

The People First Connection

The Voice of Self-Advocacy in Oregon
Published by Community Partnerships and
Self-Advocates As Leaders



New Challenges

By SAAL Communications
Committee

As we look at the New Year, we members of Self-Advocates As Leaders took some time to think about where we are going. People who are self-advocates have more opportunities right now than we have ever had before.

We are having a voice in policy changes and are expecting people to listen to us.

This is something to celebrate!

But we want to step up our efforts and out expectations for ourselves.

When we sit on boards, we do not want to just sit there. We want to share our voices with other board members.

This is important because we are not just speaking up for ourselves when we sit on boards, but for others.

We must ask for help when we need it, and give our opinions when we have ideas on an issue. We need to keep in touch with all kinds of people with disabilities, so that we can take a position that represents all of us.

That way even more opportunities open up in the future.

We will work hard to get new people involved.

We will work hard to help them gain a voice and feel more empowered.

We will work hard for the rights of people with disabilities!

We ask you to work with us for this dream!

Self-Advocates As Leaders!

To help us achieve our dream of equality we need your help.

Call us:

Our contact number is

503 232 9154 ext. 134

My Acting Career

Andy Owens
Portland

Last September I decided to take a theater class at Portland Community College. The class I registered for was called Improvisational Theater. "Improv" is a kind of theater that is created on the stage by a group of people. The actors do not know what they are going to say or do before they get on the stage.



We did lots of things during class. We started out every class by doing physical warm-ups like stretching, head rolls and arm circles. Then we usually would play some kind of game.

Some of the games we played were sound ball, elephant-bunny-kangaroo and freeze tag. The games were used to work on concentration, trust and making connections on stage.

Most of the rest of the class time was spent working on scenes.

One time I did a scene with someone else in my class. The scene was about an engagement ring.

In that scene I wanted to propose to my girlfriend but I had lost my engagement ring. I had to tell my partner where to look for it, in my bag, on the floor and in other places.

The scene ended with us trying to buy an engagement ring out of a vending machine at a grocery store!

Thanks to **Andy Owens** for this article. Andy participated in a Writer's Workshop sponsored by Self-Advocates As Leaders and Community Partnerships.

Others who participated in the Workshop were **Ann Blackburn, Tim Johnson, Sara Ann Yunker, Jill Nortell, Mark Hertell, Theresa White and Susan Asio.**

All of these writers prepared an article for *The People First Connection*. With some help and support you too can do an article.

Everyone is important and everyone's experiences matter.

For support in writing an article call **Michael Bailey, editor** at 503 364 9943 ext. 40, or you can email us. Our address is.

michaeljonna2@attbi.com

Portland

**Ann Blackburn
Beaverton**

City of roses
People busy everywhere
On the banks of the Willamette
Quiet, Graceful
Clean, Friendly, safe
City of beauty.

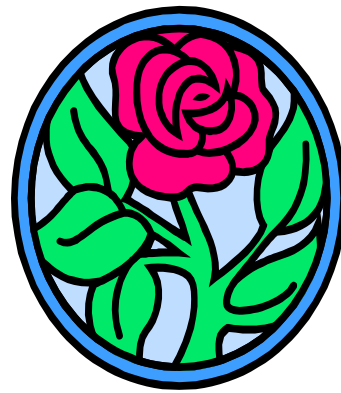
The city is looking over the
Willamette River just as if she is
looking out for her.
Always people going happily about
their own business.
The big Queen of a mountain towers
over her, taking care of her.
Rejecting nobody; she is always
opening her arms to welcome anyone
and everyone into her palace.
Watching to make sure her kingdom
is a safe, clean place to live.
She shoots a force of water out of her
souls in a fountain of youth for the
children of her land to play.

Children playing
Young and old in love
Friends having fun
Souls listening to music playing

Love birds young and old, hand in
hand, walking along the riverfront.
Children playing in the water spouting
out of her big fountainous soul.

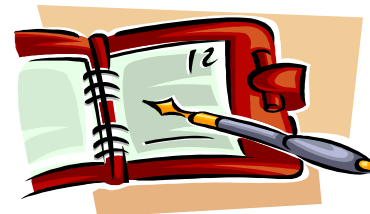
Always music playing all around the
kingdom, people listening to music
loud and soft, on warm summer's
nights.

Portland, with all her might,
stands tall and proud.
No better place to spend eternity.
With her tall buildings and long,
flowing rivers.



*“There lived many brave
men before Agamemnon,
but all were overwhelmed in
unending night, unmourned and
unknown because they lack
a poet to give them
immortality.”*

*Horace
23 B.C.*



Used To Be

Ann Blackburn

I used to be a big giant, looking over the world below me.

But now I am one of the little people living in peace.

I used to be a hunter, hunting wild bear.

But now I am a bear running from a hunter.

I used to be a millionaire, only caring for myself.

But now I am a starving child in Bosnia.

I used to be a sheep's coat.

But now I am a beautiful wool sweater.

I used to be a dancer in a beautiful ballet.

But now I am confined to a wheelchair.

I used to be a logger, cutting down all the trees that got in my way.

But now I am a redwood, fearing everyday that I will be cut down.

A Person That I Know

**Linnea Goranson
Portland**

A person that I know is caring, kind, funny and smart. She likes to read books, watch television and stay active in sports.

That person is me, **Linnea Goranson.**

I was born with Down syndrome.

I have three brothers. Anders and Eric are my older brothers and Leif is my younger brother.

I work at Portland State University in the Education Office. I collate papers, enter data, do copying and fax material to other schools. I fold packets from different departments, sort mail in the mailboxes and file papers.

That's my job.

I really love and enjoy my job because it's a challenge.

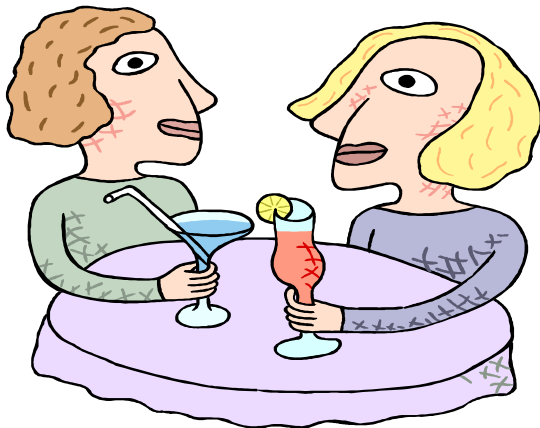
The staff and professors really like me. They even praise and compliment my progress on different jobs.

My nickname at work is "Whiz Kid."

Friends

**Meredith Mitchell
Cascade Locks**

A friend is someone special. A friend is someone you can do things with or just talk to about anything. A friend should always try to help the other friend out when they are in times of need. Friends can be very caring and very kind.



Many of us have friends that are very nice people and we do things with them. But sometimes we all have one or two very special friends that we love more than the others. We usually call them our best friends. Best friends sometimes do more things together than others.

Best friends are like our brother and sister and heart. A best friend is someone special because you have a friendship.

I have one very special friend. She is the best.

We do a lot of fun stuff together. We are always talking back and forth to each other on the phone. We have been friends for over a year. She is like a sister to me.

I have two other close friends too. They may be a lot older than me but they still have the heart of a child. They are both two great friends to have.

We always do things together. They bring so much joy and laughter to my life.

I am thankful for these special friendships.

I believe that friendships are something very special to have, because without friends I think out lives would be pretty empty.

**It's easy to do an article for
*The People First Connection.***

We will provide you with the supports you need to write and publish your experiences, hopes, dreams and ideas.

All people are important and all people matter. What you have to say is important and other people will benefit from hearing it.

Contact us and we will help you!

“It is nearly always the invisible dangers that are the most terrifying.”

Julius Caesar

Stop Violence Now!

**Gayle B. Gardner
Portland**

We must stop violence now.
Our world is full of violence.

We must stop violence in
schools.

We must teach the nations of
the world to be more adult. We don't
need guns, bombs or terrorism. We
need peace and freedom.



I am a person who believes in
being free. I can't live in a society
where people are afraid to move
around.

Help me to understand why we
have so much violence in the United
States of America.

Think with your heart. Realize
what you are doing. Life is full of
pain. Do not take innocent lives.
Think about your actions. Do not
terrorize us.

Some small nations want to
take revenge on us. I say don't be
angry with us. Unite with us.
Together we can stop violence. We
cannot have another war. Let go of
your anger.

We must learn how to educate
all Americans and people around the
world that violence will only hurt
innocent people. Death is a permanent
condition. You can't bring people
back after they are dead.

So think about your actions. Be
responsible for your acts. Believe in
yourself and think about other people.

Listen to your mind and to your
heart.

Think about children without
parents.

Think about wives without
husbands.

Think about the United States
of America. Of course we have made
mistakes. Who hasn't?

We must educate all of the
countries of the world in the
principles of self-determination. The
whole world must learn to work
together and respect each other.

We must find a way to
communicate with each other.

Violence brings only pain,
misery and agony. Let us unite
together to bring peace to the world.

Let us stop violence now!

=====

***Editorial Note: According to the
Oscar Arias Foundation, the leading
cause of disability on planet earth is
WAR.***

My Future Challenges

**Theresa White
Beaverton**

My challenge for the future is to be living on my own in a few months. Right now I live with my Mom in an apartment in Beaverton. Soon my Mom is moving to Boise, Idaho but I am staying here.

I have worked at Norm Thompson Outfitters for seven years and I do not want to leave my job.

To live alone I will need supports. I just need someone to come in and check on me. I am learning more all the time, but I might need some house cleaning assistance. Right now my Mom does a lot of these things for me.

When I first learned Mom was leaving, I was sort of scared.

She was going. I was staying, and that seemed sort of weird. Now I am pretty excited about it.

I think I can get used to living on my own.

I am going to get a girl cat.

I will name her Dolly or Daisy. She can keep me company.

A few months ago I got invited to go and visit St. Luke's Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee. I have always wanted to do that.

Things I Like

**Tim Johnson
Aloha**

I play on a basketball team. My friend Chris Smithers is on the team also.

One thing I like to do is hang out with my Mom and watch the news

I am also on a baseball team. My favorite team is the Seattle Mariners.



I went to Seattle to see the Seahawks play football. I went with my brother Craig. We had pop and popcorn.

I have a girlfriend in Bend, Oregon.

I met her at a dance in Vancouver, Washington.

I like to visit her.

My Job

Mark Hertel
Hillsboro

I have a friend named **Mary Claire Moran**. She is a grocery checker at the Sunset Esplanade Safeway. I work at the same store as a courtesy clerk.



She is a fun person. She has lots of humor. She is also a person who is good to make jokes with. I have known her for over a year. I met her when I came to work at Safeway.

I take the bus to and from work. I live in my own home with two roommates. A friend named Ben comes to help us pay our bills.

I have lived in my own home for over three years. I do not want to move because I do not want to leave my job.

As a courtesy clerk I get to see lots of children. When it is Christmas season there are lots of children in the

store and I get to ask them what they want for Christmas. I love to do that!

I have lots of hobbies. I love to do puzzles. I have done a 3,000-piece puzzle. I own five puzzles that have 2,500 pieces. Lots of people think I'm nuts for wanting to do such large puzzles.

Another thing I like is walking about and collecting pop cans. I redeem the cans.

I keep track of how much money I can make during a whole year. This year, so far, I have made \$328. Last year I made \$563.

Another thing I like to do is collect missing grocery carts and return them to the store they belong to.

Those carts cost a lot money!

VOTE!

In May 2002 there will be a primary election in Oregon.

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

MAKE YOUR VOTE COUNT!

If you are 18 years old or older you have the right to vote!

Call your county elections office today.

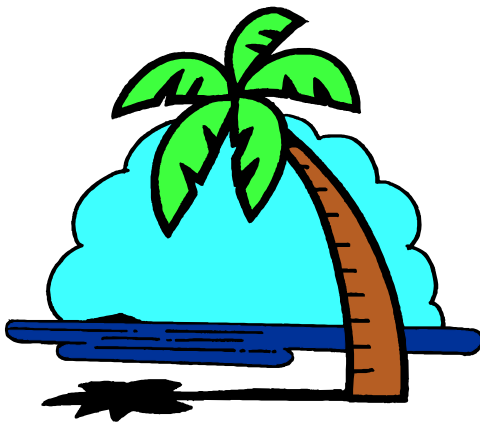
Register and Vote!

BE POWERFUL!

Goals

Susan Asio
Aloha

One of my goals is to move back to Hawaii in the near future. I grew up there. I was born and raised on Oahu along with my family.



Right now I am living with my brother Ben. I have lived with him for five years and he has supported me all of that time.

I have been unemployed since November. I will start a volunteer job at Oregon Health and Science University on December 17. I will be doing a patient survey in the main hospital.

I want to vacation in Hawaii and at California Adventure and Disneyland. I went to Disneyland in 1996. That was my favorite vacation.

I enjoy hanging out in the libraries in Washington County. I like the peace and quiet in libraries.

I also go on day trips with the Elsie Sturr Center of Beaverton. I went with them to Seattle to see The Mariners play baseball.

We also went to the Festival of Lights at Portland International Raceway. I liked the illuminated flag and basketball the best.

I also like bowling. My favorite sports teams are the Seattle Mariners, the Atlanta Braves and the Portland Trailblazers. I also like the Oregon State University Beavers.

“SHAME ON US!”

Russian President **Vladimir Putin** was personally embarrassed recently when several disabled groups’ representatives, invited to attend a government-sponsored assembly, were nearly turned away because their wheelchairs wouldn’t fit through the turnstiles at the Kremlin gate. “**Shame on us**”, Mr. Putin told the meeting. “The politics of the past made it impossible to integrate the disabled into society, even in the smallest ways. We need to make a complete overhaul of our attitudes and approaches.”

ICourtesy of PIP National List serve

The People First Connection
is available in alternative formats.

My Family

Sara Ann Yunker
Beaverton

I want to talk about my brother. His name is Mike. He has a wife named Alex.

After they got married they moved to Portland. He had to move all of his stuff out. I had to help him. He has lots of baseball cards. Now they live in a house in Portland.

I am happy, because now I can watch television. Sometimes we got into arguments over what to watch and I would say bad words. I do not say any bad words anymore.

I have visited his new house. I am proud of him for moving out. I like the freedom I have with him being gone.

I like living at home with my Mom and Dad. I take care of out dog Maxie. I help a lot. I do the dishes and recycling. I set the table and bag up the newspapers.

I just read a book called "Sweet Valley Twins". That's a series of books.

I watched a scary movie called "The Living Dead" on the VCR in my bedroom.

=====

The theme for the next issue is
"Where do we go from here?"

Targeted Goals

Rusty Hawkins
Eugene

I enjoy being a part of The Arc of Lane County. Our quarterly SDS meeting today and yesterday at the Red Lion Inn was inspiring to me.

But the most inspiring thing was working and playing roles in my group, "Voice My Choice." It gave me an image of how things work and should work, and here are some ideas about self-advocacy I have for you, which I call "Targeted Goals."

These goals are:

1. Being together/living at home.
2. Avoiding problems with services (the "old way") and gaining universal access.
3. Not letting people push us around/believing in yourself.
4. You can do anything that you put your mind into.
5. You can do it.
6. Don't put yourself down.
7. Live up to your dreams.
8. Seek them.

All articles in *The People First Connection* are subject to editing for spelling, grammar and content.

My Job

Jill Nortell
Milwaukie

I have worked at Bally Fitness for five years. It is a health club in Milwaukie.

I clean up, vacuum and take care of the equipment. I go where I am needed in any part of the gym.



Part of the gym is for women only and part of it is co-ed.

The reason that I like my job is that I get to work independently. No one comes and bothers me.

I take the bus to work. I live alone in my own apartment. I have lived there for two years.

I like to go places with Northwest Community Access. I have been to Long Beach, Washington, the Oregon Coast Aquarium and Spirit Mountain Casino.

I want to continue living alone. I do not intend to have a roommate.

I collect Disney things. I have a huge collection. I have lots of shirts and stuffed animals.

My apartment does not allow us to have pets, so my animals are all stuffed.

Disability History

On July 5, 1978 disability rights activists staged a nonviolent direct action in Denver, Colorado to force the transportation department to make public buses wheelchair accessible.

Nineteen people with disabilities encircled two city buses and refused to move. The group continued their siege for a full day and into the night.

The tactic spread until at a major demonstration in Washington, DC in March 1990 people with disabilities as young as eight years dumped their crutches or got out of their wheelchairs and crawled up the Capitol steps.

A dozen years after the first action in Denver President **George Bush** signed the **Americans with Disabilities Act**.

While much remains to be done our progress can be traced in no small measure to bold action that started one day in Denver.

Adapted from "Non-Violent Success"

Get on the mailing list for *The People First Connection*
Yes! Sign me up for all future editions.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Mail to: *The People First Connection*
540 24th Pl. NE
Salem, OR. 97301

The People First Connection
540 24th Pl. NE
Salem, OR. 97301

**Community Partnerships and Self-Advocates As Leaders
are funded by the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities**

The People First Connection

SAAL Communications Committee

Ruth Morris, Chair
Theresa White
Charlie Hammett
Dayna Davis
Gayle B. Gardner
Margaret Whipple

Staff

Michael Bailey, editor
Jill Murray
Cindy Helvington

**Thanks to OCDD Executive Director, Janna Starr,
for her support of self-advocacy in Oregon.**