

United Cerebral Palsy of Michigan

The mission of United Cerebral Palsy of Michigan is to connect people with disabilities to the opportunities and resources needed to live productive and independent lives.

In calendar year 2013, UCP MI provided direct services to 856 people in 54 counties. In addition, 11, 243 people visited the ucpmichigan.org website, viewing 30,260 pages; 59 new members joined the CP Michigan Facebook discussions, bringing the total membership to 225; and 108 new Twitter followers joined us, bringing the total to 430 followers.

Program: Regional Inclusive Community Coalition (RICC) Coordination

Description: The RICC project teaches people with disabilities to use their voices to advocate for themselves on all levels. People with disabilities have the opportunity to organize and run their own coalition meetings, talk with their legislators about disability issues, and learn personal advocacy skills. **In calendar year 2013, 378 individuals were served in the RICC program. The UCP RICC coordinators hosted and participated in 111 events in 2013.**

When a local business in the Shiawassee area opened, local RICC members found that it didn't provide any handicapped parking. The local RICC went in search of a resolution. They contacted the business who sent them to the building owner, who sent them back to the business. When RICC members were unable to resolve this on their own they asked for assistance from Michigan Protection and Advocacy, who stepped in and to create the needed change. Shortly thereafter, handicapped parking spots were designated for patrons of that business.

Geographical service area: Alpena, Arenac, Bay, Benzie, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Clare, Clinton, Eaton, Emmet, Genesee, Grand Traverse, Gratiot, Huron, Ingham, Iosco, Isabella, Manistee, Midland, Ogemaw, Otsego, Saginaw, and Shiawassee.

Program: Upper Peninsula Assistive Technology Center

Description: This program is focused on building the capacity of local school districts to meet the assistive technology (AT) needs of special education students. AT services match a device or software program to a specific task the student with a disability is having difficulty with. The staff help students obtain equipment and train them to use it. **In calendar year 2013, the Center provided direct service to 93 individuals and training to 240 teachers and school personnel.**

For each student, the Center assesses AT options and tailors a product to suit an individual's need. In 2013, 73 students received assistive technology equipment to improve their progress toward and mastery of educational goals; 21 students with complex communication needs (nonverbal) received a communication system that provides vocabulary for continuous communication in all settings; and 21 separate training activities took place that provided resources to 145 school staff and parents. In addition, 95 University students majoring in special education and communication disorders had the opportunity to learn about assistive technology in the school setting.

Geographical service areas: Alger, Baraga, Chippewa, Delta, Dickinson, Gogebic, Houghton, Iron, Keweenaw, Luce, Mackinac, Marquette, Menominee, Ontonagon, and Schoolcraft.

Program: The Michigan Assistive Technology Loan Fund

Description: The Michigan Assistive Technology Loan Fund loans money to people with disabilities to purchase assistive technology (AT) devices. These low interest loans allow people to buy AT that leads to greater access to the world at large, increased mobility, and enhanced communication and job opportunities. Examples of items purchased through the AT loan fund include hearing aids, voice simulation systems, telecommunications equipment, environmental control units, computers, adapted recreational equipment, accessible home modifications, and modified vehicles. **In calendar year 2013 the AT Loan Fund disbursed 76 loans, hosted two educational webinars attended by 70 people and conducted outreach at 12 events around the state, distributing 2,174 brochures about the program.**

In 2013, a client who has a neuromuscular disease and enjoys outdoor activities sought a way to enjoy the beautiful trails in her community. With the assistance of the Loan Fund, she purchased a bike with adaptations, including a small assist motor. It is an excellent source of exercise, as the power assist is only used when necessary for hills, or if she becomes fatigued. "Being able to bike with friends greatly enhances my life in a being part of the group kind of way. It's a great emotional, as well as physical, boost," said the client.

Geographical service area: The state of Michigan. Although the main office of the two loan funds is in Lansing, UCP MI has 16 satellite application locations at local disability service organizations around the state.

Program: The Michigan Employment Loan Fund

Description: The Michigan Employment Loan Fund seeks to reduce or eliminate barriers to employment through low-interest loans to people with disabilities. Financial loans can be used to buy employment-related equipment and training to use the equipment. Potential borrowers represent those interested in self-employment and those needing assistive devices to maintain, increase, or enhance employment. **In calendar year 2013, the Employment Loan Fund disbursed 12 loans.**

One loan recipient used the funds to purchase catering equipment to expand her business. She has 15 years of experience in the food industry and is well known in her community. "Self-employment allows me the flexibility to work at my own pace," said the client. Being able to hire and train others to assist her is also helping to increase sales.

Geographical service area: The state of Michigan.