



Linda Gail Newell of Lexington Crowned Ms. Wheelchair VA 2018-2019



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Fishersville, VA. The Ms. Wheelchair VA Board of Directors is pleased to announce that Linda “Gail” Newell of Lexington was crowned Ms. Wheelchair Virginia on Saturday, March 24th at Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center in Fishersville, VA. The program’s theme “Celebrate Life” showcased the accomplishments of remarkable ladies of all ages who have overcome challenges and obstacles to achieve and accomplish great success.

As the current reigning titleholder, Gail qualifies for entry in Ms. Wheelchair America. Gail will compete against over 25 contestants from across the country for the title of Ms. Wheelchair America 2019. The event will take place in Grand Rapids Michigan, July 30th- August 5th, 2018. During this week-long program, contestants will participate in a leadership institute, mentoring events, and multiple judging sessions.

Linda “Gail” Newell lives in Rockbridge County, Virginia. She is an active advocate for individuals with disabilities by recognizing and recommending specific accessibility needs in the community. She sets a model for others through her persistence in getting acceptable resolutions by utilizing available programs that include legal, healthcare, and housing options. Gail has studied at Dabney S. Lancaster Community College and Parkridge Illinois continuing college. She uses a wheelchair due to injuries received in a car accident caused by a drunk driver in 2000. Gail describes herself as independent, stubborn, compassionate, level-headed, and has a sense of humor. Gail’s platform of advocacy is, “The importance of the Virginia EDCD Waiver Program” and her motto of inspiration is “Even people with disabilities have value”

“Before Gail began participating in the MWVA program a few years ago, she was already very active within her community. I can only imagine what she will accomplish during her reign this upcoming year! Gail has a compassionate soul and strives to make sure that those in her community have access to resources they need.” states Emily McGrail, State Coordinator for Ms. Wheelchair Virginia.

Hani Baloch was named first runner up, Cathy Parr was named second runner up, and Amy Makar was crowned Little Miss MWVA Ambassador. Hani, Cathy, and Amy will spend the next year as MWVA Regional Titleholders and will be ambassadors to their communities. They will help to promote our vision which is ***to inspire and motivate Virginians as role models of courage and hope.*** Together, all titleholders will educate and promote advocacy for individuals with disabilities.

ABLEnow, our platinum sponsor, allows for individuals with disabilities to save for today’s needs or invest for tomorrow in a simple, affordable and tax-advantaged account that won’t impact certain disability benefits.

ABLEnow accounts are made possible by the Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act, which authorized states to establish tax-advantaged ABLE savings programs. As the Virginia-sponsored ABLE savings program, **ABLEnow** is administered by Virginia529. Virginia taxpayers are eligible for an annual state income tax deduction of up to \$2,000 per contributor for contributions to an **ABLEnow** account. **ABLEnow** is sponsoring the Ms. Wheelchair Virginia program with a \$1,500 **ABLEnow** account that Gail can use to share her platform of advocacy as she travels throughout the Commonwealth. Our first runner up, Hani Baloch will receive a \$500 **ABLEnow** account. Our Little Miss Wheelchair Virginia Ambassador, Amy Lynn Makar, will receive a \$500 **ABLEnow** account.

Ms. Wheelchair Virginia, a 501(c)3, is one of the largest Ms. Wheelchair state program in the country. Focusing on the accomplishments of Virginians with disabilities: the mission is to educate, advocate and raise awareness of the abilities and needs of the disability community; but more importantly, to inspire and motivate Virginians as role models of courage and hope.

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For more information, contact:

Emily McGrail, State Coordinator

(540) 838-5022 Emily@mcgrail.com www.mswheelchairva.org