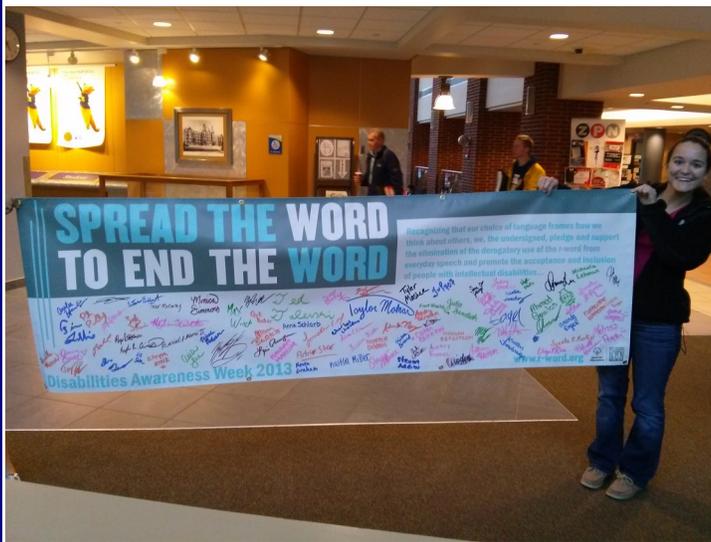




The Office of Accessibility Newsletter

Disabilities Awareness Week 2013

We hope you were able to attend an event during Disabilities Awareness Week November 4-8, 2013. Our office, in collaboration with several other offices on campus, helped raise awareness about disability-related issues to the campus community. Events included a pledge campaign to end the use of the “R-word,” several guest speaker presentations, and information sessions regarding Accommodations for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Apps for Student Success.



If you were unable to stop by our table in the Student Union to sign the pledge banner, you can still pledge online! Please visit the following website to sign your name:

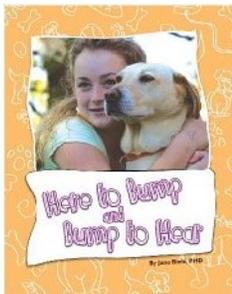
<http://www.r-word.org/r-word-pledge.aspx>.

Stay tuned for information about next year’s Disabilities Awareness Week. We hope to see you there!

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Hear to Bump and Bump to Hear



The Office of Accessibility staff also had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Jane Biehl and her service and hearing dog, Sita, during Disabilities Awareness Week 2013. Dr. Biehl discussed Sita’s remarkable journey from wandering the streets of Springfield, OH to becoming her companion and her “ears.” Dr. Biehl has had a hearing loss since a young age and Sita became her “Hearing Ear Dog.” She

chronicles Sita’s journey in a children’s book titled “Hear To Bump and Bump To Hear” that teaches awareness about individuals living with disabilities through the patient and loving eyes of an assistant dog.

Dr. Jane Biehl holds a doctorate in Counseling and is currently teaching Introduction to Deaf Culture and Introduction to Interpretation as an Adjunct Professor at Stark State College in North Canton, Ohio.



Students develop new friendships and gain confidence with Connect U

Connect U, a weekly group for students interested in connecting with one another and becoming more active on campus, has experienced significant growth and success this semester!

The group meets in Simmons Hall every Wednesday from 5-6 p.m.. In addition to weekly meetings, the group participates in activities on and around campus. Bowling, miniature golf, Starbucks, and events at E.J. Thomas Hall are a few of the activities the group has participated in this semester. At the last meeting, group members brought in snacks to share for a potluck "Connect U Thanksgiving" during the group's normal meeting time.



Meredith Sodik, a Disability Specialist in the Office of Accessibility, said that the group was formed in effort to help students feel more connected to The University of Akron and to one another. "Transitioning to college can be very difficult, and developing new friendships can be an even greater challenge for some students," she said. "Connect U provides a safe, nonjudgmental environment for students to get together and talk about their experiences. It has been amazing to watch the students grow and support one another. Connect U meetings and activities are also a lot of fun!"

When asked why he attends Connect U, one student replied, "My real question is why not? Sometimes it is easier to just bury yourself underneath a rock than actually popping up and facing the light. Connect U gives me something positive to do to break up my routine." Another student added, "If I didn't come to Connect U, I would probably just be in my apartment doing homework or playing video games. It is fun to get out and meet new people."

"I made friends in my classes and on my floor in the residence hall, but I still didn't have a lot of deep connections with people," said one Connect U member. "This is a place for me to come to make connections with people and a place where I belong."

The group's discussions range from light-hearted topics including favorite foods and vacation destinations to more serious topics including self-esteem, stress management, and anxiety. "When somebody brings up a sensitive subject, we all interject and support each other's feelings. We talk about our own experiences and relate to each other," said a student. Another student added, "You realize that a lot of people have been through similar things that you have and have similar feelings as you."

During the "Connect U Thanksgiving," a number of students shared that they were thankful for the friendships they have made through Connect U. "They say that people come into our lives for a reason, and we are led to people who help us to grow. I hope that I can teach members of Connect U something in the same way that they have taught me things," shared a student.

Group members agree that Connect U is a safe, accepting place to make friends. "We accept people for who they are. I used to feel insecure about my disability, but I realize that those insecurities don't matter because nobody judges you here. They make it okay to be you, and that gives me confidence to walk around school every day."

Any student interested in participating in Connect U is encouraged to contact Meredith Sodik for more information at (330) 972-6719 or by emailing mll38@uakron.edu.

Important Reminders

STARS Updates:

- Beginning November 25th, STARS will automatically input your class schedule information for the current and subsequent terms. This means that once you register for courses in My Akron, STARS will update automatically and the courses that you are enrolled in will be added to your STARS schedule. You will still need to select the accommodations you wish to use for each class.

Requesting accommodations:

- Once you have finalized your class schedule for the spring, make sure to also request your accommodations on STARS.
 - Log into STARS
 - Scroll down to "Select Accommodations for Your Class"
 - Select classes you are requesting accommodations and click "Step 2- Continue to Customize your Accommodations"
 - Select the accommodations you would like to request for each class and the checkbox to email the accommodation letter to your instructor
 - Select "Submit your Accommodation Request"
- Transcribers/CART or interpreter accommodation requests should be submitted at least **six weeks prior** to the beginning of the semester.

Testing in the Office of Accessibility and Counseling Center:

- If you have an alternative testing accommodation, please remember to schedule your test at least **4 business days** prior to the day you would like to take the test. Tests can be scheduled by the student through the STARS website, <https://gunadiframe.com/Akron/>, under the Alternative Testing tab. Remember to schedule early due to the high volume of testing requests during finals week!

Important Dates

December 8, 2013
Final Instructional Day for Fall 2013 classes

December 8, 2013
Transcriber/CART request deadline for Spring 2014 semester

December 9-15, 2013
Finals Week

December 13-14, 2013
Fall 2013 Commencement

December 23- January 1, 2014
OA closed

January 13, 2014
Spring 2014 classes begin

Helpful Apps for Student Success

In case you missed it! The Office of Accessibility's intern, Sariya Winters, presented information about "Apps for Success" to students during Disabilities Awareness Week. We hope these apps can benefit you in your success here at The University of Akron. For more information, please contact the Office of Accessibility at access@uakron.edu.

Organization Apps:

- myHomework (free; iPhone only)
- Evernote (free; iPhone, BlackBerry, Android)
- Dropbox (free with limited storage; iPhone, iPad, web, Android, BlackBerry, Kindle)
- Google Drive (free; iPhone, iPad, Android)
- Flashcards+ (free; iOS devices)



Notetaking Apps:

- Notability (\$2.99; iPhone, iPad)
- Bamboo Paper (free; iPad)
- inClass (free; iPhone, iPad)
- Dragon Dictation (free; iPhone, iPad)



Time Management Apps:

- 30/30 (free; iPhone, iPad)
- Maths Alarm Clock (free; Android devices)
- Student Time Tracker (\$.99; iPhone, iPad)



Additional Resources:

- Schedulizer.com
- Ted Talks
- Take A Break- free stress management App



A “Note” Worthy Presentation

Staff members from the Office of Accessibility at The University of Akron traveled to Ohio University in Athens, OH from October 24-25th for the annual OH-AHEAD conference. AHEAD, or the Association on Higher Education and Disability, is a professional organization for individuals involved in providing accommodation services to students with disabilities in the higher education setting. The Office of Accessibility staff who attended the conference included:

- Kelly Kulick, Director
- Jessica DeFago, Associate Director
- Leigh Sveda, Adaptive Technology and Service Coordinator
- Ashley Poulos, Disability Specialist
- Julie Sandish, Notetaker Coordinator and Graduate Assistant

The staff was excited to not only attend the conference, but also to present at the conference. Though the whole team shared in presenting, Julie Sandish and Leigh Sveda spent the majority of the presentation sharing information regarding the redesigned notetaker recruitment process and how other universities can utilize this process on their own campuses. The Office of Accessibility was thrilled to share this “note” worthy process with all other participating institutions!

At the end of the presentation the group surveyed the participants, 100% of participants reported that the information presented to them was useful to their work, 92% of participants reported that the presentation increased their understanding of the notetaking recruitment process and that they will use the information to manage the notetaking process on their campus, and 100% of participants rated the overall presentation as “excellent” or “good”.

Office of Accessibility Scholarship

The Office of Accessibility is proud to announce that students with disabilities registered with the office will have the opportunity to apply for scholarship funds. Selection criteria and application information is still to be determined and will be released for students next semester. Selection of scholarship recipients will be made by the Office of Accessibility.

We look forward to sharing scholarship information with all of our students once it is finalized. Stay tuned for more information in Spring 2014!



Suggestion Box

We want your feedback!

Email ooaga1@uakron.edu with comments about the current newsletter or ideas you would like to see in future newsletters.

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Fall & Spring Office Hours:
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, & Friday 8 a.m.-5 p.m.
Wednesday: 8 a.m.-7 p.m.



Simmons Hall at The University of Akron