



## **Abilities in Motion**

Helping individuals with disabilities live  
independent, self-determined lives

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### **FOR RE-RELEASE**

September 21, 2020

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*\*meeting date time correction from previous release to September 22 at 1 p.m.*

### **Abilities in Motion Launches New Community Advocacy Initiative**

Reading, PA—Abilities in Motion (AIM) is pleased to announce a new series of open community chats called “It Starts With Us” to address common barriers in the community. The first meeting is scheduled to be held virtually on Tuesday, September 22 at 1:00 p.m., with meetings held on the fourth Tuesday of every month.

“For as odd as 2020 has been, AIM wanted to start this program to allow different members of our community to have a safe place to come together and talk about different topics that are going on in the community and the world,” said chat facilitator Ralph Aurora. “It is important to have people tune in because the more perspectives that we receive on certain topics, the more educated we can all become.”

The goal of the chats, funded by a grant from the Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council (PADDC), is to bring awareness to different issues within the local community and spark change.

The problem we hope to address is the lack of grassroots advocacy knowledge needed to effect social change. A public forum for open community chats is needed to begin conversations that empower the community to create the change it seeks.

The chats will also allow attendees to learn collectively about challenging topics and new skills, like why it is important to be counted in the census, how to apply for an absentee ballot, and how to address community access needs. September’s chat will answer questions about voting, featuring a guest interview with Deborah Olivieri, Director of Berks County Election Services.

“We are living in a world where we forget that we are more alike than different. ‘It Starts with Us’ chats help the community come together and discuss different topics and hopefully identify common ground and issues or barriers faced by all,” said Independent Living Director Corrine Dietrich. “When those barriers are identified, work together to advocate for change.”

These chats also open the door for conversations about ADA regulations and disability inclusion, social issues that may not be at the forefront of awareness for people without disabilities or without loved ones with disabilities. Bringing together a community group around these issues fosters unity and promotes attitudes of inclusion.

Through these monthly chats, we aim to build a community that continues to grow its capacity to act together through regular open dialogue and strategic advocacy. For more information about “It Starts With Us,” visit [www.abilitiesinmotion.org](http://www.abilitiesinmotion.org) or call 610-376-0010.

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