

Independent Facilitator Biography

Contact Information

Full name Robin L. Bennett

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About the Facilitator

What qualities do you bring to your role as an Independent Facilitator?

When speaking to my qualities as an Independent Facilitator, I am most proud of my ability to take advantage of opportunities to grow as a disability advocate. Over the past 15 years, I have grown in my knowledge of different abilities and the systems that support those that make up our diverse population in Michigan, as well as in my experience with different independent living and supports organizations.

As a person with a physical disability, I have honed qualities that I have garnered from a life that has required perseverance, boldness, and discernment. The motto that I have lived by since being diagnosed with a form of muscular dystrophy over 20 years ago has been, "the quality of the oil is shown as the olive is pressed"; to me, this means that a person's quality of character will be shown as they react to challenging or "pressing" situations. It is my sincere desire to encourage others with disabilities to find the strength within themselves that will bring fulfillment as their qualities shine through their challenges.

Why do you want to serve as an Independent Facilitator?

I have a passion for assisting others with disabilities, especially those with challenges that may present differently than my own, to discover the choices they have in their own lives. I love to see those that may have questioned their abilities, take ownership of their options and the responsibilities that come with taking steps towards a more fulfilling life. That is not to assume that individuals with disabilities don't already have a life of quality and value, but to say that there can be satisfaction in confidently asserting a choice.

What are some skills or expertise that you have as an Independent Facilitator? For example, are you fluent in a language other than English, have experience with augmentative communication devices, etc.?

I am a 2009 graduate of Eastern Michigan University with a degree in Creative Writing and Theatre Arts, so I pride myself on thinking outside the box in terms of communication, problem-solving, and teamwork. I was an instructor and scriptwriter for 4th Wall Theatre Company, now OpenSpot Theatre Company, for over seven years and will bring the knowledge of working with young people of neurodiversity to my role as an Independent Facilitator. I have also worked alongside and with individuals of a variety of different ability types through the Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living, the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America, and the MI Statewide Independent Living Council and will adapt as needed as an Independent Facilitator. Through those careers and experiences I have learned about best practices in working for individuals with disabilities who may be nonverbal, use communication devices, or have unique ways of making their desires and goals known. I have experience helping those with multiple disabilities that may need someone to consider all of their strengths and challenges when pursuing the planning process.

Are you a member of any professional organizations or groups? If so, which ones?

I currently serve as a board member for the Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living, as an advisory member of the Nanking Transit Community Transportation board, and as an active disability advocate for independent living organizations throughout Michigan. I currently work with the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America as a part-time Development Coordinator.

Scheduling Details

Do you need any accommodations in your role as a facilitator? If yes, what are they?

I am able to coordinate well within a virtual setting, but am available to be physically present at the meeting when it takes place in my specifically designated geographic service area. I do use a wheelchair to get around, so if we meet physically, the location would need to be accessible. In some cases it may be difficult for me to get inside an individual's home, so that may need to be taken into consideration.

Times of day you are available to facilitate: 10 AM-7 PM daily

Days of the week you are available to facilitate: M T Th Sat (10am-5pm Only)

Geographic locations you are available to facilitate: Wayne and Washtenaw Counties

Do you have a computer, tablet, or smartphone with Internet access for virtual facilitations?

YES

Independent Facilitator Level of Competency: Level 1 (Trained) Independent Facilitator has completed the Independent Facilitator training provided by the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Institute, Wayne State University.