

The People First **Connection**

The Voice of Self Advocacy in Oregon
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It Scares Me

Jeff Lowry
Hillsboro

People are dying everyday in the Iraqi War. Also many people are getting sick from the dust and dirt of Iraq. The war has made it a place that is not safe for anyone.

I have a friend who is a soldier in Iraq. He and I were in school together. He was someone I liked and someone who was nice to me.

When my friend finished high school he joined the Navy. He has been in the war in Iraq. I worried while he was there. He is home from Iraq now but he must return soon.

His job in Iraq is moving supplies from place to place. It is a dangerous job because of roadside bombs and other things. He is my friend and I want him home safe.

More doctors are needed in Iraq. They are needed because disease is there and people spread

it. Poison chemicals get into people's lungs; they get sick and can die. There are lots of chemicals there and lots of other dangerous things.

If it were up to me I would bring the soldiers home now. Sometimes people say that they don't know how to have us leave Iraq. I would just send enough helicopters to bring everyone home.

The war kind of scares me. When I watch television I see stories about it. Lots of people are being hurt and things are being damaged. I see people dying on the news.

When our soldiers first went to Iraq we all thought that they were wanted there. But things are different than we thought at first.

Now it has become a trap. After a while the Iraqi's got their guns and it got a lot worse.

I wish everyone could come home safe.

Access to the Future

Judy Cunio
Self Advocacy Coordinator
Oregon Council on
Developmental Disabilities

On October 7 and 8, 2004 the Americans with Disabilities Act and Information Technology Center put on a conference. It was all about how the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) can help you if you are a person with a disability.

There were people from Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington. There were sessions on many topics that the ADA covers. Topics included employment, transportation, public business and state and local government.

Below are some questions and answers that may help you better understand what the ADA does.

Q. What is the ADA?

A. The Americans with Disabilities Act is a civil rights law for people with disabilities that was signed into law in 1990 by the first President Bush.

Q. What does the ADA do?

A. The ADA gives civil rights protection to people with disabilities.

Q. What are civil rights?

A. Civil rights are rights you have because you are a citizen.

Q. Who is a person with a disability?

A. Anyone who is unable to do one or more of the major life activities because of physical or mental impairment, or has a record of having one.

Q. Does the ADA apply to state and local government?

A. Yes, any state or local government service or business that is open to the public must be accessible to people with disabilities. For example, police and fire departments must have a way for people to communicate in an emergency or to get any other services that they may need or want.

Q. Can you be turned down for a job just because you have a disability?

Access to the Future (cont.)

A. No. You cannot be denied employment solely because of a disability. However, the employer has the right to hire the person most qualified, based on the essential functions of the job.

Q. What is a reasonable accommodation?

A. A reasonable accommodation is any change that will help make it easier for a person with a disability to do their job. Employers do not have to make accommodations that would cause them undue hardship, like it would cost too much to make the changes.

Q. If you take a test for a job, does the employer have to make changes to the test to make it accessible to a person with a disability?

A. Yes. They must offer the test in a format that allows the person to take it.

If you are a person with a disability and you go for a job interview, there are some questions that the employer can and cannot ask you.

Here are a few of them.

Q. Can they ask you if you can do the job?

A. Yes. They have the right to know what you can do and what kind of help you will need to do it.

Q. Can they ask you about your impairment?

A. No. They cannot ask you about your disability.

Q. Can they ask about past job-related injuries?

A. No, because these questions might be related to your disability.

I wrote this article to answer some of the problems you may face when you try to get a job. It is important to know your rights.

For more information, contact the ADA & Information Technology Center at 1-800-949-4232.

The People First Connection
Wants your story.
E-mail your work to us at
mtbclarion@comcast.net

SAAL Training Calendar

SAAL (Self Advocates As Leaders) has some exciting training and networking activities in the immediate future. All people who are self-advocates are invited to participate.

Capitol Connections
Legislative training has two events coming up.

“Telling Your Story”,
December 14 from 1 to 3:30 p.m.
at the Oregon State Capitol, Salem.
This session will deal with the
power of story telling in legislative
advocacy.

“Advocacy Day Training”,
will be February 15 at the capitol
in Salem.

Writer’s Workshop in
McMinnville on January 29.

If you are interested in
either of these opportunities call
Hannah Bowen at 503 589-1664,
or SAAL at 503 589-1664.

Quad Squad

Bill Miller
Leesburg, Florida

A little more than seven years ago, I incurred a spinal cord injury and I wound up paralyzed from the neck down and on a ventilator, much like the late Christopher Reeves, one of my heroes. Since I can still drive my wheelchair (I use a ‘sip n puff’ mouth system) we set out to develop a way for me to bowl by driving my chair; and if we could show that other wheelchair users could enjoy it (and we did) then we would try to “bring it to the world!”

Well, we’re getting there!
The bowling device we developed is called the IKAN Bowler.™
IKAN comes from a Greek work, which means enable, and we want to enable wheelchair users to say “I Can Bowl.”

The IKAN Sports Foundation was established to develop the sport of IKAN Bowling, among other sports, to help wheelchair users have fun and compete in sports otherwise not really possible for people with limited mobility, or even no movement from the waste down.
Checkout:

www.IKANSportsFoundation.org

Quad Squad (Cont.)

I live in Central Florida and we formed a group called the Quad Squad, a team of quadriplegics (from difference causes) including me, who try to get together and bowl once a month. We usually bowl on the 2nd Saturday of each month, about 4 o'clock, at Spanish Lanes in the Villages (about an hour north of Orlando).

Bowling isn't all I can do. I started back to college on the 7th anniversary of my accident, with the help of on-line courses. In a few years I should graduate from the University of Florida with a degree in business administration.

I am also an activist, advocate, web designer, former newspaper columnist, and I dabble in motivational/inspirational speaking.

For more about me, checkout my website:
www.lookmomnohands.net

All stories submitted to
The People First Connection
are subject to editing for
content, spelling and
grammar.

Seven Years on the Job

Tanya Gauthier
Beaverton

I am a daycare assistant at Shepherd of the Valley Day Care. I have held this same job for seven years. A job coach helped me to find my job.

I go to work five days a week. To get to work I must use the Max Train and a bus. It takes a long time to get there. Everyday I work from 8 in the morning until 2 in the afternoon.

Lots of kids come to our center. They are all four or five years old. My job is to play with them. We play with blocks, Legos and board games.

I also put out their lunch plates and cups of milk. It is also my job to help clean up after them.

At naptime I sit with them and gently rub their backs until they fall asleep. I treat all of the children the same.

I like my job. Everybody there is friendly. Everyone treats me nicely.

I live in a group home. Ten people live there. I have my own room and bathroom. I like it. We have a chef that comes everyday.

Seven Years on the Job (Cont.)

When not working I love to dance. I dance alone in my room. I love loud rock and roll music. Its beat makes it easy to dance.

I once visited Walt Disney World in Florida. The rides were wonderful.

My dream trip would be to New York City. I want to see some Broadway plays.

Personally I am happy and proud to have held the same job for seven years.

Old Home: New Home

**Theresa White
Hillsboro**

I want to talk about my old home and my new home. My old home was a good home when my mom and I first moved there. I liked the manager. I thought she was nice.

But then a neighbor moved in who was too nosey. Every time we did something she called the manager!

Then the neighbor started feeding the Nutria in the backyard. We asked her to stop because I can easily trip over them and hurt myself. We asked the manager for help but she would not help.

Then we had a fire in our garage. Two teenage boys who were playing with combustibles caused it. My bike was burnt up.

We decided to move. Our new home is in Hillsboro. We had to have recommendations to rent a new place.

I love our new place. The neighbors are nice and we have lots of room for my stuff.

I still work at Norm Thompson in Hillsboro. It will soon be ten years that I have worked there. This year I will get a sabbatical, a whole month off with pay. I am going to Disney World in Florida to celebrate my achievement.

Once I got a computer from Norm Thompson because I had perfect attendance at work. That was when I worked at the store in Northwest Portland. The one in Hillsboro is much closer to where we live.

My brothers live in other states. We are all meeting in California for Christmas.

Also I got a brand new red bike to replace the one I lost in the fire.

Softball in Canada

Mark Hertel
Hillsboro

During the summer I went to the town of Sorrowing, Canada. This was my second trip to Canada. I participated in a Women's Fast Pitch Softball Tournament. I still don't understand why it is called a Women's tournament when men play also. It's a funny name.

When I was in Canada and not playing softball I could see and hear all the different types of people and languages. People that live in Canada speak more languages than just English. I heard Chinese, Korean, Japanese and French. I liked listening to those sounds.

I got to play in softball games against teams that had players who were between 6 and 7 feet tall. I felt myself shaking when I saw them come onto the field.

One day we were near a lake. Next to the lake there were a lot of stores. We could go buy shirts, hats, pennants and so forth.

On the third day we were in Canada we went touring. We had lunch in a park and in the park the

American flag and the Canadian flag were flying side by side. Around them were growing flowers of yellow, green and red. I loved it because it was beautiful. I was able to take a picture of it to help me remember.

In the evening they had a huge buffet dinner set up for the hundreds of athletes. In the time we had it was great to meet and become friends with the other athletes.

There were lots of volunteers who supported us.

This was only the second time that I have had an international experience. It was wonderful.

Here in the USA it is rare that you hear other languages. In Hillsboro I hear people speaking Spanish but I do not hear other languages. I really enjoyed walking around and listening to the variety of languages that people speak in Canada.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Self Advocates As Leaders
503 589-1664

The People First Connection
503 284-4972

People Like Me

**Shana Stubbs
Beaverton**

I work at a job in the community. I used to work with kids but I work with people who are elderly now. I started working in a nursing home in 1992. I use to have a grandmother who lived there. I learned about the place when I visited her.

I like my work because I like doing things for older people. I fold laundry. I go to mass at the nursing home on Sundays.

I like living in my own apartment. I have a yellow and green parakeet named Sunshine. He copies me when I cluck my tongue at him. I like having the noise in the house. I've lived on my own since 1988.

A long time ago, before I lived on my own, I was scared of the thought of it. But I don't feel that way now. It is better to live on my own and not have people tell me what to do. I'm much more independent that way.

Being by myself is great.

Now I tell people how I want to be treated. People should treat us well and not be mean to us or call us names. That makes us

feel uncomfortable because it makes us feel bad.

Don't stare at us.

Treat us as well as you would treat other people.

If you want to be more independent then find out how people like me live. Ask us questions.

My Kitties

**Mary Lisor
Bethany**

I have four kitties. One mommy and three baby kitties. I like to take care of my kitties. I like to feed them and give them water.

Most of all I like to play with my kitties. I have toys for my kitties to play with. I like it when they sit on my lap and I can pet them.

My kitties are my friends.

I have other pets too.

I have a chicken.

I live on a farm with my grandmother and grandfather. I feed my chicken.

I help my grandma with her work and I take care of her too.

I like to walk around our farm.

Progress Home

**Donald Scott
Beaverton**

I live at Progress Home. I think my staff is the best. The House Director, parents and staff have been working so hard to make the place perfect for all of us.

I first came to Progress House seven years ago. It was my first time living in a group home. I found it easy to get along with my friends and family. I always respect everyone.

The house is open to all “adventures for people with disabilities,” the director and parents said at the time.

My favorite holiday is Christmas and we celebrate it with all of our hearts. If you believe in the Son of God it is special.

We have a party on the second Tuesday of December to celebrate Jesus’ birthday. All the participants are treasures, people with disabilities.

One thing I like about living in Progress Home is helping each other.

Our director is so great all the time. She is nice to everyone

and also she is very kind and caring with the staff and residents. Her name is Cheri Weber and she is a wonderful friend.

My Life Story

**Robin Grover
Beaverton**

As someone with cerebral palsy I have been through a lot in the past twenty-five years. I was diagnosed when I was two months old. My mother already knew that I had cerebral palsy and she told the doctors.

The doctors told my mother that I would never walk without braces and that I would never be mainstreamed in a regular classroom. I guess I fooled them!

I know that without the family support that I had there is no way I would be the person that I am today.

Much thanks goes out to my mother who has fought for me through all of the years. My brother took care of me while I was growing up. Now I live on my own with a fiancé who really cares about me.

When my mother found out for sure that I had cerebral palsy she got me into physical therapy

My Life Story (Cont.)

and swimming because she knew that without exercise my muscles would atrophy on my whole right side. I have strong determination. I believe that if you don't have the determination you won't go anywhere in life. I have always had determination and I still do, to this very day.

All through grade school and high school I had speech classes, physical therapy, swimming. Even as an adult I still swim a lot.

After I finished my physical therapy with swimming I got a scholarship to participate on the regular swim team.

I believe that you can do anything if you set your mind to it, keep going and don't give up!

Often people have told me of things that I would not be able to do. I have proven those people wrong time and again.

When I was in high school I was often discouraged because of the many times I was told 'you can't do this and you can't do that.' I said, "Wait a minute. I can do anything I choose. I am just as good as anyone else."

Not Enough Friends

**Janet Marie Smith
Mt. Angel**

I work at the Mt. Angel Training Center. I like my job but I need to find another one. I do not have nearly enough relationships in my life. I wish I could find some.

I went to Woodburn High School. I had lots of friends who were "Bulldogs." But now I need more friends.

Right now I don't go to People First. I am sad a lot.

My parents are dead but they are up in spirit. I used to hate it when my family had fights.

On December 14 I will be forty years old.

I Like My Job

**Wally Berning
Mt. Angel**

I work at Mt. Angel Training Center in Mt. Angel, Oregon. I start work at 8:30 a.m. everyday from Monday to Friday.

My Job (Cont.)

The first thing I like when I come to work is seeing my friends. I like it when we take breaks and I can drink my hot chocolate and spend time with my girlfriend. Her name is Amy.

At work I sit on an assembly line and we put hospital kits together.

I like when we go out to lunch with my favorite staff. We usually go eat pizza at the pizzeria in Mt. Angel.

Things That I Do

Mathew Holt
Mt. Angel

I live in a group home. Everyday I come to work in Mt. Angel. I just love to get my mail.

I am a member of Self Advocates As Leaders. I really, really like it!

My dad and I are working on a Model-T fire truck.

Last summer I traveled to Nashville, Tennessee for a vacation. The first thing I did when we got there was to go out and buy

a music tape by Earnest Tubbs. He is a big legend in country music.

While in Nashville I went to a Saloon and listened to music. I also went shopping and played video games.

We went for a cruise on a ship called the "General Jackson." It is a big steamboat. We had lunch. We rode the steamboat and watched the water and the steam wheel. It was fun.

Travel

Donald Sequin
Mt. Angel

I was born in Los Angeles, California. I was born with serious heart problems. I was blue when I was born. My doctor's name was Doctor Carten.

I like swimming and boating.

I went to New Orleans. I had a chocolate desert.

I have been to Disneyland.

The People First Connection
Will provide you with supports
to do a story. Everyone is
important.
Call SAAL at
503 589-1664