

The People First Connection

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



SAAL Names Director

The Self-Advocates As Leaders coalition is happy to announce that we have a new Executive Director and her name is **Cindy Helvington**. Cindy has been involved in many things and she sincerely cares about self-advocates. This is part of why she is so good at what she does.

She puts her time in doing the work that needs to be done, and is always willing to learn something new.

Over the years she has invited us to attend meetings and conferences to get involved. "When I first met Cindy, she would not talk to people because she was so shy. I got her talking at People First meetings in Eugene," **Ruth Morris** recalls. "Now she talks all the time."

Self-Advocates As Leaders made it a priority to hire a self-

advocate as our Director. With some support we put together a job description, recruited and prepared interview questions for this position. We interviewed four outstanding candidates to lead us, and we stand behind **Cindy Helvington** wholeheartedly to provide leadership to meet our goals.

Our biggest goal right now is to become a stronger group of leaders. We have big plans to have more influence around Oregon and we will educate more people about SAAL and the experiences of people with disabilities.

We will gather the voices of people with disabilities and help the legislators to hear us on issues. We are learning to listen better, just as we expect professionals to do.

We are learning to be more active (not expecting professionals to do it) in building networks and getting to know other self-advocates ourselves.

It is important to get active participation and representation from

SAAL (cont.)

self-advocates around the state. We want to share leadership opportunities with self-advocates who are less experienced because we believe it will make us all stronger.



We want to train people in rural areas as a way to teach people what is possible for them. We have been talking to people about doing trainings in Coos Bay, Newport, The Dalles, Beaverton and Medford. To do this we have grants like *My Voice/My Choice* training from the Human Services Research Institute and the *Voting Rights* training from Oregon Health Sciences University.

Because we expect a lot of opportunities to come to us we need to map out our plans to help us choose which opportunities we will take advantage of.

We may become a non-profit organization in the future, but we aren't sure yet. For now, we will study what that means and see if or when that will work out.

So you see, **Cindy Helvington**, will be busy helping us to work on our PATH and our strategic plan.

Keep an eye on us! We are on our way!

Confused About UA?

Are you confused about the details of implementing Universal Access to services?

Well, who isn't?

There are two places *The People First Connection* recommends you turn for 'consumer friendly' information.

There is a toll-free Universal Access Information Line that you can use. The number is 1-800-336-8208.

In addition the **Arc of Oregon** web page contains current and easy to understand information. Their web address is www.arcoforegon.org

You can also call your County Developmental Disabilities Program Office. Phone numbers for those offices are listed on the Information Line and the web page.

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

A Plea for Peace

By Gayle B. Gardner
Portland

We are advocates who care about our country. We must advocate for the United States of America in a mature fashion.

We must teach other countries a more pleasant way of advocating for themselves. We can teach foreign countries self-determination in a sensible way.

We don't need violence, bombs, revenge, fear or anger. Our lives are filled with enough pain without violence.

I don't see hope for our world if we have violence. We want peace and freedom. Until we know how to stop violence we can teach other nations what it is we want.

We can teach our country how to have a new beginning.

Please listen to my plea:

We bleed inside of our hearts for freedom and peace.

Our hearts are in pain.

We must find peace and not anger.

Touch a friend and tell them hello in a nice way.

No more violence!

My Cool Brother

By Emily Eastland
Clatskanie

My brother is autistic. He is non-verbal which means he doesn't talk. Some autistic people are verbal which means they can talk. His name is Robby.

Robby likes certain toys or other objects that might seem strange like twirling a pop can or playing with a jump rope. That is called repetitive action.

He is considered a low functioning autistic person because he is not verbal. But he is not stupid.

He can do a lot of stuff like swim, climb and bounce a ball really well. He picks up recycling from his classrooms at school. He also washes down cafeteria tables at his school.

He likes pizza, music and swimming just like you and me. He is not retarded. He just has some behaviors we may not understand.

He twirls objects, smells things and makes funny noises. He may not talk but he's not mute.

My bro Rob may be different but he's a cool dude.

=====
The People First Connection

is available in alternative formats.

A Chick On My Arm

By Ann Blackburn
Beaverton

On my way over to see my close friend, Kris, who was recovering from knee surgery, I should have known something unusual was about to happen. Whenever I get together with Kris bizarre events seem to happen. We must put out some kind of energy that screams trouble!



This day was no exception. We decided to walk down to a café for a drink, because I can't get into her house with my chair. It was a typical Memorial Day. In other words it was RAINING! When we arrived the café was packed so we grabbed a seat at the bar. There we were with Kris' leg up on a stool and my chair blocking everybody. As usual time sped by and soon it was time to head back. On the way back Kris' knee began to hurt so we

did the only logical thing...you got it! **I gave her a ride!**

There I was going down NE Alberta Street, with a grown woman trying to balance on the arm of my chair and her leg sprawled across my knees.

Swerving all over the sidewalk and laughing uncontrollably there were a couple of times I hit a bump and almost sent her flying!

To passers by it must have looked as if we had had too much to drink.

I wish I had had my camera. It would have made one heck of a picture.

I always said I wanted a cute chick on my arm!

=====

**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. All people matter. What you have to say is important and others need to hear it.

**E-mail your story to us at
michaeljonna2@home.com**

**If you need help contact us
and we will help you!**

PIP Class Named

The Community Partnerships Project has announced the composition of **Partners In Policy Making, Class of 2002.**

The class will be made up of twenty parents and 7 self-advocates. Classes will begin in January and last until September of 2002.

The self-advocates who have been invited to join the class are:

Ann Blackburn of Beaverton.

Carla Carter of Corvallis.

Patricia Fennell of Grants

Pass.

Eric Gibson of Salem.

Michael Meugniot of The

Dalles.

Scott Scales of Oregon City.

Becky Shepardson of

Portland.

The People First Connection congratulates each of these outstanding self advocates on their selection. **Partners In Policy Making** is an elite training that prepares participants to become the leaders of the future.

Virginia Bennett 1938-2001

The People First Connection is saddened to announce the death of **Virginia Bennett.** Virginia was one of Oregon's most outstanding self-advocacy leaders. She died in her home in Eugene on October 1, 2001 at the age of 63.

At the time of her death Virginia was a member of the **Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities.**

She was a graduate of **Partners In Policy Making, Class of 1995.**

Virginia was a life long learner. She regarded her greatest accomplishment as receiving her diploma from Lane Community College in June 2001.

Memorial contributions may be made in Virginia's name to the Scholarship Fund of the First Church of the Nazarene in Eugene.

Those of us who knew her will remember her commitment to the rights of people with disabilities and her unparalleled kindness and concern for the well being of others.

White Water Rafting

By Jeff Lowry
Aloha

I went white water rafting in the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River. I loved the white water rafting. I went on this trip with EDT, my dad's company.



The first day, we got in the rafts and went down the river. At night we camped. The river guide made steak for dinner. Other dinners during the trip were things like spaghetti, fish and chicken. The food was very good!

The next day we hit lots of big rapids! That was a lot of fun.

The river guides told lots of great stories about the Grand Canyon.

One was about a ghost and another was about a case of tomatoes. Those were my favorites.

We hiked to lots of waterfalls. One was so high I could not jump from the cave. I was afraid of heights.

I also liked sleeping out and looking at the stars at night. Now I have to sleep indoors.

It was very hot in the canyon, but the water was cold and felt good.

I would like to do this trip again.

The river guides were so nice. I would like to visit them.

**“Don’t walk in front of me.
I may not follow.
Don’t walk behind me.
I may not lead.
Just walk beside me and
be my friend.”**

**Albert Camus
Submitted by Cindy Helvington**

**Fax your article to
The People First Connection
503 282 6365**

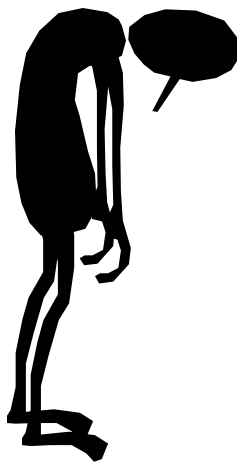
We will be looking for it!

A Shared Tragedy

On September 11, 2001 terrorists viciously and horrendously attacked the United States.

Innocent people were killed in New York City and Virginia. Although the final toll of dead is not known, it will exceed 5,000.

The People First Connection joins with others worldwide to mourn the loss of innocent lives and in condemning the violence that caused those deaths.



People with disabilities were not exempt from the horror of September 11. Children and adults with disabilities were doing exactly what they should have been doing on that morning.

We were working in the World Trade Center, walking in the city,

living in our homes and going to school. We were caring for our families.

The number of chair users who died in the collapse of the World Trade Center is unknown. The Center was also the site of the Murray Bergtraum High School work experience program as well as the location of a special education classroom. It is fair to say that hundreds if not thousands of people with disabilities perished along with their classmates, friends and co-workers.

Additionally, many people are displaced from their homes in Battery Park City, which was one of America's most accessible neighborhoods. Damage has kept the area closed resulting in people with disabilities having nowhere to live. If you would like to help the displaced New Yorkers you may send a contribution to:

CIDNY
841 Broadway, Suite 205
New York, New York 10003

“The kaleidoscope has been shaken, the pieces are in flux, soon they will settle again.

Before they do, let us reorder the world around us.”

**Tony Blair
Prime Minister of Great Britain
October 2001**

My Dolls

By Kathy Mills
Union

Collecting porcelain dolls began, for me, about sixteen years ago in Minnesota. It began with a limited edition doll that I put on a shelf where it could not get hurt.



The collection might have been bigger but we had a fire that destroyed my collection along with my clothes. One of my dolls was saved because it was positioned to look out of the window with her hands on the glass. A fireman saw her and thought it was a real baby. He broke the window to rescue her and handed her off to another fireman, never realizing she wasn't alive.

Some of my collection, which is now more than one hundred dolls, are on display in my trailer home in Union, Oregon. Many more are packed away due to limited space. My mom, who lives with me, helps me

keep them clean by changing their plastic covers on a monthly basis.

The dolls come in all races. I get them for holidays and special occasions. I also find them at rummage sales.

Most of the dolls are small. The smallest is ten inches. The largest is life-size. It wears a short dress with long sleeves and instead of a plastic bag it is covered with plastic wrap.

Someday my parents and I may move to South Dakota, near my sister. There would be more space for my entire collection to be displayed.

=====

The Real You

By Neil Jay Yocum
La Grande

When you go in the House of Mirrors
Or see yourself sideways.
What you see may bring you to tears
For the rest of your days.

When you do look you may not see
Your true self as you are.
You may not be there. No, not free.
This shows your beauties far.

And this is what you have to do:
Fight well to get it back!
Fight hard to find the real you,
And you will find the 'you' you lack.

Things I Do

By Edna Landers
La Grande

I have diabetes and I have been losing a lot of weight. I am on a special diet now where I have to cut out fat. I don't eat ice cream because it has too much sugar.

I have lost twenty-five pounds. I am proud of myself and what I am doing. I take medicine for my weight.

I go out on walks each day, and it helps me lose more pounds off my tummy.

I am happy to attend the In-Service here in Corvallis. I won't be home in La Grande until late Friday night.

I was born in August in Wallowa, Oregon. I have a brother named Earl and three sisters. I lost my daddy.

I have a nice boyfriend named **Richard McGee**, and he is at home in La Grande. He stays home and takes care of my bird and my two cats named **Champee** and **Cricket**.

I live in the upstairs of a red house. My caseworkers' name is Sandy, and she is the person who brought us here to Corvallis.

In the fall I might take a trip and see my sister in Portland. She has two sons. I have two nephews. Their names are Larry and Jackie.

I get to go to Wal Mart by myself. I can buy tickets for a taxi that will come and take me anyplace I want to go.



Richard is a very nice boyfriend. I met him in La Grande.

We have been going together for about one year.

He dusts all my woodwork, dries the dishes and keeps my house clean!

I am looking forward to coming back to Corvallis for next year's In-Service.

=====

Don't try to pretend that you're not different...in the long run, you will suffer from trying to downplay your identity. Instead politicize it and make it more passionate.

Ellen Bass

Supporting Cindy

By Gayle B. Gardner
Portland

I wish to speak to all of you about **Cindy Helvington**.

Cindy has been a teacher to all self-advocates. She has been involved with advocacy for many years!



Cindy has the ability to be involved with policy makers at all levels of government. I must tell you the truth. Cindy will be excellent as our Executive Director.

Cindy believes in our coalition of **Self-Advocates As Leaders**. Cindy has integrity, honesty and no fear.

Happy days are here again. We have a great woman to be our leader.

Cindy has the ability to share control with her co-workers.

Cindy delegates work to the members and committees of **Self-Advocates As Leaders**. I wish to congratulate Cindy on being our new Executive Director.

We have a new avenue for achievement. We have a new Executive Director. Now is the time for us to work together.

We must organize our thoughts. We must help Cindy to learn her new job.

Thank you Cindy for stepping forward to lead us. We all support you and look ahead to achieving all of our goals.

=====

VOTE!

If you live in Oregon and are 18 years old you have the right to vote!

You have the right to vote no matter what your disability!

To vote you must register. Call your county election office to register.

If you need help your county election office must provide you with the accommodations you need to register and vote.

Things I Like

By **Kathy Smith**
Cove

I'm an egg collector. I have a computer and I like that. I like going fishing with my parents in their motor home. I like doing cross-stitching. I am a cross-stitching person. I like going over and helping my neighbor Jerry. I still like hunting. I am a hunter.

I have two eggs my co-workers brought back to me from Africa. I have another egg from New Zealand. I have a pink one with pretty gold trim around it. I have a Winnie the Poo egg. I like Winnie the Poo. I have a very old antique egg that my neighbors gave me. My sister gave me an egg that sits on a stand. It has butterflies on it. I have another egg that has different colors on it. One nice thing about my eggs is the wonderful stand my brother-in-law made for them. He likes to do woodwork.

I am going to visit my sister and brother-in-law for a whole week. I will be with all my nieces and nephews. My sister knows that I like eggs. She always gives me one for my birthday and for Christmas.

I started with one egg and now I have eighteen.

I like to read and do crossword puzzles. I like coming down every year with this group to Corvallis.

I live in Cove, Oregon, which is fourteen miles from LaGrande. We get a lot of deer and elk on our land. We get coyotes in our yard.

My sister lives over by Orchard Heights in West Salem. She should pick me up tomorrow, and I am sure that she will.

I get a break from my mom and dad for a while. I live with them. I have a cat named **Smokey Bandit**. He has real pretty blue eyes. We have a chocolate lab named **Sir Chocolate**. He is a really big dog and we have a little Springer named **Rosemary**.

I keep my cat in at night so the coyotes won't get him. Also we have owls. My mom saw an owl in the apple tree. She said the wingspan was really big. She was scared. I wish I would have seen it.

I am really tired when we get home from fishing. One day we did not go out but we saw five bucks which are male deer. You're not supposed to go out there but I like looking at them.

=====

**“We have nothing to fear
but fear itself.”**

**Franklin D. Roosevelt
President of the United States
Wheelchair User**

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