

The People First

Connection

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



Do I Belong?

Jeni Granger
Lyons

I awake on a rainy morning. As I go out into society I dread each moment. My school is supposed to be a place of safety. But feelings of insecurity take place in the hearts of students who attend my high school. The clock strikes three and I hurry through the halls to escape. I race through traffic knowing that each mile I go I come closer to a place of safety.

Feelings of fear and of being struck down are at the door of my soul. The only place I can be set free of society is out of society. I run to the mountains. Leaving everything behind me I run full speed out into the open field. The ground beneath is solid and secure.

I stop and sit by a peaceful stream and only hear the water running over pebbles. In the distance a pheasant is singing in the quietness of the forest. This pheasant is one that has been raised from a baby and set free before it became tame, into the freedom of nature where it belongs. I get up from where I am sitting and quiet comes, no more is the pheasant singing because it hears danger in its habitat.

Horses on my left stop and stare. They rarely see humans. I begin to think about the things out in nature that are living but are hidden. Things we forget to show care and love to. Things, and people, begin to shrivel up and die from lack of love and care.

Continuing past the horses and approaching the mountain, I look up and set a destination point where I am determined to get to. The sun is setting over the mountain as I continue on my

Do I Belong? (cont.)

adventure away from society. I begin a race with the sun to see if I can get up and back down the mountain before the sun sets. The more I climb the more the sun begins to lie over the fields below. I feel a sense of power to know that I am above the sun before it has set.

The earth below is wet and the rain from the morning is draining off the mountain. I slip and fall on the steep trail but continue. Nothing is going to stop me from getting to the top of the mountain. Stones and pebbles fall and bounce down as they are shaken from their place on the earth's surface. A pathway of rainwater is rushing down the man-made trail on the side of the mountain.

As I climb up I leave behind the things I use to cover myself from society. The mask I put on my face to hide out in society falls off into the bushes. I can now take off the shield I place over my heart to protect myself from being hit. Weight I carry on my back tumbles to the ground and sits on the soil I pass by. Now I can run up the mountain with nothing to slow me down.

The air is crisp and clear as I finally reach my destination on the top of the mountain. I turn to look out across the valley. I scream at the top of my lungs because I have overcome the valley below. I stand on the top of the mountain while the sun sits below. There is a feeling of connection in some unknown way to know that I am above the sun's level on the earth's surface. I treasure the moments spent on top of the mountain edge before I come to realize that I must, inevitably, make my way back to society.

I make my way down the mountain. As I go, I put back on the mask to hide my face. I find my shield in the bushes to put over my heart. And gradually I take on the weight that I desire to leave behind. But it is a part of me that I cannot leave behind.

I find my shield and I take on the weight. They are parts of me that I cannot leave behind.

I wish I could be set as free as the pheasants. But I know that we humans are meant to live in a culture that is bound together with shields and weights.

Jeni Granger lives in Lyons, Oregon with her family. She has just graduated from high school and is active in the Northwest Rett Syndrome Foundation.

Advocates Corner

Where Do We Go From Here?

Judy Cunio
Salem

For the past year or more, we have been fighting hard to keep the services that we already have. And it has been a real struggle, especially for the people who receive services from brokerages and The Staley agreement.

Many people are confused and upset because the brokerages have been open less than two years and have already been at risk.

As a Self-Advocate myself, I know what it feels like not to have control over how you live your life or what services you may or may not get. For years I could never make any of my own plans and I really felt helpless.

That's not a very good feeling.

We must keep advocating for what we need to live more independent and productive lives. It is even more important to speak out when we are facing cuts, even when you feel like giving up because "what good will it do anyway?"

Don't be afraid to be heard. Anything worth having is worth fighting for.

The Legislative session is now over. They voted for an income tax increase. This income tax increase will help the state's budget so that they will not have to make any more cuts in services.

But there could be a special election in February 2004 because some people don't want new taxes. But without these new taxes our services will be cut.

Be sure to vote.

Judy Cunio of Salem is the Self-Advocacy Coordinator at the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities.

Do you have a story or article you would like to submit to
**The People First
Connection?**

Email it to us at
mtbclarion@comcast.net

or call 503 284-4972
and we will help you!

Everyone's Thoughts Matter!

Lead On!

Dear *People First Connection*,

We love you. Justin loved you and will continue to love you. Happy Independence Day! We congratulate you on your passionate advocacy everyday! You are the true patriots of human struggle. You are America the beautiful!

We join you in celebrating the ADA. Thanks to you, we have made a great deal of progress toward realization of our dreams. But as we celebrate, we are mindful that ADA is under attack. Democracy is under attack.

As we celebrate, let us rededicate ourselves to the revolutions of 1776, 1964 and 1990. Let us rededicate ourselves to the spirit of the Torch of Liberty.

Listen to Justin. He is still urging us to rise above politics as usual, and to join together, Republicans, Democrats, Americans. He is still urging us to embrace each other in reverence for the individual human life, and to unite in action to keep the sacred pledge – liberty and justice for all.

Together, but only together united in love and truth, we shall free our people and we shall overcome.

We love you!

Keep leading us on.

Yoshiko Dart and family
Washington, DC

“I call for solidarity among all who love justice, all who love life, to create a revolution that will empower every single human being to govern his or her life, to govern the society and to be fully productive of life quality for self and for all.”

“I do so love you, my beautiful colleagues in the disabilities rights movement.”

“Thanks to you I die free. I die in the beautiful belief that the revolution of empowerment will go on.”

Justin Dart, Jr.
Aug. 29, 1930 –
June 22, 2002.

Happy House

Julie Powers
Dallas

Hello. My name is Julie Powers. I was born on October 16 1953 in Portland, Oregon.

I spent two years at the Dallas Retirement Center but in March of 2003 I moved to my new home.

I call it the "Happy House." I call it that because I am happy there.



Now I get to go to work, go shopping, go dancing, go bowling, make jewelry, do my own laundry, stay up as late at night as I want, type on my typewriter, go to the movies, cook brownies, go on car rides, go to the beach and my favorite thing of all, play bingo.

I like living in my "Happy House."

Writer's Workshops

On July 23, Self Advocates As Leaders sponsored a Writer's Workshop at the public library in Monmouth. Nine writers from Polk County participated in the workshop along with Sarah Bustamante from Self-Advocates As Leaders and Michael Bailey of *The People First Connection*.

All of the participants thank their wonderful support people who attended and who helped to write many of the articles in this issue of *The People First Connection*.

Participants in the workshop included **Julie Powers, Mike Santos, David Bathke, Jeanne Kroeker, Marilyn Grazen, Chrissy Moller, Wes Anderson, Josh Mills and Travis Streets.**

Self Advocates As Leaders believes that everyone is important and that everyone has something to say. One way to say what you feel and think is by participating in a writer's workshop and getting published. We will help you.

To arrange a workshop or get support for an article call 503 284- 4972 or email us at mtbclarion@comcast.net

Self Advocates As Leaders Contact Information

Self Advocates As Leaders is always looking for new people to participate in our activities. We are easy to reach.

Dayna Davis, Chair
Cindy Helvington, Director
161 High Street
Salem, OR 97301
503 232- 9154 x 133
chelvington@mindspring.com

Jill Murray, Staff
murrayj@ohsu.edu
Sarah Bustamante
bustaman@ohsu.edu

3608 SE Powell
Portland, OR 97202
503 232 -9154 x 134
503 232- 6423 (Fax)

There are many training and advocacy opportunities available.

We want and need your participation. Please contact us!

Home

David Bathie
Dallas

I came to Polk County Living in 1991. Then I lived in Dallas, Oregon at the Mill Street house. I liked the food there. I worked at Goodwill.

Now I live at Veazie House in Dallas. I work at a bakery.

I make cookies. My favorite cookie is chocolate chip. I want to continue working there.

I attended Grabenhorst camp this year at Camp Tapawingo in Falls City, Oregon. I made a necklace and a t-shirt.

I live with two roommates. I like them. We live near the city park. I like the park.

Writer's Workshop

October 15

The Arc of Lane County

45 W. Broadway

Eugene

3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Call SAAL to register

www.asksaal.org

Love to Shop

Jeanne Kroeker
Dallas

This story is about shopping. I like to go clothes shopping. I like pants the most.

I like all kinds of pants, long pants, short pants, any kind of pants.

Red is my favorite color of pants. But I would never wear orange pants.



I like belts, and sometimes I wear them, but they have to go with my pants. I like soft pants the best. That is important because I sit in pants a lot.

Pants that are too long are a problem and I don't like them when I am trying to walk.

I think that pants are the most important clothes that I wear.

It is hard for me to talk about pants and legs and how I feel about them.

It is hard for me to walk as well as I want to. It takes a long time to walk the way I want to.

I get very tired of being in chairs. I want to walk more and I will!

Work Everyday

Chrissy Moller
Independence

My name is Chrissy Moller and I live in Independence, Oregon. I live there with my care provider.

I like baby dolls, necklaces, rings and bracelets.

I work at Work Force in Dallas, Oregon. I like it there. I go to work everyday.

The People First Connection
wants and needs your story.

**For many of us writing is scary.
But anyone can do it with the
right supports and some
encouragement.**

**Call Michael Bailey, editor
503 284- 4972**

We will help you!

My Busy Days

Marilyn Grazen
Monmouth

I grew up right here in Monmouth, Oregon. I lived with my mom and dad. My dad worked for the Post Office in Monmouth.

When I was younger I worked at Polk Enterprises in a sheltered workshop. I sorted paper for recycling.

In 1989 I left my parent's home and moved into a group home on Stadium Street.

I liked it but I missed my mom and dad. But my roommate's mom liked me.

I went home to visit and my mom would come and visit me.

I have moved several times since those early days. My mom is now living in a nursing home in Newberg, Oregon. I go to visit her every few months.

I do need to work. It exercises my hands. I make things to take to my mom.

I work at Mid-Valley. We just moved into a new building that is air-conditioned.

I live with a family now. I like it there with them.

Sometimes my brother takes me to visit my mom. He lives in Newberg, like her.

He takes peanuts to her and then I eat them when I visit.

I made some things for a recent auction. I like doing projects.

THIS IS MY APPEAL!

**“Let us unite in a revolution
to eliminate primitive
practices and stereotypes,
and to establish a culture
that focuses the full force of
science and democracy on
the systematic
empowerment of every
person to live his or her God
given potential.**

**No soldier has ever died in a
better cause!**

*Statement of Conscience
1998*

**Justin Dart, Jr.
1930 – 2002**

Love to Flirt

Wes Anderson
Dallas

Hi! My name is Wes Anderson. I live at the Veazie Street House in Dallas, Oregon.

I love to hang out with people and listen to their conversations.

I work at Workforce Industries. I socialize with everyone there.

My favorite color is red. My favorite thing to do is to go to my mom's. She is the most important person in my life.

I also love children. They make me smile.

Things I like to do are going to the beach and do anything that involves people.

I also love the ladies.

I love to flirt.

You can email your story to
The People First
Connection.

mtbclarion@comcast.org

Stories submitted are subject to editing for spelling, grammar and content.

Movies

Josh Mills
Dallas

I really like to watch movies. I like the character "Chucky", the killer doll.

But my favorite movie is Pinocchio.

I also like fire trucks and I love to travel.

Once I took a trip to the beach and played in the sand.

We all went out to eat and my roommate was there, too.

Important Dates

Celebrate Wellness

A conference to promote wellness of Oregonians with disabilities.

October 16 and 17 at the Sheraton Airport Hotel.

Contact Angela Weaver

503 494 -1205

weaverro@ohsu.edu

Family Conference on Cerebral Palsy and Related Disabilities

November 7 and 8

Wilsonville Holiday Inn

503 777- 4166

A Book of a Mysterious Author

Jeni Granger
Lyons

Sitting here alone listening
to the world go by.

The days seem endless and
without a cause at times.

Thoughts come and go, as
does everything else.

I look around wondering
where I will be a year from now.

Will I affect people in a
positive or a negative way?

And will others affect me in
a positive or a negative way?

As I look to my past,
thinking of those I have left
behind.

I pray that they haven't
forgotten me.

As they have a place in my
heart, I hope I have a place in
theirs.

My wishes and dreams are
roaming around in the back of my
mind.

Knowing that the choices I
make at this time in my life, could
affect the rest of my life.

I am careful not to jump at
things, but take every bit in that I
can.

Each page of the book about
my life I am anxious to turn.

The author of this book is
unpredictable

And that's what makes the
book worth reading.

I wouldn't change anything
in the past

As I know it has all made
me who I am.

And the future will make me
whom I become.

I will make my book worth
reading when it is finished.

By pleasing the author or
my life.

The life started rough for me
but I will end it with satisfaction.

Life is an adventure that
must be chosen to take.

For some it is as simple as
getting up and loving to face the
world.

For others it is a struggle
just to want to breathe their next
breath.

A Book of a Mysterious Author (cont.)

Roads I take may have dead
ends.

I will figure out why I was
brought to the dead end

And turn around with what I
find at each end.

I may fall to my knees but I
will always get up.

I started out this life in a
fight to live.

I choose to live and
therefore I will give it everything I
have.

Brokered Services Open Enrollment

**The temporary freeze on
new enrollments for brokered
services under the Staley
Settlement has been lifted.**

**With the adoption of the
state budget, brokerages are
once again enrolling new
customers.**

**To begin the process of
accessing services through a
brokerage call your county
Developmental Disabilities
Program Office.**

ADAPT Marches for Justice

On September 4, 2003,
disability activists began an
historic march from Philadelphia
to Washington, DC. The march,
sponsored by ADAPT.

During the 140-mile march
participants will sleep on cots, in
tents and on the ground. Marchers
plan to cover 8 to 12 miles per day.
They plan to arrive in Washington
on September 17.

The march supports
Congressional action this year on
MiCassa, the ADAPT sponsored
legislation that will assure
Medicaid funding for individuals
in their own homes. According to
ADAPT the bills passage will free
thousands of people from nursing
homes and enable them to live in
their own homes.

An ADAPT spokesperson
said, “by enduring the obvious
hardships of the march we will be
demonstrating our commitment to
all persons, young and old, having
the choice AND the opportunity to
live in their community with the
supports they need.”

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Yes! Sign me up for all future editions.

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