

The People First Connection

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



Billy's Story

Billy Carney
Grants Pass

I met Charla in the building I lived in. People had told her of a man who was lonely. One day Charla and a girlfriend were in the recreation room at the same time as me. Charla's girlfriend was interested in me but was too shy to come and ask me out. So, she asked Charla to ask me out for her.

Charla had other ideas. She came up to me and said, "Hi, my name is Chip." Later I found out that she liked chocolate chip cookies.

We talked for a bit and she asked me up to her place for a cup of coffee. I went up there for coffee and from then on we could not get enough of each other. When she went away for two weeks to visit her grandmother I

realized that I loved her. Charla and I married on May 2, 1992.

At the time of our marriage Charla was already involved in Special Olympics. She told me about it and I got interested in it and she signed me up for it. The first event I participated in was Track and Field. Since then I have done softball throw, basketball, softball, volleyball and bowling. For twelve years I have practiced twice a week. For the first time this gave me the opportunity to travel around Oregon and make friends along the way.

When you have been in a sport for a long time, a committee will pick your name and see if you qualify to be on the United States Special Olympics Team. If selected you participate in training camps where you compete against other people on the list who are trying to make the team. The coaches watch and give you tips. I was selected to participate as a member of the bowling team and

Billy's Story

Charla was selected for weight lifting.

We rode a bus to Portland and stayed for one night in a hotel before leaving on a plane for New Haven, Connecticut. When we arrived we were taken by bus to the Central Community College dormitories where we stayed during the competition.

The next morning we got up and had breakfast and caught a bus to New York City. This was our planned leisure activity before the Olympics began. In New York City we saw Ellis Island, the Statute of Liberty and the New York art museums. We also had lunch and went shopping before our return to Connecticut.

In Connecticut we also got to see Yale University and the New Haven Church. What is different about that church is that there are famous people buried in the basement. The wife of the famous patriot Paul Revere is buried there. We also saw sail boats and appreciated how beautiful Connecticut is.

I would encourage everyone to go on as many trips as possible and appreciate how pretty the world is.

In the competition I competed against athletes from all

over the world. I was awarded three gold medals.

Charla's Story

Charla Carney Grants Pass

I have been married to Billy Carney for twelve years. When you have a disability you can do anything that anyone else can do. Things like holding a job and having fun in the community. You can get married. Some people are surprised that we can get married. Even when you have a disability you still have feelings and it hurts to be laughed at.

People don't need to be afraid of us. We have a disability, not a disease. We need love and friends and people to support us in what we do and to help us be proud of ourselves. We try to do our best in whatever we do.

I think that I can be an inspiration to others with disabilities and help them be proud of who they are.

I help other Special Olympics athletes to prepare for competition. I help people with dancing, I read for others and help them with their self-esteem. I

Charla's Story

listen to others when they need it. Sometimes I help people carry things.

I do fundraisers such as March of Dimes, AIDS Awareness, Breast Cancer and Special Olympics.

I also helped my mom take care of my grandmother until she passed away a couple of years ago.

I have had a lot of jobs. I worked in a nursing home helping to dress patients. I have worked at Job Counseling and have been a landscaper helping to mow seniors' yards. I have done office work and worked for the school district.

My hobbies include embroidery and making quilts and towels. I would like to travel more. I dream of going to England and visiting Althorp Manor where Princess Diana was born. I would like to place flowers on her resting place.

I am also President of People First of Grants Pass.

I participate in a pageant called Special Beauties. It is dedicated to a special woman who had a son with Down syndrome. She used to help with Special Olympics and we all called her a mother, friend and supporter.

People who participate in Special Beauties get to take a tour of the theater district in Ashland. Then we go for an interview and questions before a panel of five judges.

There is a talent practice, luncheon and we get our hair and make-up done by volunteer professionals. The previous years winner gets a ride in a stretch limo. When we return to the hotel people clap for us and greet us and we have a wonderful dinner with our sponsors.

Next day we do the pageant. The competition is talent, followed by evening gown modeling. Police officers in uniform escort us and give us a rose. Then there is an award ceremony. The winner gets a \$100 shopping spree.

I have some role models. My husband Billy is one. My parents are another. They love me and are proud of me and what I have done with my life. They are a help to me. Another is Carrie Hughes who got me into the Beauty Pageant. She cares about people with disabilities. She helps me and has never laughed at me.

I also admire Mother Theresa. I live by what she stands for in helping others who are sick or homeless. I also like many of the people in my life without a disability. People who care about us, listen to us and don't treat us differently.

Trust Fund Dollars Available

Judy Cunio

In 1999, the legislature passed a law that said that when all of the people were moved out of Fairview and it was sold, the money from the sale would go into a trust fund. The law says that 5 percent of the money and all the interest can be used to make community housing more accessible for people with developmental disabilities.

Fairview was sold for about \$15,000,000. (15 Million dollars!)

An advisory committee of self-advocates, family members, professionals and other advocates wrote rules on how the trust fund would work. They decided that the fund should give small grants for housing modifications and equipment for people with developmental disabilities who are not in residential programs such as foster care, supported living and group homes.

Deadline for the first round of grant applications is April 15, 2004.

The money can be used in your own home, your family home or a rented apartment with your landlord's okay. The person must have a developmental disability to qualify.

Here are some questions and answers that may help you understand how the fund works.

Question: What kind of things qualify for a grant?

Answer: All kinds of home modifications or equipment that will help you to become more independent such as building ramps, making doorways wider for wheelchairs, and making bathrooms more accessible. The money can also be used for assistive technology such as putting an intercom system in your home or equipment that makes it easier for you to use the phone. There are many ways that you can use the money.

Question: What kind of things can the grant not be used for?

Answer: The money cannot be used for paying rent, for normal maintenance and repair, or for things that do not help with the health and safety or independence of the person who is applying for the grant.

Question: Who can apply?

Housing Trust Fund

Answer: If you are a person with a developmental disability and do not live in a licensed home or facility, you are eligible to apply for a grant through this fund.

Question: Can grants be awarded on behalf of children as well as adults?

Answer: Yes, both are eligible.

Question: How and when can I apply?

Answer: You can get the application off of the web site. The address of the web site is <http://www.dhs.state.or.us/disabilities/>.

The first round of applications is due by April 15, 2004. You will be contacted by May 15 about your application if it has been approved. You will be asked to provide more information about the details and cost of your plan.

Question: How much money can I get from the grant?

Answer: The trust advisory committee decided to set a limit of \$5,000 for now. That may change later if the trust has more income.

Question: What is the Trust Advisory Committee?

Answer: The Department of Human Services put together an advisory committee to advise them on rules for the fund, such as setting a limit on the amount of each grant. The committee will also evaluate how the program is working.

Question: The rules say that the changes must be part of a support plan. What does that mean?

Answer: This means that the changes to the home or equipment must relate to your overall support needs.

Question: Can I get help finding information I need?

Answer: Yes, there will be a team to help you decide on a plan and to help you work with a contractor to make sure you get what you want and need.

Question: Can you put the money from the grant together with other money to do a bigger project?

Answer: Yes, you are encouraged to do that.

For more information you can contact Gerald Stolp at Gerald.stolp@state.or.us

How to Treat People

**Eleanor Bailey
Portland**

I have a disability and I have a lot of friends who have disabilities. Here are my suggestions on how I want people to treat me.

Treat me with respect.

Understand that I need to make my own choices.

Do not help me all the time because it feels like I am not learning anything.

If I need help I can ask for it.

Don't boss me around and tell me what to do.

Treat me like a friend.

Don't call me names.

Respect that there are some physical things I cannot do. I have a fragile neck.

Say nice things about me and the things I do - compliments.

If I tell you I don't understand, please repeat it. But please don't get annoyed with me.

Don't tease me or make fun of me.

Language: A person who has a disability is a person just like any other person. When you talk about a person with a disability, don't say their disability first. So, say, "the person who is deaf" instead of "the

deaf person". Some words about people with disabilities are mean. Don't use words like dumb, retarded, crazy, deformed, lame and defective.

With a person who is blind: Let the person know you are there and who you are. If they have a guide dog, don't play with the guide dog. You can offer help, but don't help unless the person wants help.

With a person who is deaf: To get the attention of a person who is deaf, you can gently tap the person on the shoulder.

With a person in a wheelchair: Don't touch the wheelchair without permission. Don't push the person in the wheelchair unless you have offered to help and the person said that they wanted your help.

With a person who has trouble talking: If you don't understand what the person said, ask them to repeat it. Don't pretend that you understood when you did not.

You should treat people with disabilities like you would everyone else. If you aren't sure if something is okay, you should ask the person with the disability. It is always okay to ask questions.

SAAL and Writer's Workshops

Self-Advocates As Leaders (SAAL) recently teamed up with People First of Grants Pass and the Arc of The Mid-Columbia to sponsor Writer's Workshops for people who are self-advocates. With the help of volunteer support people, each participant wrote a story for *The People First Connection*. All of the stories will be published in this or a future issue.

Thanks to these active self-advocates who participated in the workshops. Charla Carney, Billy Carney, Rusty Tyndall, Colleen Lyon, Linda Allan, Ted Combs, Meredith Mitchell, Rebecca Lund, Mariah Langer, Chris Bolte, Bryan Molesworth, Brad Divish, Jarvin Whitesell and Rick Henderson.

Additional workshops are scheduled for Seaside on Saturday, April 17 and Portland on Thursday, April 29.

To participate in a scheduled Writer's Workshop or to arrange one in your community, simply call the SAAL office at (503) 232-9154 ext. 133 and speak to us.

Self-Advocates As Leaders offers many training and advocacy opportunities. SAAL welcomes and needs the support of self-advocates from all parts of Oregon.

Here is contact information for Self-Advocates As Leaders.

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The People First Connection welcomes your articles. They can be emailed to us at mtbclarion@comcast.net or mailed to Michael Bailey, editor, 4265 NE Halsey, Suite 817, Portland, OR. 97213.

Everyone has a story to tell and they are all important.

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

The Fight Against Alcoholism

Rick Henderson
Hood River

In 1981 my doctor told me that I needed surgery. A hole had been found in my heart. This was a life or death situation. The surgery took place in Portland. I spent three months recovering in the hospital. I came home shortly after Easter.

At the time I lived with my parents. I loved them both. My father was strict and hard on me. He had a tendency to drink a lot of alcohol. When he was drinking he would say and do things that hurt me very much. I didn't like the way he treated my mom when he was drunk.

Unfortunately I started to drink also.

About this time I met a lady and I really liked her company. We hung out a lot with each other and shared a common desire to go to lots of parties and drink alcohol. After three or four months of hard drinking I found myself back in the hospital.

From all of the partying and drinking I had stretched myself too much and had torn my stitches lose. I was hospitalized for two more

months. I wanted to feel better and be happy.

Now I don't drink. I like living a healthier life. I made the decision not to live like my father did.

My father passed away in 1982. I still love him. I just wish he would have lived a healthier life.

My Life

Colleen Lyon
Grants Pass

I was born in Southern California but after a while it got so smoggy that it made me sick. So we traveled all around the area and tried some new places. Then we moved to Oregon to Shady Cove, Central Point and finally Grants Pass. We decided to stay here for good. That was about sixteen years ago.

After we moved to Oregon my mom got Muscular Dystrophy so I had to go live in a foster home. I live there now and they take really good care of us all.

Sometimes we have fun by teasing each other. We have chores to do twice a week. Every Saturday we go to a restaurant called Tee Time and once every month a guy named Alex Phillips takes us fiddling in different areas. I like it when we stamp our feet or pat our legs to the music.

My dad got remarried to a nice lady named Debra Lyon and both of them are now in a nice home in

My Life

Grants Pass, close to where I live.

I work at a bookstore in Grants Pass. It is called Booklore and More. We also scan documents and prep them for certain companies. We dust and clean books, we either get rid of them or shelve them. I also try to help out by answering the phone at the same time that I do my regular job.

Every month on the fifteenth I get a paycheck. Those days feel good. I like working at the bookstore.

I have a CD player that I bought with my paycheck. I listen to tapes or the radio. I listen to soft rock and heavy metal music.

I hope that my mom is okay at Highland House. I also hope to visit my step-mom more often.

In the future I hope to continue to have people around who are friends and who watch out for me and take good care of me.

The People First Connection
wants your story.

E-mail it to us at
mtbclarion@comcast.net

School

Rusty Tyndall
Grants Pass

I spent all four years of high school at Grants Pass High School. I had a favorite teacher there whose name was Mr. Mouser. My favorite class was a computer class. When I was a senior I was nominated to be Homecoming King.

I went to school with my younger brother Matt. We graduated together. Matt and I walked onto the field together and I waited for my name to be called. When I walked up to get my diploma everyone stood up and applauded.

Then we went to an all night party. It lasted until 6 a.m.

I have worked at a lot of jobs. Right now I work nights as a janitor in White City. We clean the offices of the Oregon Department of Transportation. There are three of us who work that shift. Our supervisor's name is Jim Curcio. He helps us a lot. He came to Oregon after he left Chicago.

I liked going to Grants Pass High School and liked having my brother Matt there with me at the same time.

Self-Advocates As Leaders
(503) 232-9154 ext. 133

CALL US

Someone Who Cares

Jarvin Whitesell
The Dalles

Having someone in my life who cares for me means a lot. I met my fiancée Linda through The Arc of the Mid-Columbia. She is caring, like I am. She likes to meet people, like I do. She likes having fun and going places, like I do. We get along together really well. She helps me pay my bills and said that she would help me learn to read and write. We like bike riding and doing karate.

Our relationship makes me feel good about my life. Like I am doing something good for my life, for once. Her family is also very caring and they go out of their way to do things for people. I'm just now learning about them. It is great that everyone in her large family wants to meet me. There are more of them than I can count on my fingers.

As the months go by they invite me to spend more time with them. This makes me feel really good because most of the people I have lived with off and on over the years have not had time to help me with things. Just having people

take time to spend with me to help me is more than I expected.

Linda does nice things for me, like plan birthday celebrations. I hope that good things happen in our future.

We plan to get married in two years. We hope to keep learning from each other.

Music and Work

Ted Combs
Grants Pass

Right now I work at the Foothill Workshop in Grants Pass. I operate punches, drill press and do spray painting. I have also been a bus boy and dish washer at the Kopper Kitchen. I worked at Cassett Cabinets running a router and before that I worked at Greenleaf Nursery selling plants and working with dirt.

I participate in a square dance club and I am taking guitar lessons. "Sweet Betsy" is my favorite folk song and I have learned to play it on my guitar.

I took a trip to Hawaii. While I was there we went on an ocean fishing trip and I caught two large Marlin. I like to travel and visit with people.

Family Things

Rebecca Lund
Grants Pass

At the age of four I was diagnosed with meningitis. My real mom was not there when the life flight helicopter arrived. I am glad that my real dad was there when they operated on my brain.

After that I didn't get to see my real dad for sixteen years and I finally got to go to the coast last year to see him for two days.

It is hard for me to concentrate on things that people say and do.

I was worried about my real dad because he has had three heart bypass surgeries and two strokes and he is forty-seven years old. I wish that I could have been there when he had surgeries, but I wasn't.

My real mom told me not to have anything to do with my real dad.

But I am proud of my real dad because he was there for me all the way when I had my surgery. I forgave my real dad for some of the things that he has done.

I finally got to meet my step mom and she is really nice to me. I

am an aunt to my stepsister's daughter.

Skiing

Chris Bolte
Hood River

I have been skiing for two years. I enjoy making new friends. Special Olympics encourage me to seek donations to help other people ski.

This year I shoveled snow to help my neighbors. I fell a couple of times but I did not get hurt.

I love being out of doors. Going downhill skiing is the best. Everyone wins at Special Olympics. The people make you feel good about yourself. I enjoy meeting the girls. It is just a lot of fun.

This year my friends received Gold Medals and smiles from everyone. I was lucky to win a silver medal and a bronze medal at the State Championships in Bend, Oregon.

But my best prize was meeting a new girlfriend. She is a skier also.

The mountains are the best place to play and exercise. There is nothing better than a cold Oregon day with friends, skis and sunshine. I am glad that I am a skier.

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Yes! Sign me up for all future editions.

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