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WEST LIMERICK INDEPENDENT LIVING

30/07/2023

EDITION 10

IN TOUCH

A WORD FROM MARGARET

Welcome to the 10th edition of Intouch, as summer arrives, we hope for brighter days, even though the weather may make us question that!

In this quarter's newsletter, we have an exciting lineup of updates and achievements to share with you. First and foremost, we had the pleasure of officially reopening our refurbished offices on the 14th of June. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Pamela Wallace and Mary Geoghegan for cutting the ribbon. It was a memorable day as we celebrated 25 years of providing support to individuals with disabilities in the community, alongside both long-standing and new friends.

During the event, we took the opportunity to recognize the dedication of our loyal staff through service awards, with tenures ranging from 15 to 25 years. We were honored to have Mayor Francis Foley present these awards.

On that note, I am thrilled to introduce our Summer 2023 Employee of the Season, Sarah McCarthy a highly deserving member of our team. I encourage all clients and staff to submit their nominations for the Employee of the Season by the 29th of September.

While we celebrate our successes, we also take a moment to remember three clients who have recently passed away: Ann Plunkett, Natasha Cosgrave, and most recently, Patrick Dawson. We extend our heartfelt sympathies to their respective families. Ar dheis de go raiibh a ainm dhilis. Ann and Natasha's PA's have paid beautiful tributes to them, and we shall remember Patrick in the next quarter.

As always, we value your feedback and encourage you to share your opinions with us. To get in touch, simply send an email to margaret@limerickcil.com or call on 069 77320.

Warm regards,

Margaret O'Connor Manager



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Employees of the Season for Summer 2023

West Limerick Independent Living is thrilled to announce the latest recipient of the highly coveted "Employee of the Season" award. This prestigious accolade recognizes exceptional dedication, outstanding performance, and unwavering commitment to excellence among our employees. After a rigorous evaluation process that involved nominations from clients and colleagues and assessments by a panel of service coordinators, Sarah McCarthy emerged as the successful candidate for this season's award. She has demonstrated exceptional skill, capability, and an unwavering drive to go above and beyond to contribute to the success of the company.

Sarah exceptional performance and positive impact on the team and West Limerick Independent Living as a whole have made her an invaluable asset. The "Employee of the Season" award is an integral part of our company's commitment to recognizing and celebrating excellence within our workforce. It is a testament to the dedication and hard work of our employees, who continue to uphold the values that drive West Limerick Independent Living's success.



Photo: Precious Madubeko Service Coordinator and Employee of the Season Sarah Mc Carthy PA

West Limerick Independent Living would like to extend its sincere appreciation to all employees who continue to strive for excellence and contribute to our collective growth. Congratulations to Sarah McCarthy who was selected as the employee of the season for Summer 2023.

So, who can be nominated for employee of the season? Any of the staff of West Limerick Independent Living can be nominated for employee of the season, just contact the office for an application form by phone on 069 77320 or by email info@limerickcil.com

Employee of the Season

Any of our clients or staff can nominate an employee of West Limerick Independent Living for the award, just contact our office for an application form by phone on 069 77320 or by email info@limerickcil.com

Closing Date for Nominations: 29th September 2023

**€400
PRIZE**



Margaret O'Connor 16 years, Elizabeth Lenihan 15 years, Shirley Wrenne 16 years, Michael O'Connor 25 years, Tina Nunan 15 years, Mary Geoghegan 20+ years and Gerard O'Connor 25 years. Also, in photo Leigh Gath.

West Limerick Independent Living Honors Employees' Dedication and Loyalty with Years of Service Awards

West Limerick Independent Living proudly celebrates its employees' dedication and loyalty as it bestows Years of Service Awards upon its esteemed team members. This special recognition honors the commitment of employees who have reached significant milestones in their tenure, exemplifying the company's core values, and contributing to its continued success. The company attributes its growth and achievements to the unwavering support of its dedicated workforce, who are the driving force behind the organization's accomplishments. The Years of Service Awards recognized employees who have completed more than 15 years of service with West Limerick Independent Living. The Years of Service Awards not only celebrate employees' milestone achievements but also reflect the company's commitment to fostering a positive and inclusive work environment where employees feel valued and appreciated.

The honored employees are Gerard O'Connor 25 years, Michael O'Connor 25 years, Caroline Murphy 22 years, Mary Geoghegan 20+ years, Ann McCarthy 20 years, Patricia O Connell 16 years, Josephine O'Neill 16 years, Shirley Wrenne 16 years, Lisa Harty 16 years, Christina O'Dwyer 16 years, Margaret O'Connor 16 years, Elizabeth Lenihan 15 years, Tina Nunan 15 years, Margaret O'Grady 15 years and Bridget Sheehan 15 years. The success of West Limerick Independent Living is a testament to the dedication and passion of its exceptional team, who remain at the heart of the organization's growth and accomplishments.

The Designability Wizzybug

The Designability Wizzybug is a powered wheelchair designed for children under five years old. It is a fun and engaging way for young children with mobility difficulties to explore the world around them. The Wizzybug is designed to be easy to use and manoeuvre, with a simple joystick control and a top speed of 6 km/h. It is also lightweight and compact, making it easy to transport and store. Available in a range of colours and can be customised with a range of accessories to suit the needs of each individual child. The Wizzybug has a range of up to 10 km on a single charge. The battery can be charged using a standard household socket and takes around 6 hours to fully charge. Available to purchase from Designability for £3,000.00. The price includes delivery and a two-year warranty. I'm sorry but I couldn't find any information on whether the Wizzybug is available in Ireland, however, you can find out more information about availability and delivery options. <https://designability.org.uk/meet-wizzybug/>



MY MOVE COUNSELLING

MY MOVE COUNSELLING OFFERS PROFESSIONAL, ONE-TO-ONE AND ONLINE COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY IN AREAS OF BOTH MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION THERAPY.

Our Vision:

My Move Counselling's Vision is to provide Counselling & Psychotherapy services to people in need without waiting lists or referrals. Addressing a wide range of issues people face today in Ireland.

Our Mission:

At My Move Counselling our mission is to provide affordable and accessible support to people who are looking to improve areas in their emotional and mental health transitions. While change can be challenging, our therapists are ready to help you overcome those challenges by giving each person the space to reflect on their lives and prepare for the moves they need to take with support and encouragement. My Move seeks to embrace the complexity of each person and as such it deals with the Biological, Psychological, Social and Spiritual aspect of each person's life. We provide a professional and non-judgemental service in a welcoming environment to help you regain and restore your well-being.

What We Treat:

Bereavement & Loss, General Life Challenges & Changes e.g., Health, Breakdown of Relationships, Family Life Changes, Work Challenges, Exam Stress, Anxiety & Stress – Panic Attacks, Sleep Difficulties, Social Anxiety, PTSD, OCD, Trauma, Stress Management Depression, Mood, Anger Issues, Rumination. Self-Esteem, Building Confidence and Assertiveness.

What to Expect in your First Session:

Assessment – This is where the therapist uses various assessment tools to gather sufficient information regarding your history, problems you have been experiencing i.e., levels of stress, anxiety, depression. A specialized assessment tool is used to determine level of addiction. This establishes an effective treatment strategy going forward for therapy. Allow MyMove to help you become the best version of yourself.

Addiction Services

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MyMove offers a structured 12-week outpatient treatment recovery program face to face/online.

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- aftercare group
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West Limerick Independent Living celebrating 25 years of service



Gerard & John O'Connor with Breda Bennett & Bridie O'Connor



Mayor of Limerick Francis Foley meeting some of the guests



Alana Morrisey and her Parents enjoying the day



Current & Former Company Board members of West Limk Ind Living



Ger Flemming, Precious Madubeko & Chairman Ben Lenihan



Mayor Francis Foley, Elizabeth Lenihan, Ben Lenihan & Stephen O'Connor

Thank You for Celebrating 25 Years of Service with Us!

West Limerick Independent Living is delighted to extend its heartfelt gratitude to all the guests, esteemed clients, dedicated employees, and loyal partners who made our "25 Years of Service" celebration a resounding success.

The milestone event, held on the 14th of June, was a momentous occasion where we commemorated a quarter-century of commitment, and unwavering dedication to our mission. We take immense pride in reflecting on our journey, which would not have been possible without the invaluable support and trust of everyone involved.

Kevin Flynn, John Killowry, Margaret, Gerard & John O'Connor, Breda Bennett, Pamela Wallace, Bridie O'Connor, Ethan Wallace & Precious Madubeko.



PA's Ann Daly, Joan Fitzgibbon, Mai Murphy Mary Geoghegan, with Mary's daughter Noreen Geoghegan



Sharon Sheehy, Jack Cussen, Mattie Roche, Dermot Hannifin, John O'Connor, Steve Heath



Trish Cunningham providing some light refreshments on the warm, sunny day in June



Breda Corbett, Rose Foley, Sarah McCarthy, Shirley Foley, Precious, Gerard and Lisa Reidy



A section of the crowd at the opening ceremony



Margaret, Mayor Foley, Gerard, Trish, Mike Hayes Building Contractor, Paul Hayes Tecksoft

West Limerick Independent Living celebrating 25 years of service



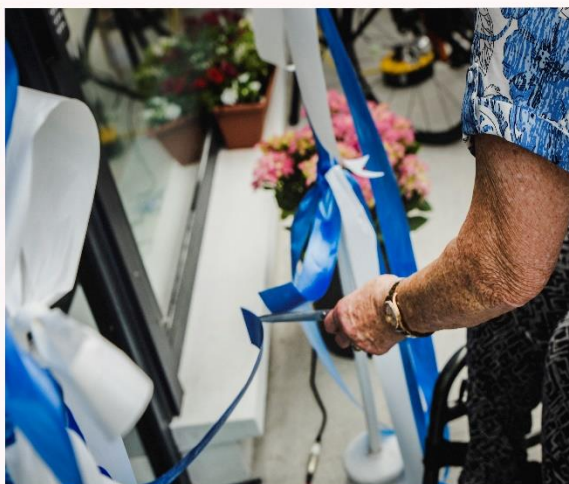
Manager O'Connor



Claire Sheehan



Ger Plunkett & PA Sylvia Barry



Marie O'Connor Local Link & Kevin Flynn



The opening of our renovated offices was performed by PA Mary Geoghegan and client Pamela Wallace. Photo on the left is Brian Bussolli with his family and PA Sunny Ezomo and Margaret O'Connor Manager.



West Limerick Independent Living celebrating 25 years of service



Shirley Foley, Mary Geoghegan Bridie O' Connor



Manager Margaret O'Connor greeting Mayor Francis Foley



Our Bus Crew Mattie Roche, Steve Heath, John O'Connor & Dermot Hannifin



Coordinators Laura Mulqueen and Sabrina Doran with PA Shirley Foley



John Killowry Company Director with PA's Tina Nunan & Bridget O' Keefe



Office Administrator Trish Cunningham with Nicky Cuddihy Irish Life & COIS Sionna Desmond Credit Union Business Development Officer, Patrick Ranahan



Photo of some of the guests at the opening. Below Margaret Hogan, Coordinators Precious Madubeko & Laura Mulqueen, and Susan O'Brien DFI and Gerard O'Connor Financial Officer



West Limerick Independent Living celebrating 25 years of service



Shane McCormack Thalita De Tavares



Mai Murphy Ann Daly Joan Fitzgibbon



Alison, John O'Connor and Steve Heath



B Lenihan, M O'Connor & G O'Connor



Pamela Wallace & her son Ethan Wallace



PA Sunny Ezomo with Brian Bussolli



Alison Oldfield, Laura Mulqueen, Precious Madubeko, Trish Cunningham and Sabrina Doran



PA's Ann, Joan, Mai, with Mary & Noreen Geohegan



Ben Lenihan Chairman, Helen Sheehy & Sharon Sheehy



Oisin & Margaret O'Connor, Trish Cunningham & Gerard, John O Connor



Photo taking of crowd during speeches



Photo taking of crowd during speeches



Photo taking of crowd during speeches

Tribute to Natasha

I started working with West Limerick independent living in September 2020 I was introduced to Natasha in the summer time of 2021, it was a summers hot day and as it was still covid I had to wear full PPE to Natasha's call for two weeks as she was in hospital the previous week, on the days that I got to Natasha's she laughed at me every time for wearing the full PPE said I looked funny.

As we weren't allowed go anywhere as there was restrictions that we weren't allowed take clients anywhere we used to sit and have the laugh and joke, we used to make diamond puzzles, listen to music and make dinners, and drink tea, well Natasha would be drinking coke zero, Natasha used to give out that we weren't allowed go anywhere but then when we were allowed out, I used to meet her in limerick and we would go shopping. She loved shopping, she would always pick up clothes for her niece Sadie, she never forgot Sadie when we were shopping.



She never left without picking up bottles of coke zero and a stash of her favourite sweets and Taytos. We would plan ahead for what we would do the next time I would see Natasha but she would always ring or voice note you in the meantime, she loved her voice notes, when I went out on maternity leave, I met Natasha out one night at a party, she was the heart and soul of the night mad for the craic and a Tia-maria and milk, Natasha was some character with a heart of gold, adored all her nieces and nephews, was mad about them all, and everyone adored Natasha, she has left an impact in many hearts but she will always be remembered. It was a pleasure to work with Natasha and her family. Sleep tight Angel. *by PA Mairead Power*

Natasha is huge loss to our service. I'll always cherish the memories with the voice messages and phone calls as she loved doing. Natasha was always in high spirits, and I could do nothing but laugh at her with the humour she had. Lots of love *by PA Shannon Ryan x*

Tribute to Ann Plunkett

Caring for people is such a rewarding attribute and throughout the years I've been honoured to have met some wonderful people who have touched my life in many ways, hearing their stories of when they were young and watching the happiness and sadness in their eyes as they'd sometimes shed a lonesome tear for bygone days. One lady in specific is Ann Plunkett the light of Heaven to her. I'd like to express my sincere condolences to her darling husband Ger who really went above and beyond for Ann, a gentleman with a heart of gold, from holidays abroad to sitting in the comfort of her stunning garden she was his life, and he was hers.

For many years I had the privilege of this lady's company and I want to thank West Limerick Independent Living for entrusting Ann into my care, she was an easy going lady and I loved her company , Every day was a school day from Sewing classes knitting Gardening and so on she was vivacious and was close to God and she would love when father Tom would call every Friday morning for his cup of tea and a chat and a good old laugh.

We are all flowers in God's garden and when he wants us, he will gently bring us to our Heavenly home where the sun shines all the time, Ger, you and your beloved Ann will always be in my prayers. Rest in peace Ann, thank you for the memories.

by PA Sylvia Barry



WEST LIMERICK INDEPENDENT LIVING

HONORING OUR DEDICATED AND LOYAL EMPLOYEES

CELEBRATING YEARS OF SERVICE



Tina Nunan, Lisa Harty, Mary Geoghegan, Elizabeth Lenihan, Michael O'Connor, Ann McCarthy, Bridget Sheehan, Gerard O'Connor, Shirley Wrenne, Margaret O'Connor, with Mayor of Limerick Francis Foley

Employee Referral Program and Shape Our Team's Future!

At West Limerick Independent Living, we are dedicated to empowering individuals to live life to the fullest in their own homes. As a valued member of our team, we invite you to play an essential role in building our community by participating in our Personal Assistant Referral Program.

Why Refer a Personal Assistant?

You know better than anyone what it takes to be a compassionate and reliable personal assistant. By referring talented individuals, you contribute to:

1. **Enhancing Lives:** Your referrals can positively impact the lives of our clients, providing them with the support and companionship they need to maintain their independence and thrive in their homes.
2. **Strengthening Our Community:** A strong and cohesive team is the backbone of our success. Your referrals help us find like-minded individuals who share our commitment to delivering exceptional care and service.
3. **Earning Appreciation:** We value your dedication and contribution to our community. For each successful referral, you will receive special reward and our heartfelt gratitude.

How It Works

Participating in our Personal Assistant Referral Program is both rewarding and straightforward:

1. **Identify Potential Personal Assistants:** Think about skilled and caring individuals within your network who have the passion and dedication to be exceptional personal assistants.
2. **Refer Them to Us:** Introduce your potential personal assistants to us through our secure and user-friendly online referral portal. We'll handle the rest, ensuring that your referrals' information is treated with the utmost confidentiality.
3. **Celebrate the Impact:** When your referred personal assistant becomes an invaluable part of our team and successfully completes their probationary period, you'll be eligible for well-deserved rewards. It's our way of saying "thank you" for helping us provide exceptional support.

Together, Let's Make Independent Living Extraordinary!

Your involvement in our Personal Assistant Referral Program can help create a caring and supportive community that empowers individuals to live life on their own terms. By referring individuals who embody our values and commitment to service, you play an essential role in shaping our future.

West Limerick Independent Living through our "Refer a Friend Scheme" is delighted to announce that staff members, Mairead Power and Trish Cunningham received the €200 gift voucher reward for successfully referring two new employees to the company.



Photo of refer a friend Personal Assistant Mairead Power with Aleesha and Max- her children, and Service Coordinator Laura Mulqueen and below Trish Cunningham

REFER A FRIEND NOW!

Staff will be rewarded with €200 if you successfully refer a friend to West Limerick Independent Living!

Phone 069 77320



Refer a friend or family member today and help us make a positive impact on the lives of those we serve. Together, we can build a thriving community where independence, respect and kindness thrive.



Electric Vehicles: A Challenge for Disabled Drivers *by Gerard O'Connor*

Electric vehicles (EVs) are proving increasingly popular with motorists, as they offer environmental benefits, lower running costs, and tax incentives. But how are these sleek new vehicles serving disabled drivers? New research suggests that there are real accessibility problems, particularly for wheelchair users.

One of the main challenges is the design of EVs, which often use a "skateboard architecture" that places the battery pack under the floor of the vehicle. This makes the floor higher and harder to get into for people with limited mobility. It also makes it difficult to retrofit EVs with ramps or lifts for wheelchair users, as there is less space under the vehicle and more risk of damaging the battery.

According to the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), at the end of March 2023, there were "over 76,000" electric vehicles, including plug-in hybrids, on the road in Ireland.



Bing AI Image of a man at Charging Station

We estimate that there were about 34,000 electric cars registered in Ireland (not including hybrids) as of January 2023. 15,678 electric cars were registered in 2022. This is equivalent to about 15% of all new car registrations (105,253) and an 86% increase on the 8,646 electric cars that were registered in 2021.

Another challenge is the availability and accessibility of charging stations for EVs. Many disabled drivers rely on public charging stations, which may not be conveniently located or easy to use. Some charging stations may not have enough space for wheelchair users to maneuver or plug in their vehicles. Others may not have accessible payment systems or signage. Additionally, some charging stations may be blocked by non-EV drivers or other obstacles.

On researching this article, I could only find one EV that could be made accessible for wheelchair users: the Vauxhall Vivaro e-Life, which launched in 2023. The Vauxhall Vivaro-e is an all-electric Light Commercial Vehicle from Opel and is available in three vehicle lengths and with two battery sizes for a range of up to 330 km. The price of the Vauxhall Vivaro-e in Ireland is from €41,995.00 which includes SEAI grant and VRT rebate.

The lack of accessible EVs is not only a problem for disabled drivers, but also for society as a whole. As more countries and cities adopt policies to phase out fossil fuel vehicles and promote zero-emission mobility, disabled drivers may be left behind or excluded from these initiatives. This could have negative impacts on our independence, employment, health, and well-being.

Erosion of Services to Disabled People set to Escalate.

The erosion of services to people with disabilities is set to escalate now that the pay talks, Monday last, between the unions and Government relating to the funding of staff in voluntary section 39 funded organisations has broken down. There is deep disappointment across the sector at the long-awaited, and much delayed pay offer to unions which fell far short of what is required. People with disabilities and their families are bearing the brunt of the continued delays in resolving this issue.

The growing disparity between pay rates for staff in section 39 funded voluntary organisations and the HSE is making it impossible for them to continue to provide the current level of essential services to disabled people and their families are under enormous strain while this goes on. Voluntary section 39 funded organisation can neither retain nor recruit staff under the existing funding arrangement.

Government is set to launch the Action Plan for the Disability Capacity Review to 2032 which will outline the future service requirements for people with disabilities over the next 10 years. The plan will sit on the shelf until Government provide an equitable level of funding to ensure that current service provision is protected and sustainable.

Government action is urgently needed to bring this growing inequality in government funded service provision to an end and to prevent the imminent loss of vital services. Disability Federation of Ireland will continue to work with it's organisations and on behalf of disabled people and their families to get this resolved.

John Dolan

Disability Federation of Ireland

Wednesday 2nd August.

Waiting list for NAS has witnessed a distressing surge *by Gerard O'Connor*



The waiting list for disability advocacy services has witnessed a distressing surge, more than doubling its numbers. According to the National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities (NAS) annual report, the waiting list reached an alarming figure of 250 individuals seeking help with essential matters such as housing, healthcare, and other pressing issues. This marked a significant increase of 55% compared to the previous year.

Regrettably, the situation continues to worsen, as the waiting list climbed further to 263 by June of this year, a considerable jump from the 161 recorded in January of the previous year. Among the most prevalent issues, the report highlights the struggles people encounter in accessing suitable housing, the difficulties they face within residential or healthcare settings, and the challenges associated with their ability to make informed decisions for themselves.

Despite the growing demand for assistance, NAS managed to address 3,576 cases, a significant increase from the previous year, with a notable rise in the number of individuals facing multiple issues. However, it is concerning to note that while this level of casework has risen by "an almost 50% increase" since 2015, the funding for staffing remains stagnant, with no increase since 2011.

The severity of these circumstances demands urgent attention and support from relevant authorities to ensure that people with disabilities receive the necessary advocacy and assistance they require. The current situation is a stark reminder of the challenges faced by people with disabilities, and it is imperative that immediate actions are taken to address these pressing needs.

The Future of Design *by Gerard O'Connor*

The significance of designing for disability is gaining prominence in the world of design. In this article I wish to highlight the importance of viewing accessibility as an integral part of the design process, leading to the creation of elegant, beautiful, and engaging artistic endeavors.

According to the Central Statistics Office of Ireland, there were a total of 643,131 people who stated they had a disability in April 2016, accounting for 13.5% of the population. This represented an increase of 47,796 persons (8%) on the 2011 figure of 595,3351. In 2016, 311,580 (48.4%) persons with a disability were male while 331,551 (51.6%) were female.



While the Disability Act 2005 requires public bodies to ensure that their public buildings are accessible to people with disabilities where possible. Section 25 of the Disability Act 2005 deals specifically with access to public buildings. It requires public bodies to ensure that the areas the public has access to are accessible to people with disabilities. One exception to this requirement is heritage sites. Discussions surrounding accessibility often tend to center on practicality, occasionally revealing a reluctance to provide necessary tools and accommodations for people with disabilities. The term "accommodation" itself may carry connotations of granting permission, implying an abnormality that requires extra effort.

Over recent years, a notable shift towards universal design has gained momentum. This design philosophy advocates creating spaces that maximize utility for the broadest range of individuals. For instance, curb cuts, initially introduced to aid wheelchair users, also benefit parents with strollers, frequent travelers with luggage, delivery personnel with hand trucks, and others carrying heavy loads who might otherwise trip over curbs.

In conclusion, designing for disability stands as an instrumental component of the future of design. By directing our focus towards accessibility and universal design principles, we can create spaces that are truly inclusive and empowering for all individuals, fostering a world that celebrates diversity and removes barriers to participation.

The Significance of Avoiding Certain Vibes in Disability Campaigns *by Gerard O'Connor*

Disability campaigns serve as a vital means of raising awareness and advocating for inclusion. However, it is of utmost importance to approach these campaigns with profound care and sensitivity. When planning such initiatives, three specific vibes must be diligently avoided.

The first vibe to steer clear of is fear. Although fear-based campaigns may yield immediate results, they can inadvertently foster negative associations and perpetuate harmful stereotypes. Instead of resorting to fear tactics, disability campaigns should be centered around empowerment and the promotion of inclusion.



The second vibe to avoid is pity. While pity can evoke strong emotions, it can also be disempowering, positioning people with disabilities as objects of sympathy rather than individuals with unique strengths and capabilities. Disability campaigns should strive to highlight the resilience and abilities of individuals with disabilities, fostering a narrative of strength and capability.

The third vibe to be mindful of is sentimentality. While sentimentality can be a powerful storytelling tool, it has the potential to be manipulative and lessens the impact of the campaign. Authenticity and reliance on factual information and real-life experiences are far more effective approaches for disability campaigns to connect with audiences and drive meaningful change.

In conclusion, disability campaigns stand as formidable tools for promoting inclusion and raising awareness. However, their success lies in the deliberate avoidance of fear, pity, and sentimentality. By embodying empowerment, showcasing strengths, and relying on authenticity, these campaigns can empower individuals with disabilities and catalyze positive transformation in society.



SMART HOME TECHNOLOGY

Smart door locks allow you to lock and unlock your doors remotely and can even be programmed to automatically lock or unlock at certain times.

Smart heating systems allow you to control the temperature of your home remotely and can even learn your habits to automatically adjust the temperature for maximum comfort and energy efficiency.

Smart gardening systems can help you take care of your plants by automatically watering them, adjusting the lighting, and monitoring the soil.

Video doorbells allow you to see who is at your door and communicate with them remotely, even if you're not at home.

Amazon's Alexa or Google Assistant can help you control your smart home devices with voice commands, set reminders, play music, and more.

Just five examples of Smart Home Technology. <https://www.lanner-america.com/blog/5-examples-iot-devices-next-smart-home/>



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