



A newsletter dedicated to friends of the Indiana AgrAbility Project/Breaking New Ground Outreach Program

Welcome to the new Indiana AgrAbility News Note!
We hope that you like the updated format. The News Note will now be published twice per year. If you would like to receive the publication in electronic format, please contact us at agrability@agrability.org.

AgrAbility and Veterans

Indiana Project expands outreach

Since its inception, AgrAbility has served veterans with disabilities working in agriculture. However, during the past few years, the program has launched targeted initiatives to enhance services to this group.

With support from USDA, CHS Foundation, and the Farmer Veteran Coalition, Breaking New Ground hired Cindy Chastain as farmer veteran AgrAbility coordinator in 2014. She assists veterans through both the National and Indiana AgrAbility Projects.

Chastain, with help from Rural Rehabilitation Specialist Steve Swain, coordinated a tour of veteran-owned Blue Yonder Organic Farm in North Salem, Indiana, in August as part of Purdue's USDA Beginning Farmer/Rancher Development Program

grant. The two also trained veterans during Blue Yonder's July 2015 Operation Groundwork summer conference.

Other veteran-focused activities include training for Indiana's county veterans services officers. AgrAbility is also forming relationships with staff from the Veterans Administration and various veterans service organizations, like American Legion.

The Indiana Department of Agriculture recently launched the *Indiana Grown* label and will soon announce support of the

Homegrown by Heroes (HBH) product label that serves to inform consumers that the product was produced by military veterans. The Farmer Veteran Coalition administers the application/approval process. Indiana AgrAbility will promote HBH and assist farmer veterans in the application process.

AgrAbility is available to conduct farm assessments for farmer veterans. If you are interested or know someone who might be, contact the program at 800-825-4264 or agrability@agrability.org.



Sara Creech leads a veteran tour of her Blue Yonder Organic Farm

Out and About with AgrAbility

**PUBLIC AWARENESS
PAST AND FUTURE**



Indiana AgrAbility spent 17 days at the Indiana State Fair. Staff, consultants, and volunteers staffed a display, pictured above, in the FFA Pavilion. The Project also had its accessible tractor and other materials in the Purdue Extension Agriculture Horticulture Building.

Some upcoming events:

- Indiana Farm Bureau State Convention, November 15–17
- Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities 21st Annual Conference, December 7–8
- Indiana-Illinois Farm and Outdoor Power Equipment Show, December 15–17
- Fort Wayne Farm Show, January 12–14
- Indiana Horticultural Congress, January 19–21

THE BRIDGING HORIZONS CONTEST PROVIDES A COMMUNITY-ORIENTED SERVICE EXPERIENCE THAT GIVES GROUPS THE OPPORTUNITY TO HELP FELLOW COMMUNITY MEMBERS OVERCOME BARRIERS.

Lives impacted through Bridging Horizons

FFA chapters dominate contest entries in 2015

2015 was a record-breaking year for the Bridging Horizons Community Service Contest, both in terms of the quantity and quality of projects. Seven organizations submitted entries describing the work they had done to assist people with disabilities in their communities.

The first place award went to North Miami FFA for an outstanding project to assist a fellow FFA member. Evan, an active member of their chapter, was born with cerebral palsy. This made it difficult for him to navigate the family farm

and participate in other activities. In response, his classmates organized a campaign that raised more than \$21,000 for the purchase of a utility vehicle for Evan. They then modified the vehicle with a mechanical lift to make it wheelchair accessible. To date, the utility vehicle has logged hundreds of miles and transported Evan to numerous school and community events.

Long-time Bridging Horizons participant Carroll FFA took second place with an accessible chicken coop and accessible dining table, both for the Bethesda Communities Residential Center in Fort Wayne. Frontier FFA won the third place prize for building two ramps to the homes of people with mobility impairments.

Honorable mentions went to: Girl Scout Troop 60558 for building raised garden beds for a senior liv-



Evan's first ride in his new Gator

Indiana AgrAbility receives new four-year USDA grant

Funding allows for continued services to the state's farmers



AgrAbility Projects must compete for USDA funding every four years, and this year was Indiana's turn. As there are always more proposals submitted than grants available, the team began meeting last spring to craft a highly competitive entry. When USDA announced its decisions, Indiana was awarded one of three new AgrAbility Project grants, along with Illinois and North Carolina.

In addition to traditional services, key features of the next four-year Indiana work plan include enhanced services to veterans, beginning farmers, and women.

Innovative initiatives include a pilot project to use crowd-funding as a way to provide assistive technology to AgrAbility clients.

Bridging Horizons (continued)

ing community; Jay County FFA for building a ramp for the home of a fellow student who is a wheelchair user; Purdue Collegiate FFA for purchasing and installing a new sign and related landscaping work at the Indiana Veterans' Home; and Seymour FFA for a project to assist special needs students in learning to transplant flowers.

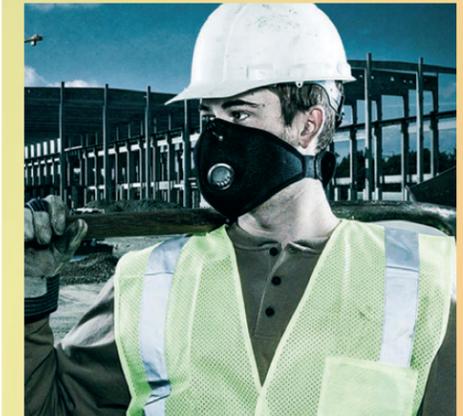
In addition to cash prizes of \$500, \$250, and \$100 for first through third place, Indiana AgrAbility is again providing \$100 to the first 10 project entries for the 2016 contest. See www.breakingnewground.org/horizons for information on how to enter.



Carroll FFA's accessible chicken coop

TOOLBOX Spotlight

**TOOLS TO MAKE
LIFE EASIER**



The RZ Mesh Mask is designed to provide respiratory protection for industry, recreation, and numerous farming/ranching tasks, such as grain bin cleaning, livestock work, and grain handling. It features replaceable HEPA and/or active-carbon filters that reportedly block up to 99.9% of dust, allergens, and pollutants.

The lightweight, flexible mask covers both nose and mouth, strapping around the back of the neck. Its two elastic sections are designed to help ensure a precision fit, so it can be worn for extended periods of time.

For more information on this and other helpful technologies, visit THE TOOLBOX Assistive Technology Database at www.agrability.org/toolbox

**Breaking New Ground
Outreach Program**

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www.breakingnewground.org

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The Indiana AgrAbility Project is
supported by AgrAbility Project,
USDA/NIFA Special Project
2011-41590-30936

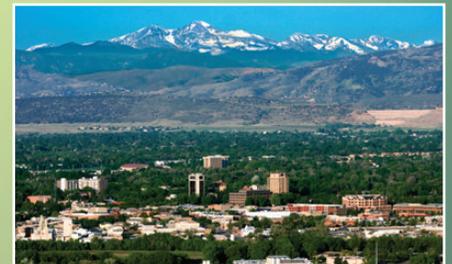
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2016 AgrAbility National Training Workshop

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- + PRE-CONFERENCE
- + KEYNOTES
- + PLENARIES
- + BREAKOUTS
- + OFFSITE TOURS
- + TRAVEL STIPENDS

The 2016 AgrAbility National Training Workshop (NTW) is scheduled for Fort Collins, Colorado, April 11-14, at the Fort Collins Marriott. This annual gathering of AgrAbility staff, clients, and professionals from the agricultural and rehabilitation communities is a highlight of the year.

The schedule includes pre-conference sessions, plenaries, breakouts, offsite tours, and a banquet. Invited guests include Temple Grandin, wheelchair cowgirl Amberly Snyder, and Maria Town, President Obama's

disability engagement specialist.

A limited number of travel stipends are usually available for farmers with disabilities. Check www.agrability.org/ntw for more information or contact Kylie Hendress, NTW coordinator, at khendres@purdue.edu.

The NTW is made possible not only because of USDA funds but also through the generous support of organizations like CHS Foundation, Monsanto, Life Essentials, The Andersons, the Farmer Veteran Coalition, and Indiana Farm Bureau.