

WASILC Report, March 2011

Text Only

The Meaning of Spring, by Rob Honan, Executive Director SILC

The long winter is starting to thaw and become a fading memory . The days are becoming longer. Daylight savings is just around the corner. Plants are beginning to emerge out of the ground. People are making summer vacation plans. It is a season of rebirth.

From a personal and professional point of view, I also see a rebirth. The times are tough, no doubt about it. The “Great Recession” has really caused a great deal of turmoil in the lives of many people and families. But, as the old Chinese proverb of crisis states: “where there is danger, there is also opportunity.” (some linguists suggest that the symbol for crisis is not opportunity/ danger, but I digress).

We in the disability community need to look at this as an opportunity to be more collaborative and more creative. One of the things that I am most proud of is that the SILC is fostering greater partnerships with agencies in order to 1. absorb costs and 2. reach a greater audience., and to 3. implement the tenets of the 2011-2013 State Plan for Independent Living. It becomes a better model of doing things.

For example, in the area of emergency preparedness, the SILC has really begun to work with important players such as the DSHS Emergency Planning Division, the state Department of Military, and the FEMA. To one extent or another, the SILC and the other agencies have made an effort to tap into the expertise of the others to enrich the knowledge base of this vital area for persons with disabilities. This bodes well for the future. As Bob Dylan once sang, “The times, they are changin.”

Willard Suitcase Exhibit by Rob Honan

On February 3rd, I had the privilege of attending the Willard Suitcase exhibit and lecture at the University of Washington in Seattle with CFI Executive Director/ SILC member Trina Forest and her staff.

I was blown away by the sheer magnitude of how many lives were stolen. The exhibit is essentially about the lives of individuals that lived in the Willard State Institution in New York. The upshot is that residents were placed in the institution for several reasons, including lack of understanding of people with mental illness, poor family resources, and the dearth of community supports.

If you have a chance to see this exhibit, I strongly urge you to do so. It is sad, but it also makes you think.

Washington State Rehabilitation Council

The State Independent Living Council is lucky enough to share office space with the Washington

State Rehabilitation Council (WSRC). I (Rob Honan) have learned a tremendous amount of the WA disability rights movement from their executive director, Joelle Brouner. Recently, I asked her to write a brief article on the WSRC and she willingly obliged. Here is what she gave me:

At a time when reduced funding is limiting access to the supports and services many Washingtonians with disabilities utilize to preserve independence, effective partnerships are essential to maximizing the impact of advocacy efforts. Like the State Independent Living Council (SILC)

the Washington State Rehabilitation Council (WSRC) is established in the Rehabilitation Act (under Title 1, Section 105). The WSRC is also comprised of a dedicated group of Governor-appointed volunteers. Members representing a range of stakeholders including SILC serve on the WSRC. Sandra Carr, a SILC member from Spokane, has served as our representative on the WSRC since 2005. In November of 2010 a second SILC member, Jana Finkbonner, of Bellingham, was appointed to represent tribal VR programs on the WSRC. We are pleased to have their perspectives on Independent Living represented in this partnership.

The WSRC works to assure that Washingtonians with disabilities have equal opportunity to secure employment and economic advancement. They do this by being system advocates for the state's General Vocational Rehabilitation program and its customers. Some activities the Council undertakes include: evaluating program data; surveying DVR's customers about the services they receive, to assess satisfaction; garnering public input on service delivery and on DVR's State Plan; and advocating for changes to improve the quality of services available. The WSRC's biggest project in 2011 is designing and conducting a customer satisfaction survey. The next WSRC customer Forum will be **Thursday April 28th from 2:00pm-4:00pm in Bellingham at Best Western Lakeway Inn & Conference Center located at 714 Lakeway Drive; Bellingham, WA 98229.** To learn more about the Washington State Rehabilitation Council visit: www.wastrehabcouncil.org

Alliance of People with Disabilities

We are very proud of all of the youth participants at the Alliance of People with disAbilities! There are three who stand out because of the tremendous changes they have made in their lives: Ladonia, Rashauna, and Leticia. These three young women have been members of the Youth and Transition Group. They have each held various positions including Volunteer, Youth Leader, and Summer Youth Intern.

All three have recently enrolled in college, and are making plans for their futures. Ladonia attends Seattle Vocational Institute. Rashauna attends North Seattle Community College, taking general courses. Leticia attends Seattle Central Community College, majoring in Social and Human Services.

In addition to college attendance, Leticia is a member of the APRIL Youth Planning Committee. She is also a member of the National Youth Leadership Network Outreach Committee. (submitted by Lu Walls, Executive Director Alliance)

FREE Assistive Technology Contact Kits are Available to Promote the new Technology Evaluation Central Hub! Join Alliance Advertising and Promoting this Exciting Program for King County Residents!

By Raymona Baldwin, Alliance of People with disAbilities

Alliance is finalizing the strategy for several areas of our organization. One area that we are focusing on intently is the Technology Evaluation Central Hub @ Alliance of People with disAbilities, a new area with many different Assistive Technologies. The lab has not only new computers, but adjustable furniture, such as the dual-adjustable workstation desk shown here and specialized hardware and software—such as a thermal imager (raises images on sheets of paper) and a new Braille printer. These are exciting, and can be powerful tools in a rehabilitation and recovery journey.

FREE Assistive Technology Contact Kits are Available to Promote the TECH Lab! If you are a peer counselor in any non-profit or interested person in DVR or other government agency,, you will need to send us your contact information and interest.

We are assembling “Contact Kits” which are packets of information that will be distributed to interested organizational leaders or peer councilors in as many organizations as possible. The kits are ready information to display at your office or pass along during appointments. The kits have an 11X17 poster, 3X5 postcards, and approved text that you can easily cut and paste onto your website or online newsletter letting your participants know about what Assistive Technology is, and how they can access Tech Lab! All the work to come up with messaging about such a program is **done for you**, all you have to do is display the program materials. If you are interested in hearing more about the program, and receiving our advertising materials, please send your name, your email address and phone number to raymona@disabilitypride.org.

Funding for the Technology Evaluation Central Hub @ Alliance of People with disAbilities was made possible by funding from the Bill Wright Technology Matching Fund (City of Seattle), American Reinvestment and Recovery Act Funds (ARRA), Washington State DVR and Alliance General Funds.

Photo of Computer with the following captioning: **One of Alliance’s adjustable workstations including HP Desktop Computer, 21” monitor , standard mouse, and trackball mouse. Participant was utilizing both a personal laptop and workstation to research the feasibility of buying a home. Housing and Assistive Technology are core areas of any Center for Independent Living. (photo on left)**

Calendar of Events: Spring/ Summer 2011

- **March 19th.** Seminar on Digital Photography, AT & Facebook Photo Practices. At Alliance of People with disAbilities, Seattle Office (1120 E. Terrace, Seattle). 1:00 to 3:00 PM. RSVP required: raymona@disabilitypride.org

- **March 30th** Independent Living Day Rally. Capitol Steps. 11AM.. Contact Betty Schwieterman of Disability Rights Washington (800-562-2702) for more information.
- **March 30th.** Town Hall meeting for Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing. Thurston County. @ City of Lacey Community Room. 402 College Ave. SE. See SILC website for more information: www.wasilc.org
- **April 7, 2011: SILC Public Forum: Washington State University, Riverpoint Campus. 600 North Riverpoint Blvd. SAC Room #20. 6:00-8:00 PM.**
- **April 8, 2011.** SILC Quarterly Council Meeting. Eastern Washington University, Cheney. 120 Tawanka Hall, Room #TAW215 9:00 AM to 3 PM .
- Washington State TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury) Conference. Seatac Marriott. **April 28th and 29th.** For more information: www.tbiwashington.org
- National Disability Rights Network Conference . Baltimore MD. **June 6th through 9th.** For more information. <https://purple.ndrn.org/Meetings/default.htm>
- National Council on Independent Living (NCIL conference). **July 13th through 16th.** <http://www.ncil.org/>
- **Some time in March or early April, the new office of Center For Independence will open (7801 Bridgeport West, Suite 200 in Lakewood. Phone numbers will remain the same). There will be more information on the “Grand Opening” in the May newsletter.**

In Memoriam. By Rob Honan

Two leaders of the national disability rights have passed away since the last edition of the WASILC Report. Both hailed from Missouri, the state of my youth.

- **Max Starkloff.** He passed away in December at the age of 73. He was an early mover and shaker in the Independent Living Movement, having crafted the idea of people living independently in their communities with proper supports. He also started one of the first federally funded CILs in the county, Paraquad, in St. Louis in the 1970s. He brought IL to the forefront, locally and nationally.
- **Jim Tuscher.** He died on March 1, 2011 at the age of 72. He was one of the first employees of Paraquad. He, too, was a national leader, having served on the NCIL board as a regional representative for many years, among other things. But, he was most known and successful in Missouri as someone who was instrumental in selling the state legislature on the importance of CILs, and actually getting state appropriations for 22 CILs. I worked closely with Jim for many years, and I will really miss him. It is indeed appropriate that both he and Max passed within weeks of each other.

Deaf Culture and working with Deaf people, by Barbara Hathaway, Executive Assistant, SILC

The Deaf World in this country has its own community and a culture of its own. Deaf people tend to come together and to form a community and then establish their own culture to improve their communication needs. Deaf people often don't find themselves feeling part of their immediate family and they struggle to fit in with groups such as hanging out at the churches, work sites, or schools.

In the Disability Community, people with disabilities call themselves a "person first", as in a person with disability, a person with multi-disabilities, a person with diabetes, or so forth. For people in the Deaf Community, they are "Deaf first." Even though there is a great of diversity in the community, their identity is "Deaf first" or a "Deaf Person." Many non-deaf people do not realize that the Deaf community itself has created a category for a person who can hear, and they are called "hearing." The conveyance of developing the "Deaf culture" is not picked up by living with a hearing (non-deaf) family, but with the contacts with other Deaf people in the community. The Deaf community have gathered and developed different habits and behavior without realizing it. The main reason that the Deaf community created this habit is because we can't hear anything around us. We must develop different ways to make it through life such as owning and using a flashing alarm clock to get up in the morning in order to get to work, installing and using a baby crying device to alert Deaf parents that their child is crying or waking up, making use of doorbell flashers, using hearing service dogs, telephone relay services, teletype device of the Deaf (RDD) and so forth. Assistive Technology enables Deaf people to live independently.

The Deaf community has its own regional, state, and national organizations, such as National Association of the Deaf, Rainbow Alliance of the Deaf, American Association of the Deaf-Blind, and ADARA (American Disability Association Regional (ADARA)). Some Deaf people gather for athletic events such as Deaf Olympics and Special Olympics. They also gather for community picnics, attending Deaf Miss America, theatrical performances by the deaf dancers/singer (signing). Some deaf religious congregations gather to celebrate intermarriage of deaf couples.

The common cultural behaviors that are well known by both world, Deaf and Hearing. Here are a few example of the Deaf CULTURAL Behaviors that differ between Deaf and hearing people

- Deaf people like to get together in the kitchen for better lighting; it is easier to see everyone signing where hearing people tend to stay in the living room, not needing as much light to depend on.
- When a Deaf person introduces herself/himself to another Deaf person, a Deaf person tends

to say his/her name then ask a lot of personal questions of the other person, i.e., where are you from? Are you from a residential or mainstreaming school? Where are your parents from? For a hearing person, she/he tends to introduce herself/himself without asking many personal questions, and then other people tend to say, "Nice to meet you."

- Every Deaf person must have an eye contact to be able to communicate back and forth. The real reason is that a deaf person must look at the person's face in order to lip-read and read sign language at the same time to see what being said. For a hearing person, eye contact is not as critical.

- A hearing person uses their voice tone to show their anger, disappointment, impatience, cheerfulness while a Deaf person must depend on their facial expression, due to his/her hearing loss and cannot hear their own voice, to show their feelings as well.

Hugging someone you don't know is considered an appropriate behavior in Deaf culture. The hearing person feels it's inappropriate for a person to hug another stranger.

- When a Deaf group gets together at a variety of clubs, conferences, churches or is invited to a Deaf person's home, they tend to stay and chat much longer than a hearing person does. Many Deaf people miss out on a lot of important information because they all cannot hear what the radio broadcasts, and often TV news are spotty at best as it relates to closed captioning, the reading level may be too high for some deaf people to understand what words means so this is the main reason for the deaf people get together to catch up what they missed. And the hardest part for deaf person to say is "good bye": and leave. It is typical for hearing people to stay at places for a very short time and then quickly take off with a few quick good byes.

- It's inappropriate for a hearing person to talk with food in her/his mouth. Good news for a hearing who has the ability to use sign language, it's ok for them to sign without using her/his voice while chewing food!

When a hearing child is in trouble with a parent or a teacher and do not want to hear what they have to say, they just cover their ears. A hearing child still can hear what they are saying while not looking them in the face. For a deaf child, they don't have to cover their ears, they cover their eyes! Can you image trying to get their attention? Smile...

This may be a new idea or topic for hearing (non-culturally Deaf) : learning about the Deaf community and its culture, and especially for all deaf individuals who are mainstreamed and are being isolated in their own world without being exposure about the Deaf culture. I hope I was able to shed some light.

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Debbie Cook (ex-officio)
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Trina Forest
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Washington Centers for Independent Living

- Alliance of People with Disabilities (Seattle & Redmond) www.disabilitypride.org
- Center for Independence (Lakewood) www.centerforindependence.org
- Central Washington Disability Resources (Ellensburg) www.mycwdr.org
- Coalition of Responsible Disabled (Spokane) www.cordwa.info
- disAbility Resources of Southwest Washington (Vancouver) www.darsw.com