



WASILC Report Volume 3, Number 4



WASHINGTON STATE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL

Volume 3, Number 4

February 2012

Changes! Message from Rob Honan

The month of February marks change. The days are getting longer, the temperatures are ever so slightly inching up. There is a sense of optimism that the long dark winter is starting to fade into the past. My life is undergoing some major changes as well. I will be leaving the SILC on February 24th and am moving to Germany where my wife recently accepted a job. I am really excited about the move, but am sad to be leaving this wonderful state.

When I arrived here a little over five years ago, my main goal was to work with the SILC and the Centers for Independent Living (CILs) to become more connected in terms of common goals. I believe that we have achieved that. We have written two very ambitious and evolving State Plans for Independent Living (SPIL) and they provide a very good summary of the types of services the CILs provided while also addressing efforts to attract more minority groups to the independent living (IL) movement. In addition, the SPIL

looks at the plan of expanding the number of CILs in the state if new funding becomes available. For more information on the SPIL, please go [here](#).

I want to, first of all, thank members of the SILC, especially Trina Forest and Linda McClain for their support, passion and teamwork towards IL goals. In the same light, I want to give a big thank you to the two chairs of the SILC that I served under, Shelley Hawkins and Romel Mackelprang. Both provided excellent leadership and guidance for the SILC. I also want to thank the other two CIL directors, Von Elison and Lu Walls. They were able to give me and the rest of the state a good rural and urban perspective of IL in Washington. I would be remiss if I didn't mention the good folks at the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Andres Aguirre and Lynnae Ruttledge were instrumental as ex-officio members of the SILC and served as the fiscal agent of the Council. Cathy Spencer did an outstanding job as the SILC web site manger, which made my job easier (a big kudos to the rest of the DVR IT team as well).

Brenda Boles worked with me to understand the "Part B" contracts (from a DVR perspective) with the CILs, and to help proofread many of these newsletters. And Joelle Brouner, the director of the State Rehabilitation Council, has been a valuable colleague and office mate since I arrived in the dark and rainy days of November 2006. Last but not least, I want to thank the SILC executive assistant, Barbara Hathaway. She gave me even more insight into Deaf culture and was a great help setting up the meetings.

With that "Academy Awards" thank you over with, I apologize if I missed anyone. There were many other folks who made my stay in Washington welcoming, and they should be thanked too, but there is not enough time and space to name them all. I am confident that the mission of the SILC will continue and that IL will continue to flourish in Washington. Auf Wiedersehen!

Note from SILC and disclaimer

- MANY OF THE ARTICLES ARE SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE IL AND DISABILITY COMMUNITY AND THE SILC DOES ITS BEST TO CHECK FOR ACCURACY AND GRAMMAR, BUT FOR THE MOST PART THE INTEGRITY OF THE ARTICLES HAS BEEN PRESERVED. THE SILC TAKES A NEUTRAL POSITION ON WORDS USED IN THIS PUBLICATION AND IF MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY WANT TO SUBMIT ARTICLES, THEY ARE MORE THAN WELCOME TO.

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Alliance Joins The World of Written Word Expression with disAbility and Identity Blog: Raymona Baldwin, Raney Newman, and Nic Lane

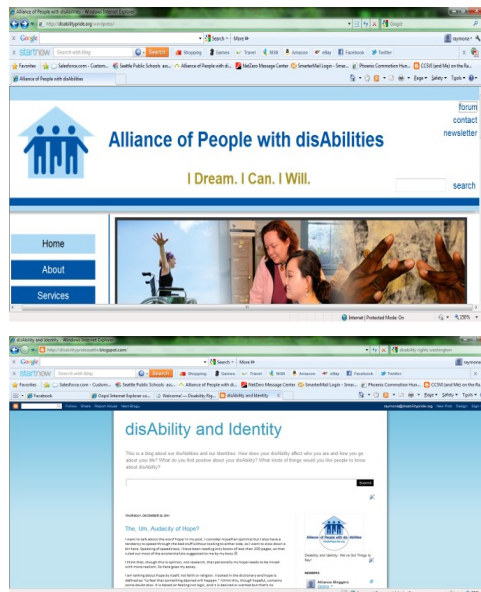
Alliance is experimenting with a new online forum to increase the level of engagement in the Alliance community online, initially and especially among those in the LGBTQIA (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual) population. This effort was made possible by initiation from our diverse community and funding from the City of Seattle's Boost Program fund.

The Boost fund is designed to make possible small technology projects that would otherwise not be able to be accomplished. The program was supported at Alliance by the Innovative Programs Department which houses the iTEC lab, Alliance's Independence Technology Employment Computer Lab, where individuals work to accomplish vocational goals using assistive technology.

To promote this effort, an initial electronic project was initiated and a round-table discussion is in the works to follow-up. We are excited about this new way to get young adults, or any adult for that matter, involved in this way of communicating.

The blog was created electronically, and populates an area of our website that was previously not populated. It is located <http://disabilityprideseattle.blogspot.com/> and can be accessed off of Alliance's website in the upper right hand corner.

Alliance's website main page and blog page – next column



Four participants and one staff were directly involved setting up the blog. We had great success with the wide variety of people that participated. Raymona Baldwin, Technology Specialist, is the lead and wrote the grant proposal in the hope that we could do a project participants could take the lead on and learn a few vocational skills or tips.

Lee Steadman and Ryan Alley joined as volunteers. Later, Nic Laine, a 21-year-old college student, was enthusiastic to do writing and research on the project. Nic wrote a great piece on identity and coming of age. Raney Newman, a volunteer interested in audio archiving and voice transmission has taken an interest. Raney wrote a piece titled the Audacity of Hope. Both come in weekly to work on the project and are excited about the writing and research they are doing. Nic is researching speakers, and Raney is taking the lead on conferencing software choices.

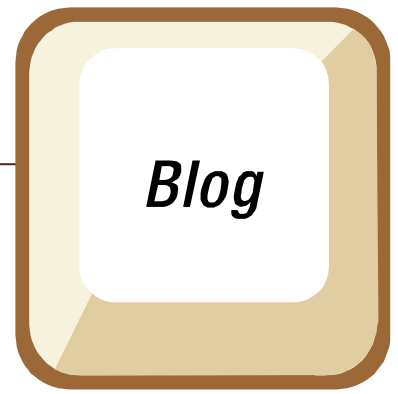
During an initial planning meeting we talked about real world topics to center the content. We had a discussion about whether Identity is too broad a term. How can we be true to Alliance's Mission of disAbility while also addressing the topics we want to talk about? How is this blog different than Alliance's website, and what is the purpose?

The blog is turning out to be a place designated for young alternative adult voices to talk about experiences: experiences of hope, experiences of sadness, and experiences of joining in the disability community. Volunteers learn about writing for the web instead of writing for research papers or technical writing. We talked about effective ways to communicate ideas on paper. We watched a talk on disability and existential thought (recording made by Aditya Ganapathiaraju via Disability Justice Collective) to fuel creative juices.

Volunteers learned about how to think about writing, how to write, to "try on" promotional tasks and how to determine effective software choices. We now have several nice pieces of exploratory writing which were created to assist people in thinking about disability as a topic of identity.

As a second component of this project, a round table discussion is in the works for late February. We hope to have a speaker available to discuss a topic of identity and disability in an online format.

The next few pages are three pieces that were written for the project. If you would like to submit something, take a look at the blog or give us a call (206 545 7055) or [email us](mailto:us).



Alliance Blog information—continued

The ... Um ... Audacity of Hope?

By Raney Newman

I want to talk about the word 'hope' in my post. I consider myself an optimist but I also have a tendency to speed through the bad stuff without looking to either side, so I want to slow down a bit here. Speaking of speediness, I have been reading only books of less than 200 pages, so that ruled out most of the existentialists suggested to me by my boss.

I think that, though this is opinion, not research, that personally my hope needs to be mixed with more realism. So here goes my essay.

I am talking about hope by itself, not faith or religion. I looked in the dictionary and hope is defined as “to feel that something desired will happen.” I think this, though hopeful, contains some doubt also. It is based on feeling not logic, and it is desired or wanted but that's no guarantee that it will happen. We may be feeding hope vainly and it depends also on our own actions, or sometimes not even that. I looked in the thesaurus to see the opposite of hope: despair or hopelessness. Dante put the quote at the mouth of hell, “abandon hope all ye who enter here.” But that doesn't really fit what I believe, or rather feel.

I think that hope is not always the same thing, but varies. Sometimes it is a strong assurance that all will be well. Sometimes it is only a faintly glowing thread out of the pit of despair. A platitude such as “you will not be given more than you can handle” may not work for you, though I have found it comforting. I falter and pause overwhelmed but then continue walking on, trusting that “to journey” is its own healing.

I will use an example from my own life. I don't like Sundays, partly because there is not enough to keep me busy and partly because there is plenty of worrying to do about the week to come. This past Sunday, I cooked a lot of food to bring to the protest on Monday at Occupy Seattle. I usually like cooking but this time I felt both tired and antsy. I told my Mom it was because of working hard, but it was also fatigue from fear, and worry about what would happen the next day. People told me to have fun, but I was afraid.

This is how I dealt with it. I did yoga and that didn't really help much. I did cooking, which usually is engaging, ditto. I walked moderately slowly with the dogs, sure that wouldn't work either, but even though I couldn't see my thoughts change much at any point, at the end I felt not totally but less anxious. It was like I showed up and was comforted. At the end of the day, I made a sign and then took a hot bath. I took my laptop to the bathroom and watched an uplifting documentary about a Hip Hop project that tried to change the kind of music that gets made by young people. I took my medicine too before bed, obvious, huh?

I won't talk about Occupy the next day, except to say, after a 4 mile walk and protest, my body was so relaxed I was almost a contented jellyfish. It was also good to get out and talk to people, though I don't always do as much of this as would be good for me.

So I don't know if I'll become a cynic yet. I will end with a quote from Emily Dickinson, who may have had an anxiety disorder: (see next column)

Blog

I dwell in Possibility--
A fairer House than Prose--
More numerous of Windows--
Superior--for Doors--

Of Visitors--the fairest--
For Occupation--This--
The spreading wide my narrow
Hands
To gather Paradise--

“GET
INVOLVED IN
POLITICS AS IF
YOUR LIFE
DEPENDS ON
IT. BECAUSE IT
DOES.”

JUSTIN DART

Coping with Depression: Getting Back on Track By Nic Laine

When I was seventeen, I started living on my own. I had moved to a new town under trying circumstances and I was leading a solitary life, cut off from my parents and without any friends. I kept myself going by throwing myself into the task of building my adult life: I got a job, I got my GED, I started attending community college.



(continued from bottom of page three)

Despite my initial success, my depression wouldn't go away, no matter how hard I told it to leave. I was convinced that it was something I needed to deal with alone, and when I was unable to will my depression away, I felt like a failure. I focused harder on school, hoping that if I clung to it like a life preserver then maybe I could drift to safety; school felt like it was all I had left.

The meager social life I had managed to put together for myself unraveled, and it was only a matter of time before my grades started to slip. Suddenly, in the middle of the quarter, I couldn't do it anymore. I broke down. I withdrew from my classes. I had driven the train too hard and it had jumped the tracks.

I realized that it would no longer suffice to try to run away from my depression. It's too fast to run away from, too strong to wrestle to the ground and too clever to reason away. I couldn't go on alternating between being depressed and then feeling like a failure for being depressed. I saw that I had been trying to walk through a wall, and the harder I threw myself at it the more I got hurt. I had to accept, at least for now, that this is a part of me, and I have to work with that in order to have the life that I want.

At first, I knew I needed to look for support, but I didn't know quite what for. Family (the good parts, at least) seemed like a place to start. I wouldn't be anywhere without my aunt, and I don't think I would know myself as well without her there to remind me of where I'm from and what I've overcome. If you can find family members who are trustworthy and supportive, don't be afraid to seek them out. Because of their longevity and reliability, relationships with family members have been important to me in times when other relationships fall through. Of course, anyone can tell you that not every family member is loving and supportive, and I've found it equally important to set boundaries with those family members that have negative influence in my life.

It may not be for everyone, but I have gotten a lot out of therapy. As soon as I got my insurance in order, I sought out a psychiatrist. I feel like therapy gives me greater perspective on my life, and a space free from the social pressures of everyday interactions where I can express what I'm really feeling. Although people have mixed feelings about it (I'm calling you out, Tom Cruise!), I have chosen to take medication as well. I don't plan on taking it forever, and I really feel that it helps. I feel that therapy is going to continue to be an important part of getting (and keeping) my life in order.

Although I haven't gotten back to school yet, I figured that it would be a good idea to find something productive to do. I was already involved with my local center for independent living (the Alliance of People with disAbilities in King County, WA), so I decided it would be a good idea to volunteer there. It's been really great to feel like there's a place where it's a little bit better for what I do. The staff there has expressed how happy they are with my work, and that has made me feel like I'm somebody who has something positive to contribute to society. I may answer the phones, but it's really important to me.

Now, I'm working on getting funding in order so I can get back to school. Getting an education is my main priority, because I feel like an education is necessary for me to achieve the goals I have set for myself. But unlike before, when I return to school this time, I'll have a solid foundation. It hasn't always been easy, but I feel much healthier recognizing and learning to live with my disability rather than trying to ignore it.

Essential Human Worth, Gimp Style

By Raymona Baldwin

I work at an Independent Living Center, specifically with Assistive Technology. I'm a Geek, A Gimp, and I'll admit "crazy" too.

During my ideal week, day etc., I "get to" work with people to mitigate the effects of disability with technology solutions so that they can get back into the workforce. Go gadget girl go. The job is a little bit investigative thinker, a little bit MacGyver. I'm lucky enough to be able to do interesting work and meet some really strong people along the way. It is more than a paycheck, and I take it too seriously sometimes.

In my department, specialist and client work together to see what software, hardware, specialized furniture, and new skills will work to make it more possible to get school or work done. My job is employing the stuff of the concrete world toward an end goal of getting the client to a functional point greater than they were when they stepped through the door. Increasing confidence, ideally enabling them to enter the career field they wish. Read: it's a glimmer of hope, but no guarantee.

I'd like to point out at this time that Independent Living is also the stuff of life and generally our teams are one on one. That means that over time you get to know people. Really know people. Other things come to the forefront requiring a degree of sensitivity really that I never thought I'd have to deal with in the workplace.

(continued on next page)

- I'm hungry all the time; I can't concentrate on this...
- I can't do everything I used to, can everybody tell?
- My girlfriend is insensitive and it sucks...I can't deal today.
- I'm not getting anywhere in life, I'm not like other people (sadness/anger).

These questions, I can't answer. I've found it best to be present, really present. And if I can to offer what worked for me if I can relate and if I can't... to own that and explain as much. I believe that the best follows the worst, so I tell people that "it gets better" (thanks Dan Savage). I know this for sure because life experience counts here.

As well, I impart without saying the words that is important to surround yourself with success. With people you can identify with, and be inspired by. Success breeds success. We have it here, in a way that most in the outside world don't recognize or celebrate.

Most of us who work at Alliance are disabled, in all that word can mean. We're mandated to keep 51 percent of the staff be people with disabilities: currently we're at 80 percent. That's right...those of us with the disability are in the majority at the Alliance and I'd like to point out also in management. But it's not the disability that makes our team strong, to stay in this work you have to face adversity and turn that bitter lemon into something else, A D V O C A C Y. We've had to face a lot of things in life, and we've live to tell.

Told that despite multiple masters' degrees, you aren't employable.

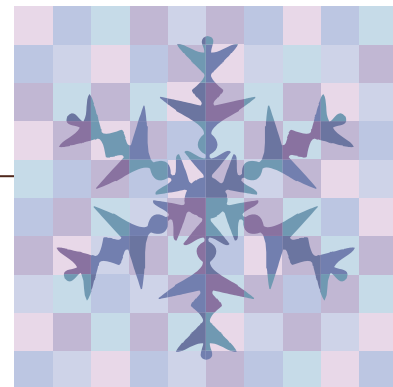
Tortured simply for who you are and being literally strung up to a tree.

More than one of us has been confined to an "institutionalized" setting and made it out to tell.

Most of us can't move in some way: physically, emotionally, sensory. We compensate in other ways.

This place has changed me. It reflects in me when I greet people at the door. I want each person to know they have reached a unique place and a place that is life changing. Renewal is possible. Your boundaries of what you thought were possible can be built into something entirely different. With trust in something, and one goal at a time.

The Storm of 2012



Compared to many parts of the country, Washington (primarily Western WA) does not have extreme weather issues. However, the storm that affected us from January 17th through the 20th was very unprecedented event in terms an ice storm on top of a large amount of snow. Loss of power for many and the lack of snow removal only added insult to injury. Now that the snow melted away, here are a few stories from those around the state.

First, I will start off. I live in Olympia and the biggest issue that I had was lack of power for a day and a half, and I was extremely lucky compared to many others. One result of the lack of power was that my doctor's office was closed for five days (the power outage lasted longer in that part of town). Because the doctor's office was closed I was unable to get some valuable information that I needed. It was not life or death, but it was very inconvenient. (Rob Honan).

From SILC member, Devin Beach:

Ellensburg wasn't too badly affected as we are more familiar with snow than other parts of the state. CWU is still open and functioning fairly well with the exception of a few areas that are a bit icy. The one thing that did upset me to hear was that my friend Shavonne from the Tri-Cities [who lives in housing specifically designed for folks with disabilities] was trapped in her apartment for 52+ hours due to the snow not being plowed. She's tried to contact the city both last year and this year regarding this situation but the city still hasn't done anything about it. She has spoken to her landlord about this dilemma and while her landlord has tried to talk to the city about this, the city refuses to do anything. She explained to me that "after a day a small portion of the

(continued from last page -Devin Beach)

the early hours which left the rest of the day to build up snow again." The only reason she has access to food is because her dad was able to go shopping for her and her sister was able to deliver her mail to her. It makes me very sad that in these times of inclement weather when we could be coming together and helping one another out that some cities simply don't even try.

From Robert Blumenfeld, Alliance of People with disAbilities, East King Co. office

The "Day Before": Tuesday 1.17.12: I made it to the office with no problems. No one else could come with varying circumstances. Two calls on the phone looking for staff. No one was coming in. It was very quiet. I drive to Redmond to pick up car charger for new cell phone. I had no idea how handy it would become, sooner than expected. Get home, news says Seattle and Bellevue school districts are closed. Oh why am I feeling so lousy

The DAY: Wednesday 1.18.12: the snow on ground was falling from East to West. Wind blowing but power on. My roommate was home, but nothing on TV and tired of being on computer. I was not feeling very well and this added to the yuck. Watching the snow pile up, my car starting to disappear under the white. Of course, living in Snoqualmie, at 500 feet, snow is a given. The Cascades can be seen from our living room with Mount Si about 20+ miles away; when the clouds obscure the mountain, then trouble coming. Go to bed warm.

Lousy DAY: Thursday 1.19.12: Up at 6:00am. I checked flashlights and batteries. I set radio to KOMO and am glad I had batteries for backup because I did not want to crank. I have plenty of medicine, enough for 10 days or more, hand warmers, comforters, Pendleton Blanket gift from beloved Board VP....., first aid kit.

But then I put my snow boots in the trunk along with the ice scraper...and the cell phone charger. MOy cell phone goes dead just as the rain begins!!

Friday 1.20.12: The freezing rain lasted about 15 hours, by my estimates. Broke records back to 1880 says the radio. A plow came by, did our cross streets—right down the middle leaving big mound to get out of driveway. Trying to stay warm-feet freezing. Takes about 5 hours to warm up enough to get dressed. Next door neighbors spent time last three days shoveling snow then breaking ice on our common walkway, then the stairs

Summary: It's 7pm on Saturday evening. Roommate came home and the power is on. I hope it lasts cause I need to wash clothes.

Submitted by Center for Independence, Pierce County

During the week of January 15th -21st the Pacific Northwest was besieged by snow, ice, and wind. During this time the Department of Emergency Management (DEM) in Pierce County (PC) Washington was prompted to open the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Several programs were activated, including the Incident Command System (ICS). There are a lot more acronyms, programs, and vocabulary to confuse you with but, I'd rather narrow this discussion.

FAST team members are trained to assess the needs of People with Access and Function Needs (PAFN) while they are in an emergency shelter. The FAST program is nearly in place and trainings are scheduled to begin soon.

for this winter's first storm of 2012, People with Access and Functional Needs (PAFN) were not ignored by mother nature. Sheri Badger, PC EMS, reported that people with disabilities, or PAFN, were in need of shelter. One 82 year old resident and her 102 year old mother asked to be evacuated to a shelter. PC EMS used the FAST model/program to assess their circumstances and determined that they were a perfect fit for a general population shelter. *(continued on second column, next page)*



Ashica Demira, Roads to Community Living and Angelica Perkins, Youth Program Staff, display our banner proudly at the Nov. 3rd Open House.

A BIG thanks to everyone who attended the East King County Alliance of People with disAbilities **Open House** in at the new location in Bellevue on 140th Street. This location is at least one-third larger than the previous (Redmond) branch location. More than 40 people attended this event, this year it featured a silent auction with many items including comedy club tickets from the Parlor and a dinner certificate from McCormick and Schmick's Fish House.

Thank you to all the Alliance Board, Staff, Members, Participants and Organizational folks for coming: including Bridge Ministries, Washington Talking Book and Braille Library, many folks from Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Sound Mental Health, All-In Technologies, the State Independent Living Council, and NAMI Eastside attended. We are also appreciative of all our donators, wrappers and drivers who helped pull off this event.

We are excited to see you at the office and the address of our new East King County Office is:

1150 140th Ave. NE

Suite 101

Bellevue, WA 98005

Phone: 425.558.0993 TTY: 425.861.9588 Toll-Free:
1.800.216.3335

(Pierce County— Continued from page 6)

The trick was getting them there. They live in a remote area of Pierce County so the 4X4 Team volunteers were deployed. Everything went as planned. Hats off to our brave volunteers and the PC EMS.

Another test for the FAST model came when a man in a power-chair asked to be evacuated. The larger part of the assessment involved determining if this gentleman would need personal assistance while in the shelter. The next test was to determine what assistive technology (AT), devices, and durable/ disposable medical equipment (DME) would be needed. Everything was figured out and then power was restored to his home. This was a happy coincidence for him and a great opportunity for testing the FAST model/program for PC EMS.

Another man, who is a participant with the Center for Independence (CFI), lost power for several days. He had no heat, light, or means to cook meals. Fortunately, he had been networking with another participant from CFI who lived nearby and had a spare generator. They got together, and, with a bit of volunteer fuel from other neighbors, he stayed home. He was able to shelter in place until power was restored.



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More News and Upcoming Events from Around the State

Alliance of People with disAbilities has a new member! Charity Marie Drummond, who is also a SILC Council member, had a baby boy! Julien-Tobias Wyatt Hueckstedt was born January 9, 2012 weighing 4 pounds, 8 ounces, and 11 inches long! Both mother and baby are doing fine. Congratulations Charity.



SILC member, Charity Drummond, pictured above is the proud mother of a baby boy! Members of the SILC gave Charity a grade one through twelve picture frame.

DVD PRODUCTION

Alliance of People with disAbilities' Youth Program is in the process of producing an educational video about living with a disability. Youth decided they wanted to create a DVD in which they could talk about their experience of living with disabilities and use it as a forum to discuss ways to handle situations and to diffuse assumptions and stereotypes.

Events were hosted at both the Seattle and Bellevue offices of Alliance where youth got together in a social setting with producer, Basil Shadid, who recorded individuals discussing their thoughts about their disabilities, challenges they face and how the world could be more accessible. 12 youth participated and we are now on the 2nd phase of the project which should be completed this spring.

American Sign Language



for Beginners

TACID
6315 South 19th St
Tacoma, WA 98465

Choice of Two Classes

Evenings: Monday, February 6 - March 26, 6:00pm-7:30pm, Room 21

Mornings: Thursday, February 9 - March 22, 10:00am-11:30am, Room 21

Registration \$65.00

Register Online at WWW.CS-DHRS.ORG

or

Mail Check Payable to:

CS-DHRS

10611 Canyon Rd E, #214

Puyallup, WA 98373

Students are expected to purchase the textbook - A Basic Course In American Sign Language by Humpries, Padden, O'Rourke and Paul available at www.Amazon.com

Contact:

Christine Seymour

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Resource Specialist

Christine@cs-dhhrs.org

253-256-4690 Voice

253-495-5825 Text



WASILC REPORT

February 2012

Vol. 3, No. 4



Crip Caste: United we Stand, Divided we Fall

BY VON ELISON, Executive Director of Central Washington Disability Resources

Recently, while explaining that I didn't drive because of a seizure disorder, one consumer with a cognitive disability looked at another who lived with a mental illness and said, "See, she's one of us." I laughed to myself...nervously...Well, of course I wasn't one of them... I was a *provider...not* a consumer. I am *different*, I thought, but the more differences I started tallying, the more actual similarities I found. The impact of limited transportation on our lives, the daily medications to control our disorders, the financial costs and the internal fear of losing the ability to pay for those expenses, and finally, the fear of social rejection.

But what I had done was to make a value judgment as to the worth of someone's life relative to our disabilities and it chilled me. The disabilities may be different, but many of the overall goals remain similar; to be able to go wherever we want, to be able to pursue our dreams, our livelihoods, to reduce dependency upon the medical community, and to put the decision-making power back in the hands of the consumer. When we think of discrimination and disability, we automatically bring to mind the "them against us mentality." The non-disabled against the disabled community. But for groups such as disability-rights advocates, whose goals are to remove barriers and fight for social justice, admitting that there is discrimination within the community itself can be painful and embarrassing.

There has been an especially large gap between persons with physical disabilities and persons with cognitive, mental, and invisible disabilities. "If your disability is not visible or readily apparent it doesn't count." If you have any type of invisible disability, you may have encountered comments within the advocacy community such as "You don't *look* disabled", or "You can't possibly represent us", "How can you possibly *understand* what is it like to be disabled?". If you have experience any type of invisible disability, you are well aware of how easy it can be to believe someone who says you couldn't possibly understand disability discrimination when you "just" have a seizure disorder, severe migraines, or depression that leaves you unable to get out of bed in the morning. Or what about when you find yourself defensive and thinking, such as I did, that you are not part of *that* group? (continued on next page)



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Unfortunately, in the disability community we sometimes have a tendency to measure a person's value and what they "should" be able to do through our own disability and personal "suffering",. But statements such as...*I am not as disabled as you...I am not like you...you cannot possibly understand* can so easily become *"I am better than you...I am worth more than you...I deserve more than you ...I need more than you."*

These beliefs are not only psychologically devastating, but often alienate potential consumers from seeking much needed resources. The Independent Living movement may have started as a way to provide persons with disabilities better access, but in order to keep the non disabled community accountable, advocates need keep moving forward within our own community in the expansion of inclusive philosophy and set the standard for what it expects; inclusion, equality, and being assessed for ability rather than disability.

The Center For Independence , Bellingham office opens on February 6, 2012. Office hours will be 10 AM to 4 PM Monday through Thursday.

Contact Information.

Center for Independence North Sound

114 W. Magnolia St., Suite 104
Bellingham, WA 98225
Phone: 360-393-3890
Toll Free: 888-482-4839
FAX: 360-778-1743

<http://www.centerforindependence.org/>

2012 SILC meetings

April 12th and 13th: Washington School for the Deaf:
611 Grand Blvd, Admission's Bldg
Vancouver WA 98661

July 12th and 13th:
Opportunity Council
1111 Cornwall Avenue
Bellingham, WA 98225

October 4th and 5th: Pullman

The dates and places are tentative and may change, so check back at: www.wasilc.org.



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Advocating for Access in the Community in Spokane

CORD has been hard at work working the city to assure they understand what access means for folks with disabilities. We have a dedicated staff that has been very involved to assure that the city understands the value of access for people who have mobility barriers, especially during the winter months with snow and ice. Here is a sampling of what we have been doing.

One of the major community barriers in the Spokane area is sidewalks. There are many sidewalks with large cracks that make them impassable for people with mobility limitations. Further, people with sight limitations face the risk of falling on these broken sidewalks. Indeed, one gentleman, who is totally blind, was hospitalized after walking into a low-hanging tree branch. These barriers are exacerbated in the winter when snow/ice is plowed onto the sidewalks, forcing pedestrians to walk/wheel on major arterials. While there are city codes in place, a series of budget cuts have reduced capacity to the point that they cannot enforce these codes.

CORD staff has been engaged in community advocacy for several years to resolve this situation. Recently our efforts have begun to bear fruit. CORD staff collaborated with the City of Spokane and the Spokane Regional Health District to testify to the City Council about the dangers posed to pedestrians by these unsafe sidewalks. We also were featured in an article in the *Spokesman Review* to explain the Complete Streets Initiative we supported. This generated comments on the newspaper blog that we were able to address.

Councilman Snyder requested that CORD staff be his guest on a thirty minute television program to talk further about the unsafe sidewalks and the Complete Streets Initiative. The initiative passed the City Council and Councilman Snyder advised he will call on CORD again if the new members of the City Council try to eliminate this project.

Complete Streets is a development model that would develop pedestrian routes through the most dangerous corridors, and establish green buffers between the curb and the sidewalk wherever possible. This would at least eliminate the snow/ice that is plowed onto the sidewalks by the city. This initiative also established that ten percent of street budgets would be delegated to sidewalks.

CORD staff serves on the Pedestrian Safety Committee, the entity charged with developing the criteria to prioritize locations and identify the most appropriate solution. CORD staff has persevered in maintaining that fatality/injury data must be a primary factor used to identify priority locations. These locations may have a pedestrian overpass rather than sidewalks but the safety of pedestrians is the primary factor.

We are pleased with the response the city has provided and will continue to advocate for access for all not only within the city of Spokane but with the county and other counties we serve.