

Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month Event March 2008

Opening Remarks by Bill Lynch, Executive Director
Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities

“On behalf of OCDD, welcome and thank you for being here.

Today we take time from our busy schedules to reflect on the progress we’ve made in providing every Oregonian with developmental disabilities a life that is rich in choice, self determination and opportunity.

And we have been making progress.

By 2011 we will have a systematic way to truly understand the support needs of individuals with developmental disabilities in comprehensive services and build budgets that reflect those individual needs.

By 2010 we will be among an elite collection of states that no longer have large institutions for people with developmental disabilities.

And by 2009 we will be one of the only states where every adult with developmental disabilities can get timely access to support services.

In our pursuit of these important goals, we cannot forget about our most basic obligation to people with developmental disabilities, which is to ensure their safety and well-being. For some of you here today, abuse and neglect is not just something you read about in the papers – it is a real life experience for you or people you love.

This deplorable reality is not just about quality of care – it is a matter of social justice. I encourage you to read and reflect on the images and words on the beautiful banners behind me – words spoken by champions of social justice and human rights. And I encourage you to join us in the fight to provide our brothers and sisters with their fundamental rights to:

- Life free of abuse and neglect
- Liberty free of institutions
- And the Pursuit of Happiness through healthy, loving relationships.”