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PHILADELPHIA'S CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING



A Newsletter Advocating and Promoting Independent Living for Persons with Disabilities

Liberty & Supporters Celebrate ADA's 20th Anniversary in Style

by Joel Moffatt



Independence Mall came to life on Monday, July 26th, as Consumers, staff, friends, and supporters of Liberty Resources and the Independent Living Movement gathered for a historic milestone: the 20th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The passage of the ADA, which was signed into law by President George H.W. Bush, marked a turning point in the push for civil rights and equal access for all

See "ADA20", p.4



Independent Living Movement Supporters

Win the FMAP Battle in Washington! *by Madeline McMahon*

After several taxing advocacy efforts, President Obama signed HR 1586 into law on August 10th, securing enhanced Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) for people with disabilities. The bill allows for a six-month extension through June 2011 of Medicaid's temporary enhanced FMAP rate for the states. FMAP was introduced last year to help financially strapped states pay for additional Medicaid coverage under the economic stimulus package.

The Senate passed enhanced FMAP in May, but just before Memorial Day was stripped out of a JOBS bill by the House of Representatives. For the rest of the summer, amendment after amendment was made, but still enhanced FMAP did not pass through the Senate.

Finally, thanks to disabled activists nationwide who made the push for enhanced FMAP their top priority, it passed.

It will not alleviate every single problem, however. Next year might be harder than this year (and this year has been hell), but the passage of enhanced FMAP is a ray of hope. Because of this hope, people with disabilities living in the community can remain there, and some who currently reside in nursing homes will transition to the community.

The remarkable unity and fortitude of the disabled community in fighting for



FMAP shows that disabled people are not without power. When we fight, we fight hard, and often we win. These are not times for cowards. Being nice may get us far, but many people will be left behind. We must be brave, tell the truth unapologetically, and stay focused in order to free our people from the neglect and abuse of being locked away, hidden behind the walls of nursing homes and other institutions.

We also must fight to preserve Consumer direction and control. We are still people with disabilities and we must stand up, otherwise we will be set back thirty years and become "patients" once again. Many of us have been able to live better lives because we have stood up.

Let's keep fighting until all of us are able to live better lives where we get to manage and control and direct our lives and our services in a way that makes us able to live the American Dream. Tell everyone we got FMAP this

year and whatever we need next year, we will keep on fighting to get.

This summer has been a roller coaster ride, but at least we ended it with an FMAP victory. There is much more work to do to end the institutional bias. Keep reading and watching as activists with disabilities and our allies continue defending our freedom.

Remember, there is enough work for you, too. For more information on getting involved in the Independent Living Movement in Pennsylvania, call Cassie James, Madeleine McMahon, or Nancy Salandra at Liberty Resources.

Cassie James: 215-634-2000 ext. 309

Nancy Salandra: extension 116

Madeline McMahon: extension 340



Accessible Vehicle Comes to Liberty Resources

by Emily Coder



VPG Press Conference at LRI with VPG CEO Dave Schembri (left), and LRI CEO Tom Earle. Foreground: LRI Board Member Filomena Ward.

To begin the month long celebration to the 20th anniversary of the ADA, a new American car company, The Vehicle Production Group, unveiled a revolutionary new car at Liberty Resources on Monday, June 28th. The first factory-built, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant, wheelchair accessible vehicle, the MV-1 kicked off its 27 city road show tour in Philadelphia.

“There is still a large gap in transportation options available to individuals with mobility issues, even as we mark the

20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act,” said Dave Schembri, CEO of VPG. “The MV-1 is breaking through that barrier with a vehicle that provides wheelchair users easier entry, a more comfortable ride, and is far easier to exit than any other new vehicle.”

Consumers tried out the MV-1, which was parked in front of Liberty. Filomena Ward, a Liberty Resources Board Member who has been instrumental in the push to get standardized, accessible taxicabs on the streets of Philadelphia, was excited by VPG’s formal announcement that Phl Taxi company had placed an order for 50 of the vehicles.

“When I first pulled up in shotgun position in the MV-1, I could not stop smiling, envisioning myself going where I want to go, when I want to,” said Filomena. “In order for me to ride these wings for my wheelchair, I must pay just like everybody else. When wheelchair accessible taxi cabs become a reality, the disabled community has won another vital step toward equality.”

For additional information, visit:
<http://www.vpgautos.com>



Tom Earle & Steve Gold



Getting down with Flame!



HUD COO Estelle Richman



Linda Anthony

ADA20 *continued from page 1*

people with disabilities. The Anniversary of the signing has become known as “Independence Day” for the disabled community.

The day’s sub-90 degree temperatures offered a respite from the oppressive triple-digit heat that has characterized this summer. Thousands of visitors enjoyed the event during its four hour span, from the old, familiar faces well acquainted with the reason for the celebration, to those who found their curiosity piqued as they passed by the Visitor Center and stayed to bask in the spirit of the gathering.

Flame, a rock band comprised entirely of disabled musicians from Lexington Center in New York state, kept up a steady flow of classic rock tunes, much to the delight of the ample crowd gathered on the Independence Visitor Center lawn at the center of Independence Mall. A “village” of over 50 tents housed dozens of sponsors and exhibitors, while local mascots like Swoop from the Philadelphia Eagles, the Temple University Owl, and the Camden Rivershark posed for photos and brought smiles to the faces of children and adults alike.

The regal Independence Hall and the stately National Constitution Center—to the South and North of the Visitor Center, respectively—stand as enduring monuments to the strength of our nation and to the ideals for which the Independent Living Movement continues to advocate and protect—a fitting setting to commemorate the occasion.

“As Americans, we hold high the ideals on which this great country was founded,” said Liberty’s CEO, Thomas Earle. “The passage of the ADA brought us closer as a nation to exemplifying our reputation as ‘the land of opportunity’ for people of all backgrounds and abilities.”

In addition to Mr. Earle, who emceed the event, the program included remarks from Chris Keith of The Graham Company (the event's title sponsor); Linda Anthony, Policy Director at Disability Rights Network of PA; Steve Gold, a renowned disability rights attorney known to many as the "godfather of the ADA", and Estelle Richman, Chief Operating Officer of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Sister Janice McGrane, the Chair of Liberty's Board of Directors, also made remarks upon receiving the "Star of Distinction Award" for her dedication to LRI and to the Independent Living Movement over the years.

Addressing the diverse crowd, each of the event's guest speakers highlighted the undeniable cause for celebration while underscoring the critical importance of redoubling efforts to secure the civil rights of people with disabilities across the country.

"If there's anything we stand for," said HUD COO Estelle Richman in her address, "it's being able to listen, not tell you what you want, not tell you how you feel, not tell you where you want to live, but listen to what you want, listen to where you want to be,



Flame gets things rocking at the ADA20 event on the Independence Visitor Center Lawn, July 26, 2010.

listen to where you want your life to be, and listen to how you want it to happen."

"We are celebrating the blood and sweat shed for our Declaration of Independence through the ADA," declared Linda Anthony, symbolically dressed as "Lady Liberty".

Disability Rights Attorney Steve Gold noted that, while the question of whether the glass is half empty or half full remains with regard to access and equality, "we're looking at a much bigger glass" thanks to the ADA.

Concluding his letter to the event-goers in the day's commemorative program, Tom Earle called for a reverence for the work accomplished over the past two decades, and a fresh sense of purpose and resolve in advancing the cause:

"Today, on the 20th Anniversary of that historic moment, let us reflect on how far we have come, but let us also renew in ourselves the spirit of the ADA so that we may continue the journey, moving faster and further toward our goal of equality." ★

See page 12 for more photos!



presented by



Special thanks to our many exhibitors, sponsors, supporters, and presenters!

Become a Member of our Board of Directors!

LRI, the Center for Independent Living (CIL) for the Greater Philadelphia Area, is a large, consumer-driven, nonprofit organization with an excellent track record for assisting people with all types of disabilities in living in their own homes.

Our mission is to advocate with disabled people, individually and collectively, to ensure our civil rights and equal access to all aspects of life in the community. While there are many ways to become involved and engaged in this mission, one of the most direct and fulfilling is to consider becoming a member of the Board of Directors of Liberty Resources or one of our affiliated entities.

The function of Liberty's Boards is to assist Consumers and the Chief Executive Officer in setting the direction and fiscal compliance for the organization. Your investment of two to six hours per month can make a significant contribution to advancing our mission.

Please call 215-634-2000 to request a Board Candidate Nomination Form. You can also download a Board Candidate Nomination Form at: **www.libertyresources.org/about-us/board.html**.

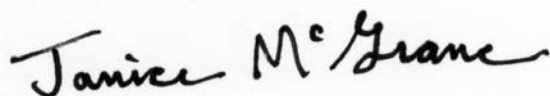
Once you receive your form, complete it, and feel free to use additional paper if necessary. Also, attach a resume (if you have one) and/or a brief summary of your life experience and/or advocacy experience in the disability community when you submit your completed Nomination Form.

Return the completed form with attachments to:

Nicholas Allin
714 Market Street, Suite 100
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Fax: (215) 634-6628
Email: nicholasallin@libertyresources.org

Again, thank you for your interest! If you have any questions, please contact Nicholas Allin at (215) 634-2000 x211.

Sincerely,



Janice McGrane
Board Chair



Liberty CEO Tom Earle Meets President Obama

After celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the ADA at historic Independence Mall in Philadelphia, LRI's CEO Tom Earle, Director of National Advocacy and Policy Cassie James-Holdsworth, and Attorney Steve Gold traveled to Washington D.C. to participate in an ADA Anniversary Celebration at the White House with President Obama. In the photo above, Tom comments to the President on the challenges ahead for our disabled community:

Thomas Earle: "Mr. President, we need your leadership to end the institutional bias in our country. We need Congress and you to pass the Community Choice Act and give people with disabilities the choice to receive supports and services in the community instead of segregated,

lonely, and expensive nursing homes that waste taxpayer dollars."

President Obama: "I understand, we're working on it."

LRI along with local, state, and national community partners, including ADAPT, will continue to advocate for ending the institutional bias in Pennsylvania and across the United States. "While it's great to celebrate our achievements under the ADA, we must be diligent over the months to come, we need to enforce the Community Integration mandate of the ADA so that people with disabilities have real choices for their long-term care needs that include community-based services and supports," states Cassie James-Holdsworth, Director of National Policy and Advocacy at LRI.



ADAPT Squares Off Against Nancy Pelosi

by Glenda Speller-Erby

On Tuesday June 8, 2010 ADAPT went to the Omni Hotel in Washington D.C. to the meeting of *America's Future Now*. We met with other ADAPTERS from Rochester, New York to map out our strategy for the next day. It was late when we went to sleep and it was early when we got up, but the end results were well worth it.

Our goal was to gain Speaker Pelosi's leadership to end the institutional bias and to support the Community Choice Act (HR 1670).

In order to get to get to the room that the meeting was being held in, we had to go down an elevator that only held one person at a time. They tried to stop us before we got into the rooms by telling us that we had to register before we could enter. We told them that someone was going to register all of us at once, and spread out so that it would not look like we were all together.

After the first two guest speakers were finished, they introduced House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Right on cue, Cassie went into action. She stood up tall in her chair and spoke her piece. Even though it was loud it was done with grace and eloquence.

Denerale Jones did a fine job also. It was as if the two of them were on the same timer. He sprang into action with the chanting just at the right moment. Passing out ADAPT literature as he walked around the room, he kept up the chants. Someone was walking behind him removing it just as quickly, and then he grabbed Denerale and tried to



Denerale Jones leads the group in a chant



remove him from the room. The people in the room tried to shout Cassie down but they couldn't. Nancy kept right on talking. Cassie never wavered.

Then the people in the front of the room stood up so that we could not be seen. That did not do any good. We could still be heard. After the meeting was over, members of the press stopped to talk to Cassie and several other members of our group. They wanted to know what all the shouting was about. ★

My Internship at the Client Assistance Program

by Tanikia Philips, Academy Student

When I came to the Client Assistance Program as an intern, I thought that I would be working from the Jenkins Law Library right away, but I was wrong. My very first assignment was to search all of the programs that are available for people with disabilities within the state, especially for those programs that are available in Butler County, PA. The purpose for finding the programs that are available for people with disabilities was that CAP wanted to better serve their clients and communicate with these programs throughout the state.

When I first came to the Client Assistance Program in late February of this year, I did not know how to use Lexis Nexis, the search engine that most lawyers and paralegals use for researching cases, but I would learn on the job. My second assignment was to search all of the cases that involve people with disabilities who had conflicts with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

At first, I managed to pull all of the cases out that had involved the words "vocational rehabilitation." Nevertheless, most of those cases involved Worker's Comp and did not necessarily involve the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. Therefore, Jamie [a CAP staff member] showed me how to cut it down to about eight to ten cases. Once Jamie and I cut it down, I started to write summaries on each of the cases. Jamie gave



me very helpful feedback on what kind of language I should use.

Once the case summaries were done, my next assignment was a little more creative. I had to take the CAP brochure and create a Powerpoint presentation for Jaime to present in California. I managed to create three good Powerpoint presentations.

The part of the Internship that I enjoyed the most was when we went out in the field. The first time I went with Jamie to watch a presentation was at the Philadelphia Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. Jamie gave a presentation to people who had previously used OVR services, and were now actively looking for employment. This was especially helpful to me as my experience at CAP ended. Now I have another outlet I can use in searching for a job.

I also remember Jamie and Margaret [another CAP staffer] had taken me to a transitional place located in West Philadelphia. I had the chance to speak to the residents about the importance of paying your rent, keeping the place clean, and moving on to their own apartments.

I even got a chance to sit on a hearing. The hearing involved a man who was legally blind and was fired from his position as a hotel sales manager. He felt that the company discriminated against him because of his disability. His father, who was also a retired Common Court Pleas judge, offered his views on the case, which was interesting.

[CAP staff members] Jamie, Margaret, and Kirsten have been supportive of

me since I came into the office and had to use one of their computers.

In conclusion, I think that this internship went well for Liberty Resources and for me. In the future, I would suggest that CAP plans more field trips to hearings and meetings with other lawyers. One memorable trip was attending a meeting with Jamie and other lawyers who worked with people who had disabilities.

By going out in the field, I learned how the law works and I met with other lawyers who encouraged me. Thank you to Jamie, the CAP staff, and to Lynne Maleeff at The Academy for the opportunity! ★

Disability Rights Network of PA Calls for Consumer Input

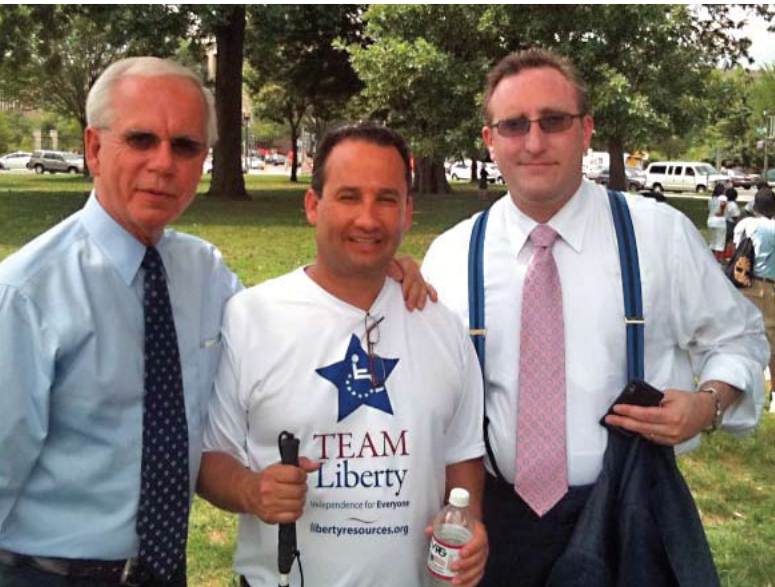
The Disability Rights Network of Pennsylvania (DRN) is gathering information from Consumers with disabilities who use wheelchairs and other mobility devices. DRN wants to know whether the medical equipment at your doctor's office or hospital is accessible, and whether your doctors or hospitals are providing accommodations.

DRN would like to know whether your doctors and hospitals have accessible medical diagnostic equipment or devices, such as adjustable examination tables and chairs, wheelchair accessible weight scales, accessible x-ray machines and other radiological equipment, accessible mammography equipment, or patient lifts to help you transfer to such equipment.

DRN is also interested to know whether your doctors and hospitals provide other types of accommodations for your disabilities or whether you have ever been denied care on the basis of your disability or the need for accommodations. We would like interested persons to contact us to share their experiences with us.

Please contact DRN Staff Attorney Chava Kintisch at:

215-238-8070 ext. 210
215-789-2498 (TDD)
ckintisch@drnpa.org
1315 Walnut Street, Suite 500
Philadelphia, PA 19107



Top left to bottom right: Consumers and staff cheer for the band Flame at the ADA20 celebration; Visitors enjoying the It's Our Story flag sculpture exhibit inside the Visitor Center; Former Pennsylvania Governor, U.S. Attorney General, and long-time ADA supporter Dick Thornburgh with Yoshiko Dart at the Washington, D.C. ADA celebration; The exhibitor village at the ADA20 event; LRI CEO Tom Earle with Andy Imperato of the American Association of People with Disabilities and Tony Coelho, former California Congressman and primary sponsor of the ADA; Police stand by as ADAPters march to urge Speaker Pelosi to support the Community Choice Act.

Get Involved with Team Liberty *by Emily Coder*

A new group of employees has emerged at Liberty Resources to participate in activities outside of work. Team Liberty is a volunteer group that is united for the purpose of increasing wellness & raising awareness for Liberty Resources and people with disabilities in our community.

The goal of Team Liberty (TL) is to participate in different races and community events to raise awareness and funds for Liberty Resources and people with disabilities. The three different components of TL are: fitness, volunteerism, and socializing.

Group runs/walks/wheels are currently held after work on Tuesdays and Thursdays, with the group gearing up for various races and events this fall, including the Philadelphia Marathon on November 21st.

Another important component of TL is the volunteering aspect. The group volunteered in Havertown at the end of April to help build an accessible playground

for all children and adults. This mission was led by Marika Van Der Es, who was the "Liberty Representative" in charge of the project. In the beginning of July, a group of about a dozen LRI employees sorted food at Philabundance—an activity that Jen Mand says "gives back to our Consumers." Volunteers had fun and shared some laughs while sorting and boxing hundreds of bags of bread.

The third and most popular component of TL is the social aspect, which includes group participation in activities after work. The kickoff event was hosted by City Tap House on July 15th,

and close to 100 people came out to support Liberty and TL! A portion of the proceeds went back to Liberty.



TEAM
Liberty

Want to join Team Liberty and/or suggest a volunteer opportunity? Send an email to:

TeamLiberty@libertyresources.org



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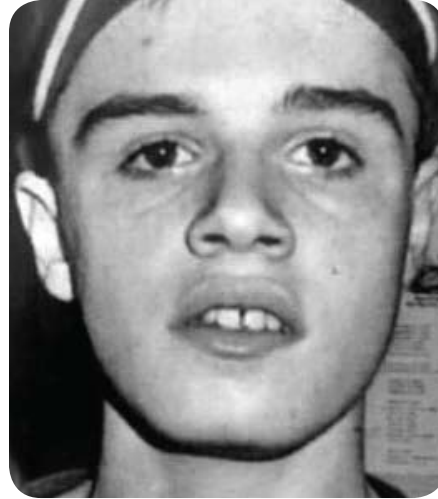


Death of Woods Services Resident Stirs Advocates

On Saturday, July 24, Bryan Nevins, a 20-year-old, non-verbal autistic man, died in the back of the van where he had been left after returning from a trip to Sesame Place with fellow Woods Services residents. Hours after the Woods Services van driver had dropped off the other residents and parked the van, Mr. Nevins was discovered missing. After five hours in the suffocating 150 degree heat of the sealed vehicle, staff found the victim's clearly lifeless body in the back seat.

In the wake of the tragedy—the second death of a Woods Services resident in less than a year—the van driver and another staff member were suspended. The State Department of Public Welfare, which licenses the Middletown, PA private residential treatment center and school for adults and children with “severe physical or developmental disabilities”, has initiated an investigation into the incident.

On Thursday July 29th at 2:00 PM, representatives and supporters of disability rights groups including Liberty Resources, ALFIE (The Alliance for Inclusive Education), Disabled In Action, ADAPT; and Kids Together gathered at Woods Services in Langhorne to lay flowers in memory of Nevins, and to protest the “unethical accommodations and negligence which lead to his death,” said Madeline McMahon, National Policy & Advocacy Coordinator at Liberty Resources.



Bryan Nevins, a 20 year-old Woods Services resident, died after Woods staff members left him in a van on a hot July day.

“This story is appalling and we will not let it pass and fade quietly into the night,” said Alan Holdsworth, one of the organizers representing ALFIE. “Woods Services basically murdered this young man, leaving him in a locked car for five hours in 150 degree heat.”

The group collectively called for the following actions to be taken:

- 1) A full and open public inquiry into this incident.
- 2) The closure of Woods Services to any new admissions until the inquiry concludes.
- 3) A planned closure of Woods Services and all its subsidiaries.
- 4) A public meeting at which Woods Services executives explain the actions and the culture within the facility that enabled such a tragedy.
- 5) Staff and management responsible are charged to the fullest extent of civil and criminal law.

6) Woods Services relies very much on public and corporate support for its existence. We call on all donors and supporters to withdraw their support.

7) The State Department of Public Welfare should withdraw funding and support for Woods Services and use those dollars to safely transition the residents back into the community.

After Bryan's death, Nevins's parents removed his twin brother from the facility. The care worker who inadvertently

left Nevins in the back of the Woods Services van was suspended and charged with felony neglect of a care-dependent person and involuntary manslaughter, among other charges.

Thanks to public outcry and advocacy efforts, state officials ordered Woods to close the unit responsible for Nevins's death and removed eight residents from the campus. DPW also barred Woods from accepting new clients until the investigation is complete. ★

LRI's Bring Your Child to Work Day *by Rachel Angst*

On April 22nd, the Northeast LRI office participated in "Bring Your Child to Work Day".

While the children viewed this day as a day "off" from school, our staff viewed it as just the opposite. We saw it as a wonderful opportunity to educate. Our goal? To cultivate attitudes of Independence for people with disabilities through some "hands on" education.

To do this, we scheduled a number of interactive events throughout the day geared toward providing the little visitors with a peek into "a day in the life" of an individual with a disability.

With our own Chico Ross serving as Master of Ceremonies, we began the day confidently. We started with Chico's introduction, followed by a presentation of a wide variety of different assistive technology tools provided

by Ingrid of Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Centers. Next up we had Sarah visit from Webb Medical provide demonstrations of different types of wheelchairs.

The most popular visitor of the day, however, was undoubtedly Debbie and her service dog, Mark. They visited us from the Lehigh Valley CIL. In the afternoon, Susan Levine from our STS department taught a cooking class for the children as her assistant (Chico) demonstrated how he is able to cook independently in the kitchen while using his wheelchair.

When time permitted, the kids spent time with their parents in their offices, completing crossword puzzles from their activity packet and putting on rub-on wheelchair tattoos (from the 3E LOVE Campaign—get more information at <http://3elove.bigcartel.com/>).



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