the age of four. Schools at the time were segregated when it came to students with disabilities. Potential students were required to take tests to prove they were "educable" and could learn. Joni argued and defended her answer to one of the questions on the test, and "that sort of set the tone" for her life.

In the 1980's, her desire to work without losing her benefits led her to John Milligan at Legal Aid of Nebraska. Mr. Milligan represented her in a lawsuit against the State of Nebraska regarding the implementation of the Social Security Administration Work Incentive 1619b. The program was not required by the Center for Medicaid Services for every state to participate. The work incentive would allow Joni to work and maintain the needed benefit of Medicaid. During the lawsuit the Social Security Administration made the program mandatory for all states. The change allowed millions of people who experience a disability to work and receive needed Medicaid funding.

She has worked in various disability-related fields in volunteer positions, and has held paid positions with Union Bank, CILs and the State of Nebraska. For the State of Nebraska, she worked as a Grants Coordinator for the State Medicaid system. Joni's current work as a Community & Disability Liaison at Nebraska Total Care provides a way for her to make sure that peoples' rights are honored. She sees herself as a bridge between the disability community and the health plan.

Overview

Joni will be sharing about the challenges of seeking and obtaining employment pre-ADA in the 80s. Seeking and obtaining employment post-ADA in the 90s and the last 10 years. Concluding with changes that have occurred since 2000. All from the lived experience of being a person with a disability.

Life has improved for people who experience disabilities post-ADA and there is still more work we can do:

- Unemployment rates for those who experience disabilities is still less than any other population
- Enforcement of ADA regulations could be improved
- Celebrate the work that is being done within the arts arena highlighting people with disabilities and non-disability roles
- Continue to seek a level playing field for those who experience disabilities

Cost

Partners - \$35; complimentary registration(s) with Partner code

Non-Partners - \$45

Forgot your Partner ID code?

Contact bperkins@centerfordisabilityinclusion.org

REGISTER BY JULY 25 at

<https://www.centerfordisabilityinclusion.org/webinars.html>