

The People First Connection

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



What SAAL Does

Dayna Davis

My name is Dayna Davis and I am an AmeriCorps Volunteer in Service to America (VISTA) for Self-Advocates As Leaders (SAAL). I am a strong self-advocate for people with developmental disabilities and I love training other people with developmental disabilities to take control of their own lives and advocate for themselves.

Self-Advocates As Leaders is a group of people with disabilities who are committed to making life better for people all over Oregon. SAAL is a coalition of self-advocates interested in developing leadership skills and becoming equal partners in policy and legislation that affects our lives.

Here are 11 ways you can become involved in SAAL and learn how to advocate for yourself or others with developmental disabilities.

1. Join the SAAL mailing list.
2. Apply for a SAAL committee.
3. Attend a Writer's Workshop.
4. Write an article for *The People First Connection*.
5. Apply for the Editorial Board of *The People First Connection* (PFC).
6. Go to a SAAL training!
7. Be a SAAL representative on a Board of Directors.
8. Be the person in your town to pass on local information to the SAAL website.
9. Share SAAL brochures and Newsletters with people you know.
10. Help with a SAAL training.

SAAL (cont.)

11. Look at the SAAL website at www.asksaal.org and see what's there!

SAAL offers many different kinds of trainings. We would be happy to provide a training that you are interested in. Please contact me and let me know what trainings you would like SAAL to provide.

You can contact me by phone at 1-800-410-7069 ext # 133 or 541-868-2507 and by email at daynamo@msn.com

I look forward to hearing from you.

I Know Some Things

**Laura May Perkins
Mt. Angel**

People should not criticize others for the way they talk. It hurts their feelings.

I never attended school. I never learned anything. But I do know how to be nice.

Now I know how to make napkin rings. I want to learn to

write. I can print but I can't see the small printing. I want to learn how.

We shouldn't criticize other people because they are smaller in size. I learned to speak up for myself but it is scary.

I have learned how to make new friends. New friends make me happy.

Two times I have gone to Branson, Missouri to have a nice trip and listen to music.

I have three cats. Their names are Popcorn, Jin-Jin and Suzie.

I also have four cockatoos. Their names are Perry, Marg, Karen and Linda.

People First

**Joe Davis
Silverton**

Here is what I like about People First meetings.

Going to dances. I like the music that is there. I like the girls that are there. I like my friends that are there.

I like the dinners that they have at the convention. I like the desserts that they have there.

I like going for walks. I like the story that I think of before I go outside for a walk.

I like to see some of my friends.

ADVOCATES CORNER

Voting: It's Our Right and Responsibility.

Judy Cunio

Have you ever voted in a public election? Did you know that you could? Well, you can, and you should. Anyone who is 18 or older has the right to vote.

You may not think that your vote matters. But every vote counts. This year is very important. We will elect the next President of the United States, as well as our U.S. Representatives and state Legislators.

You may have some questions about voting or may need a little help in understanding how the voting process works.

In order to vote you must follow certain rules.

Before you can vote in a public election, you have to register in the county you intend to vote in. There are several places in your community where you can go to register, such as your County Elections Office and Department of Motor Vehicles Office.

How do you get registered?

You need to fill out a voter's registration card at least 21 days

before Election Day. (By October 12). Voter registration cards are available in most public libraries and post offices.

Do you have to register before every election?

No.

The only time you would register again is when you move or change your last name.

SO GET OUT AND VOTE!

This Is My Life

**Kathy Painter
Portland**

Hi. I'm Kathy and a self-advocate with cerebral palsy. This is my story.

I have worked for the Commission for the Blind for 25 years, and we have started an enclave. It is a little coffee shop in Multnomah County's Health Building. It is real fun and interesting. I am a cashier there. I also work at Oregon Industries for the Blind.

Sometimes at the coffee shop I have language barrier problems. One time a man from another country wouldn't wait for his change and I couldn't tell him to wait.

Both of my jobs are very interesting and exciting positions.

My Life (cont.)

But I am working towards learning about computers and maybe it will turn into data entry.

I also have been discriminated against for other positions out in the community.

Now I'm going to tell a little about my family life. Dad always took me everywhere. He never left me alone unless I wanted to be. I always went everywhere with him. And I miss that because now I am in a foster home.

Since I became a self-advocate I've been on two different Boards of Directors. I've been on the board of Self Determination Resources, Inc. and Unlimited Choices.

I like the fact that my self-advocacy skills can be used to help other people.

Work

David Sinquentes
Mt. Angel

I like working. I like putting items into the basin. I hunt for papers. I keep the papers in a book. When I am done working I can go back and draw on them.

My Story

Pat Muller
Seaside

I have lived in Seaside a long time. I like it here because the ocean is near and it is fun.

I like to fly kites, swim, walk on the beach, ride my bike on the promenade, running, sports and being involved with people. I like to get others involved in Special Olympics.

I have a small dog at home. His name is Ready. He is a cocker spaniel. I like movies. I like the arcade games. In my house I am the cook. My best dish is spaghetti. My father taught me to cook. I do doughnuts too.

I once worked at Clem's Bakery in Portland.

My wife and I like to greet the runners at the Special Olympics finish line with a big hug, and say "you made it!"

My wife's name is Donna. She likes to plant flowers with me.

When I was a child I got up at 5 a.m. to pick strawberries.

We have a roommate named Kay that helps us. My wife needs help because she is sick with bad kidneys.

Another wonderful lady that helps us is Carol Coral.

Music and More Music

DJL
Portland

In 1995 I started going to Up and Out, Inc. For the past nine years I have been the disc jockey (DJ) for all their parties. It makes me feel so good because people enjoy my work. Now I am their permanent DJ.

In 2000 I started my own business being the DJ at dances for people with disabilities. For five years now I have spun records of music from the 50's, 60's, 70's and 80's. Everybody likes my DJ work.

When I started with my brokerage I got to DJ their annual picnic in June 2003. Everyone enjoyed it.

I also do their annual variety show.

As a matter of fact I have often been in the newspaper.

Through the years I have built up my own DJ equipment. Now I own lights, speakers, microphones, sound boards and CDs. It took me years to build up my own collection of CDs.

What I Do Every Week

Donald Heinz
Mt. Angel

Saturday is my favorite day. First I sleep in and then we go on an outing. This week we are going to the Portland Zoo. Every Saturday night I go to a dance with my support person Sandy. I meet my girlfriend at the dance.

Sunday is an okay day too. Every Sunday I go to visit my sister and see my father. They live in Aurora, Oregon. On Sunday I wash my clothes and change my bed and get ready to go to work on Monday.

On Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday I work at the Mt. Angel Training Center. My job is nice and I like the people I work with. My friends and I go to have lunch sometimes at restaurants in downtown Mt. Angel.

When I am not working I like to watch baseball and wrestling on television. I also like to watch episodes of "Perry Mason."

On Friday I am happy because my favorite days are Saturday and Sunday and they are next.

My New Life

**Linda Allen
Hood River**

I have lived in nursing homes and hospitals. My feelings and thoughts were changed there. When I found out that I have a sleep disorder the first thought that went through my mind was, "how much is this going to cost?" By using my Oregon Health Plan Medical Card I was able to pay for the machine I need to help me sleep.

I had three surgeries in three years. In 2001 I had by-pass surgery. In 2003 I had thyroid surgery and in 2004 carpal tunnel surgery on both of my hands.

During that time my one goal was to be able to ride a mountain bike. I enjoy riding my bike. I also like to sew.

I keep praying to God that I can handle anything that is placed in my life's path. One of my goals has been to have better health. Having all of those surgeries over has helped a lot with that.

While I was working on my health God answered one of my prayers by bringing a very special person into my life. That person and I share the experience of

growing together and learning how to really enjoy life.

In my present life I have the chance to see the case workers from The ARC help others to grow in so many different ways. Plus I have had the wonderful opportunity of having others come to me and ask me questions about life and how to deal with its challenges and learn how to enjoy it. It makes me feel so good when others come to me with serious questions about life and I feel that I can give them answers about things that I have already gone through.

There are a lot of wonderful people that I have met during my life. Everyday each one of us grows in so many new and wonderful ways.

I am better. My health is better. I survived yet another surgery in February 2004. There is so much more out there for me to learn and experience. I am enjoying my new life with my boyfriend. I tell others how wonderful it is to have a special person to share life's joy and adventure with.

Plus, I have been given something I never thought I would get. Someone gave me some yarn to use to make things. With that yarn I have started my own business.

My new life is full of joy and surprises.

A Career To Be Proud Of

**Peter Mark
Portland**

For 27 years I have worked at a hospital in Portland. I work in the housekeeping department. I pick up the trash, cut cardboard, haul very heavy recycling bags and whatever other assignments I am given.

During my time at the hospital there have been a lot of changes in the routine, including many new supervisors. My supervisor tells me that I am the ambassador for the department.

Like that television show "Cheers", I work where everybody knows my name. I know a lot about television and guest stars who appear on shows. I know what I have seen them do.

Whenever a movie star passes away I read about them in the newspaper. Sometimes I get heat flashes when I feel sad about them passing away. Sometimes I have cried about their deaths.

There are lots of fun things to do in life and I like to do them. There is a lot more to life than watching television.

I like the outdoors. I like to walk with someone but mostly I

like to walk alone. When it comes to others I know that I have a lot of responsibility.

I take pictures with my camera. I take pictures of telephone poles and signs. These signs are mostly restaurants, motels, stores or whatever turns my fancy.

I like to look at stoplights. They are called signals.

I like to eat out with friends. I like to go to movies. I also like to entertain.

I like cats because of the sound they make when they purr. My favorite cat color is black. I have a black leopard that is stuffed and he is my family cat. I have had that cat for 28 years.

I had a real cat that had kittens.

These are some of the things that are important in my life. There are others.

But mostly I am proud of my career at the hospital. I am a good worker who comes to work on time and ready to work.

**Email your story to
*The People First Connection***

**If you have access to email
you can just email us your
story. Send it to**

mtbclarion@comcast.net

SAAL Holds 2004-06 Elections

Linda Retherford has been elected the new SAAL Chair! Linda is a long time member of SAAL and was the Vice Chair of Operations until her election as Chair on June 16th.

Dayna Davis, founding member of SAAL and former Chair will continue to serve on the Operations Committee as a mentor to Linda.

Eddie Plourde has been elected as the Vice Chair of Operations. Eddie was from Coos Bay but recently moved to Salem.

Welcome to the new officers.

We Want Your Story

At *The People First Connection* everyone matters and every voice is heard. We believe that every person has an important and unique story to tell.

For many of us the idea of actually writing an article is scary. *The People First Connection* will help you get your story written and published.

If you have a story for us, or if you want help in preparing a story, simply email us at mtbclarion@comcast.net

We will see that you get the help you need to see your words in print.

If you would like to arrange a Writer's Workshop in your part of the state, please call SAAL at 1-800-410-7069 ext. 133.

Each year we bring our workshops to many parts of Oregon.

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What Makes Me Happy

Amy Quest
Mt. Angel

Eating, swimming and People First meetings make me happy. Sunglasses make me happy. Paper and Amy's dog make me happy. Being with cats makes me happy.

My shirt and shorts and eating and dancing make me happy.

I have five boyfriends. They make me happy too.

My Best Friend and Me

**Charlotte Brutshcer
Woodburn**

When I moved out of Fairview Training Center I moved to Mt. Angel. There I met my best friend. Her name is Janet.

We share a room together. We work at the same job. We share breaks and lunches together.

I like to tell stories and watch movies with her.

Recently we moved to Woodburn together.

When I go on vacation I like to come home and tell Janet how much fun it was.

I hope we are best friends forever.

Vote!

**If you are 18 years old
or older you have the
right to vote!
Be powerful!!
Express yourself!!
Vote in every election.**

Skiing

**Erik Morgan
Silverton**

On a snowy day Mathew, John, Kacy and I went skiing at Hoodoo Ski Bowl. After arriving we checked with the downstairs supply room to see how many skis we would need. Mathew and I helped with the people who were in wheelchairs.

After settling in, I finally got to put on my skis and go out on the slope. While skiing I did too many turns trying to maintain my balance.

I ran into my Dad and broke his left arm. After breaking Dad's arm we gathered our things and got ready to get into the van and go home.

After arriving home we unloaded the equipment. That included gloves, helmets and Dad's skis.

My mom drove dad to the nearest hospital. They did x-rays on his arm. After a while Dad came home in a big cast.

A few weeks later dad finally got his cast off but then he had to wear a big brace on his arm.

That was the day I went on my ski trip.

Collecting

Brian Haslek
Mt. Angel

I like to collect things. I like to collect GI Joe figures and Star Wars figures and airplane calendars. I get them as gifts at Christmas time. My mom always gives me airplane calendars. Sometimes I do mail orders for some of my action figures.

I keep them because they might be worth money in the near future. They stay in their boxes. GI Joe figures are in plastic containers and Star Wars figures are in a show box. The calendars are on the wall.

It is interesting to collect things.

My friend Shane Warva used to live on Hook Road in Mount Angel and he collected old GI Joe and Star Wars figures too.

I met Shane in a special education class and he is the one who got me started collecting GI Joe and Star Wars figures.

Shane had to move to Portland and got a job at the Portland Library. He and his girlfriend like to do things on the Internet.

I don't get to see Shane anymore but he talked to my mom at Christmas time and told her that

he and his girlfriend are getting married. That is nice.

I also like to collect books about airplanes and aircraft carriers. I like to watch global war movies and John Wayne movies.

A Higher Purpose

Tim Molin
Mt. Angel

When I lived at Fairview Training Center people used to call us mentally retarded people. We did not like that name. What we wanted was for people to call us adults. I don't like those words, "mentally retarded." I didn't like being called names like that. It hurt my feelings and it still does.

I have been active in the People First organization in Mt. Angel for many years. People First does a lot of very important work. But there are improvements that need to be made.

People First needs to spread out more and invite more new people to join and participate. People need to understand that we have a good time in our meetings and activities.

The time we spend at the annual convention is fun. May People First grow and may we remember what we stand for.

My Family

Jeff Glaser

Mt. Angel

My family has always been there for me. When I am sick or hurt I can count on them to be there. They do a lot for me. When I am sick they take me home or to the hospital.

They lend me money or buy me things like clothes when I can't afford them myself. They take me places like bookstores, parties and other places I like to go.

Even my brother, who lives elsewhere, helps me out anytime he can.

My family has also taught me a lot about life and how to do things like reading. The doctors told my family that I could never read but my family didn't accept that and they taught me to read. It is my favorite thing and I can read really well. I can read books that might be hard for others who are like me.

Because of what my family has done for me I have been able to give back to them. I love reading books like "The Hardy Boys," "Nancy Drew," and other books based on television shows or movies. Years ago I discovered books based on the television show "Miami Vice." I think these books

are so cool because of the television show tie-in.

I have also taken an interest in music. I especially like music from the 70's and 80's. My favorite music is that of Queen and Huey Lewis.

Other things that I love to do with my family are taking vacations, doing work at home, yard work or other things.

My family has also helped me through terrible times like when my grandpa died or when students at school called me names. My family has also done other things for me like tape my favorite television shows and listened to my problems and concerns. Like when I was scared because my little brother was sick. He is all well now. I am so proud of him because of how he has changed his life.

I am also proud of the rest of my family for their many accomplishments. I always put my family first.

When it comes to my friends and family I am always concerned when they are sick or hurt. But they always get better.

***"Everyone is a leader.
Everyone matters. Lead on!"***

Justin Dart, Jr.
Winner of the Presidential Medal
of Freedom and Wheelchair user.